

Transcription of Interview with Lauren Piasecki and Natalie Darquea by Each Other

Interviewee/Interviewer: Lauren Piasecki

Interviewer/Interviewer: Natalie Darquea

Date: 09/21/2021

Location (Interviewee/Interviewer):

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Abstract: Two people interview each other about their experience in the their last year of high school as the COVID-19 pandemic began and stay at home orders were issued in their respective areas.

Natalie Darquea 0:00

Hi, I'm Natalie. Okay, I'm interviewing Lauren Piasecki about her experience during the COVID19 pandemic. Lauren do give consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 archive project. And can you see the date and time?

Lauren Piasecki 0:12

Yes, I consent to being interviewed and the date is September 21, 2021 at 10:04am.

Natalie Darquea 0:19

Perfect. So I'm gonna start with our first question. Where were you when COVID hit and how did your location affect your experience?

Lauren Piasecki 0:26

So I live in the Hudson Valley, New York, and that's considered part of the zone for New York City. Since many people commute to work. However, the city was a hotspot during the pandemic. So when New York City had a lot of cases, and they had to shut down restaurants or other stores, we also had to keep ours shut. We had like mask mandates for a really long time. And we had really heavy school restrictions. I ended up taking my entire senior year of school remotely. And a lot of like other states were in person during this time.

Natalie Darquea 0:59

Fantastic. And what did you do during quarantine?

Lauren Piasecki 1:02

During quarantine, I really just watched a lot of movies and picked up different hobbies. I did a lot of reruns of Harry Potter, Star Wars, Hunger Games, Twilight.

But other than spending time on social media or watching TV, I went on a lot of walks with my family, just to get excited outside and not feel trapped.

We even got a new dog so we ended up like walking our dogs quite often. And eventually when like some of the restrictions lifted, I went on longer bike rides, since I couldn't play soccer anymore, and I was like feeling antsy.

But while I was in the house, I tried like embroidering hoodies, tie-dying t shirts, painting, playing my piano and guitar, cooking and even like baking, so it was a really odd mix of things.

Natalie Darquea 1:46

Wow, that's so cool. And how did remote learning changed for you at the start of the pandemic until now.

Lauren Piasecki 1:52

So at the start of the pandemic when we shut down in March of my junior year, I just thought I was going to be for two weeks, and they clean out the school. But I didn't step foot into my high school until the day I graduated. For the rest of my junior year, we worked asynchronously. So I'd wake up at varying times, like 8am, 1pm whenever I really wanted and just did my work then. It was nice at the start, like cause I didn't have to constantly wake up at 6am and like drive into school. But it became really tiring because working at home is pretty distracting. And then when my senior year started, we did synchronous Zoom calls at set times. And I would also get distracted there because you could just turn off your camera, mute yourself and just watch like videos or go back to bed.

Natalie Darquea 2:39

Were there any benefits or good things that come out of being in quarantine?

Lauren Piasecki 2:44

Yeah, definitely. I don't think quarantine is- was entirely bad. I got to stay home with my family a lot more frequently since we all have really busy lives. Um, it was pretty great because I was going to college in about a year, so I got to see them much more often. Like we would bake cakes or I go on walks with my mom. And we'd have like family board game nights. Um, I also picked up a lot of new hobbies from quarantine, and I spent more time on like self care. I found comfort in being like alone, and I didn't have to constantly surround myself with my friends. And spending that time out of high school like sorted by the eyes of others, it really gave me an opportunity to find who I was. I would like cut my- I cut my hair without the fear that it would look bad. And I tried like wearing like different clothes and different styles. And I just did stuff for me rather than others.

Natalie Darquea 3:37

And so how did you find connection with people during COVID?

Lauren Piasecki 3:41

Um, social media and FaceTime were a big help. While quarantine like physically separated me like, I felt like I actually became closer through talking to them because I wasn't just eating food or going somewhere to hang out; we actually had to talk and like, find things out about each other. And then I also found just some comfort in knowing that my friends would reach out. Like even when I wasn't there with them in person because like I said, I was going to college in about a year so that was my main concern.

Natalie Darquea 4:13

And then how do you think the pandemic will change our futures?

Lauren Piasecki 4:17

The pandemic definitely pushed us into a more remote world. It set up improved new technologies for higher education such as Google Classroom, Canvas or Zoom. My mom still works remotely even since shutdown, because they set up like new systems for co workers to easily meet over calls, and like their websites were re-imaged. And then also the way that sickness is viewed. I believe that changed because people are used to wearing masks now is no longer looked at as strange. So if a person has a cough, I think they're more readily to put on a mask.

Natalie Darquea 4:51

Perfect. Thank you so much, Lauren.

Lauren Piasecki 4:54

Okay, so now um, I'll be interviewing Natalie Darquea on her experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, do you consent to being interviewed? And if so, what is the date and time?

Natalie Darquea 5:07

I do consent, and it is September 21, at 2021 at 10:22am.

Lauren Piasecki 5:15

Okay, great. So where were you when COVID hit, and how did your location affect your experience?

