

Transcript of Oral History Monologue by Carlotta Abascal

Interviewee: Carlotta Abascal

Interviewer: Self

Date: 05/23/2020

Location: Paso Robles, California

Abstract: In this monologue, Carlotta Abascal reflects on her experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. She discusses how it affected her day-to-day life, her community, and the plans she made before the pandemic began.

Carlotta Abascal 0:00

Today is May 23. My name is Carlotta Abascal. I am 16. I'm a junior at Paso Robles High School in Paso Robles, California. So my quarantine started with a fever and a dry cough. I went to the doctor, and they wouldn't test me for COVID-19. But they tested me for the flu, which I didn't have, which was no surprise to me and my family. But I did get better. I'm here. And as I was getting better, I watched a lot of TV, barely got out of my pajamas, took probably two showers. I felt terrible, depressed, and just low, unmotivated. And I just felt like, what is there to do? I started playing a lot of Sudoku. And I got really good at it. And eventually, I fully recovered. I started getting dressed and the- my school started doing distance learning. So every week I had about four or five assignments due on Friday, so I could figure out how to schedule my time in a productive way, which was really beneficial to me because I realized that my days didn't feel used or like worthy if I didn't do any work. So as I was doing more work, I felt better about myself, I made a commitment to getting dressed every day, with a full outfit, with accessories and jewelry and like cohesive color schemes. So I started to feel really good about myself. So because of COVID-19, I am unable to see my therapist, which proved pretty terrible for the first couple weeks of quarantine as I started regressing to old habits that I've worked to break, and was feeling very unmotivated and terrible and depressed and like I wasn't worth it. But as the days went on, I started to enhance my coping mechanisms. And I really thought of this time without consistent therapy as like a trial run for when I'm in college, and I have no money and can't afford to have a decent mental health. So I've been working to improve my habits on my own without external help. I have really learned that I need structure in my life to feel productive and to actually get anything done. If there's like a due date that's like a month ahead, I will not do it. Which is pretty true for like most teenagers, but without like a structured, like regimented, like probably weekly schedule, then nothing gets done, and I just feel terrible about myself. And I also figured out that my county is much more Republican than I had anticipated. When the stay at home order was initiated, and everyone was instructed to wear masks and stay out of businesses and keep a six- social distance of six feet apart, my family did that because we're pretty liberal, but it felt really weird, walking into businesses or grocery stores with a mask on and then getting stared down from across the store. Like feeling like you're the odd liberal out, like as if someone is judging you for being safe or trying to protect the community or yourself. So that felt pretty weird. Yeah, um, I got a lot of fun activities planned out for the summer, especially like summer seminar, summer sessions, like I was going to work as a camp counselor. But as all these programs have been cancelled, more and more online opportunities have been offered. So it's pretty exciting to see how those are going to play out. Even though it would be probably much more cool if I could go and do those things in person. But it's going to be interesting to see how different organizations are handling- integrating to online programs.

And it's been fun seeing how my little high school has decided to go along with it. I don't think anyone saw this coming. But the shakeup that it has caused has certainly proved interesting. So I don't think I see the status quo returning to exactly how it was.