

PGHS student reflects on being a senior amid a global pandemic

PGHS senior Olivia Tuck: 'I feel like there's a big hole in my life and it can't be filled by kicking a ball in the backyard.'

By Jamie Biggs
The Courier-Tribune

ASHEBORO — Trips can be postponed and plans delayed, but for the Class of 2020, these seniors have been stripped of experiences they won't be able to simply reschedule.

An initial order by Governor Roy Cooper for a temporary two-week closure of public schools issued in mid-March has been extended,

leading schools statewide to remain closed until May 15. With the COVID-19 situation constantly developing, many wonder if students will return to the classroom at all this school year.

Olivia Tuck, a senior at Providence Grove High School, said it's a "weird feeling" knowing that she might not get to finish her senior year.

"The whole year, everyone is so ready to be done with school and eager to graduate," Tuck said, "but it feels wrong for the end to come



Tuck



From left, Providence Grove High School students Brynne Ingram, Olivia Tuck, Olivia Frankel and Alisha Holt pose in their soccer jerseys beside the field. Ingram and Tuck are both seniors whose soccer season was cut short following COVID-19 school closures. [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

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quicker than it already was.”

Tuck shared that even though she’s missing milestones she was looking forward to, she doesn’t feel like she should complain with “so much other bad stuff going on in the world.”

Though the Randolph County School System has yet to announce any plans about graduation, Tuck is already assuming the ceremony won’t be happening as planned.

“Thinking about the fact that I may never see the rest of my class all together, at graduation or in general, makes me pretty upset. ... Even though graduation can be romanticized a lot, it feels unfair that I can’t experience it in my own way.”

Graduation isn’t the only senior activity she’s missing. Senior cap and gown pictures, capping ceremony, senior skip day and Spring Break — at least a normal Spring Break — seem out of the question.

Tuck said it wouldn’t be as big of a deal “if we could be together and out



Madison Taylor and Olivia Tuck, seniors at Providence Grove High School, pose on the tennis court. [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

and about during quarantine,” but the seniors are missing out on their last few months with one another, some having

been in the same classrooms together since kindergarten.

“Prom is especially devastating because

people have been getting ready for weeks already,” Tuck said. “Some people already bought dresses and tickets.

“I’m really upset because I’m not gonna get a special night that everyone else had and will have. And I’m not gonna have any picture to look back on.”

For the seniors who played sports, they had no idea that the last time they played in March would be their final game in their high school sports career.

“I was in the middle of soccer season and I knew at first that season would be postponed, but now knowing that it’s completely over makes staying home even more miserable,” Tuck said. “I was so excited for my last season. I was a captain and I loved all the girls on the team and I was ready to make it the best season ever.”

“Now everything is over just like that and I don’t know how to feel. I feel like there’s a big hole in my life and it can’t be filled by kicking a ball in the backyard.”

During the school closures, classes have continued on for students, mostly through online learning. Tuck has taken online courses through Randolph Community College in the past, so the transition hasn’t been so complicated for her.

“I’m even taking one (online class) right now, so I (already) have to be online,” Tuck said.

Her two other classes, weightlifting and masonry, aren’t classes that easily make the transition to online learning.

“I’m missing two masonry competitions that I was really looking forward to, so that’s disappointing as well,” she said.

Tuck acknowledges that the students who had core classes that require more online instruction have it harder during this time.

“The school itself has had trouble figuring out how they’re going to make sure everyone has their work and can get it done and returned.”

Though the whole situation has been frustrating for Tuck, she said the most frustrating part is not knowing what’s to come, how long she’ll be stuck at home and when she’ll be able to see her friends again.

“It’s annoying how no one really cares about the seniors, but it’s understandable, of course, considering the state of the world,” Tuck said.

“I know it will be a wild story later in life, but right now it’s just sad.”