

*Essay by Chloe Ferguson*

To say 2020 was a crazy year would be an understatement. Forest fires, police brutality, protests, a worldwide pandemic, and an aggressive election are just some of the horrendous things that happened in just one year. Thankfully, we have made it through 2020 and can now hope for a better year in 2021. That being said, it's crucial to look back and think about all the things we have learned, not only about ourselves but also about the world around us.

Are we amid a catastrophe or a metamorphosis? To that I will say there is no one right answer. When we were presented with a year like 2020, each person decided to either take the horrible and go through a "metamorphosis"-try to learn and grow -or just stay focused on catastrophe. It's easy to dwell in the bad and constantly think about the things that were taken from us last year. For months we were locked in our houses watching the beautiful summer days pass by. After all that, we had to live with not knowing when we would get a vaccine or when our lives would go back to normal. It's hard to take that all in and try to find the positive. Luckily, many people used their time in quarantine to better understand themselves, and they came out of 2020 as a new person.

Personally, a lot has changed for me in this past year. Spending so much time alone helped me better understand myself. The ironic truth is that this is the first time in my life I feel like I'm not wearing a mask. I've learned who I truly am, and I've let myself express that. I'm no longer trying to be the person I think everyone wants me to be. This year has also allowed me to see the people around me in a different light. I've seen the people who refused to wear a mask around their mouth and nose to protect the surrounding people. I've seen the people who ignored the issues the world is facing. This has allowed me to see how people act when they are

presented with the choice to help those around them with nothing in return. The best way to truly describe the year we had is “eye-opening”.

Being that last year was an unfamiliar experience for everyone, the best thing we can do is take all the lessons we learned and carry them with us. We can't put that year in the past and never look back, because if we did then we went through a year of misery for nothing. We will never get back the time we spent in quarantine or the time away from our loved ones. So, everyone needs to absorb everything that happens and continue to live the rest of our lives to the fullest because as we've seen, the future isn't guaranteed.