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To document my experience during the Covid-19 pandemic, I chose this picture of myself (left), and two of my good friends at the “Cops Off Campus” protest that happened earlier this school year at UWEC. Throughout this pandemic, we have seen major protests and riots after the murder of George Floyd for the Black Lives Matter movement. I think it would be very obtuse of me not to talk about that if I am talking about 2020. While I’ve been doing my part during the pandemic (social distancing, wearing a mask, not going out), I could not sit back and do nothing when protests

exploded in late May. Since then, I have gone to protests wearing my mask and handing out waters with gloves on. I handed out masks, hand sanitizer, I organized drop off locations for food, clothes, hygiene products, helped raise money for bail for people arrested for exercising their first amendment right to protest. I figured that I had a better chance going out to help than someone older or immunocompromised. It was at this time that it really dawned on me that life had not stopped when we were first given the stay at home order. Life was never going to stop for anything. To me, that is what this picture illustrates. We are all wearing our masks, we were 6 feet apart from other groups and we sanitized everything before each new speaker. We still have to fight for rights and nobody is going to do it for us. The "Cops Off Campus" protest talked about how much money is shoved into the on campus police department, and how most of the money is not used to help protect and serve. If this money was cut in half, the police officers would still have more than enough to do their jobs well with added benefits, and the rest of the money could have been put back directly into the community for a Covid relief fund. If this pandemic has shown us anything, hopefully people recognize the real injustices people face everyday. Bodies were being stored in trucks because there was not enough space. Doctors had to wear garbage bags as PPE because hospitals were so underfunded and the government did not think it was a problem. So many people lost everything because the cost of living is so high with how little people are paid. This pandemic has shown how little minority groups mean to the top 10% who run everything. There is still work to be done, and instead of waiting a few months inside, we are expected to push through and coexist with the virus. I am lucky to be young and healthy during this time with a job I was able to work at all through the pandemic. I do

not make much, but I donated most of everything I had to local shelters and food drives because so many people were struggling that it did not seem fair for me to keep everything I made. This should not have been my burden to bear, as basic necessities like food and shelter should not be so inaccessible. Everyone I knew came together to fight the injustices we saw, while we were all trying to navigate a global pandemic that was impacting our own families. I knew people who were hit hard by Covid and some who even lost loved ones to the virus. Americans are not allowed to take personal time for anything, we are expected to take any hits that come our way with no help from anyone. I will obviously never forget this time, and I will never forget how this time has opened my eyes to so many things around me.