

Transcript of Interview with Jack Chen and Megan Murchie by Each Other

Interviewee/Interviewer: Jack Chen

Interviewee/Interviewer: Megan Murchie

Date: 09/15/2021

Location:

Abstract: This interview tells the story of two individuals experiences through COVID-19.

Jack Chen 0:00

Hello, I'm Jack, Jack Chen. Hello, please introduce yourself.

Megan Murchie 0:05

Hi, I'm Megan Murchie. And I consent to the interview on September 15 at 3:13pm.

Jack Chen 0:14

Okay, cool, let's start it. So we're gonna just talk about the, around the COVID-19, your response. So the first question, had you heard of COVID-19 before the stay at home order? What was- what was the response? Were you worried?

Megan Murchie 0:30

So I had heard of COVID-19 before the stay at home orders. And honestly, I thought it was no big deal because that's what everyone was saying. Even my cousin, who was in med school at the time, was saying it was nothing to worry about. So, no, I wasn't worried. I thought it was going to be like an outbreak, maybe an epidemic, but definitely not a pandemic. And I really never thought it would personally impact me.

Jack Chen 0:55

Okay, that's cool. So let's go to the next question. So where were you, I'm curious, where were you when various stay at home orders were actually put in place?

Megan Murchie 1:06

So in my town, um, they were put in place a little bit before the country did, because there was an uptick in cases due to a conference in Boston. So it was actually on my birthday. I was Facetimeing my friend, and we were studying for this really big Spanish test we had the next day. And honestly, when my mom texted me that, that [unintelligible] we weren't going to school next week, I was super relieved because I was so stressed about that Spanish test. Because like I said, before, I wasn't- I thought this was a no big deal thing, like, this is something that's just gonna pass through us. But it didn't, obviously.

Jack Chen 1:44

Okay, so it really did impact your life. So next question is actually about like, how did the COVID-19 actually influence your social life, and in what way did the pandemic change you?

Megan Murchie 1:57

So I feel like it impacted my social life kind of, almost positively because it gave me way more time to talk to my friends because there literally was nothing else to do except talk to each other. I mean, yes, it was pretty disappointing and sad that we didn't get to see each other in person. But I feel like my friend group handled it in the best way possible. And I also feel like, the pandemic made me a little bit more in tune with myself because before, everything was just like, go, go, go like, school, sports, clubs, homework, but I didn't have an like, time to just be with myself because I always had this and that that was due the next day. So just having an [unintelligible] to reflect and look inwards on myself was really nice.

Jack Chen 2:46

Cool. So let's move on to the next question. So how did, how did your school handle the, actually handle the pandemic? Did it go fully remote, hybrid? How did it impact your education?

Megan Murchie 3:03

So my school canceled for a week, thinking we would just go back, and then that extended for two more weeks. And then finally, we had this optional school period, where it was just a bunch of assignments that were not really graded but were kind of encouraged. And then finally, we had online school implemented, which was really just a regular day of school but online on Zoom. And then as I went into my senior year, which was last year, I had hybrid school. So I did one day completely in person, and then the next day, it was totally asynchronous tasks. So it's not really, I wasn't on Zoom, but it was one day on one day off, really. And then at the end of that year, I transitioned to full time in school with that.

Jack Chen 3:51

Well, that's a lot of changes for your school. So what were you and your family actually reactions to the masked mandates?

Megan Murchie 4:01

Um, I feel like my family and I weren't super fazed by the mask mandate, even though like, it's obviously not very common in America to wear a mask. I just felt like it was something that was necessary and had to be done. So it didn't really like put me off too much. So it was super encouraged in my household. It wasn't really a negative thing. It was a little scary at first. Like, "Oh, this is a real thing. Like I have to do this." But like, eventually it became part of my routine, and I didn't think anything of it.

Jack Chen 4:33

Yeah, everybody was scared at that first time. So how- how did you pass the time with your stay at home orders? Were you [unintelligible] Did you feel frustrated?

Megan Murchie 4:47

Yeah, so I definitely do feel a little frustrated because at first I did spend most of my time just watching TV and talking with my friends and was super bored and felt frustrated that I like, couldn't leave my house, couldn't do the things I wanted to. But once I realized this was a long term thing, I really hunkered down and started to work on my Gold Award. And for those who don't know, the Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouts. And basically, it's like an 80 hour project that impacts the community. And for mine, I created a website that encourages

volunteering in my community. So basically, throughout the entire pandemic, I was making that website and just really working on that to distract myself from the current reality.

Jack Chen 5:29

Wow, that was actually very interesting. So do the pandemic impact your choice of the university?

Megan Murchie 5:38

I would say that it did impact my choice of university. When I was originally applying to colleges, I was super unsure of what I wanted. I didn't know if I wanted to stay close, go far away. And then when the pandemic hit, ultimately, the decision was made that I would be staying close. So in that regard, I feel like it really did impact my decision because it really limited my options, from, from the whole entire country, to just New England. I'm originally from Massachusetts. So in that kind of sense, it did impact my decision.

Jack Chen 6:14

Okay. Okay, so next question, what was your initial reaction during the beginning of the pandemic and still in the present day?

