



# COVID-19: Our journey from diagnosis to recovery

**Delaney Powers**  
junior reporter

Until last spring, positives and negatives were math terms my whole life. Now, when we use these terms, people are usually talking about results for COVID-19 tests.

The pandemic came to the U.S. in January. Eleven months later it is still here. Not only that but the virus is close to home, literally. By now, people can picture a face when thinking about the virus, like a family member, a friend, a teacher or even themselves.

Some members of our community, including me, want to share their experience with COVID-19 to help people realize how serious this virus is.

Science teacher Jennifer Silva started feeling symptoms of the virus within three days of exposure to someone who had tested positive.

"Initially, I felt muscle aches, similar to the flu, all over my body which lasted two days," Silva said. "The tiredness and weakness stopped me from doing laundry and cleaning. I felt tired and weak for 10 days. On the third day, I felt sinus pressure and a bad headache for 48 hours. On the fourth day, I lost my sense of taste and smell for three weeks. On the ninth or tenth day, I experienced very mild respiratory symptoms like wheezing and shortness of breath."

Silva turned to her family for advice about handling her diagnosis and illness.

"I approached this illness like I approach any illness," Silva said. "I was following all the rules and taking all the precautions necessary. Coming from a family of doctors, I was taught how to build up my immune system with vitamins, nutritious food, drinking water, exercise, etc. However, you can do all these things and can still get sick. You just have to accept it and let your body do the work. Trust that you did everything that you could to help your body fight off any illness whether it be COVID or not."

Using her knowledge and experience with the virus, Silva now stresses the importance of focusing on hopeful thoughts to cope and recover from COVID-19.

"My advice to the community is to try to think positively," Silva said. "I strongly believe that if you think positively, it strengthens your will to get better. Don't let any negative thoughts interfere with your recovery."

Michael Leveille '19, who attends Purdue University, tested positive on August 26 during the weekly testing for athletes. He did not experience any symptoms until two days after he tested positive.

"Every Wednesday the athletes here have to get tested and I found out I was positive," Leveille said. "I got tested by the wrestling team trainer on campus. It took 36 hours for the call that I was positive. My only symptom was the loss of smell. I was able to come back to class and practice 10 days after being in isolation."

When Leveille found out he was positive, two thoughts went through his mind.

"My first thought was wondering who I got it from," Leveille said. "Then I had to

let people know to get tested, especially family members that are high risk for COVID."

Leveille strongly advises people who do not experience symptoms to get tested.

"I learned even if you feel well that you can still have the virus," Leveille said. "People should always take precautions, no matter your age, and get tested. Anyone can get this virus."

Senior Mia Norris came down with the virus over the summer.

"I started feeling symptoms on July 19," Norris said. "I had a sore throat that lasted four days, the headache lasted ten days, tiredness lasted five days and the hard time breathing stuck with me for a few months. My doctor said the shortness of breath would stick with me for a while, so I used an inhaler for about a month."

Norris received her results six hours after testing and was somewhat overwhelmed by being the first person she knew to contract the virus.

"I went to a rapid testing center on July 22," Norris said. "I stayed there to wait six hours for my results. When I saw it was positive, I was very confused. I didn't know anyone who tested positive, so the entire virus seemed very distant to me. I felt disappointed because I knew I had to stay in my room for two weeks in the middle of the summer."

During quarantine Norris spent a lot of time reflecting on her future, particularly this last year of her high school experience.

"Since I had a lot of time to myself, I was able to do a lot of thinking about my upcoming senior year and how I wanted to spend it," Norris said. "This experience changed my perspective in that the virus is real and you have to be extremely careful. I never thought I would test positive, but doing so gave me more insight into how easily this virus can spread and how careful you have to be because you never know who you can get sick."

World language teacher Robert Distasio started feeling symptoms in April. The shortness of breath and loss of taste and smell he experienced lasted until mid-June.

"I started feeling symptoms on April 15," Distasio said. "I didn't feel 'back-to-normal' until well into June. The symptoms that persisted were shortness of breath and impaired smell and taste. I went to get my test at a rapid testing site and I received my results about 45 minutes after the nose swab."

Like others, Distasio had a feeling the test would come back positive.

"I had a sinking feeling I was positive on April 15," Distasio said. "I could tell my body was going through something. I'm no stranger to a bad cold, but this hit me like a train. When I saw it was positive, it reaffirmed my instincts, but also terrified me because this was still in the beginning of the pandemic."

Because Distasio had the virus early, he felt he could coach others who have recently tested positive.

"I always took COVID seriously, but this made me even more cautious about the virus," Distasio said. "Since I tested positive early on I had a lot of people contact me who tested positive during the summer. I acted as a 'coach' of sorts to let them know what would happen if they had the same symptoms as me. I encourage everyone to wear masks and to



photo by Matthew Warakowski

Ms. Jen Silva, senior Mia Norris, junior Delaney Powers and Mr. Robert Distasio gather in Champagnat Square on Dec. 3. They are among the members of our community who contracted and recovered from the COVID-19 virus.

wash their hands. We must also continue to practice social distancing."

Distasio points out there are many different ways the virus can affect people.

