

Transcript of Interview with by Nolan Pollack

Interviewee: Ashley Freeman

Interviewer: Nolan Pollack

Date: 09/19/2020

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Transcriber: Gilbert Lopez

Abstract: In this interview, Ashley shares her experience dealing with the pandemic; in particular, how her family life was affected, as well as her school and social life.

Nolan Pollack 0:00

Hi, my name is Nolan Pollack. I'm interviewing...

Ashley Freeman 0:04

Ashley Freeman.

Nolan Pollack 0:06

First of all, do you give consent to be recorded?

Ashley Freeman 0:08

Yes, I do give consent.

Nolan Pollack 0:10

And could you state the date and the time?

Ashley Freeman 0:13

Today, it is September 19th. And it is 11:15 AM.

Nolan Pollack 0:20

So first of all, I wanted to ask what state are you from?

Ashley Freeman 0:24

I'm from Connecticut. And I'm from a town called Greenwich, where everyone is very safe and serious about this COVID situation. But yes, things are definitely turning back to normal.

Nolan Pollack 0:40

Do you remember how you first heard about the Coronavirus?

Ashley Freeman 0:42

Yes, I do. I was actually tutoring a younger student. And he asked me if I knew about a virus in China. But this was, I think, very early February. And I didn't pay any attention to at all. I did not see this pandemic coming at all. I just took it very lightly. And I, I just totally forgot about it the next day.

Nolan Pollack 1:07

Did you have any idea would be a big deal?

Ashley Freeman 1:09

No. I was thinking about it last night actually. When I was thinking about this interview, I, it just all happened so quickly. And I really feel like no one saw it coming. Yeah, it was a big surprise for me.

Nolan Pollack 1:27

Where were you when your school closed?

Ashley Freeman 1:29

I was actually that day, I had a half day at school. And I remember a lot of people or teachers were saying, “Oh, we’ll, definitely. Schools won't close for like another two weeks, three weeks.” And that time I actually had just gotten out of a yoga class. I checked my phone, and it was blowing up with messages. And I found out school had closed that day. And it was just, it was just over there was so quick. I didn't see it coming.

Nolan Pollack 1:56

So other than closing, did your school have an initial response like, online classes or anything?

Ashley Freeman 2:02

Yes, the online classes, I think it took a week for them to start. So there's just a little weird period of time where everyone realized, “Oh, my God, school's over.” And then we started online learning, but there was no like Zoom calls or anything of the sort, it was just asynchronous learning. That’s right, yeah.

Nolan Pollack 2:24

How was your experience taking online classes?

Ashley Freeman 2:27

I definitely had trouble submitting my assignments on time and staying motivated to finish them since I was always at home. And there was not a lot of structure, I guess, the teachers would just post assignments. And it was up to us to finish it on time. And I know like I was also a second semester senior, so that made it much harder for me. So I don't think I had a particularly good experience with digital learning. And my motivation went down, but my grades did definitely go up because it was much easier to just do it online than in person.

Nolan Pollack 3:08

Um, what do you think are some likely long term repercussions from the Coronavirus?

Ashley Freeman 3:14

Well, we've still been seeing these repercussions today, even though it's been many months since this virus and pandemic started. Definitely, I think the way we see things, the way we handle things, such as like health and safety, just it's all going to be very different, and it has been

changing. I think it'll take a very long time for people to recover. And there might be people who never will recover financially or emotionally. So I think it will take a very long time. And it's going to be difficult for a lot of people.

Nolan Pollack 3:55

What do you think will be the biggest long term change with regards to your life that'll affect you the most?

Ashley Freeman 4:03

With regards to my life, I think luckily, I fortunately, I didn't lose anyone I loved. We were fine financially, emotionally. I think just for many seniors and people my age maybe like the lost time or like the memories that could have been made. I know it's a lot smaller compared to what some people have suffered through, and my family was very lucky. So I don't have such a negative feeling towards Coronavirus in terms of like, I know it was much worse for most people. So I feel like I'm trying to just have a positive outlook on like how the world is changing and we're trying to get better and seeing a lot of people come together during Coronavirus that made me happy, so I think I'll just try to keep having a positive outlook.

Nolan Pollack 5:03

Do you think the Coronavirus has had any positive impact on your life?

Ashley Freeman 5:07

I think it definitely made me care more for my family, even though I think I spent like less time with them because I started to hole myself up in my room. Like, you know, my parents are older, especially my dad. And it definitely made me more conscious of like the people around me. And we're conscious of like my own health because that could ultimately, like, impact my parents' health and my family's health. So I think just they made me more aware and careful. And I appreciate that because, in case another pandemic comes again in the near future, like, I feel like I'll know what to do and like what's expected of me.

Nolan Pollack 5:51

Um, do you feel America's response to the coronavirus was appropriate?

Ashley Freeman 5:55

I definitely don't think it was appropriate with how long, with like, many people are still dying from Coronavirus and our economy, like society as a whole have suffered a lot during this time. And compared to other countries, maybe like South Korea, for example, they were able to control it and contain it like quickly and efficiently. And I know it's very difficult. I'm not blaming the U.S. like we're a very different country. And just people here are different and have different like values and like ways of thinking, so I know, I feel like it would have been very difficult to do it in the U.S.. But I really think they could have done a better job, and they just didn't act quick enough like other countries did. And look what's happened.

Nolan Pollack 6:52

Is there anything you've learned as a result of the pandemic?

Ashley Freeman 6:55

Yes, there's many, many things I've learned. And like I thought there was some disappointments definitely during Coronavirus. I really felt like, after seeing a lot of people come together. You know, we wouldn't have as many like social issues. I don't know, I thought like we would be more unified as like a country, but during Coronavirus or just 2020 as a whole, we saw a lot of divide, like economically and socially. And I learned that, you know, although like, like my expectations for this country might have gone down a bit and learned that like, you know, the world of course isn't always as good as it seems and there will always be like worse things happening as a result like, it could always get worse. And we definitely saw that in 2020. But I think a lot of people just learned not to take things for granted - family, friendship, or safety. So I think I definitely did learn a lot from the pandemic. And in some ways I'm grateful that like this happened to our country because people are trying to grow and be better from it.

Nolan Pollack 8:12

Well, thank you for your time.

Ashley Freeman 8:14

Okay, thank you.