Megan Murchie 6:26

Um, my initial reaction to the pandemic was honestly a little bit of shock. I cannot, like wrap my head around it. I kept thinking it would end in a week or two. And now look at us a year and a half later, and we're still wearing masks. But now I would say that I'm at acceptance about the pandemic, and I want to do my part to quicken the conclusion of it, and really get to a time where we're all healthy and you can go outside and it feel safe for everybody,

Jack Chen 6:56

Yeah, I can tell you they, they really impacted everybody's lives. So Megan, thank you for this interview.

Megan Murchie 7:06

You're welcome. I'm Megan, can you please introduce yourself, Jack?

Jack Chen 7:09

Hello, I'm Jack Chen, and I consent, consent you to do this interview on September 15, 3:21.

Megan Murchie 7:22

Thank you, and I guess we'll just jump right into the interview. Where were you when this pandemic started? And how did that impact contact with your family?

Jack Chen 7:32

So first, I think I would like to introduce, like introduce my- so I'm an international student from China. So, but I came here for high school. So I spent three of- three years of high school in Maryland. So right before spring break, our school ordered us online studying, so I stayed at home with my host parents, as both of my parents are staying in China. So people are very

worried. So I can tell my host parents too, they are afraid that delivery, delivery packages might spread germs, or Coronavirus.

Megan Murchie 8:11

And did you feel anxious knowing that your family was living in China at the time?

Jack Chen 8:16

Yes, I was definitely very worried. Both my parents- because we know that the virus originally started in Wuhan, China, so it was very serious. And then also, because at one point this, at, at the start of the pandemic or the outbreak, former president, President Trump, banned traveling from China and to China, according to an article from New York Times, maybe around like February 10, 2020. So I was very worried about my parents, and my parents were also worried about me.

Megan Murchie 8:50

Yeah. And did you quarantine with your parent, your host parents the whole time? And if you did, how did that make you feel?

Jack Chen 8:59

So yes, I did quarantine with my host parents. I feel fine, but I was a little worried. But thankfully, my host parents were very nice. They always treated me just like my parents. So I, so I was on Zoom, I was doing a Zoom call with my parents every day. So just to ask them how they felt and to say that I'm fine. So I feel fine but a little worried.

Megan Murchie 9:32

And did you ever go back to China after the pandemic started?

Jack Chen 9:37

No, I haven't gone back to China since the pandemic started because the quarantine time is very long that I think I should just, because of the graduation of high school, I think I should just stay in the United States and prepare for college life, and maybe after maybe all those chaotic like, pandemic ended, I might go back.

Megan Murchie 10:00

Well, I hope, I hope you get to go back some time.

Jack Chen 10:04

Yeah.

Megan Murchie 10:04

Did the pandemic impact your choice of university at all?

Jack Chen 10:08

I would like say yes, or sort of, but I believe that I will , I will still choose schools around Boston because I think that's such a nice area. But one thing it will change because the pandemic is that, if it's not pandemic, I will choose to go, go abroad for a new program. So yeah.

Megan Murchie 10:30

Yeah, I do agree with you on that one. Do you feel different from when the pandemic first started to today? And do you think it has changed you fundamentally?

Jack Chen 10:40

I definitely think I feel a lot different, especially after I got vaccine, I got a lot relief. Because I was very worried before the vaccine came out. As COVID-19 continues surge to a point, I remember that everyday, there were like, a lot of like infections everyday in the U.S. So my parents were very worried before the vaccine. So it changed the way many people live. So while I live and fighting against COVID-19, I always sanitize and clean myself, like many others. So it really gives me a sense that how doctors and lab researchers would do in their daily lives. So yeah.

Megan Murchie 11:25

And what were your overall feelings about the responses from both China and the United States?

Jack Chen 11:31

So I will say that I know more about the influence of cultures play on the response of the pandemic. So like, because the responses are very different, many were shocked the way China did at first, initially, because the government completely shut down the, the- where the virus was originated in China. So I had online- funny thing is I actually had an online classes with my teacher from Ohio; he told me during the lockdown, that he has not been to the office for two months. So it was very crazy. So it was probably a bold move in the eyes of people in Western countries. So comparing, so while in America, the response is more gentler comparing to what China had. Yeah.

Megan Murchie 12:21

Yeah. And is there anything that you would have preferred they done differently?

Jack Chen 12:26

So I would say that because I noticed that CDC actually changed its procedure like mask mandates twice or several times. So the first CDC indicated that wearing masks do not really protect from COVID-19. And then it announced that wearing masks actually do protect people from the pandemic. So actually what I would like to see is improve the CDC maybe as a former health organization to make, should make it more organized. So in this way, it will be- it will not confuse the citizen to effectively prevent the surging affections.

Megan Murchie 13:03

Yeah. And then finally, was anything positive that came out of the pandemic for you personally?

Jack Chen 13:10

I've definitely seen it did have some positive. So technically, I will have more, will have more online classes. Doing it allows me to have, to have more time to study and to study more organized. I tend to have more time to study as I did not really spend time on commuting, and certainly other positive things. I will like to say that I do Latin dances. So during the pandemic, I

really did a lot of online Latin dances. So even though I think I didn't really get to have classes in person or dance with a partner, I stressed the dancing techniques. It also helped me to relax. Yeah. So that's it.

Megan Murchie 13:51

That sounds interesting. Thank you.

Jack Chen 13:55

Thank you.