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### Pop Goes the Bubble

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## **Pop Goes the Bubble (published on my blog 9/9/20)**

It was Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Schools will close for two weeks, they said. We're monitoring the situation, they said.

Work shuts its doors. Work remotely for two weeks, I said. We'll be back in no time, I said.

213 days later, the bubble we have built, the protections we have installed, the security blanket that was quarantine is about to pop. It's hard to believe we are here.

We have more sanitizer, soap, and masks than I ever thought possible. Still fresh out of Clorox wipes though, for all 213 days.

We have spent more time together as a family than we have since they were three months, when they both went to daycare and life went on.

In the beginning, there was a bit of whimsy about this thing called quarantine. It was March, dark, cold, and we were together – hunkered down in our cozy house with a roaring fire watching CNN and the Governor's daily press conferences. Then we turned to Zoom dance parties with friends. And with each passing day, it became clear that we were in this for the long haul.

It took a pandemic to get us to stop, slow the grind, and hunker down and in the end, what we got in return were nearly six months of togetherness, rekindled relationships, reintroduced quirks, and newly discovered traits. We made memories, experienced history, and forged new paths.

Our Grace. Our Amazing Grace. She has always been quiet, humble, and inquisitive – very curious, and sometimes worried, about the world around her. She asked the most questions; I wish I kept count. They were hard questions, some for which we had no answers. “When will this end?” “Why aren't they stopping it?” “Are we always going to be locked down?” “Will masks be a thing forever?” “When can I see my friends again?” “What about a vaccine?” “Will Christmas feel different?”

But, she also blossomed. She buried her head in books, Broadway shows, and theater scripts. She painted, and painted, and painted, and painted showing us her amazing talent and mind. She made lists – there were a LOT of lists. And she conquered.



Our Paige. Our Sassy Paige. She was taken by the sudden slew of snow-day-feelings. Did she Zoom? Not really. But she excelled in math, got her reading done, and once it was warm enough to go outside and the snow melted, she put more miles on her bike in a few short months than she has in her lifetime.

She made her First Communion – mask and all. No questions, just walked in with confidence. She got her ears pierced. She kept Irish dancing, albeit virtually. She got into my make-up...a lot. She painted, and painted, and painted. She produced at least seven pounds of slime. She grew 47 new freckles; I counted. And she conquered.



They kept us going. *They* reminded *us* to wash our hands endlessly. They ran one of my team meetings. A few days, as I sat in my corner of the house trying to manage my to-do's without my office resources and team with me, I felt little hands come behind me and rub my shoulders to calm me down. They rose to the challenge and challenged us to do the same.

Now, we will send them back out into the world, armed with markers, sharpened #2 pencils, five pocket folders (blue, red, yellow, orange, purple), a water bottle, tissues, sanitizer, and masks.

We must rely on others to keep them out of harm's way, be sure they are following the new rules, washing their hands, and keeping those hands to themselves.

To all the parents out there – they have GOT this. They are resilient. They came through this with us, and they'll continue to plow through this without us. You've instilled in them these new life lessons that have become habits. Am I terrified? Yes. But are they excited? Yes.

We've taught them to be brave. We've taught them to be strong. We've taught them to be courageous. We've told them time and time again...every little thing is gonna be alright.

Pop goes the bubble.

But trust your wisdom. It's worth every wrinkle.