

# THE IMAGINE SOCIETY

JUNE 3, 2020



SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING HOPE  
KIDS QUARANTINE EDITION VOLUME 7!



“I don’t think of all the misery,  
but of the beauty that still remains.”  
- Anne Frank

## HOPE

by Elle Ferretti-Gray

It seems to me that we only put value on hope during times of hopelessness. Those are the times we need hope the most, because hope can combat bleak, dark thoughts. These days, it seems that on the news and in the media there is big emphasis on how awful everything in the world is right now, and how we have to look for hope. I don’t think people have to look for hope, or create hope. There is hope all around us, in everything we do.

I feel hopeful when I talk to people. I feel hopeful when I talk to my friends and we talk about the wonderful things that we have learned about ourselves or new interests we have discovered during quarantine. I feel hopeful when I talk about how I have rediscovered my love of Elton John and



by Audrey Cho (11)

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*The Lord of the Rings* books. I feel hopeful when I see the leaves in the oak tree by my window get greener with each passing day. I feel hopeful when I talk to my mom, and she tells me about the walking paths she discovered in Central Park. There is hope all around us, in every action we take and every word we hear.

Now, more than ever is the time to seize the hope all around us, to let it be a lifeline, a reminder of better times. It is easy to despair when everything is going wrong, but it is far more worthwhile to fight off the negativity around us. Positivity can only help, it is the most wonderful driving force in the world. Those with positive attitudes are so much fun to be around, and it is people with positive attitudes that I miss the most. To continue to keep a positive outlook is almost impossible, but it is especially important now because it will make the return to normal life that much sweeter. It will all be worth it when we can see our friends again, when we can hug them and tell them how much we missed them. It will be worth it when our lives go back to normal, because they will.

We put value on hope during times of hopelessness, but hope does not exist solely during dark times. Hope is everywhere eternally. I am hopeful for the day that my life will return to normal, because I want to be. I want my life to return to normal, and I choose to have hope that it will. I am hopeful not because it is the most positive way to channel my energy at the moment, I am hopeful because I always feel the need to hope. Even when my life is going perfectly, I have hope. Hope is the most magnificent universal unifier in the world, because hope is everywhere and it is free.

*Elle Ferretti-Gray (15) is in 9th grade at Avenues the World School*



Great essay Elle! :)

Follow us on Instagram! @theimagesociety



Thank you Audrey!

### A NOTE ABOUT THE ARTIST

We've been so impressed by new friend of The Imagine Society Audrey Cho (11). She has been sending beautiful and inspirational artwork almost daily for our #messagesoflove campaign. Her artwork is gracing the cover of our HOPE issue as well as seen here. When we heard she was working on a new masterpiece specifically for the newsletter we were overjoyed! We're honored to be able to share it with you in this issue (page 9). Thank you to her mother Julia Cho who wrote an incredibly profound essay to accompany Audrey's piece (pages 9-10). We hope you will enjoy!



# SPECIAL FEATURE: ACTIVE HOPE

The Imagine Society hears the passionate cry of our young members as they remain hopeful that joining together, they can rise up from beneath the wreckage and rubble to be a unifying force for meaningful change in a broken society. A powerful generation committed to reestablishing the fundamental principles of what it means to be an American: Equality, Justice and Fairness for all. We strive to give this next generation of leaders an outlet for their ideas and emotions as well as opportunities to engage in peaceful activism and to communicate with elected officials to end voter suppression, systemic racism and economic inequality. We draw inspiration from the great leaders of the past as we hold onto the optimism and enthusiasm of our young leaders to guide us into a better future.

