

THE IMAGINE SOCIETY

JULY 15, 2020



SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING **UNITY**
KIDS QUARANTINE EDITION VOLUME 10!



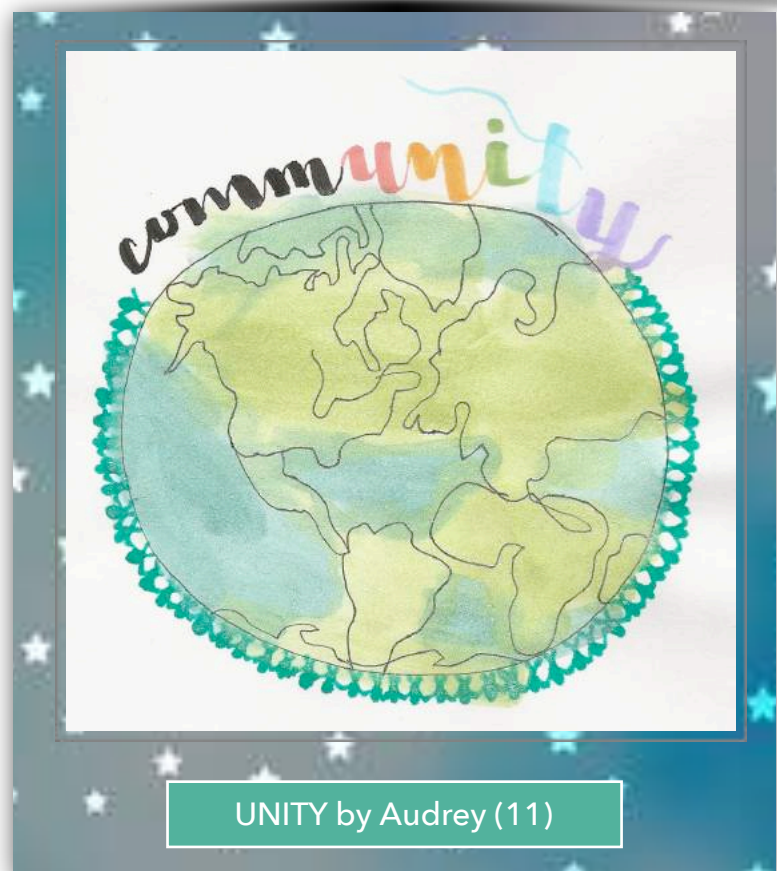
**"IF WE WANT TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL,
THEN LET US EMPOWER OURSELVES WITH
THE WEAPON OF KNOWLEDGE AND LET
US SHIELD OURSELVES WITH **UNITY** AND
TOGETHERNESS." - MALALA YOUSAFZAI**

APART, BUT NOT ALONE

by Elle Ferretti-Gray

Unity is the foundation of mankind. Our ability to unite, to bond with one another, is what put us at the top of the food chain. Which is part of why this pandemic is so hard, the toll that isolation has taken is astronomical. How can we remain united, when we must remain apart? The answer is simply this, the distance we must put between ourselves and others is what unites us.

The idea that isolation can lead to unity seems almost counterintuitive, I know. But if you think about it, rarely has there been such a universal event. Every single person on the planet has felt



UNITY by Audrey (11)

