

Interviewer- Nicole Rodrigues

Interviewee- Mikayla Marshall

Nicole Rodrigues- Okay. Do you see a red dot, Mikayla?

Mikayla Marshall - Yeah, I do.

NR- Okay. So, this is COVID- 19 oral history project interview with Makayla Marshall on April 16th. Mikayla, can you give me the day and time of where you are?

MM - Yeah, it's 2:59 and it is April 16th

NR- Awesome. Alright. Can you give me your name and the primary things you do on a day-to-day basis, like your job? Any extra-curricular activities that you do?

MM- Yeah. So, my name is Mikayla Marshall. I am a sixth-grade teacher at Madrid Middle School in Phoenix, Arizona. I teach history and intervention. On the weekends, I'm a high school leader at my church, New City. Yeah, that's it.

NR - So you are in Phoenix, Arizona, correct?

MM- I am, yes.

NR- Can you explain to us real briefly what you mean by on an intervention leader at your church?

MM- So, for interventions, that's at my school. So, it's basically like, how do I say this, kind of like a free period that my students are allowed to go to. So, each teacher in sixth grade holds an intervention class, and then students are allowed to select the intervention that they need for that week. So, if you need extra help in history, you would select my intervention to go to you and then it's an hour-long of like extra help that you can get to. There's also a math intervention or an English intervention. But my specific one is history

NR- Very cool. I love that. So, just to get some background information really quick- when did you first learn about Covid-19 and what were your initial thoughts about it?

MM- Yeah. So probably it like late January was probably when I heard about it. I was just like researching for my class. So on Wednesdays I do current events for my students. And as I was researching, I like noticed this like Corona outbreak in China. And I was like, huh, that's interesting. So I started reading articles about it and then I wasn't like really expecting it to like kind of boom, the way it has. My initial thought was just like, Oh, this is like a pandemic situation happening in China and they're going to be able to like isolate it. And clearly that hasn't happened.

NR- Right. So have your thoughts and your reaction to COVID-19 changed since your initial impression?

MM- Yeah, absolutely. I had just seen it affect so much more than I thought, so.

NR- So can you tell us how COVID-19 it has affected your job and in what ways?

MM- Yeah. So actually, I was on spring break when I like got the initial email that my school was cancelled. I mean, it wasn't canceled. It was just like, like postponed for two weeks. So that was the first week of March and we got an email from my district so that they were gonna push spring break back another two weeks. Just for like a precaution. And then probably halfway through that like break, I got another email that said that they were going to extend it until the middle of April. And so we were out of school til the middle of April. And then probably the second week of April, maybe the first week, I got another email that just said school was cancelled for the remainder of the year and that we would be moving to online learning.

NR- So are you teaching online classes now?

MM- Yes. So, I teach... I don't know how to explain it. I guess, like I'm not doing like a zoom class at all. I teach primarily through Google Classroom. And so I upload assignments for my students on there and then they turn them, like turn in assignments and ask questions and stuff all through that platform. It's not like a Zoom meeting or anything like that. It's like primarily Google Classroom.

NR- Okay. So has COVID-19 changed her employments employment status at all?

MM- No, no, no, no. So they are fulfilling contracts through the whole year and then they're reevaluating. I want to say sometime in May what Fall 2020 is gonna look like.

NR- Okay. So, do you have any concerns that this is going to affect your overall employment or your economy, your personal economy at all?

MM- It's definitely like, it's like nerve-wracking, cuz I don't know. So, it's just like a very like unknown area. Like they could like renew our contracts and everything's fine, or they could not. I have no idea what's going to happen. And I don't think that they do either. They haven't, like all they've had been saying as that like we'll discuss further in May. So I don't know what that means, but that's what we're being told.

NR- So, feeling a little shaky right now. So how has this pandemic affected the employment of people that you know and in what ways?

MM- Yeah. So, my roommate is a nurse. And so I've seen her schedule just get like crazy busy and super hectic. But there's a lot of people that I volunteer with at church that have lost their jobs or had been furloughed. So that's been difficult watching like families have to like struggle through that and seeing people like just be unemployed and not really know what's happening because no one's hiring, no one's doing anything like that. So that's difficult.

