



Watters Family Porchrait

My family has been using our favorite hobbies to cope with the pandemic. My dad has used his time wisely. He keeps a list of tasks to do around the house and does his best to complete all of them as quickly as possible. For example, one item on his list was to paint the back porch, and another was to touch up the walls around the house.

They are small things, but my family likes to fix the small things to make our house look great. My dad loves working with his hands, so he has been occupied during social distancing so far. My mom loves to cook and bake.

Though there is somewhat a lack of food in grocery stores, my mom has still managed to make some amazing meals as always!

Recently, she has made lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs, apple pie, and one of my favorites, banoffee pie (banana toffee pie). My mom also owns a nail salon in Highlands Ranch, and since that is closed, she has a conference call every week to check in with the nail technicians.

I have been spending my free time creating music and playing video games. I have had a ton of fun playing Mario Kart with my parents and it is probably one of my favorite things to do right now. One thing I have been doing lately is talking to and playing with games with my friend, Ryan, who used to go to middle school with me and now goes to Mullen. These things are what is keeping me occupied at this time. We will continue to use our hobbies to stay occupied during the pandemic.

FIRST PLACE – Judge comment: *The photo exhibits excellent technical image plus outstanding use of props to convey the message that is expanded upon in the text.*



A toddler in hand, a baby on the way

By Sam K. Saliba

While many parents will surely testify to the challenges of raising a family, some are left with no choice but to do it under extremely unusual circumstances.

Brad and Ashley Milavski had their first daughter just over two years ago. They're due for their second, Molly, sometime in August – right in the “gray area” of canceled and undecided plans drifting around the supposedly upcoming aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ashley has worked as a nurse practitioner for several senior care facilities in Denver, while Brad works as a business development representative for an investment firm. “Business travel for me has been shut down for the rest of the year, but if I ever think I’m having a bad day, I just think of what my wife is going through on a day to day basis,” Brad said.

At one point, the Milavskis even had a scare. “Ashley had an upper respiratory thing going on for a few days,” Brad said. “She did get a test, but the test came back negative.” Ashley’s in a tough spot because her work requires her to visit her patients face-to-face often, even though both she and her patients are at-risk for COVID-19.

“At the end of the day, our biggest job is just making sure our daughter spends enough time playing outside,” Ashley said. “I think that the hardest part is socializing with other kids.” While both parents have to work to keep their professional lives in order, they’re also faced with the task of balancing that and raising their daughter, all while having to follow the guidelines of social distancing.

While facing the many challenges that come with raising a family during a pandemic, the family remains steadfast and resilient, perpetually devising plans and methods for keeping their daughter safe and healthy.

SECOND PLACE - Judge Comment: *Great text makes this front page portrait so much more compelling and exhibits solid reporting skills.*