

Transcript of Interview with a fellow classmate by Angelica Ramos

Interviewee: Interviewee wishes to remain anonymous

Interviewer: Angelica S Ramos

Date: 10/09/2020

Location (Interviewee): Santa Fe, New Mexico

Location (Interviewer): Gilbert, Arizona

Transcriber: Angelica S Ramos

Abstract: This interview was conducted as a part of a COVID-19 archive project. In it she discusses her day to day life, how her life has changed since COVID hit the US, and how her home is coping with those changes. She discusses the effects that COVID has had on her family and community and how it has affected her son who has OCD. Lastly, she discusses her hopes for the future.

Angelica Ramos 0:00

And say that this is our interview for our history five eighty course on the archive. First question, what is the date and time?

Anonymous 0:14

October 9th and 2020, and it's 11:20, mountain time.

AR 0:23

What are the primary things you do on a day to day basis?

Anonymous 0:27

Um, I work full time, and I teach two online classes, and I'm also home with my son, who's in high school and I help him with his schoolwork.

AR 0:45

When did you first learn about COVID-19? What were your thoughts about it?

Anonymous 0:57

I think like maybe back in like February or March. I can't remember exactly what month, but I was just watching it over the news happening in China, and then as it spread throughout the world, and the different countries. What my thoughts were was that it was, it was very scary to just watch it all play out. Like I said over the news, and seeing how it affected everybody and seeing countries and towns and cities just shut down and the streets empty and hearing about all the people who are dying.

AR 1:40

And how have your thoughts changed since then?

Anonymous 1:45

Not too much because I still feel that it's, it frightens me every day. Because there's still a lot of people now here in the United States who are dying and still all over the world. It's still affecting

a lot of people and it doesn't seem like it's going away anytime soon. I guess that would be my thought. Or maybe a way of me thinking of it differently is when it, when it came here, they were talking about maybe it lasting for two months, we're going to go on lockdown it will last two months, if everyone does what they're supposed to do, and then it'll be gone. So, I guess being, seven months later, it hasn't stopped and it hasn't gone away. So now it's like a more, like an uncertainty of when is it going to stop.

AR 2:41

What issues have most concerned you about the COVID-19 pandemic?

Anonymous 2:55

I guess just getting ill, and giving it to my family is what I think what most frightens me. Because my son stays at home, he doesn't, you know, leave the house. My partner, he does work, but he is in his own space and he's not around people. I work from home, but I do come into the office, occasionally, maybe like once a week. And I do you know, pick up groceries and order groceries. So, I think like I'm the person who would be a little bit more at risk of getting it from somebody, having contact with it. So, it's just that's what's most worrisome for me is I'm going to probably be the one who would bring it home to my family.

AR 3:48

As COVID-19 affected your job, and in what way?

Anonymous 3:53

I'm still working full-time, but it has affected the program overall. I work for an artist in residence program and each semester we bring in around six artists onto the campus. And they work in the studio. So now that COVID has happened our campus is closed to outside visitors. And there's only a handful of students who are on campus and who are living on campus. So, we had to change our program and still bringing in artists, but they're more of like virtual artists. So, they either work at their own studio in their hometown, and they create work there and we send them the funds to do that. But they're I guess we're used to having like events on campus for the students, the faculty, and for the outside community. We host like open studios; they give lectures to courses. So now we're finding ways how to connect the instructors and the IAIA [Institute of American Indian Arts] community to these artists, but it's all virtual. So, it's just been a lot of like having to organize and plan and think of different creative ways on how to connect our community with these artists. And I also am an adjunct for the Museum Studies program here and my two classes are online. So, some students are having a hard time adjusting to online courses, because they are usually used to in person classes. So that's affected it, that way, as well as everything's been moved online. And it's just finding different ways how to interact with them and have an understanding for students who maybe not might not understand how to use it yet.

AR

What concerns do you have about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment and the economy?

