

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Intro:

Rose: Every generation has had monumental moments and periods that they will forever remember. For my peers and I one of those will always be the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm Rose Moll and today I'll be talking with two of my classmates, Jacob Hicks and Sarah Redmond, about their experiences during the pandemic and how that affected their transition and adjustment to high school.

Sara's Interview:

Rose: Hey Sara thanks for coming to this interview today.

Sara: You're so welcome.

Rose: So, my first question is gonna be... so what were your first thoughts (because we're talking about COVID-19) what were your first thoughts when the schools closed.

Sara: I was like man this is great I got two weeks off. So, OK and this was like my situation.

Rose: Yeah.

Sara: I was severely bullied in 8th grade like I like I did not have friends, I had Gianna and that's it, and like it was a very toxic situation for me so when COVID hit I was like man this is great! Like I don't have to deal with them for two weeks, I have a whole two weeks to myself and my mental health! And then after those two weeks I was like, I'm lonely like sure they were horrible to me but at least like I had social interaction. And then we were out for the whole like restless school year and basically how our school did it was like you could do stuff but your grades weren't like, you could only positively affect like impact your grades like your grades were frozen unless you did stuff. So basically the only way to keep me occupied was I had all hundreds in my classes so I didn't need to do the school work but I did, and I spent a like I spent weeks at a time like at Gianna's house and stuff because like I had nothing to do at mine.

Rose: Yeah.

Sara: And I remember like during COVID like I completely cut ties with like half of my grade because like and that was like my excuse was COVID I don't wanna talk to you anymore and I like have never talked to these people since except for the people that came to collegiate. And so COVID was a great excuse to like stop talking to people and overtime like at the start it positively affected my mental health because I wasn't getting bullied anymore, but throughout the whole thing like I was just getting depressed and lonely. Even with like my weekly trips to Gianna's and like doing video calls and stuff, I just wanted to like go to the farmers market man and like go do stuff. It was very sad and lonely and my mom was like go for a walk and I was like I've done that for three weeks now I don't want to anymore! I'm so sad! But I mean like in 2020 it was like woohoo! And 2021 I was like noooo. Then I read about people dying and I was like oh this is really sad, I mean it was like fine for me but-

Rose: Because it wasn't affecting you as much in that way.

Sara: Well yeah, and, so I had also developed this anxiety because my dad was a frontline worker I mean he had to go to target every day and so because people needed food. And so he had basically like he wasn't in the hospitals but he was out with people every single day and people who weren't wearing masks and people who were sick and like coming out, and so I had like basically developed this fear of him getting COVID. And like he's a part of an older generation like my parents waited a long time to have me and so it's that fear of my parents are part of that group of people who if they get it they have a high chance of dying. And so I was very scared of my dad catching COVID when it was very high when it was rampant and, dying because what were we gonna do. Like funeral homes were like booked from like what like- I would lose my dad and like yeah.

Rose: That sounds really stressful.

Sara: It really was! I mean like and he's caught it like after the rampantness but like that was after the vaccines and stuff when he caught it so he was OK. But like definitely during like 2020 that fear of my dad going out and like not coming back is very high.

Rose: For sure, so you kind of talked about how like it was sad after a while because you're like wait I don't have people I can talk to anymore. So what did you do to kind of like help cope with that, and like that mentality. Did you just like, did you do anything? Or did you just like stay at home.

Sara: I spent a lot of time at home and as I said before I spent a lot of time at Gianna's but I also spent a lot of time on YouTube. An uncomfortable amount of time and I spent a lot of time on like discord and Instagram I just spent a lot of time on my phone. But I also like went out and did like weekly runs and like I walked with my mom a lot and we talked and like I made a lot of food like that's when I got into my baking era. And it was like I just did like things to keep my brain occupied for a few hours at a time and then I'd inevitably go back to my phone, which like kind of made it worse, but also like you had nothing to do, you stayed at home for hours. You couldn't go out and do stuff so I mean like you would go to your phone because you like what were you supposed to do. I also spent a lot of time on Netflix I had gotten Gianna's password to it because she wanted me to finish Stranger Things right before COVID had hit and so I spent hours- like I watched Anne With An E. I finished that whole thing, such a good show. I started watching great British Bake Off, I watched Umbrella Academy, I watched Stranger Things like I watched a bunch of movies like I like finished shows and movies and stuff for like hours. I also tuned into like I got really into Minecraft again during that, during the pandemic and so I would start watching Twitch streams and like live streams of people playing Minecraft and like I would build myself houses. Basically when I was younger when I played Minecraft I would create stories in my head I started doing that again because I was so bored I was like let me just use my imagination and like create like a world and just build stuff and like have a story with it because I had nothing better to do.

