

The clear spiky ball emerged in front of the microscope. The weird shape seemed to have a mad face, looking ready to kill someone. Yes, it's the coronavirus that I'm describing. These days, instead of realizing Caillou has a yellow shirt and Peppa is a pink pig, toddlers and newborns are learning how the coronavirus looks... And let's just say that's not how we want our generation's kids to grow. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected our world so much that even from the littlest kids to adults and our senior community have the biggest changes in their life. Our community has changed, and there are pros and cons. Today, not just as a young 12 year old, but as a hope for our world, I have interviewed people in different age ranges to see the change in each person's life.

From normal school to virtual school to hybrid, Our schooling system has gone crazy which has great impact for many students across not just New Jersey but across the globe. One such student that had a major impact in his life is my cousin, Rachit Koltur. At the peak of the coronavirus hit, he was in virtual schooling. As he stated, 'it was a new change that made it hard to concentrate in school, and would get distracted easily'. To add my own thoughts as a 12 year old, I thought that virtual school was way too long of a screen time for kids my age and even younger. I knew there was nothing we could do about it then, children cannot sit in front of the screen for 6 hours. A good thing about virtual school is that teachers have more control on when the students can talk and assign work. Recently, as we moved into the hybrid model, Rachit felt much more confident in school. Rachit had a little bit of trouble with language arts during virtual school, but now that hybrid is open, his english improved tremendously,' his mother Sowjanya Koltur stated. How safe does hybrid feel from a student's perspective? This is a question that is asked frequently. Well, people like Rachit and my little sister Sahiti Koltur stated that hybrid felt very safe and was a huge step into getting back to "normal" school. Rachit is a Hindu and follows ISKON. He used to go to his temple every Sunday. How often does he go to the temple now? How safe is it there? Is his normal practices being impacted? Rachit is now going to the temple once in three months or so. Yes, a big change from every week to once in three months. And during this once in three month visit, Rachit feels extremely safe with less number of people and masks. Normal prayers are conducted, not changing the practices that were done before corona. Aside from religious practices, Rachit is one of the many kids who love to eat out. As Rachit stated, 'we are not going out as much as before, but we are doing takeout once a month or so'. A question that immediately popped into my head was, 'how does he feel about outdoor dining when it's warmer?'. Rachit answered, 'I don't feel safe, I just think with your masks off, it's not worth knowing there is a risk'. As a New Jersey girl, I know we can have harsh winters. And obviously outdoor dining is not a choice, so takeout is a great and a really safe option for food. Rachit explained life as a student and a normal child, not just him but many children are facing. To end how a child has been impacted, I would like to thank Phil Murphy for the great decisions he made for our state and how he tried his best to make it as close to normal as we can.

You look at your watch.. Oh no! Five minutes late already to your meeting! The traffic in front of you seems endless. How will you make it to your office on time? See, not only a child gets affected by the coronavirus pandemic but so do adults. I interviewed 4 different adults, Subhadra Kothapalli, Sireesha Pisipati, Naveen Gattu and Raj. Subhadra, a close family friend, who works in Hanover insurance has faced tremendous changes throughout her journey in corona. As she stated, 'Corona has made it easier in terms of commute to the office which was

1 hour away, now I just login from home'. Not only did virtual work make it easier for her, it made a lot of difference for Naveen, Sireesha and Raj. 'Who needs to worry about traffic now?' Subhadra also stated that it was much easier balancing work with family life during these times. As a mom of two children, she started new hobbies such as painting their rooms and spending more time with her husband. As always, a family does get crazy if put in a house together for more than 9 months, and so did hers. She explained, 'sometimes we couldn't put up with each other, but it has been so good getting to know my family even more.' Subhadra has been meeting with only a few families, trying to keep safe. Recently, Subhadra has traveled to India and has explained the flight was pretty safe with all the precautions. Traveling has been a major change to business travelers and family vacations. Subhadra works in an insurance company which has increased profits in 2020. All in all, let's just say for Subhadra, corona was a rollercoaster, but in the end, was good in terms of better work-life balance, family time. Sireesha, also a mother of two kids in Oregon has explained driving issues were gone and made it easier to manage family time. Social life changed, and Sireesha and her family only meet a few families with social distancing and masks. She explained she has only been meeting close family indoors. Sireesha works in Intel, which obviously because of virtual learning, had a great year and recorded it as the "best year" for Intel. As always, Sireesha explains she misses going to the gym and meeting colleagues and close personal interactions without wearing a mask and social distancing.

To add to gyms and other workout studios, our family has invested in Peloton, which we find not just enjoyable, but a way to keep fit. Lastly, Naveen has been getting more family time than ever, normally he travels on business once in a fortnight. He has explained he had reduced stress with no traveling and good sleep hours. Naveen works in Gramener as the COO of the company which has increased sales during this time. Naveen is getting more time to try new things such as tiktoking with his daughters accounts and getting walks with his wife. Raj explained his company Prudential Asset Management has increased their revenue much more this year and he is able to practice yoga and exercise more as his commute time has become zero. Overall, I think even if these adults faced a few struggles along the way, they managed well and are making the best out of this time.

From staring at a screen for hours to not being late to a meeting, corona has impacted us in so many ways, both good and bad. Michelle Obama has also been able to read with kids on Mondays because of the time she got due to Covid. No matter how dark this time gets, we will work together as a community to win. We will win this battle. Corona may be hard, but it has taught us many lessons. From scientists working as hard as ever, to children paying attention more in class, Corona has made us come together as a community and solve our problems. As one person, we might not be able to beat it; but when we come together, nothing stands in our way. To reiterate, I once again want to thank Phil Murphy wholeheartedly for an amazing job in keeping New Jersey safe. Mr. Murphy, I want you to know that all the residents in New Jersey mean this. We thank you for your service. I also want to thank Tammy Snyder Murphy for encouraging excellence in our education. Thank you so much for giving us a place to write and share down our stories. Today, I want to end with a few words. As Chuck Noland once said, "I know what I have to do now, I've got to keep breathing because tomorrow the sun will rise. Who knows what the tide could bring?"

Thank You.