

# THE IMAGINE SOCIETY

JULY 29, 2020



SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING **KNOWLEDGE**  
KIDS QUARANTINE EDITION VOLUME 11!



**“WHEN YOU TALK, YOU ARE ONLY  
REPEATING SOMETHING YOU KNOW.  
BUT IF YOU LISTEN, YOU MAY LEARN  
SOMETHING NEW.” - DALAI LAMA**

## *Knowledge and Compassion*

by Lucy Geer

After reflecting on current events and studying history, I have come to the conclusion that knowledge and allyship go hand in hand. In order to be an ally and make real change you need to take the time to educate yourself on the problems you're fighting to combat. No amount of studying or research will ever allow for a person to truly understand the experience of a group they aren't a part of, however, simply taking the time to learn about what a certain group is up against can be one of the most impactful and important acts of compassion that one can perform.

KNOWLEDGE  
fuels  
compassion  
and  
action

KNOWLEDGE by Audrey (11)

...continued from page 1

Knowledge is the difference between preformative activism and true activism. Anyone can post a Black Lives Matter statistic on their instagram story or wear rainbow socks for pride month. However, not everyone takes the time to fully educate themselves on the groups they are supposedly supporting. This is not to say that posting about BLM and participating in pride month festivities isn't helpful or appreciated. However, true activism and allyship can go even deeper. Before you repost a video of a BLM protest and caption it with a fist emoji, take the time to read an article about police brutality in our country or research the significance of protests in black history. Being a black person during these times is very overwhelming and we are feeling grief and pain that only we can understand, but seeing allies make an effort to gain knowledge about our struggles gives me hope that things can change. Having the support of knowledgeable allies is irreplaceable, and people acknowledging their privilege and using it for good is extremely powerful.

Recently, I have been trying to educate myself on the issues that Native American people are subject to in this country. My knowledge of their struggles started as surface level exposure. For example, videos on Tik Tok honoring missing indigenous women and children, and different social media posts regarding the fight against racist mascots were beginning to circulate through my pages. I cannot claim to be an expert on these issues and there is so much more that I need to learn before I can formulate a proper argument or action plan to help, however day by day I am working to increase my knowledge about their struggles so I can be a helpful ally. For example, after looking into the Washington Redsk\*ns debate I looked for sources written solely by Indigenous people in order to understand their point of view. From there I was exposed to other racist exploitations of Indigenous culture and petitions I could sign in order to help stop it. Knowledge is the first step to allyship and in order to use my privilege for good and be a compassionate ally, I need to learn more.

*Lucy Geer (16) is a rising Junior at Trinity School*



Thank you Lucy for  
your profound  
essay!

Lucy delivering masks to Einstein College of  
Medicine June 9th as part of a donation trip with  
Imagine Board Member Marina Franklin!

Follow us on Instagram! @theimagesociety





# KNOWLEDGE

by Shelby Fenton



In my writing I'm going to write about my knowledge on First Nation's culture. I am a Woodland Cree from Alberta, Canada.

First I'm going to discuss beliefs and practices. To start singing is a big part of praying. The drum to a lot of tribes represents the heartbeat of Mother Earth/God/The creator. The singing is mostly praying. These prayers could be about celebrating or keeping evil away. Secondly, many tribes have a form of smudging. Smudging is to cleanse the spirit. My family smudges by gathering in a circle and burning sage in an abalone shell. We take off all metal jewelry so that the smoke doesn't go to the metal. Next, we spread the smoke to different parts of the body while asking to bless those parts. Finally, after we say thanks for the sage and we put it back on the Earth with a rock. Finally, I'm going to explain what makes the headdress sacred. The headdress is worn by honourable people who have earned it. A lot of headdresses have eagle feathers. Eagles are very sacred and when you spot an eagle you are supposed to pray and be thankful for the blessing. Eagle feathers are used in ceremonies for prayers. These are some very meaningful beliefs and practices.

Sometimes culture appropriation can be mistaken for appreciation. I have a couple ideas that people can do to respectfully appreciate cultures. First is attending a ceremony or celebration of a culture that is really honouring. It's honouring because someone took time to celebrate a different culture. Another idea is supporting locally owned restaurants. It's really amazing when people share culture through food because it's a great way to bring people together. My final idea is supporting people who sell handcrafted pieces from their culture such as moccasins or earrings. This is really supportive and really encouraging to the person making and selling their crafts. That's a few ways people can show their appreciation for other cultures.

