

Basic Detail Report



Title Interview with Blue Hills Civic Association Members

Date 2022 February 26

Primary Maker Samariya Smith

Medium born digital audio file

Description (a) Interview with four members of the Blue Hills Civic Association: Asia Hamilton, Jenallice "EJ" Alers, Carlos Ortiz, and Elijah Kerr. Interviewed by Samariya Smith and Peter Moran on February 26, 2022 at the Blue Hills Civic Association Office, 410 Homestead Ave., Hartford. (b) Photograph of the group taken at the interview. They were interviewed as part of the Connecticut Historical Society's Community History Project discussing their experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The participants interviewed were high school students between the ages of 15-17. When asked about the impact of COVID-19 in their lives, they reported that it negatively affected the way their teachers interacted with them, particularly regarding mask enforcement. It also affected the way they interacted with their peers and the people around them. The

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students reported that teachers got Covid more often than students. The

students attributed this to teachers not obeying mask and distancing mandates

themselves, despite demanding compliance from students. They felt this

behavior was frustrating and hypocritical. The students were supportive of mask mandates and expressed concern about the upcoming removal of mandates.

They felt the school administration was trying to appease parents who opposed mandates when masks helped. Additionally, the quality of their education

plummeted. They reported online learning was not successful during the

pandemic. Many students did not have computers and the school did not have

enough to distribute, and many students were left behind. Teachers hardly

assigned any work, and the students were easily distracted at home. When the

students returned to class, they said that the constant use of substitute teachers

impaired the quality of their education, and the substitutes were unable to help

them when they needed it. While the students reported that they didn't

necessarily want to attend school, they felt like they learned more in-person than

remote. One student also reported that food was an issue during the pandemic.

At school, students got their meals for free. With many people now at home at

the same time under the same roof, food went very quickly. A couple of the

students expressed that they didn't feel the lockdowns helped. One mentioned

she felt that the lockdowns caused greater poverty by not distributing resources

equitably which "dug the hole deeper." When asked what they did for fun

during the pandemic, the students responded that their sources of

entertainment were social media, video games, and board games with family,

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respectively. When asked about mental health in their community, they

responded that most people around them were opposed to therapy, preferring

to deal with their problems themselves. They believed the rise of violence in

their communities was largely due to the pandemic. Many people, already

lacking resources, lost their jobs due to the lockdowns, exacerbating poverty.

Regarding people their age, one student responded that school was an escape

for many young people whose home environments were unsafe. Regarding

vaccines, their responses were mixed but generally opposed. Several students

noted that their parents opposed it but were forced to receive the vaccine due to

their jobs. One student expressed frustration over the mandates because their

parents wouldn't let them get the vaccine and were unable to attend an

educational event due to being unvaccinated. They agreed that the vaccines

didn't work and didn't understand the mandates when most people got

Covid regardless of vaccination status. The students felt they lost their social life

and their interests. One student described it as like the Great Depression.

Several students said they matured during the pandemic, but one student said

he felt that his peers grew up too fast. The words they used to describe the

pandemic were eye-opening, toxic, and traumatizing. The greatest lesson they

learned was to be careful what you wish for and the difference between idealism

and realism. Their advice for those experiencing future pandemics was to think

positively, prioritize yourself and your needs, listen to your parents, and to learn

new hobbies, and to take it seriously.

Dimensions Duration: 53 Minutes, 28 Seconds