

THE CAULDRON

CLEVELAND CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

2020-2021



THE COVID EDITION





As I sit here and write this introduction to our Cauldron Magazine, I can't help but think about our students and faculty. This year has definitely been one for the history books and it will be, nonetheless. Our students and this great staff truly missed out on a lot of experiences due to Covid and the sad part of it all, is that ALL of us missed the students. Yes, they were online, some in person, yet there was a piece missing from the puzzle here at Cleveland Central Catholic. I would have never thought that I would be teaching from a computer screen, knowing that there was a "misconnect" between the students and teacher. One really misses out on interaction, social discussions, the laughter, the foolishness, the learning that goes on inside a classroom where students, teachers and the entire building comes alive with energy and those "a-ha" moments that make the experience of teaching and learning worth so much. The one thing that never changes though, is our students' ability to create, inspire and write. This collection of poems, stories and essays paint a picture of their side of the story through this pandemic. These are selections that paint a picture of a world that needs change, that needs prayer, love and their thoughts are the hope of a new future; their future, OUR FUTURE.

As you read any of the selections within this edition of The Cauldron, you will be reminded that hope is not lost, prayer is never lost and God is the center of their world. Enjoy this "Covid" edition of The Cauldron Magazine where the words not only inspire, but they tell the stories of change, hope and as always, educating those that want to listen..... Open up your ears and eyes to our future, it sure looks promising.

Sincerely,

MR. ROCK

THE POETRY



THOUGHTS AND IDEAS FROM OUR FUTURE.....

Artistine Beavers

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

The End

We are coming to the final days,
we sit back and continue to fantasize about the dark days.
It's coming to an end, we have to say our last goodbyes,
it won't even feel like it,
we moved on so soon.

This year was a year to remember,
hard to sympathize because we hardly have memories,
to even say this was our last goodbyes.

But we make the most of them,
this will be a story to tell,
but like I said, "this is The End."

Johnny Black

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Boring Year

This year has been the most boring year out of all my 4 years of being in high school.

I have been really doing nothing, just staying inside and playing games. The only thing that made this year fun was sports, the only thing that made me feel like this school year was not boring. Not being in school all of the time and being at home most of the time was pretty boring for a school year. The things that made this year fun were my girlfriend and sports. Wrestling really made me happy this year; making it to states and places I knew I would make, such as to Columbus for the Wrestling State Tournament, but never in 100 years I thought I would place. If I went back in time and told my past self this, he would never believe me. I started to watch more movies because I was stuck in the house so much. I've been watching all the DC movies, from the cartoons, to live action movies, but this has been my best year academically, focused on school work and focused on getting into a good college.

Rheana Bolden

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

The Pandemic

Pandemic, pandemic, pandemic,

how will I ever survive in a pandemic?

How will I ever get through ?

What do I do?

Hmm, should I sell something?

What could I sell ?

A bell , a rail , or maybe a storytale .

Hmm what about lashes ?

Ugh, what about lashes ? Maybe I should sell glasses,

or maybe bus passes ?

Or maybe..... I will figure this out.

PANDEMIC, PANDEMIC, PANDEMIC!

Ariana Cochran

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _ 1st ____)

21 April 2021

Normal

Students stay home and do online school,
wishing Covid would move along,
because doing school at home alone,
feels like everything won't go back to normal,
Some people prayed,
some people cried,
some people exercised,
some people healed.
Some people couldn't find the time to feel pandemic vibes,
they just wanted it to be over,
they just wanted to go back to their ordinary lives.

Treshawn Gooch

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

My Pandemic Experience

It was one day in December of 2019, we first discovered an unknown virus that first popped up in Hong Kong China. I was sitting in my room playing video games when I heard the news.

People who had no brain cells thought that the Corona Virus was a myth/fake thing to scare us, we soon realized it wasn't a myth when it first hit the USA for the first time. I'm pretty sure the first case was in California but I'm not certain of it. Covid-19 hasn't affected my life in any way possible except school. I am an introvert, so I like being alone most of the time. If anything, the pandemic bettered my life because it gave me better grades when it came to school. I haven't lost anyone to the pandemic so that's a good thing, but not being able to see the people I like kind of stinks. It's kind of boring that I can't do anything, but to be able to stay away from people I don't know, that makes me happy.

Marcella Hatcher

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period ____)

21 April 2021

Moral Of The Story

I've been through alot throughout these years,
especially dealing with Corona we still have to bare.
I wish this was a dream,
that we can just wake up with a scream,
Covoid is controlling us by the strings,
I want to break free and spread my wings.
Why can't we just rest.....
Without having to stress, I feel like it's for the best.
Our lives dealing with quarantine is very overwhelming,
a Lot of people are dying from this virus, it's condemning.

Jamari Humphrey

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

New America

Killings on top of killings,

When will it stop?

Law enforcements don't learn,

Have us fearing for our life.

Hope in the end we seek change,

after everyone we lost.

Justice for Breyonna Taylor my heart goes out,

New Black America you see lights, you get scared.

Put your hands up young man so U can make it to your bed,

enough is enough, it's all about respect

Innocent lives gone, they “wanna” shut us up with a check.

Ciera Johnson

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

My Senior Year

My senior year was not well,

as I'm coming to the end of my senior year.

This year was a rough year for us seniors,

Covid really messed our senior year up.

As a student, I can't wait till graduation,

I'm going to miss school and the teachers,

especially the ones that believe in me,

When I didn't believe in myself.

Pretty soon, this senior year we end for all of us,

Graduation is a proud moment for our parents, cousins and all.....

Ge'laní Johnson

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _1st____)

21 April 2021

"Seasons of Hurt & Grief"

The agony of it all....

These are the things which has caused pain,
from it I had to gain strength and support,
this pandemic will be the death of me.

Certainly, I have created sorrow & sadness,
which turned myself into great madness,
family and friends come & go,

now it's time to show humans the monster they created.

Bringing Fear and Terror to all who stand,
making sure to bring us down forever.

Aaliyah Monroe

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Closest Enemy

I learned that my closest enemy was me,
I knew it all along, when my mind tells me I don't belong.
I wish it was temporary, but it's not, it's hereditary.
I beat myself up. I make myself fail
No energy to get up, no energy to prevail,
I want to do better, I want to be better.
But when you're stuck at home, it is hard to do so,
most times you don't want to move, you know?
And I'm not talking about a lazy day, like how my grandma says,
I'm talking about all of the stress that builds up in your head.
You're your closest enemy, you fight to win each day,
For what? It's only for other people's approval anyway.
My worst closest enemy is my mind, not many people will get that,
But all in the end, I guess the degree is payback.

La'Toya Reeder

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period __1__)

21 April 2021

2021

Who would've thought this year would suck?

It's like we're in a traffic jam, stuck.

These are the moments we're supposed to take in,

homecoming, senior night, parties, never begin.

Everyone took a loss with this pandemic,

students had to suffer with academics,

Covid hurt so many families, that died,

as we go through these hard times.

We look back on life,

I got my drivers license, I finished "med-cert" school and I helped my mom open up her
business,

And I had the strength to do it all, when my "grand dad's" died from their illnesses.

Other opportunities had opened up for me,

now it's time to graduate and figure out what I'm going to be,

I'll miss my classmates and friends,

I can't believe highschool is finally at its end.

We had our laughs, our cries and fun,

now it's time to say goodbye to the class of 2021.

Zeneyda Rodriguez

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 1 _____)

21 April 2021

The Day I Met Randy!

We began to celebrate a graduation through the movement,
of dancing and celebrating six feet apart on the pavement,
On a hot summer night in the basement,
we played pool, and listened to amazement.
As we laughed and sang, we knew the night will come to an achievement,
by getting to know one another through the Improvement,
I found out that we went to the same school and learned the same unit,
I thought I was doomed when it came to love,
but when I met you that day, I felt like I was up above.
You showed me that not all will judge,
but love you for all of your smudge,
you encouraged me to chase my dreams,
and I do the same for you by all my means.
I loved you since then,
and I'll love you when I'm at the end...

Briana Rosser

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 1

21 April 2021

My **Pandemic Experience**

This year for me has been hell on ice,

it has been a battle I had to fight.

The school year has been rough, the work has been tough,

the family broke apart with drama, had to come together and fix things,

we have had *together* as a family, we have had deaths.

I pray after I graduate for a better rest of my year, with no more tears,

life for me has hit me harder than I thought it would.

Now God has given me a blessing, from up above the heaven gates,

I pray for many and better years, and that everyone receives **JUSTICE**.

Sherelle Thomas

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period ____)

21 April 2021

Am I Really Prepared?

Am I prepared?

I have to move on soon, but I'm still stuck in this cycle that I cannot escape.

The circle continues to go on and on.....

I know it's time to get prepared to go on to another destination, but then again, I ask myself, "am I really prepared?" This is hard for me to admit, but I'm really not ready. This year sucks. I wish I could go in reverse. This year was a curse. I am a little bit confused because what did I do wrong to deserve this? But hey, these are the cards I am dealt and I have to ask myself, "am I really ready to move on."

Patrick Turk

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

History **LIES** and Hate matters!!

The year of 2021 has been bad, but my question is why is there all this hate in this country? Why do we have police officers killing black people? There is something going on that we don't know about. We have historians lying about the history of our world. Not all of my teachers have taught me the real truth, but why lie to us about history? I don't know why we have racism in this country. Why can't we all come together? It seems like we are on the verge of a race war and this doesn't make any sense! The government isn't doing anything about these gun laws, and they are not saying anything. I would love to make a difference in this world, but if I start having people coming together and spreading the truth, I could be the next target that will be under the lens of society. In their eyes, I will be against the system. For example, MLK, Malcolm X, The Black Panther Movement, or even Colin Kaepernick have tried to spread the word for equality and truth, but ended up getting scrutinized by the people in charge. Back in the day, black people wanted to have their own thing, like *Rosewood* and *Black Wall Street*. It seems like that the people in charge have burned those aspirations and dreams to the ground. One day, I hope that we will have the respect for one another that truly rings, "every man is created equal." **THIS IS OUR PANDEMIC.**

Makaila Wright

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _1__)

21 April 2021

The Outbreak

Because I could not involve myself for a Pandemic,
it was kindly involved for me.

I don't like the fact school was shut down ,

We learned to “involve” before we knew how to update.

You can involve, you can update, but can you occur?

The communicable disease that's really airborne, stopped all outside activities,
above all others is the contagion.

Does the contagion make you shiver?

Does it?

I cannot help but stop and look at the rubella vaccine.

Does the vaccine make you shiver?

Does it?

I saw the cunning state of my generation destroyed, with raging through the roof rates.

Where everyone was under a strict order, to love their “neighbor” as themselves.

The children of the pandemic, feel imprisoned and terrified.

I'm learning from this situation that family means a lot and it's really important to always take care of each other,
even though the quarantine has been difficult , it allowed me and probably other students to spend more time studying a specific subject and pick up old hobbies.
Self-quarantine gave me the opportunity to pursue personal growth.

Ronee' Armstrong

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 2)

21 April 2021

Covid Vs. My Senior Year

As we are kept in doors, I begin to think,
why did my senior year change with just a blink?
Being quarantined for over a year and a half,
Took away all of my smiles and laughs.
Senior year is supposed to be the best of them all,
but to me, it just seems like a real deep fall.
Never thought I could complete all of my tasks,
crazy how I have to complete it through gloves and a mask.
Too scared to go outside because I might die,
Had to call my mom just to tell her "bye."

Being 6 feet apart from the ones I love,
I begin to ask the man above,
After all, I've been through, I feel no peace,
Sad to say, my senior year feels incomplete.

Christian M. Brown

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 2)

21 April 2021

Time

Time is like the ringing of the ear,
that sound that just won't stop even in silence.
The killings of many behind this thing called COVID.
Not knowing if you're next or a loved one.
Mentally, Physically, and Emotionally stuck in a box.

Feeling that it's the end of the world,
thinking there might be an apocalypse on the rise.
This pandemic has been full of pain and disappointment,
away from friends and family.
With time, there will be a change.

Emilio Carrion

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 2nd)

21 April 2021

Pandemic Stain

My evil me, you inspire me to write.
How I hate the way you are hiding and talk,
invading my mind day and through the night,
always dreaming about the awful doc.

Let me compare you to an angry arch?
You are more shangri and more terrible.
Cold clouds dull the lawful flowers of March,
and springtime has a huge cerebral.

How do I hate you? Let me count the ways.
I hate your waffle kindness, mask and love.
Thinking of your woeful mask fills my days.
My hate for you is the shrieval rock dove.

Now I must away with a banal heart,
Remember my sad words whilst we're apart.

Luz Geraldino

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period2)

21 April 2021

Beginning of Life

A pandemic is such a big deal,
But who would've ever thought it would be real?
You came and have not left,
how much longer until you rest?
But with your arrival you brought me something great,
something that I can never replace.
A child who I have created,
a child that his arrival is still awaited.
But for you pandemic, I still have hatred,
Appointments are not the same,
events have to be tamed,
You are the only one to blame.
But with this, I still have hope,
that one day you will go away in the smoke.

Paul Grayson

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

A DIFFERENT Pandemic

Whose family is that? I think I know,
its owner is quite angry though.
He was crossed like a dark potato,
I watch his pace. I cry, "hello."
He gives his family a shake,
and screams, "I've made a bad mistake."
The only other sound's the break,
of distant waves and birds awake.
The family is little, terrible and deep,
but he has a promise to keep.
Tormented with nightmares, he never sleeps,
revenge is a promise a man should keep.
He rises from his cursed bed,
with thoughts of violence in his head.
A flash of rage and he sees red,
without a pause, I turn to flead.

Justyn Hall

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Covid-19

I wasn't able to play any sports my senior year of high school!

Covid-19

In person learning seems like a thing from the past!

Covid-19

Traveling seems more like a risk than a vacation!

Covid-19

These are a things Covid-19 has taken away from me,

I know it won't be like this forever,

but I'll never get the chance to have the senior year I've always wanted!

Covid-19!!

Marquintez Jones

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 2)

21 April 2021

Permanently Pandemic'ed?

Our carefully crafted illusion of “unpredictable” security,
destroyed by a simple virus.

We watched as our hard working world,
suddenly, it came to a halt.

Our invisible enemy illuminates out our interdependence,
eerie silence prowls our streets,
enforcing an isolation,
teaching us how much we missed the outside world.

Why....?

Chris Mills

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Go Harder

Who said that the pandemic was bad?

Who can just sit around, make excuses, and drag?

This pandemic taught me plenty of lessons. I worked hard to be creative while protecting my blessings.

Why is covid still in our conversation? Our people are dying from violence and starvation. I used this pandemic as motivation.

I go ten times harder for my people who didn't make it.

The pandemic helped me see life from a different perspective. I didn't complain once so now the world has to respect it.

DeMario Randall

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

The "New" Norm

What has this pandemic been like for me? It has been anything but normal when I look down the street. I see people with masks on and think to myself, "hmm, is this going to be the new "norm?" And if so, for how long? It didn't hit me until I couldn't go to school without wearing a mask and mom asks, "come in" and asks, "do I want to go inside with the mask or stay online?" It was an easy decision to stay online, not used to wearing a mask to school. I want to see my teachers, their faces, my final year, but Covid ruined everything. This is not how I planned it. I wanted this year to be my best, but instead, I'm spending it looking at a computer trying not to get frustrated at the world because it's not their fault. Always late to class, internet connection is slow. If I were in class, in person, this wouldn't happen to me. "Bro," it has built up anger deep inside but from the eyes of the world they seem like everything is fine. I have to get used to it because it's the new "norm" but no one or nothing is stopping me from getting that diploma.

Shelton Richardson

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _2____)

21 April 2021

Experience

This school year was good and bad,
the virus had everyone mixed up,
I did not step inside the school much, that made me sad.
But at the same time my grades lifted up,
Covid became dangerous and risky,
learning comes in many different ways,
some would say this virus is fishy.
But the amount I have learned in this time would have you amazed,
I'm grateful for the times I had this year that kept me smiling,
for the times I missed out on I'm sad, it was just bad timing.

Nathaniel Rush

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 2)

21 April 2021

Life During this Pandemic

Life has been so hard during this pandemic, especially that I didn't have stuff to do; no friends or family that I could see. Myself and a few other people I know had Covid 19 and I didn't like it at all because I was lonely and couldn't leave the house for nothing. I think the first few days were the worst because I had three symptoms and they were eating me alive. For instance, I didn't know what to do and I couldn't leave the room. My brothers and sister were laughing at me because before the pandemic, I always wanted to leave the house and hang with friends and family and "hoop" and go to basketball workouts but I couldn't because if I would have left, they said I might as well find somewhere to live because they weren't taking the risk of catching it. So, when the pandemic got here or whatever my dukes passed away and my "aunty" wanted me to live with her and "knowing" me, I wanted to hoop and spend time with friends and family. I left and stayed with her and I caught it, but it was fine and thank God that I was okay and didn't have serious health issues that came with it.

Jeremiah Vann

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

The Life

My life, my life, it has been hard with all of the lives and crime I'm scarred,
from love to hate, to friends whose fake, I stayed the same and prayed that it would change.
In my head, like is it real? I lost my friend to the police, killed.
Back to back, like playing a tape, there's another gone by fate, I hate.
I love my girl, I love my kid, can't wait to see her growing big.
With all of the pain and things I felt, I never could go and ask for help,
but yet I still get pressured, "why?" Because I am a male, that's why.
As life just keeps on going by, I always hope and pray for time.
As growing up, I ask "how did I grow up fast?" Not like a kid, with this pandemic, it showed
me things I wish I never ever saw, but as you know, the time will go.
I will stand up, I will stay strong.

Kayla Wright

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period __2__)

21 April 2021

I Can't Think

I've been out of school for so long,

the lessons aren't the same,

I can't focus,

I've been locked up in my house,

looking at a blank screen.

Trying to focus on the lesson.

switching from class to class,

I'm just wondering how long will this last?

Oh what a Senior Year,

sadly, it has to end like this.

Kiemescha Austin

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 5b/6)

21 April 2021

My Life During the Pandemic

It happened so fast starting around this time last year,
almost like we were being held hostage,
not seeing your family for almost a year is just terrible,
this has been the worst year of my life.

Not being able to see family and friends,
staying in the house having a curfew,
having to wear these face masks, but what would they really do?
Having all these restrictions, will it ever go away?

As the year had gone by, it feels like I am back to my normal self,
going out with my friends, family and boyfriend,
it feels as if Covid never existed,
one day, I hope the world goes back to normal because I hate these face masks.

Latianna Ayers

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Feeling Free or Incarceration

Who knew that this pandemic would change my life ?

Who knew that this pandemic wouldn't do us right ?

I'm locked in my house with nothing but time,

feeling incarcerated but never did no real time.

Watching time as it passes me and mine right by,

stressing about when the next time I can step outside.

I even have to do school online,

Would have never imagined taking my classes through a computer screen,

not the best senior year, but I'll try to make the best of my senior year,

ready to walk across that stage, wish me the best of luck.

Armani Conner

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _5/5B___)

21 April 2021

Was This Really My Senior Year?

I thought my senior year would be fun and exciting,

filled with funny, embarrassing memories to share.

Instead, we are learning on a computer and people are dying,

Is this really my senior year ??

I should be in a classroom with friends,

instead I'm in my bed, waiting for the Zoom meet to end.

I should be able to go to prom and stand next to someone,

instead, I have to go to prom and stand 6 feet from everyone.

Is this really my senior year??????

Wow, this is really my senior year....

Josephine Croom

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period __5__)

21 April 2021

WHAT IS THIS?

Dreading, waking up in the morning for school. I hate this. I used to think it was cool. Having to constantly open a computer screen to learn. The OLD education and way of learning, I frequently yearn. Teachers and parents don't understand our pain. Doing all of this work constantly... but what do we gain? Wearing these masks constantly makes my face break out. I hate it, I hate it... makes me want to shout. "DO we want to finish?" Ponders in my mind full of doubt. This horrible new way of living makes me want to drop out. How much more can I take? When will this be over. WHAT IS THIS?

Ajurai Evans

Mr. Rock

English 12 period 5

21 April 2021

Pandemic Poem

New ways to communicate,

some have to self-isolate,
although I've been doing this,
it feels unfair to be so desolate.

It is easy to focus on all that is bad,
the worry, loneliness and what we could have had.

But to realize in the midst of all this stress,
the blessings are plentiful, and I am so glad.

Soon to be a "grad,"

I wait as case numbers rise everyday,

will it ever go away?

I hope and pray that it will and I can say,

I am a proud Graduate of CCC!

Braylin Graham

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 5*)

21 April 2021

An Athletes Pandemic

2020, the beginning of a bad year,

one soon to be filled with fear.

Online classes, online school,
the virus that took everything away, so cruel.
No football games, no track meets,
vacant arenas with no one in the seats.
Social distancing, being quarantined,
Is this the new normal? Where is the vaccine?
Feeling empty and all alone,
Not knowing what's next, in a completely different zone.

Armand Hodges

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

What's Next?

What's next? We will truly never know and that is what I am scared of.

What Will I do? Will I even make it to the day that I am able to experience love?

Will I even remember anything from the past years? Will I remember how to do that equation?

Will I remember the definition of dictation?

I've realized that a lot of people I thought were my friends were just meant for school,

I've lost so many people even if they didn't pass away but I still smile and act cool.

I wonder how I would have done if we had final exams?
After this year if we had one, I wouldn't be able to even move my hands.
But I can't give up yet because we never know what is going to happen next,
I also can't give up because of what my family and everyone else expects.

Kenneth McElrath III

Mr. Rock

English 12 period 3

21 April 2021

Pandemic

School can be fun and boring but never taken for granted,
A sickness came out of nowhere shutting things down, who planned this?
Now I'm quarantining alone, alone at home.

Not knowing what to do; school work or sleep the day away?
Wishing day by day that Covid just would hurry and go away.
Lost friends and my job due to time spent away,
but I learned that things will be fine if I'm patient.
Covid is almost over, how much more waiting?
I've made money in the pandemic, more than I should,

Checking in with my family, making sure everyone is good.

Danny Mitchell

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period ___5th___)

21 April 2021

Love of my Life

During this pandemic, I went through ups and downs multiple times. I wanted to give up on multiple occasions. I've found my worth of why I'm still here in the world. Going to sleep every night, not having no one to talk to was getting out of hand. I'm not really an outgoing person so when I'm not at school, I'm not talking to anyone besides my family until I met the love of my life.

When I met her, I didn't think we were going to last, but I think that's how it always goes right? Then once I started to figure out more about her I decided that she was the one I wanted to be with. Day in and day out, talking to her makes my 24 hour day feel like 24 minutes. I don't think I can stop talking to her. You never know a person can change your whole life around with just one conversation.....

Ma-Kyriah Murray

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 5)

21 April 2021

2021 Year

As I tell y'all about my last year of high school, I get sad and mad.

We went through four years of high school for it to not be normal our last year, prom, not normal, graduation, not going to be the same.

We are not going to be able to stand close to each other without a mask, students or teachers didn't get to know each other.

Seniors didn't get to walk the halls with their friends for the last time, students didn't get to learn how they were supposed to truly learn.

Teachers didn't help like they were supposed to, just a lot of work thrown at us.

This school year is about to end, sadly,

I hope next year will have a better senior year.

Trina Wesley

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

It's Been Rough

The past 2 years we can all say the same thing and agree on, “It's been rough.”

Trying to adjust to a new way of life,

when will things go back to normal?

When were things ever normal?

Families were never normal, mental health was never normal, the social media was never normal, the list can go on and the list can also go on on how many things that were “normal.”

It's the same as saying, “everything isn't the same behind closed doors.”

It took so many of us to stand together and use our voice together to acknowledge so many problems in our society today.

The past 2 years...

We can all say the same thing and agree on.... This is the not so “new normal.”

Rafael Dejesus

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 6-6b)

21 April 2021

The Struggle Through the Pandemic.

The pandemic has been going on for too long now,

I did not know that it would come to this.

I thought it would be over after a month.

I can't go out without a mask

and if I do I will get bashed.

Getting through school was the worst, I don't know why but I put everything else first.

I was failing badly, but when we came back to school everyday I knew I made my teachers glad.

I have to worry about getting sick everyday, as well as getting people sick myself.

The virus is really deadly and we need to be careful

Once it goes away, it will be a miracle.

Joseph Fuentes

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

The poem about this school:

Covid in Slavic Village is not fun,

not having fun is not living life to the fullest,

you live once so do what you got to do in life,

Covid never scared anyone in the village, people did what they wanted.

During school is the best thing,
online school is the best in the whole world to do,
online during Covid is that you can do what you want,
the best thing I can do in my life.

I don't know what to put next, so I'm going to put random things on paper, kind of like Covid...

The End

Chloe Henry

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 6)

21 April 2021

An Overcoming Experience

This pandemic has been very hard for me,
I had a difficult time figuring out what I wanted to be.
Meaning, I didn't know where my life was going to go,
being in the house, stuck behind a computer screen, may feel like a snow day,
but when it's constantly happening you can change in a way.
This pandemic has made me think about everything I've been through,
but when you think too much, you can go into this dark place too.
For me, it wasn't healthy, I had to find a way out,

and to be honest, this is very hard for me to talk about!
Once school opened back up, I started going in person,
to get me away from that dark place where I was hurting.
I felt like a new person in school, even if I was the only person in class,
but I'm about to graduate, very happy this school year went by fast!

