



**Boca Raton  
Historical  
Society &  
Museum**

**For Immediate Release**

**Who:** Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum

**What:** Curating COVID-19 Letters to the Future

**When:** May - June 2020

**Where:** Boca Raton, Florida

**Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum Seeks Residents' Contributions to Impactful Curating COVID-19 Collection and Exhibit**

**Boca Raton, FL** —The coronavirus pandemic has had a life-altering impact on the local community, along with the country, and the rest of the world. As it is the mission of the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum, to collect, preserve, and disseminate artifacts and information relating to both the past and the evolving history of the community, they are inviting residents to participate in their Curating COVID-19 campaign.

BRHS&M Curator Susan Gillis states, "This benchmark in our nation's history will long be remembered by all who lived through it and those yet to come. It is incumbent upon our organization to document this moment in time as seen through the eyes of Boca Raton residents."

BRHS&M Executive Director, Mary Csar adds, "There are few events, in the history of our country, that have impacted virtually every citizen on some level. World War II was one of the events, along with the tragedy of 9/11 and the current coronavirus pandemic. It is imperative that we accurately document the response, so that future generations will understand this unprecedented time in history."

The BRHS&M is requesting that residents of all ages – children and adults – contribute to their Curating COVID-19 campaign's "Letters to the Future" project. Residents are asked to submit written accounts, photographs, drawings, and/or videos, that reflect how the coronavirus has affected their lives. All submissions will be reviewed by the BRHS&M curators, and they will be archived. Selected contributions will be shared on their website's Spanish River Papers webpage and on their social media channels.

Residents should send their submissions to [research@bocahistory.org](mailto:research@bocahistory.org), with the subject line, "Letters to the Future," or mail their submissions to the BRHS&M at 71 North Federal Highway, in Boca Raton, Florida 33432.

Everyone at the BRHS&M is gratified that residents have begun to contribute to the campaign. Gillis notes that professional photographer, Peter Lorber, is contributing numerous photos to the project to document this time on behalf of the community.

Other contributors include Francis Jawhari, the founder and designer, of [www.FHJBaby.com](http://www.FHJBaby.com). The Boca Raton resident has pivoted her children's accessory business to making face masks for children and adults. She is proud to also be donating face masks to several local Palm Beach County organizations, including Hannah's Home and The Open Door. She says, "I saw that there was a need and I had the supplies and the skill. I felt compelled to do my part."

In addition to home-schooling four children during the pandemic, Jawhari says that the shift to making masks has very much been a family effort. She adds, "My seventeen-year-old cuts almost all the fabric and elastic, and my little ones help with small tasks, such as packaging and occasionally sewing. Mostly, I am working at night - - staying up well past midnight. My husband helps with the numbers. I have been overwhelmed, by the love and support from our community, with the purchasing of the masks and that has helped us to continue our work and our mask donations."

Letty Sanchez, owner and fashion mentor of the THOS Fashion School of Design in Boca Raton, began making masks with her students - - to donate to first responders - - in mid-March. She states, "I was upset that people were afraid to go to work. I was also inspired to contribute - I have the space, the equipment, and the manpower. We have donated over 700 masks to local hospitals and nursing homes. We have also donated masks to flight attendants who have contacted us."

Sanchez, and her students, are also making and selling masks for children and adults, including custom "designer masks." Additionally, she has implemented a buy-one/ donate-one mask campaign. She is pleased that a local law firm contacted her, to supply ten dozen masks per week, that they are donating. She adds "My students and I are gaining so much from this -- to be able to help so many people is so incredibly rewarding."

Another contributor to the campaign is a year-round resident of Boca West Country Club. She took many photos of vacant streets and recreational areas in her community, and wrote about her experiences early into the COVID-19 pandemic with the shelter-in-place order. She states "Season, at the club, is traditionally a crowded and active time. In the morning, you would normally see a great many people walking and cycling along Boca West Drive, which is a 3.5-mile circular roadway connecting the villages and common areas... This year, life within the gates has become eerily silent and desolate. The only sounds, one hears, is the wildlife and an occasional lawn mower on the golf courses".

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**Media Contact:**

Sharon Levinsohn, 310-633-1427

Jill Kaplan, [jill@hudsonhollandglobal.com](mailto:jill@hudsonhollandglobal.com), 561-596-5465

**Photo Link: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1F4zDz5iWly6-tHSg1tnxDoiUJhM4E6Ik>**