Rose: OK so doing things, very cool, so we all started high school online, right. that was pretty weird like how what was it like for you to do that. Like going from not really having much human interaction like for like 8th grade and that whole thing was getting bullied and then not having - like lock down and then meeting people but like not for real, like how is that.

Sara: So first semester definitely sucked I was lonely, I was bored out of my mind I did not want to do online school. So the first days were very stressful because I live in an old house, our Wi-Fi sucks and so I get so stressed out about joining meetings on time. It was so bad. I remember on the first day of B days I had gotten really bad cramps and so I like I had forgotten to turn my camera off and I had to go throw

up and my dad was standing in frame just staring at the computer and I was like this is my moment where like I die.

Rose: Oh gosh.

Sara: And like no one else remembers, this but I was like surely it's somewhere because I remember it vividly. But it's like those like moments where like you could just leave the class and do other stuff, and I remember like creating judgments of people who had their cameras on. Like Jacob, we had gym together so I saw him on like the second day of school first thing in the morning. He had his camera on with his American flag in the background, I was like oh that's a republican, oh no like he's gonna be so mean and Southern and stuff and I was like oh God here we go. Then I also remember like doing online assignments which that was great, things due at 11:59, I don't know what I would be doing in high school without it like my life would be so different. I remember on my birthday I had gotten invited to a Discord server or it was around my birthday, because it was because of a government project and someone had started like a school Discord server and so they were inviting people to join. And I remember joining and that's where I really like where I made my first friends. Like I met Giada there and like we became really close, and I met like I resumed contact with Ava after COVID, and like I was talking to a bunch of people who had moved to Collegiate but also people who like I didn't know before. So that definitely like improved my mental health because we would do like nightly calls for like hours at a time and we just sit there and like talk. Talk to people and like actually talk, like we could talk about the teachers, we could talk about homework assignments and like what you guys are doing, like how you're doing this. That was like definitely a major improvement to everything it definitely like it definitely helped my mental health.

Rose: Oh for sure, so, since we started online how do you think it would have been different if we started in person. Like if COVID hadn't happened what do you think would have been different.

Sara: My grades would have been very different. Personally, the 11:59 thing for assignments is a godsend and I like don't know how I did life without it. I feel like I definitely - I feel like I would have had different friends. Because when I had come to collegiate I was depressed I mean we all were but like I had that bullying background and so I didn't want to talk to anyone who came from Premier. So I really tried to go out of my way to like meet with new people no matter like how anxious I was to like be in public again. And I remember just like, being like you're a new person you're my friend now. Like Jacob was my first like in person friend that I had met because Giada was like going on a snowboarding trip so I was like very anxious because I would have no one, basically at school. And I remember like meeting Jacob, and meeting Arnez and just being like you're my friends now. And like and Jamie. Jacob, Arnez and I, we all had gym together and we were the only people in gym class because it was hybrid. And then during lunch like Jamie sat with us and that's like just what we did for the first week. It was just me, Jamie, Arnez, and Jacob.

Rose: I was so jealous. I was watching you guys in the cafeteria like they're all friends, I should meet them.

Sara: I wanna be friends with them too. But like I feel like I would have had different friends I feel like I would have been more integrated with the Premier group than I am now because like, they're a whole group and I'm over here with our Christian Crew, and it definitely would have been a different experience. I feel like our assignments would have been different like how rigor it was would have been

different as well. And so I feel like my outlook on assignments and like homework and classes would have been very different because like in eighth grade I was a perfectionist and then like sophomore years like this is dumb like why am I a perfectionist this is like there's no point. But so if we had gone straight in person I definitely would have kept up that perfectionist mentality of like this needs to be done perfectly and as soon as possible and I definitely still have that sometimes because like not as bad as it was in eighth grade.

Rose: For sure well OK so you definitely did not like the online part of high school, it sucked, and so obviously in person seemed to be better do you like agree with the whole thing with it's like hybrid, like that you could go online if you were sick. Do you think that's still a good option for people?

