YOUTH DEALING WITH MR. RONA

YOUTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY PAGE 3

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25 YEARS TEEN TIMES AND A PANDEMIC

Like almost everything in the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the operations and plans of 2020. The world was not prepared to deal with this crisis which forced cancelations and adjustments of most laid plans. Teen Times is no exception. For the first time in our history, we were not able to host any of our annual events or conduct any of our community service projects. The publication of two issues was not possible and as you read this, we are late with this first issue of the 2020-2021 school year. What a year 2020 has turned out to be!

We move forward with no clear indication of when the world will get back to normal. We have no choice but to accept this new norm as we mark a very significant milestone for Teen Times. Our 25th year of publication. On January 26, 1995, we started this journey of educating, enlightening, empowering and entertaining St. Maarten’s youth through the influential power of newsprint.

Twenty-five years later, we are extremely proud of our history and our body of work on behalf of the youth of St. Maarten. More than 500 young people have called themselves Teen Times members/writers and many have gone on to accomplish great things in their lives. In January 2021, we will produce a special issue of Teen Times to mark our 25th – at which time everyone involved over the years will get their due mention and praise.

For now, we expect COVID-19 to dominate our pages this school year but we also hope to get back into the swing of things by once again hosting our Prom Night, Talent Showdown and community initiatives. Focus throughout this school year will also be placed on governmental accountability as it relates to the United Nations 2030 plans (see page 4). Lastly, we will increase our activity on our social media platforms by producing more video and interactive content.

There aren’t many organizations that can boast of a 25-year history. We attribute this success not only to the hard, dedicated work of so many, but to remaining constant and focused on our goal to be the voice of the youth, for the youth and by the youth. We encourage young writers, poets, artists and others, to submit their work to us by emailing teenetimesxm@gmail.com

For 25 years, we have been eager and proud to publish your work. This eagerness and pride remains and we look forward to hearing from you. Let’s go!

Rochelayne “Roosje” Romney-Richardson
Teen Times Coordinator

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Name: Maya Ellis
Age: 18
What is the artwork about?
My artwork was made for my mother as you can see the silhouette in the middle is of a mother and daughter. And it’s a sunset and sunrise reflection; I don’t really have a meaning for the painting but I just wanted to make something for my mom.

What inspired you to do this artwork?
I saw a video online doing this so I decided I would try it but put my style into it. It took me about six hours to complete but it came out good.

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Name: Tamyra Wong
Age: 16
School: Charlotte Brookson Academy of the Performance Arts
Class: 4th form
What is the artwork about?
The artwork is about Batman and the Joker.

What inspired you to create this artwork?
I was inspired to do this artwork because I figured it is Halloween season so I looked up art on Pinterest and found it.

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Name: Laylah Sherinah Chang
Age: 9
School: St. Joseph School
Class: 8th grade
What is the art work about?
The artwork is about a lady’s dog.

What inspired you to create this artwork?
Someone saw my artwork on Facebook so challenged me by asking me if I can do a replica photo of their dog.
YOUTH ARE A KEY INVESTMENT FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC INTEGRITY

Teen Times, like many youth oriented groups all over the world, has committed this school year to “Youth 2030” of the United Nations. In September 2018, in the context of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly’s (UNGA) high-level General Debate, the UN Secretary General unveiled Youth 2030, a strategy reflecting the UN’s new commitment to working with and for young people. The strategy will act as an umbrella framework to guide the UN across the strategy’s three pillars (peace and security, human rights and sustainable development).

The Youth 2030 strategy has prioritized five goals:

1. Amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just and sustainable world (engagement, participation and advocacy).
2. Support young people’s greater access to quality education and health services.
3. Support young people’s greater access to decent work and productive employment.
4. Protect and promote the rights of young people and support their civic and political engagement.
5. Support young people as catalysts for peace and security and humanitarian action.

We will focus on most if not all of these goals in some shape or form this school year, but in particular goal #4 as it relates to holding our elected representatives accountable – and we will not be deterred.

Youth and democratic governance

Evidence shows that youth play a key role in building and strengthening democratic governance. As a group, they have a unique transformative potential to change and reform politics and democratic governance to make them more inclusive, representative and accountable. On the other hand, one of the pillars of democratic governance is accountability, and it is both an end and means to hold elected leaders to account. Democratically elected governments can be held accountable by systematically and continuously monitoring their policy and ethical performance.

When the realms of youth and accountability are brought together, there is in theory a perfect harmony and natural synergy in favour of democratic governance. No question that youth can help to build a better tomorrow, and that they have the potential to be the shapers and leaders of that better future. The 1.8 billion young people in the world today is the largest youth population in history and 90% of youth live in young democracies or countries that are still trying to consolidate democratic governance practices.

The loss of trust in politicians among youth is particularly harmful to democratic governance, as it shapes attitudes and perceptions towards democratic institutions. Evidence from around the world shows that youth increasingly believe elected officials do not have their interests in mind, and therefore their own belief that they do not have the ability to demand change is reinforced. Youth are not a homogeneous group, but evidence in general shows they are more vulnerable to exclusion and inequality than other groups. In turn, exclusion and inequality undermine young people’s opportunities to engage economically, socially and politically.

Civic and social engagement is a key component of youth participation, as it empowers young people and allows them to exercise citizenship, develop life skills, network, and enhance their knowledge and experience to navigate in complex and multi-dimensional democratic governance processes. Youth are actively involved in social life across many areas through civil society organizations, universities, youth programs, youth-led initiatives and volunteering individually and collectively.

Accountability as an end and means

In practice, accountability depends on both citizen engagement and government responsiveness. The most typical accountability mechanism is an election, whereby citizens can continue to vote for those who adequately represent and respond to their needs and/or punish those who do not. But elections are often an extremely indirect and less effective accountability mechanism, as they do not allow citizens to evaluate government performance on a more regular basis. While the vote might punish public officials by throwing them out of office, it is less effective in transforming governance.

More recently, increased attention has been paid to improving the “demand side” of democratic governance. That is, strengthening the voice and capacity of citizens to directly demand greater accountability from public officials and service providers.

Capacity development for youth in accountability and integrity

While various strategies have been adopted to promote accountability and integrity, the involvement of youth can make a huge difference. Many young people have the desire and capacity to transform the world and they have the potential to positively affect future anticorruption efforts. As the new generation of politicians, entrepreneurs and civil society actors, they have an important role to play in bringing a new culture of accountability and integrity to all levels of the society.

As the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and others argued, building a culture of integrity in society necessarily begins with the education of young people. The knowledge, skills and behaviours they acquire now will shape their country’s future, and will help them uphold public integrity and accountability, which are essential for preventing corruption. Therefore, investing in youth leadership to build their capacities to effectively detect, prevent and fight corruption is crucial.
Far from home, dealing with Mr. Covid

Chantalia Van Heynegen

All around the world, students are facing many challenges with school due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a member of Teen Times, I got the opportunity to interview some students who are furthering their studies abroad. Here’s some feedback from some students on how they’re adjusting to the new way of learning and living—many thanks to all the students who participated.