Joseph M. Rock II

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period ____

21 April 2021

BEHIND THE SCREEN

“Kaitlin?” “Zaria?” “Brishaun?”
I hear my voice ringing within my own ears.
Is anybody truly listening out there?
“That is called a soliloquy, it is when.....”

This year for a teacher has been truly rough,
even for my students, I can tell from their icons I stare at, this has been tough.
Teaching during a PANDEMIC, this certainly is no easy task,
for a teacher that truly loves to teach, I don't even get to know my senior class.

I press on with the lessons, wondering if there is anything that they learned,
I wonder for their future, I think that is my main concern.
I hope they can recover, this year has certainly been a

BUMMER.

I continue to look at an ICON and press on with my class of 2021.....
“Rashon?” “Kayla?” “Luz?”

“Let's get started.....”

Emani Jackson

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 6)

21 April 2021

No Peace

Inside my soul,

not very much to see.

Inside my home,

there's no peace.

We need strength ,

to stop this madness,

in our hearts,

there's a lot of plastic.

When we join together,

it's gonna be "bombastic."

Jason Lopez

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Never going to be the same....

Going outside, now the same roads are empty,

everyone was locked up in their house.

There was no trace of life outside, none at all,

sunny playgrounds and beaches, but now looks bleak.

Not being able to go out with friends to party,

having to wear a mask everytime I go outside.

Life is just different now and got to deal with it,

what I learned is that this Covid had good and bad things,

good thing is, I was able to work on my physical and mental health.

Bad thing is, everything is with friends and family and doing nothing.

Jeudis Montgomery

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Pause

Sitting in an empty room looking at a computer screen,
wondering what to do, the thoughts in my head.

Wanting to reach out to you but a phone call wouldn't do,
trying to figure out what this life is about,
counting down the days until freedom.

One thing keeping me alive is staying inside,
nothing to do but sleep and let my body eat.

Worrying about the ones that are sick,
trying to adapt to new protocols,
positive thoughts, hoping to get through.

Giovanni Murillo

Mr. Rock

English 12 6

21 April 2021

Hope

A man has fallen in deep despair,
walking around searching for the light.
My legs are mobile just as stiff as a chair,
Looking around trying to cause a fight.
Wind blew in my face,
reaching around trying something to find.
Always leaving a trace,
I hope I bring something just in time,
I bring flowers,
Enough to make me cry to cause a shower....

Kayla Owens

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Covid -19

All of us separated by the invisible,
a virus that has caused trauma,
placing everyone in different areas,
because the world is to be at a long pause.
People are trying to find ways to get through,
we smile but fear to venture out,
on lock with nowhere to go,
a hard time but we fear to let it show.
Apart from friends even from family,
finding hope to make it through.

Cornelius Shepherd

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Cross Roads

This pandemic has been very weary ,

I had a hard time figuring out what I wanted to be in life.

What I mean when I say this, is I don't know where my life is going to go,

being in the house everyday , looking at a computer screen is very tiring and draining.

But when it continuously keeps happening, it can change you in a way ,

because you have too much time to think and when you are an overthinker, that can eat a person up. So many thoughts beyond life, it isn't a healthy thing to me, it takes you to a deep dark place,

I felt so alone and I don't normally open up about things like this, so this was kind of difficult for me.

It was so hard for me to work through this pandemic because of all the things that was going on ,

I missed out on so many great opportunities, it was hard, such as jobs, going to school.....

I'm just happy that I'm going to graduate this year!

Emoni Squire

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period __6__)

21 April 2021

Worst School Year Ever

Well, let's start with the end of my junior year with crazy Covid stuff, we were in school the whole year until the end when Covid hit the world, it wasn't that bad because we kind of had an idea of what teachers were doing as far as work, then here comes August, a new school year, which is my senior year.

We were going online, just for one to two days out of the week, the worst thing that could ever happen, I never in a million years would think that I would have to be taught online.

Senior year was supposed to be fun, it was so boring.....

I went through so much this year, I can't wait until it's over.

This school year was the most stressful school year of my life.

Ashlei Hickson

Mr. Rock

English 12 period 6

21 April 2021

End Of An Era

The last few weeks of my senior year seems to be winding down,

I will miss these halls dearly.

Staring at my prom dress waiting for the end,

over these 4 years, I am very grateful for all of my friends,

long awaited by my family.

Now, they get to see me finally walk the stage and close a chapter of my life,

long summer ahead of me with preparation for college,

a new chapter of my life waiting to be read.

The knowledge and experiences that I will take with me,

some of the most valuable things I have learned.

I guess you can say I am prepared for..... the end of an era.

Bree-Etta Byrge

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 8)

21 April 2021

A Year For The Books

This year had its ups and downs,

this year is going to be put in all the history books.

The Violence and utter disarray,

from fires, to riots, “innocents” getting murdered and every one hiding from this virus.

People getting sicker and everywhere you go, looks like a ghost town,

people fighting over basic human rights.

This year, a new man was put in the White House, causing a “ruckus” to sprout,

innocent Men and Women were murdered by the people who were supposed to save lives,

the conspiracy with the vaccines and how this virus came about,

wars are erupting and it seems like there's no way out.

This year could fill a whole history book, every event would be a new chapter that seems to

never end.....

The world needs to change and we need to be the change.

Katie Caceres

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Struggling To Pass

Covid-19 ruined everything,
could barely do anything.
Struggling to pass,
didn't think I was going to pass.
Falling behind in each class,
wanting to get ahead,
senior year became such a dread.
Can't seem to keep up at all,
graduation is so close afterall,
congratulations to all!!

Kaitlin Cooper

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 8)

21 April 2021

Pay No Mind

My mind is being taken over by fear,
when will this be over, it's been over a year!
I'm tired of the pain and I'm tired of these masks,
I know it won't end anytime soon, so I'll just occupy myself with useless tasks.
I'm sick of these walls it's suffocating me,
I feel like I'm alone, but my thoughts won't let me be.
But there's a light that saved me from the darkness,
it made me realize that not all people are heartless.
They made me feel comfort and at peace,
it's almost like the thoughts in my brain have finally ceased.
They have helped me through all the bad nights I had,
they would even stay up with me if I was feeling sad.
I can't thank them enough so I'll just say this,
you saved my life from falling into the abyss.

Jayni Drake

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 8)

21 April 2021

What Change?

Just like that, everything ended,
it was as if everyone from school had been suspended,
but, of course this wasn't the case,
it wasn't like everyone just left school without a trace.
This virus had come,
it made the world's medical technology look like a shame,
the world had been put on pause,
for those that lost their jobs, it was a lost cause.
Some people weren't even able to file for unemployment,
it's almost summer and I have yet to see any enjoyment.
I still feel bad for those that have lost their loved ones,
but remember as long as we're still breathing, this virus hasn't won.
And now people are using a dead man's name to steal,
what's the purpose of this? I don't get the appeal.
Trying to get justice for George Floyd, I get that,
but rioting and looting while using his name as an excuse is just "wack."
These businesses did nothing to you,
You just wanted a chance to act a fool & use his death as your cue.
Don't worry though, your karma will come soon,
so please stay tuned, just like that, everything ended.

Almost 1 Year Later

Vaccines have been made to combat this,
but now a new strand exists, so this vaccine could be a hit or miss.
Now that the man's murderer has been convicted, everyone had a positive reaction,
but now it's more common for this to happen based on one single interaction.

Amarie Dulik

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Changes In The Months

New year, new me in 2020,

for we would not know the things to come,
#24 gone in the first month along with his daughter.
Wildfires spread and things get hectic, 2nd month down,
10 to go.

The diseases of the bats,
Covid is where things changed the most,
masks must be worn above the nose,
temperature no higher than 98 or above,
any symptoms, drowsiness contact.
2 week quarantine and mentality becomes insane.....

Members of ISIS start to break out their cells,
escaping the imprisonment where they are held .
For we are only 4 months in and the 5th is yet to come,
murder hornets become a thing.
Be careful, Covid cases have picked up,
Mexico declared this a state pandemic,

June is here and we are still quarantined, but what
is to stop the movement for "*I Can't Breathe!*"
"Black Lives Matter!!!"
Is what you'll hear through the streets,

Protests worldwide for a man,
by the name of Floyd,
yet another month has passed,
and so are our people.

Trump cares for everything but his people,
for his words still echo *they want to riot, we won't stop shooting*,
he even betrayed his people.

The fires come back and they are nothing like they were before,
“Cali” so sunny and warm torched with fires and scorned to the ground,
Death of *Black Panther* surprised us all.

Now “Wakanda Forever” is what we shout,
9th month rolls around and the debating starts.

Nothing new just two children talking back and forth,
it's been 100 days since the BLM movement has started,
100 days that the police tried to silence,
“Hands up don't shoot!

I Cant Breath!”

Is what people shout and won't stop,
till they are heard.

Halloween a night of fun,

but the rumors of the killer clowns are coming back,
has scared everyone,
Covid still a thing kids have to remember.
Mask up,
6 feet,
Sanitize,
And trick or treat!
November comes around,
Thanksgiving is not the same,
family faces now pasted on a screen,
“Thank you for showing your faces on these screens.”
December is near and nothing is the same, masks most of the year,
New president is here Joe Biden...is everything really okay?

Jalen Green

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Pandemic Proof

COVID 19 is big, but more bigger than it seems.

kids fearing to get sick, throwing away their dreams.
Some dropouts, some incarcerated, some are working,
but there are players out and women are “barking.”
I have to find my way out of the dark,
People look at the virus like a great white shark,
I will never tell a lie or bend the truth,
It’s survival of the fittest.....
Be **PANDEMIC** proof!

Valeri Hernandez

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 8th)

21 April 2021

“Is it over yet?”

“Time flies when you are happy,” they said,
but what about when you are sad?
Time stops and I can’t close my eyes,
I count the weeks, days, and minutes,
I constantly catch myself biting my fingernails,
they are worried, they keep leaving voicemails.
I haven’t talked to my friends in forever,
I just wish all this could be over,

these voices in my head won't leave me,
I am so tired of not being free....

Amado Lazo Jr.

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 8)

21 April 2021

Tough Times

I spend most of my time at home,
and wonder when I can freely roam.

The tough times only make me tougher,
and workout to look a little "buffer."

I spend my time learning,
but my future only feels more concerning,

I always start to feel a little stressed,

but I have an open mind so I invest.

We should never take days off,

"Cause" the hard work always pays off.

Nancy Lopez

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period 8)

21 April 2021

It's For The Best

Its 4 a.m., again there is no rest,
I'm binging a new show tonight,
wondering when I finish what will I do?
Finding a new show that doesn't bore me,
a show that keeps my attention and doesn't make me cringe,
when will I find something to blow my mind?
I search and search for something to give me meaning,
I ask others for options, but they are only as lost as me.
When will this end?
This cycle of never ending boredom and having nothing to do....

Khyyana Moore

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Hush

I am no longer a human being.

I am a shell of my former self, a flicker of the flame that I used to be, a piano held by a thread.

I play in minor keys to please and appease my enemies, who bark and scream and SHOOT.

GOD WHY MUST THEY SHOOT, WHY MUST I FEAR MY LIFE AT EVERY TURN

Hush.

I want so much better, we deserve better. Life keeps us on our toes, distracted by what we want with the mirage of what we need. Keeping us running like hamsters on a wheel.

“I must keep moving, I must keep fighting, I have to go, I can’t stay here, I CAN’T STAY HERE, I HAVE TO GO, LEAVE ME ALONE PLEASE, I’M DYING.” But you can’t go, you must stay. They say.

Hush.

Charli Sanders

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _8_)

21 April 2021

Foreign B*****

I step off the plane, the fresh air gets in my lungs,
me and my “homegirls” ready to pop out and have some fun.

We go on jet skis and enjoying the sun,
planning a vacation with no adults is easier said than done.
But we are here to kick for the moment... we're not here for the long run,
we are trying to turn up the city like I just turned 21.
Not worried about a thing just jumping the gun,
We are on the beach...drinks anyone?
We trying to fly, state to state like we on the run,
Pandemic not stopping nothing, we've only just begun.

Tiana Shannon

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period __8__)

21 April 2021

Lost Childhood Memories

I remember, I was late to school that day, where it all kicked off,
remember hearing about it for weeks behind the scenes.
When it came here, we all stood in shock behind the scenes,
I knew school was basically over on the amount of bodies,
dropped in New York, I remember, I was late that day.
Parents scared out their wits, students were happy to get a break,
but we didn't know what was going to happen, pretty ironic.
I remember I was late, again, this time online,
was a great student, loved being a know it all,
all changed with the sleepless nights, forgot who I was.
Setback after setback, not knowing who I am going to be,
times I thought to forget it all.
Is there a future? I am even able to get to see,
behind the scenes, everything is a lost childhood memory.....

Asya Smith

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Stuck in a Panny

I was forced into my home and told not to come out,
it sucks to be all pinned up inside,
I have to quarantine it makes me shout.
I am so alone in my home, it feels like everyone has died,
I miss all of my friends so much, it makes me want to cry.
When outside opens, we are going to party,
I miss them all so much, all I can do is sigh.
Being locked up so long makes me no so hearty,
although this pandemic has been so bad, I won't let me down,
although this pandemic has been so bad it won't cause me to frown.

Madeleine Wadesisi

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period _____)

21 April 2021

Buzz (Hair through my Pandemic)

I can feel myself losing my senses,
I know there's no way I can stop it,
my shield is down, I've lost my defenses.
My mind pummels into an empty pit,
the clipper in my hand is calling my name,
my head screams to be free,
one inch and things will never be the same,
I know it's meant to be.
Regardless, I know the change is temporary but my mind was out of whack
but luckily, hair is hair, and in the end it'll just grow back.

Aliyah White

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period __8__)

21 April 2021

The Worst Experience

Covid took everything, but taught me even more,
it took my senior year away and I still don't know how to feel.
My social life went away because of this,
but I got my job, I worked a lot.

I found out who my real friends were and who really just weren't there,
Covid gave me the chance to get close to my teachers,
Covid took away a lot of happiness.
I gained a lot back because of the people around me, but Covid is still here,
I wish I got to live out my senior year,
here's to new beginnings....This is just the end of a very bad chapter.

Javon Williams Jr.

Mr. Rock

English 12 (period __8__)

21 April 2021

Impossible Race

Crazy how things can take a turn,
a break from school,
became a lesson to learn.
A clouded perception,
Turned diaphanous conception.
A realization that the world will burn,
a doom driven society from the beginning of time,
logic and reason left far behind,
hear my words and do take heed,
lifes a race where you'll never take the lead...

THE STORIES AND ESSAYS....



FROM THE INSIDE LOOKING OUT....

Artistine Beavers

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Life Will Go On

This year started off pretty weird. I was barely in school. We had to transition to new things pretty fast. I had to be on my computer everyday for a certain time. Sometimes, it was hard to stay up while on the computer. But we all have to adapt to new changes to be a better us. I didn't get my senior year like I expected. I have dreamed of going to prom since 8th grade. I planned big things of how I wanted everything to go, but I feel like prom won't even be the same due to the pandemic. I wouldn't want to wear a mask to prom and I went to get my makeup messed up and a lot done to do big things. I also wanted to invite a lot of my family and friends to my graduation. But because a certain amount of people are allowed and having to fit everyone and their families, this will not be able to happen. But I'm still thankful that this year went smoothly and I was able to still accomplish a bunch of things. I was able to get my HHA certification. I was able to get my license. I finished my driving school. I work a full time job, while still going to school. And taking care of my family. I was able to use the extra time to get closer with my family, grow deeper bonds with my family, because normally, everyone would be living their own lives. I also look at the world differently now. I choose to go with smarter choices that I know will affect my future. I choose to view everything better. I know life can bring crazy obstacles, but God never throws anything at you that he knows you can't get through. I will forever live life and learn new ways to go about things.

Johnny Black

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Take Nothing For Granted

Not in 1 million years, did I even think a pandemic would happen. Being home all day is not as fun as everyone thought. People who were doing online school the whole year were not able to see any of their friends, so connections were probably lost. Some people probably aren't good at social interactions, other people's conversations might be awkward. You stay inside all of the time and just watch T.V. You literally forget how to have a normal conversation with another person without saying "um" or stuttering. People always talk about how much school is boring, but now that we are not allowed to go back to school and being on quarantine, people are now wanting to go back to school because they miss their friends. Crazy how the worst school year can be my best school year academic wise and sports-wise. The most horrible thing is how many other seniors of 2021 will never experience a kind of normal senior year and I feel bad for the senior class of 2020, they didn't have a prom and we'll never get it back. It's crazy how a lot of people never really liked school until the pandemic happened and now, I'm everybody who wants to go back to school. I think school is not just for learning and trying to get into a good college. I think it is for trying to make connections with people.

Rheana Bolden

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

“TheReup” Eyelash Collection

As a younger person, I always wanted to start my own business, I never knew what it was going to be, exactly. I always sketched clothes, thinking I would sell clothes, not knowing as a kid, I needed money. When I was in middle school, I always sold what I had in my pockets to kids like pencils and chips, so I was destined to be a saleswoman, just what kind of a saleswoman? It was 2020 of May 22nd. I was 18 years old and I was in my room, trying to figure out what to sell, Then it just hit me ! “I should just sell eyelashes.” I came to the decision to sell lashes because I did my own lashes everyday. Once I came to the conclusion that I would sell eyelashes, I had to come up with a name for this lash business and that was harder than trying to find a product to sell. I brainstormed for the whole day, until finally, I came up with the one and only, “ The ‘re-up’ eyelash collection.” I had about 200 lashes in the inventory business and it was booming, but it was so hard to manage because I'm a beginner in the entrepreneur business. Women were coming night and day for lashes and with every lash purchase, you got a free tweezer and brush. The “re up” eyelash collection was created in the pandemic and it was mostly created because of the Covid incident and because of Covid, everything (as in jobs) were being shut down temporarily or permanently. So, me creating the “re up” eyelash collection during the pandemic was basically for me to make money from home. On May 22nd

of 2021 will be my 1 year anniversary for the “re-up” eyelash collection. I plan to have a big sale on lashes as well as expand my merchandise so the “re up” eyelash collection will be shortened to just “the re-up “. The re-up will still have lashes but we will have lipgloss, lashes, a kind of lash glue that is invisible and more.

Ariana Cochran

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _1st_____

22 April 2021

You remember the last day of school for us? All because of Covid? You try to forget about it though. You have mixed emotions about the whole thing, like everything was good at the beginning because we didn't have to be at school. You could be in your bed laying down, doing all of your assignments without hearing a teacher's mouth. You would have a boyfriend at the time and things would be going great. You and him would work on assignments together. You and him would both be happy. You would have felt like nothing bad was going to happen. You would go on dates and go meet his weird, but amazing parents. Everything just felt right to you. You were surprised to even go over a boy's house in the first place because of Covid and your mother. Two months pass and you're still not back at school. Nothing has really changed. You both thought you were happy and in love. You felt like nothing could break you and him apart.

August 5th hits and it's your birthday and his parents offer to buy you a gift. You say “no,” you don't want anything. Your boyfriend gives you a necklace that has a turtle charm on it for your birthday, because he knew you loved turtles. The next month on September 2nd, you and

him go to the lake and you and him put your feet in the water and just sit there, not saying anything, just in love. A few days later, his mother dies and everything just stopped. Nothing felt real anymore. You were really close to his mother and when you heard that she had passed, you couldn't stop crying. You went to the funeral and you felt like you didn't belong there, so you distanced yourself from your boyfriend and his family. You were only thinking about yourself. You feel so guilty for not being there for your boyfriend and now you try to apologize but it was too late. A couple of days later, your boyfriend says he's moving away to go live with his Aunt and Uncle and you just couldn't believe it was true.

You couldn't eat for days because you felt so guilty. But in the end, you picked yourself up and continued to move forward with your life because that's all you could do. You healed from all of the pain you felt. You are truly happy now. That relationship and the pandemic, really made you find yourself.

Treshawn Gooch

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

My Pandemic Experience

So, I was playing video games until I got a notification about something on my phone. As I'm writing this, I think to myself and say, "this isn't so bad" since I'm an introvert that doesn't really

go outside, but at the same time, a lot of people are dying from this. Thankfully, I haven't lost any of my family members thanks to this virus so that's a good thing. I am now an Uncle thanks to this pandemic, I feel bad for my two nephews because they can't do a lot of things that a kid should be able to do. I honestly don't feel as joyful as I used to, at home I feel bored, but my phone is the only thing that keeps me going insane. I think the pandemic helped me because I see that school is more important. I am happy that I don't have to go to school. This pandemic has also taught me that people have it more rough than me. This pandemic has taken away people's jobs and people can't get jobs. It made some people homeless because they couldn't pay their rent, and they lost loved ones. My birthday is on the 24th of April, so I'm hoping that when I turn 18 and can find a job that pays well and I just want this pandemic to end, it wouldn't affect me, but not being able to go anywhere is really dumb.

Marcella Hatcher

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Stupid Covid

Nobody took the virus seriously from the beginning, now we are towards the end. People thought that the virus can affect old people and others that have weak immune systems. It's sad, weeks later, children and infants were dying from the virus. I hate this virus so much. I knew something was going to be created when people started eating bats and more extotic animals

back to back. That's what I believe started it. Beginning of the shutdown was so stressful. I'm the type of person that loves leaving the house. Running low on supplies like tissue and food, only having to grab a certain amount to take was hard. Not being able to work and not make a lot of money while waiting on stimulus checks that never came. Having to be stuck in the house stunk. I couldn't visit my friends or family. It was excruciating. Dealing with online school was hard enough. Changing what days we were online, I didn't learn much from being online. What I did learn is that anything can happen in this world, anything will take your life and freedom. It was annoying and not being able to play sports for most people like football and cross country. I'm happy we got to have wrestling but half of our meets, having to be canceled sucked a lot. Having to worry about catching the virus in certain areas where there's groups of people is stressful. Restaurants and fun places being shut down did a lot. Luckily, now it's better because of the vaccine. But in general, people need to keep wearing masks and stop being ignorant. I pray for the future, we will be able to come to school and stop wearing masks. I don't want my future family to go through what I had to go through. I pray that this virus will disappear once and for all.

Jamari Humphrey

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

PANDEMIC TRUTH

“Pull your mask up,” is all I heard for the first 9 months of this pandemic. Learning that this is the new way of life just amazes me, seeing where we used to be. Working as a cashier, I saw customers daily freaking out in panic. I remember quite vividly the day where we sold out of tissue and wipes before we sold out of eggs and dairy products (pretty backwards right?) Besides that, during quarantine, people had a choice to stay fit or let themselves go and to be honest, a lot of people became out of shape, being forced in your home can be tough and could drive others crazy but I believe if you have a strong mindset, you/we can overcome anything. This pandemic showed America's true colors as we lost the likes of Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks , Breonna Taylor and many more beautiful people. Their deaths sparked a conversation. Will we ever seek peace? Can we ever just be comfortable in the skin we were given? Time after time, the cycle never changes. “An unarmed colored person was fatally killed in the hands of an armed officer,” headlines remain the same and justice never seems to fall our way. Though, the year 2020 was different and hell, even crazy, at times, I enjoyed every bit of it as it was an experience for the ages. Here’s my pandemic story and I’m here to share it.

Ciera Johnson

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Terrible Pandemic

This pandemic really messed up my senior year. I would've never thought my senior year would end up like this. Last year it was around my birthday, so in May, I first started my first job at Kentucky Fried Chicken and when I first heard about the shutdown I was mad and angry because I was planning on doing things for my birthday but I couldn't. If I really think about it, this year really came by fast and this is my senior year and it's finally about to be over and this is how it had to end like this? I'm so bummed, I wanted to go to prom but this Covid stuff happened. I said, "nevermind" because first, anybody really going to prom anymore, it's not going to be fun anymore. Now, I just can't wait to graduate and be done. I already know I'm going to miss high school when I graduate. I'm probably going to even cry at graduation because I did it all. FOUR years and it wasn't easy but I had to believe in myself and my teachers did too, so did our assistant Principal, SR. Erin. My senior year came and went by fast. It was just August when we started school, now that's all finally coming to an end, May 30th. I'm so proud of myself and I know my family is also. I'm really going to graduate and go out there and be in the real world, get a house or an apartment, pay bills, get a car. I know what it feels like to be an adult instead of always depending on my mom. Now, I have to do everything on my own. Now, I'm really proud of myself. I would like to say I couldn't have done this without any of my teachers and them not giving up on me, even when I didn't believe in myself.

Ge'laní Johnson

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _1st____

22 April 2021

“Seasons of Hurt & Grief During COVID”

Today, like any other day, is a gripping feeling of despair and unhappiness in my life. Very soon we will be long gone after this plague takes its course destroying our kind. Also, Many members of the family have been around only for a moment and then now you hear they are near death, dying in hospital because of an infectious disease. I only ask this, “Why is everyone is sick and dying?” I believe they are getting sick through not taking care of themselves or not caring to wear a mask or social distancing from others.