NR- Yeah. So, how has COVID affected you or your family's day-to-day activities?

MM- Yeah. So, my parents are still employed and still working, which is such a blessing. So not a lot has changed there. I know that like my parents have moved to like at-home work. So, they're like working from home right now. Not like going to the office, but nothing is like too crazy.

NR- And for you, day to day, outside of teaching?

MM- Yeah. I think just like getting a grip of like understanding how to online teach has been a little challenging, but not, like, it's not impossible. So it's just more of like a, like learn as I go instead of like being in my classroom. I don't know if that makes sense.

NR- No, it does. Trying to figure out a new feel for your teaching. So how has COVID-19 affected how you associate and communicate with family and friends?

MM- Yeah. So I actually haven't seen, like physically seen, my family probably since the beginning of March. So, I've like FaceTimed them and I've called them, but I haven't actually like been to their house. So that's been different. And the same with my friends. I've only seen probably like three or four of them just because we all live like pretty close to each other and those are the only people that I've like been in contact with. Everyone else, it's just been like through digital platforms like Facetime or Zoom or WebEx or something like that.

NR- And has this affected your volunteer activities?

MM- Yeah. So my church is shut down, so all of our, like I do services online. And if I want to talk to like my high school kids that I mentor or that I like associate with, I do that through Zoom. So everything is electronic and digital now. There's not a lot of face-to-face interaction.

NR- So what do you think the biggest challenge is that you face during this COVID-19 outbreak?

MM- I think two things. So the first thing would just be, kind of like, because my roommate is a nurse, it's really scary to think that like if she gets infected, like I'm gonna get infected too because we live together. There's not really like a way to intervention that or to like intersect that. Like if she gets COVID, I'm gonna get it. So that's been weird to try to like, put things in place for her to like not bring it home. And then also like if we do get COVID, like what does that look like for us? And like how are we going to be able to lie cope with that. And then as for my job, just not really, like, I feel like when I went into teaching, I thought like this is like a secure, like I have my degree, I have my certificate, like I'm going to be a teacher, but now it's like, wow, what does that look like? Am I going to continue next year? Am I not? If I don't, what am I gonna do? Just like a lot is unknown right now and there's not like answers.

NR- So going back to what you were saying about your roommate, what precautions are you taking right now in your home to prevent her bringing COVID in? What are those precautions you're doing?

MM- So when she gets off work, before she even comes into the house, she like doesn't bring her shoes or anything inside and then she'll like take her scrubs off right when she gets inside and like puts them in a bag and goes straight to the washer. And then she'll like wash her scrubs comes right away and like she showers and then we're cleaning our house like even more crazy than we were before. So we're constantly sanitizing and like bleaching, like door handles and just like anything that could possibly like transfer COVID is being like sanitized.

NR- Wow. So, being locked in, what are you or your family or your friends... are you doing any recreational activities?

MM- Yeah. So, what I do is I run every morning and I go hiking just because I can't stay inside. But like my hiking trails, I live in north Phoenix, so there's a lot of like mountains around me and there's like no one out. So there's a mountain that's like probably a mile from me that I go to a bunch and I'm the only one on the trail. Like there's no one there. It's just me. If my roommate comes with me, it's me and her, but there's like no one out. So that's been weird cuz I, I feel like most people would want to like, leave their house in some sense, like either going on a walk around the neighborhood or something. But when I'm

in the morning, when I'm running, there's no one out. If I'm hiking, there's no one. That's what I've been doing to keep in shape. But I don't know.

NR- So it's helping you release your stress?

MM- Yes. For sure.

NR- So how have you seen COVID-19 affect your community?

MM- I think well, what I was saying how no one's outside. I feel like a lot of people are isolating themselves and not like leaving. Even when I go the grocery store, like if I go to Fry's down the corner, there's like no one there. And the people that are, are like wearing mask and super like spaced out, I don't really see anyone like interacting with each other or, I don't know, I feel most people around where I live are like super friendly. Or that's what I've noticed before all this hit and now like no one like has conversations with you at the grocery store. No one like waves to you when you drive by. It's very much like get to where I'm going and like that's it. So that's what I've noticed is a lot of like lack of friendliness, I guess you could say.

