

# LIVING WELL IN LOWRY

BY NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORS

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## ...because of COVID

I've avoided this cover story for several months, but it's time to address the elephant in the room. You know, the one who stampeded across the globe around *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*. How fitting. We were just notified the kids would be on an *extended* spring break, extended by two weeks for a total of three. *No way*. Saturday night we went *out* to dinner with friends. Little did we know that would be our last time out for months. Come Sunday night, we got together with some neighbors for one last sanity check. One shared some news from her home state which was that Ohio would be closing the following day. *What?* The whole state? *No way*. Restaurants, gyms, movie theaters, everything. *Closed*. I remember thinking *there's no way Colorado will close*. Then, the unthinkable happened. One activity after another, after another, came to a screeching halt. Spring skiing, the kids' organized sports, March Madness and professional sports, graduations and concerts. *Cancelled*.

The first few weeks the kids were in heaven. Freedom from school, homework and bedtime! *I* was even productive at the beginning. The basement was cleaned out and every closet organized. The fridge, base boards and laundry room all sparkled. We even started on an epic Lego-sorting mission. Hindsight being what it is though, we should have spread out all those domestic projects because we realized we were in it for the long haul.

The honeymoon slowly ended as did our *extended spring break*. Remote-learning began, and my naïve-self thought this structure would be a good thing. I should start by giving *kudos* to our educators for pulling together what they did given the abrupt turn of events.

Our middle-schooler put in a solid four hours daily, working independently through his class schedule. On the other hand, our 4<sup>th</sup> grader was busy for *maybe* an hour each day? This was shaping up to be a long spring.

The next thing I know, I'm coming off one of my worst parenting moments in all my 13 years on the job. No sooner do I take a deep breath and collect myself does my Dear Husband walk in the door. Key detail? It's noon, on a Monday, and this *never* happens. He's schlepping what appears to be most of his office equipment including two giant monitors, a full-size keyboard and an overflowing bag of power cords. I'm about ready to tell him we probably don't have that many outlets in the house when he declares, "They closed our office. I'm working from home indefinitely." I am *screaming* on the inside, but, on the outside, I have to just walk away. *No way*.

Oh, and within 24 hours, he stops shaving his bald head *and* his face.

Just when I thought things couldn't get worse, of course they did. The soap dispenser broke on the dishwasher. Under normal circumstances, this would not be a huge issue, but, with everyone home 24/7, I learned we burn through an absurd amount of plates and glasses, and not many of my housemates are huge fans of handwashing dishes.

School ended and eventually we found our groove. We started a few new traditions like *cinnamon-roll Wednesday* and *carry-out Friday*. The kids enjoyed the hours we spent sifting through their baby mementos and telling them stories from when they were tiny. They got a glimpse of

our past as we showed off our high-school keepsakes and other old things. Have you tried explaining the Sony Walkman® to your kids? While they did think that technology was incredible, overall they still don't think we are, or ever were, all that cool.

Summer arrived and we fought hard for some normalcy. Thanks to our family, we found just that. We spent two weeks with cousins, including a road trip to Michigan to visit the rest of our family. This never would have happened B.C. (before COVID). Our trip was full of everything a summer should have: hours on the lake fishing and swimming, staying up late over a campfire, doing sparklers, playing cards and belly laughing. It was just the shot-in-the-arm we all needed.

Fall is quickly approaching, and back-to-school has taken on a whole new look. If anyone would have told me back on *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* that we'd still be doing this today, which some did, I would say *no way*. Alas, here we are.

We have all handled our days since March differently, and most of us have had a healthy mix of good days and bad. My dad has always told me *you can only control what you can control*. At the end of the day, and with his sentiment in mind, we continue to remind our kids that this too shall pass, as we try and convince ourselves of the same.

*See you on the porch!*

*Julie A. Landen*