"It's clear that COVID doesn't present itself as one singular thing," Distasio said. "It carries a spectrum of symptoms, risks and feelings. I consider myself in extremely good shape and I felt like garbage for weeks. On the other hand, I have seen people who would be considered 'high risk' have no symptoms at all and come out of it without a scratch."

Based on these stories of survival, COVID is tough with varying and long-lasting symptoms. But the thing to remember is these people beat COVID.

So did I.

I started having a fever and a cough one day after I got home from school. Earlier in the week, my family started feeling symptoms. At first I thought they were just allergies. Spoiler alert: this was COVID.

By the next morning I had a headache, no energy or taste and smell. The loss of taste made food have a metallic flavor. The headache felt like a thousand tiny hammers hitting my head.

My family and I went to get tested at the University of Chicago Medical Center later that afternoon.

I was nervous about the COVID test even though I thought I was positive. The nurses stuck this white swab resembling a Q-Tip up my nose, almost to my brain it felt like. Then, all I could do was wait for the results.

I received the results the next day: *You tested POSITIVE*. At that moment I really felt the difference between thinking I am positive and actually seeing the word.

I felt terrible for the people who had to go into quarantine for being in close contact with me. But thankfully they did not get sick because of me.

Toward the end of the week, I began to feel a lot better. The lingering symptoms were a cough and headache. Eventually, I recovered and was able to come back to school. I was so grateful to be back in the hallways. But I felt I should be wearing a scarlet letter C for COVID.

In the weeks since, I have had a lot of things to reflect on. I am so grateful to God for listening to my prayers and healing me and my family. I am thankful we did not have it as bad as some others.

This virus is rough, physically and mentally. It would be easy to stay focused on the negatives. Or, we can choose to focus on the positives by helping others to stay alert and carefully follow the guidelines in place to help us stay healthy.

It feels good to be able to join my family, Mia Norris, Mr. Distasio, Ms. Silva and all the others who have recovered.

We beat it.

During this Advent season, we should keep praying that everyone else can beat this virus too.

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# Theatre guild members deliver ‘Wonderful’ performances

Grace Molenhouse  
senior reporter

In the late 1940s, America was exiting World War II and dealing with the lasting impacts, so spirits were not high. Then the film “It’s A Wonderful Life” came out in 1946 and Americans were reminded of the sanctity of life and the value of friends and family.

The film tells the story of a desperate man driven to suicide, whose entire life is shown through flashbacks as he is saved by his guardian angel. The man, George Bailey, played by legendary actor James Stewart, is shown what the world around him would be like if he had never been born. Bailey then returns to his old life, grateful for his life and everyone in it.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Marist Theatre Guild was unable to perform its traditional fall play before live audiences in the RedHawk Theatre. Last spring, when the entire school went to remote learning, the spring musical they worked on for weeks never made it to the stage.

Determined that the “show must go on,” the guild got creative and decided to adapt the film script into an old-fashioned radio play, the type millions of American families enjoyed prior to the invention of the television. Families gathered together to enjoy the radio comedies, horrors, musicals and dramas, thus beginning the American tradition of enjoying the arts comfortably at home.

Performances were available for streaming on Nov. 20, 21 and 22 using the popular streaming site Broadway On Demand. Audience members registered and paid for their “tickets” on the website and were able to tune in within 24 hours of each performance.

Each cast member played dual roles: a 1940s actor performing on a popular radio show and a character from It’s A Wonderful Life. The cast included seniors Matthew Warakowski, Peter Cunningham, Angelina Corcoran, Madelyn Jaworek, Una Fortier, Malia Pellegrini and Emma Ortega, juniors Rebecca Jackson, Mia Padilla and Matt Elenteny, sophomores Andrew Crisp, Evan Fox and Laura Cintron and freshmen James Czoski and Chase Lanning.

The performance, despite being non-traditional, was excellent and showcased the cast members’ immense talents. Although the performers mainly stood still before their microphones throughout the performance, an effective illusion of movement was created though the sound effects, made possible through the talents of senior Isabel Piper.

While at times the story seemed a bit anticlimactic, the cast members’ effective use of volume, clear annunciation of their lines and dedication to projecting believable emotions during each scene resulted in a show that viewers could not look away from (or tune out if they chose just to listen like in the old days of radio programs).



photo by Isabel Piper

Members of the Theatre Guild record a radio play version of the Christmas classic film “It’s a Wonderful Life” in the RedHawk Theatre. The show streamed online through Broadway On Demand on Nov. 20, 21 and 22 and succeeded in entertaining audiences in a unique way.

Another great aspect of the 90-minute performance was when the audience was reminded that they were experiencing a radio show through “commercial breaks” where the cast would take a break from “It’s A Wonderful Life” and perform a 1940s style commercial. These few minute-long breaks in the show were very fun and provided interesting insights into advertising during that time.

Co-directors Erin Kelly and Erin Vail deserve extra credit for keeping theatre alive and well during the pandemic, as evidenced by the 127 families who paid to watch and listen to the show. Their hard work was evident as they created a memorable, family-friendly show that kept cast, crew and audience members alike safe and grateful for some new entertainment.

*Looking for something to watch this holiday season?*

## The naughtiest and nicest Christmas films of all time

Isabella Schreck  
senior reporter

It’s the most wonderful time of the year. Nov. 30 marked the beginning of Advent and yuletide cheer, although for some it all begins in July, with boisterous laughs with family and friends during annual reruns of classic holiday films.

