

*Pandemic Perspectives: Jeffersonville Residents Recount Their Lives During the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic. Interview with Annalise Bassett*

Jen Weidner 0:01: Today is May 8, 2021, I'm Jen Weidner with the Jeffersonville Township Public Library, conducting interviews for Pandemic Perspectives: Jeffersonville Residents Recount Their Lives During The 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic. This project was made possible with a grant from the Indiana Geological Society.

I'm here today with Annalise Bassett, who is a senior at Floyd Central High School. Annalise recorded her reactions and feelings about the pandemic in the spring of 2020, right after the stay at home order was issued. That recording will be included with this interview.

Annalise, what were your reactions when you first heard about the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Annalise Bassett 0:39: So I think, you know, in December and early January we were worried about it, but not too terribly worried because it hadn't reached us yet. And I remember, I think it was March 13, that day that everything went to heck basically. I heard from someone, it might have been March 12, actually, that someone in Floyd County got it, and it was released on the Floyd County Health Department's website and Facebook page, and then the next day we heard that the school was going to close the Monday after Friday the 13th. We wouldn't have school the Monday after spring break. So, I mean that made it more real, but we still didn't think it'd be anything longer than a long spring break. We thought we were gonna come back that Tuesday after spring break and it'd be all normal and it didn't. So I think my reaction was [that] immediately it didn't really bother me and then it just kept getting more and more real.

Jen Weidner 1:45: So you, like the rest of us, didn't think it was going to come up to the United States, let alone Southern Indiana?

Annalise Bassett 1:50: Absolutely!

Jen Weidner 1:52: So what were the feelings and actions of yourself and your classmates as more cases were reported and Clark and Floyd counties?

Annalise Bassett 2:00: So I think in my friend group, especially, we, we were all staying at home. We weren't meeting with each other, if we were meeting with each other at all. It was safe and outdoors and with people who we knew were safe. I only spent time with people I knew were safe and I didn't spend much time with people at all. A lot of people, unfortunately, in my generation were not paying attention to it and a lot of people outside my generation weren't paying attention to it. They were still meeting up; there was a prom held by parents in New Albany. It was disheartening because a lot of us were missing out on things and we were making sacrifices, and yet these people were extending the time we would have to deal with this. So while I would like to say our generation was really good about it, we weren't not good about it, my - my family was very safe about it, my friends' family, families were safe about it my, yeah, we were trying to be safe but other people weren't.

Jen Weidner 2:58: Who were you living with at the time?

Annalise Bassett 3:00: I was living with my parents and my brother.

Jen Weidner 3:03: And were your parents able to work from home?

Annalise Bassett 3:04: Yes, so, my mom is a therapist, and she was able to do teletherapy based on, there was an executive order that Governor Holcomb made allowing teletherapy to happen. My dad works in IT, so he was completely able to work from home, without any issues because he already had a great setup at home, and he still works from home. My mom has gone back to work now.

Jen Weidner 3:28: So you finished up your junior year, taking classes virtually; how was that for you? What was the transition like?

Annalise Bassett 3:36: The transition wasn't too terrible. We were already using Google Classroom and things like that, so we were already set up. Some of the elementary school kids weren't, so that was a learning curve for them, but we were already doing that kind of thing. So I didn't have to relearn any new technology. The transition was different because I did get to sleep about an hour later, maybe two, I think, I think it was two hours later because we officially had to log on by nine. All of my work was typically done by noon, I got to eat lunch, and be done for the day and then I had band class on Tuesdays and Thursdays on Google meet, but nothing else was required. So I think the transition wasn't that difficult, it wasn't really that different from normal, given we were already using Google Classroom and stuff. It was just, we weren't seeing people, we weren't seeing the teachers, it was more difficult to talk to them because we'd have to email them or wait, and my grades, unlike a lot of people did not go down, I, I actually got better in some classes. Like AP Bio was a real struggle for me junior year, and as soon as we went virtual my teacher started letting us use notes on the quizzes, and my grades skyrocket, because I was able to use my notes and because I knew the information, I just needed to reference it. I ended up getting to two fives and a four on my AP exams last year. A lot of people did not. So, in that aspect, it didn't affect me much because my grades were already good and they didn't change much at all.

Jen Weidner 5:09: And you had discipline to do what you needed to do and not just goof off?

