

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 32 years old and am a stay at home mother to my two children, ages almost 4 and just turned 1. My husband is an Accountant who is working remotely from home and we have a 5 year old dog.

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

My daughter had started attending preschool and swim lessons earlier this year, but we wound up pulling her from both programs due to safety concerns caused by the Pandemic. Having all five of us at home all day has been a major adjustment to make, especially since I'm trying to keep the kids a bit quieter than usual so my husband can work. I'm grateful that we're all healthy and we're doing our part to keep the virus from spreading more than it has, but being away from family and friends has been tough on all of us (except the baby who is blissfully ignorant.)

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

We try to clean the counters after groceries have been placed onto them. We also try to shower when we get home if we've been in an enclosed public space for a long time. We did a good job not panic buying or hoarding anything when the first lockdown happened in March, but I was concerned for a short period that we wouldn't be able to get some necessary items like diapers or formula. Luckily that didn't happen, though we sometimes had to switch what brands we bought. And I made sure to pick up cake mix and frosting early since our kids both have birthdays at the end of the year and I was a bit concerned I wouldn't be able to find any for them.

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

The isolation. I already felt pretty lonely as a stay at home parent since I didn't have any other parent friends, but not even being able to see my family or my in-laws was very difficult. We've been able to spend more time with my in-laws recently, but my immediate family are all at higher risk of exposure due to their jobs. We made the choice to limit our in-person contact with them as a result. My anxiety also has become worse since the first lockdown started. Trying to cope has been tough since the kids don't nap at the same time and I don't have much opportunity to use the coping techniques that usually work pretty well.

How have you stayed busy?

Trying to take care of the kids and the house.

Have there been any positives to this situation?

My husband has gotten so much more time with our kids than he has in the past. He's still employed and will be safely working from home for the foreseeable future. We're trying to be cautious with our finances, but we don't have the same worries so many people have right now. So as difficult as some things have been, we know just how fortunate we are to have our health and to have my husband still working.

What local Wallingford places/businesses do you miss most?

The Library and my daughter's preschool.

How have you stayed social while social distancing?

We've been using FaceTime and Zoom to stay connected with friends and family. When we visit family we try to stay outside and we wear masks when we have to go inside. Our daughter played with a few of the kids in our neighborhood who are the same age as her over the summer, but the kids all did a pretty good job at keeping their distance from each other.

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

Probably driving to my sister's house in Stratford so we can hug my nephews and have a play date. We've all missed them so much, but it's been especially hard on our daughter and her cousins - they all love each other and being apart has been really difficult for them.

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

We set up a Zoom meeting with my mom's extended family for Thanksgiving dinner. I wasn't really sure how to feel about it at first, but it was awesome since my son took his first steps during the meeting. My uncles and aunts live in California and never would have witnessed that if it weren't for the Zoom meeting, so that made it pretty special. We also swapped desserts with my husband's parents and brothers, then had a second Zoom meeting with them as we ate. They got to see my son practicing walking too and it was pretty exciting.

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 don't think we are celebrating, unless there are virtual events or we feel it's safe to attend in-person at that point.

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 preschool play area. My daughter loved playing in there with other kids and every time we drive past this spring she would get a bit sad she couldn't go inside. Now we save when we drive by and I tell her we'll be able to play again one day.