However, not all Christmas films are created equal.

Whether for the first time or the 100th, here is a list of must-see Christmas films.

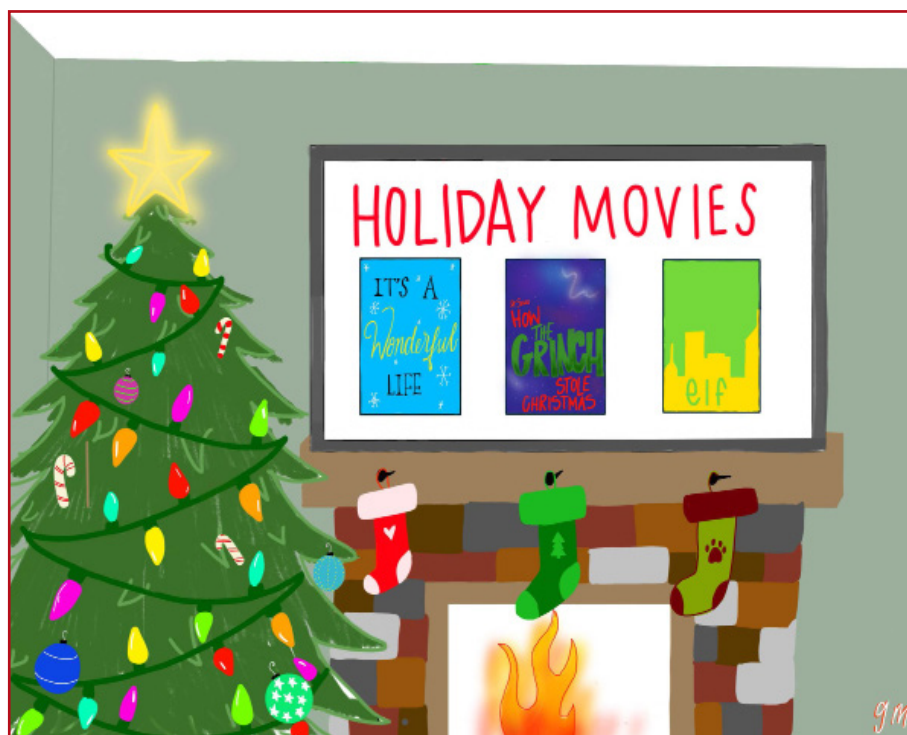
The star on top of the tree is “It’s a Wonderful Life” from 1946.

Named the “Best Christmas Movie of All Time” by Esquire magazine, the film follows George Bailey, a man who inherits his father’s investment company, yet is unfulfilled after he sacrifices his dreams.

When Bailey is about to jump off a bridge, he is visited by an angel who shows him a vision of what the lives of the people in his life and what the town would have been like if he had never been born. This film addresses love and the aspirations we all share for purpose and faith, with song and dance interspersed.

The 1964 stop-motion “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” is the TV special that brings us back to our childhood. Directors Larry Roemer and Kizo Nagashima present the tale of an unlikely reindeer who becomes the leader of Santa’s sleigh despite being bullied by his fellow reindeer.

The show features the song “A Holly Jolly Christmas” by Burl Ives and other classic Christmas hits. The film celebrates its 56th year on NBC this year.



The best regifted present is the live-action “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” movie with Jim Carrey.

This adaptation is directed by Ron Howard and based off of Dr. Seuss’ book and animated movie of the same name. The film depicts a grouchy, green creature who despises Christmas and is feared by the joyous “Whos” living below the mountain where he lives.

One day, a young girl finds him in town and makes it her mission to change his attitude towards the holiday season. The star of the movie is Carrey, who brings sentiment, anger and likability to the unlikable Grinch, according to critic Adam Smith, writing for the film magazine Empire.

With its infamous leg lamp and mouth-washing-with-soap scene, the 1983 film “A Christmas Story,” directed by Bob Clark, wins the jolliest movie award.

Set in the 1940s, young boy Ralphie Parker, played by Peter Billingsley, deals with neighborhood bullies and a nagging mother, all while trying to convince his parents to buy him a dangerous Christmas present which, as his parents had warned, ends up causing disaster.

James Berardinelli, writing for the movie review website Reelviews, said that “A Christmas Story” is the perfect movie for people who love nostalgia in films. This annual fan favorite earned an 89% rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

And now, time to look at the naughty-films that Santa and the rest of us should

pass over this year and maybe every year from now on.

The first on the naughty list is like that awful present from your aunt. You know, the one you pretend to love yet you return it to the store a week later.

The film “Elf” centers around Buddy, a human who was adopted by an elf. Buddy eventually makes his way to New York City to find his biological father. Played by Will Ferrell, the charismatic elf adores Christmas. In New York, he even finds love with Zooey Deschanel, whom he meets while she is portraying an elf at a department store.

The movie received a 64% rating on Metacritic. While it is a movie played during annual holiday movie nights, it tries too hard to be funny. “Elf” is not worth watching.

The big lump of coal in the stocking filled with Christmas movies is “Krampus.”

The 2015 film, directed by Michael Dougherty, stars parents Adam Scott and Toni Collette, who cause their son to lose his Christmas spirit. As a result, the family becomes terrorized by Krampus, a beast from European folklore who is Saint Nicholas’ evil half.

