

Person Interviewed: Amy Valens

Date Interviewed: January 26, 2021

How has your daily life been affected by the quarantine or Corona Virus?

Well, it's limited on how many people I see and where I go. I've mainly stayed home and when I go out I always wear a mask. I haven't been past San Anselmo at all since last March.

Do you feel supported by The Valley community during this time? If yes, in what ways has your community supported you? Can you think of any other challenging time in The Valley that would compare?

Yes, I feel supported by The Valley community. I haven't had to use the food bank or any of the services, but I feel the warmth of the community and how caring the people are. If I needed help I know I could get it. The most challenging time that would compare would be in 1982 when we had several days of severe rain along with a high tide and there was massive flooding. Of course, it was an event that affected most people for a few days, but we had friends whose house flooded in Forest Knolls. They came and lived with us for a period of time. It was a family with four children and they moved into our house and we took care of them until they could get back into their house. They actually had to be taken out of their windows because their house had been over flooded so they couldn't open the door. The same day a dear friend of mine had her house collapse on her. Her name was Aneice Taylor and we've been doing plant sales for her for many years. When the house collapsed, the volunteer fire department had come out to see what was going on. Her husband and two kids were able to get out, but the refrigerator had fallen on her and she was trapped in the house. I've heard the story so many different times, so I could be a little inaccurate. I know Dan Dickson was a member of the volunteer fire department and he decided to go in and get her out against the orders of the officials because it was so likely that the house might fall further and he would get trapped. He went in and he got her out but her spine was broken which resulted in her being quadriplegic, which means she couldn't move her arms or legs. She rose to the occasion and became a great role model. She couldn't live the way she lived before and her house was destroyed but the community got a local realtor to swap her section of land for another flat piece of land in Woodacre. Then the community came together and built her a house that she could maneuver in. Since then the plant sale has been something everyone wants to take part in because it was a good place to get plants but also support Aneice and the organization that she formed because there was a community memory. So may this time here also go from something terrible to something beautiful.

Do you think that the safety precautions such as masks, social distancing, and hand washing are too much, too little, or just enough?

I think that they are basic. I wouldn't say they're too little, but when you say just enough you have to be doing what keeps people safe. So just enough as long as that's all we need.

Have your thoughts about the pandemic changed at all since March of 2020?

Well I certainly didn't think we'd be quarantined this long. Other than that I am less fearful and more cautious if you can see a difference there. I'm not afraid I'm going to die, but I'm aware that this may be something we live with for a very long time and we just have to be cautious.

Would you like to add anything about what your Valley community has meant to you during the past year?

A small group of us has created our pod and my pod is four other couples. We're all people who always spend time together a few times a year, but we definitely didn't see each other every week. Somewhere very early in the pandemic we realized we wanted to see each other and do it in a safe way and it developed into meeting every week. Sometime we were able to do it socially in the summertime and other times it's been through Zoom. I've gotten to know these four couples, who some I've known for over 40 years, but now I know on a whole other level because of the way we tend to interact meeting on a weekly basis.