

Voices

from

The Bronx

Introducing...

Voices from The Bronx



As the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic reaches epic proportions, nonprofit organizations across New York City have been forced to adapt. The Bronx Institute at Lehman College continues to provide services to students and families, focusing on maintaining academic standards and addressing the socio-emotional needs of students.

We are pleased to present a collection of first-person accounts of life in The Bronx under quarantine, written by high school students currently studying, socializing, and living under lockdown. These are their stories, written in their own words. They represent our students' fears and anxieties, their hopes and dreams, as they try—like all of us—to make sense of a surreal moment in history.

This is Voices from The Bronx.

The coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic has brought the city to a screeching halt. Restaurants and businesses are closed, municipal services are strained, and families are stranded at home. No facet of life and no sector of the urban economy is untouched by the pandemic, but certain areas have borne the brunt of this trauma.

New York City is experiencing an unprecedented crisis, but the front lines are in The Bronx.

The borough is one of the hardest-hit areas in the United States. With over 31,000 confirmed cases accounting for almost a quarter of all cases, The Bronx claims the dubious distinction of the highest per capita rate of infection of New York City's five boroughs, as well as the highest fatality rate.

Preliminary studies also indicate that infection rates are closely tied to income and race. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the virus kills black and Latino New Yorkers at roughly twice the rate of their white peers.

A study conducted by New York University's Furman Center found that high COVID-19 infection rates were linked to neighborhoods with large black and Latino populations, high proportions of overcrowded apartments, and large shares of residents without college degrees.

All three factors are common in The Bronx, where people of color make up over 90 percent of the population and a third of the population lives under the federal poverty line. The Bronx was recently ranked last among New York State's counties in health outcomes, and the borough leads the city in cases of diabetes and asthma, two underlying conditions that put patients at a significantly higher risk of death from COVID-19.

The Bronx also has a massive population of residents who work in essential industries, in healthcare, or as first responders. Of the four boroughs served by the New York City subway system, The Bronx has seen subway ridership drop the least over the course of the pandemic, an indicator of the number of essential employees commuting to and from work, while the rest of the city stays home.

"There are clear inequalities, clear disparities in how this disease is affecting the people of our city," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "The truth is that in so many ways the negative effects of coronavirus—the pain it's causing, the death it's causing—tracks with other profound health care disparities that we have seen for years and decades."

Since mid-March, when the lockdown began in earnest, the lives of New York's public-school students have been upended. Online tele-learning—once a distant, fanciful notion for most parents—is now a blunt reality. Students and families, educators and administrators, are navigating uncharted waters. Every day, they grapple with technological hurdles and manage constantly shifting schedules and academic expectations.

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) have canceled or postponed certain academic requirements, such as the state Regents Exam, a standardized test that all students must take

in order to graduate. Still, it is important to maintain and support academic excellence in this transitional period, while supporting the socio-emotional needs of students and families.

The Bronx Institute at Lehman College has adapted to this tumultuous landscape. Though in-person programming has ceased, staff members continue to provide services to all students, across all grants, through teleconferencing software and over the phone.

"Although our methods may have changed, we are as committed to our mission as ever: to enhance educational opportunities and close the academic achievement gap among Bronx students," says Professor Herminio Martinez, Ph.D., Executive Director of The Bronx Institute. Bronx Institute Deputy Director Bruce Irushalmi went on to say, "This work is harder than ever before, but it needs to be done. If we don't deliver now...then when?"

The situation on the front lines—removed from speeches and cold statistical tables—is dire, but there is hope.

Organizations are expanding services and performing work they never thought possible just a few short weeks ago.

Neighbors are helping neighbors.

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MIKITA VASILEUSKI

Coronavirus Crisis

Schools are closed, and we all must sit at home. It was unexpected for me, and, I never experienced something like this before. I am confused, I feel like a prisoner at home. I am stressing out with the amount of work we have to do now. I am missing my friends, but we can't even meet. It is hard for me to think of school, because this was my last year, and I missed so many good moments with my friends. Also, it's hard to figure out what to do next. What to do with college etc. All my hope is in the hands of GEAR UP. They have really been there for me in a rough time. They put me on a right path. They offered me new information about colleges and scholarships. And, any time I knew I could call them to ask any questions, and they would help me. They make me feel confident in my college future. And I am thankful and for their help. In this hard time, we all need support. I hope it will all be over soon.