Over time, this plague has caused frustration to me and countless others, which caused all places of business and social events to close. Many schools, churches, and stores were forced to close down. Also, People lost their jobs and were forced on the streets because of not being able to pay landlord’s rent money. Some couldn't go out to feed their families. The Virus has killed thousands of people over the past year, causing more catastrophic problems along the way. Even over the recent summer during the pandemic, innocent people were gunned down like animals by authorities of law which created friction and chaos amongst the people. Even now in 2021, America is torn by bigotry, hatredness, and pain which will only hurt, divide, and separate us humans more if we don’t stop this and do something about this problem.

Dyani Love

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 1

22 April 2021

What has this world come to??

When I think about all of the stuff that has happened in the past year, I start to ask, “when is this going to end?” “When can I walk outside and not be scared that I'll bring a deadly virus back home.” This virus has really challenged me in the worst ways. Not being able to go anywhere, not really doing anything, honestly. Trying to finish the school online was a struggle in itself. Teachers couldn't really help me because they were trying to figure out how to work the computers. I thought that it was cool at first. I didn't have to wake up really early for school.

They gave us as much time as we needed, so it was cool. But when this school year started, everything went bad. I didn't really get to make my own schedule, so they just put me where they wanted me, but it was very overwhelming. I couldn't even keep up with the small amount of classes they gave us. This has not been easy, but you really learn who you're friends are when you don't see them everyday.

I can say that it's been a long year and I'm so tired of wearing these masks. I'm really going to go normal but when I look at old videos, I think, “wow, we really weren't anything!” No mask, no 6 feet apart, nothing and this seems crazy now. So, you have to ask, “is this the new normal?” Will we ever be able to go near each other without covering our faces? Yeah, things have gotten better, but how much better is the question? When will this be over? I feel like the only thing we can do is believe that this virus will end better, than when he started.

Aaliyah Monroe

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

My Pandemic's Great Depression

This pandemic has been a lot to take in. Especially for me. I suffer from clinical depression. This pandemic has left me so unmotivated for a lot of things. In the summer, right before school, me and the first boy I truly loved broke up. I broke up with him. The reason is that he caused me a lot of mental breakdowns. He wasn't good for my mental health. I never knew someone I loved could make me experience my first ever panic attack. It hurt me so bad, that I had to break up with him even though I never really wanted to. Months went by and I ended up reaching out because I couldn't stand being without him. I knew that he had gotten a new girlfriend the month after we broke up. He told me that they were still together and that they have a baby on the way. That broke my heart. I had just started working and all I could think about was how he had a baby on the way. I couldn't believe it. We ended up becoming friends again. I was happy, he was there but sad that he couldn't talk to me how he did this before. He would hang up on me and wouldn't call back until he wasn't around her. I didn't like that. One day, he called me saying that she put his hands on him because he caught her texting her ex. He was venting to me and all I could do was listen. I hated listening, but I loved him. It hurt me knowing that he loved her. In February he called me from her house again. I was over it. I felt like he only wanted me around because he knew that I was going to be there for him. I couldn't stand it. I told him that I was tired of it. I couldn't be friends again. I wouldn't be the same and it makes me so sad. I haven't heard from him since February 18th. I thought he was going to wish me a happy birthday but he never did. I have never gone through knowing experiences like this before in my life. Just last

night I had a dream about him. Where he did what he wanted and I was still there. I still love him. That's the bad thing. But hey, we can't help who we love right?

Zeneyda Rodriguez

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 1

22 April 2021

My Boring Senior Year

I wouldn't have expected 4 years ago to come into Cleveland Central Catholic as a Freshman, spending my Senior year online and out of sight and mind of others. I pictured my senior year very fun, very laid back since it's the last year. I missed Senior ditch day, Senior prank day, prom, farewell, Cedar Point, sports, banquets, you name it! All I wanted was the perfect Senior year before I set off with starting life as an adult and taking a lot of responsibility for myself. But I was wrong, none of it turned out the way we planned it to be. It was very miserable and boring. You sat/laid at home for an "ex" amount of hours staring at a laptop trying to figure out if you learned something that day or not. Trying to get yourself out of your bed because you're so comfortable in your pajamas and not a school uniform. It was a very hard year not socializing with classmates or even being in the hallways trying to rush to class in a very very short amount of time before the bell rang. It was weird not standing for prayer or the Pledge of Allegiance, but I made it to the last 4 weeks of high school, and I look back and I realized that I sure as "crap" missed the simple things when it came to going to school. All I have is the memories of the three

years there, but if I had to pick a good year it was my freshman year when I had friends and was just getting to know the place and the staff. Covid-19 ruined a lot for the class of 2020 and also 2021. We didn't have it as bad as 2020 but we all know that this wasn't a normal "Senior Year" to begin with. Throughout all of the downfalls, I'm grateful I was a part of the Cleveland Central Catholic community! Class of 2021, we are almost out of the door !

Briana Rosser

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 1

22 April 2021

My Pandemic Experience

This year, since the pandemic has started, it has shown me that anything can happen when you least expect it. Things have been very rocky for me since it started, and I feel as if karma was hitting me. It has brought to my attention that hard times happen and I should love and cherish my family more. God has given me the chance to live and be here. This year, I have had deaths in the family from the virus and it has taken a big loss in my family. It almost feels like the world is coming to an end, sometimes as I see everything that is going on and happening in the world right now. I have learned how to love a little more and stress a little. My dad had been shot last year in June and due to the virus, he could not have any visitors and it broke me because he laid there for months and it seemed like he was on his deathbed. When I finally got to see him and he could talk about it, I talked to him and told him he had to get better and stronger

so that he could come home. Me and my dad built a stronger relationship with each other since we're reunited. A month later, my dad went to rehab, got stronger, and went to the nursing home. Within months, he was back to his normal self and I prayed to God to keep him healthy during the time he was in the pandemic hospital and my prayers were answered. I prayed for my school year to end so I could walk the stage and graduate so my family can see me , and now my grades are doing so much better. I pray this world gets better and this virus ends before I bring children into my word.

Sherelle Thomas

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

The year of 2020

The crazy thing is that we never really expected this to come. In 2020, we went from a normal life to this monstrous year. But hey, I think I am moving a little too fast. Let's rewind and start from the beginning.

Well, we were in school at the time and I was doing really well. Basketball was having a good winning season, living our glory days. Grades were looking fine and the focus was through the roof. Then we heard about this virus. I never really took it seriously. I thought, "hey, it's America we won't get it." Man was I wrong. The next couple of months, the cases started popping out of nowhere. We still didn't have to worry though because it didn't touch our city. I was still playing

basketball at the time, then sadly our season came to an end. I was a little happy because by the time that happened, the virus had touched our home front. Sometimes, I feel like this is an endless war that could never be won. Well by the time April hit, we were at home at this time and the whole city was on “lock down.” That was the worst feeling ever. They said that we can't be outside because the spread was going around too fast. It's sad to say that this was the start of a downfall year. I thought that this was going away by the time summer hit. I was wrong. Summer rolls around and the world goes crazy. We found out that a cop had killed another black man. His name was George Floyd. This wasn't a bad thing because we finally started taking “black lives” seriously.

Time came back around and we are still in this pandemic. We went back to school and it was never the same. We had to learn how to be taught from home. I know this was hard because it was hard on me. It has to be also hard for our teachers because this is a new learning experience. By the end of 2020, I lost hope. It is my senior year. This wasn't how it was supposed to be, but like I say all of the time that these are the cards I was dealt. We can't complain that the decision is what we are going to do with those cards. So, with all of this pandemic stuff going on, we have to make sure that we don't use this pandemic as an excuse to not do what we have to do . Let's use this as a learning experience.

Patrick Turk

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Hate Matters in this Country!

This has been a bad year so far but what can you really do? We have evil people running this country. I am not being negative, but I am speaking the truth; slavery still exists in this country, I hope people understand and realize that. In my opinion, I think the government created the Coronavirus because they want to decrease the population of humans on this planet. I don't know why they will do that? I can't really trust the government. They lied about 9/11, my sister said the same thing about 9/11. I also think the government was involved with John F Kennedy's murder because he wanted to help "black" people. The government doesn't really care about us, their only concern is about the money going into their pockets. I often wonder why teachers lie to us about history, now I am not saying all teachers lie about history, but a majority of teachers do. They barely go over black history, the only time they do that is in Black History Month. Black History Month is also a made up holiday and I wonder why they created a month where our black leaders died, bringing peace to this country. I don't get it, but one day the truth eventually will come out. We had been blatantly lied to about history for so long, it doesn't make any sense, but all of that will change eventually.

Makaila Wright

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period __1__

22 April 2021

On The Edge of Sickness

In Wuhan, China in December 2019, a virus that was subsequently spread worldwide. This disease is diverse with a bird or bat. The COVID-19 virus has flu-like symptoms and people can be contagious for a long time, until you seek help. It seems like COVID can spread more easily than the flu because it causes a more serious illness with some people, such as elderly people can have a more serious case because of heart problems and they would need a ventilator to help them breathe and children can catch it more easily because of mild symptoms. Some may have “asymptomatic” Covid, which means it doesn't have an effect yet. Numbers of the cases of COVID were raging through the roof with 1.2 million people that have been affected by the disease. DeWine issued an order of quarantine to keep the numbers from increasing and if you or anybody else violated that order to stay in the house one would be facing a fine up to \$150 for not wearing a mask while being outside. Because I could not involve myself in a Pandemic, it was kindly involved for me. I didn't like the fact that the virus messed up the school year, it caused a canceled prom for some and any activities within school related activities because they shut down school. We learned to “involve” before we knew how to update, meaning we had to process the fact that we're out of school and had to learn how to do school over virtual learning. You can involve, you can update, but can you occur? The communicable disease that's really airborne, stopped all outside activities. Partying and small get togethers causes contagion, above all, others were the contagion. Does the fact of contagion make you shiver? Does it? I cannot help but look at the rubella vaccine. Have you ever been to a doctor's appointment or a check-up? If so, the doctor that is performing the procedure of giving you a shot should feel or

can see where the best part is to insert the needle into the vein. Doctor's should always feel before continuing because there are 2 reasons why they should be careful: They could seriously hurt the patient and it can cause bruising or irritation at the injection site. If you ever had the vaccine shot you probably should know where I'm going with this. As you think back on the time you've received the shot, they don't prepare you for the shot, they just force the needle into the skin at an upwards angle. The proper way is at a diagonal angle and slowly inserting into the patient's skin. Does the vaccine make you shiver ? Does it ? I saw the cunning state of my generation destroyed , with raging through the roof rates. We just had to accept where everyone was under a strict order. While on quarantine, we had quality time to love a "neighbor" as themselves. The children of the pandemic felt "imprisoned and terrified." I'm learning from this situation, that family means a lot and it's very important to always take care of each other. Even though the quarantine has been difficult it allowed me and probably other students to spend more time studying a specific subject and pick up useful skills and hobbies. Self-quarantining gave me the opportunity to pursue personal growth.

Christian M. Brown

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 2

22 April 2021

What is Next?

This pandemic has been very mind blowing and a whole different experience that I didn't think I would experience. When I first heard about COVID, I thought it was the world trying to scare us and that it was just something that it was going to wash over and forgotten about. The reality of this disease hit when my mother got very sick and my whole family had to stay away from her. It could've been a possibility that she caught COVID, she said that her body was very weak and that she was vomiting and not feeling well. I felt that I was going to lose my mother but I knew I wasn't going to die and that she would be okay. Before I knew she was back up on her feet and she was feeling better and I was so happy because I really couldn't be around her and I was concerned about her. Another thing that really set me back was that I couldn't do the things that I needed to do like getting a driver's license or ID, a job and so forth, that really set me off a bit because I had been wanting to do those things for a moment now and it really hurt me. I also feel that the pandemic ruined my whole senior year experience, I was definitely upset that I wasn't going to be able to see some of my friends and teachers. I wanted to laugh and enjoy my last days in high school and the fact that it was technically taken away from me doesn't make me happy. I wanted to go to the pre-rallies and football and basketball games but all of that was taken away and it's just sad to let go of something you wished you would have experienced. Now the question is, what's next? What is next for the world to see and what is yet to come or maybe what is next for me but whatever I do I will make sure that I put two feet forward and don't stop. I will not let this pandemic be my excuse to why I cannot accomplish something I want to pursue. I will be successful no matter what this pandemic choice allows me to do.

Emilio Carrion

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 2nd

22 April 2021

Before I Knew

Back in the third quarter of my Junior year, I was playing baseball, looking at colleges, and looking to where I was going in the future. I was doing well, just like everyone else but then rumors started coming up about a sickness caused by the eating of bats. I, along with everyone else, thought it was a joke, or people making fun of Asian culture. I didn't see any of what was to come, but somehow I had a slight feeling something was wrong.

Weeks later, countries around the world started to go into a world wide panic. Not knowing what hit us that we started to panic and soon realizing that this is a serious threat. Next thing we know, it's being identified as a global pandemic. Then, the United States was hit and we could not perceive how many deaths would come to pass. At that point, I knew this pandemic could put us in an era of quarantine. During this pandemic, there were tens of thousands of people dying. It was unimaginable, we haven't seen a wide spread illness like this since Ebola. A year later, now I see the world overcoming a battle of illness and surviving like we always do to move on and to grow. I learned we need to be better prepared for the worst. We need to expect the unexpected. In the near end, I truly and full heartedly believe we need AWARENESS of what's around us and what's within us.

Tangela Davis

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 2

22 April 2021

Spirituality

Going into 2020, I would have never expected for what was to come. Being in quarantine and a pandemic has made me look within and work on myself. Growing up, I was only taught Christianity and how to be a Baptist. I was never really taught about other beliefs until I started to experience the world myself, instead of just going off of what people would tell me. The beginning of 2020 was when I discovered African Spirituality. African Spirituality is the original belief before my ancestors were forced to be enslaved. Spirituality is an individual practice and one of the main things it has to do with is having a sense of peace and purpose. Spirituality helps you and encourages you to go within yourself to learn to love yourself and heal the trauma. It has been a year since I changed to spirituality and since then, I have discovered a lot about myself and my family history. It taught me that in order to have a healthy body, you have to have a healthy mind and in order to love others you have to learn to love yourself first. African Spirituality is the root to all religions. I still educate myself on other religions to understand other people's beliefs and what they stand for. I am much happier and each day that goes by, I love myself more and more.

Luz Geraldino

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Beginning of Life

When this whole pandemic first broke out, it was very difficult for me on a personal level. Me and my mom are extremely close and we are exactly alike. You can only imagine the relationship of a strict mom and teenage girl. Always arguing and bickering at things that didn't have to be fought over. As a 17 year old girl, when your mother doesn't let you do the things all your other friends are doing, it frustrates you and makes you desperate. I was so tired of not having the freedom I felt I should be having. So what did I do? I moved 2 weeks after my 18th birthday. But it wasn't just that smooth.

I was feeling funny a few days after my birthday and decided to take a pregnancy test. What are the odds, it came out positive. The day after that I took a COVID 19 test and it was also positive. So, now not only am I pregnant, I have Covid and have to be in quarantine by myself. After all of this emotional news, I really thought I was going to die. Pregnant women have a higher risk of dying from Covid than a woman that is not. I had so many ugly thoughts, I was so depressed, I didn't know what I wanted to do. After talking with my mom, grandmother, and boyfriend, I did decide to keep my child.

After my quarantine, I moved into my apartment with my boyfriend and things were very difficult for us. It was a lot to take in knowing that our lives are no longer about us, they are about our child. We only were making enough money for our bills and our groceries (imagine

adding a baby on top of that). We were arguing, the vibe wasn't the same, the stress was on a level I never experienced before. There were times I really thought we weren't going to be together anymore, times I thought our baby wouldn't be able to grow up with both parents in the household. With the help of God, we managed to get through this hard stage.

Fast Forward up to now that I am now 6 months and I am very excited for my little boy to be here. Although it has been easier to understand this is my new life, pregnancy is still difficult. It's very common for a pregnant woman to be depressed due to her hormones. This is the hardest thing I've been through in my life. Some family members don't talk to me, the constant feeling of insecurities about my new body, regretting me and my mother's arguments, thinking about if I'm going to be a good mom, the stress of making my son and boyfriend proud, I can go on and on. Sometimes I even feel like no one understands me. Pregnancy is not for the weak minded, especially during a pandemic, but with God by my side, I know that in the end, I will be strong and I will be protected.

Paul Grayson

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

“The Demic”

This will be a story about the experience of Covid-19 and how it affected me and the people around me. Because of the CoronaVirus, known as Covid 19, the world has been in turmoil and uproar because of the amount of people that are dying from the virus. The number of people caught Covid has gone to the “thousands” and the number of people that have died from it is just as much. Covid has caused thousands of people to lose their jobs and houses because of it. Businesses have been shut down and some have shut down permanently. Covid has closed down schools and colleges, forcing us to go to school online which is much harder than going into school and not just because of the work and the feeling of being overwhelmed, but because of the teachers lack of consideration for the student’s situation. The main and hardest reason online school is so hard is because we are at home and countless people are doing terrible at school. They aren't going because of how easy it is to not care any more. So, many of my classmates that are seniors just like me have no chance in hell to graduate because of them not coming to school not one day and yes, it was their decision to, but Covid 19 and online learning made the decision way easier to make than ever before. Because of Corona, everyone who goes outside is on edge about people who refuse to wear masks because it limits their “freedom” so they put everyone else in danger. Life has become very boring because of all of the things that made life exciting have been shut down and closed and if it hadn't been, then selfish people who refused to wear masks ruin it. But despite all of that, me and my friends have refused to let this keep us down and we made the most of our situation and trying to have as much fun as we possibly can from planning to go to Florida, spending a week down in Columbus, bowling after work and just trying to live our “best lives” through the crisis that the world is going through, and despite all of the deaths and all of the problems, yet there are still thousands of people that say that they shouldn't have to wear a mask, or a mask is taking away their rights or something dumb like that and argue tooth and nail for the sake of not wearing a mask. This is only a small fraction of the way that the last two years of the pandemic has affected me and some of the people around me.

Dae'Von Jackson

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 2

22 April 2021

BAD TIMING, BAD YEAR!

The Year of 2020, it started off with tragic stuff going on in the world. Months before that, a virus was in China near Asia, a famous rapper named Juice Wrld, one of my favorite rappers, died in December. Now 2020, a whole lot of chaos. For me, I usually don't get out of the house unless I go to school, work, and play with my dog. But I found myself stuck in the house almost for a couple of months learning more about myself that I never knew. My life really has changed since the shutdown notice. I used to be the crazy kid, very hyper, always energetic and funny. Now I kind of matured, not a lot, but I meditated a lot over quarantine and that's probably why. I found myself now becoming a gamer too. I stopped playing video games around 2015 because I was outgoing and was always outside. But I found myself back playing games, entering tournaments for games trying to win prizes, trying to be known. It wasn't a lot to do over quarantine even though some stuff was opening back up but I didn't have a lot of friends to hang out with. Some were busy, some probably didn't want to but I didn't mind. When stuff started to open back up, I got a good summer job for the summer at an outdoor summer camp. I attended it when I was a kid and grew up in the camp so I was prepared to show kids all of the things I used to do. It was weird going there as a counselor but it took some time to get used to, but it was a great experience and it was a good summer. I think quarantine changed my life a lot because I'm not as hyper and energetic like I used to be. I think it will probably come back but I hope one day

that the virus will go away and we can have the old world back and a lot of changes that will take place..

Marquintez Jones

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 2

22 April 2021

Do I love it here..? Or do i hate it..?

Now that I'm thinking about it..., quarantine is really a special opportunity in some ways. Will I ever spend time with my family like this again..? I loved to spend time with them and my family, in a city where I call home...Even if I have been here for a short amount of time. In some ways, the pandemic really sucks. You can agree, right? But I've found that it's an unbelievable opportunity too and at this time in my life, to really sit down and think through things, I haven't had the time to, to appreciate my family and the friends I've made, and most of all, appreciate that I'm so unbelievably lucky to be in the position I am in, even if it is bad timing on my end. I am happy to be home in a safe place with my family who loves each other, I miss school (Saint Martin, specifically.) I have friends I miss every second, and I'm comfortable with where I am and with myself.

I never would have thought that I could make it to where I am now, which is something I think about a lot. I'm so amazed at it, and rather than lament not being at school right now, I'm reminding myself all of the time to just be excited for when we get to go back and how great it

will feel to have everything be normal again. Everything has its purpose, quarantine is no different. It's just up to us to end this entire thing if we ever want to really get out of this.

Chris Mills

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Ahead of Time

During this pandemic, I had to think outside of the box and be creative. While quarantining, jobs we're closing, so I had to figure out how I was going to make money. The pandemic actually helped me find a different meaning to life. I figured out how to stay afloat by picking up hobbies that I love doing. This pandemic turned me into the entrepreneur I always wanted to be.

I chose not to complain about the pandemic and took advantage of it. I had too much time on my hands to let it go to waste. It wasn't the easiest thing to do. There were setbacks and times where my emotions got in the way of my goals but I knew that it would get greater later. I would like for my story to motivate others to start taking advantage of these times because it will put you ahead of the rest of the world.

Rashon Pique

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Covid-19

When the disaster hit, I thought it was another joke. I did not take this seriously at all and me and the kids at school were also joking about it. Then the next thing I know, we're about to go to online school. At first, I was happy. I'm not going to lie, I was, but I didn't expect how difficult it would be. I remember the first day of it all and my teachers just threw assignments in our faces that we were not ready for and I was upset because the work was not easy and I needed help from the teachers. As time went on, my grades started to go down and down and my mom was very upset at me but I was also mad because it was so difficult to do the work at home, so that was a "crappy" start. Then the next thing I know, we have to wear masks and me, not being used to it, I always would wear the mask half way down my face and I was so tired of people telling me to pull my mask up over my nose, it was killing me because my breath was so hot (lol). I had so much trouble with keeping that rule. As the school year comes to a conclusion, I remember I was trying my hardest to catch my grades back up, which I did, and I'm proud of myself. I was happy and surprised that I passed the 11th grade and I made it to my senior year

The next year, we all started back online and I was kind of upset and I failed to do my work again and it was like that until basketball season, which I got my grades up a little bit and also at that time we were allowed to go outside of school to have class. I was happy about that, that was all I wanted. Then around February, I ended up getting Covid and I was upset because I couldn't taste or smell and those are two of my favorite senses. At this point, I am so tired of Covid and I miss the days where no one asks because these masks are so hard to breathe in and I just hate

everything about it. But I see the end of Covid coming really soon and I can't wait, that's my story!!!

DeMario Randall

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Life Is Short

When I heard the word “pandemic,” it still doesn't seem real. Just a year ago in February, I was attending school in person with no mask and everything was fine. WHAT WENT WRONG? Then all of a sudden, I found out that we can't go back to school in person and I was really confused, so me being the person I am, I just thought we couldn't go back for the month, so I was expecting to go back inside the building sooner than later but that day never really came. I had to learn how to do the classes remotely and finished out the school year strong. As soon as the school year ended, I had found out that my uncle who lived in Washington D.C. had caught the virus and he had very poor health before he got sick and he was talking to me on the phone giving me advice as he always did and every time I talked to him so he remained sick for a couple of months and then finally in December 2020, he had passed away, which broke my heart because he was a big role model in my life and I could talk to him about anything. What I learned from this whole Covid experience is that in a time of need, your family will be there for you, so even if you aren't on good terms with a family member, you should talk to them more because one day your life can be going well and everything is normal to the next day and you

can't go to school anymore or even your family members are being exposed to the virus. So, life is short and can change at any second, so you have to enjoy every moment of life without having to worry about wearing a mask.

Shelton Richardson

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

My Pandemic Story

This pandemic had its ups and downs for me. I feel like I learned a lot, but also missed out on a lot at the same time. During this virus, I have made the most money I've ever made before and received some of the best grades of my high school career. The whole down side of the year was missing out on the senior year experience! No last first day, no “promposals,” not even a last homecoming. In this essay, I will be telling the story of the best thing that has happened to me during this pandemic and I hope you enjoy it.

One day around October or November, I had about three hundred dollars to my name. I got a call from one of my friends to come over to his neighborhood and join the dice game going on. Now, in my family, gambling is like in our blood and we all gamble. It can be risky, but I do it because of the possible outcome. I never really did consider what I'll have to do if I lose. I came and joined the dice game very confident but I started off bad, I lost one hundred dollars fast. Little did I know, my luck would change later that night. I ended up coming back and left out

with three thousand dollars (plus!) Two things I have learned from this experience in gambling is very risky and not for everyone, but I also feel as though in life, you have to take risks to put yourself in a winning position.

Nathaniel Rush

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

My Worst Experience

Life has been so hard during this pandemic, especially, that I didn't have stuff to do; no friends or family that I could see. Myself and a few other people, I know had Covid 19 and I didn't like it at all because I was lonely and couldn't leave the house for nothing. I think the first few days were the worst because I had three symptoms and they were eating me alive. For instance, I didn't know what to do and I couldn't leave the room. My brothers and sister were laughing at me because before the pandemic, I always wanted to leave the house and hang with friends and family and "hoop" and go to basketball workouts but I couldn't because if I would have left, they said I might as well find somewhere to live because they weren't taking the risk of catching it.

So, when the pandemic got here or whatever, my mother passed away and my aunt wanted me to live with her and knowing me, I wanted to hoop and spend time with friends and family. I left and stayed with her and I caught it, but it was fine and thank God that I was okay and didn't have serious health issues that came with it. Thank God I didn't have anything and I was able to go

back to normal but that was the worst experience to deal with. I made a lot of money from this pandemic and after I was cleared for good health, I was able to see my parents and family and some friends and be safe at the same time.

