



Write to Educate

Scholarship Contest Winner

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Essay Topic: Examine the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our society (human interactions, schooling, the economy, tourism, etc.).

On March 13th, 2020, Governor Whitmer announced the closure of all K-12 schools in Michigan. I still remember the excitement, uncertainty, and incredulity I felt that night as if it were yesterday. Now, on March 13th, 2021 – exactly one year later – I have experienced how people, places, and systems can change in a moment's notice.

The tremendous growth I have witnessed over the past year in my community, family, and even within myself is immeasurable. During my senior year serving as Key Club and SADD Club President, I was amazed by the courage, compassion, and resilience from students and parents alike in my community. From sending appreciation videos to Sparrow healthcare workers to helping out local businesses in need, our community has never been so closely intertwined. These acts of gratitude demonstrate the boundless limitation of human kindness especially during uncertain times. As COVID-19 demanded human beings to become more flexible in our current predicament, many schools also became more aware of student needs and wellbeing during the pandemic. Newsletters created by student organizations such as SADD Club highlighting topics such as the importance of healthy eating, exercise, self care, and time management are posted weekly to provide students with tips they can employ in their daily lives.

Although COVID-19 stimulated our empathy for others, desire for human connection, and adaptability in profound ways, there are undeniably a long list of challenges caused by the onset of the pandemic. Anxiety, depression, addiction, and eating disorders have been on the rise due to a variety of factors– including but not limited to social isolation, stress resulted from COVID-19 related news, and lack of initial understanding and control of the virus. Long-standing social justice issues brought to light during the pandemic such as police brutality against Black Americans and hate crimes against Asians still remain unresolved. The pandemic also confined families together while keeping others apart, strengthened and weakened previous friendships, and forced some of us to deeply reflect on our own character.

Through the lessons we were taught amidst the chaos of a tumultuous year, our society has not only learned to adjust, but in an extremely short period of time. We underwent economic stagnation and improvement, discovered the drawbacks and benefits of a virtual setting, and encountered challenges and gained achievement all in a single, unforgettable year.

COVID-19 changed the world in ways most of us could not have anticipated. As we continue to fight the virus, how will our society more effectively overcome the obstacles that inevitably lay ahead of us? I believe that we will find clarity by utilizing the lessons learned from our shared experiences within the past year. The values we absorbed, the kindness and compassion shown during strenuous times, and the struggle and suffering we endured were not in vain. The pandemic tried to separate us, yet we emerged more strongly connected than ever before.

When the COVID-19 pandemic becomes written in history textbooks, we will have made it through together. Remember all we earned, and all we lost. Through the pain, there is growth. And with it, there is hope.

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