

# Conquering isolation

Abby Wilt  
News Editor  
Kyle McCabe  
Assistant News Editor

The email with a subject line of “Your Pepperdine COVID-19 Test Result is Ready” is arriving in many inboxes — some with results students aren’t expecting.

Upon receiving positive PCR test results, many students relocated to on or off campus isolation locations and found ways to occupy their time. Students said they are at the Hyatt Regency in Westlake Village, the Sheraton in Agoura Hills, Good Nite Inn in Calabasas, Cambria in Calabasas and the Villa on Pepperdine’s campus.

Since, Jan. 3, 656 students (as of Wednesday evening) have tested positive and gone into isolation, according to the Pepperdine’s COVID-19 Dashboard.

“We’re all just waiting to get out of here,” first-year student Olivia Formato said.

**Hyatt Regency**

Sophomore Karsyn Murdock tested positive for COVID-19 on Jan. 13, put her mask on, packed her bags and left to stay at the Hyatt.

“It’s actually been not as bad as I thought,” Murdock said. “Lots of FaceTimes, lots of journaling and reading has been keeping me sane.”

Murdock said life is now looking a little slower, a little quieter and a little different. When Murdock first received her results, she said she was scared and didn’t know where she was going to go or what to expect, but now, she is getting settled.

“I actually thought it [the hotel] was pretty nice, I won’t lie,” Murdock said. “Besides that I knew I was gonna be in here for several days alone.”

Murdock doesn’t know who else is in her hall, but said she hears a little bit of the outside world through her window.

“I can hear the person next to me and I heard them sneeze,” Murdock said. “I’m

wondering if they are a COVID patient too.”

In a Jan. 13 webinar for all quarantined and isolated students, Chief Business Officer Nicolle Taylor said regular hotel guests were still staying in these venues, so it was important for students to be respectful and stay inside their rooms, to not expose anyone to COVID-19.

Students said they fill their time with school, phone calls, crossword puzzles, books and rest.

“The most exciting part so far was in the hotel, I opened the window to hear the outside world and I could hear someone checking microphones and then some party music and lots of cheering,” Murdock said. “It sounded like kind of a large crowd, I bet they don’t know that this is a quarantine facility.”

A Resident Life staff member or a University staff member is assigned to each of isolation and quarantine facilities,

Taylor said in the webinar. In addition, Taylor said there is always a Resident Director on duty who students can call off-hours.

Formato is also staying at the Hyatt, and relies on the University staff member assigned to the Hyatt for anything she needs.

“I have him in my phone as hotel COVID man, and I just text him whenever I need anything,” Formato said.

Sophomore Kristopher Gordon isolated at the Hyatt Jan. 11-19 after testing positive. Gordon said his experience is similar.

Gordon said the food was his least favorite part, but that each student received a form each morning they fill out what food they wanted for each meal that day, with around three options per meal. Gordon said the food was free for him.

The food at the Hyatt is from the Hyatt’s room service and cooked in the Hyatt’s hotel kitchen, Taylor said in the

webinar.

“My food was cold, but that’s the worst I’ve had,” Gordon said. “They’re doing their best, I’m not mad.”

Formato also said the food wasn’t the best, but was glad she had the option of food delivery after a mishap her first night with the food.

“They [the hotel restaurant] told me that their restaurant isn’t working,” Formato said. “I was like, ‘What do you mean?’ and they’re like, ‘We don’t have any staff at this restaurant so it’s closed.’ Then I kind of got upset with them. I was like, ‘I don’t know what I’m supposed to do over my food. I’m not allowed to leave my room.’”

Formato said she ordered DoorDash that night, but then started filling out the form that was sent to her about what food options she wanted from the hotel each day.

If students eat the food that is provided, they do not have to pay, but if they order food from a service such as Door-



Photos Courtesy of Olivia Mastalerz & Kristopher Gordon | Olivia Mastalerz, top, holds up a McFlurry during her isolation. Kristopher Gordon, bottom, poses in front of the window during his COVID-19 isolation.



Photos Courtesy of Kristopher Gordon & Olivia Mastalerz | Kristopher Gordon, top, holds up a book he is reading during his isolation at the Hyatt. Matalerz, bottom, FaceTimes with her friend during her isolation.





# one day at a time

Dash, they have to pay for it on their own, Gordon said.

Students said they are getting used to their rooms, minus the food and the fact that they are alone.

“I actually really love this little room,” Formato said. “I feel like it’s been kind of cozy.”

### Sheraton

First-year Alex Zink was in isolation Jan. 11-16 and went through the necessary steps to get settled into the Sheraton in Agoura Hills. A campus shuttle took her, as well as six other positive students, to the hotel, Zink said.

“I’ve heard of a lot of similar experiences with everything,” Zink said. “We’re just kind of by ourselves in the rooms.”

In regards to the Sheraton’s food, Zink said it was mediocre and edible. The Sheraton offers “Pepperdine-provided meals” for all three meals — a

hot breakfast, a cold pre-packaged lunch and a hot dinner, Taylor said in the webinar.



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### Alex Zink First-year

Zink attended her classes on Zoom, but said she had trouble connecting to the hotel WiFi and staying motivated.

