

Interviewee: Foster, Jeff

Interviewer: Hathorn, Elizabeth

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Timestamp: 1715

Elizabeth Hathorn 0:02

Today I'm here with Jeff Foster. It is 5:15 pm on May 3rd, 2021, um, how has your day going today Foster?

Jeff Foster 0:13

Well, my day is going great. Uh I went to online classes this morning and I did a couple homeworks this afternoon, so I'm on schedule.

University of Zoom treating you well?

Yeah, University of Zoom is uh treating me well.

Elizabeth Hathorn 0:27

Um alright.

Jeff Foster 0:29

It's fantastic.

Elizabeth Hathorn 0:31

Um, so I just want to let you know that you do not have to disclose any private details if you aren't comfortable sharing them. And also, please be aware of any HIPAA information you may be speaking on if you're talking about somebody else's health. Um, you can just be general and sort of unspecific in, like, who the person is to you, um, but if uh the conversation seems to be going in that direction, I will pause the audio recording.

Um.

Jeff Foster 1:03

I understand.

Elizabeth Hathorn 1:04

Alright, cool.

Um, so, flashback, um, imagine it is January 2020. Uh. What was your 2020 supposed to look like?

Jeff Foster 1:18

Well, my 2020 was supposed to look like uh me living in the high rise building, uh, just north of San Francisco State University. Uh. That's for both spring and fall. And during the summer, I was supposed to go to Kentucky for some uh well, since I'm in like the military, uh I was supposed to go there for like uh additional training. And that was supposed to be what my 2020 is supposed to be like.

Elizabeth Hathorn 1:55

Yeah. Um, and then, obviously COVID interrupted everybody's lives. Um what, what do you like wind up doing instead? Like, what was your the rest of 2020 like?

Jeff Foster 2:11

Well, uh the whole pandemic for me started around March, mid March, during spring break. And at that time, uh me and a couple of friends were planning to go on a cruise. Uh this was spring break. Uh when the pandemic hit, uh and everything was shut down, um that whole thing got canceled and a couple days later, I got a letter, uh I got an email from the university saying that

since we have this uh virus going around, uh it would be better if everybody uh returned home for a little bit and everything will be moved back online. So what I ended up doing was that I ended up packing my bags, packing my school supplies, my computer, packed it up in my car, and then I moved back to my parents, which is an hour say an hour 45 minutes away in Stockton, California. And I never, I thought for a while it was going to be just for a month or so, uh but that never happened and it lasted for what seemed like a year and a half now.

Elizabeth Hathorn 3:34

Yeah, I remember, I remember you guys wanting to go on the cruise. Did you ever like, did you guys like get your money back for that or was it just like a uh kind of credit toward a future cruise?

Jeff Foster 3:44

Uh it was credited for a future cruise. So one of our, one of our friends just have a couple hundred dollars worth of credit from the cruise line.

Elizabeth Hathorn 3:56

Um alright. Yeah, good 'ol Stockton. Um, so you live in Stockton, I live in Stockton. Um, but I think last year after the pandemic started when we moved back, um, we actually came back from San Francisco on the same day. Um but I think I think you were in Stockton a lot more than I was because I was working in Sacramento, so I was staying there um pretty much all the time. So how, how differently did Stockton handle like being shut down um, having everything having COVID restrictions. Um. How was that? Like when you came back?

I think at first in my opinion, it was a bit um relaxed than the rest of everything else because Stockton and San Francisco are completely different. Um Stockton is a lot smaller. It's a big city, but it's small to San Francisco, so there's less people. And I felt like during the beginning, the uh pandemic, uh everything was still it was a little bit relaxed, more relaxed as compared to other cities. But then as the as the years went by, and the Central Valley, San Joaquin Valley um really got infected by the virus, uh that's when restriction that's when uh the county really restricted everything, closed everything down. So at first, it was, my opinion, it was a bit relax than other cities and now, since it's really affected by it, it became really restricted.

Do you think that because people kind of like, I think at the beginning, people really like dismissed COVID, they were kind of comparing it to like the flu saying like, oh, well, um you know, people get the flu and some people die from it and it was, it was kind of being thought of

as like, not really a big deal. Um do you think that kind of had something to do with like, the lesser like restrictions?

Jeff Foster 6:25

I think, I think in the beginning, uh people were taking it really seriously. Because uh, because they thought, this is just going to be for a little bit, and then everything will just go back to normal. I remember, when people last year were counting down like this is week one, day one of quarantine, day two of quarantine day three. And then it's like day 45. And then eventually, people stopped counting and just sort of accepted it. So I think in the beginning, it was relaxed, because people were taking it more seriously um versus now where people are fed up with it. So now they're not really taking it seriously anymore. They're really coming up with excuses as to why uh we should like, open up open everything back up again.