Jeremiah Vann

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

The Life

My pandemic started off horrible: As soon as we got out of school in March because of the pandemic, I ended up getting on house arrest for 8 months. Being on that had taken my whole summer away, but I still managed to get my work done in school and pass the 11th grade. But also, we practiced all through the summer to get ready for the football season and it was probably halfway through before it had gotten cancelled due to Covid. Then a couple months go by and I get off of house arrest in October, I had gotten off everything and started to get back on track. I started to do a little of my work. I ended up getting a job and doing school work and what had happened was I started having big arguments and fallouts with friends, which knocked me off track.

Then it's warm outside and the part of the city I live in is horrible, so friends start getting shot then there's me, getting them to the hospital. After that, I started to stay away from everything and it started to change, my whole mindset, and how I saw things. Then "boom!" The police kill one of my friends and say he pointed a gun at them not knowing that there were a whole bunch

of witnesses and cameras and they still haven't shown the footage. Then a couple of months later, I'm riding with my friend the whole day and we were talking about my "gender" reveal for my baby, which was the next day! I got out of the car with him and then I called him in the morning, then I got a call saying he died in a car crash, hitting an electric pole which set the car on fire.

Just Imagine, if I was with him just a little longer, that probably wouldn't have happened. Then I ended up finding out my girlfriend was pregnant and that was the only uplifting part about the pandemic for me besides the other things God has done for me. I have been shown a lot of people's true colors these 2 years and witnessed some horrible things and I believe it's all because of the pandemic.

Kayla Wright

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Life During Quarantine

Life was different when it came to March of 2020. We went from being in school to being online behind a computer screen. It was all hard and I couldn't focus. It was hard to get up and stay up for school, just being behind a computer screen became a chore. Time progressed and it seemed to just be getting worse. People crying and families losing their loved ones. Employees losing their jobs and trying hard to provide for their families. The world seemed like it was coming to an end. This world is so crazy and I want it to go back to normal and just be how it used to be.

Covid had molded me into a brand new person. I've experienced a lot of things and stepped outside of my comfort zone. I've gained and lost friends. I've matured so much during this pandemic. This pandemic made me appreciate all of the good things in life; family and friends and most importantly life. Always remember to cherish the good things in life before it's too late.

Kiemescha Austin

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 5b/6

22 April 2021

My Life During the Pandemic

This all happened a year ago, not knowing if schools would be shut down for 2 weeks but also not knowing schools would end up being closed due to this terrible pandemic. Having to finish school online, not focusing on my school work, just trying to get through the tough year because I don't really know what to do. Being on lockdown for months, like we were prisoners, was very stressful for me and very boring. There is nothing to do for 3 whole months and the state opened back up with many restrictions.

Why can't we have our normal life back? During the pandemic, I stayed in my room more because of the lockdown and I became glued to my room. In the summer, things were okay, but not many places were open. As the months went by, our curfew and lockdown went away, but my question is what about the face masks? Are face masks really going to have a low risk of spreading anything? As many places opened up, I became more of an outside person and did

more. Being outside never felt so much better than being in the house. Some people were even getting separated from their families because of the pandemic. There are many people at my job that haven't seen their family members in about 1 year. I couldn't imagine not being able to see my family and going out to see the world. One day, I hope they find an actual cure for Coronavirus. I've learned that many people are going to be there for you, no matter what. I've learned that from many people I know and people that I didn't know what can be learned and we are going to make sure "you" are okay.

Latianna Ayers

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

My Pandemic

When the pandemic first started, I was really scared because I didn't know what was really going on in the world. I never thought that it would change the world so much. Starting with shutting down the world; people lost their jobs, schools shutting down, restaurants shutting down, can't leave the house without wearing a mask. People had to start being very cautious around other people because so many people were catching the Covid and dying. I've learned that being clean is very important because this world is a dirty place. People should understand that new sicknesses are being discovered everyday and people who work with those types of things might not know how to cure them, so we have to be safe and really careful. Wash our

hands, practice social distancing, wear a face covering, and if traveling, stay home for 2 weeks, just in case you have something.

Armani Conner

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _5/5B_

22 April 2021

The Pandemic Growth

When the pandemic first started, I wasn't too worried about it because I was told that it will be over in a month or two. But that month or two turned into a few more months and then into a year and then eventually became the new "norm." During this year, I had a lot of ups and downs. My grandmother is very strict with following the rules and our health, so I couldn't go anywhere except to the store with her, I was barely seeing my brother and sisters, and I couldn't go to school. But, that wasn't the worst part about this pandemic. The hardest part was not being able to enjoy my senior year the right way. But, I wasn't just going through emotional problems, I also felt like I was losing my mind mentality from being stuck in the house. All I did was watch TV, *YouTube*, and listen to music. One of my favorite things to watch was Kevin Hart videos and I remember watching one of his interviews and he was saying to basically live life to the fullest, no matter what circumstance you are going through. That's what pushed me to start finding things to do at home instead of just laying in bed, and watching TV. I started to read books by Joel Osteen and Mary Baxter. In one of Joel Osteen's books, he would say over and over to just change your point of view on situations and look for the positive side of situations. Once I did

this, I became more independent, learned to enjoy time with myself, became more spiritual and grew a bond with God. I also started setting goals for myself to accomplish. I told myself I was going to get a GPA of 3.5 or higher, get a car, and get into the college I want. I did ALL of that! Even though this pandemic started off rough, I ended up becoming a much better person than I was before the pandemic, with a car, 4.3 GPA, and attending Bowling Green State University this fall.

Ajurai Evans

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 5

22 April 2021

This Year Through My Eyes

Looking at this year through my eyes, I am heavy with sorrow based on the events that I've been here to witness. Through the police brutality, world disasters, politicians, stressful home situations and losing those around me -- I have seen the world through different eyes. As I struggle tremendously with crippling depression and ED, I learned to appreciate every little thing and the moments that I am very blessed with, even when it may not seem so. I want to call to those who have faced this year with gratitude and appreciation because without hearing stories of the millions of protesters who took to the streets with their concerns, shows me that together, we can love deeply and put all of the boxes we've put each other in all these years away.

Yet when it comes to me and my story, it is on a much sadder note. I have lost all of my interests and tend to sleep my day away in self quarantine by choice; I am saddened about how

this pandemic has turned my life upside down. My biggest goal in 2021 is to graduate; my high school cap and gown in hand, and God by my side for my next steps in this life. Although I know everything might not be perfect or back to normal after COVID, I know I have hope and determination to make others feel safe in their own skin and give those with no voice a megaphone, give those with no support a team, and give those with no house a home.

Braylin Graham

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 5*

22 April 2021

Surviving the Pandemic

March 2020. The beginning of the end, some may say. This pandemic was a shock to not only me, but many other survivors. Many challenges were sprung upon us as the pandemic began to unravel. People were put out of work, school moved virtually, things were crashing down all around us. Most of us lost loved ones felt lost, which made moving forward during all of this even harder. Even though we partially made it through, none of us ever thought something like this could happen.

Covid Nineteen has changed everyone. Some for the better, some for the worse. Although, I can thankfully say it has made me better, that isn't the case for everyone. The pandemic put us through so much and pushed us over our limits. I know I wouldn't have been able to make it through without my family, friends, and God. I honestly believe everything God does has meaning. Even though we've missed out on many things, such as vacations, sporting events, and

just social gatherings all together - this pandemic has brought my family/friends and I closer, which is something to be grateful for in my eyes.

Armand Hodges

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

What's Next

Well, this entire pandemic has been full of little ups and a lot of downs and I know most people had it so much worse than me and I keep that in mind when I breakdown. I learned how many people were my true friends, I lost so many people that I thought were my friends, even some people that I used to know since I was younger. I didn't learn so many things during this pandemic when it came to school (not going to even lie). I cheated so many times this year and I know it's basically cheating myself but at the same time, I know that I can with no consequences.

Most people would take an opportunity to cheat if they knew they would not have to deal with any repercussions or anything like that. I met so many people and I found a girl that I think I like, but I don't know how she feels about me. Can I ask you a question Mr. Rock? If your best friend liked one of your cousin's or family members in general, would you allow it or would you tell them to back off a little bit? That is the situation I am in right now, I met my best friend's cousin during the pandemic because he introduced us and we got closer and closer; the longer the pandemic went and I don't know if I could do that to him, but at the same time, she makes me happy.

Back to the story, I learned how to be more outgoing because of the whole wanting to change the school thing. I learned how to get a crowd, I learned the difference between a group of people that want to change the world for everybody and want to change the world for the benefit of themselves. All together, this pandemic has been exhilarating but at the same time, the most bored and sad I've ever been. It has helped me grow and has brought me down, but all together, I am grateful and thankful for everything and everyone that has been brought into my life. Thank you for talking to me as well, I really needed it and I feel like I am back on track again, one more month to go and I'm going out strong.

Kenneth McElrath

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period

22 April 2021

Covid Story

When the news broke that Covid-19 had reached America, I was working at Marc's. I was a little nervous because I was on duty for carts. I didn't know if I had contracted the virus or not, so I went home and spent the next few days quarantining. I lost my job because I spent too many days off. I had to find new ways to make money to continue living. I got a stimulus check and invested in stock.

My friends did other things like start businesses, but I wasn't interested in those things. I'd rather get a job and save my money with a bank. School wasn't going so well for me with it being online. I had struggled at first, but along the way, I got the hang of it. Covid had stopped us

from having a football season so the whole school year I felt unmotivated to do any work. On the bright side, I had enough time to spend with family and friends.

There's been ups and downs during the pandemic but we never saw a drought when Donald Trump put money in the "hood." Off of a stimulus check, people who didn't have nothing before had a chance to invest in themselves. I was one of those people and all I'm saying is that there's a little good that comes out of the Pandemic.

Danny Mitchell

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period ___5th___

22 April 2021

Everything Is Not What It Seems

Ups and downs! It feels like we are living in rounds on a survival game. Some people got a lot of joy from it, some people got a lot of hurt from it but here's what I got from it.....

I never knew a pandemic can cause hurt. I thought it was going to be a reset but it only hurt me in the long run. Not being able to do the things I did before such as going over to a friend's house, going to play basketball and just my everyday routine that involves contact with outside people and it really killed me inside. Trying out new things didn't really help me at all, gaining weight really took a toll on me because there wasn't anything to do but eat and go to work. Not really talking to friends that I used to talk to everyday really showed me who is by your side and who's not. But the other half of the pandemic actually gave me time to do the things I actually wanted to do like plan out my future, meet new people, and also connect with myself more than

ever. Before the pandemic, I never had time to spend with my loved ones and now I do almost everyday. It feels great coming closer to someone who raised me. Lots of tragic things happened like death , a big one was Kobe Bryant and Giana seeing them pass away, so tragically, took everyone by surprise and made everyone closer in different ways. A lot of my friends' family members passed away due to COVID 19 and it made me realize how serious the pandemic is and how it's far from over, unfortunately. I always say everything happens for a reason, good or bad. I just pray we get something good out of everything we've been through.

Makyriah Murray

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

2021 Year

As I sit here and think about my last high school year, I seem to come up with one word to describe it. One word to describe my last high school experience is “trash.” I say my last high school experience was trash because I didn’t get to enjoy it. The first reason why it was trash, is because I didn’t get to experience my last high school year with my friends because we weren’t allowed in the building at first. The second reason why I say this last high school experience was trash is because I didn’t even get to know any of my teachers. A third reason I say it was trash is because a lot of teachers were just giving us work, not even trying to help us or even teach us so we could get it. A fourth reason my experience was trash is because I am not going to prom because my school wanted to tell us so late that we were actually having one and then they

made it early. A fifth reason I say this is because I know that graduation is going to be the same, but not the same, because we are still doing how the graduation always is but we are not going to probably be able to be next to each other, how we would be if COVID was not around. Also, I say this high school year was trash because at first, we were going online for once a week, then we started going online twice a week and then the school made us go online back to five days a week. I feel like that was so stupid because everybody was so used to the one day a week and some of the students started to get second jobs to help their families or just got one to get one. After all of this, my last year of high school is about to come to an end even though I didn't have a good experience, I am grateful that God helped me get through this. I hope next year's school year, students have a better experience.

Trina Wesley

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

The beginning of the pandemic, I saw all types of news all over social media; African Americans can't get the virus, the Chinese people got this from eating bats. There have even been so many videos or false videos of Chinese people fainting in public. There's even a video of a Chinese guy licking elevator buttons while others were on the elevator. At the beginning of this, it was so weird. People were freaking out so bad that everyone just went out to get toilet paper and cleaning supplies. Stores were raided and out of stock from cleaning supplies, many people were even so selfish to take everything for themselves. So many warnings were put out: "You

may lose taste or sense of smell,” “if you have shortness of breath or having trouble breathing, you may have COVID.” The whole world was panicking when the school had gotten shut down, that's when I started to think it's really getting serious. It just happened out of nowhere, right after a bunch of riots and protests for the Black Lives Matter movement. I was a junior when it started. It was the end of 2019, I believe, and as soon as 2020 hit, the whole world literally shut down in a way. So much was going on, not just the virus pandemic, there were so many riots and protests for the Black Lives Matter. It didn't feel like the end of the world but it was enough to think this virus is going to turn people into zombies. People were dropping and dying very fast, states and countries were getting hit so fast it was spreading so fast, hospitals were getting filled, doctors and nurses were so overwhelmed. I saw so many videos of hospitals filled with doctors crying, due to the fact they can't go home and the fact that so many people were dying so fast. Hospitals were running low on supplies and rooms to get sick people into. I watched a video of a doctor with literally a full decontamination suit crying at the fact that nobody is listening and staying home. The news was filled with so much information on COVID, newscasters even had to work from home, everything was shut down!!!. But there's always a group of people that didn't listen and still went out and about and so many “Karen's” complaining about masks and new rules at all stores. Like I said, it didn't feel like the end of the world, but it felt like the world was falling. So much was going on; depression, stress and sadness was all over the air. So many NEW rules came out in all types of stores: “You must wear a mask here and there,” “keep a distance of 6 feet,” “disinfect everything you have.” When these new rules started coming out towards, “the dial down of the virus” life, it was still hard to manage. I was inside the house for so long, I don't even remember when this all started. I wasn't able to see my boyfriend as much as I wanted to, so staying home from school put a “little” bit of weight on all of us. My whole senior year has been

online and I never thought I would say this but I really do miss my school. Although this pandemic really changed me spiritually, mentally and emotionally in a good and bad way and I'm very proud of my changes, although there's some pros and cons, we're all human. Everyone missed out on so much at the end of my junior year, I was supposed to be in driving school but this pandemic shut everything down. It was such a mess. A lot of people were afraid and I was too. Due to the fact they literally shut school down I was like, "dang, this just got real." My biggest problem was me not being able to go outside... I was getting older and at that time I was supposed to be doing teenage stuff but I had to sit inside of a toxic environment for months. It was so terrible, I was at a high level of sadness that could have turned into a medium level of depression. Being in a house full of people that made me depressed for years was just so draining and my boyfriend's mom was really strict, so I wasn't able to see my boyfriend that much. My boyfriend is like my whole happiness, sad to say he's the only one that can make me smile, happy and laugh. I had to find so many new ways to manage a new way of life. I have picked up new habits that are not so bad, but it hit me differently. The past 2 years have really been a circus show, not a funny and weird show, to me it's been a black and white depressed circus show with many dark secrets behind everything.

Rafael DeJesus

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _6____

22 April 2021

School During the Pandemic

CoronaVirus.... I do not even know where to start. To be honest, I can not even remember when the pandemic started. This pandemic has changed my life as well as every other life around me. We have to wear masks, can not go out to certain places, social distancing... It is just all bad. I do not like wearing the mask but I know I have to to save myself as well as other people. School has also changed a lot and I do not like it at all. Being online was very hard for me. I thought that I would have been able to adjust to being online, but I just could not do it. I have to be in the school and in the school environment in order to do well. The second we had the choice to come back, I took it right away. I've seen my grades improve a lot just by being in school. There still are some struggles with the CoronaVirus in school though. There are not that many students in class and when there is, we have to social distance. We have to stop learning a couple minutes before the bell rings just to wipe down and sanitize our desks. This is my senior year, but I hope the next school year is not like this for the rest of the students to enjoy the school year. I wonder when this will all be over? I hope it is soon so we can just get back to living our normal lives and doing what we normally would do. I'm hoping that it is over soon but I do not think it will be.

Chloe Henry

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 6

22 April 2021

The Covid Depression

I feel like I've written a lot about how I felt during this pandemic. Not just for school, but personally as well. When this pandemic first started, I thought it was going to be over in "like" a

month. But little did I know, it lasted a whole year and is still going. During the summer of this pandemic, it was great and it didn't really feel like a pandemic was going on. I felt this way because there were a lot of things I could do outside. I am not really an outside person, but I'm very happy that I got out of the house because I am usually the type of person who just stays in the house all day and watch tv.

As the summer started to end, and school started back up, I didn't feel the same as I felt during the summer. I felt very trapped, it felt like no one was there for me. I just didn't feel any emotion towards anything. It got to a point where I would stay in my room and not do anything at all, and when the night came around, I would sometimes cry myself to sleep because I would think about a lot of things. I did have people I could talk to, but it just felt like they didn't get what I was going through. At one point of time, I met this boy and little did I know, he was going to be a really good friend to me. We would hang out every weekend and talk everyday. This went on for about 2 months, but we had a falling out for a while and I went back to how I felt before I met him. About a month went by and I went to the doctor. I ended up telling my doctor how I was feeling and she diagnosed me with depression. It was very hard for me to open up about my situation and there were a lot of tears in that conversation, but it felt good talking to her about it.

Time went by and me and the guy started talking again, and were still friends until this day. He and my best friend Luz have been there for me and I am very appreciative! I'm still going through things but for me, this is something that can't really go away because of everything I've been through, even before this pandemic. But I can say I'm pushing through it and have a very healthy support system.

Ashlei Hickson

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 6th

22 April 2021

The Final Stretch

As I sit here writing this, I am just thinking of what an experience high school has been for me. From meeting new people and forming new friendships, to losing old friends and having bonds that took years to build, which can be broken in a matter of seconds. Throughout my 4 years, I have had a lot of people teach me a lot of things and I have realized that I am very comfortable with being alone. Over 4 years, I have had friends, acquaintances, and associates that have come and gone. But as I sit here daydreaming about Graduation Day, I can say that I am happy with the friends I have made. This year, especially, has been kind of amazing. I am graduating and going to college but when this year started, I thought it was going to be the longest year EVER, but I guess that was the opposite because this year literally flew by. I find it hard to believe that prom is in 1 week and graduation is 1 month and 1 week away. In that time, I hope to create more memories even if it is over a computer screen or from a distance. I know it's not much time left in my senior year but I feel like I have all of the time in the world to sit back and reminisce on what a whirlwind these 4 years have been and what I have gained and lost. I am excited to see what my future holds and how some lessons I learned in high school help me and guide me through college. I can't wait to hear those words, "Class of 2021, please turn your tassels to the right" or whatever they say in the movies. At that moment, I will feel like I have officially closed one of the best chapters in my life.

Emani Jackson

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Really!

Everything I had to deal with during this pandemic was horrible. I got so behind in class because I was more focused on other things. And usually I don't get distracted like that. On another note, I didn't catch Covid and I'm so happy about that. But that didn't stop me from ending up in the hospital. Beating myself up over different topics and things really got to me. Hoping in the future that will never happen again. I kind of lost it at one point and I went crazy but I was very able to bounce back into my life. The lockdown really messed a lot of things up for me and I'm not too happy about that! But who is?

Jason Lopez

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Life is different....

This pandemic is the worst thing that can happen to the people in the world and the people that are in school. There are bad and good things that happened to me during this time of the pandemic. I am going to start off with the bad things that happened to us during this pandemic. You know me going into freshman year of high school thinking, “yeah we're going to have the best time of my life on graduation and the day after.” Thought we were going to spend time with our friends and go out and have fun. Another thing I was hoping to do this year was do senior “ditch” day, senior prank day, prom, farewell, Cedar Point, sports, and stuff like *Kairos*, etc.

All I wanted was to have the best and smooth senior year before I set off with starting life as an adult and taking a lot of responsibility for myself and becoming an adult. But I was wrong, it was boring, terrible, and I was doing all of my school work and classes online and not being able to see my friends. I know all of the time when I was at school, I said, “I wish I could just do work at home,” but I lied, I hate doing school work here. I wish I was at school with my friends. Another thing that is bad to us and other people is that we are losing jobs. When we are losing our jobs, we can't get money and that leads to not being able to pay bills and leads to homelessness and that's bad. Starting with the good things that happened during this pandemic is I was able to work on myself. It was really good that this happened because I worked a lot on my mental and physical health. I am a different person than I was before the pandemic and now I think that's a good thing that happened during this pandemic.

Jeudis Montgomery

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period ___6__

22 April 2021

Game Changer

The thing that has changed my life is Covid-19 and it changed many things for me. Since the pandemic started, I have not gone to school yet, at least not to the actual building. I haven't been able to see all of my teachers and classmates and just the staff. School was a getaway place for me, surrounded by many of my friends and teachers that actually cared for their students and all of that has been taken away by a virus called Corona. Due to this, many of my family members have been out of work, struggling, trying to find ways to pay bills trying to borrow money, but it ends up in the same predicament the next month. This has been a long and hard year for many of our family members, they lost due to this virus, sitting in my room hoping and praying this will all be over soon. Thinking that life would never be normal. Wanting to take the vaccine but in fear of losing my life, this year has taught me to cherish everyone this year that Corona has sat everybody down, and showed me to value things differently when it's gone and this is time we can't get back. I live day to day trying to get through this in fear of going out, thinking I might come in contact and be ill and die in fear for my life, not knowing what can happen and then hearing stories of doctors killing us, not knowing what to believe just wishing outside would be outside again, making it safe to go out and hang out with family and friends again.

Giovanni Murillo

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 6

22 April 2021

2020

During my whole lifetime on Earth, I thought to myself that my life was going to be original and normal, but I would still be happy either way, but the beginning of 2020 started off pretty bad to the point where I saw a one time opportunity which a lot of bad things happened; any tragedies that made 2020 was probably one of the worst years that happened and the opportunity I saw was that this was part of history. This year was a start of many things, such as someone as myself living and experiencing these catastrophes which will mark this year to be one of the worst, but how we dealt with it and moved on to be stronger people and to have a caring system around the world such as the Corona Virus which we dealt as not only as a country. We treat it as a world wide serious problem, which we try to make up ideas to make to help this future and generation to move forward and to make it go to the right direction and to prepare the future for future world wide situations that will cause a threat towards everyone. But we can use this year 2020 that us as the world and we were able to move forward and be proud and how we were able to pass and protect our futures in order for them to prepare themselves and to see that how 2020 was the year that almost every threat was brought to us which we will become the prime example of all of mankind came as one to live through this year.

Kayla Owens

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

WHO KNEW?

Who knew 3 weeks can turn into something that feels like a lifetime? Just when this whole thing started, everyone was so excited for 3 weeks off of school. Who knew that we would have never returned? Who knew that we would have been on “lock down” and not able to see friends or even family. This whole Covid Pandemic has changed many things for me, my family and just the world in general due to the pandemic. People in my family have lost their jobs, jobs that they have been at for 10+ years (crazy right?) This pandemic has caused teachers to be teaching their students, yet what about the students who are “hands on,” working over a computer can be harder than you think. This pandemic has caused us to wear face coverings. How are we supposed to breathe? How are we supposed to feel this pandemic caused by emotional feelings of people getting depressed because a virus is telling us to stay inside. What happens to the people who need fresh air? This pandemic has made me realize how much your life can change in a second. I was looking forward to my senior year and I had to spend it over a computer. This is time that I won't get back and you only get this experience one time and it has just been stolen from me, although it's been a crappy year, there has been some good, but the bad outweighs the good. Just living day to day, praying things go back to normal and outside feels like outside again.

Cornelius Shepherd

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

Trials and tribulations (Certified Speaker)

As I sit back and think about the horrible time when Covid had struck , this is a tragic timing and will forever be a difficult thing to just bypass. When I first heard about the city being shut down, I couldn't believe it and my friends took it as a joke at first, until we still went outside during the shutdown and did not see anyone on the rides. When this pandemic hit, it stopped me from going to school, doing stuff I normally would do and that affected me a lot; grades dropped, I felt over worked through this pandemic. I lost so many friends and connections with people because of this. But the good stuff out of this pandemic, is I learned things about myself that I never knew and all it took was for me to be alone.

I felt like I was in a deep dark space by myself, it's really a mindset type thing, what you need to know is that it's okay to be alone, it's okay to have them emotions, just don't let it bring you down or bring you to a breaking point, seeing people die from this sickness has had me furious and scared because my mom had caught Covid and just seeing her like that and the way she was moving had me worried. I tried my best to not think the worst, but as I was on social media, I would see different types of things about the virus, such as many people dying from it or either catching it or trying to treat it. This didn't just affect me, it affected other families throughout the entire world. Life before the pandemic was way better, I think after this pandemic is over, it still will never go back to how it was. But before Covid had struck, people should have been taking precautions and taking care of themselves such as washing their hands and stuff like that, it shouldn't take for this type of stuff to happen for people to take that into consideration.

