

THE IMAGINE SOCIETY

JULY 1, 2020



SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING **COMMUNITY**
KIDS QUARANTINE EDITION VOLUME 9!



“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

- Anne Frank



BAN THE BAGS!

by Naila Ismail

The clock is ticking and Mother Earth's pleas of help cannot be snoozed - our environment is desperately in need of our help. The global climate crisis is a matter too pressing to wait for a silver bullet from researchers and policymakers; instead, we need immediate action from the youth.

Single-use plastic bags are used mindlessly around the world. In fact, one trillion plastic bags are used annually around the world, each for an average duration of only twelve minutes. Furthermore, it takes at least 500 years for a plastic bag to photodegrade into toxic microplastic particles that contaminate the soil and waterways; these particles enter the food chain when animals ingest them and continue to pollute the environment.



“This is What We’re Fighting For”

by Crystal West (20) @crystalwestart
Friend of The Imagine Society from Massachusetts,
Crystal has been a dedicated and prolific
contributor to our #MessagesofLove art campaign

...continued from page 1

Recognizing the need for greater awareness of the detrimental effects of single-use plastic bags, I decided to tackle this issue within my community for my Girl Scout Gold Award. To learn more about the usage of plastic bags in my local community of Chatham, NJ, I met with leaders of my town and researched the topic online. I learned that the presence of plastic bags in single-stream recycling - the recycling system used in many communities, including my own - clogs the machinery. This results in lower efficiency as the bags must be removed by hand for the machinery to properly function. Therefore, it is crucial that we recycle plastic bags separately.



The collection begins...

Upon researching online different ways I could make an impact on my community, I discovered that the Bags to Benches program by Trex, a recycled materials manufacturer, provides a plastic film and bags recycling challenge for communities with an incentive of a bench made from recycled plastic. This challenge requires participating communities to collect 500 pounds of plastic films and bags (equivalent to about 40,500 plastic bags) within a six month time period. I decided to implement this challenge within my community. I reached out to local officials to receive their insight and advice on this project. I placed collection bins at the Library of the Chathams as well as Chatham High School. My responsibilities included creating awareness, emptying the collection bins, sorting through the collections to ensure that all items collected were acceptable materials, weighing and tallying the collections, and dropping it off at my local Whole Foods, a designated location for the plastic bags collection.

The collection and support from the community far surpassed my expectations; I was able to double my initial goal and collect over 1,000 pounds of plastic film in just over the course of six months. I actually earned two benches for my community. The collection was so successful that I needed to empty the bins on a daily basis, which was definitely a good problem to have!



Double her goal!

Also, I was excited to see that my project generated so much attention and commotion within my community and beyond. In addition to the Girl Scout Gold Award, I received the Presidential Volunteer Service Award for my community service efforts. On a more local level, my town's environmental commission invited me to join and share my project at their meetings. I worked alongside council members to draft the ordinance for a single-use plastic bag ban. I advocated for the ordinance within my community by speaking at town council meetings. I was proud to witness the ban ordinances pass in both of my town's municipalities.

Fortunately, my initiative was a ripple toward the greater wave in the fight against single-use plastic and acted as the catalyst for a plastic bag ban in my community. From this experience, I learned that, while it can be scary at first, it is important to take initiative in things you are passionate about and small actions can truly add up to make a difference.

Naila Ismail (18) is an incoming freshman at Barnard College

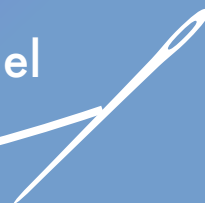


Incredible work Naila!



Helping the Community By Being a Sewing Angel

by Alessia Turner



During the COVID-19 pandemic, I began a mission to find a way to provide face masks for people so they were not using N95 medical masks, which were desperately needed by doctors and nurses. I was aware **The Imagine Society** was busy purchasing and donating many of those medical masks to hospitals in need in NYC and knew the fabric masks and were also needed.