Elizabeth Hathorn 7:19

Yeah, I feel like people are, like tired of restrictions at this point. Um, so what what were your thoughts on COVID-19 like, in March of last year?

Jeff Foster 7:33

Hm, I thought it was, hm, oh yeah I took it seriously but I was a little bit um nervous because I didn't know how serious this was how serious it was going to be. Uh it really didn't uh took hold uh on me until like, around May, when I was still living at home and everything was just starting to um close down because the restrictions. Uh in the beginning, I remember going to a store and they were like, people were hoarding toilet paper, they were hoarding, like um, canned foods uh and I was like, you know, this is just gonna blow away. People are like overreacting to this as always, so I was like, I didn't really thought about in the beginning, I thought it was gonna be fine, you know. Uh back then there was only like, 15 cases, 20 cases of COVID and there was like five in in California altogether. Uh I was like, we're gonna be fine. We're gonna be okay. We're not gonna get infected. Those people are in the hospital already. Uh they're not going to get to us. And then when I moved back in, that's when the COVID virus really spread all across the United States and those around me.

Elizabeth Hathorn 9:13

Yeah. Did you uh, did you ever hoard toilet paper?

Jeff Foster 9:18

Well, yeah, I started hoarding toilet paper when I started to run out of toilet paper because everybody else was like taking it. So I I I I did everything I can. I even called my brother in Fairfield and asked him if he had any toilet paper. Uh uh yeah.

Elizabeth Hathorn 9:39

I remember I don't know. I don't know if you ever went to Costco um like during that whole part, but like you would go in Costco and there'd be like a separate line. Kind of like on that like uh kind of on the outside of like the inside of the store. And that line would Just before like water bottles and toilet paper.

Jeff Foster 10:03

I remember, I remember going to a Walmart here and seeing like uh the they deployed barricade one section of the store and there was like one employee uh who was handing out toilet paper. They were like, uh well, only two per customer and they were really uh trying and make sure everybody gets only two.

Elizabeth Hathorn 10:31

Desperate times. I think you even compared it to uh what was it, like, Y2K? Was that what you compared it to?

Jeff Foster 10:44

Hm, no, I mean.

Elizabeth Hathorn 10:49

In terms of like hoarding.

Jeff Foster 10:50

People were hoarding toilet paper, but I think it wasn't, uh, it wasn't as bad because it was a a virus that was completely made up whereas this was actually a real virus. Like, people were saying people were very dismissive about it. They said, oh, nothing's going to happen. In in the end, Y2K never really happened because, because it wasn't, it wasn't real. Whereas COVID, um people were, the fact that there was a virus there was an actual virus being uh told in news uh I

think it made it a lot more real for a lot of people. So I think uh I think COVID was a lot more worse than Y2K.

Elizabeth Hathorn 10:51

Yeah, uh um, have your thoughts about uh COVID changed from March of last year to today? In any way?

Jeff Foster 11:50

Like the cases?

Elizabeth Hathorn 11:52

Um, yeah, maybe just like your um like day to day activities, like were you more careful then, less careful now, or vice versa, things like that.

Jeff Foster 12:08

I was more careful then than I am now because uh I remember the CDC coming out like a week, two weeks ago, saying that it's less likely for somebody to get COVID uh by touching any surfaces. And back then, I mean, I wasn't wiping down any of my produce or anything like that, but I was being extremely careful about uh when whenever I go out to the grocery store, pick up some stuff, um I would often um use alcohol to wipe to wipe down my hands. Uh but nowadays, I was like um, we're learning more about this virus. Um we understand a little bit more, so now I'm like, a little bit more relaxed than I was last year.

Elizabeth Hathorn 12:58

I think my mom was one of the ones that was like, wiping down the produce and the bags that had like, chips or like anything that came from the grocery store. She wiped down.

Jeff Foster 13:15

I wiped down my car's steering wheel every time I came in. I used to have like uh, alcohol swab in my car, wipe down my hands after I got back and wipe down my steering wheel that way it doesn't like uh. Yeah, that way kills it.

Elizabeth Hathorn 13:36

Yeah. Um all right. So um you are, you're actually um an active duty US soldier who's doing the Green to Gold program, um where you left kind of in the middle of your contract to finish the last two years of your bachelor's degree. Um and then after the end of this current semester, you will actually be returning to the Army as a lieutenant. Congrats, by the way. Um. How do you think COVID-19 would have affected your time as an active duty soldier?