Anfereen in the Netherlands

1. Are you currently attending school via distance learning or on campus? I attend school both ways—via distance learning and on campus.
2. How are you adjusting to the new mode of learning that has been implemented? I’m adjusting pretty well, but I do prefer attending school physically. At the moment, I have two days of classes on campus and three days of online school.

3. Are you experiencing any challenges thus far with distance- or on-campus learning? I’m not facing any challenges with learning on campus. However, it’s kind of difficult with distance learning to get a response from lecturers on time.

4. How does it feel to be away from your family during this pandemic? I’m feeling pretty good, because I’m able to keep in contact with my family via the phone.

5. Has the pandemic affected you in any way? The pandemic hasn’t affected me in any way.
6. Do you keep track of the Covid-19 cases in your area? No, I don’t keep track of the COVID-19 cases in my area because I try to avoid becoming anxious.

7. What precautions has the government implemented to protect the country you’re currently in? A mask has to be worn on all public transportation and while walking in public areas; you must walk on your right side when walking on a sidewalk or in the city. In some stores, it is mandatory to wear a mask and sanitize your hands at the door before entering.

Reshandra in the Netherlands

1. Are you currently attending school via distance learning or on campus? I’m currently attending school via distance learning.
2. How are you adjusting to the new mode of learning that has been implemented? Distance learning is a bit hard for me, because I’m the type of person that loves doing my work and studying in school. When I’m physically in school, I feel more motivated to actually work than when at home. I’m dealing with it by going to the library to study or, for example, my school (vrije uni Amsterdam) has a study room where you can study. One last thing I’m trying to do is to stay on top of my work.
3. Are you experiencing any challenges thus far with distance- or on-campus learning? Keeping up with the amount of work while at home is a bit challenging for me. I tend to procrastinate—and now that a lot of the lectures are pre-recorded, sometimes I rather not watch them, whereas, if I were to be in school, I would’ve been more motivated to watch them.
4. How does it feel to be away from your family during this pandemic? For me it’s okay, because I live with my friends and I also call my family regularly.
5. Has the pandemic affected you in any way? No, it has not affected me in any way.
6. Do you keep track of the Covid-19 cases in your area? Sometimes I do, but not as much as I should.
7. What precautions has the government implemented to protect the country you’re currently in? Currently, I think there is a maximum of three people that can be in your house; you have to wear masks on public transportation; and some restaurants are not open for dine-in.

Student in the USA

1. Are you currently attending school via distance learning or on campus? I’m currently taking virtual classes, as students had a choice of which classes they’d like to take.
2. How are you adjusting to the new mode of learning that has been implemented? This is the second semester I’ve been doing online learning and I’ve got a hang of it. I like online learning better as you can work on your timing better than during face to face.
3. Are you experiencing any challenges thus far with distance- or on-campus learning? I haven’t had any challenges thus far. If there are any questions, I can always contact my professor via web.
4. How does it feel to be away from your family during this pandemic? I’m currently not away from my family, and I’m happy I got the opportunity to be with them during these hard times we are facing.
5. Has the pandemic affected you in any way? I will say the pandemic has affected me as there were a lot of casualties that happened. Trying to focus on my studies can be very discouraging seeing how the world has changed in such a short time.
6. Do you keep track of the Covid-19 cases in your area? I’ve been keeping track of the cases. Once the government sends out the notification, I keep track of...

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Far from home ...continued from pg. 4

the numbers.

7. What precautions has the government implemented to protect the country you’re currently in?
Currently on the island, every facility requires the wearing of masks and keeping a two-metre distance for the safety of everyone.

Chianne in the Netherlands

1. Are you currently attending school via distance learning or on campus?
I am currently attending school both ways. I attend The Hague University and they’ve implemented a method to kind of fill that yearning to get back to the traditional method of learning. They did this by establishing one day where we attend school physically to get that face to face interaction, and the days following are online learning.

2. How are you adjusting to the new mode of learning that has been implemented?
I have been doing distance learning since March, so it definitely grew on me from that time period up to now. However, with the school having the opportunity to actually coordinate this new method of distance learning for the new school year, additional work is placed on us than what we were accustomed to in the previous school year. I guess this is because in the previous year, everything happened so abruptly there wasn’t proper coordination. Honestly, I rather the traditional method of learning because I’m human and you yearn for that social interaction and actually getting hands-on with certain courses. Also, when there was traditional schooling, I was not drowning in so much work.

3. Are you experiencing any challenges thus far either with distance- or on campus-learning?
As I already mentioned, my school has incorporated both methods of learning. With the traditional learning, as you may know, the Netherlands is currently facing a second wave in which daily cases are four times the number they were than in the first wave of the pandemic. Thus, with the traditional learning, they would have everyone sitting at least a maximum of 1.5 metres away from each other and some classes would require group work, so you can imagine how that goes. In addition, it is now mandatory to have facemasks on in the school, so you can also imagine that.

With distance learning, being home and having to make your own schedule for yourself makes it way easier to get distracted and to not be focused rather than if you are in a setting where the mode is: “Hey! It’s working time and you have to stay focused and serious!” Then you know you cannot afford to get distracted. In my opinion, this time of staying focused is a challenge for everyone.

4. How does it feel to be away from your family during this pandemic?
Honestly, during the first wave of the pandemic, I was home with family for quite some time. However, during this second wave of the pandemic in the Netherlands, it’s a little bit lonely I would say, because it’s not all the time that you want to go out and possibly expose yourself to the risk of being infected with the virus. So you are mostly home and trying as much as possible not to move.

5. Has the pandemic affected you in any way?
In my opinion, this pandemic has negatively affected people all over the world as many have lost jobs, places to stay and food to eat and this can be seen on all kinds of social media platforms. However, I didn’t personally experience this aspect of the pandemic. I was impacted negatively in the sense of being in lockdown and having nowhere to go was hard to get through. This impacted me negatively as it would leave me in a different mental state daily. Some days I would be depressed or sad, or I would feel empty and it would sometimes be hard to cope. However, this pandemic has also affected me positively by making me re-evaluate myself as a person and changing certain habits that were ultimately the best decision for me, also building a closer bond with my family, actually putting down my cell phone and having face to face interaction with those around me and less screen time.

6. Do you keep track of the Covid-19 cases in your area?
Oh yes, I definitely do! It’s very important to know your surroundings and understand what’s going on, so this is something I do daily by keeping up with any news that is published and definitely the numbers.

7. What precautions has the government implemented to protect the country you’re currently in?
As mentioned, we are currently in our second wave and it was recently implemented to shut down bars, restaurants and certain nightlife activities by 10:00pm. Also, on public transportation, it’s necessary to wear masks, or else if the controller sees you without a mask you would be heavily fined; and you are limited to a certain number of guests in your house as well as in an area, and if this is not complied with, similar to the masks, you will be heavily fined.
Juliet and Jennifer Derby will always remember their 30th birthdays. Not for the milestone that it is or for grand celebrations, but because it was the birthdays that marked a time that forever changed the direction of their lives.

Eleven days after her 30th birthday, Juliet was diagnosed with stage III breast cancer. Eight years earlier, just one week before her 30th, Jennifer was also diagnosed with breast cancer—both sisters shared the BRCA1 “Breast Cancer” gene.