“...Freedom is an endless horizon, and there are many roads that lead to it. We must walk arm in arm with other men, and we must struggle toward goals which are commonly desired and sound. We must give and lend to the youth for stronger voice and encourage their individuality.”  
- Shirley Chisholm, Howard University Speech 1969

## I have hope for the future because...

“Despite the pandemic and racial issues happening, I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation can surpass all the injustice going on around us in which we change the world for the better, as well as handling such viruses in a correct and responsible manner.” - Dayelin De La Cruz (17)

“I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation can be a good example that the color of your skin should not matter.” - Sheick Kourouma (19)

“I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation can endure the pains that it will take to grow and change.” - Emily Blumstein (20)

“I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation will keep working together to overcome and overthrow the systems of power that discriminate against, and harm people of color, LGBTQIA+ people, and all other minorities.” - Lucy Geer (16)

“I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation can work together and solve problems peacefully. I have hope my generation will change things.” - Audrey Cho (11)

“Le pedimos a dios por todas las familias de este mundo existe una gran desesperacion por toda las situaciones que estamos atravesando de tantas controversias y tantos sentimientos encontrados pedimos a dios que nos ayude y nos de fuerzas para poder soportar tanta inestabilidad que estamos pasando en este momento pero mantendremos la esperanza y la confianza en dios en que pronto todo esto pasara bendiciones amen.” - Familia Rodriguez

“I feel despair because of the horrific racial inequality in this country but I have hope that my generation is going to enact meaningful change!” - Marre Gaffigan (16)

“I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation can use non violent ways to deal with issues” - Ibrahim Kourouma (16)

“I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation can move past divisions of class, gender, and race and enact change that will improve life for future generations.” - Sebastian Huerta (16)

“I have hope for my future because I imagine my generation can help one another as a society, in unity, no matter the race or economic status of the world.” - Isabella Frias (17)

“Even though there is such darkness in the world I have hope because as a society we have changed before.” - Joseph Fitzpatrick (16)

“A quote that I’ve been thinking about during this period is “No one can be free until everyone is free.” Equality is what we should strive for, so this movement is perfect for raising our voices to ensure our needs are met.” - Sofia Corsico-Sánchez (15)

“I have hope for the future because I imagine my generation can be better than the last one.” - Sekou Kourouma (14)

“I hope the government will start to listen to us because soon we will be old enough to vote and there are a lot of elected leaders that need to be gone.” - Jack Gaffigan (14)



# HOW WE CAN HELP FIGHT RACISM

## WORDS TO INSPIRE

A Century of Great African American Speeches  
[americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech](http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech)

## SUPPORT FOR PROTESTORS

[National Bail Fund Network](#)

[The Bail Project](#)

A full list of bail funds by city can be found [HERE](#)

## DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS

[George Floyd Memorial Fund](#) (GoFundMe)

[Ahmaud Arbery Fund](#) (GoFundMe)

## TOWN HALLS/PODCASTS

TheGrio Presents: State of Black America

[facebook.com/theGrio/videos/954653608328583/](https://facebook.com/theGrio/videos/954653608328583/)

"Why The Coronavirus Is Hitting Black Communities Hardest" from NPR's Code Switch

([NPR](#) / [Stitcher](#) / [Apple Podcasts](#) / [Spotify](#))

1619 from the New York Times ([Stitcher](#) / [NYT](#) / [Apple Podcasts](#) / [Spotify](#))

## ACTIONS TO TAKE

[THIS LINK](#) includes an extensive list of resources outlining ways to help - including petitions to sign, numbers to text/call to demand justice, resources for protesters, mental health resources, and more.

Attend or Support a Protest: Learn how to safely protest during a pandemic [here](#) and [here](#). You can [virtually protest](#) also.



## ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE

[Black Lives Matter](#)

[Color of Change](#)

[Be The Bridge](#)

[Center for Policing Equity](#)

[The Innocence Project](#)

[The Black Youth Project](#)

[NAACP Legal Defence Fund](#)

[Black Visions Collective](#)

[National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls](#)

[The Sentencing Project](#)

[Reclaim The Block](#)

[Know Your Rights Campaign](#)

[Fair Fight Initiative](#)

[Dream Defenders](#)

[Campaign Zero](#)

## RESOURCES

*13th* ([Netflix](#))

*When They See Us* ([Netflix](#))

*If Beale Street Could Talk* ([Hulu](#))

*The Hate U Give* ([Hulu](#))

"How to Talk to Your Family About Racism on Thanksgiving" by Rachel Elizabeth Cargle

[The National Museum of African American History & Culture](#) - "Talking About Race"

[Here's a thread](#) with a list of black-owned businesses that were damaged in the protests and how you can support them. [Here's another list](#) compiled by Black Lives Matter.

[Anti-Racism Work and Resources for Allies](#)



# *The Power of The Ascension Food Pantry*

## *by Dayelin De La Cruz*



The Ascension Food Pantry has become a home for me over the years. Unlike any other pantry in the city, it has always been run by the youth which makes it so much more powerful. The sense of family incorporated in the running of the pantry is what keeps everyone so engaged and optimistic. Ms. Robin has been the most inspiring and motivational person throughout my involvement in service.

Transitioning from a public school to a Catholic school for the 7th grade was undeniably difficult. I never knew what it was like to do service how I have in Ascension. I met Ms. Robin and began helping sort the food for the pantry when it had just begun, in two white closets along with some of my classmates as well as other volunteers. In turn, I questioned if the limited space for the food was enough to give out to people. However, the pantry was soon moved into a room. When I started volunteering at the distributions of the pantry, I was so grateful that I was able to do it around people my age, some who I knew, so I did not have to feel uncomfortable or pressured to do things a certain way. From sorting to giving out, I have had multiple encounters with amazing people who share gratitude for all the efforts put into the pantry. Our mission in the pantry is for the youth to do the Church's work where we serve those who are in need, in hopes that it is carried on in the future.

It was not until 2 months ago that the pantry went from serving 60-70 clients every 4th Saturday of the month and 20-30 the second Wednesday of every month, to serving over 1,000 people each month. COVID-19 has greatly affected several people everywhere and due to members of the community becoming fearful of lacking food or financially unstable to stock up, the pantry has been open every Saturday. Seeing how many people show up every weekend makes me so happy to know the pantry crew has done everything possible to aid our community. As we have all not been able to be too close in contact, the number of volunteers has greatly decreased especially the youth. Thankfully, those who have given their time throughout the current state our world is in, have made sure the job still gets done with love. Deliveries have even begun to take place! More teen volunteers are in the process of getting involved again while being cautious and the implementation of "shifts." Everyone's safety is the main concern.



**Dayelin your  
commitment to service  
and the pantry is an  
inspiration! Thank you  
for being a superstar!**



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The pantry wants everyone to feel a sense of joy and faith. As we have always done, we pray right before we start with Father Kearney leading. In addition, this weekend we will have donations from the Imagine Society, Religious Education classes, and Spirit Squad for a bake sale. The bake sale is not for profit but rather to give the clients treats. As Robin stated, "We are all thriving on the sense of pride, responsibility, comradely and gratitude in doing the Church's work."

To me, the Ascension Food Pantry is a home for all. It has shaped the way I view the world and shown how a group of people ranging in different ages can do so much to help those who need it. The people involved are so passionate. I cannot forget that without Ms. Robin, none of this would be possible. She is the glue who keeps it all together even if it means devoting all of her time to making sure people get the food they need. We, as a family, will not give up on our mission.

*Dayelin De La Cruz (17) is a junior at Loyola School*

**For more information on how you can help The Ascension Food Pantry please email us at: [outreach@theimagesociety.org](mailto:outreach@theimagesociety.org)**



Original Artwork by  
Lily Vaysman (17),  
inspired by a quote from  
poet Emily Dickinson and  
made just for this  
HOPE newsletter!

Lily is Junior at  
Stuyvesant High School  
School.

Thank you Lily!