That's some of my knowledge on my culture and supporting others.



Thank you  
Shelby for you  
important essay and  
for sharing your  
knowledge!



The sage in a shell, a pair of moccasins and a dress the Fentons bought, from a young woman who makes outfits, for Shelby's younger sister. It was taken after her first pow-wow.

*Shelby Fenton (13) is a rising 9th grader at St Timothy's Junior & High School in Cochrane, Alberta, Canada*



# URBAN FARMING FOR THE FUTURE!

by Emily Blumstein



In a deep squat, head down, sun beating on my sweaty neck and back, I massage the soil. It is the best lesson in mindfulness I can think of. It may not be therapeutic for my knees, but the process of growing and caring for plants is absolutely cathartic.

Volunteering on NYU's Urban Farm lab has been an incredible growing experience (pun intended) for me as a college student. Being able to grow edible plants in a city like New York gives me so much hope, as we figure out ways to bring fresh produce to those living in food deserts. The roles plants and agriculture play in our day to day lives vary greatly in different communities and populations. As a future Nurse and Horticulture Therapist, I see the medicinal benefits of plants and crops. From sowing the seeds, to eating the fruit, I find the plants teach me different lessons as they grow. Plants are resilient. From pests to heat, the crops overcome much adversity. Caring for life is such an empowering and intimate role. Bringing humans closer to plants and the food systems that nourish us foster values such as empathy, an appreciation for life, and hope. Unlike much in modern life, there is no instant gratification in farming (except for weeding!) Patience and trust in the process are pillars. Gardening and farming bring not only joy, but a sense of purpose and self.

I see children wandering the garden, curious about all of the life around them. It saddens me that there are only a select few children in this urban jungle who know what a baby strawberry looks (hint, it is not red!). I hope and pray that one day all of the children in New York City's Public schools will get to experience and interact with a garden; to smell fresh wet soil and pull carrots from the ground! I did not, and although I feel blessed and honored to care for these plants now, I know what a difference urban agriculture can make for families in need.

Achieving Health Equity in New York City is a future goal of mine. Health Equity is a term used to describe the notion that ideally everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and that no one should be disadvantaged in their care. Especially now, as we reflect and take action to improve the way we serve People of Color, it is important to look at healthcare as an investment in people's lives. I believe the key is in horticulture, and our food systems. In the US, our healthcare system fails many Americans who are not given the same level of care based on economic, demographic, racial, ethnic or other defined parameters of inequality. For marginalized or disadvantaged populations and groups of people, staying healthy, and then when necessary quality care is harder to access and achieve. From the definition, achieving health equity seems like a monumental task. I believe we play an incredible role in defining health and investing in it.



Emily hard at work at the urban farm!

*Emily Blumstein (20) is a rising Junior at Rutgers School of Nursing*



# SHINING STARS!

## A SHINING STAR ON THE SCENE!

**Tobias Everke** @tobias\_everke is a treasured member of **The Imagine Society**. Pre-COVID he could be seen at any number of our service events taking photographs of our kids learning and helping others. Ever since the pandemic, Tobias' work with us has evolved into a friendship that is unparalleled. While traveling the country photographing everything from a small town in Georgia battling the virus and poverty, an empty NYC haunted by the sick and medical workers desperate to save our community, to the tear-gassed streets of Seattle and the tragedy of George Floyd's funeral, he has generously shared his work and his time with the newsletter allowing our kids to interview him, giving us an intimate view and first hand account of these historical events. Originally born in Germany, he has been in NYC since 1986. We are so happy he is our friend, neighbor, and ally. Tobias' commitment to **The Imagine Society** and especially to help our kids gain a deeper understanding of the world around us has been incredibly meaningful.

**DANKE SHON TOBIAS! THANK YOU!**



## A SHINING STAR WITH STRENGTH AND HEART ¡UNA ESTRELLA BRILLANTE CON FUERZA Y CORAZÓN!

**Jesus Tiburcio Zane** (14) is a vital part of **The Ascension Food Pantry**. With the dramatic increase in food insecurity post COVID, the pantry has been in overdrive as struggling neighbors need help. Jesus is there, every step of the way with leader **Robin Klueber**. As a core teen leader, he has to handle a lot of heavy lifting, but Jesus also does all the pantry's Spanish language translation, all verbal communication with clients who are Spanish speaking, and contributes so much in helping Robin herself understand the Latinx culture. This enables an inclusive and holistic understanding that helps welcome and involve the entire community. Jesus has shown a level of extraordinary dedication that is to be treasured and celebrated by us all.