We each carry BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. The names may suggest it; however, BRCA genes do not cause cancer, on the contrary, these normally play a significant role in preventing it. A small percentage of people (about one in 400) develop/carries mutated BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes. The mutations occur when the DNA that makes up the gene becomes damaged and the gene may no longer be effective at repairing broken DNA and in turn helping to prevent cancer. Because of this, people with a BRCA gene mutation are more likely to develop breast cancer, and more likely to develop cancer at a younger age, as is the case of Juliet and Jennifer.

While breastfeeding her eight-month-old, Juliet felt a lump in her breast. At the time, she thought it could have just been a cyst; but two months later, she found another under her right arm, the same side her first lump had developed. “I didn’t want to do it, I really didn’t, I was so afraid to know the results.” Then she remembered “knowledge is power!”—the three words of her sister, Jennifer, who had knocked cancer out a few years earlier.

At around age 28, Jennifer insisted that her doctor take an x-ray of her breast. The doctor said, “No you’re not old enough, you’re fine.” Luckily, Jennifer listened to herself and got the x-ray. “She is the one that pushed me to get the test, to figure out if I had the gene or not,” Juliet recalled.

Tests revealed that Juliet had stage III breast cancer with metastasis. “My cancer was so aggressive and so bad I heard the fear in my doctor’s voice when she found out what kind of cancer I had. I heard the fear in her voice when she told me to get a PET scan. And I heard the relief in her voice that it hadn’t spread further than my lymph nodes—because if it had, I would’ve had a terminal diagnosis.”

Juliet would have to now prepare herself, if ever one could prepare for such battles, to fight two cancers—breast and lymphoma—at once.

The doctors immediately started her on intravenous chemo-therapy (IV chemo). A treatment so intense, it had to be administered through a chemo port—a small, implantable reservoir that attaches to a vein. The advantage of this device is that chemotherapy medications can be delivered directly into the port rather than a vein.

The port was placed under Juliet’s skin, leading directly to the arteries to prevent her veins from disintegrating as the chemo was administered.

After chemo came a double mastectomy to completely remove the breast tissue on both sides. All lymph nodes were also removed under her right arm. “For the rest of my life now, I have to watch my right arm just to make sure I don’t get a scratch, just to make sure that I don’t develop Lymphedema.”

In the months following, Juliet would fight a series of infections and endure multiple surgeries and lengthy hospital stays. A year later, her skin remains “destroyed” from the radiation that on average would heal within three to four months. “It almost looks like sunburn, but you can clearly see the square across my chest where they administered the radiation.”

In the fight of her life, Juliet started next what would be a short-lived round of oral chemo. Doctors could not continue to give her the treatments after her white blood cell count dropped below 400 (a normal count being 4,000 and 11,000).

“The fight almost seemed like you won a battle and you lose the war. One thing after another, one losing battle after another, all bad news, all the time; everything getting worse one after another, it almost felt endless. My caretakers have been the most amazing in the world and still you find the feeling that they could never actually know what you could go through, how defeated you can feel. It felt all so overwhelming. Yet you still had to fight. I fought for my boys. Two little boys not even one year old and no, not even four years old at the time—both I had to do it for them because I was their mom and I couldn’t imagine leaving...continued on pg. 7

By Claudine A. Williams
them."

In April of this year, Juliet had yet another PET scan. This time the doctors would confirm whether she had any breast cancer left. The scans proved that she didn’t!

"I felt like that should have been a new start and almost felt like a relief; but on that PET scan, there was a spot on my ovary."

Months later, another examination revealed another spot on the other ovary. However, despite tests, it remains inconclusive whether the spots on her ovaries are benign or malignant.

Juliet’s last reconstruction surgery was a success: "I managed to keep my expanders. They put expanders in, which is almost like a Zippoc bag filled with saline to stretch the skin slowly, so that you can end up having implants put in. That went successfully, thank God," Juliet chuckled.

September – another successful surgery – this time for breast implants. For many, this would be a relieving moment, but more tests are needed to determine what the spots on her ovaries are.

"It terrifies me because I feel like I can’t hear the news again. I can’t hear the news that something else might be going on with me. I can’t hear the news that I might have cancer once again.

This journey has taken me almost two and a half years to get over this one thing. What if I have to go through it again?"

Juliet’s message to all women: "I encourage you...I plead with you, take care of yourself. If there is breast cancer in your family, you need to get tested every two to three months to get checked because I didn’t trust myself. I wrote it off because it was easier. For me, a month or two would’ve been it. That would’ve been the end of my life, but I knew, I always knew – as women, we always know. So, I say to all of you, know yourself; be strong, get tested. Do what you need to do to survive. The most important thing that you can do is be well so that you can take care of others the way that you want to, the way that you need to."

Juliet was born and raised on St. Maarten. Having attended St. Dominic High School, she furthered her education in Dance at Santa Fe College and also attended Keiser College for further studies in Radiologic Technology. She received the very best care by oncologists, radiology and plastic surgeons in Florida, where she now resides with her two boys.
Away from home during a pandemic

By Antonet

Coronavirus is an ongoing health crisis that has affected more than just the health of many individuals. The disease has caused drastic changes to our society and we are still adapting to the new normal. Although the severity of coronavirus is seemingly decreasing, there are still many changes in our day to day lives. With this ongoing pandemic, I know we all have experienced stressful situations and difficulty adjusting to new routines.

Knowing that college is stressful, I conducted a survey to learn how students abroad have been coping amidst the pandemic.

Name withheld at student’s request
Summa College, Netherlands – Year 2

• How did the transition to a virtual setting affect your education?
  Badly. I was unable to attend my practical classes for culinary technician.

• Who did you spend the peak of the pandemic with and how did it make you feel?
  I spent it with my brother and felt that our bond grew stronger.

  • What resource could have made your quarantine easier?
    A resource that would have made my quarantine easier would have been a plane ticket to Sint Maarten for summer vacation.

  • How do you take classes now and how do you feel about them?
    My classes are hybrid. I do my theoretical class at home, and my practicals at school. I cannot ask as many questions as I would like to.

  • Extra comments and concerns
    I deeply concerned that COVID-19 will prevent me from doing my internship.

Ryan
Monroe College, New York – Year 2

• How did the transition to a virtual setting affect your education?
  The comfort of being home has made me too comfortable.

• Who did you spend the peak of the pandemic with and how did it make you feel?
  I spent the peak of the pandemic with friends and God mostly. It contributed to the reduced feeling of a sense of isolation.

• What resource could have made your quarantine easier?
  Sticking to God!

• How do you take classes now and how do you feel about them?
  I take hybrid classes and it’s alright so far.

Lea-Ann
Monroe College, New York – Year 4

• How did the transition to a virtual setting affect your education?
  The transition has been hard. Although I feel this way, I have been trying hard to keep my GPA high. In addition, I’m a little wary about in-person classes because of exposure to the virus.

• Who did you spend the peak of the pandemic with and how did it make you feel?
  I spent it with my family at home and I’m glad I did be-

DEALING WITH MR. RONA

By Evelyne Icetus

It’s no secret that Mr. Rona has stamped into many lives and changed up how things are usually done. Today you’ll have the opportunity to find out how corona has affected me and my friends. A series of questions was asked to each of my peers. Here are some of the responses.