If you would like to share what you or your group is doing, would like to contribute to the next newsletter or even be a guest editor please email us: [outreach@theimagesociety.org](mailto:outreach@theimagesociety.org)

# UPDATE! FROM OUR PANTRY TO YOURS WITH



by Joseph Fitzpatrick and Sabrina Turner

Covid-19 is, first and foremost, a health crisis but has also resulted in an enormous economic and community crisis. New York communities are devastated with some feeling disproportionate impacts of both COVID-19 and the economic consequences. Even before the pandemic started, most were living paycheck to paycheck. The city was facing a sizable homeless crisis, and too many New Yorkers were food insecure.

The Warriors Youth Group wanted to do something to help the large group of New Yorkers in need. As all of our youth group members were quarantining, we had to come up with a model where we could help but also remain safe. It was with all these things in mind helping the neediest, staying safe, and targeting a program for the food insecure that our program *From our Pantry to Your Pantry with Love* was born.

*From Our Pantry to Your Pantry with Love* is a teen led program, where teens coordinate donated food pickups from individual households and bring them to the Ascension Church Food Pantry. Ascension is serving 1,000 of New York's most needy families each month with a weekly supply of groceries. *From Our Pantry to Your Pantry with Love* connects households across the region that want to help New Yorkers facing hardships during this time.

If you or your family would like to participate in the next pantry service scheduled for June 12th, please email us at [outreach@theimaginesociety.org](mailto:outreach@theimaginesociety.org) subject "Pantry to Pantry."



Joseph Fitzpatrick (16) is a Sophomore at the High School of American Studies at Lehman College (Bronx) and Sabrina Turner (16) is a Sophomore at Marymount School of New York

Follow Saint Patrick's Warriors on Instagram! @warrioryouthnyc



# SHINING STARS!

## A SHINING STAR SUPPORTS OUR HEROES!

Ann Johnson is the Administrative Manager for the Department of Emergency Medicine and EMS Administrator for Bronx Care EMS (where she oversees a fleet of 170 EMS crew members). We first met Ann a little over a month ago when social worker Megan Fogarty reached out seeking support for their hospital. Since then Ann has been a pillar of hope and compassion for all of us at The Imagine Society. It's been an honor for us to work with her and it is clear how deeply she loves and cares for all around her. She tells us,

"I see how hard the Emergency Room staff work and how overwhelmed they were during this pandemic so with your help and the help of other donors I was able to make their days a bit lighter not having to figure out what and where they are going to get something to eat when they do get a break." Her role in the Emergency Room has afforded her the gratification of giving back to the institution and the community for which, Ann tells us,

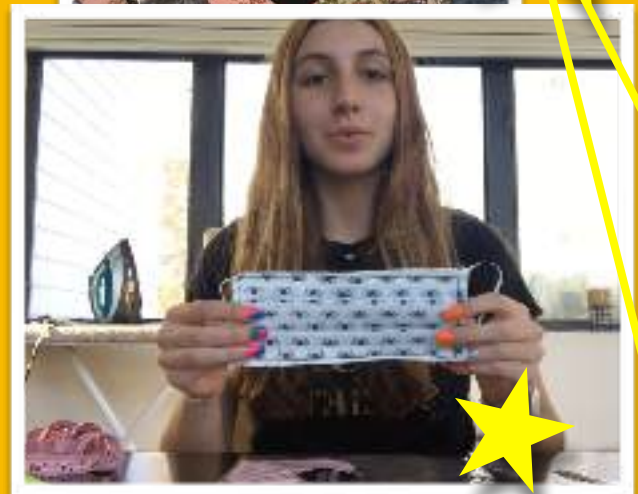
she is forever grateful.