**THANK YOU JESUS, THE WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE  
BECAUSE OF KIDS LIKE YOU! GRACIAS JESÚS, ¡EL  
MUNDO ES UN LUGAR MEJOR PORQUE LOS NIÑOS  
COMO TU!**



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)



Please see below an excerpt from one of **The 2020 Clara Lemlich Awards Imagine Society** interviews between **Gloria Miguel (94)** Founder of Spiderwoman Theater (the oldest, continually running, Native women's theater company in North America), and **Marre Gaffigan (16)** rising Junior at Marymount School of New York. To learn more about the 2020 Honorees and read the full interview please go to: [laborarts.org/lemlichawards/2020/index.cfm](http://laborarts.org/lemlichawards/2020/index.cfm)

MG: What do you think is the most important thing about your work?

GM: I guess right now I feel the connection with dealing with what is going on in the world: the racism, the pandemic, and just surviving, is the most important thing. Native women are still being used as prostitutes, being sold, and murdered, they still have to fight though they're disappearing. In 1973, the people of Minnesota and Minneapolis started the Native American Movement that fought police brutality, they were well known as fighters against the police and helping the protests even back then. Native people have been doing what's going on today since 1492, fighting racism because you're a "savage" - being killed and having their land stolen. It's an old and long fight, it's in our identity, our way of thinking, our DNA.... There's always something to fight for, always something going on. We have to put our heads together and help, we understand the hate that is present when you walk into a room or are in certain situations. It's not new.

MG: What were some of the problems you encountered along the way?

GM: I don't know, we've never solved all of them. At our performances, people were expecting sweet flute music and didn't want to hear the sad stories of Native American people fighting for land and just staying alive. Everybody has that problem, but it's true how we're last on the list most of the time, we're often disregarded. Some people are just racist and don't like us. It's not easy being a Native American, it's very political and it's hard work. It's necessary though, something always comes out of each situation. With everything that's happening now, [people] forget the Native American people have a lot of experience with police brutality. We're still involved in it. Now, we've had to think about how we're keeping our theater open amidst everything that's happening, using zoom, everything. We're doing it. I'm going to be 94 on July 19<sup>th</sup>, and I've still got a lot to work on.

MG: What advice would you give the younger generation for becoming lifelong activists?

GM: Just to be honest. Try to understand and identify when something is wrong, and fight for it. You do have to explain, and you do have to fight a lot if something means something to you. Spiderwoman Theater's biggest audience is the Native audience. We've always wondered how to use it to keep our traditions alive. There's still so much more, I'm still learning!

**Marre's Final Thought (an excerpt): I've always known about the history of America and the violent mistreatment of early Native Americans, but when I realized that what was happening to them back then basically has not stopped but simply taken a different form, I was shocked. I have never been more ready to change the world as I know it and work with my generation to create a world where our differences are celebrated.**

Gloria Miguel - activist and icon!



Thank you  
Marre for your  
interview and  
helping to share  
Gloria with us!



# A Healthy Summer is a Happy Summer!

In June, **The Imagine Society** unveiled our #FOODFORFAMILIES campaign. Inspired by the success of the #4thofJulyBBQ, Imagine Teens launched a Healthy Summer recipe initiative led by Imagine Teens **Zaylen Palacios** (12) and **Marre Gaffigan** (16). The first donation was on July 25th with our friends at **The Ascension Food Pantry**. The Imagine Teens chose a **Healthy Summer Rice and Beans** recipe, fundraised for groceries and supplies, sourced ingredients with the help of our friends **Fany Gerson** and **Daniel Ortiz De Montellano** at **La Newyorkina**, designed and had manufactured 275 reusable shopping bags for the donation, created a bilingual recipe card to be included in each bag of groceries, and filmed a bilingual cooking tutorial available online for the clients.

The service on July 25th was led by adult leader **Robin Klueber**, adult volunteers and her super star team of **Spirit Squad** teen volunteers **Angel Guinazu** (16), **Beatriz Rebollar Sanchez** (17), **Bella Frias** (17), **Betsy Klueber** (21), **Dayelin De La Cruz** (17), **Grace Hastings** (18), **Jesus Tiburcio Zane** (14), **Joshua Lupton** (13), **Mariella Leon** (17), **Marleni Leon** (13), **Nick Hastings** (13), **Sebastian Huerta** (16), **Sophia Lupton** (15), **Stella Krajick** (19), and **Valeria Huerta** (14). Festive balloons were on hand to welcome all the clients, and photographer **Enid Alvarez** @koolkat130 was there to document this wonderful service.

