

Letters to the Library



Describe yourself in a sentence or two, for example your age and occupation (or, if you do not have one, what you like to do). What is your household like?

I am 13 years old and going into 9th grade in the fall at Sacred Heart Academy. During quarantine, I have been keeping busy with writing, reading, and drawing. During the spring, I was doing online distance learning. Now, during the summer, I do an assortment of summer activities, like skateboarding, hiking, and swimming. I have a dad, a mom, a sister, and two cats, who are named after the desi desserts Laddoo and Jalebi.

What is your day to day routine like now? What has changed? What has not changed?

My day to day routine right now consists of me waking up when my cat jumps on top of my bed and nips my feet until I wake up and give them breakfast. When I was in school, I would have left before it was time for my cat's breakfast, but now the three of us can eat together. I usually eat my cereal while checking the news and updates. In Connecticut, our COVID cases have been going down, unlike many other states in the US. After breakfast, I will freshen up and begin to do whatever work my mother told me to do. Usually, I have to suffer through some Algebra practice, do some writing and research, and some chores around the house. After that, it is about 11, and I get stuck into ultimate boredom. Usually, in summer vacation, I go outside and play tag with the neighborhood kids or get ice cream at Mr. D's. Currently, I can't play around with other kids because of the possibility of passing the virus around ourselves and our family. I read for a while, then write, and draw if I get inspiration. By the time I am tired of doing things indoors, it is 1, and I go outside to walk around the block and to do some gardening. My family and I have been working on the exterior of our house during the quarantine. We made a flower bed and extended our current garden. We are going to make a firepit and fix our patio. My summer routine has mostly stayed the same, besides the part where I can't see anyone. My school routine was a lot different, though. When school was online, I woke up at around 10, not bothering to sign in at 8 when school started. I would go to some google meet, whenever I had time, and finished whatever work I had assigned to me. But I would rarely move from my desk, except to eat lunch. It wasn't enjoyable. I never saw friends, and the teachers were all stressed. I have my fingers crossed that when school starts at the end of August, I can go to school. But if the situation gets worse, I must stay home to keep my family safe.

What precautions have you taken against the virus? How have you prepared? Were there any difficulties (shortages, high prices etc.)?

As a family, my mother, father, sister, and I have been choosing to stay away from other people whenever we can. We shop less frequently, and when we do, we bring an assortment of defense to aid us in defeating the monster known as COVID-19. *Cue epic music* We have a mask, the most efficient item in our arsenal, which will stop cough droplets from leaving or entering our mouth and nose. We have hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and cleaning spray. We prepared for any attack, whether it comes in the form of someone coughing in the produce section or the Karen, who refuses to wear a mask. *Epic music fades* Now that you know our plethora of safety items, I would like to point out that obtaining these things, as well as other stuff is somewhat of a struggle. For months, stores haven't had any cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, and even things like milk, canned beans, and bread has been wiped from the shelves (is this a pandemic or an apocalypse? It feels like both). In the very beginning, before school even closed, we supplied ourselves with enough food and cleaning products to last a couple of weeks, just in case we would have to go into a complete shutdown. Thankfully, essential places like the grocery stores are opened the real heroes of our world, the essential workers, have made sure we have what we need during these hard times. Thank you, essential workers <3.

What have been the biggest challenges for you during this time?

Some of the biggest challenges for me have been keeping up with friends and maintaining relationships. If mental health didn't exist, I would gladly hole up for months with nothing but my computer and books to keep me company. But I need people to talk to people to stay sane. I try my hardest to text my friends, but because I no longer see them every day at school, I have fallen out with many of them. It is unfortunate, and I wish it weren't true, but I have lost many of my nearest and dearest friends during this pandemic.

How have you stayed busy?

I have stayed busy by taking up new hobbies, like knitting, skateboarding, and gaming. I bought a Switch and a skateboard, and I have been obsessed with both. Throughout the night, I use my Switch, and in the morning, I practice tricks on my board. I'm close to finishing knitting a scarf for the winter. I also began reading new book series and genres. I used to be a fantasy and Sci-Fi geek, but now I read everything from epic fantasy tales to informative autobiographies. I began and almost finished The Mortal Instruments series, and I've read books like Becoming from Michelle Obama, Anne Frank's Diary and Born A Crime by Trevor Noah. One of the biggest things I've been doing is educating myself on systemic racism and fighting for the BLM movement. Quarantine gave me so much time to learn about new topics, and I'm happy I used it right.

Have there been any positives to this situation?

Of course, there have been bright sides! I hung out with my two adorable cats and celebrated their 'gotcha' day and birthday. There had been fun car parades on our block, including ones for my sister's prom and graduation. I also learned many new hobbies and have made a bunch of new online friends. But the most significant positive is that we have spent so much time as a family, and time with your family is time well spent.

What local Wallingford places/businesses do you miss most?

I miss Half Moon, Mr. D's, the library, Ricks on 5, and Doolittle Park.

How have you stayed social while social distancing?

Although I can't hang out with friends in real life anymore, I have hung out with some friends through a screen. It is quite funny how the tables have turned. Usually, being on a computer for hours on end would be looked down upon. But now, if I'm in a Zoom call with my online friends for four hours, my parents won't bat an eye. I also made so many online friends. Using social media like Instagram, Discord, Snapchat, and many others, I can talk with people all over the world. It is interesting to see how other countries are handling this pandemic and comparing it to what the US is doing.

What is the first thing you are doing when things go back to normal?

When things go back to normal, I'm going to a skate park where I can learn some new tricks on my board.

How did you celebrate the Holidays? Did you see family in person, digitally, or not at all?

I celebrated Eid by doing a two-week quarantine, then going to see my family friends. We usually go to a bunch of parties, but this time we went to one, where we ate and prayed together. This year we planned to celebrate with my family in Minnesota, but instead, we chose to see them digitally, as well as my family who live in Pakistan.

How will you be celebrating Wallingford's 350th Jubilee? If you were here for the 325th Jubilee, do you have any memories you would like to share?

I was supposed to play in Dag's marching band this year, but, plans fell through, as they tend to do. Instead, I may just visit some local Wallingford business and go to a couple of cool places in town.

What do you miss most about the Wallingford Public Library? What is the first thing you will be doing when you can come back into the building?

I miss the assortment of books. I love going to the library and just sitting in a secluded corner, where I can read as many books as my heart desires without having to worry about anything. The library was my little safe space, a getaway if you will. I would see friends who use computers and talk to them a bit. But the seemingly endless books at the library always makes me feel content. The first thing I will do is just browse the shelves.