While rated PG-13, the work has several terrorizing moments and is not one to watch with the family on Christmas Eve drinking hot chocolate. People who like holiday horror films, may find it interesting, but for most of us it will dampen our holiday spirits and maybe induce some eerie nightmares.

Now it is time to put yourself in Santa’s shoes and decide which Christmas films deserve to be on the nice list...

and which deserve a big Bah! Humbug!



# Let’s open the door to face the music (no masks required)

The majority of the world has been on airplane mode because we think now of a future that seems unimaginably so very far away. Added to this, we did not know the next time teachers, students, Lysol wipes or toilet paper would be seen again. However, in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, there is one thing that can help a long day feel shorter. Maybe it can even make us feel like a rockstar.

Music. To get our minds off cloud nine, many of us turn to music as a welcome distraction from what is going on in the real world. Listening to music is like opening a door, behind which we find the answers we seek.

Reporter Debra Rosse Wilson wrote for Healthline that music improves our response to anxiety, pain and sorrow, emotions most of us have experienced in 2020. From wistful snaps to rhythmic foot taps, music can bring some of us out of this funk, the loud noise of this pandemic.



“There’s something about the sunshine....” Sterling Knight

During these past months of uncertainty, senior Kayla Ivy chose this song to “see the world in a whole new light” and to think back on brighter times. “It’s a song that just puts a smile on my face,” Ivy said. “It just makes me happy.”

Faith Harper  
junior reporter and photographer



Some of us have tried to block out what was real in the world by shutting doors that would usually be open. Behind those doors was all of the stress, anxiety and fear, so it was easier to shut it all away and not hear the sounds of it all coming through. Reporter Kendra Cherry, writing for Very Well Mind, notes that many of us have experienced a “blank space” during the pandemic that can affect our mental health. Filling that blank is difficult, especially in these times when seeing family and friends is a risk.



“Alexa, play ‘Crazy Train’ by Ozzy Osbourne!”

Principal Kathryn Baal draws from the energy of her five-year-old nephew Ryan, keeping in touch with him through FaceTime. “This is a crazy time and it feels like we are on a crazy train,” Baal said. “Just having fun with Ryan shows that, in spite of all this craziness, you can still find joy.”



“Dreams” by Fleetwood Mac and “Imagine” by John Lennon

Seniors Julia and Lauren Kokaska chose songs reminding them that there is a light at the end of the dark tunnel of 2020. “The lyric ‘Thunder only happens when it’s raining’ makes me think of what we are going through,” Julia said. “‘Above us only sky’ symbolizes my hope for the future,” Lauren said.



“Knock, and it will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7)

Getting that door of good distractions open can help us face the future and what we want to see as we move forward. All the shady and shadowy figures can slowly fall away once we focus on the possibilities of what waits for us on the other side of that closed door of our minds.

“Ask...and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find.” (Matthew 7:7)

For some, it’s hard to distract ourselves intentionally because we try hard not to pay attention to distractions. Reporter Mike Robbins of the Huffington Post writes that we should “get out of our heads” for a little while each day. Listening to music is a healthy distraction that will help us to keep that door open.



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SENTINEL



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Celebrating Christmas during the pandemic

Mariah Carey is once again gracing the airwaves on 93.9 FM, and it is once again time to trim the tree, cook the turkey, break out the eggnog, flip on a holiday movie and prepare to visit your pesky relatives.

However, this is 2020, the year nothing has gone according to plan.

COVID-19 has invaded our homes for the holidays. The world continues to be rocked by the pandemic, with everyone from teachers to mall Santas having to wear masks and practice social distancing in accordance with local regulations and Federal guidelines.

Due to recent stay-at-home advisories from Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the prospect of holidays without large, in-person gatherings seems as sorrowful as Elvis Presley's cover of "Blue Christmas."

Yet Christmas is not canceled.

If we follow the safety guidelines, use technology creatively and remember the importance of family and traditions, these holidays can remain the most wonderful time of year, in spite of the pandemic.

According to recent national news broadcasts, the American COVID-19 case counts are over 150,000 every day. It is imperative that all Americans follow the Center For Disease Control's (CDC) guidelines for limiting the spread of COVID-19.

The CDC advises against any gatherings that include anyone but one's immediate family and urges families who do gather to wear masks and practice social distancing. The CDC also urges high-risk civilians and the elderly to stay home for the holidays. While these recommendations may dampen the celebrations, these precautions will save lives this holiday season.

While the prospect of no large gatherings seems to ruin the holidays, the marvels of modern technology enable us to celebrate together remotely.

Online services such as Zoom, Skype and FaceTime offer safe alternatives to in-person gatherings. Christmas Mass is even available online this year, with streamed Masses available on the Archdiocese of Chicago website in English, Spanish and Polish.

Websites like Google's Santa Tracker can offer children a way to keep their holiday spirit alive as they follow him from the safety of their own home.

The wonder of the holiday season can prevail if we remember the traditions that made them great in the first place.

A Nov. 4 article in The Villanovan, the newspaper at Villanova University, urges us to remember that focusing on the true meaning of the holidays will be key to enjoying them this season.

