

Transcript of Oral History of Sabrina Sakata and Emily Fink

Interviewee: Sabrina Sakata and Emily Fink

Interviewer: Sabrina Sakata and Emily Fink

Date: September 17, 2021

Abstract: Sabrina Sakata and Emily Fink take turns interviewing each other. The two discuss their initial reactions to their schools being shut down, their communities reactions to social distancing and lockdowns, and the biggest impact on them personally due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sabrina Sakata 0:00

My name is Sabrina Sakata and I will be interviewing Emily Fink. Emily, do you consent to being interviewed for the COVID-19 Archive Project?

Emily Fink 0:10

Oh, yes, I do.

Sabrina Sakata 0:11

Could you please state the date and time?

Emily Fink 0:13

Today it's September 17, 2021 at 11:10am.

Sabrina Sakata 0:18

Okay, and the first question is, what was your initial reaction when the stay at home orders came out?

Emily Fink 0:24

Um, well, I remember the stay at home orders came when they said that our school was shutting down. And they just said it was going to be two weeks off of school. So I remember FaceTiming all my friends. And like, all celebrating, because we kind of just thought of it as like a two week extra vacation from school. We didn't really take it as seriously as maybe we should have, like, I remember wanting to meet up with them. But then being told by my mom, that probably wasn't such a good idea, considering we'd just been told to stay at home.

Sabrina Sakata 0:53

Yeah.

Emily Fink 0:54

So yeah, I don't think we really took it as seriously as we should have maybe. It did just feel like a vacation. I remember seeing like online, other people reacting the same way. Like, oh, yeah, we get school off, but it's gonna come back a few weeks later. But then I remember like, as the weeks came, they're like, oh, it's actually gonna be like, a month now. And then, oh, it's gonna be a month, or they just like, kept extending it. And they're like, school was canceled for the rest of the year. So I don't think though it really hit me until they said school was canceled for the rest of the year. Like how serious this was.

Sabrina Sakata 1:34

Yeah. So how did your community specifically respond to the pandemic? And did you agree with this response?

Emily Fink 1:41

Um, I remember, the first thing I remember was, um, they shut down restaurants, which, also at that time, I think I still didn't really think of it as a thing. So I was like, Oh, that's pretty drastic. But I was like, I mean, if it keeps people safe, that's good. And I remember they also had a mask mandate, which I think most people did follow, but I didn't really go out that much.

Sabrina Sakata 2:07

Yeah.

Emily Fink 2:07

So I didn't see. But when I did see people outside, they were wearing a mask and keeping their distance. So I think generally, my community, which is like, a very, like left leaning, like kind of liberal town, followed what the guidelines are pretty well. And I agreed with that. Because like, like public safety, that's an important thing. So I was pretty proud of the way my community reacted except for, and also, I'm glad that our schools closed down, because that was probably for the better, but I don't think the way they handled school was that great because like, especially after they canceled school, and it was just like online, we only actually met one day a week on Friday. And it was like each class for 15 minutes. And other than that, it was just work throughout the week, but they barely gave us anything to do. So I don't really think I learned anything. Yeah, I like the end of that year.

Sabrina Sakata 3:01

I would agree with that. Yeah. So has the pandemic affected you emotionally in any way? And if so, explain how?

Emily Fink 3:10

Yeah, probably say it would. I don't think during the pandemic, I didn't feel that emotionally affected. Like, I remember when people would ask, like, oh, how are you doing, and like, stuff like that, I'd be like, Oh, I'm fine. Like, it's whatever. But only like, once we started to, like, go out in public again, and talk to people that I realized, like, how lonely I was during the year. I just like, it felt like I missed out on like, a year of my life. And it might seem like kind of superficial, like I missed out on my senior year of high school. And like, that's kind of like, the height of like, your, like teenage years.

Sabrina Sakata 3:46

I definitely would agree with that, yeah.

Emily Fink 3:47

Yeah, like, we were able to have a prom, but like other senior events we weren't able to do. So just like looking back on that, I'm like, not gonna really have any strong memories of my senior year, which I know kind of makes me sad.