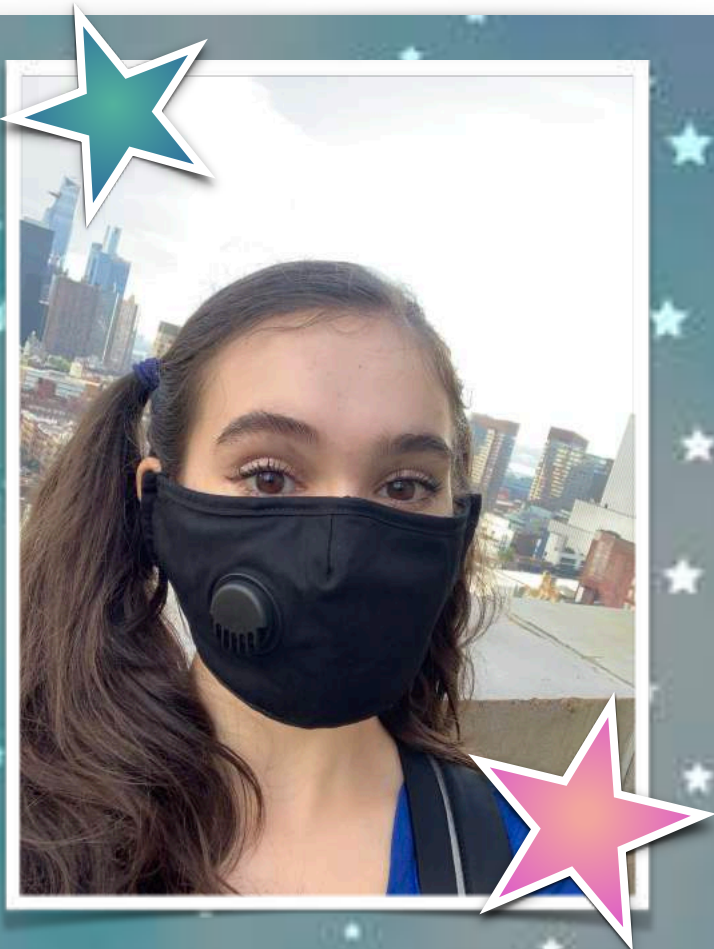
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the effects of the pandemic, and that is something we can take solace in. We are not alone in our isolation, our experiences aren't completely unique to us. We can let our physical distance divide us, but instead we could use it to unite us.

During quarantine, I, like many of my friends, used FaceTime to communicate with my friends and family. While talking with them, I realized that we were all feeling the effects of isolating, that we were all similarly saddened and depressed by it. For some unknown reason, I felt like I was the only one with those feelings, so to know that my friends were feeling the same way comforted me. We were able to use our isolation as a unifier.

While not everybody can relate to my experience, I felt compelled to share it. We are all alone right now, but we are not alone in how we feel. I urge everyone reading this to reach out to friends and family, and while it may be awkward at first it will soon be natural again. We can use our isolation to unite us, and we should. Being alone has a certain finality associated with it, but it is not the end. The oddest things can unite us, and we should look forward to when we can celebrate our unity in person.

Elle Ferretti-Gray (15) is a rising Sophomore at Avenues the World School



Introducing New Teen Member of Imagine Newsletter Editorial Staff

We're so excited to welcome **Elle Ferretti-Gray** (15) to The Imagine Newsletter editorial team!

Elle has been a part of **The Imagine Society** since early March, when she volunteered as a sous chef at **The Image-Inn** service event at The Ascension Shelter. Since then she's shown a real dedication and aptitude for helping others. Elle is not only compassionate, but she's a great cook, loves reading and music. As Elle tells us **"I've learned about helping people for the sake of helping people, and how rewarding it is to help."** Thank you Elle - we look forward to more of your meaningful contributions to the newsletter and **The Imagine Society!**

Follow us on Instagram! @theimagesociety

Cliché as it Seems, Compassion Truly is the Only Way Forward

by Paul Bloom

When I interned at the **Southern District Court of New York**, I never anticipated that my work volunteering at my local food pantry and homeless shelter would overlap with the criminal justice system. My supervisor at the time set up a lunch between the interns and District Judge Kevin Castel. Over the course of the conversation, we learned a tremendous amount about being a judge in New York City and all the ethical responsibilities that come with the job. One of the interns asked him if he ever got burnt out after hearing so many sad cases; did he ever become numb to the nuances and emotions associated with each case? He responded that if he ever became apathetic toward his job, it would be time to leave. He said that no judge can fulfill their moral duties without deep care and respect for every person's situation who came through. There were many kids, my age and a little older, who committed crimes, but the judge knew that these people all had a background and a life beyond the label "defendant."

