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Making the Most Out of the Pandemic

I never thought there would be a day when my kids would want to go to school, but in April, that very thing happened. Like many kids, Gabby and Mikey were sequestered in our home and schooling digitally while the country battled COVID-19. Both of my kids are good students, but this spring, I know they would have loved nothing more than to hang out with their friends, go to practice, and see someplace other than our home.

I don't think they were alone. This pandemic stretched all of our comfort zones as we quarantined ourselves in our homes to limit the spread of COVID-19. At Monteforte Law P.C., we took these orders very seriously. We serve a very susceptible population, and we wanted to do all we could to ensure that you and your families remained safe and healthy while receiving the services you needed from us.

When Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker issued stay-at-home orders in March, our team quickly started working remotely. We have always used digital platforms to schedule meetings, file paperwork, and do a lot of our processes, but we had to change how we met with clients and worked together! (Working so close to one another in a small office setting means we usually communicate vocally instead of through chat messages or email!)

So, we switched to phone and video meetings, and after a few bumps, we were running on a remote basis. It was a bit of a learning curve for everyone — especially for me as I had to figure out how the heck our office phones could work remotely — but I am so proud of the way our team came together.

I had two goals with this transition. For starters, I wasn't going to lay anyone off. At the end of the day, we still need our staff to survive, and I knew we had plenty of work



in our pipeline to make each day valuable. Second, I didn't want you, our client, to feel any decline in the quality of work you receive. Your experience matters, and ultimately, it's your life we are impacting. We want to be as valuable to you as possible.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank you for all your patience as we switched over to a remote system. Your support was so helpful during this time, especially since, like you, we were also managing many family dilemmas or changes as the pandemic unfolded.

This spring was slated to be a pretty big one for Gabby. She turned 16 in April and was going to be confirmed in our church. She was eagerly waiting to get her driver's permit on her 16th birthday, and plans were in place for a combination Sweet 16 and confirmation party. Instead, we celebrated at home, trying to make the best of a sad situation. Additionally, many of her traveling dance competitions, including a local one that many family members may have attended, were also canceled.

Meanwhile, Mikey missed out on his first season of high school baseball. As you may remember, Mikey is very dedicated to baseball. He began working out and preparing for this season back in October, and to have it cut short was so upsetting. Sadly, a tournament he was invited to play in Italy this August was also canceled.

Our hearts were breaking for both our kids, and we were all bummed to miss another family trip to Italy. But instead of dwelling on what we were missing, we all agreed to focus on what we *could* do. Immediately after learning about Italy, we researched new trips and found a cruise that will be just as nice. We may always remember this spring and what it took from us, but we will also remember being together, supporting one another, and making the best out of everything.

I hope you and your family remain safe this summer!

- Mike Monteforte Jr.

ABOUT TO RETIRE?

CONSIDER THESE LOW-RISK, HIGH-RETURN INVESTMENTS

As you age, it's wise to make some changes in order to stay healthy, like your diet or your workout routine. Likewise, your portfolio should be adjusted to reduce risk and protect your financial health. After a bad turn in the market, it can take up to a decade to make your money back. If you want to retire in the next five years, then can you really afford that risk?

Reducing your risk doesn't necessarily mean missing out on high-return investments, though. Here are some low-risk, high-return investments to consider adding to your portfolio as you approach retirement.

PEER-TO-PEER LENDING

Otherwise known as P2P lending, this investment takes place online. Borrowers are matched with investors for loans that benefit both parties — lending without the bank. Your risk and potential returns depend entirely on which loans you choose to invest in. The two most popular P2P lending platforms are Lending Club and Prosper, and you can start investing in either platform with as little as \$25.

REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

When you invest in real estate investment trusts (REIT), you're investing in mortgages or direct equity positions in various properties. When the stock market is in decline, REITs are a good investment because they're not corrected with stock exchanges. Plus, their yield is usually higher than the dividends investors get from stocks.



FIXED INDEXED ANNUITIES

When it comes to low-risk, high-return investments, fixed indexed annuities (FIA) are the most attractive option for retirees. In 2018, renowned economist professor Roger Ibbotson conducted research into the return history of inflation, U.S. Treasury bills, government bonds, FIAs, and stocks. Unsurprisingly, stocks offered the highest returns historically, but Ibbotson was surprised to find FIAs came in second, beating out bonds and conventional wisdom.