I began to search for ways to support my community. In my search to help I discovered **The Turban Project**, which is a charity that provides turbans, beanies, courage caps, and face masks to patients at hospitals and treatment centers across the country. They are sewn by sewing angels in peace and prayer. I decided I was going to join the **Sewing Angels** and used my birthday money to order a sewing machine. While I waited for the sewing machine to arrive with the help of some of the Imagine Society mothers, I began to source fabrics and elastics. This was not easy because most businesses were closed.



ALESSIA AND SIS SABRINA HARD AT WORK!

When the machine finally arrived I was ready. I set up in the family dining room. I taught myself how to cut the fabrics and sew them. This looks a lot easier than it is! At one point there was no more elastic and the elastic on order was further delayed. I reached out to **The Turban Project** to ask for some ideas on how to buy more elastic because my supplies were not here. Two days later, I received a package from **The Turban Project**, with elastic and fabrics and a note to me that read, "So you can keep sewing until your materials arrive! Keep up the good work!" This was such a wonderful act of kindness and they wanted to support me in my efforts to help the community.



ALESSIA IN THE SWING OF THINGS!

When you become a **Sewing Angel** they ask you to do a couple of things when sewing the masks. 1. Sew when you are feeling peaceful or praying 2. All masks need to be blessed by a deacon or priest 3. Masks must be gifted. I added to that process and I also package each in a cellophane sealable bags and add a personal note on a cutout heart, wishing everyone health and safety. So far I have gifted masks to The Ascension Pantry in NYC, a food pantry in Hampton Bays, and St Steven's chapel on Staten Island. If you are interested in joining me and becoming part of **Alessia's Sewing Teen Angels** or donating fabrics or supplies please email me at **AlessiaTurner@nyc.rr.com**. God bless you all.



THE FINISHED PRODUCT! :)

Alessia Turner (15) is a rising Sophomore at The Chapin School and a member of The St. Patrick's Warriors (@WarriorYouthNYC). Visit **TheImagineSociety.org/service** to see Alessia's tutorial on sewing masks!



Our Experience in Ascension

by Marleni Leon and Beatriz Rebollar Sanchez



Being able to help out during the pandemic has been very encouraging for us. While helping out at The Ascension Food Pantry we were able to help our community that counted on the pantry's food supply. This experience has helped us assist the people from our society that are struggling through the pandemic. We never thought that during this pandemic we were going to help people. Once we heard about helping at the food pantry it changed our way of thinking and made us want to help the people that count on the food pantry.

"I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go visit you? The King will reply, truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

As stated in the bible verse above, helping the world is us making our Lord happy. When we first went to the food pantry we were really excited and we were proud to be able to do something for others. We then noticed that we were really interested in helping others. It all started since the day we found out we were able to help the people and volunteer. We plan on carrying this experience our entire lives and we decided to keep on helping others even when the pandemic is over. When we first did deliveries we were very happy helping people and bringing food to their homes, being able to work with the other volunteers has showed us that working as a team helps bring success to the world we live in.



Thank you Marleni and Beatriz! You are awesome!



Marleni is front left, Beatriz is back, right. Here they are sorting the salad into smaller bags for distribution. The kids help break down donations into smaller sizes, in a clean, dignified way.

Prepared grocery bags for distribution. Notice Alessia Turner's masks included!

Marleni Leon (13) and Beatriz Rebollar Sanchez (17) are cousins who have been volunteering at The Ascension 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

SHINING STARS!

A SHINING STAR CARES ABOUT HER COMMUNITY!