NR- So you've seen people change their opinions day-to-day, their activities, their relationships in response to the growing pandemic?

MM- Absolutely. Yeah.

NR- So as far as like self-isolation and flattening the curve, those have been two ideas that have emerged during this pandemic. So, do you feel like you, your family, your friends, your community have responded to this requests and how have you?

MM- Yeah. I think my, like immediate family, like my parents and my brothers are definitely being like not leaving the house at all. Like they get groceries delivered, they like everything is online. They don't leave at all. And then for me, I think that I am taking, like precautions and like necessary, like necessary precautions. But I am like leaving my house. I'm not like staying in like a 100% all the time. I like to go on hikes and long runs and go the grocery store. And I do like maintain social distancing, but I'm not completely isolated in my like house.

NR- Do you feel like COVID-19 has changed your relationships at all?

MM- It's definitely made it more intentional. It's not just like, something like, oh, like I'll go see my parents eventually, it's definitely like I like me to make it a point to call my parents or to like check in. So definitely more intentionality behind relationships.

NR- So do you know anybody personally that's become sick with COVID-19?

MM- I don't know anyone personally, but I have like friends of friends that have had it.

NR- Okay. So, in what ways do you think COVID-19 is affecting people's mental or physical health?

MM- I would say just how unknown it is and how uncertain employment and like when are like stay-at-home orders gonna ends, just how uncertain that is. I think a lot of people are struggling with that. And I feel like a lot of people put their identity and purpose in like their jobs and if that's taken away from you, it's hard to like, recuperate, and recover from that and to like, kind of find your worth in other things. So I definitely think that that's been a struggle. And then also there's only like that we as

humans are relational people. And so when you don't have like steady relationships, whether that be your co-worker that's next to you or I don't know, like your church community or whatever your religious establishment is, like when you don't have that in your life, I feel like that makes it hard to like be human or be like feel fully human. We don't have that, like, relational communication aspect.

NR- So, can you at all gauge your student's responses to COVID-19. I know you're not seeing them, but you are having some interaction with them. How are they responding to all this change?

MM- Yeah. I when I talk to my students, so I call them every other week and then when I'm not like actually calling them on the phone, I'm like doing Google Classroom. So, a lot of them are just scared. It's a lot of when you're 11, everything's like new and like you think you're grown but you're not. And so they have all these big questions. And then when adults in their lives aren't able to answer them, that makes them very like weary and scared and I guess I would say isolated even just because like the people that you look up, don't have the answers for you and so you're even more confused than you want to be. And so I think, I've noticed a lot of them just like wanting questions, wanting answers and then when they don't get them, they just like have even more questions and then they like freak themselves out even more.

NR- What kind of answers are you giving them?

MM- I try to be honest, but in a like 11-year-old mindset honest. I don't want to like freak them out even more, but when they're like "Miss, is this gonna end?", I like I'm telling them like, hey, doctors are working really hard to find a cure for this so that it can end. So I'm not giving them like false hope to be like, "yeah bud, like this is gonna be okay and it's going to be over by the fall." And just giving them like, in a sense, broad answers that aren't necessarily like specific, but are like encouraging, I guess you could say.

NR- So, where are you personally getting your primary source of news is during this pandemic?

MM- Yeah, so I'm following a bunch of like news sites. So I like, try not to stay like bias at all, but I'll do like CNN Ten, I'll do FOX News, I'll do like the New York, New York Times. I'm like trying to find a bunch of different resources to like kind of see what the main idea of all this is. So I don't want to say like I'm going to one news source or one outlet. I'm trying to research all of them and get like a base of what's going on.

NR- So your news sources have changed since the pandemic, in essence?

MM- Yeah. And then I think my roommate too, just like getting kind of like what's going at the hospital and then gauging like what she's seeing, what's going on.

NR- So what do you think are important issues of the media may or may not be covering at the moment?

