

# COVID-19 cuts learning expeditions short

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With the school year being cut short, many exchange students traveled back home early having to leave their host families and friends sooner than expected.

“Returning home was both positive and negative. I got to see my family and friends again, but I had to leave my American family and American friends who I really miss. It

was hard to leave my host family so soon since we already had so many plans that we won’t get to do together, and I wasn’t ready to end my exchange year yet,” said Alma Gabriellsson.

This unexpected turn of events left many host families having to say goodbye much sooner than expected which changed plans for the rest of the time they should have had with their exchange student.

“It’s really hard because she is our family. We didn’t expect her to have to leave and it was all so sudden. It hurt a lot to see my whole family heartbroken and I miss her more every day. We didn’t get to do stuff we planned to do and it’s just not a good situation,” said freshman Jasmine O’Neal, whose family hosted Gabriellsson.

For other exchange students, while their school year is still cut

short, going home is not safe.

“I am staying in America and I don’t really know when I am going to be able to leave because the frontiers are closed so I don’t know if I will leave sooner or after the date, I was supposed to

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**Jasmine O’Neal**  
freshman

leave,” said junior Paula del Rey. Because of such an unexpected and monumental pandemic, many countries around the globe are dealing with the coronavirus in a different manner with different precautions.

“In Spain, they are doing a lot of things to stop the spread of the virus. They have been in quarantine for almost a month now and it’s illegal to get out of the house. They can only go to the grocery store, work or walk the dog. If they go to the grocery store they wear masks and gloves and keep a distance between each other,” said del Rey.

Sweden, unlike other European countries, has taken a different approach when it comes to dealing with the coronavirus.

“Sweden is really focused on not overflowing the health system, so they are going to wait until they are at the line and then they will stop everything so that they will have time to recover. They don’t think pandemics like this can be stopped, so they are just trying to make sure that as few people as possible die,” said Gabriellsson.

Since it is not safe for most exchange students to return home, they rely on their families for information about how life is back home amidst the pandemic.

“I call my parents every day, so all the information about the

situation over there is mostly based on what they tell me. Italy right now is in lockdown, [which] means that they cannot leave the house as they used to. Every time that

go out you have to bring a self-certification in case the police pull you over,” said junior Valentina Samsa.

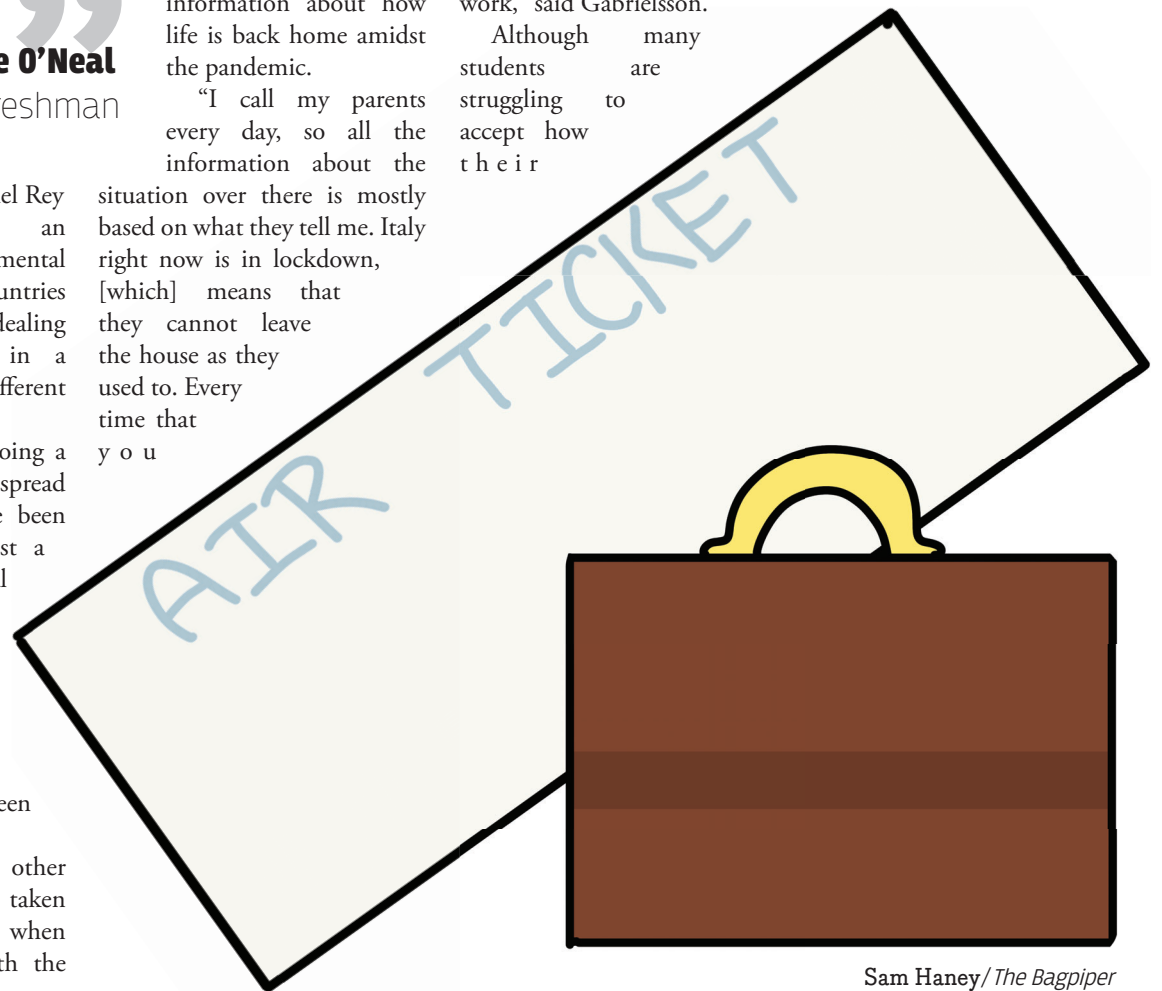
Different places around the world are taking different measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

“As I said, Sweden is not in quarantine because they have a different approach to handling the virus. For example, I am not in quarantine here, and even though high schools are closed, middle schools are still open and most people still go to work,” said Gabriellsson.

Although many students are struggling to accept how their

time as foreign exchange student ended, many are grateful for the opportunity and the memories.

“One thing I will miss from Floyd Central is the school spirit. It’s so different from my school in Sweden and it makes the school year a lot more fun,” said Gabriellsson. “My favorite experiences from this school year were probably all the American football and basketball games. We don’t have sports in school here, so it was a really fun and different experience.”



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