PJ McGuire has become a true friend to **The Imagine Society** and the NYC community. We were first introduced to PJ in mid May when Board Member Marina Franklin arranged a donation of PJ's face masks to Calvary Hospital. PJ is founder of the company **Wrapperoo (@thewrapperoo)**, a Chicago-based business she created with the dream of helping women with natural and curly hair struggles. When COVID-19 hit, PJ thought of the essential workers, and the great need for PPE across the United States. In lightning speed, she started sewing masks with materials either on hand, locally sourced or from family-owned businesses; first on her own, then with the help of her staff, five female sewers. When she started selling the masks online (**wrapperoo.com**) she donated one mask with every one purchased. Through her humanitarian efforts, she's helped donate over 1000 protective masks to healthcare heroes from Chicago, New York, Ohio to Georgia. PJ continues to help **The Imagine Society** get masks to nursing homes, hospitals and families in need.

THANK YOU PJ, YOU ARE AN INSPIRATION IN EVERY WAY!



A SHINING STAR INSPIRES WITH ARTISTIC EXPRESSION!

Audrey Cho (11) is a prolific artist. She's been one of **The Imagine Society's** most dedicated contributors to our **#MessagesofLove** campaign. Her meaningful artwork comes through to us almost daily. There is no counting how many lives Audrey's inspirational art has helped and touched, as it has been sent to hospitals and nursing homes all over NYC. You may have also seen the profoundly beautiful piece she created especially for our HOPE issue on June 3rd. But Audrey's talent doesn't stop there. At the age of 10, she played piano at Carnegie Hall! Even though Audrey has seen and witnessed a lot of the brokenness in the world, she wants to help make it a better place.

We think she's doing just that.

THANK YOU AUDREY FOR ENRICHING OUR COMMUNITY!



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



A VERY SPECIAL
ANNOUNCEMENT AND
PARTNERSHIP!

THE
IMAGINE
SOCIETY

THE IMAGINE SOCIETY AND LABOR ARTS' THE CLARA LEMLICH AWARDS TEAM UP TO HONOR FEMALE SOCIAL ACTIVISTS!

The Clara Lemlich Awards for social activism celebrate the lives of incredible women in their 80s and 90s and 100s whose brilliant activism has made real and lasting change in the world. They've been held every year since 2011, and since 2013 have been celebrated at the Museum of the City of New York.

This year the committee was thrilled to announce the honorees, but saddened that an actual reception was not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in an effort to make special this historic event, **The Clara Lemlich Awards** have invited **The Imagine Society** to conduct a series of cross generational interviews with our members and the distinguished honorees.

Taking place throughout this summer, a diverse group of our young female members will be interviewing and honoring these **unsung social activists**. Increasing their own and our community's awareness about the history of social activism as we ask ourselves how we can lead lives of volunteerism, awareness, and service towards others. Now more than ever, we need to hear their stories, and be inspired by their heroism.

In future newsletters we'll be publishing excerpts of the compelling interviews, and they will be published in full online at the Labor Arts website laborarts.org/lemlichawards/2020. This project will be updated throughout the summer and we will keep you updated!

In 2020, we can truly appreciate the words of a 23 year old Clara Lemlich who in 1909, at Cooper Union's Great Hall, when championing the rights and lives of her fellow immigrants, said

"I've got something to say!" and changed the world.





RUPPERT PARK

by Salaar I. Din



Can you think of an activity that helps the earth, the people, cleans up and gets your hands dirty?

Two years ago we started planting flowers, mulches, and raking leaves in Ruppert Park located in New York City (behind my house). We planted the flowers and mulches, so the park would look better and smell better. This way people would come here more often. We raked the leaves because it would make more space for people to play.

All the stuff we did helped the earth because we cleaned and planted. It also helped the people because it would be more comfortable for them. My hands got dirty, but I didn't mind. :-)



You are awesome
Salaar!

Photos from previous
MV4NY event at
Ruppert Park!



Salaar Ismaeel Din (7) is in Grade 2 at PS 177, Lower Lab School, and a Junior Member of Muslim Volunteers 4 NY @MV4NY



MV4NY CELEBRATES A MILESTONE!

The Imagine Society would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our friends Muslim Volunteers for New York as they commemorate five years of exemplary community service!

