

Transcript of Interview with Jennifer Harris and Kevin Xin by Each Other

Interviewee/Interviewer: Jennifer Harris

Interviewee/Interviewer: Kevin Xin

Date: 09/22/2021

Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: Both of the participants in this interview serve as interviewer and interviewee. In it they discuss what it was like transitioning to the pandemic, how they coped and occupied themselves, and ultimately what they believe the future might be like.

Jennifer Harris 0:03

Okay, so let's get started. Do you consent to being interviewed for the COVID-19 archive project?

Kevin Xin 0:09

I do consent.

Jennifer Harris 0:11

Can you state the date and time?

Kevin Xin 0:13

Yeah. So the date is Wednesday, September 22nd. And it is nine o'clock right now.

Jennifer Harris 0:21

Perfect. So for my first question, where were you when the first stay at home orders were put in place.

Kevin Xin 0:29

So the first when I heard that the say home orders were in was that I was actually at home, I just gotten back from track practice. And I got like an all call from our school district. And they told us that we'd be starting with asynchronous school the next week.

Jennifer Harris 0:49

Wow. So that must have been a big shock for you guys. Right?

Kevin Xin 0:51

For sure. For sure. Yeah.

Jennifer Harris 0:53

Yeah, I can imagine that. Um, so how did your school immediately respond to this? Were they, did they go online right away? Or was it like you said, asynchronous.

Kevin Xin 1:03

Yeah, so um, we actually went completely asynchronous, like right away. So we, we had like a website, and teachers would record themselves teaching like a lecture. And then we would also get assigned homework online, and then submit everything, like all through online.

Jennifer Harris 1:24

Did you think that you responded well to online learning?

Kevin Xin 1:29

Definitely not as well as I did in person, because I wasn't able to focus as much.

Jennifer Harris 1:35

I can imagine it'd be hard, like, staring at a screen all day is not that great.

Kevin Xin 1:40

Definitely yeah.

Jennifer Harris 1:44

Do... were you able to see your friends or was everyone kind of like, staying in their own houses?

Kevin Xin 1:51

Um, so not as much at first because like, there are tight restrictions on like, going out. But later on, we kind of made plans to go out to play like basketball and to hang out. And we would just like, call, or just FaceTime to talk.

Jennifer Harris 2:09

That's really good. You said that you did sports, so were sports heavily affected by the stay at home orders?

Kevin Xin 2:18

Yeah, so I didn't do track my senior year because they required you to wear masks while you're running. So I kinda...

Jennifer Harris 2:26

Yeah, that must be hard.

Kevin Xin 2:27

Yeah.

Jennifer Harris 2:31

Did you find that you were more anxious during the pandemic, like you were scared to, you know, go out into stores, or just general anxiety?

Kevin Xin 2:42

Definitely a little bit. I was kind of anxious in that, like, I wasn't able to see my friends as much and go out. Like without, like [audio cuts out] or meeting people up. But yeah, it was a little hard at first.

Jennifer Harris 2:58

Yeah, I totally understand that. I mean, I thought it was like a little scary. I was even nervous to like, go to the grocery store, because I didn't really understand what was going on. Did you think that you were on your phone more during the whole stay at home and pandemic in general?

Kevin Xin 3:17

I think I was I phone like a good amount more, but I tried to balance it out with like other things, like going outside and exercising, but definitely like a decent amount more. Yeah.

Jennifer Harris 3:30

What were some of the ways that you coped with the kind of stress of not only having online school but just general having to wear the masks not really being able to go anywhere?

Kevin Xin 3:43

So I.. like two of the biggest things I used to cope were exercising and like physical activity. So like I would try to go outside every day for like a run or just to get fresh air. And we had like a gym in our basement, so I would use that as much as possible and I spent like a lot of the time down there during lockdown. So exercising and just like getting in shape were ways to keep my mind off like everything that was going on

Jennifer Harris 4:10

Yeah, it's kind of perfect you have that gym because I know, at least gyms by me, took months to reopen. And when they did open, it still was not full capacity.

Kevin Xin 4:19

Oh yeah, that's true. That's true.

Jennifer Harris 4:22

What would you say your daily routine is like?

Kevin Xin 4:27

So I'll just get up like a couple minutes before class started. Yeah, didn't really get breakfast, I attended class. Then I would like go out workout a little bit. And then sometimes, like hanging out with friends, and then chill, like watch sports at night.

Jennifer Harris 4:48

Sounds nice.

Kevin Xin 4:50

Yeah.

Jennifer Harris 4:52

So my, my last question is, was there anything positive for you that came out of the pandemic and the stay at home orders?

Kevin Xin 5:01

Yeah, so like one positive thing that I felt was that I was definitely able to spend more time with my family. Because my parents, like work late hours, but during the pandemic, they were able to work from home. And I kind of cherished that time that we got together to spend like more.

Jennifer Harris 5:22

Yeah, I totally get that. So that was my last question.

Kevin Xin 5:30

Okay. All right. So do you consent to being interviewed for the COVID-19 interview?

Jennifer Harris 5:42

Yes, I consent.

Kevin Xin 5:44

Alright, and are you able to state the date and the time?

Jennifer Harris 5:48

Yeah, it's Wednesday, September 22nd. And it's 9:10pm.

Kevin Xin 5:55

Alright. So the first question I have is, when did you first really hear about the Coronavirus and how did you react?