• How has corona affected your social life?
  Person 1: Corona hasn’t really affected my social life since I wasn’t a part of any social group before corona and I’m not that much of a social person.

  Person 2: Before corona, I was more active and I did more sports, but now I’m just slumped at home scrolling through social media.

  Person 3: Corona has stopped me from going to the movies and to my baseball practices so I haven’t really been able to keep in contact with my friends.

  I’m not always able to attend my classes. This sometimes makes it hard to grasp certain topics.

• Of all that corona messed up for you, what do you most miss?
  Person 1: My sister was supposed to visit me this summer and corona messed that up for me. Because of corona, my sister still hasn’t visited me to date.

  Person 2: What I miss the most is being able to go out and have fun with my friends like I used to do before corona.

  Person 3: What I miss the most is the physical contact I used to have with my friends before corona. I no longer hug my friends when greeting, because I’m trying to avoid contracting the big, bad coronavirus.

COVID-19 has impacted the whole world. Everyone is trying to adjust to the new normal and I hope that all the students abroad are keeping sane and finding proper coping methods.
HOW COVID-19 HAS AFFECTED
MY SOCIAL & EDUCATIONAL LIFE

By Cecilly Nicholas

As we all know, we are currently facing a global pandemic which has affected many people around the world. The pandemic has brought quite a few changes to our lives. We adapted to new norms, such as social distancing, practicing social hygiene and reducing the amount of time we spend in big crowds. This global pandemic has had a major impact on our social life; our time spent socializing with friends and going to different places have become very limited.

Schools have switched from in-person learning to online learning which is very troublesome for most students. I interviewed some of my peers to find out how Covid-19 has affected their social life and asked them what difficulties they’ve faced as they aren’t able to go to school in-person. Below are their responses:

Manuel Gonzalez – 15
I am a student at St. Maarten Academy (Academic). The COVID-19 virus has really affected my social life. Due to lack of physical interaction among my peers, I’ve become kind of antisocial. Speaking from an educational point of view, this virus has definitely affected my school life. Due to social distancing rules and the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases, I am subjected to digital learning. This means I learn through various platforms that I have been instructed by my teachers to download. This is stressful but it has its benefits. Honestly, I really don’t mind doing online school, although I can definitely say I miss going out with my friends and not having to wear a mask!

Reanna Sivibadan – 16
One way Covid-19 has affected my social life is the fact that we can’t really go out or even be around friends. I am a senior. Back in March when the virus first arrived on the island, we went into quarantine and then into complete lockdown for months. We then started following school classes and are currently still doing online classes. The coronavirus has definitely impacted my social life. Although I wasn’t able to interact with my friends physically, we still remain in contact through the media. As a student, I learn best by participating in activities and physically doing the work that is given. When we began online schooling, I had no motivation whatsoever; I honestly thought that term-3 would not be counted, seeing the circumstances on the island.

Beyoncé Williams – 16
I am a St. Maarten Academy student, currently in my last year of high school. Right now in the world, we are in a fight for our lives against the coronavirus. It has affected many people including myself. It has mostly affected my social life and education. Not being able to socialize and mingle with my friends without being cautious and adhering to the social distancing rules has been hard for me. Also, now that education is being learned through online platforms, this can be challenging not only for me, but for my peers.

Kandice Chambers – 16
I attend St. Dominic High School and I am currently a senior. Back in March when the virus first arrived on the island, we went into quarantine and then into complete lockdown for months. We then started following school classes and are currently still doing online classes. The coronavirus has definitely impacted my social life. Although I wasn’t able to interact with my friends physically, we still remain in contact through the media. As a student, I learn best by participating in activities and physically doing the work that is given. When we began online schooling, I had no motivation whatsoever; I honestly thought that term-3 would not be counted, seeing the circumstances on the island.

I was unable to focus and I did not feel as if I was truly learning; I understood the work given, but to apply it was one of the main challenges I faced.

Now that I am a senior doing online schooling, I have to force myself to remain focused as well as be on top of my work. Every time I get frustrated and feel demotivated, I remind myself that this time next year, I will not be in school. Socially, I have lost friendships, but I also gained many beautiful friendships with inspiring individuals. I would not say that my social life was affected negatively at all because I learned many new things about life, friendships and even myself. I would say coronavirus really opened my eyes to different paths in life.

Cashante Benjamin – 15
Covid-19 has affected many different aspects of my life. In the educational aspect, school is closed physically due to the virus, and we are now going to school online. Virtual schooling is a struggle for me since I am not accustomed to it and it is also difficult because I have internet problems and this causes most of my assignments to be incomplete. Being in front of a computer for several hours causes headaches, eye soreness and other issues.

Socially, most kids need to be outside and with people to release their energy and socialize with others; but this cannot happen due to Covid-19. Not being able to communicate physically with peers can be very difficult for us. Being at home and not able to chat with friends physically is difficult and uncomfortable for everyone. Social distancing also plays a huge role in the pandemic. Finally, I miss being in school with my friends, having a nice time together and going out with each other.

The coronavirus has negatively impacted all our lives, but we are all finding a way to cope with the new norm. We are hoping that the next upcoming months our lives can slowly go back to normal. Coronavirus is not to be played with and this virus is something we will have to learn to cope with and adapt to. This may be challenging, but this is the new normal, so we have positive thoughts, stay healthy and follow social distancing rules. Wishing the individuals who still go out and work and those currently attending school physically a safe and blessed week.
Dealing with COVID: A teachers’ perspective

By Haila Forde

Two teachers were nice enough to give us an interview about what it’s like to be a teacher during the coronavirus pandemic. Teacher Leandra Honoré has been an educator at the Asha Stevens campus of the Holland Christian schools for the past 10 years. She is also a mother of a five-year-old daughter and an 18-month-old son.

Teacher Dennis Tjon teaches at St. Maarten Academy – academic campus. This is his 11th year teaching at St. Maarten Academy and his 21st year teaching in St. Maarten. He graduated from universities in The Netherlands, New York and Kentucky, USA. A music teacher, music is his specialty and passion, but he’s also taught Dutch language classes in high school and one year as a primary school teacher. He’s married with three children.

From a teacher’s perspective, would you say that the transition to online learning was an easy decision to make?

Teacher Leandra: From my perspective, the decision to transition to online learning was an easy decision because our children’s education needed to continue and it was our best option given the challenges that the COVID pandemic presented.

Teacher Tjon: The transition to online teaching was not easy. It challenged me in ways I did not consider myself a tech-savvy guy, but I learned fast and I coped pretty well. At times, it can be stressful, especially when my inbox overflows with hundreds of submissions of assignments and other messages. During the early lockdown, I was answering messages on quick school and WhatsApp day and night, even weekends. I had to find time to message everyone during “more acceptable hours” of the day.

What are some of the challenges you face as a teacher?

Teacher Leandra: As a teacher, some of my main challenges were not being able to connect with all students initially. It seemed like every day that passed without a student being connected was a day lost. Students with unstable internet connection and those using mobile phones to connect were sometimes at a disadvantage when it came to participating in certain activities. Keeping students engaged while being present in another environment was another challenge. I had to keep things fresh and exciting every week. I tried many programs, websites, and apps. As a teacher with two young children, balancing my daughter’s schedule and activities with mine was a bit challenging at first.