People started hurting because they didn't have any money, people lost their jobs, small businesses were going out of business, students weren't coming to school, graduations, proms, weren't the same or were postponed. Kids fighting depression and not everyone can learn through a computer.

Emoni Squire

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period __6__

22 April 2021

Pandemic Story

I knew things were going to be going downhill when they gave us 3 weeks off when Covid first kicked off. Once they did that, I just knew we were never coming back to school or it will never be normal again. As the months go on and the summer goes by, my senior year comes along (worst year ever). So, they had us getting online for at least one or two days out of the week. I hated going online because I'm the type of person in some subjects, I have to be face to face taught.

I just think to myself, "why did this have to happen my senior year?" I was looking forward to this year. Let's get into my personal life a little, because it really affects my school year. In September, one of my uncles passed away and was the worst part about life. I kind of fell off with school because I just wasn't able to function. Then comes December, the worst month EVER! My grandmother passed away out of nowhere, she was never sick or anything. She had a little cold, that's it , here comes all of the extra stuff. December 7, 2020 was the worst day of my

life hearing that news. This was the biggest effect to me because when you use to see someone everyday, to not see them at all, it can be so tragic. I was out of school for so long, I couldn't focus, my mind was just everywhere. Here comes the end of December and I hear that my "auntie" has only a couple weeks to live, so now I have more stress to worry about. The beginning of January she passed. So, I'm missing more school because of that. Overall, I pulled everything together and thought to myself and said, "they wouldn't want me to be so behind like this," so my first and quarter grades were straight A's.

Jayni Drake

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

"Meh"

It's crazy that it's been over a year since Covid took over the world. Nobody was prepared for how this virus would affect everyone's daily life. When it was the last day of school, before the lockdown happened, I think that everybody had a feeling that we wouldn't be coming back for the rest of the school year. The teachers were telling the students to take everything out of their lockers, just in case. I remember writing on a dry erase board in school, "Happy Last Day of School," not knowing what was going to happen.

Now, I'm just over this situation as a whole. I was never interested in school, but now my concentration on school has diminished. I couldn't even take the classes I wanted because they weren't being offered due to Covid. Senior year is supposed to be the year for students to just

relax and enjoy their last year of high school. Now, there is nothing enjoyable about senior year and there isn't anything to look forward to. When I was younger, I wanted to be homeschooled. Now, at least I am fulfilling that wish I used to have.

Bree~Etta Byrge

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 8

22 April 2021

A Year Of Remembrance

As we grow, we hear stories of the past about how people of that time dealt with a *Plague* or epidemic that was a major setback towards the growth of other nations. We never imagined living through something like that in our lifetime, but it turns out, we were wrong. Over the past year or so we as a whole were shut down and by a whole, I mean the whole Earth seemed like it was in "lock down;" country after country was affected by this pandemic, it seems like this will never end. The virus known as Covid 19 has impacted many nations as it began to seemingly take over the Earth. Places that were once full of life and laughter are now dark and silent. People are scared to leave their home, afraid of getting this virus. There was a race for a vaccine that may seem not like any other but because of the rush, now no one knows how this can affect human life in the future. Covid is always going to impact our world, we will most likely be wearing masks for months or maybe even years that are still to come. But Covid is not the only problem that has wrecked our world over this past year.

Violence has spread through our nation. People, innocent people, are dying everyday because of hate and injustice. Throughout this year, I have heard so many instances where police harmed people in violent and unjust ways. Innocent people were killed, due to hate crimes. Even more innocent people were killed, due to an injustice in our government and court systems. African Americans and other ethnicity groups are fighting for basic rights that they should already have. People are posting, just hoping someone will hear and help but it's like know one can hear, or is just ignoring the fact that people are fighting for the rights to be treated as human. Whether it's because of their skin, gender, or sexuality, people are fighting for the right to live and be human. It's insane that humans have to fight to be treated and respected as a human. Did you know that every person on this planet shares 99.9% of their DNA ? Yes, we share DNA with our friends, neighbors, strangers, so why are we hating on people. The people that share and spread hate need to know that by hating on people, they are also hating on the same DNA that they have and that their family has. They wouldn't want someone hurting them and their families, so why harm others? We as humans should be bannng together and helping each other. Our world is a dark and hateful place full of death and injustices and something needs to change. Our world is not going to last if we don't change. People are dying because of the ideals that are spread throughout our nations. And if we want to be able to truly live we need to change. It's hard for one person to change the world, but if you stop hating on the people around you and do the right thing and the best you can, you can help change. We need to not only stand up for ourselves but others. We need to become a nation of helping and working together to change, to get justice for those who can't. We need to do better, I need to do better, you need to do better. Let's change the world and change the direction of our nation or else we will be our own downfall.

Kaitlin Cooper

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 8

22 April 2021

A Time I Will Never Forget

I will always remember my senior year of high school. I turned 18, I applied to colleges, I attended prom, and I graduated. I had laughs with my friends and family and I also cried some tears. There are so many things that happened this year that I will never forget. But a time I will never forget, no matter what, is the Coronavirus. Yes, I was able to do a lot more during 2021. 2020 was a complete disaster, because everything was closed and we had nowhere to go. We had a little bit of freedom this year, but we were still bothered with staying 6 feet apart at all times, “where your masks,” use hand sanitizer, and if you have any symptoms of the virus, you have to stay in quarantine for two weeks.

Where has my senior year gone? I’ve been learning over a computer screen. I feel so bad for every single teacher and student because we had to find new ways to learn and teach. We had to come up with different ways to complete our work and get assignments in on time. “Due at 11:59,” I see all over my screen about 5 times every day. I try to get my assignments done and turned in on time, but I am struggling and I feel so alone. I get no sleep because I want to meet that deadline to not disappoint anyone. I miss seeing my friends everyday and creating new memories at school. I miss hearing their laughs and seeing their faces grow red because they are laughing too much. I miss the corny jokes they would crack that we would still be laughing about till next week. I want my life back! I have been missing out on so much this year. This is not how

my senior year was supposed to be. My face is hidden behind a mask and I forgot how my closest friends look sometimes. It's a struggle living in this new life. I feel like there is no end.

Jalen Green

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period _____

22 April 2021

End of the Beginning

Today is April 22, 2021. That means we are under a month until we all graduate. This school year has been one of the most interesting years of my life. Who would have thought we would be in school during a pandemic? Now, I was one of the kids who did not go to school in the beginning of the year. I thought I could handle being homeschooled. It is hard to do school work at home. When you are entering adulthood your workload can be a ton. I was having trouble multitasking between work and school, real life situations, and family issues. I thought I had it all figured out in the beginning until the time came and I was losing my mind. I fell way off track and my grades slipped to the bottom of the slope. My senior year was now hanging by a rope. I had to get myself together.

When you're looking for success, it all starts with you. You have to be willing to make the change. When it comes down to it, people can't make your life decisions for you. I've made friends and realized I didn't have any in this pandemic, but then again, it all starts with you to make your life shift in the direction you want it. Now, I am on to the end of the finish line of my

high school days and I plan on attending Notre Dame College for sport's management. My grades have boosted dramatically just by me switching back to in person learning.

Lastly, this pandemic has taught me to love the ones that are close to me. In the snap of a finger, they could be gone. Cherish the moments with your loved ones while they are still here, and do not play with sickness.

Valeri Hernandez

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 8th

22 April 2020

“I Can't Take It Anymore”

“My forest was dark. The trees were sad and all of the butterflies had broken wings.”

- Unknown.

Reading this quote takes me back to those days when time would move so slow, when I felt like something wasn't right with me but I just couldn't figure it out. We often focus on the physical pain we feel and we tend to take care of it as soon as possible. If we do this, then why don't we do the same when we know we are in pain even if nothing physically hurts? People will tell you it's all in your head and they are right but that doesn't fix anything or make it any easier.

Being inside of my house for 6 weeks with my family, at first sounded like a vacation at home. The first couple of weeks were fine, I kind of got my life together. After that, everything started to fall apart. I am an overthinker and I love to think but I believe that thinking 24/7, 7

days a week isn't the healthiest thing to do. You start to think about everything, to worry about everything, things that you shouldn't even be worrying about. Once you are lying on the shower floor or can't sleep at night. It's when you realize that you are not okay, that you need to get out and have human interaction with someone other than the 4 people you live with. You need to get out and live life, to stop being used as an electronic device all day, to distract yourself from your thoughts.

Being in quarantine made me dependent on others, made me think that I couldn't be alone, that I needed to be surrounded by people 24/7. I can be alone now, and I am slowly starting to enjoy my own company again. Now, I need to keep myself busy 24/7, I need to squish a ball, I need to play with spinners, I need to play with sand and rocks. That's the only way that I can't stop moving. Otherwise, I would just start walking around, and those are the ways for me to escape my head and its thoughts. I know what I need to do to get better but sometimes it's hard to pull yourself out of the dark but once you do, it becomes easier each time. Once that pain doesn't hurt anymore, not anything can break you.

Amado Lazo Jr.

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period __8__

22 April 2021

My Pandemic Life

I spend my boring days at home. I don't go out often but when I do, I feel as if I should've never left home. I think to myself that the time isn't right yet, I shouldn't leave home. I started to think more about my future, what can I do to be successful? I started to make decisions since some say I'm falling behind. I decided to study and research investments instead of getting a job. I didn't want to take the risk of getting my family Covid, so I took another risk and chose investments. I made my buys and now I just wait. I workout almost every day, go to school and keep my grades up. I practice boxing and always have something in thought. I work on cars and watch videos that teach me more and more everyday. It does seem like a very boring lifestyle, but all that has happened gave me the time to learn more and more. I obviously don't want this lifestyle forever, but I will have to for now. Times have changed and we had to change with it. I say that I use my time wisely and focus on what I need to. Looking back at what has happened, I haven't seen people face to face in a long time. I haven't done anything exciting or fun in over a year, which surprises me, but as P Diddy said in the song, *Victory* Featuring Biggie, "The sun don't shine forever, but since we here we might as well shine together. Business before pleasure." I think I got to prioritize things correctly.

Nancy Lopez

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 8

22 April 2021

It's For The Best

People are so afraid of change, when something slightly changes in our daily lives, we do not know how to react. We sometimes don't even realize that what is changing is actually for our own good. We were forced to quarantine and not allowed out. We were smacked down and forced to spend so much alone time. People got to discover themselves more profoundly. Some are forced to spend time with their family, which could be good or bad, depending on everyone's situations. The point is, change is good, it means the world is evolving.

So, maybe COVID-19 wasn't the kind of change any of us wanted. It held us back from many events, and important things people were looking forward to. Did we not get to see how important small things were to us when they got taken away? Things so simple, like being able to fly on a plane! Or even just go to the shopping center. We took so many things for granted and when we couldn't have them, we didn't know what to do. Mental health issues arose as people were going through depression and anxiety. Having depression during quarantine just made things worse due to the fact that people couldn't go out and socialize, if that is how they coped. But on the other hand, it helped. Having to stay inside, being alone, being able to handle alone time, to know that you don't constantly have to be around people. Some in fact learned that being around people was the cause of their problems.

Personally for me, being stuck at home during quarantine helped me. I'd like to say that my anxiety around people got better. Which sounds weird considering I wasn't around people, but it helped me get more self confident. A couple of months later, restaurants started opening up again, and I was able to get a job. I was able to leave the house and make some money. But of course, we were still in a pandemic. And people were not like me, they were angry. They were mad about face masks, and how not all of the tables were available due to constructing the social distancing protocols. It was very stressful at first, but I understood them. They don't like change.

They can't accept change. They want everything back to normal, but then you wonder where things are even normal to begin with. There was always something, there will always be something.

Denise McDaniel

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 8

22 April 2021

What a “Panoramic”

I was lost in the pandemic going to school and working, it put me in a bad spot. Hearing that Covid-19 was in the air and coming to America, jobs around me started to go under, businesses closing, except the grocery stores and convenience stores. I knew my time would come soon to leave my job because I didn't want to contract the virus. Losing my job would leave me at a point where I would have to invest in myself and find ways to make money. I'd find ways working with family and doing hair, but I knew that wouldn't cut it; that was just to get me by.

I realized I couldn't take things, I did everyday for granted like I used to. No more trips to get my hair and nails done with my friends all because of a virus. The government wanted mayor's to start placing laws stopping people from going places at certain times and making everyone wear a mask, mandatory. I really hate wearing masks because it makes my face feel weird. I really learned to deal with the pandemic, I just had to focus. Knowing that things will get better over time has helped me stay strong during the pandemic.

Khyyana Moore

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 8

22 April 2021

I Am Myself..

During this pandemic, I've been filled with anger and resentment, and need for release. I, who loves to travel and meet new people and have new experiences, have been caged. It's been said that one may "know why the caged bird sings," but there's been no sweet song. I wish that I could make a claim so lovely as that of learning a new skill or language or finding a new passion, but if anything, I feel more lost than ever. Up to this point in my life, my decisions have been made for me. I was made in a mold, an image that found joy in following directions and receiving praise for it. Do what I'm told and do it right so that no one has a problem. I was made to believe that every authoritative figure knew better than I, and life would be better if I didn't give my own input.

But then one day, I was forced to make my own choices. Each day, I was forced to make my own choices with no prior experience or idea of what I was supposed to do. What do I want? I don't know. I kept seeking direction, fine instructions of how I should look and feel and act, anything to remove the pressure of making my own decisions, the real struggle being the fear of choosing incorrectly.. I looked to those who directed me before only to find them enraged. "Why do you need help? Why can't you do this? What is wrong with you?" What is wrong with me? I did everything I was supposed to, so why are things going so wrong? Why are they so hard?

I found myself in a situation where I attempted to make my own choice. I was finally confident in one decision, and it was shattered. My thoughts slammed and injured by that of the overseer. I was confused. Why was I wrong? How can I think in a more correct way like everyone else? I thought and I thought and I stressed and I cried and I strained my every waking thought as to why I was not as perfect as those before me.. And it clicked. I was filled with rage and grief and sorrow having come to infinite conclusions at once. I would never be as perfect as those before me. I would never be able to pass those in authority over me! I would never get to think like them.

I was lied to. There is no perfection. There is no goal to strive for, no people I needed to be enough for. I was lied to. They lied to me. I was told to follow rules, rules that I had no say in and I was LIED TO. I was created broken. And now I was left a broken shell that needed to repair myself. I wasn't a person. I was an idea of what everyone else wanted me to be.

Now, I am taking the steps to fix myself. I am doing what I want to, and thinking what I want. I am becoming comfortable with myself, embracing all of the things that people don't like about me, because those are the parts that I am. I'm going to dress how I want and eat what I want and do what I want and BE WHO I WANT. I have learned to be myself.

Charli Sanders

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period ___8__

22 April 2021

Pandemic Party

In the beginning of the pandemic, the news and outside resources had everyone on their toes and afraid for what was to come next. We were all under the impression that this sickly disease would not be around more than a few months and everything would go back to normal. As we come upon our first year in this pandemic, we found out we may be in it longer than we expected. Even though the world is going through a weird time, I've been through a lot that I feel would have not happened if I were still in school everyday. I have met new people, had new experiences, and made a lot of new opportunities for myself. One of my best memories over this pandemic was going to Puerto Rico. We all had the time of our lives going on vacation. We all tried new foods that we can not try at home and got to expand our culture by learning about a new one. We met famous people from the United States and also from Puerto Rico. We explored the island and all of the hidden gems that only certain people knew about. There was one night we met a group of people and their vibes were immaculate, I can honestly say I have never met anyone in my life that could compare to these people. They made us all feel like different people, even though they were strangers, we had an odd sense of safety while we were with them. I am so grateful for this experience because going somewhere besides the United States really opened my eyes that there is a whole world out there and tons of people of all cultures I have never seen before.

Tiana Shannon

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period 8

22 April 2021

The Musical Dance

Our spiritual soul is dancing with the wind, we have been battling with our physical form; hearts beating, marching like a drumline. Minds of the era have been blindsighted deep as the self conscious. We stand in the frontline of a dangerous symphony of violence. Dealing with the law enforcement never knowing cherries picking whose next or who gets to stay. Either incarcerated or leaving in a body bag no matter the age. When covid begins, death doesn't discriminate, it is blindsighted and takes and takes.

Fear blasting through the streets is only chaos, never knowing half the fear behind closed doors. For some, like the silence when a ballerina dances, the tears and cries of domestic violence victims, kids dealing with depression. Never even trusted the news since a young age, seen with my own eyes how it can be twisted. Like that man who was shot and killed in front of my window on 93rd and Kinsman by law enforcement. News claimed he had a gun and the public never got the real picture. People just now scream, "Black Lives Matter," mothers always losing their sons and needing a tissue. Can't even protest in the streets with beings looked at as a threat. When you really look at it, everything forever repeats, when is the real change? People are looking for someone to blame, even God. But it's really the musical dance, a beautiful symphony with the devil as the conductor of it all.

Asya Smith

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period ____

22 April 2021

Evolving

In today's society, the word "quarantine" used to be foreign, but after last year, it became an everyday word to many Americans. Hearing that a huge virus was forcing everyone into their homes was crazy and quite frankly, I didn't believe it would happen until it did. March 2020, my life changed forever. I didn't know what to expect hearing that everything was closing and that I wouldn't be able to do what I normally do. From being a very busy person moving around doing things nonstop, to having no choice but to sit in the house all day and do nothing. However, I decided to not dwell on what I couldn't change and take advantage of the things I could. This year, I learned a lot about myself. I also learned that I don't need much to be happy. This year, I focused on my my self care more than I ever have. Small things make me happy, especially self care things. I love doing my hair, taking baths, at home pedicures, baking, and plenty of other small things around the house. Taking care of myself is such a big part of my life now and I wouldn't have it any other way. Another thing I love is being kind to others. That's one of the biggest things I've learned, that being kind or helping others where I can help them makes me feel good. It brings me joy to know that I am bringing joy to others. For that, I think that it has made me a better person. Although this year hasn't been the easiest, I'm glad good things have come out of it.

Aliyah White

Mr. Rock

English 12, Period __8__

22 April 2021

The Not So Bad Experience

Coronavirus has been a very weird experience; it was a good thing but a bad thing. I didn't get my senior year and that hit me hard. I had to start off my year on a computer. Staying in my room everyday was very different. I hated every moment of it because I couldn't see my friends. I couldn't go out like I always did. Everything was very different but not everything was so bad. I ended up getting a job and because of Corona, I got a raise. I went from making \$8.50 an hour to \$10 and it got higher as time went on. I still wish I could have had my senior year. I usually stayed and talked with my mom everyday and that caused us to become very close, closer than we've ever been. I'm not sure how my life would be right now if Covid had never come around, I would have had my senior year like I wanted, but I wouldn't have met my best friend at my job, and I wouldn't have gotten closer with my family. I guess it wasn't as bad as I made it, but I just wish I got to live more before going to college. I feel like I'm not prepared enough to be on my own because I never could be on my own. I didn't get a chance to get a car as soon as I wanted to because Covid made my hours get cut at work. So, no work would mean no money. Sometimes I think I should thank Covid though because I turned into a different person. I learned how to love myself and learned my self worth. I will always hate the idea that Covid came into my life, but at the same time, it was my blessing.

Ronee' Armstrong

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Faith Continues to Grow

“You can't be too afraid to fail, it's the only way to succeed. You're not going to succeed all of the time and I know that.” *-LeBron James*

My life was actually turned upside down in the year 2012. My mother became seriously ill all of a sudden. They say, “health runs in the family” and this is a true fact and I am here today to be the hope for my mother, myself, and our future together. My mom was diagnosed with many health problems that year, including nerve damage, spine issues, had a stroke that year, due to heart failure and one would think this would happen over time, but in this case, it rocked our world all at once and left us literally in the dust.

Believe it or not, my mother is my beacon of light, my hope, my faith and my blessing and to see the woman who holds this family together really tight, it took a toll on my mind and way of thinking. My grades began to plummet, my health began to diminish because all I could do was think about my mother all day. How is a young teenager supposed to concentrate on school, try to be involved in extracurriculars, figure out what I am to do after my senior year and come home to take care of my wonderful, yet ill mother?

As the years go on my mother's illness becomes more stressful, as a senior in high school and I'm trying to manage school, work and apply to colleges. Her illness is becoming an effect that's

hurting many people. My senior year has been very difficult as it started, as to COVID coming around, my mother has been going in and out lately. It hurts me seeing my best friend experiencing all that pain and I can't do anything about it. As time passes by, there's been a lot of pressure on me to be a role model for my sister and buy things that are needed in the house. With my mom being sick, she hasn't worked in forever, but she still makes a way for anything we ask for.

As many say, "life may get hard but it's on you if you make it hard." My mother's illness became an obstacle for me, my sisters, my family and I. I learned that making sacrifices is the best way to go. Many may give up and let the obstacle get a hold of them but with me, I am continuing to push through this tough life even if it knocks me down harder each time. Life has been very stressful for me after coming home from working an 8 hour shift everyday, going straight to practice and when done, coming home to cook and take care of my mother. I ask myself everyday, "how am I going to manage helping my mother, focusing on online school, going to work, taking care of my younger siblings and focusing on being a great leader at practice?" Now, I'm working less, taking good care of my mom when needed, and focusing more on school and being able to get applications turned in. I am a young talented lady who figured out the best way to live life during a stressful time of the year. A way to make the world a better place and be able to live through their tough obstacles. I am important to the world today. I made a difference in life by facing my obstacles.

Kiemescha Austin

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Covid Catastrophe

“ as with the butterfly , adversity is necessary to build character in people. “

-Joseph B . Wirthlin

As you get older and figure things out, you seem to have the knowledge of everything and know what life's really like. Many friends and family teach you new things and you learn new things yourself. There's always the question, “What are you going to do after high school?” And most people's responses are “college,” “the Army” or maybe they don't even know . Going to high school taught me many different things and made me into the person I am today. There are many types of people who have your best interest at heart. Being able to have the types of friendships I have from high school is great, I've met great people who helped me tremendously, from the teachers to my friends. I think life after high school would be the best for me. You meet many new people and experience things you've never experienced before. There are going to be many hardships when you move on from high school, there are going to be new faces that help bring you up and maybe the person you are going to be in the future. You will face many challenges but you have to put your faith in everything and go for what you want, live your life to the fullest and be what you want to be.

Now that I am halfway through my high school senior year, college has been on my mind a lot. Applying to many colleges out of state means meeting new people and starting new

friendships. There are going to be many lessons I learn when I am away by myself, but I'll have God by my side. Being around good energy and positive people will bring great things into my life. It will be very emotional when I start my new life after high school, such as leaving my family and friends. I hope it won't be very hard for me to adapt to the new things when I arrive at college. College will be the best thing for me because I would like to meet new people and continue my education and become a nurse. Following my goals and dreams will be the best decisions I've ever made for myself.

Name De'Vion Boyd

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

A New World

*“Empty your mind, be formless, shapeless — **like water**. Now you put **water** in a cup, it becomes **the cup**; You put **water** into a bottle it becomes **the bottle**; You put it in a teapot it becomes **the teapot**. Now **water** can flow or it can crash. Be **water, my friend**.”*

-Bruce Lee

2020, just like every year before it, we thought it was going to be “Our Year.” The year where we’d come one step closer into leaving a mark on the world. It’s just a little funny how this time around, how wrong we’d end up being. For some people, like DaBaby and Cardi B (musical

icons) it was, that they turned a challenging circumstance into success or I'd like to say a world full of lemons into a world full of lemonade. Yet, for everyone else, COVID-19 halted everything in almost a blink of an eye, it became almost like a new world. My name is De'Vion Boyd, I'm the oldest out of 8 siblings on both my mom and dad's side of the family and because of this, since the beginning, I had high expectations from my family, especially on my dad's side. My grandad is the one who pushes me the most, I appreciate it because I know he's trying to make me the best version of myself I can be. I'm from Cleveland, Ohio, AKA, "The Land," one of the greatest places to be (completely biased).

Some great people came from here, such as Steph Curry, Thomas Edison, LeBron James and hopefully myself. 2020 has been filled with its fair share of hardships and obstacles, some of which have been too much to bear. One of its hardest was the loss of Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna Bryant and the other seven victims in a helicopter crash. As well as Chadwick Boseman, who died of Colon cancer that he had been fighting for four years. Due to COVID-19, I've had to stop playing basketball because they've taken all the rims off the hoops and I watched as the seniors before me became sad and disappointed because they wouldn't be able to have a prom like the seniors before them. Despite all of these hardships and obstacles, I've learned to let my mind be "formless like water" and focus on the positives and focus on bettering myself. During quarantine, instead of watching Netflix all day and playing my games (although I was doing that too) I was working out and working on improving my art skills.

In The midst of COVID-19, I was somehow able to get a job that my uncle offered me at his restaurant (Sam's Sylks) and even made a new group of friends that I go "hoop" with on their courts whenever I don't work. In conclusion, by making my mind "formless" and focusing on

myself, I've learned to overcome all obstacles and I plan on applying this to college and to the rest of my life.

Ashley Davis

College Essay

5 October 2020

More Than A Sport

"You have to be willing to fail to improve."

-Al Scates

Volleyball has had a positive impact on my life which has helped shape me into the person I am today. I say that because it helped me become confident in my body, taught me social skills, self-discipline, how to be a good winner, even if I lose, and to work extremely hard and never give up. With that, I have gained lifelong friendships that I call family. Being a part of a team for seven years has had a huge impact on my life.