**THANK YOU ANN FOR BEING AN EXAMPLE OF  
GRACE AND COMPASSION !**

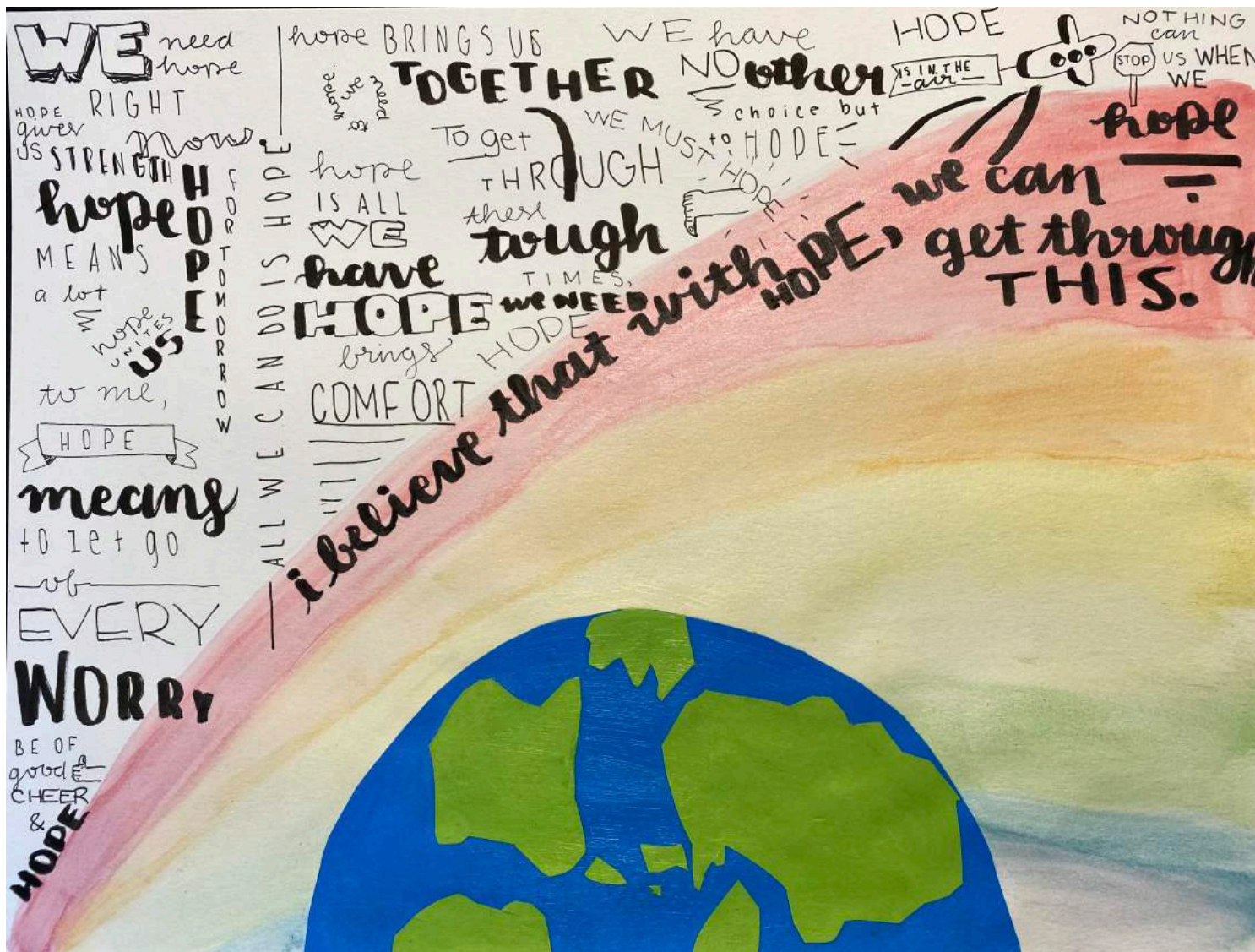
## A SHINING STAR TEEN WORKS HARD TO GIVE BACK!

