

## Richmond High School students confront demands of social distancing

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APRIL 9, 2020 | MARINA KNOWLES

Shutting down California to control the spread of the coronavirus requires everyone to cooperate. Gov. Gavin Newsom urged young people to take the crisis seriously and stay indoors and at least six feet from others after commenting on the tragic loss of a Lancaster teenager who died of COVID-19.

He went on to say:

“Young people can and will be impacted by this virus. In fact, young people disproportionately are the ones testing positive in the state of California — 50 percent of the 2,102 individuals that have tested positive, 50 percent are between the age of 18 and 49 ... I just cannot impress upon young people out there more the seriousness of this moment and how critical they are to ultimately getting us on the other side, by practicing that social distancing that we all are accustomed to hearing about but not in every case advancing individually.”

Teenagers at Richmond High School in West Contra Costa Unified School District in the San Francisco Bay Area shared their thoughts about how the pandemic is affecting their lives:

**Yoryanni Coyoy, 15, Sophomore:**

I only notice social distancing if I go out to stores because now the checkout lines have a certain spot for you to stand with a distance of six feet apart. Other than that we don't really go out because there's nowhere to go. At home I basically do chores, schoolwork and watch Netflix. My dad still works and my mom hasn't because they canceled her job. We're not worried about paying rent or not being able to get groceries for now. I'm kind of worried because my mom has health problems, so she can easily get sick. Then again, I'm not really

worried because I haven't met anyone that has the virus. People that I know say that their parents don't let them go out or they say that they should stay home instead.

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**Tenayah Crockett, 16, Sophomore:**

I've only been going out to the store, work, church and my grandma's house. When I'm home I do my school work and clean up around the house. My dad doesn't go out for work now because both of his jobs are closed. It's pretty worrisome to think about my parents having to pay rent, but I think that my dad is getting unemployment now. Social distancing doesn't bother me. It actually kind of helps at work because I don't have to get close to people. My granny and grandad are the people that I'm worried are going to get sick. In a way I think that all of this is necessary, but only for people that are susceptible to getting it.

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**Evany Cruz, 15, Sophomore:**

My family and I are trying to practice social distancing by only going out for groceries or to buy things for the house. We like our own separate spaces anyways. Some students have been social distancing too. A few that I know are still required to go to work. My mom's job doesn't require her to go anymore, but my dad still goes everyday. My parents haven't been worrying about money because they have savings.

Most stores require everyone to stay six feet apart or you get kicked out, so it's been a bit weird, especially since you have to wait for someone to move before you can grab something from the aisle. I'm not really worried about the older people in my family because they live in Guatemala, so there's not a big chance that they will get it. I think that sheltering in place is the most helpful thing in this situation. It will help prevent the virus from spreading in the long run.

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