Jeff Foster 14:23

Hm. I think it'll be interesting because uh there's very limited stuff we can do at home you know. If I was back in the regular Army, uh we had to be we had to do all kinds of stuff like uh uh check equipment, train, and you can't do any of that online.

Elizabeth Hathorn 14:52

Right.

Jeff Foster 14:52

So how we will affect it. I think it would have made us less, like it would, it would have stretched everything because we, we will end up having to be so careful about everything. I was saying it's like, we will had to like, stretch out our training, because we would have to create, like um, like we would have to train less people at the same time. So if we want to train our troops, it would have taken it taken us a lot longer versus without COVID where we can train them at the same time.

Elizabeth Hathorn 15:36

Right.

Jeff Foster 15:37

So it would it would have slowed down our training um considerably.

Elizabeth Hathorn 15:44

Yeah, I feel like it's, I mean, all jobs are, you know, you have trainings that you have to you when it gets difficult. Like, I know, my unit, they're getting ready to deploy in July and we spent, in the Reserves, we spent almost a year doing um virtual drills. Um so we give like, PowerPoint

presentations, um like lectures, sort of, and it's kind of hard to get like, hands on training. And it definitely affected like our unit's readiness for the deployment. And it it really set them back. Um do you have any concerns about the effects of COVID-19 when you return to the military?

Jeff Foster 16:40

Yes. Um I think like uh, mostly um health concerns, because I keep hearing study after study that there are some after effects that people still suffer uh for, for uh when they contracted the virus, and I don't want to uh like get those. I don't want it to affect my long term health. And I'm pretty sure everybody, um I'm pretty sure everybody don't want that either.

Elizabeth Hathorn 17:13

No.

Jeff Foster 17:14

So that's like, the one major thing I don't want is like uh to to contract the virus and suffer some kind of long term health problem.

Elizabeth Hathorn 17:28

Yeah, it's always it's always hard. Um, do you have any concerns about the economy in general? People losing their jobs and not being able to buy things that are helping small businesses, um, you know, a couple of my small business restaurants in Stockton close and I was sad.

Jeff Foster 17:55

I think nowadays, I'm a little bit more optimistic than that was like last November when uh cases were really high. Nowadays, uh since cases are going down because of the vaccine, um I'm a little bit more optimistic now that everything will go back to normal that people uh will be able to open up their businesses again, um uh revitalize the economy, and just, you know, that have to close their business for good, because I know, there's a couple of different businesses uh in Stockton that I don't want to see go away. Mostly like restaurants and stuff like that.

Elizabeth Hathorn 18:29

Island Gourmet?



Jeff Foster 18:30

Island Gourmet yes, of course. Uh my favorite Filipino place. Uh but yeah, I'm I'm I'm a little bit more optimistic now than I was a couple months ago. And I'm hopeful that uh many of them will get back on their feet soon.

Elizabeth Hathorn 18:48

Yeah. Um. I feel like, has um, has COVID, has the pandemic affected um like employment of people, you know, like, I know, you are active duty so obviously, like, soldier jobs, military jobs are pretty much safe. Um but like any like civilian, any civilian friends or family?

Jeff Foster 19:17

Yeah, I mean uh, there was uh this one friend I had, where he was having trouble. He graduated like a year ago. And he was having trouble finding it because finding a job because uh there's not a lot of people hiring at the mo.. at the moment. But he he eventually found a job uh because um well, he he found a job because uh everything was coming back up again. And then I have another friend who um is like a a kinesiology major at uh SF State, and he was having trouble because he is a fitness nut. And he was was working um at a gym as the trainer. But since all the gyms were closed, uh he got laid off. And so he was unemployed for a little bit. And he had school. He had like financial uh like he has school cost that he had to worry about. But um ever since um cases have been going down he did, he was able to find the job finally after about like six months, so uh I did had, like friends who uh got fired uh because of the fact that everything was closing down.

Elizabeth Hathorn 20:44

Yeah, you're kind of, you're lucky that you're still getting paid by the Army for that.

Jeff Foster 20:50

Yeah. I'm lucky though.

Elizabeth Hathorn 20:56

I know. I mean, honestly, we're lucky that like, I mean, I haven't had the virus and neither of you. So

Jeff Foster 21:06

Well maybe, because I remember, last January, I got sick twice. Or maybe that's just a clue.

Elizabeth Hathorn 21:14

Okay, so I think it was like somebody said, it was like late 2019, early 2020. And it was like, if you had some, like, nasty sickness that just, like lasted for like over two weeks. They were saying it was like possibly like a pre COVID. But.

Jeff Foster 21:38

They were talking about report said COVID have already been here since uh December 2019.

Elizabeth Hathorn 21:45

Yeah. I mean, who knows?

