
Transcript of Oral History of Sephanie Roberto

Interviewee: Stephanie Roberto

Interviewer: Nick Goettke

Date: 10/01/2020

Abstract: Nick Goettke interviews Stephanie Roberto. She discusses her opinions on the government being to restrictive in their guidelines, her dislike of online school for kids, the importance of community and mental health, and having a cold during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Nick Goettke 00:01

All right, we're recording. My name is Nick Goettke. I'm here with Stephanie Roberto. It is Thursday, October 1, at 8:45pm. We're located at Stephanie's house, we're on the west side of Cincinnati. First off, I want to briefly review the informed consent and the deed of gift document you signed. We've already done that, and you've signed it. This interview is for the COVID-19 oral history project which is associated with the journal the plague here COVID-19 archive. The COVID-19 Oral History Project is a rapid response oral history focused on archiving the lived experience of the COVID-19 epidemic. We've designed this project so that professional researchers in the broader public can create and upload their oral history to our open access and open source database. This study will help us collect narratives understanding about COVID-19 as well as help us better understand the impacts of the pandemic over time. The recordings, demographic information and verbatim transcripts will be deposited in the Journal of a Plague year a COVID-19 archive and the Indiana University Library System for the use of researchers and the general public. Do you have any questions so far about the project that I can answer?

Stephanie Roberto 01:22

No.

Nick Goettke 01:27

Taking part in this study is voluntarily you may choose not to take part or you may leave the study at any time leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, your decision. Whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Indiana University, IUPUI or the IUPUI Arts and Humanities Institute, or the University of Cincinnati, through which you're running this project. Participating this project means that your interview will be recorded, which we're doing right now in digital format. The recordings, and possible transcripts of the interviews, or copies of any supplementary documents or additional photos that you wish to share in the informed consent

and deed of gift may be deposited into the Journal of the plague year, a COVID-19 archive and the Indiana University Library System and will be made available to both researchers and the general public. Your name and other means of identification will not be confidential. Do you have any questions so far?

Stephanie Roberto 02:29

No

Nick Goettke 02:31

In addition to your signed document, would you please offer a verbal confirmation that you understand and agree to these terms?

Stephanie Roberto 02:37

Yes.

Nick Goettke 02:39

Thank you. I'm also asking that you verbally confirm you have agreed that your interview will be made available under the following license. The first one is the Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International. The second is the COVID-19 oral history project, the Journal of the Plague Year a COVID-19 Archive and the Trustees of Indiana University acting through its agents, employees or representatives has an unlimited right to reproduce, use exhibit display, perform broadcast create, work from and distribute the oral history materials in any manner or media now existing here after developed in perpetual throughout the world. I agree that the oral history materials may be used by the voices from the waterways and the IU including it's a signs and transferees for any purpose, including but not limited to marketing, advertising, publicity, or other promotional purposes. I agree that I you will have final editorial authority over the use of the oral history materials and I waive any right to inspect or approve of any future use of this oral history material. Moreover, I agree that the public has the right to use the material under the terms of the fair use us copyright law section 107 of the US Copyright Act. Finally, I want to ask you for a verbal confirmation that you agreed that your interview will be made available to the public immediately. Do you understand all that?

Stephanie Roberto 04:25

Yes.

Nick Goettke 04:29

Okay. So now we're going to get into the questions. Again, it is about 8:50pm on October the 1st. If you could state your name, and the primary things you do on a daily basis.

Stephanie Roberto 04:47

Stephanie Roberto, and I work in a childcare center.

Nick Goettke 04:53

In a childcare center?

Stephanie Roberto 04:55

Yes.

Nick Goettke 04:57

Okay. You work full time there?

Stephanie Roberto 04:58

Yes.

Nick Goettke 05:00

Okay. In what area do you live?

Stephanie Roberto 05:03

I live in the suburbs of Cincinnati.

Nick Goettke 05:06

Okay. What's it like to live there?

