

Transcript of Interview Tehya of by Vanshika Dawar

Interviewee: Tehya

Interviewer: Vanshika Dawar

Date: September 19, 2020

Location (Interviewee): unknown

Location (Interviewer): unknown

Transcriber: Angelica S Ramos

Abstract – Northeastern University student Vanskiha Dawar interviews fellow student Tehya. In this interview Tehya discusses what life was like for her when COVID hit her hometown of Long Island. She discusses her transition to remote learning and the moment she realized she wouldn't be finishing high school in a more traditional way. She discusses the High School senior events that she missed out on and her life at home during quarantine. Tehya also discusses being worried for her at risk grandmother and her thoughts for the future. She talks about the precautions Northeastern University is taking to keeps their students safe and her opinions on how government has dealt with the pandemic.

Vanshika Dawar 00:01

Hi, I'm Vanshika Dawar, and I'm here with Taya. Um, do you give consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 archive project?

Taya 00:11

Yes.

VD 00:13

Alright, could you please state the date and time?

T 00:16

It is September 19 10:29am.

VD 00:21

All right, let's get started. Um, do you mind telling about yourself.

T 00:27

Um, I am a first-year student at Northeastern University. I'm from Long Island, New York. I have one sister, and I am 18 years old.

VD 00:48

Alright so, when this whole COVID-19 outbreak started, where were you and what was going around you?

T 00:56

Um, I was in school, when I first heard about the virus, I think it was like a week before the shutdown happened. And, um, I got a announcement in my school's on speaker system, and it said, we will not be having school the

next week. And at first, they made it out to seem like it was some sort of test like they wanted to test out the online system. But as the week's progressed, we started to realize that it was more because we weren't ever going to go back to school again. So, it was a hard moment. Because when we started to realize that the pandemic was here, we had to come to terms with the fact that like, we were going to be home for the next couple months, and we wouldn't be able to go to school again.

VD 01:51

And so being a senior in high school, there's a lot formal events at the end of the year, like prom, graduations, so did you end up having those?

T 02:02

um, I didn't end up having prom, which was a big deal, because it was something we were all looking forward to. But I did end up having a some sort of graduation, I call it a semi graduation. We basically watched it on a screen. But we all got to go into the school and see each other again, which was a nice way to end the school year even though we didn't get to see each other for the past couple months.

VD 02:32

So, you said you switched to online school? How did your- How did that go?

T 02:38

Um, online school for me I felt was more of like a mental hurdle than I actual school work hurdle I fit I thought the schoolwork was relatively easy and kind of similar because I go to a very small school. So it was easy to have all of our classes just be on a zoom platform, because there were like 10 to 15 kids in the class. And it was just like a big FaceTime video. But workwise I thought it pretty much stayed the same we met every day. So, it's not like we were just given work and never met with a teacher. But the mental hurdle was just like I said before, not being able to see my friends when I knew it was the last time I'd probably see them before college. So that was the hard part for me.

VD 03:36

And I during quarantine were you able to still keep in contact with your friends keep like your social life? Like how did you manage?

T 03:47

Um, I was, um, but towards the end, obviously, you still have text and FaceTime. But when quarantine first started, my parents are very adamant about not letting us outside. So, I didn't didn't see them for a while, which was hard. But towards the end of quarantine into the summer, I was able to go outside and see them in person which I respond better to I'm not like an online social. I mean, I like social media, but I don't get the same level of interaction and like happiness from only seeing my friends from online or on a screen. So, it was nice to be able to see them.

VD 04:29

No, I get that. And so, the COVID-19 if you don't mind me asking have any impact on your family?

T 04:38

Um, luckily, we haven't had anyone get it um. We're very lucky that we haven't had anyone pass away from it. But it affected us in a way because my grandma is very old and we see her a lot and my cousin lives with her and she has two young children. And there was always that fear of like, will they bring it home to her. And when we see her, we have to wear a lot of masks and we couldn't go and like, actually be in person with her for months. And it was really hard because we wanted to see her, because she's very old and needs, you know, to talk to someone, or else she's alone. But it's also important to make sure that she doesn't get it because she is an at risk person because of her age. So that was hard.

VD 05:34

Um, so becoming going into freshman year of college, how did you think Northeastern's plan to reopen were your thoughts on that,

T 05:45

um, I thought they were really good about their plan, they laid it out clearly. I think the testing policy of three times a week is one of the better ones I've seen that colleges are doing. And it made me happy that I picked this school because I see a lot of other schools closing and sending freshmen home. And I think our school is doing a good job of being strict with the policies, but also allowing us to still be here. Even though we have our own, you know, we have to wear masks and get tested, which is hard, but it's still better than being at home, in my opinion. So, I'm happy with their response.

VD 06:29

So now being in Boston, your freshman year, how is the community here and reacting to COVID-19 compared to where you're from?

T 06:40

I'm from Long Island. So, it's like a suburb to the city. So, I always felt like we didn't have that many strict rules compared to New York City, because they were in complete lockdown. And they had they were the epicenter for a while. So, I always was able to kind of have that perspective of like, Oh, I don't live in a city. This isn't that bad compared to people who do. And so, as kind of quarantine was dying down a little bit. I was able to eat in restaurants, I was able to go out in groups with masks and the beaches were open. But now that I'm in a city again, I feel those same quarantine measures being taken as I did when I visited the city. And when I saw what the city was doing. I felt like, I feel like here it's a lot more strict. But that's not a bad thing. I like how people always wear masks. And if you don't, it's you know, a problem. And people will tell you, and I like how eating outside is a big thing here. So I'm not mad that the rules are more strict. It's just an observation.

VD 07:58

And what do you think about how the government officials reacted to the outbreak at the beginning?

T 08:06

I'm on like a more local level, I think in my state and my town, we reacted pretty well. There were masked mandates and schools closed and all that on a national or national level, I thought the response could have been better. With like the recent news of the president being on tape saying that he knew the virus was going to be, you know, harmful and cause deaths. And he knew that it could harm children. But he didn't do anything. Um, it's concerning, because I understand that inciting panic doesn't help. But I also understand that being strong in the

values of helping America and getting through the virus together are also very important. And I feel like we didn't have so much of a unified response, especially in the mask wearing category, I think there's still people that don't wear them. And I worked actually on during quarantine in like a, like a retail store. And I found that like most people just didn't come in with masks. And I feel like if we had a more National Response about, you know, knowing the science about how masks help, it would have actually saved a lot of lives. So I wish they would have done that sooner and and made made that clear much sooner because they didn't know that it was helpful.

VD 09:38

Yeah, it's interesting to think about what could have gone different if there is a more unified response. And so when you first learned about COVID-19, where were your thoughts about it, and how have they changed?

T 09:55

Um, I think first, my first response was fear because I didn't want to get it. I'm a very health conscious person, I don't like the idea of getting sick. So, it was a lot of fear in that. And that's still the case. For me. I say this all the time, I think a lot of kids in my generation and in my age group think that it's just something that they will be able to get over quickly, which is true. Most times you are able to recover quickly. But I don't think that it's just something that's going to go away forever. People have already been saying that they're getting like, post covid problems, such as like, you know, asthma, or like signs of trouble breathing, and I and I just, I fear that when I'm older, if I were to get it, that when I'm older, I will have respiratory issues that will last through my more adult life. So I'm still very conscious about it. I don't think it's something to laugh at. But I think my initial response was more fear. And now it's more caution. I don't know if that makes sense. But it's just, I know that if I do the things now that will protect me, I'll be okay. Before I was more just like panicked and fearful about the future.

VD 11:23

And I think that's all the questions we have. Thank you for your time.

T 11:27

Thank you.