

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Ryan Brueckner and Lauren Leonard

Interviewee: Ryan Brueckner/Lauren Leonard

Interviewer: Lauren Leonard/ Ryan Brueckner

Date: September 20, 2021

Location: Stoughton, Massachusetts

Abstract: Both of the participants in this interview take turns being the interviewer/interviewee. In it, they both discuss how they adjusted to the pandemic, how their social lives and mental health were affected, and some of the positives to come from it.

Lauren Leonard 0:00

All right, this is the COVID archive project. I'm Lauren Leonard.

Ryan Brueckner 0:03

I'm Ryan Brueckner.

Lauren Leonard 0:04

It's September 20 2021 at 2:15pm. I, you have my consent to put this on the COVID-19. Archive?

Ryan Brueckner 0:14

You have my consent.

Lauren Leonard 0:15

Okay. How did the pandemic first impact you?

Ryan Brueckner 0:20

When the pandemic first started, we were on school. And I was excited, because I thought we weren't gonna be in school, which happened. And I only thought we weren't going to school for a week or so. And I didn't realize how fast a pandemic could spread. And so when a week turned to a month, which turned into two years, I was really, I didn't realize like, the extent of like, what effect a pandemic can do to society, because I've ever been in one before. How about you? How did the pandemic first impact you?

Lauren Leonard 0:55

I kind of on the opposite side, I was really scared because I didn't know exactly what a pandemic entailed. Like, I thought it was just gonna sweep through the community and like, everyone was gonna get sick. I was also excited to have that time off of school, but it was more nervousness for me because I was just kind of paranoid about the disease itself and its effects. What was the biggest loss for you in terms of the pandemic?

Ryan Brueckner 1:21

Biggest loss for me, I would say would probably, like socially, like hanging out with my friends, whether in school or out of school, that's a lot of businesses and stores close, I couldn't hang out with them anywhere in school closed, so I didn't see them as often that really affected me. What about you? What was the biggest loss for you in terms of the pandemic?

Lauren Leonard 1:43

For me, it was also the social aspect, I found it was tough to still socialize with friends, just keeping on touch only online was really hard for me. And I lost out on sports seasons and clubs. So I think, just overall, the social aspect was the biggest loss for me. What was the biggest gain for you in terms of the pandemic?

Ryan Brueckner 2:05

The biggest gain? There were many, but I would say all the time that I had on my hands, I got to learn new skills, and really focus on myself, like over to the pandemic and learn how to solve a Rubik's Cube, which is pretty cool. So yeah, sir, what was your biggest gain?

Lauren Leonard 2:24

I think it helped me a lot with time management, when you have that much time to kind of do whatever you want. You have to learn how to allot time to different things. And I think I got pretty good at knowing how much time to spend on which activities. Alright, how did the pandemic affect your mental health?

Ryan Brueckner 2:45

So mental health. So again, there wasn't much to do. So I had to find ways to keep me active TV, doing stuff, keep my mind active, or physically active. So I try to like set up goals every day, like, go on and wrong, or just exercise to like, keep me active. How did the pandemic affect your mental health?

Lauren Leonard 3:13

I wouldn't say it was too poorly. But I think I'm a very social person. So it was tough for me to adjust from going to constant... from constant social socialization, to very minimal or simply only with my family. Like you said, I had to find other ways to kind of use an outlet for mental health, whether it be like do a puzzle, or go for a run that kind of thing. What got you through the pandemic,

Ryan Brueckner 3:41

what got me.... I feel like my family, and my pets, because I was home all the time. It was good, it was nice, it's good connection. Got to spend more time with them, and really strengthen our bond as a family. And that was very important to me. What got you through the pandemic?

Lauren Leonard 4:04

Honestly, I'm not really sure it wasn't like there was one thing that was keeping me going, but I don't think there was anything that was really holding me back either. Like I think just taking

things one day at a time and not checking the news constantly, kind of just focusing on where we were at now not worrying about what the next stage was or like how many new cases there were. What did you learn about yourself during the pandemic,

Ryan Brueckner 4:28

About myself, I learned that I am a more social person who I thought I was originally like before, sometimes I would be more reserved with people because I had like a friend group. And we were just hanging out together all the time. But after the pandemic, I just wanted to meet new people. I just became really social and just try to make new friends. What did you learn about yourself during the pandemic,

Lauren Leonard 4:58

Okay, so during the pandemic I had like a lot of independent time, so I had more time to discover what I was truly interested in. I started an anti-suicide campaign, just something I've always been passionate about, but I didn't realize like, they could turn it into something else. So I guess like, my dedication to things I'm passionate about was one thing I learned about myself. How did your family handle the pandemic?

Ryan Brueckner 5:26

Like I said, they handled it pretty well. I mean, the transition to working from home was smoother than I expected. And we got to, like, hang out with each other a lot more. And like I said, before, it really strengthened our family bond. What about you how has your family handled the pandemic?

Lauren Leonard 5:47

So we started doing, oddly enough, we were spending more time together, but we started doing more mandated like family game nights or family movie nights. And it was kind of something that would break up the time not necessarily to give us something to do, or also give us something to do. Both my parents had already worked primarily from home before that. So it wasn't a huge adjustment. But it was just the sheer amount of time in home that like, kind of stressed us all out, but did bring us closer together. How do you feel that your community school or local government had handled the pandemic?

Ryan Brueckner 6:24

For my school? I thought they handled it pretty well. I mean, the first half of the year were the pandemic first hit, I thought they had they really struggled in trying to convert people to online school, because not many people like computers. But the next year, they got the school was funded, and got all the kids computers. So I thought that was a great transition to online learning, and making sure that everyone has access to the internet. For my community, I would say they did not handle the pandemic well, originally, like, originally because many of the grocery stores were having shortages on stuff like toilet paper, or water. And I felt like that was really like it hurt the community. economically and I just didn't think they handled the situation very well, because I think that they were worried of what a pandemic meant for their society. How do you feel that your community, school, or local government handled the pandemic?

Lauren Leonard 7:38

I feel like my school was pretty quick to implement online learning that was kind of mandatory, but it was only pass/fail. So it wasn't super stressful. And my community was really quick to put in stay at home orders or mask mandates and all these different things. I feel like both my school, community, and local government handled it pretty well and kind of kept things under wraps. All right. That's all thank you.

Ryan Brueckner 8:05

Thank you.