Enjoying the holidays inside with the people we live with will be a great way to make the holiday season worthwhile. Some safe traditional activities include decorating a Christmas tree as a family, watching holiday movies, playing board and video games as a family and sharing holiday meals together.

Yes, the holiday season will be different this year, but we should rejoice, for all is not lost.

If we remember traditions, cherish family, use technology and, above all, follow CDC guidelines, the holiday season can be both safe and as memorable as always.



99 days left: how to make it to spring

The bad news is that there are 99 days until the beginning of spring. With COVID-19 continuing to change the world in which we live, it will be very challenging to make it through the rest of this winter season.

The good news is that there are many things people can do to get through these next 99 days.

One thing that can help get people through this winter is music. According to medical experts writing for Northwesternmedicine.org, music can help a person cope with COVID-19. Listening to music or singing relieves anxiety and stress. During the pandemic, people need to try to keep their stress levels down because constant stress and anxiety puts a strain on the immune system. So this winter presents a time like no other for people to turn to music to stay healthy.

Another way to get past the winter season is by spending time with friends and family, although this must be done virtually. Whether it is on a Zoom call, Skype or FaceTime, "seeing" people will

help us stay connected. The Mayo Clinic reports that regularly scheduling a time to talk with friends and family gives us something to look forward to. It also allows us to provide emotional and mental support for one another.

Prayer and meditation will also help to get people through this difficult time.

With everything that has happened this year in our world, prayer and meditation are calming activities that people can always utilize.

During times of crisis, praying, meditating or doing both will help people to remain more peaceful. The Catholic Health Association website reports that taking time out of the day to pray or meditate will also help people maintain the hope that the arrival of spring will also signal the arrival of a more normal way of life for us.

Exercising regularly is yet another way that people can feel better during these winter months.

While quarantining this year, many people have gained weight. According to a survey conducted by the weight loss

program Nutrisystem, 76% of respondents gained weight between mid-March and July 2020. Exercise raises endorphins, the "feel good" hormone. According to helpguide.org, even 20-30 minutes of exercise a day will have a significantly positive impact on thoughts and feelings. Exercise helps ease anxiety, stress and depression.

At some point, the gyms and fitness centers may close again, but exercising at home is always an option. Businesswire.com reports that fitness equipment sales grew by 170% since the pandemic reached the United States. According to a report on CNN.com, the Peloton company, for example, has also seen a 172% increase in exercise bicycle sales since the pandemic began.

Putting together a plan for coping will certainly make the winter season more bearable and maybe even make it go by a little faster. Now is the time for each of us to make that plan. With luck, a vaccine will be available by spring, if not sooner, and then we can really start to look forward to getting back to life as we knew it.



# Toward 2021 with hope and cautious optimism

Hannah Finnegan  
senior columnist

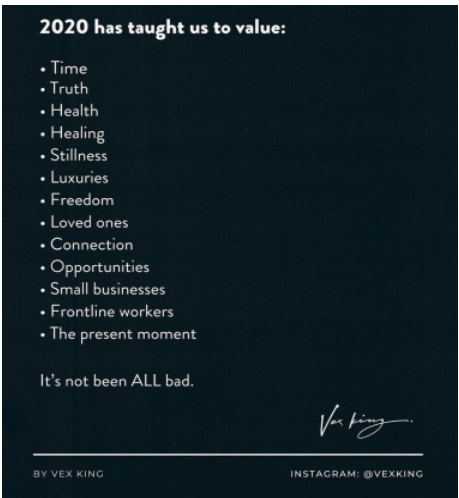
COVID-19 was not an expected part of 2020. As this historic year comes to a close, we are looking forward to what 2021 will bring.

There are many things that people have been missing since the beginning of the lockdown, such as concerts, sporting events and just being able to simply hug friends and family members.

Resuming these activities may not be as far away as some may think, and there is reason to hope for a better world in 2021.

In mid-November, major pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna announced that their COVID-19 vaccines proved 95% effective against the virus in clinical trials.

As the vaccines become available, this will help bring about a return to the many social activities that we have missed out on, like having big gatherings, dining out in crowded restaurants and just hanging out with larger groups of people.



Will Leitch, a sports writer for the *Intelligencer*, said that the idea of fans filling the stands at sporting events next year is likely, although outdoor football and baseball stadiums are more likely to open to more fans first.

Traditional concerts at venues both large and small may also return, although there is no guarantee. According to *Billboard*.com writer Dave Brooks, Ticketmaster will

likely require evidence of vaccination after purchasing a ticket, or will accept proof of a negative COVID-19 test about 24 to 72 hours before the concert. Until that happens, outdoor venues are likely to host events first, and venue owners are testing ways to have socially-distanced concerts.

Many seniors wonder what the start of their college experience will look like in the fall of 2021. Jacob May, writing for Michigan State University’s *The State News*, reports that many universities will likely return to normal, or close to normal, just in time for the arrival of this year’s high school seniors.

With cautious optimism, people should keep their heads held high as we enter the new year, because activities that were canceled this year have the potential to return in 2021. The new normal may look and feel different from the old normal, but hopefully we will get the chance to go to a baseball park and cheer in the stands for our favorite team. Hopefully we will be able to watch our favorite music artists perform in person again.