Teacher Tjon: For my subject, it is not easy to teach (especially the practical component of my subject) online. I would not think it is ideal to ask a group of 80 or more students, or a smaller number, to unmute themselves and sing or play the recorder together on Zoom. That would create so much feedback and chaos. In my classroom, I also have to adjust lesson plans and some other instruments. Instruction of those practical skills is not fully possible in the ZOOM. One-on-one instrumental instruction is more effective because our group instruction would not be so effective. The general and theoretical component via ZOOM, Google Classroom, and other platforms is manageable. Our school follows the CSEC curriculum which includes a lot of theory, so that part is going pretty well.

How would you describe your experience as it relates to keeping the students and their parents updated about their work?

Teacher Leandra: Fortunately, I had and still have a group of parents who are very keen to be in the loop and parents that is very eager to continue learning. Keeping every family, their needs, challenges and strengths in mind helps me to cater to them and adjust so that all students can thrive. Including all family members in the learning process also helps parents keep their children accountable. Parents and students are updated daily through email, posts in Google Classroom or text messages.

Teacher Tjon: On Zoom, many students stay quiet, even if I ask if they have any questions. I try to also post some things on WhatsApp so students can interact during Zoom classes on QuickSchools and Google classroom. Most of the times, I also post a lesson overview of all that was done and said in the Zoom class. I also try to have more individual conversations with students and parents on QuickSchools. I also have on WhatsApp a smaller group of students who are interested in online learning, the mentor and their parents.

As it relates to online learning, do you think there is anything you can do better?

Teacher Leandra: As it relates to online learning, the workload is much heavier as I must try to create engaging lessons through a screen. I continue to try to find new ways and ideas to keep students engaged and I can sometimes be a huge task to create new lessons. What I can do there is find easier ways to get all my tasks done.

Teacher Tjon: I am learning every week to improve with regard to security issues, but also in my approach to keeping students engaged. I evaluate from week to week and, yes, Teacher Tjon is always room for improvement.

How has teaching online changed/affected your teaching style?

Teacher Leandra: Teaching online has given me a fresh perspective into my students’ interests, skills, and creative abilites. This has given me the opportunity to create lessons and give assignments that foster their interests. This year, we have planned lessons and activity.

Teacher Tjon: It has changed everyone’s approach. I also have a lesson plan with things I want to do that I want to do in the available timeframe. In face to face teaching, I can instantly see the reactions of all students in the classroom – which is much less the case online. I try to change activities and topics several times over the course of the day, so my students keep the students engaged and attentive.

If you had to choose between face-to-face learning and online learning, which would you choose?

Teacher Leandra: I am grateful that, my students and I can connect through distance learning. I also appreciate the help parents provide in their child’s education. Parents and students are updated daily through email, posts in Google Classroom, or text messages.

Teacher Tjon: Face-to-face teaching is still the most effective. I would not mind a combination of both. I would use face-to-face time for the practical side of my subject, group singing, instrumental skills, presentations, performances that the students have to do, and assessments/tests. Most of the other times, I could do well on Zoom as well as posting some independent assignments and projects in Google Classroom.

As a teacher, how are you time just to help them develop specific technological skills? I thought that certain learning experiences would not be possible online. From March until now, I am continuing to learn how resilient my students and I are. They learn quickly and adjust to change. They are not afraid to be a part of learning new skills quickly through exploration. My perspective has changed, and many things are possible if we take on the adaptive, creative and free so that quality education that our children take on.

Teacher Tjon: I am getting older, so it’s a little weird for me, but I am still learning, but this is something that the education field should retain even after the current pandemic. As we move further into the 21st century, technology becomes more crucial for everyone and the next generation will need it even more. It would not be a bad idea to maintain a blend of traditional and instructional approaches.

How has online learning been a life-changing experience for you?

Teacher Leandra: Through online learning, I have gotten more insight into my students’ lives at home and I have learned the capibilities and challenges of parents. I have learned that although tools and resources are important, it is important to have a balanced mindset.

Teacher Tjon: As a teaching, I have learned that technology has forever transformed my perspective and approach to education. The balance has forever transformed my perspective and approach to education. The balance has forever transformed my perspective and approach to education. The balance of face-to-face and online learning is always the way forward.

What online tools are used in the classroom to aid learning?

Teacher Leandra: Google Classroom (an online classroom where resources and homework assignments and links can be shared with students); Quizlet: (a website that helps with vocabulary study); Microsoft Teams (a tool that helps with practice spelling and vocabulary words in fun and interactive ways); Google Docs, Slides and Forms (which I can use to create interactive and collaborative lessons). I use these tools to create interactive and collaborative lessons.

Teacher Tjon: I use anything that I find useful on Google, even texts and pictures which I can use in screen sharing on ZOOM, but my biggest tool by far is the audio visual material on YouTube.

How has your perspective on the learning changed now as opposed to when you first started?

Teacher Leandra: When I first started, I wondered how my students would cope with learning how to use certain online tools and learning the specific concepts and skills being taught at the same time. I thought that technology would help them develop specific technological skills. I thought that certain learning experiences would not be possible online. From March until now, I am continuing to learn how resilient my students and I are. They learn quickly and adjust to change. They are not afraid to be a part of learning new skills quickly through exploration. My perspective has changed, and many things are possible if we take on the adaptive, creative, and free so that quality education that our children take on.

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Teachers/Students face a multitude of problems

This pandemic has brought about new challenges and experiences for everyone in different ways. Our teachers play a vital role in today’s society by giving knowledge to the youth of our island and so we were curious as to how they were coping with this current global crisis.

Below is my interview with a St. Dominic High School teacher.

• What is your opinion of online teaching versus in-person teaching?
  Online teaching is where educators work with students from a distant or on the internet; the only interaction with the learner is that of the internet. In-person teaching is where there is face-to-face learning (not virtual), and teachers and students can interact in a physical environment.

• What is a personal challenge you faced during this pandemic and how did you overcome it?
  One personal challenge I faced during this pandemic is using the keyboard to type formulas and symbols. I overcame this challenge by upgrading myself with a touch screen computer that included a stylus.

• In terms of teaching, how does online school affect your plans/goals?
  The objectives or goals planned during a specific period were harder to achieve; online learning goes much slower and you have to foster students’ learning environment. The form of assessments given had to be altered as well – more formative assessments were given rather than summative.

• What are some struggles you have with teaching your specific subject in comparison to others?
  Students are very passive online; therefore, I’m not able to have a day-to-day assessment of the learning process. There is limited collaboration and of such the learning is very teacher-centred. I am not able to assess if students are using subject material correctly, e.g., a compass, protractor.

• Do you think your students have adapted well to the current education platform?
  I do think most students have adapted well to the current education platform, although there are a few students who are having challenges with this education platform.

• What improvements do you think can be made to the teaching experience for students?
  A blended approach will help alleviate the challenges of online learning.

