**LILY ELLICKSON, 9**

"One thing that was difficult was that I used to see my grandparents once or twice every month [then] to not see them at all for a few months. This was really hard for my sister and I, we love seeing our family."

AVA WARKENTIN, 11

"I was not able to travel as much with my family as I usually do this summer because of COVID and travel restrictions. I grew closer with my parents because we all are working during the pandemic so we are able to relate to each other more."
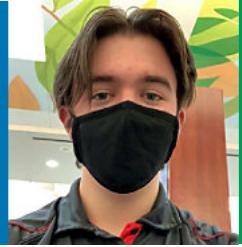
TAKING THINGS FOR GRANTED

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life for all of us. After some reflection, most Bolts realized they had taken some things for granted previously. **Sydney Hested, 9**, said, "I think [the] one thing I took for granted the most before COVID is being able to go to school. In years past, I would dread going to school some days. Now, everyday that we get to go to school I'm excited. I enjoy seeing my friends I don't get to see everyday. I didn't know how much I liked school until we couldn't go anymore." Sydney isn't the only one who has reflected on things that she took for granted before COVID hit. Check out what others are more grateful for today.

Sydney Hested, 9

While COVID affected our summers differently, **Sydney Hested, 9**, explained how it changed hers. "One way it affected me was high school and club softball got cut short."

"As I said before I couldn't play as much softball as in years past. I found myself watching a lot of Netflix. We have an ongoing joke in our family that I have watched everything there is to watch on Netflix."

Sydney & her sisters:
"I think COVID brought our family closer together. We spent a lot of time together. My mom ended up getting COVID so we had to quarantine together which was an experience to say the least."

Amirah Butali, 12

"COVID affected my family because we couldn't see my grandma and make sure she was okay because she lives in another country. I took that stuff for granted before COVID. Before, I could see my friends and all my family, but I couldn't see them at all this summer so we have to communicate through the media."

Ella Rose Terry, 9

"I was not able to do gymnastics at all since COVID started. This has been tough because I have been doing gymnastics for 11 years, and I have not been able to practice for 7 months. I think I took that stuff for granted but I never expected not going on vacation ever or not seeing my friends anymore."

Amelia Cleary, 11

"My family had planned a trip to Europe over the summer, and I was looking forward to it for months prior to COVID. When I found out we had to cancel, I was really upset, but understood why it was important. Instead, we went on a family camping trip so we could travel safely, and I can honestly say it was one of the best trips I've ever been on."

Wesley Phipps, English

"I do think I took things for granted before COVID-19, like being able to travel to visit family and being able to spend time in person with family and friends."

Ava Walker, 11

"I'd say I took for granted just being able to go to school normally and getting to actually see your friends and talk to them."

Jeremiah Madlock, 9

"Even though COVID was around, I was still able to buy everything that I would've got if COVID wasn't a thing."

Jeremiah Madlock, 9

"Hate to say this but, I took school for granted. Right now I'm doing classes online I miss the social part of school, I miss seeing my friends everyday and going to the games especially since it's my senior year." **Lilia Chalkley, 12**

CAMERON MCKNIGHT, 12
"What I learned I took for granted was my parents stable job. Having the ability to continue working during the peak of the pandemic was a blessing."

FATIMA EL-ZEIN, 11
"Something I took for granted before COVID was going outside and enjoying day-to-day life. It affected me this summer because I have some relatives that live outside of Iowa."
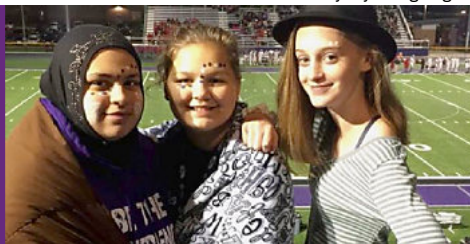
WILLIAM LANGE, 12
"I took for granted many life experiences and connections. Before COVID-19, I didn't do many activities or talk with many people. I didn't realize how important friends and experiences are until they're gone."

"I took for granted traveling this summer because I was going to travel to a lot of other countries, but all the borders were closed." **Hannah Johnson, 12**

Hannah Johnson, 12, & Camille Mac, 12

Vanessa Hegland, 10, & her friends

"I took for granted how lucky I was to see my family and friends without worrying about spreading or getting a sickness from them." **Vanessa Hegland, 10**

Logan Jones, 9

What he took for granted

"It felt weird training for [running marathons] and being told I couldn't do it." **Logan Jones, 9**

COVID made a lot of us realize how good things were before it. **Addison Fishman, 10** explained, "I think something I took for granted was just the sense of normalcy and realizing how much you need family and other people to interact with. COVID affected my relationships with my family because I had to keep my distance from my grandparents. Another thing that was hard was that both of my grandparents got COVID and my grandpa was in the hospital which was very scary. Thankfully he recovered with full health but it really made me think about how much I need them in my life." Pictured below with Addison, is her brother **Brody Fishman, 12** and their mom, Tiffany Fishman.

Addison Fishman, 10

Abigail Stapleton, 10
"I took playing sports with my friends for granted before COVID. I didn't even consider not being able to wake up early for tournaments or bus rides without a mask and social distancing!"

Noah Klosterman, 11
"Looking back I think COVID, surprisingly, positively influenced my summer. It forced me to spend time camping and boating, as well as personally reflecting on myself to be a better person."

Elliette Grimm, 11
"I took for granted going out for fun. I'd almost always think about staying home as a better option, simply because I'd be able to be lazy, watch TV, etc. Now that I've spent almost seven months doing those things, it's getting old."

Elly Grimes, 9