

Interviewee: Shawn Berg

Interviewer: Rayne Berg

Date: December 10, 2020

Format: Video recording zoom

Location of interview: Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Transcriber: Rayne Berg

Additional transcription equipment used: Otter.ai

Project in association with: University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

Abstract:

Shawn Berg was born in Milwaukee Wisconsin, and raised in La Crosse Wisconsin. Recently he moved to Altoona Wisconsin to begin his job as a service manager at Texas Roadhouse in Eau Claire. In this interview, Shawn discusses how COVID – 19 has affected his life personally along with how it has effected the local Texas Roadhouse regarding their employees as well as their guests that come in. Not only does he discuss the consequences for the employees, but he also talks about how the guests have reacted to the mask mandate and how the restaurant has handled it all.

RB: okay, can you tell me the date and time?

SB: yeah, Friday [laugh], December 11th, 10:49.

RB: perfect, and then what is your name, and do you mind sharing demographic information for this study such as race, ethnicity, age and gender?

SB: Shawn Berg, 29, a white male

RB: what are your primary things you do on a day-to-day basis? For example, your job, exercise, extra activities?

SB: work and hike and do photography

RB: and then where do you live, and what is it like where you live?

SB: I live in Altoona, in an apartment

RB: and when you first learned about COVID – 19 what were your thoughts about it?

SB: I've always thought kind of something that people blew up and made a bigger deal about something than what it was

RB: and how have your thoughts changed since then?

SB: about the same.

RB: and what issues have most concerned you about the COVID 19 pandemic?

SB: mostly just staffing

RB: has COVID 19 affected your job? If so in what ways?

SB: yes, mostly because of staffing getting sick or being out, as management having to work more to cover other shifts, especially when the kitchen gets hit. It's harder for us to have those shifts covered because we don't have as much staffing in the back.

RB: Has COVID 19 changed your employment status, if so in what ways?

SB: No

RB: What concerns do you have about the effects of COVID 19 on your employment and the economic more broadly?

SB: not too much on current employment, besides just staff getting sick and then more on an economical side, just local businesses that are struggling and having to close.

RB: has COVID – 19, has the COVID 19 pand, pandemic affected the employment of people you may, may know, if so in what ways?

SB: yes, I have a lot friends that live down south that due to the pandemic their businesses shut down or reduce capacity leaving a lot of my friends without jobs.

RB: has, how has the COVID 19 affected you and your families day to day activities?

SB: only thing its really affected most so just like family like gatherings and stuff like that, other than that it hasn't affected too much.

RB: and then how are you still managing your day-to-day activities in your household?

SB: nothings really changed on that.

RB: how has the covid 19 outbreak affected how associate with or and communicate with friends and family? If so in what ways

SB: mostly just gatherings and get togethers.

RB: what have been the biggest challenges that you have faced during this covid 19 outbreak?

SB: just businesses and places being cold, closed, having to cancel vacations or move things or not being able to do certain things during the pandemic.

RB: how has the covid 19 outbreak affected your community?

SB: mostly just local businesses and just businesses not being able to be open as long, with my work it's just harder for me to was, was harder at the time for me to go out and like do things or go shopping or get groceries.

RB: have you seen the people around you change their opinions, day to day activities or relationships in response to the pandemic?

SB: yes, I've seen some people have some

RB: how so?

SB: some people like to have this more like a scared thing and they would neglect themselves from everybody and like basically lock themselves in a room until they'd have to go out So some people just kind of overdid it.

RB: has the COVID 19 changed your relationship with family friends and the community, if so in what ways?

SB: not too much, no

RB: Have you or anybody you know gotten sick during the COVID 19 outbreak?

SB: yes

RB: how bad did they get sick?

SB: I don't know what what do what, what degree they got sick, it's just with my staff, a lot of my staff has been out due to COVID, but once their timing was off, and once they were clear, they came back to work without any issues.

RB: in what ways do you think the COVID 19 is affecting peoples mental and/or physical health

SB: I mean, from what I've heard, I've heard two sides, one side saying that it's not that bad, and then I've heard some people say that they've heard of individuals getting other illnesses due to it, or other complications due to it, but I have not seen or experienced anything.

RB: okay, what have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic?

SB: just like just the news and local, like local Facebook videos of our of our health department

RB: have your news sources changed during the course of the pandemic at all?

SB: no

RB: what do you think are important issues that the media may or may not be covering?

SB: I mean, I don't really know. I mean they pretty much just COVID and everything going on with it. So not really anything else.

RB: how has the government officials in your community responded to the outbreak?

SB: back in February when it first started, they reduced capacity for bus, local business or for businesses and then within that same week, shut all the businesses down for to go's only or carry out or curbside only.

RB: do you have any thoughts on how local, state, or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently ?

SB: I mean, like, everyone's doing differently. I mean we're opened up 50%, but right across the border, they're closed completely for to go only and back at a safer at home. So, each place and each location always kind of handling it differently.

RB: has your experience transformed how you think about your family, friends or community, if so in what ways?

SB: not too much, no

RB: and then knowing what you know now, what do you think that individuals, communities, or government need to keep in mind for the future ?

SB: I think just mostly just peoples like sanity and what their effect on kids are going to be, I understand the whole mask thing, but at the same time kids growing up without having social interaction with other kids, and only seeing people with masks on I think is going to affect their long-term social mobility.

RB: okay, and then what are some issues that you've seen in the restaurant, with COVID 19 and how things have changed

SB: yeah, so obviously, the obvious one is just going to be like staffing, limited and reduced staffing due to staff getting sick and with covid. Outside of that, I would say just guests, guests having issues with guests wearing masks, whether its medical reason or not. That's just another big one. Some people just don't care about other people or whatever, and then that's pretty much it. I mean like we've, we've changed our whole business as far as how we do we put dividers in, we've done cleaning measures, we have new sanitation practices involved and more and more coming up. So, I mean, just things that were doing like that, but really just masks, dividers and then staff getting sick.

RB: perfect. Well thank you, I'm going to stop recording now.