

Transcript of Interview of Jennifer Martin by Angelica S Ramos

Interviewee: Jennifer Martin

Interviewer: Angelica S Ramos

Date: 10/03/2020

Location (Interviewee): Georgetown, Kentucky

Location (Interviewer): Gilbert, Arizona

Transcriber: Angelica S Ramos

Abstract – Graduate student at ASU, Angelica S Ramos interviews mother of four, Jennifer Martin of Kentucky, to get her first-hand experience of being a working mom during COVID. In this interview they discuss the hardships of motherhood, how the routine of the household has changed and the hardships Jennifer has encountered. Jennifer also expresses excitement for moving out of the suburbs and into a farm, a decision which was made during COVID.

Angelica Ramos 00:01

All right. Can you please state your name, date and your location?

Jennifer Martin 00:05

Jennifer Martin, it's November 3, 2020. And I'm here in Georgetown, Kentucky.

AR 00:12

How many children do you have? And how old are they?

JM 00:16

Four, I have a 14, 13, 12, and a 2-year-old.

AR 00:24

Describe the moment you first learned about COVID, and how it made you feel.

JM 00:30

So, I had been following the COVID news pretty closely when it was primarily overseas. Because I am a project manager. And so, I, I was paying attention to what the impact would be on the projects that I was managing. Um I was a bit nervous. There was a lot of conflicting information on is it just like a cold? Is it worse than that? What's so there was a lot of uncertainty as to like, what the impact would be for us, in North America. You know, prior to really coming to the US, like in February, March timing. So, like, November, December, I was watching and like around February, a lot of our overseas suppliers had started to shut down or have shop delays because their people were were sick. And so it was a little unsettling.

AR 01:36

What is it like being a mother during the pandemic?

JM 01:40

It's been a challenge. It is. As a working mom, it's been a lot of trying to keep track of children's schoolwork, assignments, my work my assignments, um, it's been hard.

AR 02:01

How has COVID changed your day to day routine?

JM 02:08

In a lot of ways, it's been almost six months of new normal, preceded by about two months of everything shut down for a minute. It certainly made the decision to go run out to the store to get a small stable item, more of a thoughtful task. You know, what else do we need? While we're making this journey out into exposure land, you know?

AR 02:44

How has your role in the household changed?

JM 02:50

Hmm. I would say my role as chief administrator of home IT systems has, has expanded with you know, three, three kids that are in like, elementary to high school age range, there's so many zoom meetings. tools that I have never used Google classrooms, that was not a thing when I was a student. And you know, just trying to troubleshoot everything from busted laptops to the screen broke and had to replace the screen and a laptop. It's been a wild time.

AR 03:33

What have been the biggest challenges you faced due to COVID?

JM 03:44

For me, because I've been working half in the office and half at home for the past six months. The biggest challenge is being able to kind of separate those two personas you know. At work, I'm very direct and very blunt. And, you know, as Mom, I'm fairly emotional, fairly giving, you know, and when I'm working at home, the second I step out of the room that I'm in, which is my office, I have to be soft again, instead of boss mom. So, it's a, it's a bit of a challenge. The kids have gotten used to it now. But the first eight weeks was very difficult for them because it was like, mom can't talk. She's in a meeting, mom wants to have time for you, but now's not the moment. Um, go ask that dad at home. Go ask dad. So it's been a little bit of a an adjustment, I think.

AR 04:45

Can you tell me how you've been feeling lately?

JM 04:50

Um, yeah I can. Um, I have absolutely struggled with anxiety and depression through this whole This whole shenanigans, um, I have, you know, been aware enough of what's going on with my emotional health to, you know, see the systems, you know, I, I meet regularly with a counselor to talk about all this stuff and then not wanting to get out of bed not finding the joy and the things anymore.

AR 05:28

is it affecting your mental or physical health?

JM 05:32

Definitely, I initially joked for the first eight weeks that we were all home, and everybody was just, you know, oh, it's fine. You know, I gained 19 pounds. So, like, it's kind of a joke. And now I'm like, here, like, net 30. For the year, like, in a year, I've gained 30 pounds, it's awful. You know, you just you have like, the emotional side of it,

where, you know, like, I know how to eat, right, I was eating right. But you know, put it all back on. So, there's a little bit of a challenge there.

AR 06:12

What kind of support do you have, or wish that you had as a mother during the pandemic?

JM 06:24

I do miss having, you know, friends or family to spend time with dad and I would trade off days where like, we would go out with our friends and just go do not stuff with the kids. Just whatever it is, and with everyone being so concerned about, you know, exposure and, you know, playing a safe for their own families, it's been really close in and a little bit difficult. You know, there have been a lot of tougher conversations at home too. Because we used to see each other a little bit and now we see each other all the time. You know, I I do miss the free socialization, I don't know how to frame that.

AR 07:23

Are there any aspects of motherhood that you can think of, that maybe society doesn't understand that have been highlighted by COVID?

JM 07:37

I would say, you know, one thing that, that really showed up, in in our household, my two-year-old, it didn't matter. If I was in a meeting, it didn't matter. Like he would come find me every time and I'm like dad's here. But, you know, my, my employees have all been fantastic. My supervisors have been fantastic. Every bodys, like, we're all having the same problem. And so like, it's, it's been very clear that the burden of motherhood and those kind of traditional roles still exist. And many of the many of the men at work don't necessarily have to deal with the same level of attention division among, among the crowd. So that's,

AR 08:42

what are your hopes for the future?

JM 08:47

So, in September, we closed on a farm, and we are preparing to move, um, it's about an hour away from here. It's, it's a very large farm. It's over 200 acres. We are. We're really looking forward to getting away from being it we're in a suburb, it's, it's a good area, it's fine. But you know, being cooped up here, we really both wanted to move out into the country. We had been talking about it casually about getting like a small patch of land for recreational use. But, you know, during the pandemic, we spent a lot more time poking around on the real estate apps, and we found a place that we love and we're working on renovating the farmhouse, um, and so hopefully it'll be ready to move into around Thanksgiving.

AR 09:48

Oh, wow, that's so exciting. So, this interview is going to be put up in the archive. For the pandemic. Is there anything else you would like to add about your life as a mother during COVID.

JM 10:05

As, as a mother during COVID, there were a lot of moments that I had to consider the health and safety of my children and my family and make decisions that were a little bit harder than me people that only had to worry about themselves, or, you know, a two-person family. My two-year-old, was a premature baby. And so, he has traditionally had a lot of issues with lung issues. And so, we made a lot of decisions about like, who's going to go

shopping? Who's going to do this? Who's going to do that? And it was, it was a bit of a challenge. Like when we ran out of something, we had to make hard choices like can we go another three days because we don't want to go every day to the store. Or, you know, if we want to make a click order click list or whatever curbside pickup order, we want to make sure that we get everything we need.

AR 11:11

And then last question, how has your thoughts changed on COVID from when you first heard about it to now?

JM 11:20

Um, I'm certainly more concerned about the impact of the virus after seeing like, how much it spread in Kentucky it's been slower than other states. But you know, as as a state, we haven't been continuing to follow safety protocol. And so, my opinion on it is it like it's it's getting worse. I thought it was gonna be bad, and I thought it was going to be over maybe around summertime. And then it didn't stop.

AR 12:01

Alright, that's actually the end of my question list. So I just wanted to thank you so much for taking time out of your day. So I did this. For my own purposes, this is actually where I'm going to