If there was one thing I got from that internship, it was the knowledge that there is no job or space that can function properly without empathy. **Everybody falls in life, but empathy allows us to get back up and be better than we were.** My time at the homeless shelter allowed me to eat dinner with a variety of people, all of whom I felt deeply connected to. I realized that you can never judge a person based on the situation they find themselves in. These men were deeply interesting, charismatic, ambitious, imaginative, and persistent. If I had not had dinner with these men, their existence in my mind would be incredibly restrictive and simplistic.



Paul Bloom at his internship :)

At the food pantry, I saw people whom I knew from the neighborhood. People who lived in my community, but did not have the access that I did to food. I knew there was nothing about these families that made them "deserving" of such food insecurity (such a sentiment I have genuinely heard in my lifetime). I knew it was my duty to help as much as I could to allow those around me to have the same comforts that I enjoyed. I became dedicated to helping people – what I now understand as my life's purpose. I vowed to pursue a career in science to improve the lives of those I knew and beyond. Everything I have done has been in preparation for this goal. My work at the court and at the **Bard Graduate Center's Lab for Teen Thinkers** helped me understand the intricacies of our society's emotions and cultures, and gave me the skills and perspective that I needed to effectively support those around me. My research at a cancer lab in NYC helped me gain the scientific grounding for a career in the field, and allowed me to see what it was like to work towards a goal to end a disease that afflicts millions.

Naturally, I was thrilled when my school notified me that the **Bard Lifetime Learning Institute** was giving out stipends to those engaged in unpaid internships. I have been volunteering at the pantry for some time, but I was not doing it for personal gain – that would defeat the point. My mother was also providing

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weekly food donations to the pantry, but this was hard to maintain. I thought about what that money could do when spent on food for those experiencing food insecurity during the pandemic. I applied for the grant saying that I did volunteer at the pantry, and that I would love to receive financial support. However, I made clear in my proposal that the entire sum of the grant I received would be donated to the food pantry to assist with the increased need during these hard times. The review board approved my proposal and allowed me to donate \$500 to cope with Covid-19's demands on our community. This is only just the start of money I hope to give to this pantry, and to every other organization that helps people survive who were less fortunate than I.

I knew that every bit of time I spent working to help people; every amount of money I could give (no matter how small) would help uplift the people going through the courts, and the shelters, and the food drives. I believe that empathy drives us to be better, and allows those who receive it to feel loved and wanted. I thank Judge Castel for what he said because he reminded me that it is impossible to be a positive force on the world without empathy.



Paul at the
pantry!



See
page 6 for
Paul as our
Teen Shining
Star!



Thank you Paul for a
truly profound
essay.

Paul Bloom (16) is a rising Senior at Bard High School Early College Manhattan, member of the Spirit Squad, and volunteer at the Ascension Food Pantry

Follow The Ascension Food Pantry on Instagram @ascension107

For information on how you can volunteer or donate to The Ascension Food Pantry email us at:
outreach@theimagesociety.org

★ 4TH OF JULY KICKS OFF ★ THE IMAGINE SOCIETY'S #FOODFORFAMILIES CAMPAIGN!