BRONX LEADERSHIP ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL



KHAMIL ROSSET ALMONTE

Coronavirus has been the most off-putting event that has occurred in my life. It has affected me in multiple ways like closing schools for public safety. The school closing was the last step before what I saw as mass hysteria. School closing affected the amount of class time I am offered. It is not all about making my last memories as a senior, it is also about being able to feel prepared to enter college. I am taking AP English right now and I have to take my test at home, and I don't feel the slightest bit prepared for the test. Nevertheless, I must learn how to adapt to this new environment and these new learning mechanisms to get me ahead. Learning in school and over a screen will never be the same as sitting in a classroom and physically being in a learning environment. In addition, the coronavirus also impeded my last opportunity to play softball for my school and my coach. Corona has become an influential factor in everything. Softball slipped out of my hands a week before our first game and it was devastating to know that, in my last year, being a part of my softball family was over. Coronavirus has been the source of a lot of devastation not only in my life, but it is treating others way worse.

Hopefully, this blows over soon and everything will return to normal.

For now, all I can do is have faith that everything will be okay,
and I just try to deal with everything one step at
a time.

BRONX SCHOOL FOR LAW, GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE



**KIMBERLY
LUGO**
Stairs

I
climb.
Every day.
A different priority.
Slowly making progress
toward success, success, success.
No time to stop, to rest, to appreciate
the small things around me-the air, the flowers,
even the people I meet are standing in the way of
the climb.

MOTT HALL V HIGH SCHOOL



MARLEN BECERRIL

I still gaze up at the same sky
and wrap myself in its beautiful familiarity.

The melon sunsets
still look after me,
even when I'm peering through
my glossy jar.
The sun has never
looked so far.

We all dream of a better tomorrow,
in which we roll in soft lilac fields
and take in the scent.

It's a warm spring afternoon
and we have the whole world back,
almost like it never left.

They notice how everything will turn out.

It will all end the same.

The sun will always rise.

The moon will always change its phase.

New feels and will always feel
a certain way.

You know you see what I see.

All of it is an alluring beach in Hawaii
with white sand and pink seashells.

The days seem to swim away there.

And with the gush of a wave,
it's over.

The clock is ticking.

VOICES FROM THE BRONX

GEAR UP HIGH PERFORMING ACHIEVERS

**GALIBA**

Every day I wake up and I wonder, is this all over yet? Was I just dreaming? And then, I am met with the crushing news that more people have died. The numbers are decreasing which is wonderful, yet that doesn't change the fact that someone has just died. A person who had a family, who could've been a mother, a father, a sister or someone's child, has just lost their life much too soon. Waking up every morning knowing that there are people grieving loved ones, people risking their lives to help others or support their families, people unable to learn or eat and even people who feel as if they are suffocating in households, feeling as if there isn't an escape, makes me feel awful. I keep these people in my thoughts and I am constantly praying for them. I can only imagine how they feel, and I am more than thankful for what I have now. I'm thankful for the food that we are able to eat every day, the fact that I'm still able to get an education and especially that I'm surrounded by people whom I love and cherish. No matter how hard it is now, no matter how long it will take to recover, I know that we as a community can and will get through this. Each day, I feel as if I'm losing hope, but I know deep down inside that we have the strength to beat this. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, to the people on the front lines of the pandemic for being the true heroes. Not to mention, the essential workers who are also at risk and most importantly the teachers doing their best to make us feel safe while trying to motivate us. Not to mention my favorite program, HPA, for being able to adapt to the situation so quickly, providing many kids with the opportunity to learn and spreading a bit of positivity in our lives. Thank you.

COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE FOR MATH AND SCIENCE

**HARVIN**

The Coronavirus is just making me not be able to contact some people like my friends, but it has a bigger impact on my education because now I have to take online classes and it is really tedious to do the assignments. I constantly have to switch pages to different slides and criteria for an assignment and I don't really feel like I'm actually learning or in a full learning environment. I understand that this is the only way to connect with students, but I prefer going back to school than online classes and I think some teachers do too and I hope things go back to normal eventually.

VOICES FROM THE BRONX

BRONX LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



DALMA NORALES

At first, when teachers were giving out assignments through remote learning, it felt so different compared to them having and explaining their lessons in person and in class. I haven't had much contact with the outside world due to social distancing so the fact that GEAR UP has been reaching out to me and contacting me during these times has actually been good. Each day is a rollercoaster for me. I am constantly overwhelmed and behind on things. I am concerned about going to college starting in the fall of 2020 considering that everything is happening online. Nothing has changed with my family. This crisis has made me more distant from my friends. I understand that people should be reaching out to others, especially to their friends in order to help with mental support but there's no point in me sending out a text to my friends when they don't text me back. The support they do give just involves liking my posts on Instagram. I distract myself by drawing. I am a digital artist so I make digital artwork with the use of a program called Photoshop CC 2017. I mainly do portraits, but I've also been hired/commissioned to do logo designs and business card designs. It is the most positive and happiest thing I am doing. Creating art for me can be stressful because my artwork may look good to everyone else but to me. There is always something that doesn't sit right with me that others wouldn't notice. Also, I don't always draw for myself because I'm trying to make a business for myself so I accommodate what other people want and prefer.

VOICES FROM THE BRONX

NEW WORLD HIGH SCHOOL



DENNISE BARBOSA

The Corona Crisis is affecting me and my education because it is hard for us to learn through online classes since we are not be able to cover all the topics that we should learn. All our teachers are doing everything they can for us to keep learning. We are also doing our best to keep doing our homework and assignments. The concerns for my future are what I am thinking about. I still do not know what to study or what college to choose.

This crisis has affected my parents more than me because they are the ones that go outside for food, laundry and to work. One of the members of my family has stopped watching news because it is creating anxiety when you think about all the people that are suffering.

I am feeling good these days. I know that being home all day can be exhausting and can also cause anxiety, but this is for our own good and we must be patient and we must wait until things get better. I am trying to stay positive by thinking that the crisis will end soon, and everything is going to be okay.

The crisis did not change my relationship with my friends. We keep in touch to know how we are doing and if we need something. We chat and spend time having fun so that we do not get bored.

GEAR UP has offered me a lot of support by sending me emails offering me opportunities for my future.

FORDHAM HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS



Nicaulis Mercedes

Quarantine experiences

My family has been buying loads of groceries and supplies necessary for us to stay home. All we do is watch the news every day, and, it seems that only bad news is constantly being broadcast. Seems like the governors and the president are truly trying their best to get rid of this virus as quickly as possible. They are spreading awareness on the topic and emphasizing how the only way to truly get rid of this problem is if people become self-aware and cooperate with the policies put in place regarding public health. I've been anxiously eating every day and facing boredom at home. I am afraid that, at this rate, I will eat all the quarantine food we need. Social media and online school are my only distractions now. This is making me realize how much I need school for proper structure and resources. I will never take school for granted again. My teachers have been extremely helpful through this difficult process as well as my friends who I am trying to stay in contact with. Because of this virus we are not receiving proper teaching, it is negatively affecting our education, but I'll try my best to keep my grades up despite the circumstances. I mostly love staying home but I need a better and quieter environment like a library in order to be productive. I hope this public issue gets fixed soon for the sake of my education and sanity.