Jeff Foster 21:49

Who knows? Maybe that was just a flu I had.

Elizabeth Hathorn 21:55

Um okay, so uh normally, as you said, you would have been staying in the dorms at San Francisco State. Um so kind of like moving back home wasn't in the plan when you started at San Francisco State. Um. How, how many years exactly has it been, um, since like, the last time that you lived at home, I guess?

Jeff Foster 22:24

Oh I would say about 15 years. Yeah, this was uh temporary, but then it became permanent.

Elizabeth Hathorn 22:35

Yeah. So I mean, like you're getting um, you're getting time to spend with your mom and your brother and you can kind of sort of like look in on how they like live their daily lives. Um at least like in a pandemic, but um how how has COVID 19 affected their, like, regular day to day activities that you've kind of noticed?

Jeff Foster 23:01

Well my mom is retired. So uh she, she is doing the same thing she did before. Uh. But uh I think it's really getting to her because she's not able to go to places she used to go. Uh and I guess that's that's all of us. As for my younger brother, uh he was going to school. He was going to a community college. Uh but then they shut down uh all schools and went back went online. So it it it changed for them to uh very similar to my situation.

Elizabeth Hathorn 23:40

I think everybody can get a diploma from University of Zoom. Um and then, so how are you, how are you like managing day to day activities kind of back when um like, they were sort of at least wanting to restrict, like, okay, you can go to the grocery store only like essential places. Um. How are you managing like doing your regular activities then?

Jeff Foster 24:17

Back then um, back then since I was only able to go to the grocery store, um I was really really trying to struggle, I was really struggling a little bit because um I had so much time and I didn't know what to devote myself into. And I gave uh plenty of time for school. And that was good. But I can't be at school 24 hours a day so um I couldn't hang out with my friends. Um I couldn't go to the movies, I couldn't go to the mall, I couldn't go to the gym to workout. And I couldn't even walk in the street because for my situation, 2020 was like the worst year for me because you had that, like California fires going on and being since I was in the Central Valley at the time, uh there was smoke outside my house and ash, raining down, combined with the pandemic. It was kind of I was kind of like, uh stuck in my own house. Um. So I was like, how do I manage my time? I don't really know. I got myself a dog. That's how I managed my time.

Elizabeth Hathorn 25:47

I am I'm not mad that you bought a dog, cuz your dog is cute.

Jeff Foster 25:51

I just sort of like, had to release some kind of excess energy that I had. Just being at home all day. So I got myself a dog.

Elizabeth Hathorn 26:02

Yeah. Um. And then like, obviously now you can, like, go wherever pretty much. Indoor dining is opening back up um. So like, obviously, things have changed from the beginning of the pandemic to now um. So are you kind of like more of a more like at back to normal, like, daily activity? Routine?

Jeff Foster 26:30

After about a year, it's kind of strange. It's like, I don't even know what normal is. I mean it's a strange feeling. It's like, I've been stuck at home for like a year, year and a half. And say, okay, what what is a normal routine for me, like going to the gym? Like, I haven't done that in, like a year. So it's like, I'm trying to, I try to figure out what normal is.

Elizabeth Hathorn 26:56

Yeah I feel like, I feel like everybody's gonna be questioning what's normal for the next couple years I think.

Jeff Foster 27:05

Like. It's like, can I go to the mall without a mask? Is that normal? It's like I wear my mask everywhere, even though I got the vaccine already. I wear it everywhere. So it's it's a sort of a strange feeling for me to kind of take my mask off. Uh if I were to go to like, a grocery store, say, is this normal? Like am I going to get infected by some virus because I don't have my mask in the grocery store?

Elizabeth Hathorn 27:36

Yeah.

Jeff Foster 27:37

It's it's weird. It's like a uh normal, it's going to be something that I need to figure it out again.

Elizabeth Hathorn 27:47

And then you said that uh obviously like COVID has affected everybody's like communication with friends, family. Um there were no like family gatherings last year for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Um no, like summer vacations, with friends. Um. So like, what, what ways have you been at least like keeping up with like friends and family?

Jeff Foster 28:14

Well good thing is we have cell phones and we can always call. I mean, I've been I've been calling friends, texting them. Uh. And I have like uh, group chats with friends and social media and we uh text each other and just let uh everybody know that uh we still you're still we're still friends that uh we missed we've missed each other and we wish we can be together. You know. I think uh we live in a world where we can send a text message and a phone call online.

Elizabeth Hathorn 28:52

What do you think it would have been like if say like Coronavirus was like the black plague like, you know, back then they didn't have phones, you probably the mail carrier pigeon had the disease too. Do you think do you think COVID would have been like so much worse for you if you didn't have sort of these easy communication methods of being able to talk to people?