Thanks to your generous donations, the day was a great success, and helped to feed over 300 food insecure families. For information on how to help our next Healthy Summer donation please email us at [outreach@theimagesociety.org](mailto:outreach@theimagesociety.org).

Check out this link [theimagesociety.org/service](https://theimagesociety.org/service) to watch the Healthy Rice and Beans tutorial, and on the next page is your very own recipe card! **STAY HEALTHY AND STAY HAPPY!**





Print out your own Healthy Summer Rice and Beans recipe card here!  
Please share your cooking photos with us at [outreach@theimagesociety.org](mailto:outreach@theimagesociety.org)

## The Imagine Society's Arroz Con Frijoles Saludables y Pollo

- |                                                                                          |                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 - 3 cucharadas de aceite de oliva                                                      | 1 paquete de 8 onzas de arroz precocido (si quieres puedes usar otro arroz precocido) |
| 1 cebolla dulce vidalia                                                                  | 1 - 2 cucharadita de comino                                                           |
| 1 pimiento rojo grande, cortado en cubitos pequeños                                      | 1 cucharadita de sal, para el gusto                                                   |
| 1 - 1½ tazas de zanahorias ralladas                                                      | 1 cucharadita de pimienta negra, para el gusto                                        |
| 1 - 1½ tazas de maiz (si está congelado y agregado justo cuando lo sacas del congelador) | 1 pizca de adobo                                                                      |
| 1 taza de alverjas (si está congelado y agregado justo cuando lo sacas del congelador)   | 2 - 3 cebollas china, cortado en circulos delgados                                    |
| 1 lata de 15 onzas de frijoles negros, drenado y enjuagado                               | 2 - 4 cucharadas de cilantro                                                          |
|                                                                                          | 1 cucharada de jugo de limón                                                          |
|                                                                                          | 1 libra de pollo como te gusta cocinarlo                                              |

### Instructions:

1. En un sartén grande a fuego medio poner el aceite de oliva y la cebolla por aproximadamente 4 minutos, o hasta que ablandar. Revuelve ocasionalmente.
2. Poner el pimiento y zanahorias. Cocinar por 3 o 4 minutos, o hasta que ablandar. Revuelve ocasionalmente.
3. Poner el maiz, alverjas, frijoles, arroz precocido, comino, sal, y adobo. Cocinar aproximadamente 2 minutos, o hasta que este cocinaron bien.
4. Añadad los cebollas china, cilantro, y jugo de limon. Mezcla junto. Probar y verificar el condimento. Poner mas sal, pimienta negra, y comino hasta tu gusto.

Para ver tutorial liderada por jóvenes visite nuestro sitio web [TheImagineSociety.org/service](http://TheImagineSociety.org/service) y siguenos en Instagram @TheImagineSociety

## The Imagine Society's Healthy Summer Rice and Beans

- |                                                                                 |                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil                                                    | 1 to 2 teaspoons cumin                           |
| 1 large sweet Vidalia onion, diced small                                        | 1 teaspoon kosher salt, to taste                 |
| 1 large red bell pepper, diced small                                            | 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, to taste |
| 1 to 1½ cups shredded carrots                                                   | Dash of Adobo Spice                              |
| 1 to 1½ cups corn (if frozen and added it straight from the freezer)            | 2 to 3 green onions, sliced into thin rounds     |
| 1 cup peas (if frozen and added it straight from the freezer)                   | 2 to 4 tablespoons fresh cilantro, finely minced |
| 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed                                  | 1 tablespoon lime juice                          |
| 1 8-ounce package precooked white rice (another cooked rice may be substituted) | 1 lb cooked chicken how you like it!             |

### Instructions:

1. To a large skillet, add the olive oil, onion, and cook over medium-high heat for about 4 minutes, or until it begins to soften; stir occasionally.
2. Add the bell pepper, carrots, and cook for about 3 to 4 minutes, or until vegetables are crisp-tender; stir occasionally.
3. Add the corn, peas, beans, cooked rice, cumin, salt, pepper, adobo, stir to combine, and cook for about 2 minutes or until warmed through; stir occasionally.
4. Add the green onions, cilantro, lime juice, stir to combine, taste and check for seasoning balance and add additional salt, pepper, cumin, Adobo etc. if desired.