Sara: I think that for me missing class is very stressful especially at a school like this where like you do stuff every day it doesn't matter. I think being able to go online and stuff that like can definitely get rid of that anxiety of like I can still be in class and like get work done even though I am sick but it also promotes that you can't unplug from work mentality like you can't take a break. So I think it does have some positives and negatives to it, like positives are like you don't fall behind and like you can still like keep up with work, negatives are you don't unplug and like you don't take time if you're sick to make yourself feel better like you don't take rest you're just working, working, working even though you are sick. So I definitely think that hybrid was a great idea for during COVID but I think getting rid of hybrid was also very healthy for us, because now we have to unplug when we leave school and we like have to basically take time if we're sick to stay home and like rest and like not continue to do work even though we like parse it.

Rose: OK last question of the day, do you feel like COVID has overall made high school a less pleasant experience or more so, like do you think it's more negatively or positively impacted high school for you.

Sara: Well, that's aside from COVID because that was pretty negative.

Rose: Yeah.

Sara: Freshman year second semester was so much fun because of the hybrid and because I got so close to people, especially track. Oh my gosh that was so fun and like I really like having that hybrid schedule because it was so easy and like I like spent majority of my time hanging out with my friends like art class freshman year was so much fun because we were in person for half of it. I definitely like I felt bad for the people who weren't in person but also I was like, I have more friends than you, like I am closer to my friends. I definitely developed a better like teacher student relationship with the faculty here and it definitely like, I think it was great it was so fun freshman year and sophomore year was so fun but like now everyone's here also crowded.

Rose: Yeah, so you're definitely partial to smaller classes.

Sara: I'm so partial to them.

Rose: So partial.

Sara: Like I hate huge classrooms, like you don't learn it you just like it's a lecture basically like you can't I feel like part of me personally I don't like asking questions like in front of the crowd. I feel bad so small classrooms for the win.

Rose: Yeah, alright well thank you so much Sarah for doing this interview with me.

Sara: You're so welcome thank you for having me.

Jacob's Interview:

Rose: Hey Jacob thanks for doing this interview with me today.

Jacob: Thank you.

Rose: OK so talking about COVID and like transitioning to high school and stuff with that, so you were home schooled right.

Jacob: Yep.

Rose: So like what was that like for you, first of all what was it like when schools first closed because it didn't really affect you because you were home schooled like what were you, like did it affect you at all when they close for COVID.

Jacob: Well it affected me to a degree so I was home schooled, since I was you know since I started school I've been school all my life up until, high school obviously. But I did do Co-op which is basically like there were very few like select classes that I did take outside of the house. I took art and science and literature with like classes with other people and other homeschoolers and those did stop. It was kind of like this time period where like no one weren't sure. They were like you know we're gonna talk we need to not be together so we can't have classes but like I said it was only a couple of my classes so it wasn't huge have a huge effect on me, I thought it was I thought it was funny because like my science teacher filmed videos for us and she would like post them to like this Google album every week and I just thought it was so funny watching her do that. And like my literature teacher, she was on top of it we pivoted, and I think honestly like funny that some people about how like their school like to have a plan and couldn't get up like my literature teacher just straight pivoted to doing zoom meetings and we had class for the rest of the year. So in some ways it didn't affect me I mean I didn't get to see people from Co-op a ton but the thing is a lot of my friends that like overlapped between Co-op and that we made like I was already like friends with and we already hung out a lot together and so we had a couple hangouts.

Rose: Nice, nice. Okay so, throughout the next few months because you didn't have school and stuff like how did you deal with lockdown?

Jacob: I mean for me was a very peaceful time, some people some people it was really bad and I totally get that and I understand how it could be bad for some people for me it was just, it was really nice. So being homeschooled is, I don't know some people, everybody's different but like for me I had a very set schedule like you always did it's like you know I get up I do the same subjects in the same order and just get it done and then I like eat lunch and then I do like homework and like work for my other classes in the afternoon and then I'm done. I'd usually be done around 12:31 each day, sometimes if I'm just taking a long time or have a lot of reading to do it's like two or three like normal school time I guess but like normally done and have the rest of the day to just do stuff. I'd play video games, I took the dog on a lot of walks, I started running during a long time was my big thing, obviously you know I still run today it's a big part of who I am now and I'm really happy I discovered that then.