Jeff Foster 29:23

Oh yeah. I consider myself an introvert, and, but it doesn't mean that I don't want to talk to my friends so. So it's like, yeah I don't want to talk to anybody for like a day or two, but then afterwards, I have like excess energy to socialize with other people. And I feel like if I didn't have like this uh, if I didn't have like technology to communicate with other people, I'd be like, lose my mind. Because it's like, I don't want to be alone for so long. You know. Like I like hanging out with people. Uh like, like, yeah, like talking to people. So I I would lose my mind.

Elizabeth Hathorn 30:09

Um what have been the biggest challenges for you um that you've had to deal with during the outbreak?

Jeff Foster 30:17

Hm I guess the biggest challenge for me was like uh, trying to stay healthy. Because uh since I was in the Army, um I need to stay healthy. And the fact that they closed everything down, um I wasn't able to go to the gym. Uh with the one fire, wildfire going on in 2020 I wasn't able to go out, uh doing like a simple jog outside. So it's like staying healthy, safe, physically healthy was like, one of the most challenging things that I had to go through uh during the pandemic.

Elizabeth Hathorn 31:01

Yeah, I feel like I think there was like a meme somewhere and it was like, half of America either, like, started a home gym and start eating healthy. And then the other half just like binge watched through all of Netflix. Like, I was like, kind of in the middle there though.

Um. Um, so did around like Christmas time, Thanksgiving, did you um, do you like a Zoom meeting with your family or what did you kind of do to um sort of like, facilitate socially distance like group hangs or whatever.

Jeff Foster 31:46

So normally, every year, my family would have a family reunion. So my aunts and uncles, my cousins, we would gather in like one of my aunts and uncles place to just kind of chit chat to catch up, but that didn't happen because the pandemic. So we decided, um me and my brothers decided that we're just going to have like a small little gathering for uh Thanksgiving and Christmas. So for Thanksgiving, Christmas, my my brother and his, his family, came to my mom's house, and we had a nice little Thanksgiving dinner. Um we were we were making sure that uh, you know, we're keeping safe, uh because we were still afraid that uh might get the virus from each other. We had a small little gathering for Thanksgiving. And then for Christmas, uh we we had another small gathering just family over at my brother's house in Fairfield. We didn't we didn't try to do the Zoom virtual Zoom thing. We just kind of kept it small. Make sure that uh everything everybody was keeping safe.

Elizabeth Hathorn 32:58

Yeah, I think like friends, I mean, we'd head over to um the David's pizza place in Stockton, and they have their outdoor patio, which was kind of cool just getting to like, you know, see friends and see friends without masks is different. Um so how has COVID-19 affected your community?

Jeff Foster 33:33

Definitely a lot of the stores were closing down and um I was seeing a lot of like, closed business sign everywhere. So it's like, I don't think crime is going up. But I do see a lot of like um, people really struggling to keep their um businesses open because of the restrictions. So how this affects my community um, just from what I can see, a lot of small uh businesses were closing down and that was just a really sad, like image.

Elizabeth Hathorn 34:12

Do you think um Stockton did like a good job with trying to help um through like, social media or the internet um sort of just like, Stockton promoting, um like, small business support?

Jeff Foster 34:36

The news in the local news, I remember uh they were opening up donations, like send your donation here to help out like small businesses. So they were promoting small businesses, while at the same time they were uh making donations to help them out as well.

Elizabeth Hathorn 34:56

Yeah, I've I think I found myself over the past year sort of um trying to support the community trying to support businesses that have been here since, like, before I was born. Um. And like, you know, usually the chain stores are a little bit less expensive, but um I've been like, eating at, eating at like mom and pop shops, or going to like the small, like grocery stores just to support local and I feel like I know, um, I know you've been like Empresso, which is a independent coffee shop in Stockton. Um and they had, they had a lot of support from uh from their customers saying like, you know, skip Starbucks or skip Pete's, um support local businesses so that they don't go out of business. Um I think I remember telling my dad that I would cry if they ever went out of business. And I think I would. Um. How do you think people around you are responding to the pandemic? So like, neighbors or um just like, people in Stockton in general?

Jeff Foster 36:20

Well, okay, so the neighbor on my left are very concerned about uh the pandemic. Uh but the neighbor on my right is a little bit suspicious about pandemic. So if there's a [inaudible], well, the neighbor on my left, he's an old man and he is very liberal so he's very concerned about uh getting the pandemic. But the neighbor to my right, he's more of uh a younger person. Uh and I mean, he's a good person but he is a little bit on the side where he feels as if the pandemic is not that bad. Uh he might even be at the point where he doesn't believe it exists. So, yeah, in terms of my brothers and my mom, well they're taking it very seriously.