Anonymous

Um, thankfully, it hasn't affected the school, or the program. We still have our program; it is funded through grants. And so far, it hasn't been affected by it. But it is scary to think that it could be, especially if this thing, you know, keeps continuing. But I think hasn't, I haven't really, like thought too much about it. Um, and as far as the economy. It is, it is scary. It's scary to see that people who don't have jobs, and they're unable to feed their families, or pay their rent or the mortgage. So that's difficult to, to see what's happening to everybody else.

AR 7:11

Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the employment of people, you know, and in what way?

Anonymous 7:29

I think the only person that I know that it has affected would be one of my friends. When this first started, she worked at a hospital and they cut her hours to like part time, I think she was only working like, twice a week, or two days out of the week. I know that was hard for her because she had just purchased like a brand-new house, and her husband doesn't work and they have a daughter. So, I know that she did have to go on unemployment for the other to make up for the other three days that she wasn't working. So that was really stressful for her. But now she's back to work full-time.

AR 8:14

How has COVID-19 affected you and your family's day to day activity?

Anonymous 8:22

Um, I guess the hardest part is my son he is diagnosed with OCD. And before this, I mean, with OCD, it's different for everybody. And they focus on different things, I guess. But for him, he's always focused on germs, getting sick, dying. So, like that was already part of his daily worries. And that was, it could be difficult to, to manage. So, it was always like a process with him. But since this happened, it just because it is germs and illness and death. It just like skyrocketed his concerns and his condition. So that was very difficult to deal with. Because when he, when the schools got out for the first couple of months when he was home, he wouldn't even go outside. And where we live, I mean we I mean we have neighbors, but we live like in a rural part of Santa Fe. So, there's, we don't have like close neighbors. So, I'm like there's you're not going to get it. There's like a lot of open space, but he still wouldn't go even outside. So, it took him a couple of months just to be brave enough to go outside. So, now he's able to go outside and go for walks and do things like that. But he will not, like go into town. And I'm like, let's just get in the car and, like, go for a drive, we don't have to, like go anywhere, but let's just, you know, go to a drive like up to the mountain and just, you know, get out of the house, you need to, like, leave this property, but he won't, he hasn't. Um, so that's difficult to see him, I guess, suffering a little bit more condition. And, like, when I do leave, he's very, like, strict and he has all of these, like, rules that everybody in the house has to sort of, like, follow. So when I get home, like I order the groceries, I don't like go into a grocery store, swipe, you know, order the groceries online, and I go, and I pick them up. And then I bring them home, and I have to like, wipe everything with like Clorox wipes. And then, and then I can bring them in the house or like the mail has to be like, sprayed and outside for like, three days before I can bring it inside. So, he has like all these different little rules. And it's very difficult because like, I understand that, like, there could be germs on packages and whatnot. But it's just like he's like, overseeing the whole household,

because he doesn't want to get sick. So, it's difficult to see him, I guess, suffer. And it's also difficult to see, to to have to follow all of his rules that he has, for me, his mother. His dad kept like going in his room. And like, sometimes he'll let me go in his room. And I have to come home and like, wash my hands. And depending on where I'm at, I have to like go change my clothes. And it's just, I mean, I understand but it's just really worsened his his issue.

AR 12:15

How are you managing day to day activity in your household?

Anonymous 12:27

I think just, I, I guess, trying to find balance between everything. Because I think now, I'm like, a stay at home mom, a teacher, for my son, a student and an employee, a full-time employee. So it's just like, yes, I was that before, but not as well because like, I came to work and my son went to school and then if he had homework, he had a tutor that would help him with that after school. So I can do like my work my homework, or work. And now it's like all of that is on me. So it's just having to find time to do everything, which I don't feel that I have and it just seems like the date and the hours and the weeks and the months just fly by and they still don't have enough time for anything. So I guess just trying to find the balance of everything I'm still trying to figure that out.

AR 13:49

Has the COVID-19 outbreak affected how you associate and communicate with friends and family and in what ways?

