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Living through the past year as a high school student has not been easy, to say the least. I never expected my junior year to take the turn that it did. We were all so naive, and even a bit amused by the thought of an “extended spring break” that we were blindsided by the harsh reality of these unprecedented times. Hope wavered, and people became anxious and terrified. There was a time where I was even frightened to leave my home. No one knew what was going on and it felt like the world was ending around us.

However, looking back on it now, I have to note how grateful I am to have been able to experience this pandemic in the town of Point Pleasant Borough. Since the beginning of lockdown, our Mayor put out multiple regular updates, nearly every day. This helped to establish a sense of normalcy and routine within our tight knit community. It made things a bit less terrifying, and helped us to be informed and hopeful. Information is one of our greatest tools in life and having someone with the ability to filter information that was so new to all of us, was quite a comfort. Mayor Sabosik sent out information regarding COVID 19 safety guidelines and updated us about the case count in our town. He and our Borough council members assisted us in understanding how we could wisely obtain necessary goods and services. This further rooted my great sense of togetherness and community, offering hope when it felt like there was none to be had.

Alongside being a high school student, I am also an employee at a local business. I was beyond thrilled when the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce instituted the virtual ribbon cutting ceremony to signify the reopening of our town. I am fortunate enough to have witnessed first hand the resilience of our community, and the healing that we did together with our local government officials. They were true leaders throughout who worked to create a safe, healthy environment that gave us a sense of normalcy.

In addition to their leadership and comfort, they also did not forget that we had people in need due to many circumstances. However, the negative economic impact of the pandemic restrictions on families and other residents of our town was a concern for all of us. Our local leaders have spearheaded a number of food drives, school supply drives and toy drives. My employer was active in these events, which afforded me the opportunity to witness the outpouring of caring and generosity, first hand. This too created a greater atmosphere of togetherness and an example of how to do such things safely.

As I approach a new chapter in my life and I plan to move on to college, I do so knowing that coming home means more to me than my family and my house. It means home to my community of Point Pleasant Borough. Mayor Sabosik and our council members will always be my hometown leaders, because they helped to teach me how to survive and overcome the most dire of circumstances by doing simple, caring, logical things.