# Working the polls on Election Day

Grace Molenhouse  
senior columnist

On Nov. 3, over 140 million Americans voted for the next President of the United States of America. Like most high schoolers, I was not old enough to vote in this election. However, I still wanted to do my part as an American, so when I saw a Tweet calling for citizens to work the polls this year, I was instantly interested. And I was old enough for the job.

The post stated that there was a tremendous lack of poll workers for this election and urged people to sign up to ensure the voting process goes smoothly, safely, fairly and efficiently. It stated that poll workers keep American democracy alive and running and is a great opportunity for high school students to get experience and make a difference.

I completed a lengthy training session in which I watched videos and studied diagrams of the machines used to check voters in and scan the ballots. I read articles explaining voter intimidation and how to be an effective poll watcher. After finishing the training session, I still felt confused and nervous about working.

Overall, the job seemed very difficult, especially because I had to arrive to the polling place at 5 a.m. and work until 9 p.m. But it proved to be equally rewarding. When I excitedly told my mom my intention to work on Election Day, she looked at me like I was crazy. She could not understand why I would want to help people vote if I could not vote myself, but that was exactly why. I wanted to be part of the election in any way possible.

Election Day finally arrived, and during my 4:45 a.m. drive I was feeling a mixture of exhaustion, excitement and nervousness, but as soon as voters began walking in, excitement took over. The line of voters extended into the parking lot when we opened, and the hour between 6 and 7 a.m. was definitely the busiest and craziest hour of the day, but I somehow managed to stay calm and collected throughout all the chaos.

The day went by pretty quickly and, due to the other election officials I worked with, I had fun. I worked with four adults and all of them respected and listened to me, even though I am so much younger than they are. We learned about each other’s lives and spent most of the 16-hour day telling stories. They were very interested in why I chose to work the election, and agreed that the job was very important and rewarding.

Difficulties also arose, mainly as a result of the machines disconnecting from the internet or running out of battery, and I was faced with many impatient, frustrated voters. Thankfully I work in customer service and handled these situations calmly, but it was definitely more stressful than I was used to. Most voters were very kind and grateful, which made up for the difficult ones.

Working on Election Day was a fulfilling experience that taught me more about the government and how important every single voice is. It gives teenagers a great way to serve and protect our democracy and be a part of the voting process, especially for those who are not old enough to vote.

For more information about volunteering on upcoming election days, visit [www.cookcountyclerk.com](http://www.cookcountyclerk.com) or, if you live in the city, [www.chicagoelections.gov](http://www.chicagoelections.gov).

## photo opinion

compiled by Hannah Finnegan and P.J. Cunningham

### How will you spend your holidays and vacation during this pandemic year?



Nicholas Walker  
freshman

My family and I will just stay home and cook. I’m looking forward to sleeping in and getting any homework I might have finished. I was also thinking of playing some video games remotely with friends.



Ella Ingram  
sophomore

For this holiday season I plan on spending more time with my family. Usually my mother would make a big dinner for the family and this is a tradition that we will continue this year.



Sam Colon  
junior

I will be spending the holidays at home with my family. Usually we go to Florida for Christmas. Unfortunately, we are not able to go this year. It will be just be my parents, my sister and my grandmother.



Molly Patula  
senior

My extended family, all 50 of us, usually get together for Christmas, but obviously that is dangerous during the pandemic. Hopefully we will be able to come up with a fun alternative.

# Things to think about regarding college

Jordan Mighty  
junior columnist

To go.  
Or not to go.  
Or-where to go.

That is the question on the minds of most high school students when they think about going to college.

Just thinking about student loans, test anxiety and the stress of getting in leaves some students wondering if going to college is even worth it?

Fortunately, there is no need to worry because there is something for everyone. Options include going to community college, taking a gap year, applying to the military or enrolling in a career college.

Community college is beneficial to a lot of people as it is more inexpensive. Branka Vuleta, writing on the *What to Become* online blog, notes that many states now offer free tuition to those who choose to go to community college. For those who do not get into the school of their dreams they will

be in luck if they choose this route. Studies show that many students have a higher chance of getting accepted as a transfer student from a community college than as a fall admit right out of high school.

Many other high school graduates have made the decision to take gap years. After spending 12 years in the education system, it is reasonable to want to take a break from school and figure out who we are as individuals.

College counselor Nicole Peterson says that students who take a gap year before starting college gives them the opportunity to find out more about themselves and what they want to accomplish in life. They might want the chance to have a little bit of time to themselves and do therapeutic things like traveling, doing an internship or working at various jobs to get some “real world experience.”

Another option is to take the patriotic route and join the military. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and National Guard are always looking for recruits.

After one finishes serving, veterans can get up to 100% of tuition off for the college of their choice, according to Today’s Military website. Meanwhile, recruits travel to new places and learn a variety of highly specialized skills, such as combat training.

Career college is a way to get it all over with. These colleges teach strictly the field a person would want to go into and are cheaper. So, no need to worry about taking extra courses that do not directly relate to a person’s chosen major. The Imagine American foundation website says that many career colleges are flexible with their starting dates, are very hands-on, and allow students to complete courses early if they choose to do so.

The choice of what to do after graduating high school is up to the individual. However, those thinking beyond high school should talk to their parents, counselor, or any other mentors they have about what is the best route to take.

The thing to remember is that with all problems, there are solutions.



