

# Arts



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## Library collects coronavirus stories from Village residents

**Aimée La Fountain**  
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The Bolger Heritage Center at Ridgewood Public Library is asking those who live or work in the Village to share their experience responding to the coronavirus pandemic. The library will preserve and maintain the materials in their archives. The submissions will also appear on the library's website for a feature called Stories of the Effects of COVID-19.

Librarian Beth Potter came to Sarah Kiefer, local history librarian at Ridgewood Public Library, with the idea for the project.

"Part of the mission of the Bolger Heritage Center is to preserve and maintain Ridgewood's history and collecting stories about this unprecedented event documents not just Ridgewood's history, but that of Bergen County, New Jersey, the United States and the world," Kiefer said.

The project asks people to detail how they're spending their time, the biggest challenges they've faced and the moment they realized this was a historic event. They're especially interested in hearing from Ridgewood health workers, teachers, business owners and employees, parents, grandparents and students of any age.

"One day, this time will be considered history and we wish to document and preserve the materials and stories that demonstrate how you are continuing to communicate, work, commute, learn, use the library, teach, create, celebrate, mourn, and give aid to others," said the project description on the library's website.

"By documenting this pandemic, we'll be providing future generations



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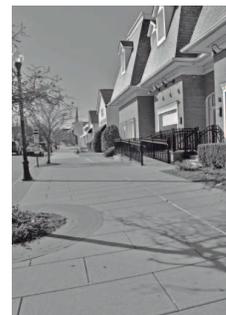


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Flynn

with answers to questions they may have such as, "What did people do to get through this?" Kiefer said.

Materials the library is seeking include typed personal reflections, images, videos, social media posts and blogs. Participants can submit the digital content directly through the library's website.

"To get a sense of how it felt to live in Ridgewood today, it comes alive through the personal stories, photos and things people save and give to the library," said Ridgewood Public Library Director Nancy Greene.

Aidan Joseph Flynn, a junior at Ridgewood High School, discussed his experience with online schooling and

the upset of losing the opportunity to play sports in the spring.

"I've been playing lacrosse since I was in third grade and have always dreamed about the idea of playing varsity sports," he said. "However, COVID-19 has taken that from me."

Resident Marshall Katzman participated in Valley Hospital's program to sew masks for hospital staff members and submitted a photo of himself wearing his face mask.

Another resident participating in Valley's program, Victoria H., shared a photo showing the masks she created and her sewing machine, which was left to her by her mother who recently passed. "These two things, helping in some way and thinking of my mother, came together in a wonderful, unexpected way," she wrote. "As I quietly

sewed these masks, and thought of those that they could help, I also realized that my mother was with me."

Reviewing the submissions that have come in so far, Kiefer said, "Each story leaves an impact and leaves a sense that we're all going through this together."

"There's no need to overthink what to submit. There's so much out there that everyone's doing to get through this moment," Kiefer said. "If you can capture these moments and send them on to us, we'll make sure that your story is remembered."

To see the collection, visit [ridgewoodlibrary.org/covid19-storiesshared](http://ridgewoodlibrary.org/covid19-storiesshared). For questions about the project, email [heritagecenter@ridgewoodlibrary.org](mailto:heritagecenter@ridgewoodlibrary.org).