Thank you for your partnership, your friendship, and for your dedicated service to New York City.

5 Amazing Years!



AMERICA THROUGH THE LENS OF COVID-19



Welcome to Part Three 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 continue the series with **Joseph Fitzpatrick (age 16, rising Junior at the High School of American Studies at Lehman College in The Bronx)** and Part Three: New York City Homelessness During Covid-19



PART THREE: NEW YORK CITY HOMELESSNESS DURING COVID-19

Joseph Fitzpatrick: You have been on this amazing journey across the country capturing COVID-19 images. What was it like to capture these powerful images in your own city?

Tobias Everke: I love New York. Whenever, after 35 years being here, I think that I have seen it all and know it all, the city surprises me again and again and its people give me hope that there is a (better) future possible.

JF: How do you think the homeless population of New York is dealing with the pandemic?

TE: I am an enthusiastic strap-hanger and use the subway to go anywhere in the city. As a real 'New Yorker' I stopped paying attention to the homeless and beggars and performers in the subway a long time ago. Always following the (MTA) argument, that if you do not "feed" (bad word) "them", "they" will not come. My assignment, a story on *"The homeless take over New York's subway,"* changed my view. It was emotionally one of the hardest jobs in a while and it took me a few days to absorb and digest it.

The hopelessness and cry for help in some of their eyes are what got to me when I edited the pictures. While you take a photo, I was more concentrated on general composition and to tell a story with a picture, meaning I had to see that it was an empty subway car, that they were homeless. But when I got home and edited the photos that night, I had more time and looked closer at the images I took. And all of a sudden, and this may sound stupid, **I realized that they are humans.**

...continued from page 6

Homeless humans in one of the richest cities in the world. I felt disgusted, that we as a society are unwilling to deal with this. That the budget for our police is higher than most countries' defense budget, but that we do not deal with social issues appropriately. The money is there, but people, in general, do not care. The underlining thought, that if you work hard and are successful, you deserve it, and if you have no money "it's your own fault" (because 'you had a chance'). This idea overlooks that there are many grey zones and many storylines in between and that any team or any society is only as strong as its weakest link. Long story short, I believe that Covid-19 was not on top of the list of concerns for the homeless.

JF: How do these photos capture the sense of community in New York at the moment?

TE: As in any crisis, the strengths and weaknesses of society and communities are being highlighted. All healthcare workers went above and beyond, risking their own lives on a daily basis while being ill-equipped. As with the homeless situation, that should be unacceptable in the "richest" city, in the "best" country in the world. But talking to individuals and photographing a church and community-driven food pantry in Hell's Kitchen, made me optimistic, that maybe there is hope.

JF: There is great suffering and hope in these photos. What was it like among all this suffering?

TE: Besides the general observations and critics of the system, the fear of getting infected myself and then infecting my family and my children, was the biggest concern. But working non-stop for weeks at a time and being a witness to history does not let you sit back and think much. Plus, my camera, the physical camera in front of my face, always gave me a (false) sense of protection. I am 'only' an observer. As a journalist, I am not getting involved, I am 'only' reporting. And that does not work. Both, my writer and I spend countless days talking about what we saw. Many things hit us only with a delay because the next assignment was already waiting.



On the E train creating privacy with a blanket

JOSEPH'S FINAL THOUGHT: Tobias' pictures and then reading his words inspired me to think about how I must challenge myself to not ignore my city's needs. There are many people in NYC that are apathetic to the poor and needy they just pass by these issues. From the little corner of my life, I want to lend a hand to the people that need it most. I also agree with Tobias that more money should be allocated to the poor. Protection and the police come in at \$6 billion of the NYC budget. There should not be that much money spent on the police and it should shift to help the poor and the needy including the homeless.