Stephanie Roberto 05:08

Good. Nice.

Nick Goettke 05:13

Okay. When you first learned about COVID-19 earlier this year, what were your thoughts about it?

Stephanie Roberto 05:19

Um, at first, it was a little scary.

Nick Goettke 05:27

Okay. How have your thoughts changed since then?

Stephanie Roberto 05:31

A lot. It's not as scary as it was.

Nick Goettke 05:35

You're no longer concerned about it?

Stephanie Roberto 05:39

Not as much as I was.

Nick Goettke 05:42

Okay. What issues have most concerned you about the pandemic?

Stephanie Roberto 05:46

Um, kids not being in school and businesses closing.

Nick Goettke 05:53

Okay. Do you have kids?

Stephanie Roberto 05:56

Yes.

Nick Goettke 05:57

Okay. How many kids do you have?

Stephanie Roberto 05:58

Two.

Nick Goettke 06:00

Two kids. Were both of their schools closed?

Stephanie Roberto 06:02

Yes.

Nick Goettke 06:03

Okay. All right. Next is a couple questions about employment. First off, has COVID-19 affected your job?

Stephanie Roberto 06:14

Yes.

Nick Goettke 06:15

In which ways?

Stephanie Roberto 06:17

I was off work for two and a half months. And when we I went back to work, there was a lot of regulations put in place like masks, and limiting the number of children and people in the building.

Nick Goettke 06:43

Okay. What concerns do you have about the effects of COVID-19 on your employment or the economy more broadly?

Stephanie Roberto 07:01

That a lot more small businesses or privately owned businesses will go out of business and leave people without an income.

Nick Goettke 07:13

Okay. With that in mind, has the Covid 19 pandemic affected the employment of people, you know, whether people that I guess you don't work with?

Stephanie Roberto 07:24

Yes.

Nick Goettke 07:26

In which ways?

Stephanie Roberto 07:26

People have been out of a job or not as busy or making as much of an income because of certain regulations that have been put in place.

Nick Goettke 07:46

Okay. How about your family? How has COVID-19 affected the day to day activities in your household?

Stephanie Roberto 07:57

Um, not too much. Besides remembering to take a mask with us everywhere we go.

Nick Goettke 08:05

That's the biggest thing.

Stephanie Roberto 08:07

Yes.

Nick Goettke 08:09

Okay. So you're saying COVID hasn't really affected much. So there's, you're not having difficulties in the day to day managing? Dealing with the pandemic?

Stephanie Roberto 08:24

No.

Nick Goettke 08:28

Did the COVID-19 outbreak is affected how you associate or communicate with family and friends?

Stephanie Roberto 08:35

Yes.

Nick Goettke 08:38
Can you explain that?

Stephanie Roberto 08:40
In the beginning we tried to stay away from family just especially elderly grandparents who have underlying health conditions. So we weren't putting them at risk. Since we still had people in our family that were outside going places outside of home, like to the grocery, to work, things like that.

Nick Goettke 09:11
Okay. So basically, just keeping the elderly in your family protected.

Stephanie Roberto 09:15
Yes.

Nick Goettke 09:17
Okay.

Nick Goettke 09:21
What has been the biggest challenge you have faced during the Covid 19 outbreak?

Stephanie Roberto 09:27
Remote learning with my children.

Nick Goettke 09:31
Remote learning with your children?

Stephanie Roberto 09:33
And being off work for two and a half months.

Nick Goettke 09:37
Okay. Are your children currently remote learning?

Stephanie Roberto 09:42
No, not right this minute.

Nick Goettke 09:45
But when the outbreak occurred, they were?

Stephanie Roberto 09:47
Yes.

Nick Goettke 09:55

Okay. What have you and your family- [coughs] Excuse me. What have you and your family or you and your friends done for recreation during COVID?

Stephanie Roberto 10:05

Spent a lot of time outdoors, going for hikes, riding bikes, taking walks. A lot of arts and crafts and family board games and things like that.