Natalie Darquea 5:21

So when COVID hit, I was at home in Los Angeles, California. I think being in such a big city really shaped my experience in both positive and negative ways. In terms of drawbacks, first of all, it's such a population dense area. So it was scary in the sense that like, as we've talked about in class, there's a lot more spread. Another drawback was that when the lockdown order hit, everyone was understandably so freaked out and started stockpiling supplies. And so when a large study does that, there's just complete chaos everywhere. I also feel very lucky because the fact that I live in a large city, there was a lot more supplies available. And this deviates a little bit from how my location affected me when recovered when COVID first hit, but it definitely influenced a lot for what happened to the experience as a whole because I live in a large, mainly liberal city, there was a lot of education on how to stop the spread and easier access to essential things like COVID tests. If I had lived in a small rural town, I can only imagine how different my experience would have been. I also think that living in a larger city made the effects of COVID very pronounced. So one example is that pre-COVID there was an insane amount of traffic all the time, but during quarantine, there were maybe three cars on the road.

Lauren Piasecki 6:31

Great. So what did you do during quarantine? Did you like pick up any hobbies spend more time outside?

Natalie Darquea 6:36

In the beginning, I spent a lot of my time on social media and Netflix. Social media was so important because we went from being so social and being to see a being able to see friends every day at school to being extremely isolated, which was not super great for my mental health. So, social media really helped me keep in contact with everyone and not feel so alone. And then of course, Netflix, I had never binged more series in my life than in quarantine, but that got a little old after a while. So I started getting into a lot of new hobbies. I started baking a lot, reading. I tried painting and doing crafts, but I'm just not that artistic, so I didn't go super well. But it was really nice to have time to figure out more of my interests. And I also started going on a lot of walks with my dogs to get out of the house and explored my neighborhood a lot more. Um, I also started doing like online workout classes because it- staying inside all the time was driving me a little crazy.

Lauren Piasecki 7:24

Cool. So how did remote learning change for you at the start a pandemic until now?

Natalie Darquea 7:29

At first it was a really rough adjustment especially- especially because we had to go online two thirds the way through the junior year, my junior year when COVID first hit; our teachers didn't really know how to run class online. So in high school, a lot of my classes were discussion based, which was really difficult online when breakout rooms were hard to navigate for our teachers when they are just kind of thrown into it. We also had a lot of projects going on in my junior year that were started in person and needed to be finished in person, too. So that was disrupted a lot. But as my senior year started, they got a lot easier because they- our teachers had the summer to adjust and repair new learning plans, it was a lot smoother. There was obviously still a lot of days with tech difficulties. But I think the hardest part of online learning was that period when we were forced to go online without any preparation. Um, I also think my learning style changed a lot in general during the pandemic; being online, I had to become a lot more independent, and I got to manage my schedule a lot more. And I actually really liked this change even if like understanding the concepts was a little harder, especially in classes like calculus, it was a little more difficult to understand the topics, but I know my teachers worked really hard to try and compensate for that.

Lauren Piasecki 8:35

Cool, and then were there any benefits or good things that came out of being quarantined?

Natalie Darquea 8:39

One of the best things that come out of quarantine was just the free time to explore new hobbies and activities in general. Pre-COVID, I didn't really have a lot of time to stay home and relax and actually do activities I enjoy like baking or crafts. But during

quarantine, there was so much time at home that I had a lot of time to do these activities and also practice self care, which is so important when you feel kind of isolated. I also learned how to manage my time a lot more effectively. With online learning, there was just so much more freedom, time wise, and so that can really get away from you quickly. So learning how to schedule my time and actually stick to it was a skill I got to work on a lot. I also spent a lot more time with my family and bonded with them more. There were definitely rough patches because we were so sick of each other, but it brought us much closer together. Pre- COVID, we were always so busy that like even having dinner together on weeknights wasn't a regular thing. But kind of being trapped in a house really brings you closer together.

Lauren Piasecki 9:34

And then how did you find connection with people during COVID?

Natalie Darquea 9:37

Social media was a really good tool for staying connected. Instagram and Snapchat. A lot of my friends that I kind of share snapshots of our lives with each other and talk. There were also some new tech updates like Netflix party, so my friends and I would watch movies together and talk about that. And obviously FaceTime was so helpful because you can have actual conversations and kind of face-to-face talk. Also, I ride horses and so my barn was open during COVID. Obviously, they had a lot of measures and like scheduled times, but we couldn't like leave our horses to stay in their stalls all day. So that gave me a good amount of time to get out of the house and see people and kind of connect even if it was really socially distanced.

Um, I think the biggest thing is just making sure to reach out and check in with friends regularly because sometimes you get so caught up in life that you don't realize how isolated you are. I also became a lot closer with my friends because we all struggled so much together. And like Lauren said to we came close to me because we had a lot more like deep conversations.

Lauren Piasecki 10:33

Great. And then lastly, how do you think the pandemic will change our futures?

Natalie Darquea 10:37

I think it changed a lot in both my personal future and obviously the world around us. In terms of me, I'm worried about how COVID will change my co-op opportunities and job opportunities in general. I also think it changed me and my outlook on life. I can entertain myself so much easier now and don't get as much anxiety from being alone, which I think is a really good skill. Obviously changed the world around us so much; our culture and habits changed in ways like being more hygienic to just normalizing remote jobs. Also, the technology updates have been drastic from vaccine to technology to more contact payment- contactless payment options. The world has changed so much and will continue to do so. I think it's really hard to say what exactly will change in the future because there are so many small things along with giant things like politics and the economy. Yeah.