It has been announced that school will now be closed for the rest of the year. I won't be able to see my friends until September. At first, I felt hopeless and frustrated but after thinking about the increasing rates of this virus I now believe it was a good decision. There is no way that this could be over by April 30. It will take a while since after all, even after the virus goes away it most likely will

FORDHAM HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS



Nicaulis Mercedes

Quarantine experiences

come back during colder seasons and peak for a second time. The flu back in the day peaked twice and the second peak was much worse. Currently the State of New York has more cases than any other country. Which is a shocking and embarrassing fact, yet people still don't want to stay home. If all people were to stay home this virus would die out at a faster rate and students would be able to go back to a normal education

During this pandemic I officially have little to no social life. But that's okay with me, since I've been trying out positive activities to help me cope with being quarantined. Isolation has provided me with a lot of time for self-reflection and improvement. Since my remote education is now lasting up to a year for me I've been trying to form a new routine or schedule. After completing all school-work I start exercises and meditation. (I read an article about how they both help improve a person's mood and ease stress). On a daily basis I perform a little bit of self-care, organize/clean my room, as well as try to be socially active on social media and once I'm done with these activities I get back to school work. I strongly recommend that other teens seek remote activities or programs. Lots of organizations and schools still offer creative online programs for students. Spending time on these, can help you still have an extracurricular experience while being at home acquiring new skills and reaching into your creative side. Time at home should be used as an advantage to develop skills and talents. Being productive not only is a good distraction but also ends up being beneficial in the long run.

BRONX LEADERSHIP ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL



ANONYMOUS

Coronavirus

This crisis affected me in the most unexpected ways, not only affecting my senior year memories but affecting the way I learn. Adjusting to remote learning has been the hardest thing for me, due to the fact that I am a hands-on learner. I like to visualize what I am learning, so doing classwork without having a visual model in front of me is really challenging. Also, becoming an actual teacher for my sister so that she doesn't fall behind with her learning is equally difficult. This affected my family in a positive way because it brought us closer, although sometimes we get tired of each other and we can't wait for this to be over. GEAR UP has offered so much support, not only do I receive emails from my coach checking in on me but also information about college. GEAR UP is my only true support right now when it comes to getting ready for college, although I feel lost due to this crisis I know I have somewhere to fall back. My current concern for the future is when this is going to end, and (relating to my future) will I really have my graduation and say an actual goodbye to my teachers and friends in person. My relationship with friends is being challenged due to the fact that we don't keep in touch as much. My positive influence is my cousin, she made me realize that I need to look forward to what I want to do after this crisis is over. I want to explore new stuff like hiking and going to church and traveling. GEAR UP is also a positive influence because it gives me hope and reminds me of my purpose with college, although starting college online scares me because I don't know what to really expect. I do know though that with GEAR UP support I can accomplish whatever I desire.

BRONX LEADERSHIP ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL



JACOB WILLIAMS

Coronavirus Crisis

One way that the coronavirus has affected me is with schoolwork. Since the outbreak started and the schools closed, I have more time to complete my work. It feels like I have more freedom and control when it comes to my work. I also feel like I have been getting swarmed with emails from my teachers and it does get annoying. For a person who admires the outside as being a distraction from home, it kind of throws me off that I can only go outside a limited amount of time. Being home has me feeling more isolated than usual. I want to go outside and hang out with friends, but I am feeling overwhelmed with all this work and it is affecting my mood every day. I wake up and immediately get into the remote learning, it is frustrating.

I have been getting bored of doing work but the only work that I like to do from remote learning is exercising, math and Mandarin. I feel like my brain is getting fried from doing all of this work, I actually feel like getting a GED as a way to stop getting emails from my teachers. My mood is almost always low unless I make myself laugh because of all the work. Sometimes I can't keep up with everything because I have to focus on college and my after-school program. I like going to school but I hate doing the work that is taking over my life right now, I feel like I'm scrambled, all over the place, not being able to actually chill out.



OANH THAI

Hold out your hand when you've lost your light.
Even though I can't reach you, I can still feel your warm touch in my heart.

At the end of a tiring day

At the end of an endless day

When the sun has fallen down and won't rise back
I'll be your smile until tomorrow becomes a better day

I'll wait for you and don't worry I'll be fine alone.

Everything will be alright, the clouds will fly away and soon enough.

