

CLEVELAND STATE MAGAZINE

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Quarantined in China

Alumna **Carrie Kidd** (BA '17) sat in an airport in Wuhan, China, during an eight-hour layover on the night of December 30, 2019. As she waited for her next flight, she scrolled through Chinese news sources on her phone. Suddenly, she spotted a headline with Wuhan in the title. On any other day, it wouldn't have caught her attention, but she was in Wuhan at that very moment. She clicked and read that approximately a dozen people in the city had been infected with a mysterious virus. She thought to herself, "Well, I'm sure they have a handle on that."

The Lake County native had been teaching English as a Second Language in Tianjin, China for two years. Tianjin is a 4.5-hour train ride from Wuhan, but she wasn't headed back there yet. She'd just traveled home to Cleveland for the holidays and was now headed to Thailand to celebrate the New Year with friends.

When Kidd returned to Tianjin in early January, everyone was talking about the unnamed virus. Schools went on holiday for the Lunar New Year from January 24 to January 30; but as the virus spread, the break kept extending for nearly a month.

Everyone quarantined. I spent weeks in my apartment and my company sent me care packages," said Kidd.

People were afraid to go outside. Even groceries and essentials were brought to their doors, thanks to Tianjin's excellent delivery system.

Since Kidd lives alone, with only her cat Pebbles for company, quarantine was hard for her.

"I always thought I was an introvert, but not being able to see your friends for months really takes its toll. I wish I could say I was motivated to pick up a new skill or get creative with cooking, but it was hard to think of much else but the virus. So I coped by investing in streaming services that I never bothered using before, like Netflix and Hulu. I had video calls with friends, coworkers and family.

"My family was very worried, of course, especially when they saw on the news that the American government was flying its citizens out of Wuhan. My mom asked me to come home multiple times, and I was more afraid than I let on. So I told her if I could find a cat sitter that I would come home. For better or worse, I didn't find a cat sitter, so I remained in Tianjin."

Classes moved online and Kidd began working from home on February 20. In-person classes wouldn't resume until mid-June.

"When quarantine ended and we were starting to go to work again, I had to keep my passport on me so people could confirm that I hadn't left China. They didn't want someone bringing the virus back into the city from outside China, since it was affecting the whole world at that point," said Kidd.

"Having a departure stamp from the beginning of the year with Wuhan's name on it has raised some eyebrows."

Life in Tianjin is resuming a sense of normalcy, though not completely clear of the virus.

"Citizens and foreigners here in China have green QR codes on our phones to verify that we haven't traveled into a dangerous city or outside the country. Public transportation, work, restaurants, movie theaters and malls will deny entrance if you don't have this health code."

Kidd encourages everyone to do their part to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

"Stay safe and wear a mask. Quarantine as much as you can...until all people have access to a vaccine."

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Law grad fights for ICE detainees and wins

Elizabeth Bonham (JD '15) staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio in Cleveland, successfully fought for the release of 21 people held by immigration authorities in four Ohio jails as COVID-19 cases spiked at the facilities.

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