Anonymous 14:08

I guess, I guess it has because I see people still, like friends and family you know like going and eating at restaurants and getting together for like, you know, small gatherings for like birthdays. But we don't do that. So, like seeing like my close family probably are- I think like the last time I saw my grandpa was for Christmas. And the same for my aunt. I mean we're really close. She's like close to my age. And you know, we always hung out and do things and same the last time I saw her was probably for Christmas. So it's just, I guess there's no meeting and they've had things like they had a birthday. my grandpa's birthday was in July, they had a little small dinner for him. But, you know, I, we don't go to it. And the same for I guess, like Mike's mom. Like when this first started, like we took her packages to like her house that we saw her from, like her window, things like that, but, but now we haven't been to her house, or even taken her anything. It's been like months. So that's difficult, you know, not to see people, your loved ones. That I think that's the biggest thing.

AR 15:55

What what have been the biggest challenges that you faced during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Anonymous 16:12

I think the biggest challenges is just like I mentioned, having to handle my son's OCD. And just, you know, giving him support and reassurance and understanding of you know, his condition. And I know, it's like, it's hard for me to have to understand how he's feeling and do all of these little rules for us, but it must be more difficult for him with, with because he's having to live with

what these fears like in his own mind and body. So I think that's probably the biggest challenge I faced, I'm facing.

AR 17:01

What have you, your family and friends done for recreation during COVID-19?

Anonymous 17:16

I guess nothing really. Like we go outside. And we just like hangout in the yard and play with the dog and take him for walks and but we don't we don't really like do anything. I guess other than that.

AR 17:36

How has the Covid-19 outbreak affected your community. And by community I mean, school church, job any community that you may belong?

Anonymous 18:02

Um, I think the thing is way it's affected us to not being around other people. And not having a guess that like human contact from your family and friends.

AR 18:31

How are people around you responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Anonymous 18:41

I think it, I think it just sort of like varies. I think some, some people that I know think you know, take it, like take serious and others not so much. Right, I think a lot of people are taking precautions.

AR 19:08

Have you seen people around you change their opinions their day to day activities or relationships in response to the pandemic?

Anonymous 19:18

Um, I think so. Um, I think maybe people like when it first started the took it serious, and now they're sort of like relaxing a little bit. And I think that would be like the biggest changes, you know, or they took it really serious and they were worried and scared and now it's sort of like everybody, just wants everything to like, reopen or they're feeling more free to go places and stuff like that.

AR 20:14

I think you've already answered this one but: self-isolation and flattening the curve has been two key ideas that have emerged during the pandemic. How have you, your family and friends, and your community responded to requests of self-isolation to flatten the curve?

Anonymous 20:41

Well, for me, yes, we have we, I mean, we don't go anywhere. And, and I think I'm okay with that. Like, at first, it was kind of like, it can still be difficult. I mean, like, there's days that yes, I

do want to go to like a restaurant and eat and not have to cook like breakfast, lunch and dinner and just eat somebody else's food, because I'm already tired of having to cook. And it's just, I just want something different. But, but so I mean, there are hard days, but for the most part, like we're okay to staying at home. Um, but yeah, I do believe that it could flatten the curve.

AR 21:42

Has COVID-19 changed your relationship with family, friends and community? And in what ways?

Anonymous 21:57

Um, I mean, I think the only thing that has changed with, with my family is we're not able to get together and see each other as much as we probably would like to. I know, for Mike his, he's had a little falling out with his brother. Because his brother believes that it's, I don't know, if it's maybe not, I don't know, if he doesn't think it's not real, or it's not serious. But he just basically like lives his life, like how he would normally I mean, just like going out with friends and people and not social distancing or whatever. Which is fine. Because, you know, that's his belief and we, we don't judge people, I guess on like, well, you should, XYZ, we're not like that. But he's the opposite. Because he, you know, gives Mike a hard time and tells him that it's not serious, or it's not really what they're saying it is. And I guess, him not going to certain things, us not going to certain things for some reason, that has bothered his brother, and it just sort of like put a strain on their relationship to where they're not like speaking. And it's been probably a couple months since they spoken to one another. Because we're understanding of, you know, if he wants to go and do whatever, like, that's fine. It's his choice, but we choose not to attend things or go to things because that's how we choose to live. But he can't understand that. So, it just caused some tension between them.