MM- That's hard. I think just based on having like the nurse as a roommate, I'm seeing a lot of like kind of sugar-coating or like half-truths like the news sources are bringing out, whether that be like in medical supplies or just like progression of COVID. I'm seeing a lot of like, they'll like tell you the truth, but it's only like halfway. Or like, they'll make kind of like they like inflate things, like things sound a lot worse than they actually are, or sound a lot better than they actually are. So that's what I've noticed is a lot of like, I don't want to say fake news, cause that so like political, but like, just definitely like half-truths.

NR- So is there anything that you feel, like how do you feel that your municipal leaders and government officials in your community have responded to this outbreak?

MM- How do I phrase this? I think that they want to believe that they're doing everything that they can and they're doing their best. But like I have friends that are in kinda like the hotspots where I'm seeing their like governors and stuff being much more, I don't want to say proactive, but just like I feel like they're being more proactive. So like I have a friend that lives in Seattle and like it's shut down, like you cannot leave, you cannot go anywhere. And then like saying with New York, I have a couple friends, who live in New York and they're like shut down as well. And so I feel like our governor is being more like open, I guess you could say is like, yes, you have a stay at home order, but it's loose. And like in Seattle, you can't leave your house at all for like anything. And then here it's very like, if you have something that you need to go get, you can get it. You can still like go outside and go hiking. It's very like they want you to be using social distancing, but it's not as like strict, if that makes sense.

NR- So do you have any thoughts on how your local, state, or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently and how they can fix that.

MM- I feel like, I don't know. I like.. if you could guarantee me that like we all lock in for two weeks and this would be over and like it would flatten the curve and we would be like done, I would say do it. Like lock us in for two weeks, let us like go to the grocery store, grab what we need, come back, and just like shut it down. If that was like the end-all be-all, I would be all for it. But I feel like there's not enough evidence out there to say like, I don't know. Like when you look at like Seattle or New York and they've like been shut down for, I want to say three weeks, almost a month, it's still like it's definitely helped it, but it's not like completely over it. So I don't know. I would want to say, like they can be more proactive, but also like I don't know if that's necessarily the right answer either.

NR- So, has your experience transformed how you think about your family, your friends, your community, and in what ways?

MM- Absolutely. I think one, like I was saying earlier, it's definitely made me more intentional and it's shown me how like fast things can change. So definitely being just more cautious with that. And also like it's made me realize that I do have time for things. I just need to like, make it a priority. So when I'm like, oh I'm busy. Like yes, I'm busy but also like how much of my busy-ness as like filler time. So just being more aware of relationships and of like time I'm putting and where my time is going.

NR- So knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals, communities, or in governments need to keep in mind for the future?

MM- I think, ooh, that's hard. There's a lot. I think that we need too... ooh, hold on. I'm trying to think of the right wordage. Can you repeat the question one more time just so I like have my thoughts clearing?

NR- So knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals or communities or governments need to keep in mind for the future should something like this happen again?

MM- One- I think we need to, I guess for like lack of a better word, like be less selfish. I think that through all of this, you've seen a lot of like just like me, me, me kind of situations where it comes like the toilet paper crisis and just like groceries stores being like bare, Give me 1 second. My computer's gonna die. I'm gonna go grab my other charger. So, like I was saying, just being more like courteous and considerate

of other people and not being so selfish. And then I also think that like just being truthful, in a sense. Like I like I feel like a lot of times like the media or like social media or just anything kind of sugarcoat things and tries to make it like less than. And I think that like if we're being honest, like we want answers even if they're not answers we like or desire, I guess you could say. So like when things are bad, I feel like instead of being like, oh, like it's bad, but it's not like as bad as it can get. Or, I don't know, like kinda like sugar coating things. I think as like not even just American people, but people in general. Like just being honest. And so like seeing like, I don't know if you guys have heard but with the nurses how like they didn't have enough like I don't know like mask or something. Like some media outlets were saying like, oh, like there's like there's nothing like it's gonna be like awful. And, then other media outlets were saying that like there's enough and it's just like a conspiracy. I think like being truthful with the people and be like, hey, like some hospitals don't have enough and some do like just being honest instead of trying to like sugarcoat things. I think that's like if this happens again, I feel like we want honestly, not like what we want to hear.

NR- Perfect. Those all the questions I have for you. Thank you so much, Mikayla.

MM- Of course.

NR- I really appreciate it. And I'm going to stop this.