• How has your daily routine changed since COVID?
  Since COVID, my daily routine has changed drastically. Nowadays, I am sitting around a computer for most of the day – this hampers the interaction needed for the teaching and learning of my discipline. There is a lot more administrative work required in the daily routine.

• Do you miss teaching in person?
  Yes, for sure. I love to interact with my students and be able to see them face-to-face. I love to observe their expressions when a concept is being taught. Having discussions with my students enhances the teaching process. School was not only a place of learning, but a place of social interaction, a place to play, a place to share meals and a place to develop and maintain relationships with peers and teachers.

• Do you think the positive and/or negative impact of this pandemic on students has been significant?
  I think this pandemic has caused a negative impact on students. Remote learning has resulted in an increase in anxiety, depression, social isolation, insecurities, loneliness, helplessness and hopelessness for most students. Children are facing a multitude of challenges. Not only do they have concerns about COVID-19 and its effects on their physical wellbeing, but many children are struggling with the impact of new economic stress due to parental job loss, and the uncertainty regarding school, socializing, travel, and day-to-day living. Moreover, there are frustrations regarding access to the internet, learning how to use online teaching platforms, and establishing a learning environment within the home that is conducive to studying.

• What is keeping you motivated in a time like this?
  My main motivation during this period is that we have a generation of students that we don't want to be lost. We need to prepare this generation to be risk takers and thinkers. Amidst the pandemic, we have a responsibility as educators to equip these students with the tools they will need to be global ambassadors. With this in mind, teachers have to come up with creative ways and means to educate this generation. Education is the key to success.

• What should students do to keep motivated?
  Students need to stay focused and avoid distractions. They need to have a goal in mind and strive to achieve this goal.

• What has your school done to help students and teachers throughout this time?
  The school has ensured that each student and teacher is familiar with the platforms being used and there is access to internet and devices.

• Identify some drawbacks to our island in relation to education during this COVID phase.
  There is financial strain on the government when it comes to education during this COVID time. The government needs to see to it that each child has devices and internet to participate in this remote learning. If parents cannot afford these resources, it will cause a strain on the government to provide these resources to everyone that needs them.

• In terms of their academic performance, have your students fared better or worse with online classes?
  There are some students who are enjoying the online learning and performing much better using these platforms; on the other hand, there are students who are struggling and performing worse.

• What advice do you have for parents to make their students’ online learning experience better?
  Parents need to continue encouraging their students during these times. They need to ensure that their students have an area at home to do their classes. Parents need to be cognizant that when their children are in class (even though they are at home), they should not be distracted. Children need to be given the tools such as devices, internet to have their classes each day.

Overall, everyone has to work together in order to have a fruitful outcome, especially during this difficult period. Teachers truly are working their hardest to share the necessary knowledge for their students’ benefit, adjusting to new teaching platforms as well as overcoming different types of problems, even though it is a challenge. Therefore, we commend all of the educators out there who are constantly trying to adapt to this new situation while still keeping a positive attitude through it all.
Not just pretty faces

Every school year we recruit some new faces for our modeling crew. The Teen Times modeling crew go through the year showing-off clothing from various stores around the island, having tons of fun in the process. But they are more than just pretty faces. As part of this crew they form part of Teen Times in general and fall under the same, strict requirements we have for regular staff writers. Most significantly, they must maintain good academic performance. Nothing is more serious to us than that. These young ladies are also filled with dreams and aspirations. Allow us to introduce them to you since you will be seeing them almost every month.

Maya Ellis – 18 years old
Teen Times Fashion Coordinator
She wants to study fashion design and one day own her own design business.

Shannen Maria Molanus Martinez – 17 years old
School: MPC
She aspires to study law in Holland and live in Canada.

Chayenne Coffie – 17 years old
School: CIA.
She plans on attending university to study biomedical science in hopes of becoming a doctor.

Breyenne Brown – 17 years old
School: St. Maarten Academy Academics
She aspires to become a physical therapist or an orthodontist. She also aims to become the Valedictorian of her class and an MVP in the sports she is currently playing which is soccer and track.

Juhi Soneji – 17 years old
School: Learning Unlimited Preparatory School
Future study: Psychologist
Future goal: Make the world a better place

Mary-Jean Parice Acevedo – 16 years old
School: Charlotte Brookson Academy of the Performance Arts
Future study or goal: The Communication Field

Elisandra Santana – 18 years old
She aspires to be Business Administrator.

Trinity Delain – 15 years old
School: St. Maarten Academy
Her future goal is to finish high school and then go to college and study to become a gynecologist.

Kienoy Fleming – 16 years old
She is in the graduating class of 2020 at Saint Dominic High School. Her “smaller” goal is to obtain a Bachelor of Science in either Biology or Biomedical sciences. My bigger goal is to become an OB/GYN (Obstetrician Gynecologist), and hopefully open my own clinic one day.
We are very proud to once again have a full, positive and energetic group of writers for this school year. We are eager to get to work and empower, educate, entertain and enlighten our peers through our writing and look forward to their contributions as well. We will always be for the youth and by the youth.

Cecilly Nicholas  
Senior Writer

Kandice Chambers  
Senior Writer

Antonet Espinosa

Caelann Moore

Dija Sachdev

Evelyne Ilceus

Kenzira Hall

Lavisha Dadlani

Mary-Jean Parice Acevedo

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Rochelayne Rommy-Richardson  
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Nichele Abreu-Smith  
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Maya Ellis  
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Fashion Coordinator

Sarafina Walters  
Content Coordinator

Chantalia Van Heynegen  
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Haila Forde  
Senior Writer

Juliana Guerina  
Senior Writer

Kiang Blanc  
Senior Writer

Rohan Goswami  
Senior Writer

Vanessa Mathew  
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Rochelayne Rommy-Richardson  
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Maya Ellis  
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Evelyne Ilceus

Kenzira Hall

Lavisha Dadlani

Mary-Jean Parice Acevedo

Noshavyah Whinfield
The coronavirus quickly became a worldwide pandemic, with about 40 million cases and nine million active cases worldwide. This pandemic has caused many business owners to shut down their business, people to lose their jobs, and even students to find alternative ways to go to school.

While many students are continuing school online, many students have not been able to further their education because of Covid. Here in St. Maarten, a lot of high school graduates were not able to leave for college, leaving them no choice but to take a gap year. Every student has different feelings and experiences during this situation. I interviewed two students who shared about their delayed college experience due to Covid; they wanted to stay anonymous so we’ll call them Student A and Student B.

1. What were your plans for college before the pandemic? Student A: Before Covid, my plan was to go to Holland in August to study with my sister. Student B: Before the pandemic, my plan was to go back home (to the motherland) to study in the medical field.

2. What are your plans now? Student A: The plan right now is that I will be working for six months. Other than that, I am trying to learn and develop my skills. Student B: To keep myself busy, I am doing foreign language studies on my own and I also got a job.

3. What are you doing to keep yourself busy? Student A: Well, I was not doing much for some time, because I was home all day. I was thinking of doing a job or study-

4. What lessons have you learned from this pandemic? Student A: A lesson I learned from this pandemic is to take it seriously and not take it as a joke. Try to focus on the present instead of planning unnecessarily. Student B: Lots of self-reflection. It made me appreciate the simple joys of life and spending time with family; the importance of taking a break because schedules during a pandemic can be very hectic, overwhelming and uncertain.

