

Hannah, Age 17

March 26, 2020.

Dear Journal,

It honestly has been one of the craziest weeks of my life. A couple of weeks ago, they started talking about this “coronavirus“ and none of us really knew was happening. I saw over Instagram different videos of Chinese men in hazmat suits and women being taken from their families in hospitals, but I honestly thought it was a dramatic re-creation or something. When I found out what coronavirus was, I didn’t really know what to think. We were told that it’s basically just widely spread flu symptoms. The flu, like any other winter sickness, is mostly curable, right? The answer is no. At least not for now. I was safe in America and I didn’t realize how quickly it could spread. I was going to AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and people were freaking out about the virus. A lot of the major politicians were coming to speak to us, and people were incredibly concerned. They were saying that it’s a huge danger for lots of people to get together because it spreads easily. I still wasn’t really sure of the extremity of it. After I came back from AIPAC everything went downhill. We had gotten a bunch of emails from various programs canceling. We were no longer allowed to go to Penn for Model Congress, our Gettysburg trip was canceled and there were rumors saying that summer programs would be too. All of the emails started falling in from different places I signed up for like restaurants and stores were saying that they would no longer be kept open. All of the memes on Instagram were about food shortages, wanting to die from the virus, couples being “quarantine buddies” and Zoom (the online format for FaceTime in class). We were then told to stay home from school. Last Friday we were instructed to go to our lockers, pick up all of our books, and leave as soon as we could. I haven’t been back since. Los Angeles quickly became a ghost town. While people were still driving around, hysteria broke out in supermarkets. Shelves were empty and there was no more paper towels, hand sanitizers, larger jugs of water, simple things like pasta and vegetables, and other things that people need. Elderly people were fighting for toilet paper. The mayor sent out an order last week saying that we should not leave our houses and the entire state of California is basically shut down. Trump also labeled this an emergency, which is crazy. Basically, you’re only allowed to travel one person in a car, you can only go to the supermarket and medical-related places, and starting tomorrow, offices are closed. I have been going on bike rides and people are still driving around, but apparently the national guard came to the beach and told people of leave. I am not worried, but I am worried for my family and the older people. I’m looking at <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> and right now, the cases are over 500,000 and deaths just over 22,000. Those numbers are what is scaring me. Israel has had 2,666 cases but 8 deaths. And obviously, the dumb people on twitter are blaming the Jews. Right, okay. And honestly, I am petrified.