Nick Goettke 10:22

Okay. Spend a lot more time with just your immediate family?

Stephanie Roberto 10:26

Yes.

Nick Goettke 10:32

Okay. How about in your community? How has the COVID-19 outbreak affected your community, such as, obviously, you've already said school being closed, but anything else like clubs or churches,

Stephanie Roberto 10:48

So our church shut down was not having in person services. A lot of local, just in small business independently owned places have gone out of business. And, um, you just have to wear a mask everywhere you go.

Nick Goettke 11:14

Okay. So that's kind of how it's affected your community.

Stephanie Roberto 11:17

Yes.

Nick Goettke 11:21

How have the people around you, the people you associate with, how have they responded to the COVID pandemic? Is it different than you?

Stephanie Roberto 11:32

I, it's, I think a lot have responded the same at first. In the beginning, they were a little more strict with everything, but now have kind of lightened up and don't seem to be as worried as they were when it first started.

Nick Goettke 11:54

Okay. And since the outbreak of the pandemic, have you seen the people around you change their opinion, or their day to day activities? Or relationships in response to the pandemic?

Stephanie Roberto 11:59

Yes.

Nick Goettke 12:06

And in which ways? Can you kind of elaborate on that?

Stephanie Roberto 12:11

So I'll- like the last answer. A lot of people were you know, quarantining, staying home a lot more. But now, I think they've are adventuring out more spending more time with extended family, doing things in public and kind of loosened up.

Nick Goettke 12:41

Okay. There's been two kind of key terms, self-isolation, and flattening the curve that these terms have kind of emerged during the pandemic. How have you or your friends or your family? How has the people around you have responded to request to self-isolate? Or to flatten the curve? Have you- Have you and your family? Do you feel like you guys have self-isolated much during the pandemic?

Stephanie Roberto 13:20

I mean, in the beginning, we did. But, no, I mean, now, I feel like we would just self-isolate if we felt like, we were showing symptoms or felt like we were sick. Um,

Nick Goettke 13:40

Yeah. Okay. And then the notion of flattening the curve of the, I guess, of the numbers of the pandemic. I know, it's, it's hard to say, if you've helped to flatten the curve, but has that been a concern of yours at all?

Stephanie Roberto 13:59

I mean, not a major concern. We wear a mask when we're supposed to try to social distance when we're keep our, you know, six feet or in public, and follow the rules.

Nick Goettke 14:15

Okay. Do you think the Covid 19 pandemic has changed your relationships with your family or friends?

Stephanie Roberto 14:20

No.

Nick Goettke 14:25

You don't think it's had a positive or negative impact?

Stephanie Roberto 14:31

No.

Nick Goettke 14:34

Okay. How about do you know or have you? Have you or anybody you know, gotten sick during the Covid 19 outbreak?

Stephanie Roberto 14:43

Yes. Um, my children and myself.

Nick Goettke 14:50

Both your children?

Stephanie Roberto 14:52

Yes.

Nick Goettke 14:54

Okay. What was your response to, to the illness during the pandemic?

Stephanie Roberto 14:57

Um, right. I just stayed home until he was feeling better. My youngest we did go to the doctor and the doctor just said it was just a cold. He didn't even want to have her tested, didn't even mention having are tested for COVID. And myself, I just stayed home until I felt better.

Nick Goettke 15:25

Okay, so no one in your immediate family was actually tested for COVID?

Stephanie Roberto 15:29

No.

Nick Goettke 15:34

Do you know anyone that has tested positive?

Stephanie Roberto 15:39

Yes.

Nick Goettke 15:42

Okay was it-

Stephanie Roberto 15:44

Coworker.

Nick Goettke 15:47

Okay, a coworker. On that note, do you- Do you think COVID-19 is affecting people's mental and or physical health?

Stephanie Roberto 15:58

Yes. I feel like people were more depressed, ready for things to go back to normal? Um, I feel like healthy habits have gone down. Less, people were exercising less, especially when gyms were closed. And I feel like alcohol assumption is up.

