**Shantel Torricellas**

**Interviewed February 2021**

Abigail

If you need me to, like ask a question a different way or help thinking through it, just let me know. Okay. So the first question is, why don't you tell us about yourself? Who are you? What do you like to do? What are your hobbies?

Shantel

So I'm Shantel, Shantel Torricellas. My hobbies are drawing, and coloring, and doing puzzles.

Abigail

Oh, nice. I didn't know about the puzzles. That's new to me. Did you want to share anything about your music interests at all? Or some of your favorite movies that you like?

Shantel

My music interest is pop, a little bit of rap, and country.

Abigail

Mmhmm. And what about like, do you still like Marvel? Is that still in? The Marvel characters?

Shantel

I still like Marvel.

Abigail

That's what I thought. Tim and I actually weren't watching all of them in order. I thought of you when we started doing that. So yeah. Okay, cool. Do you work?

Shantel

No, I do not work.

Abigail

But do you volunteer?

Shantel

Yeah, I volunteer at the zoo but I haven't been in the zoo during the Coronavirus.

Abigail

Right. So, do you want to say more about that? Like, how does that make you feel that you can't go to the zoo right now due to COVID?

Shantel

I feel kind of a little bit sad about it. Because I really like being at the zoo.

Abigail

Can you tell Julianne what you did at the zoo when you were able to go there?

Shantel

I tell guests what all the animals' names are and tell them how old they are.

Abigail

That's so cool. Isn't there a house, like it's an indoor part of the zoo right that you work outside of and it's like an information center, right?

Shantel

Yes.

Abigail

Okay, cool. And isn't there like a panda or something at the zoo you really like, the red pandas?

Shantel

Oh yes, the red panda, Flash, yeah.

Abigail

Do you remember what their name was? I can't remember their name.

Shantel

The red panda?

Abigail

Yeah, the red panda at the zoo. What was its name?

Shantel

Flash.

Abigail

Flash?

Shantel

Yeah, you got it. Yes.

Abigail

Aw, okay cool. How do you think COVID.. Like, do you have any extended family that you haven't been able to see because of the COVID virus?

Shantel

What do you mean extended? What do you mean extended family?

Abigail

Like nobody living in your house. Like any family that's not living in your house right now that you haven't been able to see.

Shantel

No, I've been seeing my aunts and my cousins.

Abigail

Okay. Okay, cool.

Julianne

Guys I'm going to jump in for a second. I'm so sorry. Shantel, can you make sure that you're close enough to your phone? You're sounding a little bit far away again. I just want to make sure that the recording picks up what you're saying.

Shantel

Okay.

Julianne

Thank you.

Abigail

What about your friends from school? Like how has COVID affected that with them? Have you been able to see anybody or what has that been like for you?

Shantel

I haven't been seeing anybody, I've just been at my house.

Abigail

What do you think are some of the biggest challenges that you had to deal with because of COVID?

Shantel

That I couldn't go to school. I can't go to school in person right now. And I can't really do any Best Buddies activities right now. I haven't been seeing any of my friends. I've been kind of feeling mad, sad, left out, very bored.

Abigail

Mmhmm. Yeah, for sure. That makes a lot of sense. What has your school experience been like this year so far? Like I know you're virtual and online but what is that actually like for you? Do you like it? Do you feel like you're learning well? Those sorts of things.

Shantel

I learn much better when I'm in person at school.

Abigail

Yeah. Yeah, totally makes sense. Do you think because of this experience, you've learned anything about yourself during this time? Like, for example, I've learned that I really need to be outside at least once every day. I've learned how important it is for me to get out of my house once a day. Have you learned anything important about yourself during or because of the pandemic?

Shantel

I do really want to be back outside again. I really like being outside.

Abigail

Yeah, you're a hiker, right? You like to hike and stuff and be outdoors?

Shantel

Yeah.

Abigail

Mmhmm, yeah. Have you had to learn any new skills during this time? Like I learned how to bake some new things. Did you learn any new art skills or I guess the question is like what good things can you think of that came out of this?

Shantel

Good things are.. I really do like seeing my dogs when I'm at lunch breaks from online, so that's a good thing. And playing games with my family, that's another good thing. When I'm done school. I don't have any other good things right now.

Abigail

No, that's awesome. Those are good ones. That's really cool. Do you think you've had to depend on yourself more due to COVID?

Shantel

What do you mean depend on myself more during COVID?

Abigail

So like, because school is online, you know, having that motivation, like, from yourself to do it versus like, you know, getting like picked up to go to school or like getting driven to school. You know, have you had to, like kind of like, be? what's the word I'm looking for? Like, more on top of your stuff due to COVID?

Shantel

Definitely.

Abigail

Yeah. How do you think that's been going through you? Is it stressful?

Shantel

It's a little stressful, but not like a lot though.

Abigail

Do you think it's hard to keep up with like, all of your schoolwork too now that it's all online? And like, it's like, if you had a question like, how would you ask a teacher?

Shantel

There's a raise the hand, like you can raise your hand button to ask the question.

Abigail

But what if you were like doing homework outside of school? And you had a question? Like, what would you just have to wait for the next day to come to ask your teacher? Or like, could you like send them a text or something?

Shantel

Well, I actually can just ask my family to help me with it.