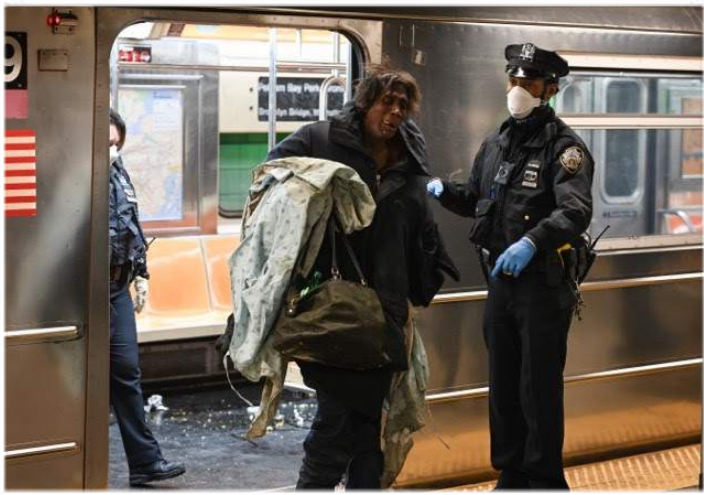
See next page for Tobias' photography



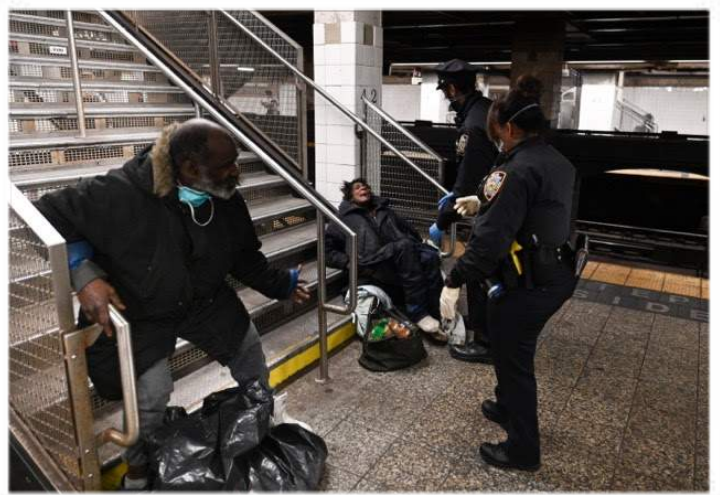
Woman named "Seven," collects money in a golden vase



Portrait of Tatiana Bianca, "she smiles into the camera... almost as if she does not realize her situation for a moment."



"Tatiana Bianca being escorted out of the subway by transit police. She was eating in an empty subway car and very happy when we photographed and talked to her. We did give her some money, only to see her being escorted out of the subway by transit cops. She cried when they took her and I got in trouble from another homeless for taking pictures."



Everyday life for a person experiencing homelessness in the NYC subway



Pastor Arden Strasser hands out food at the Saint Luke's Soup Kitchen on West 46th Street in Manhattan

Coming up next Issue: Part 4: NEW YORK CITY'S MEDICAL FRONT LINE

Photo credits: Tobias Everke @tobias_everke

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EET!

Thank you Imagine Member
Emily Blumstein (20) for the photos
from Millburn, NJ!



Thank you to The Fitzpatricks
Imagine Family for the photos
from Baltimore and NYC!



Thank you friend of
Imagine Society
Jim Conaboy for the photos
from all around NYC!



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



Heroes Feeding Heroes



Since April 1st, when we officially launched our first #FoodForFearless campaign to feed the Frontline Heroes fighting to protect NYC during the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have had the honor of speaking with, meeting, and serving some of the most incredible Healthcare Warriors across our city.

We were also fortunate to work with and engage some of the most devoted and kind-hearted people working at food trucks and restaurants across NYC. Thanks to you and your generous donations together we were able to serve over **9,000** meals to the frontlines.

As we end our first #FOODFORFEARLESS campaign, we wish to honor **the HEROES that served our HEROES.**

Here are some photos of our **COMMUNITY** of support!