5. What advice do you have for students like you who got held back because of Covid? Student A: My advice for students like me is try not to stress too much, talk to your parents and older siblings about what and how you’re feeling and just relax; also use this time to work on yourself. Student B: Take a breather. It’s okay to be behind. Focus on yourself, your friends and your family and use this time to find out what you truly want. Although things may not go as planned, you should take this time to develop and learn new skills. For some people, this gap year may even be beneficial by figuring themselves out and knowing what they actually want to do in the future. Just remember that you’re not the only one going through this. There are many people in similar situations going through the same problems as you. However, this will all pass and many lessons will be learned afterward because “there is no success without hardship.” ~Sophocles
Are you satisfied with the image you see in the mirror? If not, you are not alone. Most of us have struggled with dissatisfaction when it comes to our physical appearance. Fortunately, some of us have been able to overcome this negative perception of ourselves, maintaining a positive body image in our eyes. Body image is one’s perception of oneself fabricated in one’s mind, without bearing any correlation to how one actually appears. Certain major factors influencing one’s body image are inclusive of, but not limited to the following: attitudes of other individuals (parents, relatives, peers, etc.), childhood experiences, social media/the Internet in general and internal elements like emotions and moods.

Several of us have been affected by the factors stated in the above-mentioned paragraph and that has led to either a positive or a negative body image. A positive body image is a true visualization of oneself—that is, one that is not formulated mentally. On the contrary, a negative body image is in fact formulated mentally, and is a distorted visualization of one’s appearance. A negative body image can also be termed as body dissatisfaction, and it involves feelings of shame, anxiety and self-consciousness. People who suffer from extreme levels of body dissatisfaction feel that their body has more imperfections in comparison to others. Consequently, this leads to other youth issues such as enduring feelings of depression, isolation, low self-esteem, and eating disorders. Although there is no sole contributor to the onset of eating disorders, research shows that a negative body image is the most eminent cause of the development of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa (Stice, 2002).

Having a healthy body image is an important part of mental wellbeing and eating disorders prevention. Developing a positive body image is definitely not an overnight process; however, by putting positive thought patterns into practice, you can eventually view yourself and your body from a healthier perspective. For instance, it is important to realize that your beauty is not the state of your body, but a state of mind. When you carry yourself with confidence, self-acceptance and openness, it makes you feel beautiful. It is important to do something your body will appreciate like making time for naps or taking a bubble bath. Moreover, it is encouraging to shut down your inner voice that reminds you of your imperfections. Build yourself up, as opposed to tearing yourself down, by empowering yourself with positive affirmations.

On a final note, you reside in your body; it is your home, your temple. It is important to always bear in mind that everybody is different and comparison of yourself to the "ideal body type" is futile. Remember that everyone, both men and women, experience body distortion or dissatisfaction at some interval of their life. We all have our set of imperfections, and it's up to us to take them positively and embrace them, rather than degrading ourselves because of them. The key to a healthy body image lies in positive thinking, appreciation for what your body can do for you and good self-esteem. Feeling beautiful has nothing to do with what you look like, but more with what you feel like.
By Sasha Buncamper

Well, we’re now autonomous! So we’re one step closer to independence. Sounds exciting – but let’s unpack what it actually means to be independent. It means that with such limited landmass to house whatever maximum number of inhabitants, we’re fairly easy picking for any big country to move in and try to recolonize us.

Why is it easy? Because there’s nothing we can do to stop it. We don’t have an army or military to protect our borders if need be. We’re not directly part of many treaties just yet, because the Netherlands has signed on our behalf. Full disclosure, I personally don’t know the technicalities of how the transition to becoming a party to an existing treaty after new found autonomy has been found. And I feel like that information should not be hard to find. Yet here I am, clueless.

Sint Maarten is not the most remarkable island, the people living here do not have the most remarkable skills and we certainly do not have the most remarkable resources. However, historically, our island has hosted visitors from near and far with the absolute friendliness giving us the nickname “The Friendly Island”. That’s been our edge in this ever-so competitive tourism industry which our economy has directly depended on for so many decades.

Has autonomy brought increased patriotism? We now represent ourselves as an individual island, rather than the group of islands which was the Netherlands Antilles. So we now have and represent our very own identity, we could technically compete in the Olympics – which historically brings tons of national pride. We can compete and represent in the international arena of any sport, art form or other field in which one can compete and perform.

There are a few individuals who sacrifice and persevere to grow and succeed despite the odds being stacked against them, despite travel being so expensive, despite there not being government funding or support and oftentimes not having ideal facilities to train, practice or rehearse. After having achieved and succeeded on their own, these individuals are incidentally highlighted. They are celebrated upon their return home, only after having achieved victory; rather than their island sending them off with the strength and power of knowing that they have the support of their country – so no increased levels of patriotism in the grand scheme of things.

The last 10 years have certainly been different to previous decades due to technology. Information is more accessible than ever and, thanks to social media, people are also more accessible than ever. And how do we use this accessibility to all this information and all these people? Well, a slim majority of us are choosing to search for relevant information that will help us grow into more productive and successful individuals, whether we are taking a course to improve or expand on our skills or taking on the venture of opening a business. Kudos to those applying themselves and being disciplined enough to persevere among peers who choose to sit around and complain about everything the government is not doing.

Opportunities have been put in place and it’s up to each individual to take the opportunities and put in the necessary work and energy required to allow those opportunities to bear results. Otherwise, you’re just wasting time, resources and opportunities that could have been utilized by someone else. Examples are NIPA – which, granted, did take a while to get itself together and operate properly, but hey, most establishments take a few years to really find their bearings; the Chamber of Commerce and Industry – which makes regular and continued efforts to help (prospective) business owners navigate the world of doing business in Sint Maarten; USM – which is still around and has produced many of the most productive and proactive people that I know today.

Besides those mentioned, if you just look around, there are so many firms, businesses and institutes that offer programs aimed towards improving the people in the job market.

Since 10-10-10, it seems as if the government of Sint Maarten cannot keep it together – literally! A record number of elections have been called in the last 10 years, and this is not a record we can be proud of. In the infancy of our autonomy, our government has basically run away and cow- ered whenever the going got tough. That demeanour does not garner respect internally from the people of Sint Maarten, whom these governments represent, nor externally from foreign governments and many investors, who basically deal with a new minister every time they get a meeting with a ministry.

It’s embarrassing and shameful because it showcases a deep lack of professionalism and determination to do the job they were appointed to do by those elected by the people of Sint Maarten. Frankly, it’s disrespectful towards all the voters and in particular the taxpayers who pay for these immature shenanigans. It causes instability on so many levels. Consider all the requests for permits and licenses that take extra-long to process because another new minister has to be appointed and it takes time.

Why do we tolerate this? Do we somehow like the instability? Are we so accustomed to pointing fingers and tearing each other down that the prospect of disagreeing, but still moving forward in a solution-oriented manner is so uncomfortable we prefer to consider it impossible and take comfort in an impasse? Or do we just have a majority of voters who truly do not care about the prosperity of the island, be it economically or virtually, and are all too happy to go back to the polls so they can once again sell their vote?

