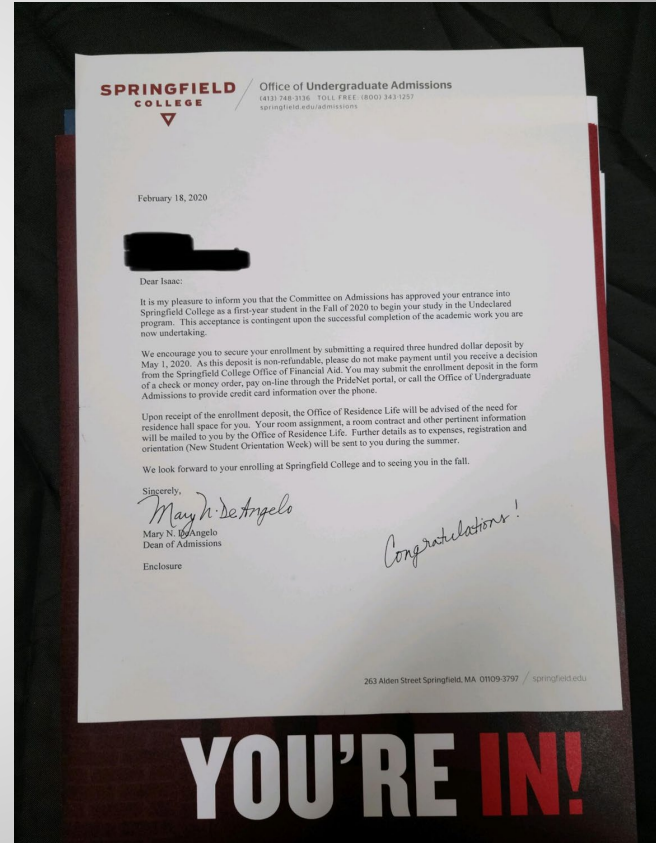


Unmasking My Truth

This pandemic has been an experience like no other. It sent the world into panic and forced people to adjust in ways that we have never seen before. Adults were forced to work from home, and many lost their jobs, while students were sent home from school for what would end up being the duration of the school year. I was one of those many students that was set to graduate in 2020 and make their summer going into college the best yet. Unfortunately, my senior year was cut short, graduation was celebrated through the passenger seat of a car, my summer was spent wearing a mask, and somehow this new way of living through a pandemic became somewhat normal. However, what students like me had to endure this year is unheard of and the complete opposite of normal. No prom, no celebrating, no gatherings, no way to live as freely as we did in the past. Throughout this series of photographs it will become very clear of exactly how unusual life has been from the point I left high school in March to when I arrived to college in August.

Decision Day

Decision day for most seniors occurs on May 1st. It's usually a day for students to announce what they want to do after high school, and most importantly, it happens in school. Nothing was normal about my situation though. I decided that I would continue my education at Springfield in my house surrounded by my immediate family. It was strange to not be with my classmates in our college sweatshirts, and celebrating our futures but this was what Covid-19 had done to me and every senior in Massachusetts.



Graduation



Graduation was unique in every sense of the word. My high school set up a “drive up” ceremony for my classmates and I. Teachers and staff sat along the driving route to encourage us through the windows of our cars. As students, we could only wave and look at the people that supported us from a distance. All sitting 6 feet apart, it was difficult to really see what the world had come to. I drove up to the stage at the end of the route, got out of my car, received my diploma from my principal and went home. In a matter of 20 seconds, I had graduated high school in a way I never thought was possible.

A Summer full of “Hanging Out”

Summer was supposed to be fun, exciting, and full of memories with friends. This image is a display of how my friends and I spent time together during the quarantine phase of Covid-19. In order to stay socially distanced, we met up at our old elementary school and stayed in our cars in order to communicate with each other. It was strange and challenging at first so we had to improvise the best we could even though it seemed like we were all trapped. However, it taught us all a valuable lesson about how important it is to appreciate life without policies like social distancing and wearing masks.



A Quiet Vacation

During this pandemic, a vacation was crucial to relieve built up stress from everything going on with school and life in general. It was questionable if a vacation was even an option because of the travel guidelines that Covid required us to follow. This picture was taken in York, Maine of what is usually a jam packed boardwalk on a beach. I was fortunate enough to go but many people weren't and this is shown here. There is nobody around me, and there are very few people in the distance. The lack of people changed the normal vacation experience but it still made it just as memorable.



College: A New Beginning



Arriving on campus was an unforgettable experience. My mom and I took the hour and a half drive from my hometown to campus, and had no idea what to expect. We got here and the first thing I had to do was get tested for coronavirus. After my test I moved into my dorm and took a quick walk around campus. It felt empty and quiet, and nothing close to what I imagined my first day on campus to be like. I remember walking by the James Naismith statue and seeing the mask on his face, I was amazed that this was going to be the reality of life for the foreseeable future.