Elizabeth Hathorn 37:18

Yeah. Do you think it um I know, like a lot of when it started, a lot of like, older people were a little bit more concerned and younger people were having like COVID parties. Um they were doing like uh, lick the public toilet seat challenge. Do you think uh, do you think a lot of like younger people were sort of uh just like cavalier about the whole, like pandemic and sort of like their actions on like not being safe versus like the older people?

Jeff Foster 37:57

I think it is a generation thing. As you get older, you get a little bit wiser whereas you're young, you can be reckless. So I think it's just a natural course uh in a person's life where they, they're young, and they're stupid. Whereas as as you get older, um starting to get a little bit wiser and I feel like that's what the younger generation is doing. They're being reckless because they just never been in a position where um they don't understand the consequences of direction. So I think it's just uh a natural age progression. Um yeah.

Elizabeth Hathorn 38:46

Um do you think that like your family or your neighbors, um their day to day activities, have they um have you sort of changed as we, like, get deeper into the pandemic?

Jeff Foster 39:03

No, I I haven't noticed. The neighbor on my left is retired so he he likes to work on his lawn um a lot. Um the neighbor on my right, um, he, I feel like he's, he's working. I feel like he's working more he's away more from his house. I know that because uh he drives a truck. Uh he commutes he commutes to Sacramento and I feel like he's working more because uh more people are getting laid off in his department. So he's working, he's working a lot more so I think, I think the neighbor to my right, uh his habit changed a little bit as we got deeper into the pandemic.

Elizabeth Hathorn 39:51

Um, has it has this whole like experience kind of changed your relationships with family or friends like you're at home with your family more um so you're getting to spend more time with them.

Jeff Foster 40:08

Yeah I mean it kind of changed uh a little bit uh since I haven't been at home for a very long time um I feel like I have a firm understanding of what I want now and I don't want to live at home with my mom and my brother so um and I told them that um so I think I have a better understanding of my relationship with my mom and my family um than pre-COVID.

Elizabeth Hathorn 40:48

Yeah um and then I also just want to remind you that like any health information that you want to remain private um you're definitely more than welcome to not talk about that um but so you you weren't sick um from COVID other than like that little pre-COVID or the flu that you had



um last year. Um but has you has anyone that you known gotten sick during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Jeff Foster 41:28

Yeah uh uh a friend of mind got sick yeah and he ended up infecting his mom and he got sick. He was asymptomatic but his mom um ended up going to the hospital. Other than that I'm just grateful that my mom, my brothers, and myself haven't been sick.

Elizabeth Hathorn 41:55

Yeah you you said that you got the COVID vaccine?

Jeff Foster 42:03

Mhm.

Elizabeth Hathorn 42:04

Both of them already?

Jeff Foster 42:05

Mhm.

Elizabeth Hathorn 42:06

Um did you have any like symptoms after like the first or the second one?

Jeff Foster 42:13

Uh I did uh I had more severe on the first one. The first one uh the first shot the first dose I got really tired really sleepy. Uh and of course I had like a sore arm um but the second one though the second one uh I was a little worried about that because I was hearing stories about how well the second one is the worst one and you'll end up getting these symptoms and I was like well yeah I was a little worried about it. Uh I ended up gaining muscle pain, joint pain, and headaches. Uh I had a fever chills uh so I I had I had like uh not really severe but I had symptoms like two days. Afterwards though I felt great.

Elizabeth Hathorn 43:09

Yeah I think cuz I I just got my second shot last week um and I had really bad symptoms two days after and then I woke up on the third day and it was like magically fine. I felt back to normal. It was it was great. Um alright. Uh so COVID-19 um people that are like especially outgoing people um not even just outgoing people but not being able to see people or talk to people um and with how like much it's sort of disrupted people's lives, um how do you think COVID-19 has affected people's mental health and their physical health?

Jeff Foster 44:07

Definitely the physical health uh the fact that you're stuck inside the house all day and you uh you're not able to go to the gym, if you go to the gym. But definitely their physical health suffered. People got a little bit you know gained extra weight. Uh and then I think for mental health I think it really affect them really bad because it affected me too. Uh it really it really kind of like puts you in a bad mood like COVID-19 really puts your mind in a bad mood because you're just stuck at home all day long and you're not able to do all the things you're used to. So it really kind of had an adverse affect on people.

Elizabeth Hathorn 44:58

Yeah. Um. Were you like early on into the pandemic did you kind of find yourself um like reading and watching a bunch of like news articles news videos um about like COVID-19 like the numbers and um were you kind of keeping up with that?