“Being here in the hotel makes me feel like I’m on vacation and that I don’t actually need to do school,” Zink said.

### Good Nite Inn

Sophomore Madison Smith found herself in the Good Nite Inn in Calabasas, Jan. 15-19 due to her suitemate testing positive. Smith said she was fully vaccinated but had just received her booster one day prior, so had to quarantine anyways.

“I’m at a motel by myself,” Smith said. “So I don’t know, it is what it is.”

In contrast to students at other locations, Smith said the food was her favorite part.

“My food is the highlight of my experience,” Smith said. “The room, yeah, another story, but the food is good.”

Smith said she packed snacks, but Pepperdine provided meals catered by Mar-

malade to her at her hotel such as grilled cheese, spaghetti and meatballs, tomato soup and French toast.

“I am not spending meal points and I’m getting some quality food,” Smith said. “I’ve been taking pictures of all my food just because I think it’s like a fun way to like document life.”

Smith said she thought the food made up for the motel experience, and she kept her doors locked and safety precautions at the forefront of her mind.

“I keep my windows closed, I don’t see daylight most days,” Smith said. “I’m a 20-year-old in a motel by myself trying to be as safe as possible.”

Laundry was something Smith said she did not think about while she was packing, but she went into her stay hoping that she would be OK since it was only five days in quarantine.

“I’m just relying on the clothes I have,” Smith said. “If for whatever reason I have to go into 10 days or something,

I’ll need I don’t know what I’m gonna do about clothes. That’ll be a road bump when we get to it.”

### The Villa

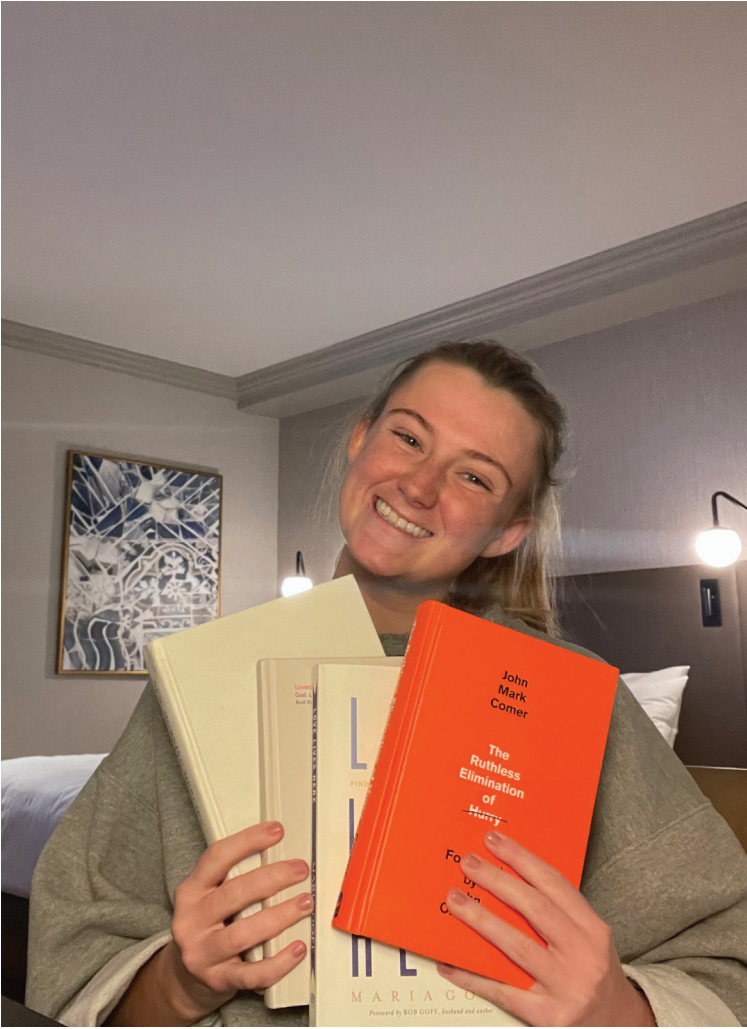
First-year Olivia Mastalerz isolated at the Villa on campus, and was there Jan. 11-17.

The Villa offered three meals from the Caf for each meal daily, Taylor said in the webinar. Mastalerz said she did not eat much of the food offered, and instead ordered her own food.

“I just discovered we were able to DoorDash,” Mastalerz said. “I’m pretty sure the people at the front desk don’t like me though because I order so much stuff.”

Mastalerz said she stayed in her room until she knew she was allowed to leave.

abby.wilt@pepperdine.edu  
kyle.j.mccabe@pepperdine.edu



Photos Courtesy of Karsyn Murdock & Kristopher Gordon | Karsyn Murdock, top, holds up the books she is reading during her isolation at the Hyatt. Kristopher Gordon, bottom, takes a photo of himself-watching Netflix during his isolation.



Photos Courtesy of Rianna Smith & Kristopher Gordon | Rianna Smith, Ava Stottlemire and Jamie Daneri, top, pose for a photo as they quarantine due to COVID-19. Kristopher Gordon, bottom, lies on his bed during his isolation.