To view youth-led tutorial video visit our website [TheImagineSociety.org/service](http://TheImagineSociety.org/service) and follow us on Instagram @TheImagineSociety



# BLACK LIVES MATTER ACROSS THE USA

Welcome to Part One of our special four-part series in which *Imagine Teens* interview photojournalist and friend **Tobias Everke** @tobias\_everke about his travels throughout the United States during the Black Lives Matter movements across this country.

We start the series with **Paul Bloom (age 16, a rising Senior at Bard High School Early College Manhattan)** and Part One: NYC Black Lives Matter Protests on 6/3/20.

PB: George Floyd's murder took place on May 25th, this protest was on June 3rd, what was NYC like that day?

TE: There were daily protest during those days and the initial problem we had, was to find the march. My writer had just come back from DC where he witnessed the violent treatment of peaceful protesters and became a victim of teargas himself. This was my first assignment to cover a demonstration. The atmosphere was peaceful.

PB: Looking at these photos, I'm struck by how many people of different ethnicities are protesting, but they look for the most part young. Did this feel like a youth movement?

TE: You are right, people from all walks of life took part. Yes, mostly younger and mostly white actually. I hope it turns into and then stays a youth movement and those protesters realize the best way for real change is, to vote.

PB: Did you witness any violence during the protests?

TE: The protesters were very peaceful. We marched with them from Times Square to the Upper West Side, crossed over to the East Side and walked to Gracie Mansion, before heading downtown again. The only semi violence, from the side of the police, occurred when they finally stepped in and ended the march on Third Avenue and 51st street, one hour after the curfew had started.

PB: As someone who isn't native to the United States, what do you think about our history of racial unrest? What do you think about our police force?

TE: I am actually surprised that there is not more and more violent racial unrest. The systematic racism and unfair treatment of minorities is obvious. I am upset that the phrase "defund the police" became the poster child of the movement, because to the uninformed observer it sound like that the protesters are 100% against the police. That is not the case. The budgets for local police departments are overblown. For NYC it is bigger than the defense budget of some European Countries. It seems that some Police Departments of major US cities are in an arms race of who gets the next armored vehicle. That needs to be stopped and regulated. I believe that some of the money could be spend wiser (longer training and better education of police officers, more social programs in communities). But police are needed and important.



## PART ONE: NYC JUNE 3RD BLACK LIVES MATTER

...continued from page 9

PB: I see images of both peace and anger, what was your impression of the protest?

TE: Overall I only saw peaceful protesters. Here in New York, in Seattle and in Atlanta. The assertion from the president that the protesters in Seattle were terrorists was wrong.

PB: In almost every picture, the police are present (either physically or through signs). How would you describe the interactions between the police and the protesters? Are there any interesting stories you want to tell?

TE: The interaction throughout 98% of the protest march (at least five hours), was good and peaceful. Police and protest organizers interacted and talked. Only at the end the police, for no apparent reason decided to show force, trapped the maybe 100 demonstrators that were left at that time (one hour after the curfew had started) in one city block and then forcefully started to arrest them. The press was yelled at and we were not allowed to cover those arrests up close.

PB: I can't help but notice how many cops there are surrounding one man, on the floor, whose hands are zip tied together. Did you intend to evoke that reaction? What do you think that man was trying to show?

TE: I happened to be nearby, things happened very quickly. Nothing is staged. He was one of the first protesters to be arrested. It seemed that for many cops the forceful end to this protest was as new and uncomfortable as it was for the demonstrators. Some other cops seemed to enjoy that they finally could show and use some of their gear and toughness. If some of those cops...play out their frustrations then it becomes dangerous.

PB: Your images of the protesters are very powerful. The way you captured their faces in the moment is jarring and empowering at the same time. How did being there affect you? Are there any takeaways you want to share?

TE: One, I was worried afterwards that I put myself and my family at risk by being so close to them. Their yelling expelled any potential viruses further than normal. My pessimistic take-away is, good for them to protest, but nothing will change. The rage is not strong enough and did not penetrate enough people (yet).

PB: What would you say to the next generation of activists who may be looking at your photos in 20 years?