On a very special 4th of July, **The Imagine Society** kicked off the #FOODFORFAMILIES campaign to aid NYC's food insecure community. This first meal donation service was held for our friends at **The Ascension Food Pantry**. Through collaboration with our generous donors along with Driscoll Foods, Otter Pops, Costco, The Sheeler Family, and a major donation of 275 apple pies from **Table Talk Pies** in Massachusetts, we were able to provide 285 families with the following BBQ inspired menu in celebration of the holiday: hot dogs, buns, fresh spinach, baked beans, corn on the cob, fresh apples, apple pie, ice pops, and lemonade mix. Red, white, and blue balloons from Balloon Planet Delivery, also donated, set the festive scene. The Ascension Pantry volunteers along with Spirit Squad and Imagine Society teens, led by the brilliant Robin Klueber, spent all week organizing and managing this service, established in the spirit of the real patriotic tradition of helping our neighbors! Even news outlet NY1 was there to capture the event! Special thank you to Enid Alvarez @koolkat130 for being on hand taking the moving photos you see on this page from this incredible event. For more information on how you can participate in #FOODFORFAMILIES please email us at outreach@theimagesociety.org



SHINING STARS!

THE SWEETEST SHINING STAR!

For the past few months, it has been an honor for us at **The Imagine Society** to be able to partner with NYC sweet shop and restaurant **La Newyorkina** and its founder, superstar Chef **Fany Gerson**. Not only is her food and treats delicious, but her mission is to honor the flavor and culture of her Mexican heritage, and her company's ethos is to support Mexico "by promoting and educating, by sharing a rich (and delicious) part of the culture and by giving back." Fany gives back through her work with **CREA**, an organization that generates employment opportunities for low-income women in Mexico offering training and business development support. @LaNewyorkina has also been an integral partner in **#FOODFORFEARLESS** preparing countless nourishing meals to frontline staff across the city, culminating in a spectacular Paleta Party sending 915 delicious Mexican ice pops to 7 hospitals! Fany is now consulting on our **#FOODFORFAMILIES** campaign, helping us create, source and translate simple, healthy and culturally relevant recipes for donation to NYC food pantries.

**GRACIAS FANY, WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE
YOUR SWEET SUPPORT!**



A SHINING STAR GIVES BACK WITH ACTIONS AND COMMITMENT!

Paul Bloom (16) has been a member of the Ascension Church's youth group the Spirit Squad for 4 years, and in that time has shown an empathy and dedication to service that is something to be celebrated. Just recently, he was awarded with the **Bard Lifetime Learning Institute Stipend** of \$500 which he immediately signed over to **The Ascension Food Pantry**, which has been operating on overdrive for the food insecure struggling amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Paul tells us that he always feels "the need to help our community" and he has done so through exemplary volunteerism. As a self-proclaimed "science minded person" Paul's now on a hunt, through research, "for knowledge that may one day allow me to innovate for others." "My goal is to give back to the people who enabled me to live such a wonderful life, and I know that I will do that given time!"

THANK YOU PAUL FOR HELPING SO MANY!



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



AMERICA THROUGH THE LENS OF COVID-19



Welcome to Part Four of our special four-part series in which Imagine teens interview photojournalist and friend **Tobias Everke** about his travels though 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 finish the series with **Jack Gaffigan (age 14, rising 9th grader at York Prep)** and Part Four: New York City's Medical Front Line.

Special Thank You's to Jack Gaffigan and Joseph Fitzpatrick for leading thoughtful and thought provoking interviews, and to Tobias Everke, for his profound photography, and generosity of time spent with our teen members that have enriched our understanding of our country and the COVID pandemic.



PART FOUR: NEW YORK CITY'S MEDICAL FRONT LINE

Jack Gaffigan: These photos of New York City during the peak of the pandemic in late April are shocking and tell the story of a city fighting a war against an unseen enemy. What was it like to see these iconic places that we are all so familiar with in the "city that never sleeps" transformed into something out of a post-apocalyptic war film?

Tobias Everke: It is funny, that you mention a 'post-apocalyptic' film. Especially the photo of the elevated, empty street leading to Grand Central reminds me of a scene from the Will Smith movie "I Am Legend", which I just had seen again a few days before I took this picture. Actually all the photos of deserted streets were taken at the very beginning of the lockdown. The city was eerie. During the height of the pandemic itself, traffic had already increased and more people were on the streets.

