

Transcript of Interview with Kayla Cruz and Marisol Palacios by Each Other

Interviewee/Interviewer: Kayla Cruz

Interviewee/Interviewer: Marisol Palacios

Date: 09/17/2021

Location (Interviewee/Interviewer):

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Transcriber: Lily Crigler

Abstract: Kayla Cruz and Marisol Palacios share how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their personal lives and changed their high school experience.

Kayla Cruz 0:00

Hi, my name is Kayla Cruz.

Marisol Palacios 0:02

Hi, my name is Marisol Palacios.

Kayla Cruz 0:04

Marisol, do you consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 Archive Project?

Marisol Palacios 0:09

I do. Kayla, do you consent to be interviewed for the COVID-19 Archive Project?

Kayla Cruz 0:14

I do. Can you please state the date and time?

Marisol Palacios 0:17

Today is Friday, September 17 at 1:11 in the afternoon. Kayla, in what ways are you or your life different today because of the COVID pandemic?

Kayla Cruz 0:27

My day to day life has definitely changed in the aspect of how myself and everyone around me are still continuing to wear a mask inside places even if we're vaccinated. I still continue to use hand sanitizer regularly when I'm out or take public transportation. And for school, we're still required to wear masks inside the classrooms and get tested weekly. You still have to remain cautious with who you- who you are- who you are around and who you interact with because the COVID precautions are still in place. But I would say that things are definitely improving for our day to day social lives as things continue to open up. For me personally, I find myself to be more independent and confident. The pandemic has given me a lot of time to reflect and focus on myself and what my goals are. I've always been so busy with school, volleyball, travel, and spending time with my friends and family, but COVID has given me time to slow down and think about who I want to be and what I want to do in my life. What did you expect the next year look like at the moment lockdown started?

Marisol Palacios 1:28

It's definitely not what's happening today. For me when locked down started, it was when my school dismissed us. And at the time, we were just dismissed for two weeks. I was one of some of the first to be dismissed for school because I do live in the tri-state area very close to New York City, which was where one of the first COVID cases in America was reported. My, personally, my parents were a little more strict at the beginning of the pandemic. I feel like at the beginning, a lot of youth especially felt that they were immune because they were young and healthy. But I remained at a pretty strict lockdown from the get go. But at the time, I didn't expect it to be affecting my entire senior year, or my college years in general. I didn't go to school at all my senior year. And it was really interesting to know that that day in the middle of March was my last day of in person high school without knowing it at the time. But at the time, I just expected to go back in two weeks and everything to resume back to normal, especially since with previous epidemics and pandemics like Zika virus, and Ebola, it barely even brushed the United States. And I think I expected something more like that to happen. So it's very different. What happened is very different from what I was expecting. What was your experience completing at least a portion of your senior year online, and how did it impact your education and perception of your high school experience?

Kayla Cruz 3:07

Starting on my senior year online was definitely not my first choice for how my senior year would go. But I knew that if we wanted to get to the place where we are today with being able to see more people and be able to travel that that was the right choice at the time. It was definitely hard for me to do online school from home because I've always imagined my senior year beside my friends, teachers and my teammates. But that was the exact opposite of what it was like. I started off the year really focusing on my schoolwork and spending a lot of time with just myself figuring out college plans, and planning out what the next few years of my life are going to look like. I definitely was able to focus more on school since there was no like outside activities or school sports in like the fall or winter. But I was- think I was able to achieve more in the past year because of the more time I had for myself and for school. Something that was really important for me during online school was building a routine and staying organized. I definitely missed working in a classroom and collaborating with others balance was taught me like independence, organization, and time management skills that desperately needed to work on before the pandemic. I was happy that towards the spring of my semester, school was able- more schools were able to open up and I was able to see my friends and teachers for the last time before college started. But it was definitely hard- a hard adjustment with being from online remote school for about almost a year to then just go into in person schooling and getting used to the new mandates and the restrictions. So it was definitely challenging, but everyone had to be super adaptive to the new environment around us. But I feel like something that helped me was being able to go back to school and being able to play volleyball in the spring. I felt like it was something I missed a lot, and it was like a huge part of myself. But I was happy that we were able to start getting back to normal and the COVID cases were starting to decrease in my area, and I'm sure in the United States before, like the new delta variant came. So I'm just really grateful that at least for two months, I was able to somewhat get back to normal schooling. Marisol, how have you changed from the start of quarantine, which is March 2020, to present day?

Marisol Palacios 5:26

I think that I've changed a lot as a person in terms of being- in terms of under- being more understanding. I think that before I've failed to recognize with every individual that I truly don't understand what's going on, beneath the surface. And I think especially from my experience, COVID was hard for me, being so isolated and whatnot, and especially during the college process was- which caused me a lot of nerves. And I also think that during the COVID, it was a big time for a lot of people to be more vulnerable. And explain to people what the true [unintelligible] is, through this pandemic, and introduced sort of financial problems, social problems, and whatnot. And I think seeing people's true character and people's true struggles during this difficult time has really changed my perspective and allowed me to be more understanding of other people who have different experiences than I do and different ways of life that I do that might- might not have experienced or understand, but I can still appreciate now, which I think was really important for my group as becoming an adult and as a person.

Kayla Cruz 6:36
Perfect. Thank you.