Imagine Teen, and St Patrick's Warrior Alessia Turner has been hard at work at her sewing machine these days, cranking out so many masks for donation it's hard to keep up! She sends her beautiful handmade masks with messages of love and support from The Imagine Society. So many have already been received and used by our friends at The Ascension Pantry! Check out her amazing online tutorial! [theimagesociety.org/service](http://theimagesociety.org/service) Alessia has also been an integral part of setting up the Long Island chapter of the Pantry to Pantry campaign helping to support NYC's food insecure.

**THANK YOU ALESSIA FOR BEING AN EXAMPLE OF  
POSITIVE TEEN SERVICE!**







HOPE by Audrey Cho (11)

## Practicing Hope By Julia Cho

*"A person with hope does not get tangled up with concerns for how his wishes will be fulfilled...hope is based on the premise that the other gives only what is good. Hope includes an openness by which you wait for the other to make his loving promise come true, even though you never know when, where or how this might happen." Henri Nouwen*

Our daughter was only 21 months old when my husband died in an accident overseas almost ten years ago. Shortly after, a mentor wrote me this in a message about my daughter: "She will learn from you how to deal with life's unfairness and pain...it could be the greatest gift you give to her."

Although many of the young widows I'd been put in touch with found comfort in their faith, I struggled with theological questions and veered towards bitterness. It wasn't that I questioned God's goodness or felt angry with him; it was more that I worried that my husband and I, who had served faithfully together in the church for years, had been duped altogether.

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"It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong and sound as long as you are merely using it to cord a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it?" wrote C.S. Lewis about faith. Thrust into tragedy and a life I hadn't planned on, I was hanging over that precipice. When faith felt like too much of a jump, thank goodness, hope stepped in and held its place.

One day as we sat by the Hudson River, my daughter in her stroller, I asked her jokingly what the meaning of life was. While gazing at a few geese on the grass in front of her and appearing in a daze, she spoke softly, still staying in that daze... "ope." I leaned in, curious what she said and fascinated that she would even attempt an answer... "What did you say?" "Hope." "Did you say hope?" "Yes."

For a long time after that, I wore a single stamped charm around my neck that said "hope." Some days were so hard that I had to physically reach for that charm around my neck. It became such a part of my identity that by the time my daughter was in kindergarten, whenever she drew a picture of me I noticed the word "hope" in large scribbly letters around my neck.

Dr. Timothy Keller, founder of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in NYC and author of "The Reason for God," has said that if we rub hope into sorrow, kind of like the way they used to rub salt into meat to preserve it, we will become wise instead of bitter. For me that looked like laughing with my toddler, grappling with theology and philosophy in the many books I took out from the library, and encouraging other widows who wrote to me—always signing my name, "Hope, Julia."

How can we rub hope into our global loss and sorrow today during a pandemic? Maybe it looks like checking in on friends or neighbors, donating to help our frontline workers, or even offering scattered prayers. It might just look like patience as we wait in this liminal space between our old "normal" and a future that isn't yet clear.

Though there is nothing redemptive about loss or a pandemic, there may be something redemptive about our response. How will we deal with life's pain, and what kind of gifts might our response yield? Wouldn't it be lovely if, when we look back at this time in our lives years from now, our defining characteristic isn't fear or bitterness or anger, but hope—like the large letters my daughter wrote around my neck years after our loss?

This pandemic has thrown us all over a precipice. It's knocked out our planned narrative, and made us wonder if we can trust what previously sustained us. If your faith feels fragile, maybe you can ground yourself in hope for now. Not an optimistic, wish-y kind of hope. But the kind of hope the Bible talks about—an anchor for our souls—hope against hope—the kind that does not disappoint.



Julia and Audrey Cho (11)

*Julia Cho is a freelance writer in Northern New Jersey. Her work has been published in The New York Times, The Atlantic, and The Washington Post @studiesinhope.juliacho*





# AMERICA THROUGH THE LENS OF COVID-19



Welcome to Part Two of our special four-part series in which Imagine teens interview photojournalist and friend **Tobias Everke** about his travels through the United States over the past two months featuring the photographs he took from different American cities ending with our home, New York City.