TE: The general message is, that the protests I witnessed were all peaceful. In Seattle it felt like a food festival in the East Village with many families and children attending. Looting and riots are the exception by a handful of extremists. Protesting is important and should be kept up, despite intimidation tactics by our wanna-be dictator.

**PAUL'S FINAL THOUGHT:** *After speaking to Tobias, I am left with a sense of cautious optimism. I am wary to fall into a complacent mindset, but I do wish that things will change for the better. To affect real change in policy, we do need to vote - that is a given - but we must also continue to feel for our peers and loved ones who are struggling in a very turbulent time. It is empowering to see the next generation active on the streets, but these changes need to go everywhere; it doesn't stop when you disengage.*

*Understanding and truth seeking is the only way to proceed. We must come to our own conclusions about movements independent of what we see on social media, or on tv. It is completely ok to disagree with what someone says, but real conversation and dialogue can only happen when everyone involved understands the facts and the emotions behind our issues. Productive debate and discussion is the only way forward, and if we had faith in the socratic method, we would be able to come together to solve our systemic inequalities.*

**Coming up next Issue: Part 2: George Floyd's Funeral**

*Please see the next page for Tobias's photos from the June 3rd BLM protest in NYC*





These two women hold up signs on Sixth Avenue, outside Radio City Music Hall.



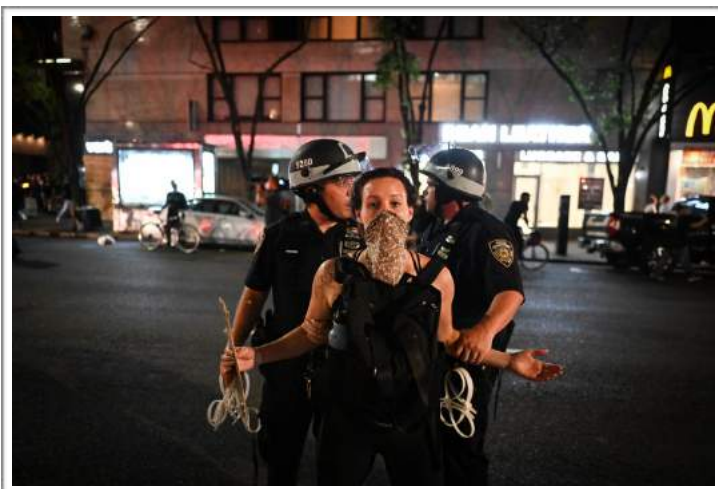
Protesters with bicycles block an intersection on Lexington Avenue and 68th Street to protect the march.



Young and engaged. Demonstrators on Third Avenue in Midtown Manhattan.



One hour after the official curfew, a small group of protesters, from the original march, trapped by police. Outnumbered with police officers in front and behind, they knelt down with their hands in the air to show that they were not violent. Some of them still got arrested.



A young woman gets arrested by two young police officers. No-one between the 3 seems to know why.



After the police entrapped the demonstrators and ended the protest, they started to randomly arrest some of them.





# *Knowledge*

by Elle Ferretti-Gray

There are different types of smart,  
From understanding slang words,  
To curating art.

No one form of knowledge,  
Is superior to the other.  
In that we can take solace.

It's such a subjective thing,  
One that we put so much value on,  
Yet it has next to no real meaning.

We all have knowledge, useful or not,  
It's not quantifiable,  
You can't measure the genius of a thought.

We are taught its importance is paramount,  
But who is to say?  
Knowledge of different things is often not tantamount.

Knowing about Ancient Rome is sublime,  
And no one could contradict that,  
But so is reciting a movie line-by-line.

From knowing what makes candy sour,  
To understanding what is in a black hole,  
Knowledge is power.



An interview with a

# SHINING STAR!

Imagine Society Member **Jack Gaffigan** (14) got the opportunity to interview the new president and CEO of The Bowery Mission **James Winans**. To find out more about The Bowery Mission and the extraordinary work that they do, please visit [bowery.org](http://bowery.org).

Jack Gaffigan: Today I have the honor to interview the new President and CEO of The Bowery Mission. Although a new position for James, The Bowery Mission is not a new place to James because he started there as a summer intern in 1999. Probably the same age or not much older than me.

JG: James, twenty-one years ago you probably had a different idea of how you wanted to spend your summers, and now you run this organization. What called you to dedicate your life to this service?

