

The loud beeping of my alarm woke me up bright and early. The sun had risen just a bit ago. Today was the day we had all been waiting for. It wasn't your average Saturday. Today was different, for today was the day we could live our lives happily again. On March 13th, 2020, Geneva shut down. Schools and shops closed and everyone was quarantined in order to stay safe from Coronavirus. It was a terrible time for everyone. Originally, this was only supposed to go on for three weeks, but little did we know it would be over a year until we could walk the streets of downtown Geneva again. Thankfully, we can put all that behind us now that people are finally vaccinated.

I hopped out of bed to get ready for the day. I couldn't wait to meet up with my close friends, I hadn't seen them in forever. In less than 20 minutes, I was tying my shoes and was out the door. No words could explain my happiness and excitement. It was as if the dark clouds covering the sun had finally floated away. The world was warm and peaceful. I grabbed my bike and headed downtown for the first time in months. I noticed people reuniting and talking. Everyone was so happy that they no longer had to suffer from masks, including me! It had felt like this day would never come.

I finally made it downtown, and it was packed! People were shopping at their favorite stores, eating at restaurants, or taking a stroll! Geneva looked better than it ever had before. I was so lucky to be a part of such a wonderful community. It felt amazing to break free from all the negative energy COVID19 brought! It was amazing to be living life normally, I had really missed it. I spotted my friends and biked over to them. It was strange to be so close to people. The pandemic had made me realize how important it was to stay connected with people. I love my family, but it's important to keep friendships strong too. Sometimes face-timing a friend just isn't enough. I want to be able to give them a big hug and laugh over stupid things. I want to be able to actually spend time with them. If we aren't able to stay connected with our friends, it's hard to keep them.

Covid had made me realize that I need to be thankful for the little things in life too, such as going out for ice cream, having a sleepover, or even just going to school. Most kids say that they hate going to school, but I think that Covid made them realize how much they love it. It gives you a place to go every day. School is a place where you can be with your friends and have fun. It gives you something to look forward to at the end of summer. Whether it's recess, lunch, or the actual classes, I'm sure that Covid has made every kid, tween, or teen realize that there is at least one thing they love about their school.

My friends and I walked down the sidewalk to the place we would be having brunch at. We were very excited! It felt nice to hear the sounds of downtown Geneva, the sounds of cars, birds, and people. Everyone was outside even though it was still morning. I guess people couldn't wait to have fun! We got to the restaurant and sat down. I'd be having my favorite pancakes, as usual. We chatted for a while and got to see some other school friends which was nice. Our food finally came, but I couldn't stay long. I had to eat my fancy pancakes quickly because I had dance. I waved goodbye to my friends and headed to my studio, which was just around the block.

It was weird being back at my studio after so many months of taking dance at home. I got ready and tied my hair into a tight ponytail. It was great to see all of my peers and my teacher again. I

was so ready to start dancing normally! Although I wasn't really at dance before, I had improved a lot due to all of the free time that I had, especially during the first few months of lockdown. Back in March, April, and May, everyone had so much time on their hands. Many people used that time to practice their skills or try something new, which I think is actually something positive about the global pandemic.

Anyways, after we were all warmed up, we were told that competitions were starting soon. I was really excited and couldn't wait! We got started on the group number right away. It was a Jazz routine that had a lot of fun moves. I loved it, considering Jazz is my favorite style of dance. I'd been taking it for years. We learned most of it in the time we had and a lot was accomplished.

That night in bed, I was thinking of the amazing day I had and how I couldn't wait for the competition! It was if I had been locked in a dark closet and someone finally opened the door so I could see the light. The global pandemic was over, and we were all finally happy.

Today was competition day. It had been several weeks since we were all free from the horrible pandemic, and we were pretty used to living normally again. My dance friends and I were in our costumes, preparing for the group number. We were doing each other's hair and makeup and were having a great time! Our costumes were baby blue and glittery, they were really, really, pretty. There was so much noise, people were chatting, signing in to the competition, and rehearsing their dance with music. There wasn't a mask to be seen.

A half an hour later, it was almost time to go onstage! Everybody was so excited, but deep down we were all really nervous. We stood by the edge of the stage as we watched the group before us perform. Then, it was time. We confidently walked on stage with the biggest smiles. The lights were bright and the music loud. This was my first time performing in months, I had been waiting for this for so long. Our group was amazing! Everything was done perfectly. We knew that we had a pretty good chance of placing first in our category.

While we waited for the other groups to finish performing, I thought a bit. In just these past few weeks, I've realized just how much Covid19 had affected our lives. We were going through what is going to be written in the pages of history books in the future. It's surely going to be a story that will never be forgotten, and I'm able to say that I survived the dreadful pandemic of 2020 - the most unforgettable year.

But I don't want to focus on our terrible past, I want to focus on our future where we can walk the streets of beautiful downtown Geneva mask-free.