Jeff Foster 45:27

Yeah I like to watch uh the news a lot so during the pandemic uh I was watching a lot of uh the news, TV about COVID and I saw cases going up. They went from like 15 to like 40 and then it went to like triple digits. Uh so I was really watching the news and I was also watching the local news seeing how we were getting affected uh locally. Uh so yeah I was really paying attention to news when COVID broke out the first time.

Elizabeth Hathorn 46:08

Do you think you're not paying as close of attention now?

Jeff Foster 46:16

I think uh uh no uh yeah I'm not paying close attention now. I'm paying close I'm paying a little bit of attention because I like seeing the numbers go down so the the more it goes down yeah the better for pretty much all of us.

Elizabeth Hathorn 46:35

Yeah I think like at least for me I think a lot of sort of like my interest is um kind of like how the vaccine is going so it's kind of shifted from like COVID-19 to kind of like watching the vaccines.

Jeff Foster 46:54

Exactly.

Elizabeth Hathorn 46:58

Um. So uh Stockton we're kind of famous for uh the number of homeless people that we have here. Um how do you think it how do you think COVID-19 has affected um like the homeless community in Stockton?

Jeff Foster 47:32

Hm. I think I don't know the numbers but I think a lot of them are getting sick because during the high level of the pandemic I never saw a homeless person wear a mask. Uh and I'm pretty sure they don't have many resources that kind of protect themselves so. I feel like the homeless people during the pandemic was really worse for homeless people because they didn't have a place to stay didn't have a place to they didn't have anything to keep them safe and healthy so I feel like that's I feel like that's what's what was going on with homeless people in Stockton.

Elizabeth Hathorn 48:13

Yeah do you think like um do you think our like mayor and also other elected officials um do you think they were responding to at least like the homeless COVID outbreak um well?

Jeff Foster 48:34

I think they were uh trying to respond to it because they know that uh if if a homeless person gets it and we get it under control, we we have the potential to spread it again uh so uh I remember Governor News Governor Newsom he was trying to set like um uh shelter for the homeless

people using like hotel rooms and stuff like that. Uh so I feel like uh I feel like the mayor of Stockton um wasn't really paying attention uh with the homeless people. I think he might have forgotten about them or he didn't thought about them.

Elizabeth Hathorn 49:20

Yeah.

Jeff Foster 49:21

I don't think they were doing I think they were doing something but I don't think they were doing a pretty good job.

Elizabeth Hathorn 49:27

I think they had they had like some groups that were going around and kind of like um like giving them meals. I think there was like uh I think there was one of those shower on wheels programs where it's kind of like portable showers or they could go and like clean themselves off um. But I think I think the homeless was kind of one of those forgotten groups unfortunately. Um so kind of like widening it from just Stockton, how do you think California we have a ridiculous homeless people, so like how do you think like how this state did as a whole in comparison?

Jeff Foster 50:18

When it comes to taking care of homeless people during the pandemic?

Elizabeth Hathorn 50:21

Mhm.

Jeff Foster 50:23

I think it uh overall we did a lot better than other states. Yeah I think I think the governor I don't think he did a very good job at taking care of the homeless but uh I feel like he did he did a lot a lot more than other states. I'm not really sure what other states did in terms of taking care of the homeless people, but I know I remember Governor Newsome he was really concerned about this and uh he was really concerned about it in the beginning but I feel like now he's just moved on.

Elizabeth Hathorn 51:03

Um so has like your entire COVID experience um sort of changed the way that you think about like family, friends, um Stockton community?

Jeff Foster 51:17

I think it really changed my view of community because um during the pandemic at the beginning of the pandemic, people were hoarding stuff and they weren't really I mean they weren't really thinking about other people. They were just buying stuff. Like hoarding toilet paper for themselves. Um I mean that's not for me I was I was buying one or two packs of toilet paper because I didn't want to I didn't want to uh hoard it but it turns out that a lot of people a lot of people hoarding stuff and they weren't really concerned about other people so it kind of changed my view of uh really community what what what people would do you know? So it feels like there's a lot less people that care about other people than uh uh the they're a lot less people that care about other people than people who care about like the health of the community.

Elizabeth Hathorn 52:28

Yeah uh I feel like I feel like that was kind of selfish of people. Um and I think for me, I was it was kind of disappointing because you hear stories about um like I think there was a story about uh an older couple in Target and they had a roll of like toilet paper in their cart and somebody like just came up and took it out of their cart and like ran. And like you know the older you get the harder it is to do everything and I feel like it was kind of like half people caring half people not. Um cause like I actually have like a neighbor who's a nurse on my block and he stuck like little cards with his cell phone number um in all of our front doors saying that if we were like experiencing symptoms or if like somebody was sick, he wanted to give us like a phone number to call just in case anyone had any questions form a medical standpoint which I feel like that was pretty cool. That was really nice of him.