Rose: Yeah.

Jacob: I mean I just I had a very I got done, I got always got my school done early and I just had the rest of the day to chill. I just remember so many good times just out in nature walking the dog being in the park just a lot of fun times to just chillax. Lockdown for me was a very peaceful time. I got into playing Animal Crossing oh I played a lot of Animal Crossing, it was very peaceful.

Rose: Very cool OK, so that's good. So what was it like for you to start high school online? Like it's a big transition and you started it without seeing anybody.

Jacob: I know it was very weird I mean I've interviewed other people as well and it's like I said you know it's just it's not how I envisioned my high school experience at all. I don't know I mean honestly being homeschooled like so much of what I thought starting high school be like would be like what I saw like Disney Channel movies, just like the drama and the parties the pomp and circumstance and all that stuff I just thought I was gonna be so it was very, it was very different. I mean it was very it was isolating in a way because I was like nobody I know I knew from being homeschooled went to the school and obviously I've made a lot of friends I've realized that we've had connections in the past that I didn't realize, but I still didn't know anybody like it was like I literally knew absolutely no one. So starting online was hard because like I just did anybody and you know you can only make friends online to a degree like you know unlike breakout rooms and stuff you can talk and be like I like that person but you don't know that person like they're fun to talk during class but I don't know them. We don't hang out outside of school and we don't have time to talk about who we really are and stuff. So anything it was just it was not what I envisioned and it was weird. But I just remember, I don't know, it's really funny I judged people a lot.

Rose: So did Sarah.

Jacob: To be honest I just like made so many assumptions about people and like create a little like storylines in my head of who they are and yeah. It was a problem because you have like these images in your head of who this person is and obviously they may not live up to that and that might just not be who they are. But yeah it was very different in in ways isolating, but I mean they like you know I still had my friends from being homeschooled and we still hung out. I remember like during August and September of 2020 like when we started we played tennis a bunch together so like I still had social stuff I saw people to hang out with it was just different not what I envisioned.

Rose: Yeah that's fair. So what do you think it would have been different, how would high school have been different if you started it in person? Like would your friends be different, would like how you viewed it be different?

Jacob: Yeah I think my friends are probably definitely different because obviously you know we're now in a friend group but that like really formulated and really got cemented like midway through sophomore year. My friend group freshman year started because when we did go in person it was just who I started sitting with at lunch and they invited me to join discord and then I got involved with like friends there. But I think if I had gone in-person from the start I probably would have made very different friends I feel like I just like everything would've been different you know. It's just like if all the circumstances had been different like class would be different I would been with different people so many things probably would have changed. I feel like for sure I would have made different friends I also

just probably feel like honestly I probably would be a different person now. Because I feel like during these three years of high school like who I am has changed so much from who I was when I started coming out of 8th grade, so I feel like had I started in-person my experience would have been totally different which would have changed me into a different person for sure.

Rose: Okay, so going kind of off of that do you think the lockdown and like COVID and stuff like had a net positive effect on your high school experience or a net negative?

Jacob: Hmm that's an interesting question, like when I think about the things, like the ways that COVID affected my high school experience, like some of it is like when I think about the ways that it like affected me, I don't know it's hard. Like some of it was like obviously, it was bad like isolation and not being with people starting online, it was very different, it was isolating but then like I said also I've met the people that I met because we like went online later and because of how things went down. So I would say overall I mean I think the lockdown had a net positive on me as a person, on my high school experience though I don't know, I think it's honestly been kind of neutral. Because I just feel like we've all, our school collectively at large, I mean everybody, all schools that have been affected by this you know we've kind of kind of had to live with it. So I think it's just like this is how it's happened, it is what it is, this is how it went down.

Rose: Yeah, that's totally fair, okay, well that's all I have for you today thank you so much for talking with me and have a great day!

Jacob: Thank you!

Conclusion:

Thanks to Sarah and Jacob's accounts, I all the others who listen to this recording will be able to understand a little better what students were going through in the pandemic. First hand accounts like this are important so that we as a society can better empathize with one another and learn about the history of our past. I hope these interviews accomplished this goal. So with that I'm Rose Moll and that was an interview session with Sarah Redmond and Jacob Hicks about their experiences as students in the COVID-19 pandemic