Going on to play volleyball for my community recreation center in fourth grade was just something to do for fun until I really began to commit to the game. When I entered high school, I was so excited to finally play on a bigger, more serious team. That was until I went in for my physical and I was told I was not allowed to play due to health problems and that was a major setback. I went through multiple EKG's, which are tests that measure your heart activity. I had shortness of breath, I would pass out often, the doctors even thought that they would eventually turn into seizures.

Today, I can say I'm much better than what I was three years ago. I am thankful to say that I was able to play my Sophomore and Junior year. That experience helped me realize to never take anything for granted, and appreciate the little things because they can be taken away from you in a heartbeat. Being on a team pushed me to do better in school, it taught me leadership, and it always taught me to be a student first and an athlete second. Volleyball has served me by providing me a place to escape from the "real world."

Volleyball has prepared me for my future in many ways. I am always learning from my mistakes. In volleyball, when you do something wrong, there is always room for improvement and when you make a mistake, you brush it off, you keep going until you get it right and you know not to do it again. Taking criticism from others, on the court you hear people in the stands, the other teams criticize you but that only makes you stronger. It strengthens your weaknesses. Setting and accomplishing goals, setting team goals or individual goals, achieving goals is the way to winning in life. Keeping your emotions in check, on a court you can't show that you're upset or mad, you learn to keep that under control. In life, not everything needs a reaction out of you, you learn to not show it and you learn to excel with all of the skills you have gained.

Willie Fleming Jr.

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Mentality

“You only see obstacles when you take your eye off the goal.”

- *W Fleming*

The smell of the new school year has made me get into such a great mood, but knowing that we will not attend school because of COVID doesn't sit right with me. It is my senior year and I wanted to at least enjoy it one last time with the people I know and the ones that I may never see again. I do like school online a little because I still can enjoy it with my associates, including my teachers. It is a little different, but it's worth it because I am still learning and working towards the goal to get my diploma. COVID was a major obstacle when I took my eye off the goal of education because I really couldn't focus on what I was doing at first when our school went virtual. There was so much chaos in the world with this virus, but I learned how to stay to myself, continued to live, and I continue to go on for my success, because it was so easy for me to take my eye off the goal and get distracted, now I am on track.

I also can't sit right with the fact that my school is not doing sports this year because there are a lot of students that use sports to get away from the “streets” and trouble, etc. They should at least let basketball be one of the major sports this year because most students play basketball and that is their ticket out of whatever situation they have at home and the sport is also an entertainment for others to watch the students play. I understand this because I was once a basketball player and I played from 5th to 8th grade. I made the 9th grade team, but I didn't play because I was ineligible, I took that eye off the prize. I put everything that means little to me aside and focus on the things that are major in my life now. I have a great future planned out and I'm ready to do whatever it takes to get where I want to be in my future and in life and the first on my list is graduating high school and then, off to college to prove myself once more.

Dalays'ia Maxwell

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Losing both of my grandmother's....

“Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children.” — Alex Haley

Well, I had just moved to Cleveland my freshman year, my first year of high school at Cleveland Central Catholic and it was a big change for me and I'm still trying to adjust to it. I moved in with my grandparents (my mom's side of the family) and I came from my mother's house. She just couldn't take care of me financially on her own so we all felt it was best for me to move to Cleveland. It was tough the first couple of months and I had some bumps in the road but once my grandmas both passed, my perspective on life changed and I realized I wanted to be something for them.

My grandmothers both always wanted the best for me and always looked out for me in ways I can't explain. My first grandmother Genevieve has always been around since I was first born, both of them both have, but she just had me a bit more, but she taught me how to bake and cook ever since I was little and she had me in the kitchen helping her. She was the one that told me I should be a nurse. My second grandmother Gloria always took me out shopping, walking

and getting ice cream and she had a garden I used to help her with. But on the night of homecoming, my grandmother Genevieve passed from a heart attack, I didn't find out til I got home of course, yet it hurts losing someone I was so close with one person I can talk to. I started slipping in school and my grades weren't so good, so that's when I started praying more often because I really didn't like venting to anyone else and I know I needed God the most at that time because I was in a dark place. And Once I finally picked myself up, I got myself all of the way back to me. I realize my grandma wouldn't want me messing up an opportunity for me to get away from Elyria.

My grandmother Gloria had an asthma attack, it was a sad time because I had to be strong for my mom and also be strong. I know my grandma Gloria wouldn't want me to be crying over her death. She had been sick a long time and also battling addiction and it was a hard time, but I promised myself that I wouldn't let this affect my grades and my job that I had at the time.

Danny Mitchell

College Essay

5 October 2020

Life As A Young Man

“Everything is not on veteran mode, take your time and do things how you do it at your own pace and it will be easy.” -Danny Mitchell

My name is Danny Mitchell and this is what you don't know about me. Things nowadays, I wouldn't think would have come this fast. I wake up everyday and say, “here we go again!”

Having school in my head and having work in a few hours gets very frustrating. By me turning 17 in July and turning 18 next year and graduating next year, brings a lot of things into my head. “Am I going to pass high school?” “Am I going to be successful?” And the list goes on and on. By me being the oldest, I have to set an example for my siblings. If they see me going on the wrong path, they will think it's ok. I had to pass so many obstacles to get here and I'm only 17. I ask myself if life as a young man, “is this hard?” I wonder how grown people feel. Life as a young man you have priorities for yourself, you can be successful in the real world like getting your temps and to get that license. Build up your credit so you can get a nice car and house. Life as a young man is very hard, harder than it seems by me being the color I am . I already have a hard time crossing the road. Racism goes around, thoughts about school grades, my college future and my siblings’ future in my head. Will I ever have time to just calm down and say everything is ok anymore? Certain things you can't even talk to your parents about because you know they will not understand, like being depressed because you have so much stuff going on at one time. Screaming, “I need sleep” but knowing you have that big assignment due at 12 so you have to stay up. Parents asking why you sleep during the day and only able to eat breakfast at night and the only thing you say is “This Is A Life As A Young Man.” Let’s not forget about your high school crush always asking for attention and always wanting to talk about problems and you just block her out and feel guilty afterwards. Also, having your friends asking, “are you ok? What are you doing today? And you always have to say, “I have to work?” Is my childhood over? Crying myself to sleep because I know the same thing I did today I have to repeat tomorrow. Sadness, always slumbering, not talking to no one because you have to go to work and deal with rude customers. Why is life as a young man awful just to have a decent life ?

Life As A Young Man is not just skipping ahead to the real world, but just living with your parents, trying to find happiness but everything is not the same because of the pandemic. You only can stay home, pick up some pounds and feel way worse about yourself then you did a couple of months ago. Whispering to yourself, “everything is going to be ok” but your heart is telling you the total opposite, mixed emotions to the extreme of what should you do? Crying yourself to sleep, then waking up and saying men don't do that but you really can't help it because so many things crash in your head at once . Sometimes, you have good days only because you called off work but you can only do that once every 2 months or they are going to fire you and that's less money in your pocket. What should you do? Quit your job and not have a stable bank account for happiness?

So, many questions about the real world as a young man. You already think it's going to be disappointing because of the things you already have to do and you're not even 18. This is my life as a young man, yet through all of this, I'll get by and will succeed. As you know I am an EDUCATED young man.

Giovanni Murillo

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

My Journey as a 17 Year Old

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only the light can do that”-Marther Luther King Jr.

In my elementary years in school, I always realized how much of the world would matter to me and can I make such a difference in a huge world that I live in? How can I make a mark into this world, wondering can my actions really become the paths I open which allows me to find more and more ways to keep myself thinking out of the box and hoping I get to see it in the end, which is my mid-life years.

In my middle school years my mind and body started to develop and to have ways where I started to make my own actions, which I believe to be the case of making me closer to what I believe to call a “Goal,” which is an achievement. I'd put out to myself having an objective to finish and to make more and more which I can have a purpose in completing such goals and to have a dream one day of making a difference in the world. Now, close to graduating out of middle school, ready to proceed my next years as a freshmen to my new school Cleveland Central Catholic, which was the school that I would spend my last educational years and started to make my final memories with the school. Listening to a teacher saying to us, “Your lives as a freshman will end as fast you just got in,” which basically says how school years in high school will become more fast paced and have more to store our minds and goals to the point of having the world in our sight.

Now, today, my final year at CCC and my educational year is also known as the “senior. Our generation is ready to make the world change of how much we can make a difference in this huge world we live in and how we can completely change the styles we set up to have a life with no regret and no obstacles standing in our way, hoping to look forward to the future and to see how bright and big the future will be and how will it affect my life over the years but in my life, I will always keep a stable mentally and a be myself. Still, no matter what the world is today which includes a virus, riots and more and more tragic things to come in the year 2021. I was

hoping that all of this catastrophe could stop and let the world calm down and catch its breath since how bad the year was, causing so much change with our policies and changing my life which forced me to take a different path and route to finish my goal in different coordinates and to meet the unnecessary requirement to make it past this last year in school. No matter what the case is, I still believe that anyone can put their mind to change, where to the point, it's possible to complete your goals at this state, it just makes it a challenge to overcome and to pass by which to solve and defeat any upcoming obstacles but overall nothing is impossible. All of this doesn't make it difficult, but we must achieve it, it's where you are going to make it a miracle in your own life. I believe in my miracle.

Trent Proctor

Mr. Rock

College Essay

29 October 2020

FOCUS

“Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly” - Robert F. Kennedy

My senior year has definitely been one for the record books. Every week, I must log into a google classroom and have class with a number of students and a teacher that is talking on a computer screen. Math, English, Religion, World History, Statistics, Forensics, they are all online and somehow, a student has to understand all that is said, get their work done and basically be a robot while attending school. Being at home, isolated and all to myself for eight hours, doing schoolwork, attending classes just seems boring to me and it is hard to focus. When

one is in school, there is more of a social aspect and one can build relationships between friends, classmates and the teachers as well.

It seems that the motivation of myself has gone downhill since I have been trapped in a computer screen, sharing an ICON only if I don't want to listen to the lessons, or if I want to run and get something to eat. It seems that it is not fair to have classes online and try to get an education without leaving your house. I am a much better student, one on one, I am a better student when I can talk, raise my hand, communicate with those around me. It seems that I am being cheated on my educational high school life.

Then it's like we just get work on top of work. On top of work. In school, we learn a lesson, complete class work then maybe be sent home with homework. At home, it's like before I can finish even learning the lesson, I have five assignments due. In school, if someone is moving at a slower pace, it's easier to help them keep up.

Also in school, I don't have to hear from my mom as much. At home, she's just been on my back all day, talking about how I don't try. She doesn't know how it is to switch from in school to online. Plus, she doesn't even help me with my work. So, at school, I don't have to deal with that stress and with all of this, I am applying to schools and trying to get everything together for a better future. This has been challenging, yet I will get through it and make everyone proud in the end.

Nathaniel Rush

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Covid 19 Backfire

“Imagine coming from nothing and being the first one one to make it out of your situation and going to college to be something and move your family out of the bottom to up to the top.”

- Nathaniel Rush

Imagine, being the outside child where your siblings and family don't get you and they pick on you because of what your future dreams and hobbies are. I come from a family that doesn't have a lot and still have ways to provide and get stuff done to survive. I also didn't come from a rich family and I lived on Section 8 for a while. Moving from house to house, I also slept in cars and I saw things no child ever needed to see in this lifetime. I remember times where we didn't have food in our stomachs and my parents tried to find ways to feed 5 other kids in the household. When I was younger, I thought things such as bread and butter was nice and then I started to realize that my parents were getting kicked hard by life and I watched them struggle to pay bills and raise us and I couldn't do anything about it and they always said that I needed to go to school and go to college and graduate and make something out of myself. Then, I had grown to think that basketball was what I wanted to do and have a career but now, Covid 19 has changed my thoughts. Here, I can't even play sports. On May 23, 2020 in the morning, my father received a call, saying my mother had passed away that morning and that broke me down and killed my insides. It was the hardest day of my life and my siblings were sad and crying and I tried to comfort them but I was hurting myself and I couldn't feel any emotion. I was numb for

days and days and when I saw her and the casket, it broke me because I knew everybody was going to die, but I never thought she was going to leave so soon.

That pushed me to be better than what I was doing before, but I also lost motivation while she's been gone. I constantly asked myself why I was going to school and played basketball and the reason is because she said to follow my dreams and make it to the NBA. I always stuck to it, trying everyday and trying to make it to the league and provide for my family and move them out of their situations and pay bills and medical bills for my mother, then she passed and with her left my motivation. The mentality I chose to have made my life for the better. Overall, the more days I live through, the less distant this obstacle becomes and the more I realize that I better listen to her and follow those BIG dreams.

Patrick Turk

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Haters!

“The important thing is to realize that no matter what people’s opinion may be , they’re only just that- people’s opinions.” - Mary J Blige

When I was growing up, I had a multitude of “haters” at my middle school and I was thinking to myself, “why is this happening to me?” Around the age of 13 and 14 years old I played for a football team called the Cleveland Warriors. The two years I played with that team I

remember I had a coach who always insulted me. This football coach would always use these idiotic words to define me ugly, a scrub and he thought I wasn't good enough.

I was always good at football. I don't know why my coach hated me but I learned something from that, never let anyone stop you from what you want in life. My last year playing for the Cleveland Warriors we lost our first game, 18-0 and I remember my coach blaming me for the loss. At practice, teammates were casting aspersions on me calling me a "prima donna" and on that same day we were doing hitting drills. I got hurt, my mom wanted me to leave the team and she told me to let them succeed themselves but what happened to the Cleveland Warriors was that they lost the rest of their games. The coach that insulted me needed me in the middle of that season, he would call me or text me about coming back but I said "no." The day before the playoff game, my coach came over to my house and wanted me to play really bad and I said "yes." The next day was our playoff game and we won 8-0, the team was happy. I learned that insults are not helpful and to see me quitting, it hurt the team the whole season but I never did listen to those individuals and I learned to always prove your "haters" wrong.

It was crazy how my coach did me wrong casting aspersions on me every time he saw me. I don't know why, but this is the life I live, this world is full of evil people. I learned that day to always have a positive mind set and don't let evil people stop you from what you want to do. I hope my coach respects me after all that happened, from me quitting, my coach calling me on the phone, asking me to come back to play.

I felt some emotion when we won the first round of playoff games, I was blessed and happy the final score was 8-0. Every human being has haters and doubters but it's our job to ignore that, and use it as motivation . Keep striving, strive for greatness. I still have haters up to this day and

I plan on proving all of them wrong. My dream is to make it to the NFL. I will cry because it's a dream come true. Never let "haters" stop you.

Jayla Vinson

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Summer Bummer

"Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change."

– Martin Luther King Jr.

Before I ended up at Cleveland Central Catholic High School, I transferred in from another school. Don't get me wrong, I am serious about my grades, my GPA and my all around education. The obstacle that literally almost ruined my educational career was that I had failed a math class at my formal school. It seemed that for some reason, the teacher that taught this class really wasn't fair and I felt that I could not go and talk to them if I needed help. I was definitely stuck and I ended up falling behind, not wanting to go and mathematics became a burden in my life.

The school made me have an option; go everyday (five days) to the school and retake the course or do a credit recovery via an online course. I chose to do the credit recovery, took a laptop home and struggled every single day to understand Algebra. My father was a "Godsend" and hired a tutor and believe it or not, she's been helping with math ever since. It's funny

because a teacher can really “make” or “break” a class for a student and I was definitely broken when it came to one particular math course. Going to summer credit recovery really helped me become more motivated to do better as a person with my work because I've never failed a class before. When I had to take the class, I was embarrassed because it made me feel dumb, so I refused to go for a while. My school then made an agreement with me to let me do the credit recovery for two weeks instead of the whole summer. Once I started the credit recovery, it wasn't bad, so I was able to push through and get my credit back to where it needed to be. What I learned most throughout this situation is that no matter what is going on and how you feel, if it's the right thing to do, then do it and do what's best and most successful for you. I am not a failure and I never will give in.

William Walsh-Clarett

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 20

One Last Game

“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.”

– Henry Ford

My father was never the most active person in my life. He was always out working and he never even took a sick day. Many times, he lost vacation days, by not taking them in the allotted time frame. The only time you'd get to spend time with him, was if you went with him while he was working. This could range from anything from helping him paint the wall of a house to

cutting grass for someone or shoveling six driveways of snow during a blizzard. He was always proud of the fact that he had a strong work ethic. He thought working was something to be proud of as a man. The problem was, he missed so many opportunities to spend time with me and my sister. He never really was around to watch our basketball games in grade school or see our performance in the Christmas play. He missed most of our birthday celebrations. My uncles attended more birthday celebrations than my dad. What might shock you, is he lived with me. He thought because he lived with us, it made him “present” in our lives. In my mind, I would have much rather had his presence in the simple things of life. No matter how many times I might try and express that I wanted time with him, he didn’t really seem to change. He always said we would have more time together later in life. He worked so much that he rarely was home. He would take a couple of nights off each year and we learned to do what he liked on those nights. Usually, we would play cards on holidays together. We would celebrate HIS birthday taking him to his favorite restaurant. I even took up drumline during high school, to try and have something he was interested in to be in common with him. To be honest, he probably attended more school programs while I was in drumline than throughout my entire school career. It was very difficult growing up with a dad inside your house that was never really present in everyday activities.

What happened next was even more difficult. I always believed that “one day” my dad would get old enough to be retired and have the time to spend with me. Well considering, he was almost 50 when I was born, I thought that day would come sooner than for most people. My dad turned 65 last October. However, with that birthday came a new thing: dementia. We didn’t recognize it immediately. Last year, we actually had some of the best holidays ever. He stayed home more than ever. What we didn’t realize was he was covering up and compensating for his

confusion and incidences of getting lost. We stayed up several nights playing cards and he was here and present. We were all happy and enjoyed our time together. By early January, he had an incident getting lost in his car, and woke us up crying that he missed Christmas. I had never seen my dad cry. He spent several days in the hospital. They were trying to figure out if he had a brain tumor, had a stroke, or what was going on. He was cracking jokes and very pleasant while he was in the hospital. My mom, my older sister, and I began to compare notes and realized he had been having issues for a few months. The interesting thing is because he was busy so much, we didn't really see the symptoms. The doctors told him not to drive and wanted more tests. He decided that driving was more important than being with us. He called his older kids from his first marriage and moved to Indiana! They still let him drive. He is no longer living here in the house. The day he left, he told me and my sister he was calling his "real kids" because we weren't going to prevent him from driving. He now denies he said that to us. My understanding is that happens with people with dementia: They say horrible, hurtful things and then have no memory of what they said. The last night he was here, he kept us up all night demanding his car keys and insisting that he needed to drive.

Since he moved to Indiana last January, things are different here at the home. I have more responsibility in terms of taking out the trash and cutting the grass. In some ways, I don't really notice a change or difference with my dad not here in the house. It is sad in a way that he thought that his living here made such a difference. His parents were divorced and his dad died by the time he was twelve. Since he left, things are a bit calmer. We never realized how much we accommodated his odd behaviors of hoarding things. We have since learned that his "collecting of valuables" that were actually just junk, is a symptom of dementia. We would all try and get him to part with things that were taking up valuable space in the home. Since he has

left, we have begun to change things to what we want. We actually have family meetings and respect for each other. I feel like I actually have a voice now. We show care and concern for what is important to one another. We eat together at the table. In a strange way, it is actually better.

What did I learn from this experience? In my “later-day,” the plan to spend time with my dad is never going to happen. He is now living with his “real kids” five hours away from me. He still doesn’t have time to get to know me. I also realize that one day soon, he won’t remember me. I am determined to live in the present and be a part of the life of my children and the people who mean the most to me. I never want to promise them my attention at a future date. While I am not afraid of hard work, I want to be intentional about where I spend my time. I want to give attention to MY people. I don’t want to live with regret. I don’t want my children to experience what I did. I am convinced that an obstacle or hardship can ruin your life or make you better. I want to use this experience to be aware of what is important and keep my focus on the goal of being a good husband, father, family member, and friend. Not give them empty promises of delayed gratification. I want to enjoy the little moments of everyday life. I want to treasure what is most important: Building relationships with the people who mean the most.

Trina Wesley

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Dimensional Thinker

“A person who thinks all the time
Has nothing to think about except thoughts
So, he loses touch with reality
And lives in a world of illusions” - INZO

As much as I get lost in my head, with all of the thoughts that come across my mind, it sometimes gets hard bringing myself back to reality. I continuously think about the future or what can happen next or even what just happened now. I actually believe that my mind can be creative in many ways, especially with my art. I have so many ideas to put on canvases and paper and so many things to mix and match but also have a deep meaning to it. I always think outside the box, and think beyond reality. As much as I hate my mind with overthinking, I also love it sometimes because when I'm all alone, I have nothing but the imagination inside of my head. I just have to put myself in the right set of mind, get up and exercise, go for a walk, read a book, draw or write about your feelings or day. Just doing anything or something to distract yourself from the imagination inside your head. Doing some new things is also really good because you can get yourself into a new hobby.

Thoughts can sometimes hurt individuals as well as help. There are suicidal thoughts, thoughts about depression, anxiety and even thoughts about life itself. One must know how to control and react to these thoughts in order to grow and understand oneself. As for me, I have a very hard time bringing myself back to reality when I'm overthinking. There was a time in health class where we were talking about mental health and depression. The question was “look at all of these smiling children, are you able to figure out which one is the depressed one?” And I believe one person shouted out that all of them could be depressed. When that was said, it hit me and I just went into the dark void of overthinking. Of course I started thinking of myself and how I can smile but no one would know I'm depressed at the same time, since I don't open up to many people. I couldn't even pull myself back to listening, I started to tear up and I tried holding it

back like nothing was wrong because I sometimes believed nothing was wrong with me. I also didn't want to cry in front of the whole class, I didn't want no one to look at me and see that I actually went through some dark thoughts. We all go through some dark thoughts and we all have someone to pull us out of that dark void. At a young age, I didn't have too many people. I didn't have the family love that was needed, although many teachers throughout the school always thought, "you have the best mom." Well, no not really because everything behind closed doors is not always so great. And many adults wonder why teenagers are so ruthless and edgy, I want to say it has to do with their environment and mental health because a lot of humans don't just do things for no reason. You ever wonder why young people are just going around rioting, sometimes destroying everything? It's because of the hate others bring upon the community. I myself always wonder why there's people out there kidnapped and selling innocent kids that didn't even get the chance to grow up yet. This world needs a new educational system, one that is not focused on tests, but individuals. This is where true education takes place, with one another. Learn what is important, learn about individuals and each other. Learning from one another can be helpful in building relations and maybe hate wouldn't spread around that much. This world needs a lot more love and not many of us are showing that love, you know God says you should love yourself and love others. With just a little bit of change we all can make that happen. We all need to work together and for each other to get the best future possible.

Makaila Wright

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Analysis of Theories of Fear and Anxiety

” Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and face the challenge of change. “ - Martin Luther King Jr.

Anxiety. I finally came up with a name for what I was facing. Anxiety is defined as, “ a feeling of worrying, nervousness, or of unease.” Everyone has faced obstacles of some kind; a struggle with health, a failed personal project, or financial hardship. This prompt is relevant to most people applying to college - which isn't a bad thing. Anxiety is an emotional feeling of uneasiness and worries, usually generalized and unfocused and menacing. It all started with the sleepless nights. I started to notice when anxiety made it near possible to fall asleep. My brain was constantly whirring like a bunch of ghosts on a train with no off switch. This meant that I never really rested for school.

I started to feel as though my chest was to get tight and filled with fear, and my stomach wouldn't stop fluttering, and that I'd never been able to organize my thought process or my life. Classic anxiety symptoms, along with a racing heart, sweaty palms, difficulty breathing, stomach- aches, headaches, irritability, panic, or difficulty concentrating, muscle tension, sleep disturbance, being easily fatigued, excessive worry that is difficult to control embodied my whole being.

Most people feel nervous or stressed at some point, but when you're living with anxiety, that restless feeling never really goes away. My anxiety disorder came both slowly and at all once. For a while, I'd often write my feelings down and think back on what triggered my anxiety

because I never had anxiety before. The way I was feeling was very stressed and I attempted to keep my feelings under control with regular workouts. Then suddenly, some major life changes made my anxiety feel insurmountable. There is nothing incorrect in being anxious. When confronted with a circumstance or an issue, people experience stress and anxiety.

Most people have the propensity to worry when trying to end up on a due date that seems difficult to beat like cramping. It is that itch of nervousness or worry. It is not as simple as that. Anxiety is constant. It is that itch that just will not go away. Every little thing is caused by anxiety. Big event coming up ? Anxiety. Something is broken and it's my job to fix it ? Anxiety. Telling my father how was my weekend ? Anxiety. Whether it is me worrying about an big event or a person, or it is just checking every 5 minutes to make sure I have absolutely everything I need in my bag for where I am going for the day, and then always finding something new to pack because there is so many "what if" situations has a bad thing when you have anxiety eating you away constantly.

Anxiety is unexpected. Though constant, it is not constantly at its peak. Taking me by surprise is something anxiety excels at. Anxiety is a disorder that is becoming very common, about 25 to 29 percent of people are affected by this disorder in the United States today. I;m just living with it, making the best of my situations and trying to excel at everything I do.... With Anxiety!