JW: You are correct. I was a college student hoping to work with children when I joined an internship program in New York City. To my surprise, I was assigned to an internship that did not involve children at all. Instead, I spent the summer working at one of The Bowery Mission's residential programs for men. My heart was moved, however, as I watched men who had formerly experienced homelessness dedicate their lives to working with men currently experiencing homelessness. Working with the staff at The Bowery Mission was and is such a privilege. I learned about the realities of homelessness and the promise of life transformation, which forever changed the course of my life. I am a Christian, and I really sense God's calling to do this work.

JG: The Bowery Mission has an incredible history. It has served homeless and hungry New Yorkers since the 1870s. I read that it was actually organized as a response to the rampant homelessness on the Bowery after the Civil War. Your Red Doors have stayed open through our city's worst disasters like the Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, Hurricane Sandy, 9/11, to name a few of the most traumatic events of the last 140 years. How has this history influenced The Bowery Mission's response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

JW: As you mentioned, The Bowery Mission has a rich history stretching back to the 1870s. The Bowery Mission has a rich history stretching back to the 1870s. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have remembered the ways The Bowery Mission always stands with New Yorkers in times of crisis. The Bowery Mission demonstrated God's love to New Yorkers then, and we resolve to do the same now, with the help of our faithful staff, donors, and volunteer base.

JG: When New York was ordered to shut down and stay at home, what impact did this have on the over 70,000 new Yorkers that do not have a home, and what ways was the Bowery Mission able to respond to the needs of these forgotten new Yorkers who probably had more complicated and unique difficulties with the shutting down of public restrooms etc?

JW: For New Yorkers experiencing homelessness, COVID-19 is especially dangerous and the current need is urgent and critical. Those living unsheltered already experience higher rates of chronic disease (e.g., diabetes, hypertension), mental illness, substance abuse, and trauma, and these conditions inherently increase vulnerability to illness - particularly when combined.



What's more, in light of citywide restrictions designed to prevent further spread of disease, homeless New Yorkers lost access to hygiene facilities, safe shelter, or food supplies in a time when these basic necessities are needed more than ever. They cannot follow mandates to "stock up, stay at home, or work from home," simply because they do not have a home. The Bowery Mission continues to provide emergency meals, hygiene care, and ongoing residential care at five locations in Manhattan.

For the past few years, The Bowery Mission has been working hard to overcome the "social distancing" experienced by those experiencing homelessness. Now, of course, "social distancing" is a public health imperative for all. Isolation can be a dangerous place for many who are dealing with addiction, mental illness and social marginalization. Our staff are supporting many people who are feeling alone and fearful. The Mission is providing critical and urgent services and support in a time where our community has been largely forgotten and has nowhere else to go.

JG: African American and Latinx New Yorkers are disproportionately affected by homelessness. More than half are African American and almost half are Latinx. Also we know the same ethnic groups are most at risk for contracting the virus and by suffering the most as a result of the economic impact caused by virus. What do you think this says about equality in our country?

JW: As you point out, racism and trauma do not affect our communities equally. Prior to the pandemic, homelessness was impacting 17 out of every 1,000 Black New Yorkers, 8 out of every 1,000 Latinx New Yorkers, but only one out of every 1,000 white or Asian New Yorkers. At The Bowery Mission, we see these realities daily as we serve a community experiencing homelessness deepened by a legacy of marginalization. The Bowery Mission stands daily with neighbors who are experiencing homelessness, hunger, and trauma, deepened by historical and ongoing systemic racism. These inequalities impact not only economic outcomes, but also COVID-19 outcomes, as there is a clear relationship between healthcare access and economic resources.

JG: The Bowery Mission provides annually 558,726 meals, 140,658 nights of shelter, and 100,334 articles of clothing. How have you been successful at keeping these numbers though this pandemic? How have you been able to manage and what are your current and new needs?

JW: We continue to offer essential residential, shelter and meal programs, as well as other services. Our response balances the consideration that our guests and clients are highly vulnerable to many challenges. Organizations like ours have a duty to care and not prematurely suspend potentially life-saving services. We are seeing new faces, with new worries – people who are desperately in need of the food, shelter and hope offered at The Bowery Mission. People in need continue to be welcomed at our locations and can reference our website for program changes.

When the pandemic began, we quickly saw an increase in the number of people served per meal. At the height of the pandemic in April, our Bowery Campus served more than 500 lunches, up from an average of 250. We still offer both residential and emergency shelter, but have decompressed our campuses to be in line with DHS standards for safe social distancing. Since the pandemic began in mid-March, we have provided 32,500 nights of shelter, 127,000 life sustaining meals, and 1,400 emergency showers and sets of clean clothing.