Jennifer Harris 6:06

I think the first time I heard about it was in my AP bio class. And we were talking about it, but we weren't really acting too serious about it. I actually remember me and my friends, being in a study hall, and joking about getting gas masks, because oh, wow, this is gonna get really bad. But it was all joking. We never really thought it was gonna, it was really going to come to us. And then when schools in China started closing, we still didn't believe that it was ever going to come here. We thought we're still gonna be here all year. It's gonna stop. And obviously we were very wrong.

Kevin Xin 6:40

Yeah, it seemed like a joke at first a little bit. So when you had options for going back to school, what were like the different choices that you had like, virtually or just going like hybrid?

Jennifer Harris 7:00

So for my senior year, we could either choose to stay virtually online all year. Or we can choose the hybrid model, which is basically we had two days online, two days in person, and then that same schedule would repeat. In the beginning of the year, a lot of us went fully online, because we were still a little

nervous about everything going on. But eventually, as we got more comfortable, as the cases start to go down, and people got vaccinated, we started going into the hybrid model. And then eventually, during our, I believe it was last month of senior year, all the seniors got to come in fully every single day. So that was nice.

Kevin Xin 7:40

That's nice. Yeah, for sure. So with like the restrictions that were in place, and everything like locked down, were you able to find time to do like new things or explore different activities you hadn't done before?

Jennifer Harris 7:58

Yeah, so I think one of the things that I really found myself liking was actually painting. Me and my friends would kind of meet up outside, spread apart, obviously, in the beginning. And we would go to these really pretty places outside, and we would just bring paper and some pencils, colored pencils, and kind of just draw what was around us and all of us are really, really bad artists. So what came out was really bad. But it was kind of fun to just be together and try to pretend like everything's normal.

Kevin Xin 8:28

Yeah of course. Yeah, with everything locked down, like not being able to go out, did you rely a lot more on like, online shopping or just getting stuff like, delivered to you?

Jennifer Harris 8:43

Yeah, I think I did develop a sort of online shopping addiction. Because it was, staying at home all day, it's hard to find the joy in little things. For some reason, putting those things in the Amazon cart just brought me a little bit of joy. And so that those kinds of things piled up, but I did find it also a necessity at times because stores around me were closed. So I kind of had to use things like Amazon to you know, get things I needed. I even got food sometimes delivered from Amazon, so that was good.

Kevin Xin 9:14

Oh, yeah, I definitely found myself in that same situation as well. Yeah. Um, so during the pandemic, did you work at all? And if you did, what was like your experience?

Jennifer Harris 9:27

Yeah, so the summer before coming to college, I did actually work as a camp counselor during the pandemic. And it was it was pretty difficult especially, I was with really young kids about they were probably five, six years old. And it was really difficult mainly getting them to keep their masks on. And also, what I found really hard was trying to explain to them what was going on, because a lot of them were really confused. And I didn't really have a good answer for them as to what was going on or why they couldn't be within six feet of their friends, or why we couldn't share toys, things like that made it pretty difficult.

Kevin Xin 10:06

Yeah, I'm sure it was hard to get them to actually understand what was going on. And how has like the pandemic affected your mental health?

Jennifer Harris 10:20

I think that it's definitely made me a little more anxious. Like when the, everything started happening in the beginning, I got really like scared to go to the stores because all we knew was there was this deadly disease. And when you got it, you were in hospital and on like a ventilator. So I think I did come out of it with some residual anxiety. I also think it lower. it in a way lowered my attention span, because I started using things like TikTok a lot more. So I now can really only focus on something for like, 30 seconds before I need to move on, which isn't good.

Kevin Xin 10:59

Yeah, I felt that as well. So like everything that was going on? Did you have anything that would bring you joy or like, keep your spirits up?

Jennifer Harris 11:13

Yeah, I think that staying in contact with my friends was really important. Just Facetiming them; we would drive to like empty parking lots and park our cars kind of in a circle, so that we were far away from each other, but we could still talk. And I think that having that connection was really what helped me through it because without it, I would have just been sitting at home watching Netflix all day, and that would have been really sad.

Kevin Xin 11:39

Definitely, definitely. Yeah. And what.... if life gets back to like, how it was before the pandemic, do you think you'll be able to adjust well, to that sort of new lifestyle?

Jennifer Harris 11:56

I really don't think I'll be able to just, even now, when people started being able to go indoors without masks, if they were vaccinated, I felt very, very uncomfortable. Like it wasn't natural and that it was something we shouldn't be doing. So I mean, I'm sure eventually I'll be able to adjust. But I think it's going to take a long time for me to be able to see someone handing me food without wearing masks. And I think honestly, it's turned the public into a bit of a germaphobe because it's made me realize, you know, there's lots of germs everywhere. So that's kind of not good, but I will adjust eventually.

Kevin Xin 12:34

Yeah, it was hard adjusting at first to wearing masks. And then to get back to without masks will definitely be hard as well. But then the last, with my last question, did you like have any sort of like a silver lining or do you have any positives that you experienced throughout the lockdown?

Jennifer Harris 12:58

I think I would agree with you in the fact that I think it did bring my family closer together because before the lockdown, we're kind of living separate lives in a way because we were going out to school and going out with friends or online or doing something. But then we all had to stay home, and we talked to each other. We spent time together. And I think it was a really nice way to bring my family closer together as you said it was for you.

Kevin Xin 13:25

Oh yeah, definitely. Definitely. All right. Thank you so much for participating.

Jennifer Harris 13:32

And thank you for participating

Kevin Xin 13:35

Of course.