Annalise Bassett 5:14: Yeah, I would sit down at 9:00 am get my stuff done as soon as possible, take a break here and there if I needed it, and then eat lunch when I was done.

Jen Weidner 5:23: As your senior year began, were you still in virtual classes?

Annalise Bassett 5:27: So we started off, we were supposed to start I think on the 29th of July. I'm potentially remembering that wrong. But they decided that the teachers did not have enough time to plan and switch all of their lesson plans over to full virtual format or hybrid format at all. So they switched it to August 12, so we were pushed back two weeks. They were going to take a week off of our fall break and a week off of our spring break. So they got everything switched over and we did hybrid learning from August 12 through the Friday before Thanksgiving. At that point, we went full virtual because the numbers went up.

Jen Weidner 6:05: What was hybrid learning?

Annalise Bassett 6:07: So, hybrid learning we went we were split by alphabet, so A through G. No, I think it was A through K; A through K went on Mondays and Thursdays, no, Mondays and Wednesdays, and the rest of the alphabet went Tuesdays and - crap, Tuesdays and Fridays. Yeah, something like that, and then we switched it, and we ended up going Mondays and Wednesdays and Tuesdays and Thursdays. My Friday was virtual, or something like that. So there was a full virtual day no matter what so people would go to school, two days a week, and then they would have everybody online one day a week. And then, in November right before Thanksgiving break, we had two days of full virtual with Thanksgiving break, and then the rest of this semester was virtual. So, that was because the numbers went up, and we did that the rest of the semester and then the first week after winter break. After that we went back to our hybrid schedule. And then in early March they announced that the week before our spring break, they were going to go to full in person again. They had this whole plan, they were going to make sure masks were required and space people out at lunch, and we went back and I haven't noticed anyone sick at all I mean, it doesn't seem like the numbers have gone up at school. We've - it feels pretty safe to me, I was kind of apprehensive at first but I'm fine with it now I'm glad that I'm back in person, they most of us are.

Jen Weidner 7:11: Especially your senior year it will be hard to do it all virtually not be able to see your peer group and interact with everybody.

Annalise Bassett 7:49: There are certainly still people who are doing full virtual, because they do have a virtual option still. And they have that hybrid to some people just weren't virtual, they weren't doing the hybrid. I've still got friends who do full virtual. I still communicate with them, but I don't get to see him every day. I have two friends who just came back for full in-person this week from full virtual, and they're going to stay the rest of the year because one of them's a senior and they want to experience the senior year normally. So yeah, we're, we're back to full, full in person, we are having normal events going on, we had senior dinner dance in the middle [of] April. We've had senior week this week, Baccalaureate ceremony class day, class night, having prom next weekend. Graduation will happen normally; it's starting to get back to normal for us.

Jen Weidner 7:56: How, in your opinion, did the virus change your senior year experience? Did you, do you feel like you've missed out on anything that normally would have happened?

Annalise Bassett 8:47: I definitely missed out on a lot. So, first, a lot of it it was hybrid, so I didn't get to see a lot of my friends because a lot of my friends were there, just, they decided to do virtual or they were on a different day than me, so I need to see them do marching band, and we didn't have state competitions; we didn't have local competitions all year. So, we only got to play for football games and private parent performances, we didn't do competitions, and that is a big change for us, we normally - it's competitions every weekend, from beginning of September to the end of October or even later than that. Last year we went to Grand Nationals, so we were going until the middle of November. And I'm used to having a very, very busy schedule, and that was not the case. I'm also on my newspaper staff this year. I was editor-in -chief, and a lot of what we normally do was much different. We did not publish print issues. In fact, this month we're publishing our first print issue, so everything else was digital and online content and putting out photo galleries online and not in print, that kind of. Concert band we didn't have state qualifier, state finals, we didn't have state-level competitions. We did have a virtual district kind of competition, and my band scored well, but that's different. It's different to record anything, and then to play in a concert hall in front of a bunch of people and judges, and you only get the one shot on recordings; now we recorded one recording and submitted it, we didn't do it over and over and over again, but on our recording you have that opportunity. Same for orchestra, we just recorded our concert and submitted it. We didn't go to state level competitions. National Honor Society, we didn't do a lot of the volunteering that we normally do, we did virtual volunteering instead of going out and helping in the community. We were allowed to, but if we felt more comfortable we could just do virtual, we didn't. We didn't require a bell ringing through the Salvation Army, we normally are required to do that. So, yeah, and in my opinion the virus has definitely taken away a lot of things. And, and some things have just been changed. So, our senior dinner dance is normally in January and this year it was in April, because of the numbers. Yeah, that's, that's like, I would say the viruses changed a lot.