A rainbow will appear right before your eyes

All day, every day I want to let you know

You did a good job, you worked so hard

Even when you're tired and exhausted, all the pain that numbs

So strong, just take a breath.

It's okay to be sad and worry, just close your eyes.

Know that I'm with you even when you can't feel touches

Tomorrow may not be better than yesterday but it doesn't have to be today.

Someday, we'll reach again but for now promise you'll stay strong even when you think you're not.

Don't let the rain, leave you all gloomy and lonely

Know that there's love and care around, even in your loneliest time

I will be there to light up the night.

Hold out your hand when you've lost your light.

Even though I can't reach you, I can still feel your warm touch in my heart

At the end of a tiring day

At the end of an endless day

When the sun has fallen down and won't rise back

I'll be your smile until tomorrow becomes a better day



I'll wait for you and don't worry I'll be fine alone.

Time flies by when your not here with me but don't let it stop you.

You know that as long you keep on believing in your dreams, that someday that dream might come true.

Keep your head forward and don't stop moving to it.

Have faith in yourself, you know you can make a miracle come true.

No matter where you are, I'll be standing by you, but until we meet again

I'll wait for you, this isn't goodbye.

I believe in you, someday we'll make our dreams come true

Keep being strong, I'm here for you.

At the end of a tiring day

At the end of an endless day

At the end of a stressful day

At the end of a lonely day

At the end of a tough day

At the end of a sad day

At the end of the tunnel is a light of hope.

I'll be waiting there for you no matter what time of day it is

I'm here to make you feel better, tell me how you're feelin'.

Even when you're down, I'll tell you that "It's okay"

But you know you can never give up, soon a day awaits

I can't promise that that day will happen but keep trying even when you're wrong.

Hold out your hand when you've lost your light

Even though I can't reach you, I can still feel your warm touch in my heart.

At the end of a tiring day

At the end of an endless day

I just want you to know that you did a good job, you worked hard.

I'll be your smile and I never wipe it away.

COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE FOR MATH AND SCIENCE



ISATOU BAH

The coronavirus has affected me and my family because one of my family members caught the virus.

It was so depressing because she wasn't able to be with her family or kids as she was self-quarantined.

It was a touchy moment because it was a hard time for my family and I have a close relationship with her.

But thank god she recovered and feels better. I believe that people take the virus seriously when a loved one gets it.

NEW WORLD HIGH SCHOOL



JONATHAN BRUCE

The pandemic has affected many people, including me, in different ways like socially, financially and mentally. Because of the Coronavirus, students must stay home and take online classes. Taking online classes is not too stressful for me if I focus, but the bad part of online classes is not having a teacher there to watch over you so you have to make yourself focus and that's hard when you have your phone. At the end of the day, I get my work done before it's due so I'm not struggling with school work. I still have my High Performing Achiever classes on Saturdays, but this does not overwhelm me. We have Zoom calls with our teachers and it is nice to hear their voices. I am excited about Saturdays because my teacher's classes are fun, and we still learn.

During these times, I am in a positive/happy mood. Some things that keep me happy are playing games, especially when I play them with my friends. It also makes me happy when my parents come back from work safely. I have not been in touch with too many friends, but I talk to the closer ones. I hope the Coronavirus does not stay for too long because it might cause schools to close again in the next school year. I have to prepare for the SAT at school

because I will be more focused and learn more. I also want to see my friends and teachers.

VOICES FROM THE BRONX

NEW WORLD HIGH SCHOOL



LEIRA FONG

The coronavirus has been affecting me since day one, as a teenager and as a person. It totally changed my life in a few seconds. Staying home is not something easy for a person even though it is best for us. It has been really hard to get used to the online classes; to work hard knowing that there are people dying every day; to have questions about the Regents and promotion; how this might affect us for college applications; those questions go through my head every day.

Each day I feel stressed because of online classes, I feel bad for all the people who died without deserving it. Every day is a fight against the virus. It also concerns me that my grades from online classes might affect my college application and what grade I will get at the end of the school year.

