

Covid_chester_ellie

Cara: Today is August 26, we at the Ashland Library are interviewing Ellie Chester, who is visiting family in Ashland, Kansas. Ellie, when did you first hear about the coronavirus?

Ellie: I was in school and every morning we watch CNN 10 and they mentioned something. It was just a brief segment about a virus in China.

Cara: What was your reaction when you first heard about it?

Ellie: I didn't really have much of a reaction. I thought, "Oh, OK, just a virus. It'll go away like nothing."

Cara: Did you think it would affect you personally?

Ellie: Not really. I didn't think it would get outside of China.

Cara: And where do you live and who lives in your home with you, like with your family, whatever.

Ellie: I live in Algiers, Algeria, and my mom, dad and little brother live with me.

Cara: When Covid hit. Were there any changes that had to be made in your home?

Ellie: I started online schooling and then they put down lockdown hours so we couldn't leave our house within certain times.

Cara: OK. When did the virus really first start to affect you then?

Ellie: It was... I can't tell you the exact month, but it really kind of hit and made sense that this was a real thing when my school did move to online.

Cara: How do you feel about online schooling?

Ellie: I do not like online schooling. I like to be there in person so my teacher can help me and show me through things.

Covid_chester_ellie

Cara: I think it's one of those things we all just had to get through. This is a question that... how did you feel when your school closed?

Ellie: To be honest, I didn't think it would last very long. So I was kind of excited thinking, you know, "Yay, no school," but it turned out to really not be good.

Cara: It seems like you were still doing school work when you first came to Ashland, I'm trying to remember, but weren't you still doing some schoolwork?

Ellie: Yes.

Ellie: Yeah.

Cara: OK. Were there changes that were so gradual, so incremental that you really didn't notice them at first?

Ellie: Yes, I had a baby-sitting job and I slowly noticed that people were calling less and less and because they were just trying to be safe. And I just thought that maybe since it was almost time for people to start moving again, maybe that was it. And then I kind of realized that a lot of people just wanted to be safe and not have their kids exposed to anything.

Cara: And if you can't go out after 7:00 at night.

Ellie: Yeah.

Cara: OK, so it impinged your money-making abilities didn't it?

Ellie: Very much so.

Cara: OK. What is your family situation right now?

Ellie: My dad is still in Algeria, along with all of our stuff and my cat, and my mom and little brother here in Ashland.

Cara: OK, and your dad's coming to get you hopefully...

Covid_chester_ellie

Ellie: Yeah, in a couple of weeks, three weeks. Yeah, hopefully he'll be here, but he won't have time to quarantine.

Cara: OK, so you'll have to go. Who's feeding your cat?

Ellie: Well, right now my dad is feeding my cat, but when he comes, we have a housekeeper, so she will be doing that.

Cara: So the cat's going to be OK?

Ellie: Yeah.

Cara: When do you think life will get back to normal for you?

Ellie: I have no idea. None of us really know anything here. I don't think that we can do this forever. I think it's going to be kind of like the flu and not go away. But I don't think we should treat it super special just because it's here.

Cara: You think we may just have to get used to it?

Ellie: Yeah, yeah.

Cara: If we have to get used to it, then what we consider "normal" will be different from what it was a year ago. What things do you think we will have to do in this new normal?

Ellie: Most likely, I would think we'd have to keep wearing masks in public, washing our hands even more regularly and sanitation will be very important, much more.

Cara: What's your reaction to all this now, how do you feel about it?

Ellie: Don't like it. I don't like how everything's different and we can't even talk to friends or family in person. I don't like that.

Cara: You're just unhappy with the changes. OK, well, when your dad gets back, at least your

Covid_chester_ellie

family will be together. I knew you were here visiting your grandparents who both live in Ashland. I think both your parents were raised at least part of their lives in Ashland.

Ellie: Right.

Cara: So you have a lot of ties to people here.

Ellie: Yes.

Cara: So I'm glad you got to come back and at least... We think of Ashland as a little bubble where we're kind of safe and happy.

Ellie: Yeah, it's definitely better in Ashland, very different than even Dodge.

Cara: Will you be in a safe little bubble when you go back to Algeria?

Ellie: Maybe people have started to not necessarily care less, but my dad has hosted a party with some of his friends and he gets together with his other friends to work out. So I feel like we will be in the bubble of the embassy, but I think that it'll still be very different outside of our embassy bubble.

Cara: OK.

Cara: Ma'am, is there anything else that you would like to say that in 20 years people could read and try to understand how Covid affected a young woman this time?

Ellie: All I can say is that I do not like it and want it to end.

Cara: Thank you very much.