# Marist Brothers remain dedicated to educational mission

Isabella Schreck  
senior reporter

Becoming a Marist Brother is a life-long commitment. The men make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as they strive to “make Jesus Christ known and loved” in the world, specifically through the education of youth in their communities.

“Marist Brothers are the living spirit of our founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat,” Marist Brothers Provincial Superior Br. Pat McNamara said. “I hope that the Brothers inspire their colleagues to become the daily bread of faith, hope, and love among our students and families and share our spirit for Mary with the entire school family.”

The Brothers live together in community, but each of their faith journeys is unique. Religion teacher Br. Luis Ramos’ first step in following his vocational calling was joining the Catholic Church.

“My parents are nondenominational Christians, but they sent me to Catholic school because they wanted me to attend a faith-based institution,” Br. Luis said. “I learned about the Marist Brothers in my junior year of high school at Mount Saint Michael Academy in the Bronx, and I found their way of life very interesting. As my curiosity in the brotherhood grew, in college I decided to move forward and receive the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation.”

Brothers first enter the postulancy and novitiate stages of initial formation, where they begin their religious studies. Then, the men join a community and make temporary vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, which they annually renew during a five-to-seven year probationary period. At the end, they profess their final commitments.

Religion teacher Br. Sam Amos made these life-long vows in October.

“These past five years I was living the full life of a brother, but now I am committed to continuing my journey with Christ for the rest of my life,” Br. Sam said. “I feel peace around that.”

Br. Rich Grenier joined the Marist Brothers after graduating from Merrimack College in 1965. After three years of working at a school in Poughkeepsie, New York, he was transferred to Chicago where he has coached, taught and continues to inspire.

“It’s been an interesting 52 years here,” Br. Rich said. “I’ve done every job there is, except for being principal of course, and it has been very exciting. It’s been a great experience and hopefully I can keep being productive for years to come.”

The Brothers’ focus is on centering their communities in Christ. They work to show devotion to the schools they work in through teaching, counseling and spreading the Word of God.

Br. Sam and Br. Luis, who is in his second temporary year as a Marist Brother, also lead catechism and youth programs at their parish St. Benedict in Blue Island.

“My main ministry is teaching and leading different retreats throughout the year, some in the area at my church and some at our center in Esopus, New York,” Br. Luis said. “We make a commitment to be completely available to the people we work with.”

Former school president Br. Hank Hammer, who currently serves as the standardized testing coordinator, lives in the Leavitt Street community in Beverly, which was established in 1980 after the Brothers transitioned from monasteries. Br. Sam, Br. Luis and former school president Br. Rick Carey also belong to the community and are part of the seven remaining Marist Brothers in Chicago today.

Br. Hank is also involved in his parish in Beverly and reflected on the relationships he has built during his time as school president, principal, academic dean and an English teacher.

“I am part of the music ministry at St. Barnabas because it is one of my passions,” Br. Hank said. “It gives me a whole circle of friends, in addition to my colleagues at work, who have helped me understand what it means to be a Brother.”



photo by Isabella Schreck

Brothers Sam, Rich, Hank, Luis and Rick (L to R), each of whom work at school to carry out the Marist mission of making Jesus known and loved, gather in the chapel on Dec. 2. The mission began in 1963 with 10 Brothers working and teaching in the school.

It was this opportunity for connection that interested Br. Sam in religious life.

“In my parish in Michigan, there was a convent of nuns and they just seemed really happy,” Br. Sam said. “It was that simple. I liked the community aspect and being able to be part of a bigger mission.”

Planned giving coordinator Br. Rick, a member of the Class of 1976, said his alma mater inspired him to join religious life, which eventually gave him the opportunity to travel the world to Marist Brothers high schools and spread a message of love and acceptance to students.

“In high school, I worked during the summers doing work around the property, and it was during that time that I met a lot of influential Brothers,” Br. Rick said. “The positive dynamic of the Marist Brothers created comfort for me and inspired me to create change.”

A prominent brother in Chicago was Br. Brendan Brennan, who died on Oct. 19 after 64 years as a Brother.

Br. Brendan taught religion, ran Kairos retreats and worked in campus ministry for 24 years.

“Brendan was able to show us how to adapt as our world and Church changed from when he joined the Brothers in the 1950s,” Br. Hank said. “Brendan taught us and his students that you must have faith that God is in charge, that He is leading us towards him.”

Together, the Brothers continue to encourage students to follow their passions and look for God’s guidance in their lives.

“I am convinced that being a Brother is what God wanted me to do,” Br. Rich said. “However, it’s not for everybody. I hope that the Holy Spirit will open people’s eyes and guide them to their own niche in life, whatever that may be.”

Interested in a white collar job?



Ask Brothers Hank, Rich, Rick, Sam, and Luis about theirs.  
*Real brothers. Real stories. A real difference.*

To explore vocations or to learn more about the Marist Brothers check out [maristbr.com/calledtobeabrother](http://maristbr.com/calledtobeabrother)



Stay healthy!