AR 24:06

Have you or anyone you know, gotten sick during the COVID-19 outbreak. And what has been your experience in responding to the sickness?

Anonymous 24:17

um, I don't know anybody, like personally, like close to me who has gotten sick. The only person that I, I didn't know this person but my aunt's husband, his mother who lives in Mexico, got sick from it and, and she did pass away and they weren't able to go and see her. When she was sick. They weren't able to travel over there but I, I didn't know her personally and I don't know anybody personally who, who is sick from virus

AR 25:04

In what ways do you think COVID-19 is affecting people's mental health and or physical health?

Anonymous 25:14

Um, I think there's some people, it's adding extra stress. Like, my son was one instance that I've already talked about. I know, for me, like, there's days where I feel so overwhelmed with everything that's happening, and not being able to control it. That I'm not able to like, function properly, if that makes sense. Or like, forget simple things. Like, how do you or just even, like, how do you like, do basic math, like, just me like it just like it's affecting, like my brain for some

reason. Like, the other day, I was cooking dinner, and it was like a cultural dish that my grandma made. And I've seen her make it like 1001 times. And she taught it to me, and I've made it 1001 times, and I was cooking it for dinner. And I couldn't remember like, how to cook it. I couldn't like I started it, but I couldn't remember. And then like, I was like, because it couldn't remember. I just got stuck in this weird place. And then I like went into some sort of like, panic on like, why can't they remember? And how am I going to cook dinner? And for the life of me, I couldn't figure it out. And then dinner sucked. And then. And then the next day like, Oh, yeah, I remember now. But see, like simple things like that. And I don't know, like, what's triggering it. If it's just like constant, like, constant stress in constant like survival mode, if it's just like, affecting the way my brain is working. Like, even with our, like, weekly meetings, like there's some days that I'm just sitting there, and I'm able to participate and answer questions. And then there's other days where I'm like, I can't even put like this sentence together. And I don't even know what's coming out of my mouth. So, it's just I don't know, and I don't know what, what, why this is happening to me. But um, so that's my, my own, I think how it's affecting me.

AR 27:44

What has been your primary sources of news during the pandemic?

Anonymous 27:49

I'm probably just like, the, like, the news channels that come on, like newspapers and stuff like that, um, I don't, I was never really big on watching the news, in like, the first place before this happened. Because it's, there's just a lot of like, negativity and awful things happening in the world that the news shows. And yes, it's important to know, like, what's happening, but I think it really affects my mental health like to just constantly watch like, kids getting murdered, stolen or killed by their parents or just people, their families being broken up at the border. I mean, this is all very important, but I can't expose myself to it too much, because it makes me physically ill. So, I read and watch the news, like occasionally, so I don't do it too much. But just yeah, so that's basically just it.

AR 29:14

Have your news sources changed during the course of the pandemic?

Anonymous 29:26

No.

AR 29:29

What do you think are important issues that the media may or may not be covering?

Anonymous 29:48

I think a lot of the news is and everything surrounding the pandemic is political. What is our president doing? And what is he not doing? And XYZ. So, I think it's very political. We know people are suffering from it. But I don't think that they're representing how this is affecting, like the everyday person. How people are losing their jobs, how people are dying, how our health care system is not working for them. Health insurance? Are people going to be left with like, million-dollar medical bills? Who's paying for this? So, I think we're not hearing about everyday

people. I think it's very political. I think there needs to be a balance between it because everybody is affected by it.

AR 31:06

How have municipal leaders and government officials in your community responded to the outbreak?

