

## **Children of the Pandemic: Navigating Fourth Grade**

An Interview by Logan Johnson

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This interview provides a glimpse into how the pandemic has affected the life of ten-year-old Rose Micciche. Rose is an elementary school student and is currently taking most of her classes using online platforms, which she mentions often during our time together. She expresses how her thoughts and feelings have changed over the course of this year regarding COVID and what she has been doing during this time. She shares some fun and exciting activities that she has still been able to participate in despite the pandemic, but she reassures how much she misses life before the virus. This interview exhibits emotions that most likely resonate with many of the children across our state. It is important we do not neglect – amid the global crisis – the perspective of our children growing up during these uncertain times.

Logan: Hi Rose, how old are you?

Rose: I am ten; I just turned ten recently. For my birthday, it was supposed to be a surprise but then I heard about it. We got to go horseback riding, but then because of COVID I only did it for three weeks instead of four.

Logan: Can you remember the first time you heard of the COVID-19 virus? How did it make you feel?

Rose: I think the first time was when it was a Friday and there was a thing at school, but we didn't end up going and I didn't know why. And then my Nonno knew what was going to happen and he told us. And when I really knew, it was my brother's school musical, and it was cancelled and there were only two shows. That's when I knew it was happening; I didn't really understand before. Once things started getting shut down that's when I knew what was happening, too.

Logan: What was your daily routine like before it was a pandemic? Were you going to school and doing sports?

Rose: My routine was waking up, getting ready for school, going to school, and then coming home. On Thursdays I had singing and on Tuesdays I had gymnastics. On the other days I would just relax after school or sometimes go places. And I think that's all I did then, so that was my routine before COVID.

Logan: How did you feel about having to be in quarantine? Did you miss your friends and your activities?

Rose: Yeah, for gymnastics it was all shut down, and for singing we used, I think, Zoom for virtual lessons. And we had to cancel our 70s showcase and our March showcase. We finally did a showcase in September. I missed my family members and all my friends during quarantine.

Logan: What was your daily routine like during the quarantine period? Did you pick up any new hobbies, or continue doing stuff you like?

Rose: I usually got up and I checked my emails because before we knew how school was going to be we would always get emails to say what we had to do. It had video links in case we had to read books or use charts online. So, I did school and then I watched some TV to give my brain a little break from working so hard. And then I probably did something else, too. I did start learning how to play the piano during COVID. I also did horseback riding for three weeks. Also, I did a pageant for Little Miss New Jersey. I was in the 7-9 age group and I won the title! I won for talent, casual, and gown wear. It was originally scheduled for March, but it was postponed for October. They found a way to do it during COVID, and everyone had their masks on except when we were performing on stage.

Logan: What do you think is the hardest part about being in a pandemic? What do you think is the easiest part?

Rose: Well, I think the hardest part is probably school because sometimes when we do meetings the videos aren't working. And then the teachers have to say when we change subjects. And they usually say they want our camera to be on, so they know when you're writing. I think the easiest part is like staying in the house. It is hard not getting to go out, but it is easy to do because you just have to stay at home, and you don't have to go out. I also have my dog to keep me busy. Phoebe comes up to me when I'm on my iPad or she grabs a toy and pushes it on your leg. She likes to play with me, so I usually play with her. And when I wanted to relax while watching TV, I would sit with my little dog, Dior, and Phoebe would get jealous. She really loved Dior, though.

Logan: Do you feel like online school is better, the same, or worse than regular school? Why?

Rose: I think it's worse because it is hard for learning. And it is hard to get the homework done. For specials, we never had to submit assignments before. Like, before you just had to go and get the good grade. This is actually my first year getting grades, so it has been hard for me. And we often lose links, or they don't work sometimes. And, in regular school, we would lose track of time and it would go faster. It is harder to stay on-time while we are online. My mom and I have to focus on getting on Zoom on time and doing the Nearpods on time, too, and they are usually like 20 pages. And for science, when we were in school for that short period, we had to leave our science books at home. So, at school, we had to go on our computers to do Nearpods, and you have to click so much to get on the right page to read.

Logan: What do you miss most about regular school?

Rose: I think being able to see all my friends and actually being able to learn better. It wouldn't be so complicated.

Logan: Does it make you scared when the adults talk about COVID-19? How does it make you feel?

Rose: At first, I thought it would only last a few months. I thought July would be the latest that it would end. And I knew people were dying and it was serious, but I didn't think it would last a year. Like I thought it would be done in October and for my birthday in November. But it doesn't make me sad anymore because I am used to it and I don't have my normal life anymore. I know I will get it, maybe, but I am not scared anymore because I know more about it now. For now, I know how to keep myself safe.

Logan: Do you think you will be returning to school next year? Are you excited to do something fun in the future?

Rose: I think so, maybe not the beginning of the year, but maybe near October. Like two weeks before Halloween. I'm hoping something like around there, but I am really hoping it will be sooner. Yeah, in March I think I am going to try horse back riding again. Once COVID is over, I am excited for gymnastics and everything being normal. I want to do gymnastics again and do our recital dances. And, also, for singing I am excited to do our showcases again instead of just doing it over video and doing recordings. Before we would only record a few seconds to practice, but now they let us record our whole songs. And then we use those recordings if they are good enough. At the first showcase we did during COVID we had to sing behind these pieces of plastic. In October, there was a Halloween background for the stage, and in November there was a fall-themed background.

**Below are some exciting photos of Rose from the time she went horseback riding and after winning the title of Little Miss New Jersey!**

