

Students provide essential work during virus

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Features Reporter

For the first time in the majority of American people's lives, the entire country has been shut down. COVID-19 has traveled to most of the world, and America is no exception. Although the crisis is serious, the world has to go on, and essential workers are a steadfast force in the face of a global crisis.

Junior Alivia Singleton works at Texas Roadhouse, which is essential because they provide food to the public. Her workplace has taken every step they can to ensure the virus does not spread.

"We have not allowed anyone inside the store. Texas Roadhouse is typically on a

three-hour wait, and so we haven't been having anyone inside. I think it's really weird. We have been taking precautions, we have timers set to constantly wash our hands, we wear masks, everyone wears gloves, we've taken a lot of precautions," she said.

Junior Aneesa Omar is another student working in a restaurant. Her job at the Spaghetti Shop has also undergone changes to make sure that nothing is contaminated or spread.

"People can still come in, but they can't sit down and eat, it's only carry-out. Everybody has to stay six feet away from each other, and all the employees have to wear gloves at all times, and we have to use hand sanitizer after every order that we take. We also only have three people working at a time," said Omar.

Restaurants are not the only places that have changed in response to the pandemic. Junior Jackson Ryan works at JayC Food

Mart, and the prevention methods for grocery stores are different than in restaurants.

"Just last week we put up a piece of glass between the cashier and the customer. We've been wiping off carts. The store has been offering gloves to the workers, and we've been wiping down the conveyor belts and our areas more often now," said Ryan.

Singleton said that the changes have made her job harder. Social distancing that makes it harder to serve food and the constant need to wash hands and sanitize all supplies after every interaction.

"Social distancing definitely makes it more difficult, because whenever we are trying to give people their food, we have to

sometimes do it through their trunk, but if their trunk has stuff in it, we have to hand it to them. Then we

instantly have to take our gloves off because they're contaminated, and we have to constantly use a sanitizing solution on the pens that people use and the card readers and stuff like that," said Singleton.

Omar has a different view of social distancing. She believes it makes her job easier than it was before.

"I don't think it's made it any harder. If anything, it made it easier. We don't have to wash as many dishes or close as many things since we're not using them anymore," she said.

With the dangers and changes that come with facing

the virus, it can be daunting to keep working through the epidemic.

"I feel like I have to [work] because I have to pay for my car and insurance and stuff. If I didn't have bills, I probably would have quit so I could keep myself safe, but since I do have bills, I have to go and work," said Omar.

Singleton said overall workers want everyone to feel and be safe during the crisis.

"I just hope that everyone is taking this seriously and that they're all using protective measures. I really hope everyone is staying safe."



Scarlett Hatton/The Bagpiper

Senior Tanner Striegel on being an essential worker

Bagpiper: What are your duties as a manager at Berry Twist?

Tanner Striegel: "I manage the girls I'm working with and the customers. So I deal with any problems a customer has. I make sherbet, change the flavors, and tell people what to do at closing time."

BP: What is the hardest part of working during a pandemic?

TS: "The hardest part has been satisfying our customers with all the changes that came with the pandemic. We have also been extremely busy, so it's been hard to keep the line down."

BP: What advice do you have for other essential workers?

TS: "My advice would be to keep a smile on your face and keep pushing through! Essential workers do so much for us in these times and I appreciate all of them."