We cannot go outside to see our friends or classmates. It is hard because we used to see each other and sometimes escape from personal problems and problems in the house. However, since most people see the negative things, I try to stick to the positive hoping that this will not be forever. I know we must be strong, and it is good to stay close with your family and do things you could not do before because you didn't have the time. I also started doing exercise to keep moving so I can stay strong for the people that may need me.

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MIA MILLER

With the COVID-19 quarantine, I'm mostly worried about my future. I'm a junior in high school meaning next year I have to submit college applications. I feel that I can't do my best with online learning and that could affect my chances of getting into my dream college. Also it is a possibility that I may not be able to retake the SATs or even take the ACT before applications are due. Even though it may not be mandatory, I feel my GPA alone may not get me where I want to go. I'm also concerned that if I do get in will Corona be around when its time for moving in? Will I also have to go to college online? I just feel there are a lot of unknowns concerning my college career.

PELHAM PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL



MICHAEL HARIPRASAD

During this period of time, this epidemic has affected me negatively but also positively. At first when this happened I was happy, but as time went on I kind of felt upset and missed going back to school and the basic norm of going outside to roam around and breathe the fresh air. This has caused me to feel negative and made me feel the need to get out and do something besides virtual school work. However, as a result of this crisis I believe there have been a significant and beneficial outcomes in my life because I have learned to use better time management and do more activities that I enjoy. When I was attending school, I did everything to make sure my grades were good. I hated the fact that I had to do nothing but school work everyday and study for academic tests. Essentially, I just felt that everything was too forced and that I didn't have time to really enjoy things because my life was centered towards school. But because of this crisis, I have the ability to create better work (I believe personally) while also doing some activities that I enjoy doing at the same time. Personally I am grateful for this time of social distancing.

NEW WORLD HIGH SCHOOL



NADIA MONIRA

Nowadays we all are scared of one thing, which is Novel Corona. This 2020 will be a mess year in most of our lives. This Corona Crisis is affecting me and my education a lot. At the beginning of remote learning, it was so hard for me to manage the time and find a place where I can sit and do all my work. At home, all the family members are now together. Moreover, my uncle and his family came from my country recently. They are new and we all stay in the same house. It is also much harder to understand all the topics and every part of the work because in school I used to get help from my teacher and friends. Still, I must work with reality. Also, staying with my laptop and phone all the time is too much for me. During this hard time GEAR UP offered support for me a lot. The coach from GEAR UP always helped me. Even though school is closed she still sets up meetings and helps us with college information. Each day the best two words to express my feelings are "bored" & "tired". I'm so tired of staying home 24/7. Also bored with laptops and technology. I love to be out. I love nature. I don't even always get time for family even though I'm at home all the time. Nowadays, I am concerned about all my classes. I need to pass with good grades. I am a junior this year, and the score I got for my SAT is not good for me. I must score higher and then start looking for colleges. However, during this time, I still have good communication with most of my friends. We always help each other if we can. We share ideas and all the teachers are there for us too. After this crisis I always will try my best to stay safe and make my family stay safe. I will also pray to God so everything will be okay very soon. We all need "a morning when we wake up and hear no more Coronavirus."

COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE
FOR MATH AND SCIENCE

NEPHERTITI MAIRS

The corona crisis is affecting me and my family in a tremendous way. To start off, my mother is a nurse and she is on the front lines battling this crisis. She works in a nursing home which is where a lot of cases are popping up. All of my classes are online so I am managing how to spend my time wisely and make sure that all my work gets done. I make sure to constantly speak to my family and friends, because this is definitely the time to keep everyone close. Online classes are more stressful than I thought they were going to be but it has helped me not procrastinate too much or else my work will pile up. Listening to music and doing my work at the same time is a great way to help me concentrate.