Delly's
Yaad Style
Cooking!



Wafels &
Dinges!



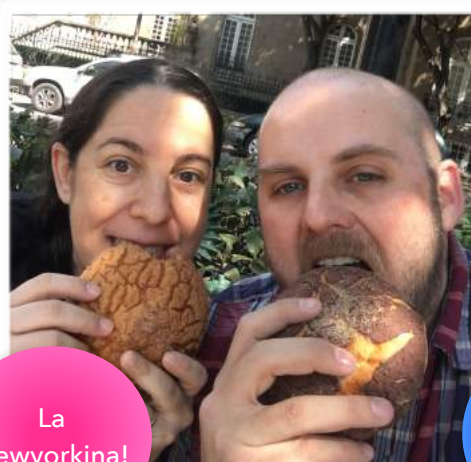
Gary's
Steaks!



Russ &
Daughters!



Mr Softee!



La
Newyorkina!



Savvy
Bistro!



Ample
Hills
Creamery!



Jiannetto's
Pizza!



Panera!

THIS SUMMER IN THE HAMPTONS, GET BACK IN THE GAME SAFELY WITH PRO REPS BASKETBALL!



PRO REPS BASKETBALL
NOW OFFERING PRIVATE
AND GROUP LESSONS



IN THE HAMPTONS!

SEE YOU
IN THE
HAMPTONS!

You can stay healthy physically, mentally and safely with Pro Reps!

- Training is available for children of all ages and skill levels.
- Lessons offered one on one or small group training (no more than 3)
- We can come to your backyard, driveway or park near your home!
- Sessions include ball handling, shooting, and cross fit exercises that will increase lateral movement, quickness, and general overall fitness



In order to schedule your next individual or small group training session please contact us directly via phone at **732-642-9803** or via email Laurence@prorepsperformance.com

*All participants will be required to bring their own basketballs (2) and jump rope

FUN PAGES

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

Katie's
Fave
Memes
:)

Lol!

Corona Virus - explained
in craft terms. You and 9
friends are crafting. 1 is
using glitter. How many
projects have glitter?

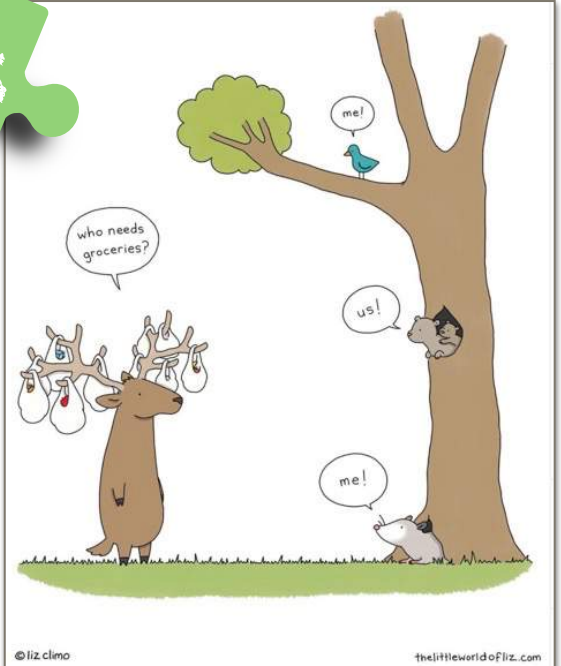
Me : Alright, time
to sleep

Youtube : 10 things
you didn't know
about black holes

Me :



WHEN YOU FINALLY GET TO GO THE GROCERY STORE AFTER SHELTERING AT HOME



ALL FEELINGS

ARE FOR EVERYONE!

There's no such thing as a "girl feeling" or a "boy feeling".
We can **all** feel:



All feelings are **NORMAL** and **HUMAN**.
What matters is how you express those feelings.

@Elise Gravel

Every month so far in 2020 has been like.