We continue the series with **Jack Gaffigan (age 14, 8th grade at Avenues The World School)** and Part TWO: Albany, Georgia.



## PART TWO: ALBANY, GA

JG: What made you choose this specific location to photograph?

TE: Albany became infamous after a guest at a funeral infected almost all the mourners with the Covid-19 virus and consequently turned the city into a hotspot with an infection rate the same as in Chicago. After the Governor of Georgia opened the state, the mayor of Albany and many religious leaders refused to follow the governor's guidelines, because they felt that the minorities are being used as guinea pigs. Albany is very poor, 73% is African-American and 75% of the Corona victims there are African-American.

JG: What was your take away from your experience in Georgia, both as an artist and as a family man?

TE: That America has a problem and that sooner or later there might be a revolution. At the time I was not thinking about a black revolution, but rather an uprising of the underprivileged, the poor. As an artist empty buildings and decay are attractive, but the same sensitivity also makes me sad, to see historic cities dead and dying, because of mismanagement and greed.

JG: Is there any other observation that you would like to share about this particular location? Such as what were the people like? How were you received as opposed to Los Vegas?

TE: Ray Charles was born in Albany. The people we met were all very nice, as they are in general wherever we go. In Albany the people and their pain seemed more real than in Las Vegas.

JG: Thank you Tobias for giving us a glimpse into the America outside of New York City. I hope that people reading this will see these photos and understand that there are two different Americas. I want to be part of a new, "one America" where we can take pride in our country. I want to be part of the change that makes that hope come true. I hope The Imagine Society is the place where our voices can be heard.



Earnestine Wooden (64) is a retired nurse. Both her and her husband had the corona virus and were on different floors in the same hospital. Her husband died and she had to say good-bye to him via FaceTime.



Mike Arline restores cars and helps a friend who is old, clean out his yard of old cars. He continued working during the lockdown.



James E. Brown is a veteran who always stays at the same street corner and waves to passing cars.



Petri Lawhorn (50) is a handy man and did not have any work for weeks. He hopes to get work soon.



Tobias's favorite photo.



Homeless man passes empty building.

*Coming up next Issue: Part 3: LANSING, MICHIGAN*

Photo credits: Tobias Everke @tobias\_everke



An interview with a

# SHINING STAR!

Imagine Teen and St Patrick Warrior Zaylen Palacios (13) interviews Shining Star Laurence Jolicouer, Advisory Board Member at The Imagine Society and founder of Pro Reps - a basketball training and educational company.

Zaylen Palacios: Hi Laurence! Can you tell me a little about yourself?

LJ: I'm originally from Queens. I attended Holy Cross High School, then Manhattan College. I played basketball at school and started a sports training company called Pro Reps for kids and adults.

ZP: What is the importance of physical health and physical activity for people and especially for kids?

LJ: Physical health and activity is important for blood circulation, for your heart, and your lungs.

ZP: How is physical health and activity important right now when we are quarantined at home?

LJ: Right now because people don't have access to their normal routine like gym class, personal trainers or parks, which are shut down, you can become very tense if you don't work out.

ZP: What are some safe creative ways kids can help improve their physical activity in New York? What can you do if you live in an apartment?

LJ: A lot of people are exercising online via youtube and in-home workouts. There are a bunch of challenges that keep you active yet make it fun.

ZP: How did you get connected to The Imagine Society, and what has that connection meant for you?

LJ: I was referred by a friend, and now I know all of you! I've been able to participate in and help out at a number of different events, like the food pantry.

ZP: What is your wish for your future with The Imagine Society?

LJ: I would love to have a safe space that the The Imagine Society can call its own recreation center with the resources they need. When the city opens back up, we can play sports, and take part in other extracurricular activities that will help kids become more mindful and resourceful.

ZP: Thank you Laurence!

*Zaylen Palacios (13) is in 7th grade at Friends Seminary*



Way to go  
Zaylen and  
Laurence!