Jen Weidner 11:13: So you said that all of your newspapers were just virtually printed and kept online virtually, will you be printing those to save those for archives?

Annalise Bassett 11:23: No we will not, it costs a lot of money to print anything so we didn't, we didn't get to fundraise this year.

Jen Weidner 11:30: Okay.

Annalise Bassett 11:30: Because small businesses cannot afford to submit any money and we did not feel comfortable asking them for anything, because they're struggling. So, that will just stay online forever, We're still, we always put up the PDF versions anyway. So, this month, we'll go online anyway. But, this month we will actually get to publish in print, but we will not actually go back and like retroactively or, yeah.

Jen Weidner 11:57: So do you plan to archive this print copy somewhere for future generations to be like "Hey, this was during the pandemic, this was our first one we got to print"?

Annalise Bassett 12:06: We hadn't thought about that, but I could ask our advisor if you want to hold on to that, yeah,

Jen Weidner 12:11: I mean it's just, it's, I'm collecting things for archives for from the pandemic so you know, 25, 30, 50 years from now, people could be like-

Annalise Bassett 12:21: I always keep extra copies too, so, yeah.

Jen Weidner 12:25: What would you like people in the future to know about the pandemic and how it changed you or your view on the world?

Annalise Bassett 12:31: I think it definitely taught me and I know I'm not the only one to not take things for granted. A lot of things were taken for granted. So, you know, marching band, like I was just used to that happening, it was given. I was going to be away at competition on Saturdays and have practice every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and have football games and, yeah, that was a given. But it didn't happen this year to the same extent. And, for two years now, haven't gone to state-level competitions with band, orchestra. So I think it's taught me to not take things for granted because I've missed out on a lot of stuff, both with school and without. I mean, there are plenty of things I didn't get to do with my friends or experience with my friends because we weren't allowed to, or it wasn't safe to. My friend groups have been safe, so we are only really just now starting to hang out again. So I think that's the one life lesson that I've learned.

Jen Weidner 13:32: So in the fall, you're going to be going to Hanover College. Do you think going into your first semester of college will be changed because of the virus, or do you think by then things may be back to whatever our new normal is?

Annalise Bassett 13:45: So, they have announced that we will be full in person, so they won't have required zoom or anything or hybrid learning. So, in that aspect, I'll have full normal classes; it will be just like I have right now, just at college. I won't have to do half and half or full. They have not announced anything about masks that I know of. I'm fully prepared to wear them if I need to, because it's just safe if; I need to, I will. I don't think it'll be that much different at all. I think we're getting to the point where it's normal, again, or at least somewhat normal, so I don't think it's going to be that much different. I don't expect it to be too terribly different. Unless we hit some huge spike in numbers soon, but I'm vaccinated, a lot of my friends are vaccinated. Some of us are getting to a point where we're two weeks past or vaccinations, so we're getting normal. Yeah, I don't. I don't see it being that much different and I'm hoping it will be done.

Jen Weidner 14:48: Do you think colleges will be requiring people to be fully vaccinated before they can come on campus?

Annalise Bassett 14:53: If I remember right, I think IU, maybe Purdue are requiring vaccinations, but with private colleges they have to worry about even if they are, you know, supportive of masks and vaccinations, they have to worry about donors and stuff so, you know, a donor might be anti mask or anti vaccination and pull money or threaten to pull money if they even talk about doing that and Hanover is private. So I don't, I don't know if they'll require it, but I'm not worried about it because I am fully vaccinated, and I'm not anti vaccination or science so if they require it, I don't, I don't have a problem with it.

Jen Weidner 15:01: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your COVID experience?

Annalise Bassett 15:42: I don't think so other than, I mean, I know this has been hard for all of us and, yeah, it's, we're almost normal and I think, I think at this point we're starting to get back to normal and people just, if they're listening to this 50 years in the future or whatever, don't, don't take your life for granted, because it could change at any moment.

Jen Weidner 16:03: Thank you for coming out and letting me interview you today.