Historically, these investments have produced great returns for individuals who are in retirement or who are about to retire. However, remember that everyone's circumstances are different. Before making any changes to your portfolio, talk to your financial planner about your options.

TIMES THE OLYMPICS WERE CANCELED

And the Postponement of the 2020 Tokyo Games

In late March, amid the global spread of COVID-19, the International Olympic Committee announced the postponement of the 2020 Olympic Games. They were slated to take place in Tokyo, Japan, this summer, but they will now happen in the summer of 2021. While this is an unprecedented decision, it's not the first time that major global events have affected the Olympic Games or which countries participated.

Since the inception of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, they have been outright canceled three times — 1916, 1940, and 1944. The first cancellation of the Olympic Games happened during World War I. The German Empire was supposed to host the games in Berlin, but by the time 1916 rolled around, Europe was deep in the trenches of WWI. Many nations had sent their athletes to fight in the war, so the games were canceled.



World War II caused the next two cancellations. The 1940 Olympics were initially scheduled to be held in Tokyo. It would have been the first time the games were hosted by a non-Western country, but Japan forfeited the right to host when they invaded China in 1937. The games were then rebooked for Helsinki, Finland, but after Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939 and started WWII, those games were scrapped as well. Since the fighting hadn't ceased by the time the games were supposed to happen in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, in 1944, the Olympics were canceled again.

Though the Olympics have happened on schedule since the end of WWII, the United States has not always participated. In 1980, when the U.S. boycotted the Olympics that were held in Moscow, Russia, in protest of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, 64 other nations followed suit. However, those games still went on as planned and 80 countries participated.

The fact that major global conflicts are the only other events that have been catastrophic enough to affect the Olympics might be distressing and elevate anxiety about our current global health crisis. However, it's important to keep in mind that the Olympics have only been postponed this time, not canceled. We'll still get to cheer on our favorite Olympians next year.

TAKE A BREAK

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7	5	9	4	1	8	6	3	2



GRILLED BASIL CHICKEN AND TOMATOES

Inspired by TasteOfHome.com

You can't go wrong with grilled chicken and tomatoes on a warm summer's evening. It's a simple recipe that packs a flavor punch.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup tightly packed fresh basil leaves
- 8 Roma tomatoes
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (4 oz each)

Directions

1. For marinade: In blender, combine olive oil, garlic, salt, vinegar, and basil. Cut 2 tomatoes into quarters and add to mixture. Cover and process until blended. Halve remaining tomatoes for grilling.
2. In bowl, combine chicken and 2/3 cup marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Reserve remaining marinade.
3. Heat grill to about 350–400 F. Lightly oil grates. Grill chicken until internal temperature reads 165 F, about 4–6 minutes per side. Grill tomatoes until lightly browned, about 2–4 minutes per side. Discard remaining marinade.
4. Serve chicken and tomatoes with reserved marinade.

TURN YOUR VACATION INTO A STAYCATION

3 Ways to Replace a Canceled Vacation

Vacations provide opportunities for families to spend time together in a relaxed environment, get away from the routines of everyday life, and create meaningful memories. If you've recently had to cancel a trip but still want to create the experience of a vacation for your family, then a staycation is just what you need.

TRANSFORM YOUR BACKYARD

When you're trying to recreate a vacation, the outdoor areas of your home present a variety of possibilities. You can turn a sandbox into a relaxing beach, complete with a kiddie pool "ocean." If you have trees, then set up a zip line or obstacle course. You can even stimulate summer brains with a scavenger hunt around the backyard with hidden clues in the dirt or bushes. The ultimate prize can be something you would have purchased on your original vacation, like a souvenir you can find online.

CREATE A 'FAMILY MUSEUM'

Many vacations include an educational aspect in order to enrich our understanding of the place we're visiting, and museums are a great way to accomplish that. If you're confined to the house, then teach your kids about your own knowledge and interests and encourage them to get creative and make their own contributions, too. Have everyone create art, take photos, or write about their prized possessions. Display these masterpieces around your home and let their creators take you on a tour. Learning more about one another builds meaningful bonds.