Anonymous 31:15

I think our governor has actually been really good about it. I mean, well, from my point of view anyways, because she has closed down like restaurants and businesses that aren't essential. I guess, to sort of like, stop the spread of it. But then I, you know, there's also the other end of people who believe that what she did, killed our economy and closed down businesses, which I'm sure it has. It has affected small businesses and restaurants. But I think for a while they're New Mexico is doing really well; with their numbers it has risen has went up. For the last past couple of months, I think, because things started to open and the different holidays and people getting together. But I know that there are some people who are upset that the state was closed down for such a long time. So, I think it just, it depends on your own opinion of it.

AR 32:38

Do you have any thoughts on how local state or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently?

Anonymous 32:57

I just think that it's as a nation we're not cohesive. Um, I see different state governors in different states having different policies, which I know that they're allowed to do. They're allowed to govern their own state. I understand that. But I think that it's because we are not cohesive, and we're not one it's very confusing for people. And I think it's also confusing because the President himself doesn't really - like when this whole thing came out it was like a hoax, it wasn't serious, but it is serious. A lot of people have died. I think that that's not being acknowledged, just even with like, the whole mask wearing thing. So, I think that's what like we don't have, like real leadership, I guess, to be like, this is what we need to do. You know, this is serious, this is what we need to do. Like all of us need to be like together and help combat this and fight it. So, I think because of that, it's caused even more tension within groups. You see people fighting over who's wearing a mask and who's not wearing a mask and people fighting physically fighting each other killing each other over masks. And I think that's because it's, it's not clear like yes, like wear a mask. Even like when he (President Donald Trump) got out of the hospital, you know, it was like, hh, I feel like better than I did 20 years ago and don't let it ruin your life and blah, blah, blah. So, again, there it's like, causing division between people who want to live on opposite ways of life, you know. Um, so I think it's just not, we're not together, we're very divided. And I think that's, it's sad to see that happening. Especially now because we should be together supporting each other.

AR 35:48

Has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends, and your community, and in what ways?

Anonymous 36:29

I guess not too much. Um, I guess. Being not able to visit with my family and friends. It made me like, maybe appreciate them a little bit more, not, you know, I did always appreciate them, but, like, appreciate them even more, because I'm not able to spend time with them, and laugh and hang out and enjoy good food and just whatever. But think of them differently. I don't I don't think so. And I think as far as transforming maybe how I view my own life, like what's important to me, like maybe I thought, like, before this I thought like, one thing was more important, or very important. And now, you know, being at home and seeing sort of like, the world fall apart and people die. It sort, of like did change my perspective on what is important, and what's not.

AR 37:42

How does this pandemic compare to other big events that happened in your life?

Anonymous 37:53

Um, I compare it to inaudible....I don't really know how to compare

AR 38:35

What do you hope your life is like, in a year?

Anonymous 38:45

Um, I guess, I hope I don't lose any friends or family members to this. I hope that all of this stress and trouble and worrying brings something, a new lesson to me, a new way of life. And hopefully, I can go on vacation and eat at a restaurant.

AR 39:32

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

Anonymous 39:38

I guess to be prepared and have a plan, and how - and know how to address like for the leaders like how to address your community, because I think like when this happened, everybody like went into like panic mode. Um, and I think that's understandable because - if we don't, if we don't have a leader who is strong and can, I guess not make us feel better but can have a understanding of like, ok this awful thing is happening right now, this is what we have planned out, this is what were gonna do to handle this. I don't think that there would have been so much panic. Of course, there is, there's always gonna be panic and what not but maybe not so much. I mean just like watching grocery stores being empty and people fighting over toilet paper and um, like I was worried but, I didn't feel like I needed to go and buy everything up and - It was just weird to see, it felt like the world was coming to an end, you know? So I think if we had better leadership and we had a plan and we had someone to tell us like this is what's gonna happen. It would have been no so that wouldn't have happened, so much panic. So I guess just being prepared and that makes me see how I need to be prepared in the future as well.

AR 41:43

Thank you that was my last question.