Sabrina Sakata 4:00

Yeah. I mean, you will probably remember.

Emily Fink 4:03

Yeah, the COVID, yeah.

Sabrina Sakata 4:03

Yeah.

Emily Fink 4:05

Not the memories I exactly wanted.

Sabrina Sakata 4:06

Yeah.

Emily Fink 4:07

Yeah.

Sabrina Sakata 4:09

So what do you think is the biggest impact or change that the pandemic has had in your life?

Emily Fink 4:15

Um, I think it's changed the way I interact with people. Specifically, like, my friends, like, I think, in like a weird way, it made me closer to them, just because I appreciate them a lot more now. So I think it's kind of made our bond stronger, which is, yeah, like a weird idea, because we weren't able to see each other that much, and also less so now. But it did give me a little bit of like social anxiety just because I hadn't been around new people for like, a while during the pandemic. So like, whenever I had to order food for a bit like after we started to integrate back into society, I would get really stressed out about it. But I think like college has helped like just being forced to interact with new people. So it's but not as much of a thing I struggle with anymore.

Sabrina Sakata 5:02

Yeah.

Emily Fink 5:03

Yeah. Yeah, you want to move on to your questions now?

Sabrina Sakata 5:08

Okay.

Emily Fink 5:09

Okay. Hi, I'm Emily Fink and I'm interviewing Sabrina Sakata. For the COVID-19 interview. Do you give consent to being interviewed?

Sabrina Sakata 5:20

Yes.

Emily Fink 5:21

And then can you state the date and time?

Sabrina Sakata 5:22

It's September 17, 2021, At 11:15am.

Emily Fink 5:28

Okay. Um, so when did school shut down for you, and what was your first initial reaction to it?

Sabrina Sakata 5:33

So school shut down for me on March 13th, which is when it felt like the entire world shut down. And originally, like you said, they just told us we were going to be staying home for two weeks. Initially, I remember thinking that this was a really good thing like it was, everyone was talking about it, like it was an extra long spring break. And so I just was excited kind of to get a break from like, my junior year classes. It was like a hard year. But I think later on when we started, they started extending how long we weren't going to be at school, like you also had that experience. It kind of made me more anxious, I would say just because I didn't really know how things were going to play out.

Emily Fink 6:17

Yeah, um, how did you handle the drastic change to like your social life?

Sabrina Sakata 6:22

Overall, I think I just tried hard to stay like in contact with my friends through FaceTime and texting and social media. It was definitely a huge change, just because I was pretty much only interacting with my family every day, instead of like, normally, you'd be seeing your friends during the day. And then you'd see your family like at night, maybe. But, so it was definitely a big change, it was something I had to get used to during quarantine. But it definitely helped just to be able to talk with my friends and know that like everyone else was kind of going through the exact same thing.

Emily Fink 6:58

Yeah. How do you think your school handled distance learning and just like COVID-19 In general?

Sabrina Sakata 7:04

I would say that they handled it in the best possible way that they could, given the circumstances. I know they tried hard not to give us too much screen time. So they like made every class shorter, it was only an hour instead of an hour and a half. And they also at, near when things started to get better, they started to offer in person learning later. So they, they did try to, and they tried to give us some senior events like we had like a small prom for just seniors on campus. Yeah. Yeah. So they did try to give us as much as they could, given how the pandemic played out.

Emily Fink 7:43

And then do you think COVID-19 will have any long lasting effects on you like whether they are physical, emotional or mental? And like, what do you think those effects will be?

Sabrina Sakata 7:51

I think that COVID will always make me remember how important social interactions are. Because you definitely take it for granted. Like before, I felt, I feel like I took it for granted how normal life was before and how I would see people every day. And I think it'll just serve as a reminder that our normal way of life isn't always a given. And that I should just be able to take advantage of like even now that we get to go in person to school even if we do have to wear masks, I think it's important to like have social interaction and just to be able to see people is important. So yeah.