VOICES FROM THE BRONX

PELHAM PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL



THURIA ALJARADI

This crisis has deeply affected me and my family's relationships, some in positive ways and some in negative ways. First, I feel like the bond between me and my parents has grown stronger and I have started to be more open with them. I also have been talking to them a lot in Arabic which I struggled with because I know more English. On the other hand, my relationship with my sister went downhill. We were like close friends but now since we're stuck together for 24/7 we (mostly me) get annoyed with each other. Sometimes we would want to actually fight each other, but I have to go back to reality and realize she is only 10 (but has a mouth of a teen). Another thing I struggle with is trying to wake up my baby brother in the morning for school. I have to deal with him hitting me and crying just to get him out of bed in order for him to video call his teacher in the morning. I just wish the CDC finds a cure soon because I don't know how I'm gonna survive...alone... as a 17 year old... with 3 younger siblings.



ANONYMOUS

Bored at Home

I'm really bored at home, really really bored
Looking at the floor, very very bored
Doing lots of work, very very much
Oversleeping too, really really lazy

Eat the same breakfast, getting really old
Falling asleep, done before
I'm really really bored, very very bored.



TADELIN DE LEON

Pixels

Days repeat consistently,
Like how the clock ticks repeatedly
Although time may be passing
The same day keeps dragging
The world has stopped
But time still keeps going
Because unlike humans
Time can keep flowing
It's difficult not asking when will this end
As I listen to the glitched voices of my friends
Seeing the barren wasteland that has become our world
The state of society that is unearned
But I do have
Wires
Wires that keep all my friends attached
Even though our voices may be a little mismatched
Wires that can connect me to other people
Showing that life like this can still be peaceful
I do have
Screens
That can show me faces that had begun to fade
All that they've done and all that they've made

Melodies and harmonies that I can still practice
See and hear things that keep me from madness
I do have
Pixels
Red, blue, and green
That can show me new worlds and everything in between
Distractions from the world and what its become
All at the tips of my fingers and thumbs
Although pixels could never become reality
And can't prevent any of life's fatalities
Even though all my knowledge and all my synthesis
Can tell me how virtual sunlight can't cause
photosynthesis
Pixels can connect us when the world won't let us
When it's too dangerous to even take the bus
When face to face is no longer an option
There are still headphones that can ease my conscience
The world may have stopped
Our homes may be cells
But time has kept going
So we must, as well

PELHAM PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL



A. SINGH

Being someone who has no siblings, each day my feeling of loneliness grows as I am no longer able to see my closest friends every weekday like I used to. I feel as if those close friends are the closest thing to actual siblings, and I dearly miss the way we would all interact in person every morning or during the one class we are all together in. They bring joy to my day when I get to see them, and this isolation increases my desire to hang out with them again. However, this period of isolation has also increased my creative thoughts, which led to me creating more digital art than usual. With this, I am put to ease as drawing is one of the most calming activities I can do. In essence, I may miss my best friends dearly, but I am also appreciative of this opportunity to be more inspired and create as much artwork as possible. The time will come soon where I am able to spend time with my best friends in person again.

BRONX SCHOOL FOR LAW, GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE



ANONYMOUS

Some people can't get food
 But we think it's all good
 till no money comes to the hood
 we act all mad but on the inside we are sad
 but glad that COVID-19 didn't take away our dads
 people can't sleep and refuse to eat
 Quarantine may be "hurting" teens
 but it's for their safety and that's the tea
 people may be worried about their friends
 when people's lives are coming to a end
 caronavirus came in like mily cirus said "like a wrecking ball"
 even if i miss the halls, I will still give every thing my all
 I know we will back some day...
 acting all crazy but for now don't feel down or have a frown.

CELIA CRUZ BRONX HIGH SCHOOL OF MUSIC



ALEXANDER ESTRELLA

Bittersweet

You
Put your
Life into this
Tears, sweat, stress for
What? A piece of paper
A diploma that says you made
It? A stamp that says you're well Rounded?
A paper that shows you learned something.
You're not getting that! But that is okay right?
You didn't care about it, you joked that it wasn't
worth anything anyways right? So why do you care?
You can't walk across that stage or say bye to your peers?
But you're happy you're not gonna have to see them right?
You won't miss them right? So you spent 12 years and
you're not getting that paper. I'm sorry.

