

The first time I had heard of Covid-19 was around the beginning of the month of March on Instagram when I was scrolling through my daily feed. It was like any other regular school day and I had briefly looked at it, and then kept scrolling onto the next post. Little did I know at the time is that Covid-19 would be all I ever see on social media now. I have been in quarantine for over two months now and the toll it has taken on my mental and physical state has made this one of the most difficult times in my life.

Prior to the pandemic and self-isolation in the United States, I lived everyday with a positive mindset and appreciation for what new adventure awaited me. I was a full-time pre-nursing college student at Sacramento State, with a part-time job I had just landed with the Sacramento River Cats. I embraced this full schedule that I gave myself with determination and a “get-it-done” mentality that has been instilled in me from my father. However, since being quarantined and alone for so long, I have realized that the true reason I was able to take on so much work was because of the support I had from my friends. I was active in a variety of clubs such as Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity, running club, anime club, badminton club, and my personal favorite, the quidditch team. By being a part of so many unique and different clubs I was able to meet people from all different backgrounds of life. These people that I met would later become some of my closest friends and unbeknownst to them played a huge part in helping me keep my mental state healthy. I have dealt with depression and anxiety my whole life, and by keeping busy and maintaining an extroverted personality, I was able to keep my inner demons at bay. But, being in quarantine has made me feel alone and unhappy. Nowadays, I wake up to take classes online that I dislike and dread doing. Taking classes online does not present the same

atmosphere and euphoria that it would face-to-face. Since online classes present a lackluster feeling to me, my motivation towards my academics has greatly diminished. Worst of all, this semester is the most important one yet, as the grades that I receive play a strong factor of the probability of me getting accepted into Sacramento State's nursing program. A program that I have worked diligently towards and sacrificed so much for two whole years. To those unfamiliar, Sacramento State's nursing program is considered one of the schools most impacted programs and ranked fairly high in the state of California. However, in spite of the obstacles that Covid-19 has created for me, I have been able to find hope in new and unfamiliar ways.

It's safe to say that the main "person" who is keeping me sane is my dog, buddy. When I was going to school at Sacramento State I would come home only once a month and rarely got to see Buddy. But, because of the quarantine, I now get to see him everyday. Ironically, he is laying down next to me on the carpet as I write this out. Buddy is my best friend and the greatest dog I could have asked for. He has been my source of comfort and his presence makes me feel secure and less stressed. Also, since Covid-19 caused most of the college campuses to close their dorms, a lot of my friends who I ran cross-country with in highschool are back home and we've started running together. The amount of miles we cover in a week seems as if we were training for a marathon, last week(April 27th-May 3rd) we ran for 35 miles, but the reason we run so much is because we have been trapped inside our homes all day and want to see and feel the sun. The routes we run on are empty and we don't listen to music, instead just listening to our surroundings. We can hear the birds chirping in the distance, leaves whistling, our feet hitting the gravel, our deep breaths, the crickets chirping, etc. My two friends that I run with, Mark and

Isiah, are seasoned veteran runners, so running with them is taxing and far more difficult than I expected it to be. But the feeling after finishing reminds me of the beauty in my own city I can look forward to seeing once this pandemic is over.

I think it's crazy to say but the one thing that I can thank Covid-19 for is helping me find a different part of myself that I didn't know existed. With a new outlook on life I can progress towards my goals with the same determination I had prior to the pandemic. Then, hopefully one day, I can become a registered nurse, and do my own part in practicing the noble art of self-sacrifice that we witness everyday.