Shauntario Bell Jr.

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

“Without You”

“We never truly get over a loss, but we can move forward and evolve from it.”

-Elizabeth Berrien

301 days. 7,224 hours, 433,481 minutes. This is the amount of time it had been since I lost someone I felt was like a brother to me. It felt like I was drowning. My cousin, more like a brother to me was leaving me and there was nothing I could do. I didn't know what to do. All I could do was cry. What do you do when you are losing one of the most important people in your life, someone you looked up to the most? What is there to do when you are forced to literally watch someone die? For days, I had to sit by your side and watch as you and your soul became two. The last time I got to talk to you, we were at work. It ended in a petty argument and I didn't even get to say goodbye, or even an I love you. That's the part that hurts the most. The only thing playing in my head is, “why didn't I just say goodbye, why didn't I just apologize?” Full of laughter, full of love. You were always the life of the party. But why now? Why you? You were so young and had so much more to see in life. The questions I just kept asking. Now, you are gone. The year 2020 has to be the worst year of my life.

My cousin, Mac Harris, or as I knew him, Dashawn was the closest thing I had to another brother. That was my brother. The one you could ask to do anything for you. He was the one that

always checked up on you and just made sure you were okay. He was the true definition of blood and doesn't that make you family? Even though we didn't all have the same mothers, me and my cousins always knew we were brothers at heart. Our group of four had just become three. We did everything together! From going to football games, to basketball games, going to the movies or just going over each other's house. You couldn't break us up. He was always happy. He never was the richest person or the most lucky when it came to having things, although you could never tell. He was always so positive. He had dreams. He wanted to make something out of himself. Not just be another person in the world. He wanted to make a difference, to help everyone.

This was the first time I'd ever had to experience death in my life. It was like I was literally stuck and didn't know what to do. I was never much of a cryer ever and I'm still not. Although that next day, all I could do was cry. I cried and cried and cried again. All day in school, it was nonstop. Most importantly, I could not figure out what I was going to do. How was I going to move on? January 11th, I lost a brother. He fought for a while to come back from the car crash. God had another plan though. It was just his time. I always believed that everything happens for a reason. I just couldn't wrap my head around this one. Now that I am able to reflect on him and the life he left behind, it was a short but beautiful one. He helped so many people and touched many hearts. He was surrounded with love and a family who adored him entirely. I don't remember much, but I remember feeling like I was in a movie. When the doctor came and gave the family the news, all I could do was sit there frozen in my chair. I still remember all of the crying and sad faces from everyone there. I never moved from my spot. Unable to talk, all I could do was run to the car and cry alone.

Although I can't control what happened in the past, what I can control is what I will do next. How I will live my life. I want to finish school and make something out of myself. I want to do it for Dashawn. I want to do something that he would be proud of. Even though he won't be here to see it all. I know that he is watching over me in Heaven. Knowing that he won't be at my graduation or even see me go off to college is what really hurts me deep down inside. I lost a part of myself that day that he passed. I lost a brother.

Jayni Drake

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

The Time Crunch for a Better Lunch

“If you want something done right, do it yourself”

-Charles-Guillaume Étienne

At a middle school, there is a thirteen year old giving her lunch away to her friends. Actually, she has been doing this for the whole four years she has been at this school. Nobody questions her for not wanting to eat lunch. As a matter fact, teachers encourage students to give their unwanted food to others instead of throwing it away. There are so many students that do not want their lunch, that the teachers go around asking the children for their extras, so they can give them to other students.

This thirteen year old had been given the same type of food for lunch for the past four years. Anytime the school tried to get new lunch options, it was only for a short amount of time. Sometimes, the students would even complain about the lunch, but the teachers always said that they could not do anything. The teachers were able to pick up lunch or pack lunch and have it properly preserved, while the students did not have that option. The thirteen year old had a chance to change this and took it.

I was that thirteen year old. When I was in eighth grade, I had the chance to be a part of a newspaper class. This was the first year this class was available and I chose to take on the role of a reporter. I reported on the school lunch and why it needed to change. I went around the school and interviewed many adults, including the principal, about the lunch program. When the newspaper was published, my article was successful and the lunch program was changed for incoming students.

People say, “If you want something done right, do it yourself” and I believe that. I wanted the school lunch to change. So, I made that change. I got lucky and things worked out in my favor. To this day, I find myself still trying to do things on my own. Sometimes, it works out sometimes it does not, but what matters is that I keep trying to make a change.

Jalen L. Green

Mr. Rock

College Essay

06 October 2020

Determination

“Everything happens for a reason.” - Marilyn Monroe

When I decided to quit my job, I took a major risk for the betterment of myself. I wanted to start a rap career and this might have been the best chance for success, since I'm young and still have a chance to learn. Yes, I lost a lot of money but I became closer with my family because I had more time to be with them. My mother taught me how to manage my money and life without a job. She always told me to have some determination in whatever I do. So, right now, yes I am still unemployed and my career is getting noticed and I have managed to keep all of my bills paid. There is still more to come with this journey I will take you on.....

It's been two months since I quit my job and I am still maintaining myself. I have started to apply to more colleges and started searching for the right career for me. I've been having struggles with which path I should choose. There are many things that I want to do but I know I cannot do everything at once. My mother always told me to slow down and focus, but I have a bad habit of dreaming to be successful and diving in head first. I developed that habit because you have to fail to be successful and I'm willing to fail and learn more.

I am always willing to learn new things about how to be successful. When you network with others you are sharing wealth. The smallest conversation can open up a door to success. You have to be willing to work with others. Someone who is on the same page as you in college can take you very far. You have to go out and search for people, get advice, network, and trust yourself. When I put my trust into this career, I saw support come in from many directions. Believe it or not, they noticed my work more than me.

Markiya Harris

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Everlasting

“Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.”

- Maya Angelou

I am the oldest grandchild of 8 grandchildren. My grandma has four daughters and each daughter has 2 kids (6 out of 8 kids are boys). This is an important fact about myself because of the injustice that Black communities face everyday. Everytime I turn the news on, there's a black person killed by the police. Most of the time that person is male, more so than none, an African-American male. My heart yearns for the families of those people. ***Tamir Rice, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tanisha Anderson and Philando Castile.*** These are just a few of the names, the list gets longer. Everytime I see the person's name, I see one of my younger cousins or my little brother. Six ***African-American Males***, means six ***targets*** for the police. That fact in its entirety sets my soul ablaze and puts fear in my whole body.

Obstacles and problems will always be recurring and it's a part of life that we have to handle, but for how long will we have to handle the issue of Racism? The issue of prejudice and the problem of not feeling safe due to the color of my skin? As I grew up, I grew up wanting to be someone that fixes those problems for everyone, because I too, face those issues when truthfully, no one should. In order for me to be one of the leaders to fix these problems, I need to make sure that my education is at its finest because that is what's most important. Education is something that will put me where I need to be and where I want to be, so that way, my dream of making the world a better place will become a reality. I will stop at nothing to get to that point because of my perseverance. As well as my need to pursue my dreams, this will always keep me going. **I am the change that the world will see.**

Valeri Hernandez

Mr. Rock

College Essay

16 October 2020

“I’ll Rise so High”

“I am not telling you it is going to be easy - I am telling you it is going to be worth it.”
- Art Williams

First, there is an egg, then it becomes a caterpillar, then a chrysalis, and finally a beautiful butterfly. I believe it is worth being a caterpillar before turning into a butterfly. It is like learning to crawl before learning to walk, before running. Life is not about waiting for it to happen but

making it happen, getting up every morning and working for it until there is nothing left working for. However, there is always something worth fighting for, something to wish for, something to dream about until our last day.

There is always something worth fighting for. It is about not stopping the fight once the battle is won but to keep fighting the ones that still aren't. Life is an endless fight, a fight to become a better version everyday. The first and longest fight is with ourselves, it is about figuring out who we are, what we want, and where we are going. This fight lasts a lifetime, a person discovers new things about themselves everyday of their lives. A person is an open book, a book where the story doesn't end until the person is gone.

There is always something to wish for. Life isn't the perfect fairytale; no matter how good things seem to be, there is always something we wish was different. I desire to be a person who always wishes for things to be better than they were. I want to always find a way to figure things out, and I believe that for as long as we are alive there is always a solution to our problems. Pain doesn't just go away; a person does not get over it but they learn to live with it. Growing up without my father and accepting that he didn't want to be a part of my life was one of the hardest things I experienced as a child. Deep down, I would always wish that things were different; I didn't get over it but I did learn how to live with it. I learned how to turn pain into strength.

There is always something to dream about. I'm a dreamer, I'm always looking at the sky but my feet are always touching the ground. I don't ever want to stop dreaming because the day I do will be the day I stopped living. I don't dream to be one of the stars up in the sky, I dream of being the sun, the most beautiful star. I always dream of doing more and more but I also know my limits. If I know I won't commit one hundred percent to something then I don't do it. I like to give my all to what I do. I dream to be the sun because it is unreachable and unstoppable and

that's what I dream of becoming some day. My dream is to become an immigration lawyer. I want to help my people, the immigrant community, I want them to trust me. I want to be a person who'll fight for them no matter how hard the fight is.

I dream of becoming a butterfly, but I'll be the caterpillar first because that's part of the journey. I dream about it, I wish for it, I fight for it and the cycle never ends. My ambition to be better than I was yesterday is endless because I want to rise higher every day of my life. My only competition is myself. I'll never stop wanting more, never stop working to turn my dreams into reality. There is always something worth fighting for, something to wish for, something to dream about until our last day. Until then, I'll keep fighting everyday to become that butterfly, to become the sun.

Amado Lazo Jr.

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

My life Experiences

“The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.”

- Dolly Parton

My name is Amado Lazo Jr. I come from a family with two different backgrounds. My mother is from Puerto Rico and my father is from Honduras. My life changing experience was the time I went to Honduras, it is a third world country in Central America.

This was the second time I went to Honduras, I was only three when I went the first time. My family and I went to Honduras because our family wanted a vacation. My father wanted to show me how different it was compared to the United States. We arrived and instantly saw the difference; military officers driving around, people selling food on the streets, and houses made out of concrete with tall gates around them because the crime rate was very high. What really changed me was when I saw a little kid selling tortillas alone on the side of the road. I asked how much for all the tortillas he had. He said “900 lempiras,” which is about 40 dollars. So, I gave him 2,000 lempiras which is about 100 dollars and took all the tortillas.

The whole vacation I thought about how different it was, it changed me. When I came back from vacation I changed my work ethic, the way I view things, and my personality. I thought that I’m lucky to have a chance to go to school and I was thankful for what I had. I made myself goals that I had to accomplish, such as graduating high school and graduating with a high grade point average. I want to become the best version of me possible.

In conclusion, I have made myself goals to accomplish and have goals for the future. Seeing that little kid by himself helped me realize how important education can be, and how we had completely different experiences before I met him. Now, I want to enter college and study engineering and earn a master's degree. I plan to complete all of the goals I made and make my family proud when I graduate.

Le-don Morris

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

HardWork

“Achieving success is a challenge but so is struggling so you may as well choose success.”

– Rob Liano

I often think of what my life will look like in the future based on my successes and failures. Success is something that's hard to come by in this world because success requires hard work, passion, and a certain dedication that lots of people can't achieve. People have to spend hours and days working consistently to earn a small amount of success, although not working hard seems easier. While not working would look to be simpler and easier, you should think of why you have to work hard and what is success to you; and why you need it. If success to you is happiness, wealth, knowledge, or accomplishing personal goals, you need those things to survive. If you choose to not work hard, then you will end up failing and struggling to live the way you want and if you think of it in that light, then the difficulty of achieving success should trump the difficulty you would experience if you did nothing at all. Thinking of your future can help you determine what your successes and struggles may be making easier to choose which path you want to take. I did not always have the habit of thinking of my future. I mainly focused on life in the present, what I wanted then and what I didn't want at that moment and that way of thinking was unhealthy for the young me.

All throughout grade school and middle school, I struggled with learning and focusing on what was important. I'd often play or ignore my responsibilities because I thought the future would take care of itself. When the time had come to start thinking of the future, I was stumped, I had to choose a high school and think of college after high school. Why should I go? What would I learn? And "what would I do afterwards? Not knowing the answers to these questions was hard on me because I didn't want to let down my mother who had worked so hard for me to learn and receive an education. Although I was worried, it did not matter because the world didn't stop for me as it does with all people. Before I knew it, I was failing classes and options for high school started slipping away, so I had to study and dedicate myself to learning and thinking more seriously so as to not waste the time and opportunities I was given. Thanks to my hard work, I got into high school and I learned things leading up to this last year of my journey. I know what I want my future to be, I realized what hard work is, I realized what I want my success to be and I am going to choose my success over my struggles and failures. Although I know what I want, I can see others struggle just as much or even more than me. Working hard in school is a different level of struggle for some people nowadays, including some of my friends. The worry of getting a passing grade or even getting in the top percentile of students with straight A's can be stressful. Also, the idea of college and university can scare them because you're thinking about whether or not you make it in or if you'll go anywhere afterwards. Seeing people around me with similar struggles makes me feel a little less behind others and it adds to my confidence. I think everyone has a fight and struggle and the only way to overcome it is to focus and work hard for what you want. Once I have achieved all I have set out to, I would hope that I can show others how much hard work can pay off and how much success you can have if you try.

Miyonna Parris

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Life Obstacles

“There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits.” Michael Phelps

In this essay, I will discuss how it feels like when my opinion has been unpopular everytime I say something that someone doesn't want to hear because they feel as if they know it all and can't handle it on their own. I believe that whether or not someone agrees with you, your voice should always be heard, your thoughts and beliefs should be heard. We live in a society today where some people are afraid of what others think of them but as long as you know and believe in whatever it is you believe in, then that's all that matters. In this essay, I will also discuss some meaningful challenges that I've faced throughout my life.

One of the biggest challenges I've faced in my life is when I went down south one summer and we stopped in a town in Tennessee and the people down there were so racist. We stopped at a restaurant and everyone else was being served and we weren't. At that moment, you could tell that they didn't like African Americans. At the time, I was around 7 or 8 years old but that moment stuck with me because it taught a valuable life lesson. No matter how bad someone treats you, never stoop down to their level, still treat them right because something good will happen as a result of you being polite and kind towards them. I never thought that I would one day come in contact with such hatred like that but hey, it's still a part of our society today.

There's still people in the world who still judge others because of their skin color or ethnicity. There will never be a time where everyone could get along without judgement. That's just how life works.

I am the kind of person who is willing to stand up for what I believe in because there was a point in time when African American's opinions did not matter to anyone. Growing up as a young African American female, my grandma had always told me to stand up for myself, never be afraid to speak what's on your mind and I always stood by that. Something important to me on a fundamental level of morals and values is respect. A lot of people don't respect others the way they should because they feel as if the world revolves around them and they can treat people how they want. I am very passionate when it comes to things I believe in. I've noticed a lot of people who were born around the time when racism was a huge thing, especially black people, and are scared to voice their opinion and are scared to stand up for themselves because they think back on the times when they were beaten for doing so.

In conclusion, I believe that racism has improved a little but not entirely. Just because you look different than the next person doesn't mean anything at all. If your dream is to become a multimillionaire, then go for it. Never let someone tell you different. The more you block out the negativity from others, the more happier you'll be. Make something good out of yourself, make your community and everyone else proud. You might have the materials to do such things to start a business or something, but reaching out to people will help you get those materials. Everyone has a purpose in life so never say you don't. Honestly, if you didn't have a purpose in life God wouldn't have put you on this Earth. You might not know what your purpose is in life right away but you'll eventually find it, because it'll be something that you fall in love with and have a strong passion for it. You'll have some obstacles that you face throughout life, but those

obstacles just come from mistakes that you made in the past and now you're facing them trying to learn from it.

Charli Sanders

College Essay

5 October 2020

How To Overcome

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.” – Albert Einstein

In life, we are not always ready for what's next, let alone, do we really know what is next? We face minor or major problems everyday and find new ways to conquer these challenges. When Albert Einstein said, “It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer,” he meant that if you are rushed into figuring out a solution to any obstacle the outcome may not always be good. Taking your time and focusing on any stumbling blocks thrown at you can set yourself up for success just by fixating yourself on one thing. This year for me, my high school experience could be one of my major hurdles in life that I will overcome. Compared to a lot of past seniors, the class of 2021 has a fairly abnormal school year. In some cases that may be a positive or a negative for some of my peers. A lot of things have changed for everyone and all we are trying to do is maintain and shift our normal lifestyles into our new ones. As a result of this uncommon situation, students are faced with new ways to prevail over our minor setbacks to keep us on track for our final goal.

Javon Williams

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Hardships and Challenges

“The broken heart. You think you will die, but you keep living, day after day after terrible day.”

– Charles Dickens

One thing you’re going to encounter in life is hardships. They’re absolutely unavoidable. How you handle the situation however, is what sets you apart from the others. Giving up can’t be an option if you want to succeed. When there is an obstacle in your way, you have to take it on with grace even in failure. I deal with hardship by thinking what my next smartest move will be. I feel like in tough times, you have to stand your ground and not let pressure get to you. The more level headed you are in the situation the easier it’ll be to think.

A challenge is anything that isn’t super easy to accomplish. A setback is something that doesn’t go as planned that puts me behind or deters me from attaining your goal. For instance, I wanted to go to this really prestigious high school but my family couldn’t afford it. So, I went to Cleveland Central Catholic and I chose to adapt to my situation and thrive. Now, I’m finishing my junior year and I wouldn’t change it for the world. A great quality to have is being able to learn from every failure; that’s something I try to do with everything. It can also be a good skill to learn because it’ll help to not dwell on the past as well as take the proper steps to be in a better position the second time around. For example the “quarantine.”

Yes, we're stuck in the house but the pollution level has decreased, people are spending more time with family, some are becoming very creative. I've used this time to spend time with my friend that I don't see often. I have learned a lot about myself. One thing I've learned is that I've grown a rather huge fondness of biking and listening to different kinds of music as well. I also just like going for walks in the woods and it's been really calming and a great destresser.

One major challenge for me was losing a lot of friends I've had since freshman year that I thought would be friends for life. They were also holding me back and weren't really a good influence at all. The silver lining was I met a whole new set of people who really are good people. They're very goal oriented, ambitious, and want to see me being the best me that I can possibly be, and for that I'm thankful. These days are the perfect example of looking for the silver lining. It's so easy to focus on all the bad things going on right now. It's so easy to throw away all of the progress made this year and go back to old habits, but there's a lot of positives to focus on as well. I also think this is the perfect time to find a niche. Find something that makes the time because we have nothing but time on our hands. I've taken this time to really get to know myself and to further explore my interests.

Finally, I think when being faced with hardships, the best thing to do is to keep your back against the wall and keep swinging. The best feeling is overcoming all challenges and emerging victorious. Just keep going and keep fighting. Hard work always pays off in the end.

Jesus Bermudez

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

On The Mat

“There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits.” - Michael Phelps

It all started my freshman year and I wanted to break out of my shell, I wanted to do something a little different with my talents, so I joined the wrestling team at Cleveland Central Catholic High School. I never thought that I would compete in such a tough, rigorous sport, where your mental state truly has to be put together before you even put on a wrestling singlet. My mind kept telling me that I would fail, not wrestle my opponent the way my coach wanted me to. My mind became my worst enemy, every time I would step out into that circle in the center of the mat. In fact, truth be told, I lost ALL of my matches and I never felt worse within myself.

After that season, I just gave up, especially that summer, yet all was about to change. There was something missing in my life when I did quit, I felt that I had to prove something to not only myself, but with my state of mind. I ended up coming back, singlet and all, my sophomore year and still, I was that same wrestler, having doubts before I went onto that mat. Pretty soon, I did start to win matches and then more matches and still, this was not satisfying to me.

After cutting short in sectionals, I decided to work even harder than ever, to catch up on what I lost that summer before. I wanted to be good enough before my junior year of wrestling so I went to every practice from different schools, camps, one on ones, with my teammates. I took notes on my wrestling, my movements and conditioning, I needed to know what were my weaknesses and my strengths on the mat. I trained almost everyday, every week and I saw different results then the past week, I got stronger physically and mentally. Near the end of the summer, I started to go to open tournaments and that's where I knew I wasn't where, I wanted to be still, yet I kept losing matches. I shouldn't have lost and my mentality was still the same as before. Then my coach motivated me and said, "it doesn't matter who you wrestle now cause at the end of the season you'll see the results".

My mind became clear, the only goal I want to achieve this season is to go to states, my mentality was and I had a good feeling this year. The season came up and my first match I didn't feel scared or nothing, I wanted to win, that's all I was thinking about. During the seasons, I had more wins than I've ever had during the 9-10th grade but that still didn't satisfy me because the losses were the ones that kept me up at night. Sectionals come up and this time, I'm ready. Everything I had trained for all adds up to this moment. Junior year was just the same as my sophomore year, I ended up cutting short again, knowing that I was more comfortable with my wrestling and skill. It wasn't enough to take me to the next level, I now know I really have to give it my all this year because I'm a senior. My plan is to go to states this time, that's all I'm going to be focusing on, I'm going to win more of my matches and I will go to states because I want to be great!

Armani Conner

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

The Outcome of an Obstacle

“Success is measured by the obstacles which we have overcome to reach it.”

Booker Washington

Currently, more than 2.7 million children have a parent behind bars. When I was young, my father was put behind bars. I was with my cousins when my father was put in jail. At first, nobody was telling me what had happened because they felt like I was too young to know what happened but eventually my aunt told me. When I found out the truth, I was hurt so I started to isolate everyone out of my life because my father and I were so close. I didn't want to talk to anybody or be with anybody. I started to get closer to other family members along the way. Things started to change a lot in the family.

When my father was put behind bars, my family wasn't the same at all. A lot of us were hurt about this because my father has a big impact on all of our lives. I had to move in with my grandmother and I saw my siblings less than usual. My uncle started to become more of a father figure to me while my father was incarcerated, so my cousins and I were seeing each other more than usual and grew a stronger bond. Even though things started off bad, it started to get better along the way and me and my family started to get a better attitude about the situation.

My father being incarcerated has changed our lives and relationship. My father being incarcerated helped us grow a stronger bond. He has taught me to turn any situation or mistake into something I can learn from instead of putting myself down about it or regretting it. Our bond has helped build both of us and impact our lives in positive ways. His talks with me and life lessons about certain situations have really changed me, who I want to be and how I want to live out my life.

In conclusion, my father leaving has had a big impact on me and his life. For example, he's going to school while being incarcerated and has been maintaining a B+ average which pushes me to do better and get higher grades than him. He is always pushing me and my siblings to do better than him. Even though my father is incarcerated, he is not a selfish person. He is always giving and helping even when he's at his lowest which makes me want to give and help others when I'm at my lowest. He is the reason why I want to be successful and grow into the best individual I can be.

Armand Hodges

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Hell Fire

“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.” Dale Carnegie

I am going to start this off by thanking everyone who has been by my side when things in my life had no light at the end of the tunnel. It feels like it was just yesterday my family and I were on the news because of that fire. One night, my family and I were just so down and we didn't know what to do, except hope and pray. That night was the most horrific, yet important night of my life. My house burned down and thankfully everyone who was in that fire was able to get out with no physical damages. Yes, there were no physical damages but mentally and emotionally, we were torn apart. The house that I spent my entire childhood in and loved burned down and all we could do was ask for help because we didn't have the finances to just go and get another house. Still, to this day, I ask myself, "where would you be right now if that fire never happened?" I can assure you that I would not be where I am today if that never happened.

Now, I'm going to get into detail on how that fire has changed my family and myself for the better. The fire that took everything we had away from us including our hope is the reason I strive so hard to become successful in life. No matter what I do to become successful, as long as I get to that point, I will be happy and so will my family. I try so hard to prove to people along with myself that I am meant to be somebody in this world and that I will not let anything slow me down and I am like this because of that fire. That night showed me that literally anything can happen to you or the people you love, so you must live your life to the fullest and take nothing for granted. The last thing on my mind that night was that we would never be able to step foot in that place ever again and I still think back on all of the memories I had in that house that I will never forget. I thank God for helping us through the hard times we were through together and alone. I will always strive to be the best version of myself and I will never let anything throw me off my path to success because I have to do this for myself and not only that, but for my family as well. I guess it is my turn to light that match and set my world on fire, not only mentally, but

educationally as well and the outcome will be not destruction, but determination and the will to educate others with the knowledge that I will gain. Here's my match, give me the light.

Jason Lopez

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

Father Knows Best

“The imprint of a father will forever remain on the son.” - Cesar Lopez

When I was five years old, my mother dropped my sister and I off at my grandmother's house and never wanted to be in our lives again. My father took custody of us and has been an excellent father ever since. He has influenced me greatly throughout my life. My dad is a man who really loves his family . He is also a person that will do anything to have food on the table and make sure that we will get the things we need. He has also made sure to raise me to be a good man and to not be afraid to be the best that I can be. I realized this during an event that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

It was a Saturday night at 10:00 p.m. Four friends of mine and I were walking in the woods. Suddenly, after walking for like ten minutes, we heard a woman screaming for help. I turned to my friends and asked if they thought we should go help her. We ran over to where we heard the screaming. When we got there, we saw a man on top of her and it seemed as if he was going to

sexually assault her. We scared him away and took her to the local police station. My friends and I decided to call it a night and when I got home, I was going to tell my parents but I never did.

