

How I spent my time during quarantine

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When the Coronavirus breached America and cases started to rise, national quarantine was declared. Big businesses, sports, schools, restaurants, and many other public places and events were closed or cancelled. With students no longer leaving the house, free time built up for everyone and boredom grew prevalent in many teens' lives.

The key to keeping yourself sane during quarantine is being productive. Valuing your time and participating or engaging in events that are beneficial to you over time really is the best way to keep yourself sane during quarantine. Whether it's volunteer work or just learning a new skill, being productive is a huge way to resolve anxiety about staying at home. Since early March, I have executed the principle of being productive and kept myself active.

One of the things I did to be productive during quarantine was volunteer for an organization I'm a part of called Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB), which helps feed thousands of underprivileged families who were even more troubled with finding food as their kids were no longer

getting school meals. Every Friday, I would gather a small group to head down to the agency and assemble grab and go lunch bags for people in need. This not only occupied some of my time and was very easy, but it also made me feel really good about myself as



FEEDING FAMILIES: This is Jack Shechtman (middle) at the Healthy Mother Healthy Babies agency with the administrative staff after a Friday of packing up the week's bags for families in need. Jack went to the agency almost every week of quarantine and used it as a way to give back and keep himself occupied (photo submitted by Jack Shechtman).

I helped contribute to providing necessities for thousands of people.

Another way I spent my time during quarantine was I found a job in the field of work I'm interested in pursuing for my future. I worked Monday-Thursday at a general contracting company called Newman Construction, and I learned so much about the industry, as well as made a summer salary. I enjoyed my job and made money, and this definitely kept me sane as it gave me something to do during the week.

One more way to keep yourself busy during the pandemic is to do the things you normally wouldn't have time to do. Whether that means spending more time with your family, working on your body, or learning new skills, any of these things could keep you active and prevent yourself from feeling bored or depressed inside the house.

All in all, making use of your time and being productive will eliminate the boredom and stop the insanity from building up inside yourself.

Think beyond Heritage: halt online exams

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With Advanced Placement (AP) exams online in 2020, AP students from around the world got the opportunity to experience online testing. Although the College Board tried their best under time restraints and circumstances, their fate is just one reason why standardized tests should not lean toward online instruction.

Leaning toward digital tests creates a more apparent digital divide. Although Heritage may hold multi-billion dollar facilities with state-of-the-art computer technologies and programs, according to Time, a quarter of Americans do not have broadband (a connection fast enough to stream video).

We, as global thinkers, need to understand that the implications of "going forward" with online testing means leaving

students behind. Although we are not primarily impacted by the digital divide, we need to cast our student vote and opinion with a global mindset. AP students with slower wifi should not have their scores cancelled as opposed to those with the fastest wifi in the nation.

As seen with the 2020 AP Exams, the 2% of students who failed to submit their tests did not deserve the additional stress of retesting or getting their scores cancelled. Even FairTest.org joined the ranks in arguing against College Board in the class action lawsuit regarding the exams, which claims "gross negligence and unjust enrichment." No matter how well the College Board will improve the program, we will always face problems similar to what the 2% of students faced. Some of these students even come from Heritage; we are not exempt from the

woes of digital testing.

The 2020 AP exams are now a thing of the past. However, their failure only shows how much we need to prepare for digital exams. We need to work first toward bridging the digital divide before we can move toward the future of digital exams.