Abigail

Oh, that's nice. Your family so kind. So do you want to talk a little bit about what you used to do before COVID happened? Like what would like a day look like for you before COVID?

Shantel

Well, every Saturday I'd be going to jujitsu.

Abigail

That's right. You haven't gone to jujitsu, either.

Shantel

Yeah, I know. And I haven't been going to do tutoring in person anymore. Like not really going to the zoo, but I'm not doing that anymore right now.

Abigail

Mmhmm, yeah. I forgot about jujitsu. So I know that's like such a huge part of like, who you are and your life. So what do you miss about jujitsu?

Shantel

I really miss learning new moves in jujitsu.

Abigail

Mmhmm. Have you been practicing at home at all?

Shantel

Yeah, I practiced once my dad a while ago.

Abigail

Is he your instructor, right?

Shantel

No, my dad is not my instructor. My instructor is Steve.

Abigail

Steve, okay, but your dad does it with you. Right?

Shantel

Yeah, every Saturday. Yeah.

Abigail

That's nice. That's good. And you would obviously go to school prior to COVID. So you had a pretty full schedule before COVID hit?

Shantel

Yup.

Abigail

Do you have any concerns about the future?

Shantel

What do you mean concerns?

Abigail

Like are you nervous at all about anything? Like or future events? What's an example I can give you.. I know some people are a little bit concerned about, you know, life after COVID or will COVID be around like for a while like are you concerned about any of that? Or are you just hopeful?

Shantel

I really want COVID to be over in the future.

Abigail

Mmhmm, yeah. What are your hopes for when COVID gone?

Shantel

To go back to jujitsu, go back to school in person, maybe do tutoring in person again, get a job.

Abigail

Yeah, that's huge. It's hard to even job hunt right now because of COVID. Right?

Shantel

Yeah.

Abigail

Yeah. If you could, so this is a little off script, but if you could, this may sound like a silly question, Shantel, but bear with me. If you could go back and tell yourself something like, go back in time before COVID hit and tell your pre-COVID self something about how to prepare for what's coming, what would you tell yourself?

Shantel

That's a good one. I would tell myself to be brave, to stay calm. If something changes that's really big, don't get mad or anything. Just stay calm.

Abigail

Aw that's so good. I definitely think you've been super brave during this time. What are your thoughts on the vaccine?

Shantel

What did you say?

Abigail

What are your thoughts on the COVID vaccine?

Shantel

I like it. I actually got my first vaccine a couple of days ago.

Abigail

Oh did you? Okay, how did that go?

Shantel

It was good. I was really excited to get it. I'm getting my second one on the 24th of February.

Abigail

Okay, that's awesome. How did your arm feel? I heard a lot of people had sore arms after it.

Shantel

My arm is actually feeling a lot better. It hurt when I got it but it's feeling a lot better.

Abigail

Ok, that's good. That's awesome. Well good, good. Are you nervous about like, so when you know, we can start kind of reentering the world? Do you think you would approach it cautiously or would you be excited to like, get back out there in the community?

Unknown

The second one, I'd be very excited to get back in the community.

Abigail

Yeah. I bet, I bet. You're so social. Well I think that's all the questions I have. Julianne, did I miss any?

Julianne

I have to pull the list of questions up. Give me a second here.

Shantel

I also lost my summer job when COVID came.

Abigail

Oh, that's right. You had a summer job. Yeah. And you lost that too.

Shantel

Yep.

Abigail

What were you doing in the summer?

Shantel

I was working at the park program.

Abigail

And what did you do for that?

Shantel

I just helped the kids stay safe and not be mean to each other. Because they would sometimes be mean to each other.

Abigail

Yeah. Yeah. Working with kids is a lot of work.

Shantel

Yes!

Abigail

I have lots of nieces and nephews. So when you babysit, I know it's a lot of work.

Shantel

It's pretty exhausting, too.

Abigail

It is exhausting.

Julianne

I can't find the list of questions right now. But I trust you if you, you know, that you got them all. Shantel, was there anything else that you wanted to add that you didn't get to say?

Shantel

No.

Julianne

Do you mind if I ask you a couple follow up questions?

Shantel

Sure.

Julianne

So you mentioned about the Best Buddies events that you haven't been able to go to. Is that what it's called, Best Buddies?

Shantel

Yes, Best Buddies. Yeah.

Julianne

Can you tell me a little bit about that? Like, how often did you get to do them and what did you do there?

Shantel

Well, I went there, last year we did a lot of Best Buddies event. We did like a Buddy Ball. We made like gingerbread houses. We have a bingo like, eating pizza and had Bingo.

Julianne

That's sounds so fun. So did you like school before COVID? Like going to school in person?

Shantel

Yes, I loved it. I got to see all my friends. I was truly happy.

Julianne

Aww. So What about now? I guess that's such a hard transition.

Shantel

Yeah. I've been feeling kind of left out when my friends are in person and I'm not.

Julianne

I bet. What's your routine like now? Like, what do you do during the day now that you can't go to school?

Shantel

Well, when I'm done school, I do tutoring, you know, Mondays and Tuesdays. But this. So today if I had to be doing tutoring, but I'm doing it on Thursday.

Julianne

And that's virtual now.

Shantel

Yep.

Julianne

It's so hard to learn online.

Shantel

Yes, it is!

Julianne

Well, that's all the questions I had. So unless you guys have anything else to add, that will be the end of the interview.