xxxx

PELHAM PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL



ANAHYT MARIN CHAZARI

Covid-19 has affected me in good and bad ways. During this pandemic I was just lost and I didn't know what to do. I just sat there on my bed watching makeup and other videos. I was slacking off with my work and my homework was just adding up. I felt a lot of stress and I was turning real lazy. I was so bored that I decided to put a screen protector on my phone, but the result of doing this ruined my social life and then everything went downhill. I don't want to get into too detail but let's just say my phone later fell and never turned on no matter how many times I tried. This meant I couldn't go on Instagram anymore, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter or play any of my favorite games. I couldn't go on any of my apps. So then I was even more bored. I was just able to use my computer, but it's not the same. Honestly now I am thankful this happened. I was so bored that I decided one day to get up and start doing things I used to do. I set a daily routine for myself. I used my school planner to note any Google meets and homework. Doing that has helped me catch up with my homework and my English teacher has helped and motivated me to complete his English assignments which I did. I have completed most of my work so far and I'm really proud of myself. I started meditating, painting, drawing again and trying out new things that I've always wanted to try out. I learned as the result of this pandemic that it's good to get off your phone and do something you like to do including painting, trying out or styling clothes, setting a routine for yourself, using a planner, journaling, meditating and just give yourself a phone break and self care time . I am learning how to be confident and comfortable with myself and try new things. After missing school work and having my phone damaged there was a good outcome which I'm happy for. But I am hoping that this virus leaves soon because I miss going to Target.

VOICES FROM THE BRONX

VOICES FROM THE BRONX

WEST BRONX ACADEMY FOR THE FUTURE



WANDA SALAZAR

My Life During Covid-19

Two months ago, I would have never imagined that we would not be in school and that it would be because of a pandemic. Things changed for us all so quickly in a matter of weeks. At the beginning, I did not realize that this would be a worldwide problem and that we would end up in quarantine.... and then it hit me. At first, I was excited, fairly sure everyone was, we no longer had to wake up so early in the morning to go see the same faces every day and do work. Literally everyone on social media was begging for school to close for longer. And then it did. About 4 weeks in I started to get tired of my house, there was nothing to do other than go to the living room, bedroom or bathroom, I had little communication with my friends, the amount of work given was unbearable, and cases of COVID were rising in the United States. I was literally going insane. The situation started to sadden me, and isolation made it even worse, and numbers just kept rising. Eventually, it got worse in New York and that is when I started to get worried. I prayed for those who were sick, my family, friends, and everyone in the world. I never had any close relatives who got the virus until my pastor who is also my uncle got it, I was told he was in intensive care. Even though I knew he would be fine I could not help but worry about it. I continued my prayers for him and everyone else and gathered my thoughts.

Being at home was boring and the situation was not getting any better I decided to think about the good things. It is a time for the planet to restore itself since we have been so

WEST BRONX ACADEMY FOR THE FUTURE



WANDA SALAZAR

My Life During Covid-19

hard on it, constantly polluting the air, harming animals, adding toxic chemicals, littering and so on. This time would also help us appreciate being together and having family and friends around. Now that I have more time at home I decided to take advantage of it and stay positive. Since my excuse for not working out and reaching my body goals was school and “not having time”, I now have time to be active and workout. I manage to do all my schoolwork on time and my grades started getting better than ever. My friends started a group in which we would host Zoom meetings and have a movie night occasionally, so my communication with them got better. I started to get consistent with growing my hair and keeping my skin clear and eating healthy. My pastor was out of the hospital so much faster than I anticipated and we were back to our virtual church classes and overall mood and confidence went back up. Even though times are hard I am staying around positive influences. I appreciate having extra time with my family since I only see my mom and dad for less than half of my day, I appreciate having my family and everyone I know healthy. With my teacher’s support, I can manage my time and stay on task, they reach out to me and ask about me and my family. Even during this crisis, with GEAR UP help, I can plan for my future, decide what colleges I’m interested in and try to maintain things as normal as possible. The situation may last a while but I’m still hopeful for the future. I hope that once this is over, we can all go back to our normal lives and be together once again.

Voices from The Bronx