JG: There was so much death. How emotional an experience was it for you as you looked through the lens and captured all the morgue trucks and the gurneys that held so many victims of the virus? The reaction and feelings that we as the viewer experience looking at the images are overwhelming. What must it have been like for you to be there in real time behind the camera?

TE: I think that the camera somehow protects me, in this case even literally (it covers my nose and mouth), when I take pictures. But even emotionally. So I distant myself from what I see, I become an observer, who's job it is to report the facts (neutrally). I do realize that I am part of something historic,

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but still have to concentrate to take the best possible photo in regards of composition, light and telling a story. Only now, weeks later, when my friends ask me about my assignments or when I look at some photos or videos on my cell phone, it hits me and I realize the need to talk about it. And I basically tell everyone that something has to change (social services, health care, education) to make America great or at least save it.

JG: New Yorkers always maintain their senses of humor to cope with even the greatest disasters. What are some examples that made you smile in spite of the horrific circumstances?

TE: In Germany we call that "Galgenhumor" (grim sense of humor, gallows humor, black humor). Good questions. My writer and I constantly made jokes. Over the years we have done so many stories together that we can 'quote' from jobs in the past and things our editors wanted us to do that were impossible to do, but it's only funny to the writer and myself. Otherwise during large events you always find many people in uniform and they all are being told what to do, "Do not let anybody cross here!", "Do not let anybody in!", "Check their ID's!" and so on. The funny thing is that most of these people do exactly what they are being told, but do not function if they are confronted with anything different. In South America the police always says NO first, but you can talk to them and eventually they will let you in. In America a policeman is firm when he says NO, but when you go to the next policeman around the corner and he might say the exact opposite and you get in. Other funny things were the official instructions and guidelines in regards to masks and social distancing and their real world implications.

JG: I see in these photos the story of the greatest city in the world that had to stop in time and stay home, while the medical community went to work longer and harder than they ever had before. I see the heroes of this war risking their lives for us. Is it possible that this historical catastrophe made the city even greater in a way, by showing the resilience and strength of its core? What was it like for you to interact with these incredible essential workers on the front lines?

TE: It was very frustrating to hear their stories. This country (the government) let them down. They did not have enough protective gear and equipment and therefore had to risk their lives even more and some died. Totally unnecessary for the 'richest' country in the world. Lack of leadership and planning, despite the knowledge that a pandemic was coming. My niece is a nurse in Long Island and for weeks she had only one mask to wear. This catastrophe will make this city and this country greater, if we learn something from it.

JACK'S FINAL THOUGHT: *A lot of these pictures had deeper meaning to me after Tobias spoke about them. I still have pride that our city followed the rules to flatten the curve by achieving the impossible by shutting down. I still have the deepest admiration for the medical and essential workers who had to work to save our lives while we stayed home. But I also feel ashamed and angry about our government letting us down in two ways. One, we already heard about how the racial injustices in this country were exposed because the people who were most affected by the pandemic both economically and by sickness and even death were people of color. In these pictures you can clearly see the majority of the essential and medical workers who heroically risked their lives to save ours were ALSO people of color. Second, the government repeatedly referred to the medical workers as "heroes in the war" which they are of course, but would our government send our military into battle without bullets in their guns or gas in their*

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planes? It is disgraceful that there was not enough protection for the protectors. I take pride in New York City though because of our unity we flattened the curve. If the rest of the country had as much unity as us we would not be seeing the cases go up in other states and we could be safely getting back to opening. We are supposed to be the UNITED States of America. Now all the disunity is causing the pandemic to go on and on. Get it together America!