Nick Goettke 16:30

You think people are drinking more?

Stephanie Roberto 16:32

Yes.

Nick Goettke 16:37

Okay. During the pandemic, what has been your primary source of news?

What do you, uh, do you watch the news at night?

Stephanie Roberto 16:55

Internet.

Nick Goettke 16:56

The internet?

Stephanie Roberto 16:58

Yes.

Nick Goettke 16:58

You get you get your news from the internet? Any specific places?

Stephanie Roberto 16:59

Social media

Nick Goettke 17:01

On social media. Okay. Have you changed who you get your media from during the pandemic?

Stephanie Roberto 17:05

No.

Nick Goettke 17:09

No? its remains the same throughout?

Stephanie Roberto 17:14

Yes.

Nick Goettke 17:16

What do you think are some important issues that the media is not covering?

Stephanie Roberto 17:24

Any positive medical findings with COVID. They're not telling how many people are tested and test negative or keeping track of, you know, the people that test positive and do don't need to be hospitalized. To feel like the media is all the negative of COVID.

Nick Goettke 17:51

So you feel that medias is focusing on the on the bad part of it and not the positive part.

Stephanie Roberto 17:57

Right. Yes.

Nick Goettke 17:58

What about local leaders? Any anybody in your community government officials? How do you feel that they've responded to the outbreak? You mentioned earlier about closing businesses. Is there anything else that you think the government locally has done well, or not done well?

Stephanie Roberto 18:25

No.

Nick Geottke 18:26

Okay. How about on the state level? Or federal level? How do you think or how do you feel? The government leaders have responded on that level?

Stephanie Roberto 18:40

Um, I think some of the decisions are affecting us in a negative way, like with closing schools, and making restrictions and guidelines so strict that businesses can't can't stay open or can't afford to stay open.

Nick Goettke 19:05

Okay. The governor, you know the governors are kind of in charge. How do you feel that the governor of your state has been doing?

Stephanie Roberto 19:13

I think he's being a little too harsh on some of his regulations.

Nick Goettke 19:28

Okay. Looking back through this whole experience, how do you think your experience of the pandemic has changed how you think about your family, or friends or community? Does it change that at all?

Stephanie Roberto 19:44

Yes, makes me realize how important they are and how much. I really need them on a daily basis.

Nick Goettke 19:56

Okay. How does this pandemic compared to any other big event that is happened in your lifetime?

Stephanie Roberto 20:03

I don't think it does compare. I've-

Nick Goettke 20:08

What do you mean by that?

Stephanie Roberto 20:10

I have it. I mean, any big event in my life has not put this much stress in my life. I've had to have my kids miss school and the stress of remote learning.

Nick Goettke 20:34

Fast forward to a year from now, what do you envision your life being like?

Stephanie Roberto 20:41

Back to normal? Like COVID never happened.

Nick Goettke 20:46

Okay. And so that's what that's kind of what you imagined your life being like in a year.

Stephanie Roberto 20:51

Yes.

Nick Goettke 20:54

And knowing what you know now, what do you think individuals, communities and governments should keep in mind for the future? In case this were another pandemic were to happen again. Do you think there's any major changes? Or do you think, well,

Stephanie Roberto 21:15

How important that is for kids to be in school in person and how important social interaction is for people in their mental health.

Nick Goettke 21:29

As far as the health aspect of it, do you think this was if the another pandemic were to arise? Do you think our government has hit the nail on the head? Do you think they were too restrictive or not restrictive enough?

Stephanie Roberto 21:39
Too restrictive.

Nick Goettke 21:45
Do you think it was too restrictive this time around?

Stephanie Roberto 21:51
Yes.

Nick Goettke 21:54
All right. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your thoughts of the pandemic or this interview?

Stephanie Roberto 21:59
No.

Nick Goettke 22:04
Okay, Stephanie, I appreciate your time and we will end the interview now.