During this time, we are partnering with a number of agencies to meet the critical need at our doors, including an average of 430 volunteers/month, non-profit partners such as Showers of Blessing and New York City Relief, and food supply partners like City Harvest and Bloomberg. New needs include PPE supplies and isolation beds for COVID19 positive guests and clients. We have worked with a number of partners and agencies to obtain the



...continued from page 14

necessary PPE, such as SaturnFive and N95forNYC. We are also working with the NYC Department of Homeless Services to refer guests with possible COVID19 to isolation beds.

JG: I noticed you have started a program called the Associate Board. Can you explain what that is?

JW: The Associate Board is a group of young professionals, ranging from new college graduates to people who are further along in their careers. Associate Board members use their time, talents, resources, and networks to help support The Bowery Mission.

JG: It's been difficult and frustrating for kids like us who used to volunteer at your meal services now to have to be quarantined. The Imagine Society is an affiliation of service-minded youth groups mentored by adult leaders. We have found we can get a lot accomplished in both raising money as well as raising awareness by working as a team. Could an organization like the Imagine Society be a part of your associate board? We want to help!

JW: We are so grateful for your eagerness to get involved! Due to the age of this group (usually people in their 20s and 30s), it may not be the right fit for Imagine Society members, although that does not mean that you cannot be important partners to The Bowery Mission! Here are some things that the Associate Board does that you can also help out with:

- 1.) Fundraising: We have a great online fundraising platform that you can use to raise money for The Bowery Mission. You can create your own page here. This is a great way to get your friends and family involved while also raising critical funds.
- 2.) Volunteering: You can check out our volunteer opportunities [here](#) I know things are shut down now, but as NYC becomes safer, we encourage you to take a look and help out wherever you are comfortable!
- 3.) Sharing: Whether on social media or in conversation, sharing about our work is so important, and allows us to reach new people. These are some great ways that you can make a real impact on the people that we serve at The Bowery Mission.

If any members of the Imagine Society want to join the Associate Board once they have entered the workforce, we would love to have a conversation then!

JG: Thank you for taking so much time to answer my questions. I will let you get back to doing the most essential work of all.

*P.S. As of July 27th The Imagine Society Youth leaders premiered the #OneFiftyNine Instagram campaign for The Bowery Mission, by committing to a daily post to raise funds for hundreds of meals costing \$1.59 each. At the end of August, we will present them with a check in the amount of all the funds we raised. Please help us reach our goal by liking our posts, sharing on social media, and donating multiples of \$1.59 to the link in our bio @TheImagineSociety or through our website [TheImagineSociety.org](https://TheImagineSociety.org)*



**Go Jack! Pictured here  
volunteering for the Riverwest  
Food Pantry in Wisconsin**

**The Bowery Mission is still caring for our most vulnerable neighbors in the wake of the coronavirus. Learn more here: [bowery.org/covid19](https://bowery.org/covid19). This 4-minute video about their response to COVID-19 includes Bowery Mission staff members, volunteers and clients: [youtu.be/uON9P7f5NHE](https://youtu.be/uON9P7f5NHE)**

Jack Gaffigan (14) is a rising Freshman at York Prep

SPOTTED

ON

THE

STREET!

Hope Grows in Lewes, Delaware! Thank you Friend of The Imagine Society  
David Blazina for sending in these photos!



Lewis Miller Design back at the Flower  
Flash game! Spotted by @westsiderag  
on 78th & West End Ave

Still standing strong in NYC! Thank you Imagine Friend Jim Conaboy for these photos from around the city.



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

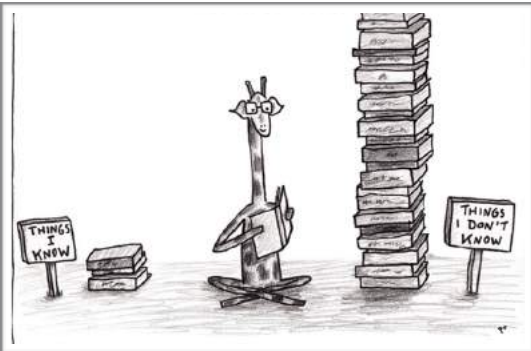




# FUN PAGES



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



Katie's  
Fave  
Memes  
:)

Lol!