SPOTTED

ON

THE

STREET!

A discount fit for a hero! As seen on the Upper East Side! :) Thanks to The Fitzpatrick Family for sending in!

Right on!



Positive vibes from a galaxy far, far away in Millburn, NJ. Thanks to The Blumstein Family for sending in!

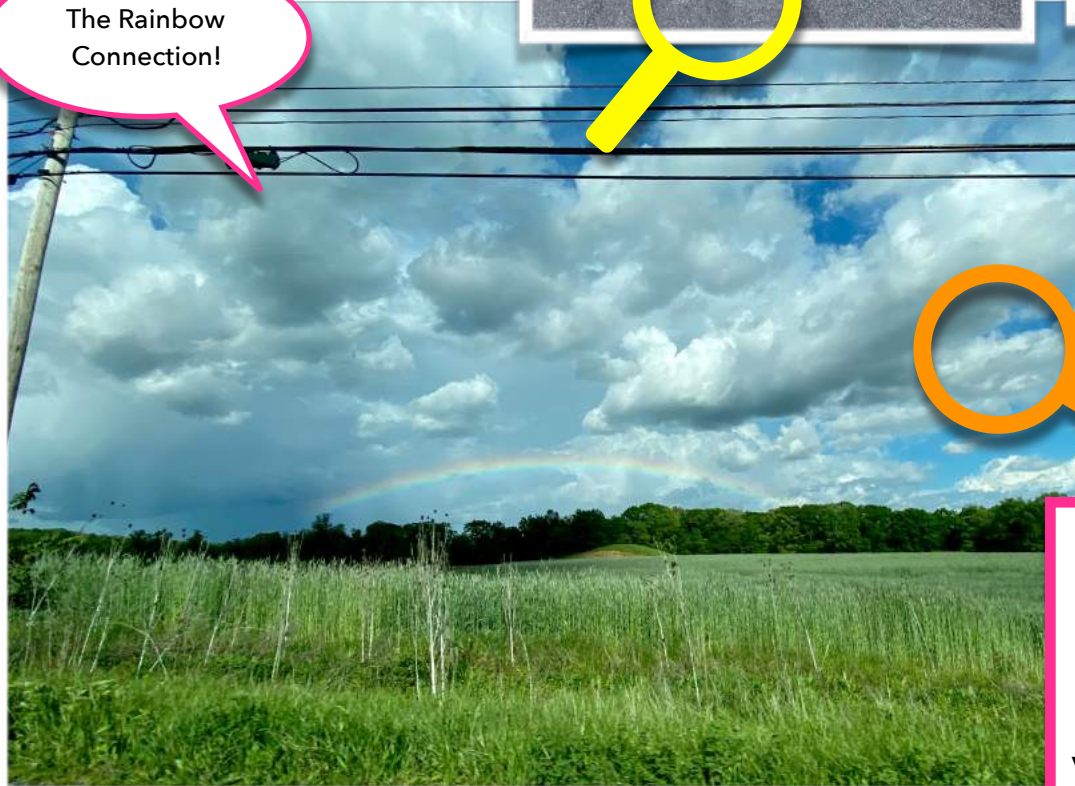
Same girl, same. Lol!



Love and support from NYC kids! Check out these awesome signs from around the city sent in by Imagine Society friend Jim Conaboy!



The Rainbow Connection!



Spotted on the road! On the way to her family in Rochester, NY friend of The Imagine Society Jessi Partridge spotted this full arc rainbow! It's very very rare to see! How beautiful!

Send in your "Spotted on the Street" photos to: [outreach@theimagesociety.org](mailto:outreach@theimagesociety.org)



Artwork by  
Audrey Cho (11)  
and Raegan (9)

# Katie's Art Gallery of Hope

Junior  
Editor Katie  
Gaffigan (11)  
Marymount School  
of New York

Raegan's art  
Thank you!

