

## Reflections on senior year quarantine

**By Anusha Vadlamani, Mason High School, Mason, Ohio Class of 2020**

Six months ago, if you had asked me what I wanted out of my senior year, I would've told you that I wished time would stop. I wanted a chance to savor every moment I had with my friends, before the good-byes crept up on us, before our lives changed for good.

Unwittingly, the universe seems to have granted my wish.

When my senior year came to a screeching halt two months ago, I was devastated. A part of me still is. I was looking forward to a lot — state competitions, prom, graduation, celebrating my 18th birthday with my best friends.

I believe that everything happens for a reason, but for a long time, I couldn't come up with a reason that could justify this pandemic.

The truth is, coronavirus has taken a lot from us — all of us. I don't think anything can ever justify what we've lost.

But, at least for me, I feel like it has also given me something. It has taught me — and is still teaching me — to genuinely reflect and give thanks for all that I have.

When the world went into lockdown, I didn't realize how fortunate I was. I live with my parents, my little brother, two cousins and aunt and uncle, so when the lockdown ensued, I didn't have to quarantine alone — a fact in which I take great solace. Living with seven other people is hectic, chaotic, and sometimes overwhelming. But I've come to realize how lucky I am because there is never a dull moment - only moments that I wouldn't trade for anything in the world.

I live down the street from my best friends, and sometimes when the sun is setting, I can see them sitting on their stoop, watching the same painted sky I

am watching. I'm thankful that they are home, and that they are safe.

I'm grateful that my school's administration team has worked tirelessly to provide us with a senior year that we can cherish. I'm grateful for the teachers that persevered in order to give us a quality education. I have never felt more cared for than I have in these last few months.

High school has given me lasting friendships, but quarantine has allowed me to turn them into lifelong ones. I know I am blessed to have friends who are going through the same challenges, and that understand the gravity of supporting each other in times like this.

This fall I'm going to college halfway across the country from my home — from my family and friends — and I appreciate every moment that I get to spend with them before I leave.

The lockdown has felt like it has made time stop, but I finally, finally feel like the world is turning again.

This wasn't the ending that I envisioned for my senior year, but I can't help but feeling like it was the right one.