Empty Times Square



Empty Wall Street



Rooms at The Standard Hotel in the Meat Packing district lit up to create a heart



Positive message on the marquee of the Apollo Theater

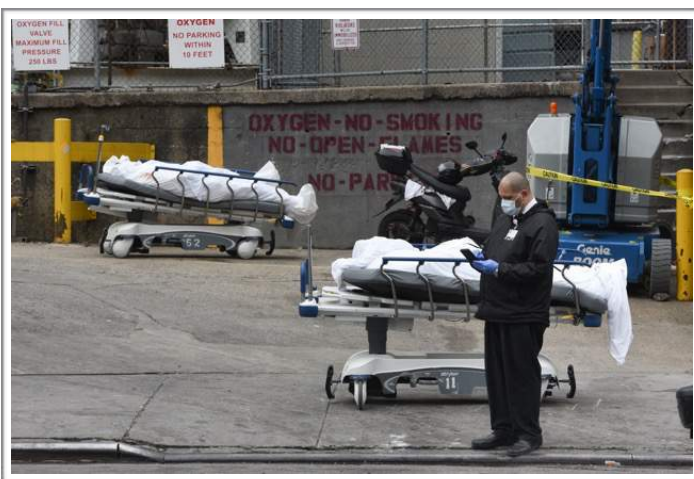
A billboard in Times Square



A patient gets checked in at Mount Sinai hospital in Astoria, Queens



Dead bodies being loaded into a car outside a funeral home in Brooklyn. There were so many dead bodies, the same funeral home did not know where to store them.



Dead bodies outside the Brooklyn Hospital in Fort Greene, Brooklyn are waiting to be loaded into a refrigerated truck.



Refrigerated trucks behind the City's Medical Examiner's Office (we went there a couple of times and each time they added trucks and even build a ramp for the dead bodies to be unloaded on)



A nurse leaves Lincoln Medical Center in the Bronx to take part in a demonstration for more Respect and Support for Nurses.



Every night at 7pm the nurses and doctors and other hospital workers came outside Lenox Hill hospital to be celebrated by the neighborhood.

Photo credits: Tobias Everke @tobias_everke

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EET!



Optimistic graffiti on Broadway storefront as a homeless man passes.
Photo credit Tobias Everke @tobias_everke



Beautiful crochet Imagine tribute
on 79th & Amsterdam Thank you Robin Klueber
for sending in!



LOVE WINS on West 18th Street :)
Thank you Jim Conaboy for sending in!



Signs from a front lawn in South Orange, NJ

Send in your "Spotted on the Street" photos to: outreach@theimagesociety.org

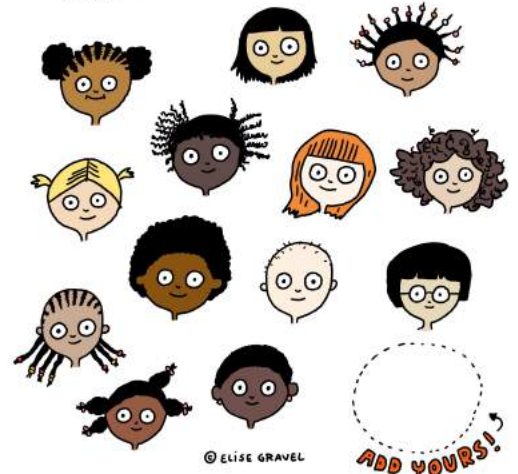
When it's 10:57 a.m. and you have a Zoom meeting at 11:00



FUN PAGES

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

YOUR HAIR IS BEAUTIFUL!



Katie's
Fave
Memes
:)

Lol!

WORK FROM HOME MERIT BADGES



Q: Which is faster
hot or cold?

A: Hot! Because
you can catch a
cold.

This reboot looks scarier than the original





Word Search HEALTH

by Katie Gaffigan (11) Junior Editor!

Y P Z P C I T Q R B A V Y V B
P Y H I T L M A X X C F F U R
G A D O S H P F C V T N Q A E
X G D G T E Z T X S I S B V A
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photosynthesis

vegetables

agility

fruit

liveliness

wellness

breathe

bloom

strength

stamina

vitamins

vigor

vitality

glowing

active

life