BRING YOUR TRIP HOME

You probably chose your original vacation destination in order to experience new and different cultures and activities. But just because you're no longer traveling to that location doesn't mean you can't experience some of what it has to offer! Research popular local cuisine, activities, and history of the area, then create ways to experience them with your family. Cook a traditional meal, recreate a scenic location through photographs, or share a story about local lore and history. Your changed plans will no longer feel like a missed opportunity.

Staying at home doesn't mean your family can't have the fun of a vacation. All it takes is a little creativity and innovation to build an experience that will bring your family closer together.





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THE BEST WAYS TO HELP LOCAL NONPROFITS IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Over the past several months, families, businesses, and nonprofits have had to navigate life in this challenging “new normal,” and it can be hard to support your favorite nonprofits when times are tough. Here are a few ways you can help these important entities, even when you don’t have resources to spare right now.

DONATE

While many people donate generously during the holiday season, remember that nonprofits need donations throughout the year, and different nonprofits need different things. A monetary donation can often go a long way, but never feel obligated to give money, especially when your budget may be tight. Instead, consider cleaning out your closet. What clothes, shoes, or other accessories can you part with? What about dishware or small appliances? When you clean out your home and donate unused items, you benefit those in the community who need them most.

VOLUNTEER

In a time of social distancing, volunteering may be discouraged, but nonprofits still need volunteers to operate. The good news is that many nonprofits need volunteers for positions that maintain social distance, such as driving. Food banks and kitchens need drivers to pick up donations or ingredients from donors and to deliver food to people in need, such as the elderly or those with disabilities.

ADVOCATE

Even if you don’t have time or resources to give, you can become an advocate for important causes around your community. While it might not seem like much, sharing information about local nonprofits on social media can make a genuine difference. Nonprofits need exposure, which is greatly boosted through community support. Sharing useful information about nonprofits — or sharing their posts — increases their visibility so more people will take action.



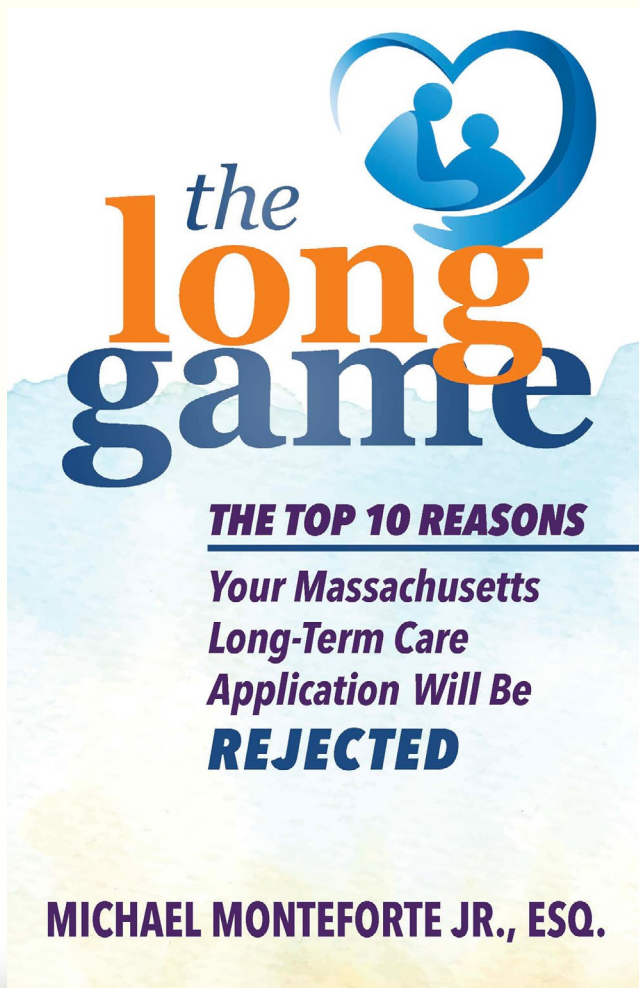
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