Elizabeth Hathorn 53:54

How long do you think it's going to be until we get back to uh pre pre 2020?

Jeff Foster 54:00

I think uh a couple more months I think just until the end of this year and it's going to be like 50% normal. So I think like I think around 2022 around January 2022 it may be at least 50% more normal so I'm a little bit optimistic now that I'm seeing cases go down so.

Elizabeth Hathorn 54:36

Um. How do you hope that your life is going to be a year from now?

Jeff Foster 54:44

Well I'm hoping that a year from now I don't have to wear a mask everywhere. Uh I'm hoping that a year from now uh I'll be able to do all the things I used to do which is like go to the movies, watch a movie, hang out with your friends, go to go to like uh uh a restaurant, uh without a mask on, uh go to the gym work out, um and then just go to work without having to worry about getting infected or getting other people infected. So yeah.

Elizabeth Hathorn 53:29

What do you think that um what do you think that everybody kind of needs to keep in mind for the future whether it's like um safety protocols or like outbreak protocols or um even like just personal um what do you think people or communities or the government should kind of keep in mind for in case this happens in the future?

Jeff Foster 56:01

I think in the future uh we need to keep in mind uh that uh well we need to keep in mind that masks work. So the next pandemic uh uh for the next pandemic if something like this happens again, all we have to do is wear a mask. That's it. It's like the simplest thing in the world. Just wear a mask and that will stop the spread of like whatever virus you can think of. I think this like uh minimize the damage. I feel like we didn't do that in the beginning.

Elizabeth Hathorn 56:52

Do you think it would have been different like now or um like maybe in terms of how many people actually like died because of it if people had started taking it seriously from like day one?

Jeff Foster 57:12

Yeah cuz um I remember well I know that uh the first outbreak in the United States uh it it happened in the same day the first outbreak happened in South Korea and in South Korea they took it really seriously. They restricted everything. They had everybody wear a mask. It was like no question about it and because the fact they took it seriously their cases are like one a day I believe that's the last time I saw. They have like one case of COVID getting infected every single day so uh everything for them is open whereas for us um around the same time we were like ten

times uh we had like ten times more cases than uh South Korea did. If we did exactly what they did, then we would be enjoying the same uh the same situation they are now which is like everything is open just wear your mask until the pandemic is over and everything will just stay the same . You know. Things would have been different for all of us if we had taken it seriously from like day one.

Elizabeth Hathorn 58:30

So we like countries like countries like South Korea or uh even North Korea or China where they sort of had these much like stricter policies um I think a lot of uh a lot of other countries or people think that you know the United States is soft or whatever and that we have a lot of people who want to to do things when they want to do things and how they want to do things. Do you think that sort of like the stricter stricter government um like rules and ways they were handling, do you think the United States would ever be able to do that or that um.

Jeff Foster 59:21

No I think it's uh it wasn't about like the stricter government. I feel like it's not it's not about that. It's about like uh trying to enforce the right thing which is we understand that the virus kills people. It infects people um and we shouldn't be like we have we have doctors who tell us what to do what the right thing to do is. And I feel like it's just about doing the right thing. I think trying to restrict your rights. It's about to protect ourselves in doing the right thing. I feel like people are criticizing everything so it because political to wear a mask and stuff like that. That that's the reason why like some states didn't have certain types of policies while other states had more stricter policies. Um and then I feel like that's the reason why COVID went out of control in the United States because we didn't have consistent uh message for everybody.

Elizabeth Hathorn 1:00:34

So what do you think that you're going to kind of like take from this whole COVID-19 experience and being able to uh say that you've been able to live through a pandemic?

Jeff Foster 1:00:48

Oh the big takeaway for me is that uh I didn't realize how dependent I am with like uh just uh being like I didn't realize how dependent I am with like the structures we had like uh you sort of take for granted everything you used to do like prior to COVID uh and I think that's the big takeaway for me. It's like I'm not going to try to take for granted all of the stuff I had for anything really.

Elizabeth Hathorn 1:01:24

Yeah.

Jeff Foster 1:01:27

I'm just going to be more grateful.

Elizabeth Hathorn 1:01:29

Yeah. I mean, you got to spend some time with your family and you know they drive you crazy sometimes, but I feel like that's everybody. Um alright. So that is all of the questions I have for you today and um I would like to thank you for allowing me to interview you and participate in this Oral History project.

Jeff Foster 1:01:59

No problem. Happy to help.

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