Phillips finishes strong at statewide meet

Kaylee Frederking  
junior reporter

The cross country season ended with sectionals on Oct. 31 this year, as the IHSA did not hold a state final meet. Varsity junior runner Jake Phillips ended his season a week later and came in 17th place at the 2020 Shazam XC Championship at Three Sister Park in Chilicothe, IL on Nov. 7. This season, he took 4th place at sectionals, which qualified him for the championship meet. Last year, he came in 42nd at sectionals. “Overall, I am really happy with my running season,” Phillips said. “I improved tremendously from sophomore to junior year and I am really proud of that.” In addition, he led the team to six victories earlier in the season, while focusing on good relationships with his teammates in spite of the pandemic and the changes to the season schedule. “The team dynamic has still been there,” Phillips said. “Even though it is different this year in terms of social distancing, we still found ways to bond like in years past.”

Practicing was also a little different this season. “Although we were outdoors most of the time, we still had to wear masks whenever we were not running,” Phillips said. “And [we] socially distanced at practices, especially during stretching. I would prepare myself mentally by going into each race thinking of a positive outcome,” Phillips said. “This season it was especially important that we keep our minds in a good state.” Like any fall athlete whose season was not postponed, Phillips was very glad to be able to compete. “Going into this school year with the pandemic, my prediction was that we were not going to have a season at all due to the pandemic,” Phillips said. “I am just glad that I was wrong and that our season actually happened.” While he is happy with the outcome of this unusual season, Phillips is looking forward to next fall, which will be his fourth and final season for the RedHawks. “I will work on weight training, and hopefully we will have a normal season and face more teams next year,” Phillips said.



photo by Victor Bautista

Varsity cross country runner junior Jake Phillips rounds a bend during the Oct. 31 IHSA sectional meet hosted by Lincoln Park High School. Phillips finished fourth at sectionals after taking third place at regionals a week earlier. He finished his season coming in 17th place at the statewide Shazam Championship on Nov. 7.



photo by Patrick Quinn

Junior Emma Karczewski comes up behind her opponent from Jones in the IHSA sectional meet at Lincoln Park on Oct. 31. Karczewski’s time of 20:18 was the fastest finish of the three RedHawks who competed at sectionals.

Girls’ cross country team enjoys hosting regionals

Delaney Powers  
junior reporter

The girls’ varsity cross country team finished sixth in sectionals at home after ending the season 2-2. After placing second in the ESCC conference championships on Oct. 17 at Arlington Park, the RedHawks hosted regionals on Oct. 24. Although the team did not qualify, senior Lilly Roche, junior Nora McClorey and junior Emma Karczewski advanced to sectionals at Lincoln Park on Saturday, Oct. 31. “I thought Nora, Emma and Lilly responded to every obstacle presented,” Coach Patrick Quinn said. “At regionals, the illness of our top runner forced the other runners to move up one spot. In spite of this, the team was only three points from qualifying [for sectionals]. Seniors Roche and Sarah Hughes ran their best times of the year.”

McClorey and her teammates were glad to have “home field advantage” at regionals. “Having regionals at Marist was an awesome experience,” McClorey said. “This was the first year we had any races at Marist and we’ve all become really fond of the course, so we were all confident which made it a fun experience. Roche reflected on the end of her last season as a RedHawk. “Making it to sectionals meant a lot,” Roche said. “It felt great to represent my team especially since the team didn’t qualify. I finished my senior year season with the best and most supportive team.” Coach Quinn is grateful that there was a season this year. “This COVID-19 season was different, but we had a season,” Quinn said. “I think everyone looked forward to gathering after school for practice and really began to appreciate their teammates more than ever.”

Wrestling season postponed to April

Haley Fisher  
senior reporter

The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) voted on Oct. 28 to move the wrestling season from Nov. 16-Feb. 19 to April 19-June 26, classifying the sport as a high-risk for participants to get the COVID-19 virus. In spite of the delay, head coach Brendan Heffernan remains optimistic about this season. “We don’t have a lot of information on the protocols yet, but we are glad to have a season at all,” Heffernan said. “Most of the states surrounding [Illinois] are already wrestling. We are hoping to learn from their mistakes before our season begins and adjust our season based on what happened with those programs.” Instead of having regular contact practices, the junior varsity and varsity wrestlers come together three days a week for strength and conditioning classes. Senior Mateen Taylor is looking forward to his last season, no matter what it looks like.

“When wrestling got pushed back it was definitely a tough pill to swallow,” Taylor said. “I hope that [the season] doesn’t get cancelled because this is my last ride and I want to go out with a bang.” Senior Bobby Gaylord agrees. “There is nothing more I want to do than get on the mats with my brothers and train for a state championship,” Gaylord said. “This year brings a huge opportunity because our team looks very solid. We are training hard to get where we need to be by April and are ready for whatever opportunities are coming. We look at each day as a chance to work together and prepare for the unknown.” The team is aware that the new start date is tentative, depending on the state of the virus come April. Meanwhile, they will keep counting down the days and working hard to prepare to meet their opponents on the mats this spring. “We have five previous state qualifiers on the team this year,” Heffernan said. “If we get a season, this will be a strong and solid team. They have been working really hard to prepare for spring and summer.”



photo by Haley Fisher

RedHawk wrestler senior Bobby Gaylord is spotted by sophomore Peter Marinopoulos while freshman Michael Maloney lifts standing up in the RedHawk weight room on Nov. 12. The team is strength conditioning three times a week, but unable to hold regular practices due to the IHSA’s postponing the season, now tentatively scheduled to run April 19-June 26.