This event changed me in so many different ways. It changed me physically, mentally, and changed what I do. I no longer go for a jog at night by myself. After that night, I will always go out with my friends or somebody I know. It also changed me on how I like to help other people when they need help because before that event, I always thought it was better to mind my own business. Before that event, I was very shy. I was really scared to open up and be myself. Now, I'm no longer afraid of that and look forward to opportunities to challenges and on improving myself.

Without the education I received from my father on how to be a man, I don't think I would have helped this woman. Now, I have the courage for my future because of him. He tells me everyday in the morning that I should go out into that world and do anything that I can to achieve what I want in life. There are many things my father says that are worthy of quoting, but the best quote he has is, "The imprint of a father will forever remain on the son." In my case, I hope it does.

Nate Bledsoe

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Nate's Thoughts

“Hard work beats talent when talent fails to work hard.”

- Kevin Durant

In your life, there are a few things that would make you change how you look at things. One day, I was trying to figure out how to ride a bike. First day, I fell off, scraped my leg, and the second day, I fell off and hit my hand. I didn't understand what was the problem. That night, I cried when my dad came in and told me, “you can't give up.” I tried and tried again and learned how to ride my bike.

You learn in your life from situations in your life lessons. From these situations you have to grab more knowledge as you go for the future. I think as we get older, we look back on situations and take some of the stuff we learned and use it for other situations. The story about the bike made me learn to never give up, keep trying even if you don't get it the first couple of tries. You always keep the lessons you learned. The consequences of going through life learning lessons is that you take a lot of losses. You get your heart broken a few times, you get some scratches and bruises but the thing is you learn. Yes, at the time, it might make you mad or sad but you have to take it and keep going, like falling off a bike. You are not going to ever learn if you stop trying.

In conclusion, 100% of the stuff you give up on, you will never complete. That is a fact and one should take lessons you learned and put them into the future and never give up. That is how life goes and it continues to go on a curvaceous journey we call life and I'm still on this bike.

Name Rheana Bolden

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

The One

“Fear is stronger than love, all that love I gave didn't mean nothing when it came to fear.”

-Tupac

I had to let go of someone I loved the most. It affected me a lot badly in the beginning because I didn't see the bright side. I was focused on the wrong things, I had to realize I had to choose me over them for the better. Later on, it affected me in a good way. I realized you can't force anyone or beg them or even dim your life down for toxic people. I learned that some people are not on the same level as you or even exchange the same love back that you're dishing out. Also, always choose yourself over situations that you don't feel welcomed in. As Tupac Shakur stated, “all love he gave was nothing to the fear he felt. “He means that his moments of fear were so much more than the love he gave out.

Tupac also said, “stay to yourself.” He said that because when you stay to yourself, you don't have to worry about disloyalty or any confusion around you. I learned from this poem and lesson that people will change on you, due to the "fear" of risking themselves, not succeeding in life or as well as the people around them. Regardless of how much you love someone, someone may not love you, people will stab you in the back to benefit themselves. From this statement, you will learn to embrace it and cherish it instead of fearing that you can't have it or it is not meant

for me. Also, you can fear to love someone or something and won't be able to expect the best for yourself if you can't overcome the fear of loving it or wanting it. This quote will help me a lot later with success because it will help me stay focused and reminds me to trust no one and also the fear that I feel when a situation happens is always stronger than the love I gave out. Also, as I mentioned before, people will change on you due to the "fear" of risking themselves, not succeeding in life or as well as the people around them, so those same people you love will watch you fail. As Mr. Shakur stated at the end of the poem, " all the love I gave did me nothing when it came to fear but I am a soldier that's how I always survive." I felt that because I feel as if every obstacle I ever been in, I overcame.

The whole concept of the poem will help me with every challenge I will ever encounter. I say that because the poem is basically teaching me the value of perseverance, the ability to believe in myself. I always say to myself, "how will I ever get through?" But the more I wonder how I will ever get through is just me wasting time when I could be finding myself. This poem will help me with that problem as well as others because if I focus on the things that Tupac was really open-eyed about, such as peace, education and being grateful, I would be able to live a life of no problems. The more I focus on pain I am just making myself go backwards. I have to realize I have to forgive myself for what I allowed, just how I forgive people .

Looking back at the specific situation of losing someone is nothing compared to my life story exactly. This poem relates to both a lot because helping others was my downfall. I say that because the pain I endured helping those people didn't do anything but show me that people can be self centered and heartless. When helping others, you have to be careful, meaning protecting your energy. You have to ask yourself, "is it beneficial to you?" Or "can this person or particular favor drain your energy?" You have to actually be very cautious of who you help

because those same people will just use you for all they can until you have nothing to give. When helping someone, I never think of what I will receive back or what they can do for me. I always think will this deed teach me a lesson? Or will it make the person happy. Making someone happy is just as great as making yourself happy.

Tyrone Ellis Jr

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

A Strategy and Me

“People will hate you, rate you, shake you, and break you. But how strong you stand is what makes you.”

-LeBron James

I plan on succeeding in college by making sure I go to class on time, doing my homework and making sure that I keep a very good relationship with my professors. These three things are a guaranteed way to succeed in college, in my opinion. I know that college will be challenging, but so far, my high school years have not been so challenging after all. I am a senior and will be graduating in 2021. I make sure I attend all of my classes and I do put my best foot forward.

You have to make sure that you are in class on time and if you are late three times, you will get a detention. The teacher detention means you have to meet with your teacher before or after school to talk about why you got the detention. The teacher will ask you questions about why you have been late. This is to keep you focused on following the rules in the school.

When I get home, I immediately start doing my homework because everything that I learned is still fresh in my mind, therefore, this makes it easier to be able to concentrate on my studies. If you don't turn your homework in on time, points will be taken off and this can take your grades down. Studying and doing homework is definitely important because you have to remember what you learned to pass your tests.

Having a good relationship with your professors in college is critical. If you are in need of help, you can always ask them to help you so that you can get a better grade and assist you with assignments. I believe your relationships in college are just as important. They also can give you good advice on other things, such as family issues, other class issues and maybe even, other student issues.

Doing my homework, going to class, having a relationship with your teachers are the three things that I believe will help me to succeed in high school and now, in college. As long as I stick to these things, I honestly believe I will reach my goals in life, which include, going into a trade (carpentry) and fulfilling my dream of actually owning my own possession by the age of twenty-five. Any obstacle can be defeated, jumped through and accomplished, all you need is a strategy. I plan on utilizing every one of these strategies to make my own fortunes and be a successful, skillful young man.

Joseph Fuentes

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

“I never gave up or gave in, did my own thing.”

-J. Fuentes

When I was in my old school, I was a person that didn't care about school or doing work at all. I just wanted to do my “thing” and not do my work, but that school let me do what I wanted. They didn't care if I left school early or if I walked off campus to get some food and some snacks. When they gave me work, I would do it and turn it in, but I never gave up on my work. When I got into the 10th grade, my grades went up, still doing the same thing that I was doing in 9th grade; goofing off and getting food while in school. I actually never built a rapport with the teachers that would teach me and I never did show up to school, so it was hard for me to learn in 10th grade, and hard for me to learn in my three years in that school. My junior year, I stopped skipping classes and started to stay in class more, I wanted to make sure I learned and I started to truly get an education that year.

When my mom saw my grades that year, it felt like she was going to beat the living daylights out of me for having such poor grades and I deserved that. She told me that I better have decent grades or she will put me in another school so I could focus more. I realized I didn't want to go into a new school just for my grades, so I did what a normal person would do and buckled down,

started to take school seriously and now, she will not be so disappointed in me. I am at a new school this year, with a new attitude and a new strength to show what I really am. A

SCHOLAR!!

Dominique Inniss

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Shot I Decided to Take...

“You miss 100% of the shots you don't take”

-Wayne Gretzky

Growing up was never easy, there were always complications in the road. Having bad influences for most of my life affected my view of the world. I was always a loner and stayed to myself for most of the time. I let many opportunities slip through my fingers. There were many shots I could have made, but instead, I let the people around me influence my decisions. They doubted me, making me believe I couldn't do anything. As I learned to block them out, I realized what I needed to do. I need to be a man with a plan.

As the years passed, I've begun to write down goals for the future. My main goal is to make money because growing up was hard, my family and I didn't have money. I didn't have a lot of clothes or shoes when I was younger. One of the obstacles I overcame were my financial problems. What I did was look for job opportunities by searching on the web for hiring signs and asking my cousins if I could work at their jobs. In the beginning, it was hard getting a job due to

the pandemic but after a few months, I found a few jobs that started hiring again. Not long after this, I got a job working for CUI Landscape Company.

My second goal was to figure out what step I needed to take in order for me to be successful in what career I happened to take up. I have a few dream jobs that I want, which include being a Youtuber, game tester, game editor, and being a cook. People ask me, “How would I achieve getting one of these jobs?” In order to get any of my dream jobs, I have to take a shot outside my comfort zone. The ways in which I plan to accomplish this is by finishing high school, going to culinary school, getting a high paying job, saving money, moving out of my parent’s house, buying equipment for my Youtube set up, and starting building a name for myself.

In each of my goals, I will have obstacles that I will have to address. In my career, there will be a lot of obstacles that I will have to get over. The length and duration it would take for me to complete culinary school is going to be challenging.. Learning new recipes, the presentation of the food, or how to cook a variety of food items are just some of the aspects of cooking that I will learn, but, I will be up to the challenge. In conclusion, I've come to realize that this small challenge will be one of the few that will allow me to continue to expand my knowledge for my future. Even the future challenges that I see down the road will shape me into the person I am. No matter how hard my dreams will be, I’ve learned that I can overcome anything due to past obstacles.

Michael Miller

College Essay

9 October 2020

Covid Disaster

“You will face many defeats in life, but never let yourself be defeated.”

-Maya Angelou

As a young gentleman, I always often find myself facing many defeats in life, but I always find another way to never be defeated. Throughout my first two years in high school, I have been an amazing student by having at least made the honor roll each year, by now applying a different mindset for school my senior year. During my junior year, things had taken an unexpected turn for the worst. As I was trying to finish my junior year off strong, so I could have a strong resume for the colleges I would like to get into, things didn't go as I planned. When Ohio had to close school for Covid, it didn't turn out good for me, because I couldn't boost my GPA, or my ACT score. I didn't really think about it too much because I thought that we were only going to be out of school for two weeks. After the two weeks, I started to panic because the government was now closing cities because of the outbreak. During online school, I found that the amount of school work we were getting, was eventually becoming too much. My grades started to slowly decline. I also couldn't schedule an appointment to retake my ACT to hopefully get a higher score, so that I could get into the colleges that I would like. I eventually didn't finish my junior year off strong as I would have hoped to.

I am now starting my Senior year off strong so that there is still hope in the future for me to eventually pursue the career I would love in the future. Things are still tough because of the situation the world still is in, but I am having an amazing senior year so far by having better grades this year than last year, and also talking to my guidance counselor to eventually schedule an appointment for my ACT. I would say taking all of these defeats, in the most significant part in high school, has made me able to survive any change to ever happen in or out of school. The more I apply myself and that this is my final year to myself, then the more I try to accomplish everything I can this senior year.

La'Toya Reeder

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

My Memories of Dad

"All you can do is handle it, the worst thing you can do is panic. Use it to your advantage, avoid insanity, manage to conquer every obstacle, make impossible possible. Even when winning is illogical, losing is still far from optional."

T.I.

At a young age, I had my life planned out. I knew what I wanted to be, where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do. My goals are to join the Army Reserves and to become a nurse practitioner. Traveling around the world with my loved ones, write songs, paint and become a pastor. But all those thoughts, ideas and goals just STOPPED. I don't even know how to feel

anymore. It's like my happiness was stolen away from me . In this life, you need happiness to live a peaceful life. And right now, I don't have peace or happiness. I just feel depression and no motivation anymore. I wouldn't wish this feeling on my worst enemy, because it really is an empty feeling in my soul and gut. In my head i'm just stuck with memories and in real life, I just have a picture and that's not good enough.

Halloween is my favorite holiday and it's around the corner. Too bad I won't be celebrating this year, it just wouldn't be the same. My grandfather and I go shopping at Marc's and find some candy to pass out to the kids. I remember last year, we had a lot of candy and instead of being outside sitting in the garage. We decided that the kids should just ring the doorbell since it was so cold. We waited for the kids to come but they never showed up. We didn't realize that when we put the garage down I guess we forgot to turn on the lights for the little trick or treaters, so they would know we have candy. It was a great laugh but we just ended up eating all the candy for ourselves and watching old scary movies.

I'm writing this because my dad was my everything and I am lost without him. It is a struggle every single day, but I know he would want me to persevere and get on with my life. It is hard, but I am taking that picture and trying to move on.

Shelton Richardson

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Road Block

“Obstacles are like a block in the road. Just because there’s the block in the road do you just stop driving? No, you find another way to get to your final destination.” - Unknown

Wow, senior year is finally here! Honestly, it does not feel how I thought it would. COVID really took away from a lot of my experience so far. Not being able to see my classmates and not being able to have a senior night for my football season was a big let down in my senior year. At this point of this pandemic, I am used to this way of living and some expectations for my senior year have lowered tremendously. Everything seems like it's a toss up. We may not have prom, we may not be able to walk the stage. All we can do is hope that everything goes back to normal soon enough.

Hopefully we can get to enjoy winter sports like basketball and create more memories with our classmates. Or even get the chance to create memories everyday at the lunch table with our friends. Everything is online now and I can't speak for everyone else, but I miss going to school everyday and seeing all of my classmates from over these last four years and being able to interact in real life. I'm not sure as to how long this way of living will continue, but I hope it's over soon. Hoping this pandemic is over does not affect my whole future in a negative fashion.

The beginning of this school year has been stressful with everyone being at home. This pandemic has affected my family in many ways. My dad has been working from home for months and that's not at all normal for him. He is not even the type of person to want to stay home all of the time, but on the positive side of things, it gave me a chance to get a lot of hours at my job and helped me make a lot of money over this drastic time. We are already about to be finished with the first quarter and nothing has changed at all. I am trying my best to be the best student I can be and complete all of my work on time and also provide for my family. Stress and

struggle has taken over my life as of late and I have just been trying to get back to my regular way of living.

This pandemic has been a big block in the road to complete certain goals I had planned, but I'm still pushing to try to complete those goals, and I don't plan to let anything stop me from achieving the goals I set educationally and not fundamentally. An obstacle is only as big as you make it in your life. Some give up when times get rough but someone like me would roll with the punches until everything works out. These so-called obstacles we are going through are nothing compared to the real issues in our world. There are two things you can do in times like these and it will determine whether you will be successful or fail. You can lay down, make excuses and give up or stand on your own two feet and be determined to succeed.

Marquel Smith

Mr. Rock

College Essay

28 September 2020

The Cell I'm In

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to just try one more time.”

– Thomas Edison

Being diagnosed with a sickness at the age of seven months was devastating to my mother. As a mom, she had to deal with not only twins, but she also had to deal with her seven month old boy having a life threatening sickness called Sickle Cell Anemia. Growing up, there were many moments in my life that I have had to miss. Family functions, school activities, watching what I

have to wear, being too cautious and even missing out playing the sport I love called football. Life with this sickness has not been a walk in the park, yet it has been a journey of discovery.

Many individuals have no idea what it's like to have a life threatening sickness all of their life. Someone should experience these types of health affects when they are much older into their golden years, yet I, as a young man, walk through life carrying this weight that actually has made me stronger, more loving and hopeful. As a high school senior, trying to find my way in this world, I have learned that a sickness doesn't tie you to an excuse that one cannot make it, but it actually forces oneself to always get back up and continue trying to achieve the goal that one may have. As I continue my life, I will try my best to continue to be a strong black man. Many people in my support team believe I will be okay. I will continue to be the greatest and never give up on myself or my loved ones.

Myiesha Smith

Mr. Rock

College Essay

23 October 2020

My Hurt

“Life is full of challenges, obstacles, and problems. But learn to face them courageously with joy. Live every moment with happiness and positivity, for we never know.”

-Sai Kaustuv

With just a blink of an eye, your whole life can change. I was only nine years old when it felt like my whole life had crashed. A piece of me was missing, my grandpa had passed away due to cancer . My grandpa and I did everything together. He is the dad that I never had literally. It's like my life went from light to dark with just one blink and I was so young, I barely knew what life was. For some time it made me feel really alone. It made me sad for a very long time just seeing my mom cry because she lost a father and it broke my heart.

My grandpa's death still affects me to this day. I get sad all of the time about him not being here, but I always think to myself that he would be so proud of me if he was here. Sometimes, you have to think about the good memories so you can smile and even though he is gone, I know he's watching over me. You do have to learn how to face your pain, you can't just put it behind you without solving it or it's going to keep getting brought up or keep re-entering your life so it's better to overcome your hurt or obstacles rather than act like it never happened and just put it behind you. I had to learn that regarding my grandpa's death, I tried so hard not to think about it like it never happened but it kept getting brought up and it would come back to me and make me even sadder. So, I had to learn that I had to overcome this obstacle and how I did that was just thinking about the good memories. It wasn't easy. My grandpa did not graduate from high school, so I'm going to make it my business to make sure I graduate high school with a high GPA and even though he's not here, I know he's watching me and I know he's proud of me.

October is a really bad month for me. My “papa's” birthday is on October 28th and on the 30th, he passed. It just makes me sad that he's not here for his birthday and then who would have known he would be dying two days after? I make the best of those days. I just try to think of the good times and good memories. My motivation is him. I always “go hard” for him, no matter what because I know he is proud . Even when he was here he was always my motivation. He

always made me stronger and I started high school with straight B's. Now, I am a 4.2 student with straight A's . Something told me he wouldn't like B's because he knows I am not going to my full potential. I also joined the wrestling team my freshman year because my grandfather loved wrestling and I was never a "girly girl," so wrestling fits me very well. I made it all of the way to the "states" last year and placed 3rd in my weight class. I literally had no support because I wasn't there . Only my coaches pushed me harder but I knew I had to win states because I knew my grandfather would be very excited and happy, so that's all that mattered. I was wrestling for him and I continue to carry him with me.

Emoni Squire

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Read ALL About It

“ Success is measured by the obstacles which we have overcome to reach it.”

- Booker T. Washington

Let me take you, the reader on a journey through my life as a fourth grader, a time where I could not read to save my life. In fourth grade, there's a lot going on in the mind of a nine year old. In fourth grade, it is kind of a time where you grow into your own, especially when it comes to academics. I remember my mother always trying to ask me questions about my reading homework and for some reason, the words on the page just looked like a complete blur. I wasn't

getting it, I actually thought that I had a real problem, because the reality of the situation was that I could NOT read.

My mother kind of panicked and took matters into her own hands. She started reading to me, she made me read to myself and afterwards, she would ask me questions about my reading materials. In school, I would go, knowing I could read, yet I was so nervous to read in front of the class (I just didn't want to). I was kind of embarrassed with myself and my confidence was at an all time low. I actually realized that I don't care what others may think and I stopped worrying about the kids in class and put the focus once and for all on me.

This made me who I am today because I built confidence in myself and realized I can't think about what others think. This changed my whole life , now I am able to read in front of the class with no hesitation. I had so much confidence now that when I read, I barely even think about when I couldn't or what others thought of me. I can definitely say I have grown over the years and tremendously improved in my reading skills over the years.

Jordan Vinson

College Essay

5 October 2020

The Big Obstacle (course)

“When you meet obstacles with gratitude your perception starts to shift, resistance loses its power, and grace finds a home within you, ”

- Oprah Winfrey

Let me take you, the reader, on a journey through my life as a gymnast, a time where I wanted to be great enough to make it to the Olympics. I believe in gymnastics and I believe in my skills. I'm in a place where I feel safe, where I can be myself and know that everyone accepts me and understands me. For each event I have my own skill levels, and I have my favorite events. I like the bars a lot, but I also have the floor, beam and vault. I love backhand springs and front flips. I might not be able to do everything but I can do some things I put my mind to, I just have to work hard enough for it.

One day I faced a big challenge in gymnastics. This challenge was to try the vault. The vault is a big thing where you have to run to backflip on. So, one day, my trainer asked me to try it and I agreed to try it. I stood straight up with my hands in the air and ran and flipped over the vault. I did not get a chance to fully flip over the vault because I ended up hurting my neck, but before I could go any further and hurt myself more, my trainer caught me in enough time. After I faced that challenge, I lost all hope and faith and wanted to give up. I felt stressed and worried and I felt like I couldn't do it anymore so I hesitated to do anything. I started to give up on myself and the hard work I put into this, because I lost hope, faith and strength. I felt that I could work harder, but at the same time, I felt that I did not want to be a gymnast anymore because of this obstacle, but I stayed strong.

A month after this big obstacle, I dropped out of gymnastics. I really did not have a reason why I dropped out. I plan on going back to gymnastics for the Olympics one day. Going to the Olympics is a big step for me and it would be a long trip for me because you have to be elite enough to make it to the Olympics. Going to the Olympics has always been one of my big dreams, something that I thought would happen so quickly but

instead, it didn't. A couple months later, I ended up going into boxing for a year. I enjoyed boxing, but a couple months later, I dropped out of that also (you can say that I am trying to find where I fit it into this sports realm). Now, it's a little hard for me because it's a big decision if I want to go back to gymnastics or boxing. I feel that I would go back to gymnastics because that has always been my passion, but now, I have gained all hope and faith back and have been practicing at home for gymnastics. I know now that I can overcome any challenge I face, in gymnastics. I will always remember gymnastics is more than a sport, it's more than my passion. It's me. Know this though, I will never give up educating myself in who I am, who I will become and WHAT I WILL TRULY BE.

Craig Wilson

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

Sidetracked

"I encourage everyone to become their dream. Most young people get sidetracked and never end up doing what they really set out to do."

- James De La Vega

Believe it or not, when I was a lot younger, I never ever paid attention to much. School was just a place to go and hang out with my friends, the last thing on my mind was to get an education. I really believed that school was just plain 'boring' and very easy for me. It was easy

to get good grades (when I wanted to), especially science courses, they kind of held my interest. I was the kind of kid that basically got bored real easy and picked up other things to do, other than focus on school. Gaming peaked my interest at such a young age. I would literally stay up for three full days without even putting my head onto a pillow. I was going down a “downhill” spiral of almost failing.

Through the years, I found out the hard way that school is far more important than losing my mind, heart and soul into a game such as “Kingdom Hearts.” The truth of the matter was, that I would lose myself within these games, allowing my mind to wander to the past, present and future. I had to wake up fast, because I was on my way to a terrible future as a student. I still “game,” but I tend now to take a break a lot to focus on the future of my life and it doesn't involve a fantasy game, this is REAL LIFE.

I have found out that I am not only a player within my own game, but I am the controller, the screen and the outcome of my own game and it is never, “game over.” In fact my game has just begun. I plan to take my strategies that I have learned and maybe go into game design and take my lessons, my life and use these tools to create a masterful game with meaning and creations that are true to life and the real world. I guess the future of gaming is actually in my hands. I have the controller and now, I do press the buttons for my life.

Kayla Wright

Mr. Rock

College Essay

5 October 2020

My Strength Is My Future

“It is important for you to experience facing and overcoming adversity, it’s actually one of your biggest advantages.”

-Michelle Obama

As a young woman and also a young teenager in life, we face many challenges in our lives. Everything isn't always good and some things aren't always easy. Life teaches you many lessons and there is no warning on life. As a youth, you go through the typical things such as peer pressure and acceptance. When you are growing up, your parents teach you structural things and when you meet other kids that have other issues, then you have to deal with peer pressure and sometimes it may cause depression.

One of the hardest obstacles in my life that I had to deal with was depression. Depression held me from a lot of different things as a child. I wasn't “intuned” with my emotions. I wanted to feel wanted and I wanted to be accepted by all of the other kids. I had big bubble brown eyes, I was 4’11, and I was skinny and I was the good girl who didn’t do anything rebellious. I wanted to be like the “cool” kids. I wanted to fit in, but to them, I was not good enough. As a young child not understanding why people didn't like me, it broke me down. I believed I was ugly. The kids would hit me and verbally abuse me. So, I thought the Earth would be so much better if I didn't exist anymore. I went through a state of depression and anxiety up until my 11th grade year of

high school. When Covid began, we had to quarantine and be in the house and I had the time to examine myself and everyday I would force myself out of bed because I was craving this love so bad. I wanted to love myself. I wanted to know that I was accepted, but little did I know, I was already accepted by the KING (God) himself. I grew closer to God. I prayed for continuous days and asked God to transform my heart and guide me into this new way of living. God showed me I didn't need to be accepted by anyone but him. My healing process took some time and as I'm typing this, I'm still healing from untold stories and experiences. Becoming one with God and also myself was the best thing that has happened to me in 2020. Thank God for my family and my amazing two friends who pushed me to keep going when I didn't have it in me to keep going. I fought with my thoughts every night until I couldn't take it anymore. I beat depression and anxiety. Depression and anxiety have been one of the biggest obstacles in my life and I am always grateful. To every young man and woman out in the world, remember life Isn't easy but don't let that stop you. Don't let society tear you down. Love the person that God made you to be inside and out. Self love is the best thing in life. Keep fighting until you can't fight anymore. Don't lower your standards for someone who can't meet them.

