

Mary Johnson (Teen) 1st Place

Title: Remember the Year

The new catchphrase is “ I know we have all had a tough year, but...” Personally, I believe that 2020 was an awesome year! It had its ups and downs, but I grew from all that I went through during that unique time.

During the pandemic, my Kitchen Aid mixer became my new best friend. Cakes and cookies were constantly coming out of the oven as I learned how to bake. I even taught a cookie making class to the girls in my church class, which was awesome. My grandma-like talents continued as I sewed over 200 masks for people in need during the pandemic. The pandemic also came with a ton of family time, sometimes way too much, but in the end, I loved it. We bought a kayak, (classic COVID move), and found local lakes and ponds to kayak. I loved enjoying the outdoors, when typically I would be too busy with sports and other activities to even consider discovering local lakes for kayaking and fishing.

So you may be wondering, why is it important that I learned how to cook, sew and kayak? I asked myself that question often, but I like to think that I made a difference for 200 people so they could see family, or feel safe going to the grocery store, or church. I brought the numerous treats to neighbors and friends, hoping I could brighten their day when it was harder to feel happy during the pandemic. And, even though we fought and teased each other, I grew closer to my family on those kayaking trips and board game marathons, and hours just talking. So maybe I was just baking and sewing and playing pickleball, or maybe I was making a difference one small act at a time.