

My name is Logan Watt, born November 29, 2007 and was 12 years old when COVID-19 took over the world. I remember hearing about the virus in January and February 2020 but it seemed like it was still a world away. My family, Charlene (my mom), Cam (my Dad), my brothers (Jordan and Dylan) and my mom's family (Grandpa Don Payne, Monica Schamehorn, Aunt Jaime Jackson, Aunt Kaitlyn Payne and my cousin Rachael Jackson) went on a family trip to Cuba for a week in early March 2020. When we returned from our vacation, COVID had started to spread and people were scared. I remember that my mom had to quarantine for 14 days after we returned from vacation before she could return to work at the Township of Armour. Within the week of being back, Premier of Ontario Doug Ford came on tv and told the province that the March Break was being extended and that children would not be returning to school. We were to learn through a new online format. The province was shut down except for essential workers, like grocery stores and delivery trucks. Restaurants were takeout only. My dad did all of the grocery shopping for the house and when he brought groceries back from the store, everything had to be wiped down with Lysol wipes before it went into the cupboard or fridge. Everyone in the country raced to stores to stock up on toilet paper and Lysol. There was a shortage of toilet paper and even the Premier of Ontario couldn't figure out why people were hoarding the stuff. The virus seemed like a zombie apocalypse because no one really understood it. All I really knew was that the virus came from China and it spread fast throughout the world.

I did online learning for my grade 7 classes until mid-June. It was a different way of learning and I really missed my friends. The internet connection was horrible and some days I couldn't get my assignments done. Everyone was told to only leave home for essentials and to not travel too far away from home. We had a few cases of COVID-19 in the Parry Sound District but the reports never told people what town had the infections. As of December, 2020, I wasn't aware of any cases of COVID-19 in Burk's Falls.

My summer of 2020 was beyond boring. I did not visit any of my school friends until late August but everyone had to socially distance themselves from each other and keep 2 meters apart. We were told to wash our hands frequently and to use hand sanitizer. There were COVID signs at the parks, the grocery stores, everywhere, reminding people to follow the

COVID-19 safety measures. Most of my summer was spent at home playing video games online with my friends and my cousins. It was the only way that I could have a social connection with kids my same age. My mom and dad would take the family out once in a while to pick up a takeout dinner but we couldn't go to any cinemas or on our annual summer trip to Darien Lake because the borders were closed. We would camp in the back property at Uncle Bill Watt's and hike through trails on Grandpa Richard Watt's property. We went fishing at Pike Lake in Armour a lot. All the community events were cancelled in 2020, the Fall Fair, Halloween parties...even the Santa Claus Parade! I went trick or treating with my cousins in Novar but most people left candy in a bowl on their doorsteps for kids to grab.

I went back to school at Land of Lakes Public School in September 2020 but some of the students chose to continue learning online from home. My mom spoke to my doctor at Toronto Sick Children's Hospital a few times and she encouraged my mom to send me to school. I was happy about going to school again, I missed my friends. School was different, so different when I returned. Everyone over grade 4 had to wear a mask/face covering and there were strict rules about only having contact with my classmates, washroom breaks and how we walked orderly down the hallways. There were no pizza days, no fundraising, no class trips, and no Christmas concerts. I liked to wear the face coverings that were bandanas (like a cowboy) because they weren't so hot but most people wore disposable masks.

In November, I turned 13 and it was a quiet celebration with a couple classmates and my cousins, Emerson and Nevan from Novar. My Grandpa Payne made me a cowboy saloon bar and my party was set up like the Wild West. It sure was a fun theme and the party was what me and my friends needed.

On December 14, 2020, the first person in Ontario got the COVID-19 vaccine. It will be many months before everyone else gets the vaccine but it's light at the end of the tunnel. I look forward to the world returning back to normal, (whatever that may actually be) but to me it is a place where people can shake hands and people can gather in groups without worrying about spreading a virus, a virus that has taken so many seniors' lives. For the most part, the world listened to what the medical professionals were telling people to do. I was worried in the

spring of 2020 that the world was going to lose an entire generation of grandparents. One thing for sure is that COVID-19 was an opportunity to change what we do and to create something new out of the disruption. As Winston Churchill said, "Never let a good crisis go to waste."