At the end of the day, dwelling on all the wrongs and negativity won’t improve the situation for anyone; however, addressing them and holding people accountable in whatever form or fashion deemed necessary and feasible will certainly improve Sint Maarten. So let’s agree that these first 10 years of autonomy have shown us what not to do – i.e., get emotional and overwhelmed when we realize being autonomous is much more work than anyone anticipated. Let’s agree we WILL LEARN from the past and take calculated steps, we will apply the necessary levels of discipline and respect to all public offices and we will champion those representing our island in a way that we can be proud of.

Everyone needs to become more aware of their actions and the consequences thereof. Stand up for decency and respect like we stood up for our open borders. Be accountable for your decisions. Apologize when you make a mistake. Be a responsible role model for the kids and the young people, as their behaviour, values and morals are a direct reflection of their family and surroundings. Display honour, not ego. Finally, be sure to hold yourself to the same high standard that you hold another to.
A look into the video commemoration of 10-10-10

By Rohan Goswami

St. Maarten obtained its country status on October 10, 2010, popularly referred to as 10-10-10. The importance of becoming an autonomous country in the Kingdom of the Netherlands is understood by many, but maybe not so much. In observance of 10-10-10, well known island personality, the honourable culturist Clara Reyes, organised a video commemoration. Keeping in line with social distancing measures as dictated by COVID-19, this video consisted of interviews with Ministers, as well as a tribute to the artistic aspects of St. Maarten.

I interviewed Ms. Clara Reyes on this video commemoration.

• According to you, what is the importance of 10-10-10 to the island?

The importance of 10-10-10 to the island is that it helped to establish St. Maarten as a country within the Dutch kingdom. It gave St. Maarten its own constitution; it gave St. Maarten infrastructure that helps it to strategize for self-governance, self-determination. Through this benefit, we now have a parliament. We have a minister system. We have new ministries that were put into place, such as the justice ministry, the ombudsman, and quite a few other ministries and legislation that came into effect on that day.

However, in short, it put St. Maarteners in a position of full responsibility for their own governance. From what I heard during the interviews, a lot of our politicians have put the blame on the als of our society and the fact that we were almost second class citizens within the constitution of the Netherlands Antilles. However, this allows us to be fully responsible in being proactive in the governance process.

• Do you think the youth of today are sufficiently informed about the political freedom that the island received on 10-10-10 and about the general political climate on the island?

The process of 10-10-10 took about 20 years, and in the initial 10 years, there was a huge campaign of keeping the community involved in the process; so there were many referendums, trips to town halls and villages as well as conferences and media, and the public was largely informed about what was going on. After June 23, 2000, until today, there have been multiple people who have been born and that have migrated to St. Maarten and I feel like these groups are being sort of left out and only now, 10 years after independence, we are reflecting on this and so we, with this documentary, hope to inform the public about this constitutional change. For the second part of the question, I believe that there is so much information available on social media like radio programmes and blogs, etc., and the St. Maarten people are fully involved in the political process, and the youth just need to avail themselves to it.

• What encouraged you to spearhead such a project?

Well, this year marks the 10th anniversary of St. Maarten becoming a country within the kingdom of the Netherlands. The whole idea was to create an opportunity for reflection, as I mentioned this was a 20-year process. The story dates back to when there were six islands as a part of the Netherlands Antilles, and each island affected another. There is a long story on St. Maarten’s contribution to political freedom. There was a referendum that took place in 1994, but the preparation of this began years prior to 1994. Unfortunately, we were hit by Hurricane Luis in 1995 which caused tremendous damage. After this, another referendum took place in 2000, which began the 10-year journey to freedom. The fact that this year is the 10th anniversary was what drove me to do this program, to establish with the public what this is, as well as who were the key protagonists in this pivotal moment in St. Maarten.

• Can you explain a little bit more about the components of the program and the reason behind each component?

We already knew this program would be a long one, because it involved both the political and the artistic aspects. We interviewed eight out of the many people who were instrumental in this change, and that was 20 years of history that needed to be documented. We also felt it necessary to bring in the artistic component because artists are the reflection of society, and so we decided to bring in the dance, song, music, spoken word and other artistic aspects of St. Maarten. Each component was necessary because it complements the other, and brings about a rich account of 10-10-10.

• St. Maarten has already received country status; do you think we will receive the status of a completely independent country in the future?

Yes, I think we will eventually receive this status. I think more and more people are realizing that this status provides us with autonomy, and full autonomy is the right of every nation on the planet. The reality is we are a colony, and who wants to be a colony in the 21st century? At some point, you want to strive for full independence because it provides us with full growth.

• How do you feel about the response to this video?

I received nothing but glowing reports to the video. Everyone said that it was timely and that this information was something that so many people didn’t know about. A lot of people were not informed of the details and so the response was beautiful. We were complimented by people of all walks of life on the quality, diversity, and professional level of the work and people were happy that we provided an archive of all this valuable information.

• Any final thoughts?

I would like to encourage every St. Maartener to be engaged and be involved. You have to read, know your politicians, and follow the parliament sessions. That is the only way you can connect to the intricacies of being a true St. Maartener. A commitment needs to be made by all of us to be fully engaged and to help St. Maarten to become the best nation she can be. This is all of our responsibility and we must work for what we want.

In conclusion, the process of freedom was a lengthy 20-year process. This isn’t something many people are aware of, and this video commemoration was done in order to inform people as well as to provide us with an opportunity to reflect on what the island has been through in the past, and the greatness of the 10-10-10 freedom. I leave you with this final thought: “Freedom cannot be bestowed; it is achieved.”
My name is Kiemoy Fleming. I am 16 years of age, and I paint rocks. I started painting on rocks specifically because I thought it would have been an ideal way to stand out. You mostly see paintings on canvases, or maybe even glass, but it’s not every day you come across a landscape painted on a rock.

For me personally, painting gives me the freedom to put my creative side in the driver’s seat. As none of my rocks are identical to each other, each order really allows me to brainstorm and think of new ideas so that each piece is unique. My rocks are being sold at the starting price of $15, but prices do vary depending on the detail of the painting, and the size of the rock itself.
Do you think you would’ve ever lived to see a time where the entire world was simultaneously at home, and every single activity of everyday life, with the exception of healthcare, came to a complete halt? Yeah, me neither. With the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 (or the Coronavirus) in Wuhan, China in December 2019, every single country, whether large or small, was advised to remain at home and encourage social distancing, regular sanitizing, and the use of masks among their population. It doesn’t need to be mentioned that the virus has affected the world in every way possible, be it economically, socially or even legally. But have you ever thought about the effect that this pandemic has had on the already deteriorating environmental state of the earth?

On March 11, the World Health Organisation officially declared COVID a “global health crisis” and declared it to be the first pandemic since the Influenza pandemic of 1918. This pandemic has changed what is considered to be normal in the present day. Due to the mandated lockdowns all over the world for an extended period of at least three months, travel of any kind was reduced to nothing but emergency travel. This caused the emissions of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane and other dangerous greenhouse gases to reduce significantly. This is a positive change that the virus has brought about, and even though it is a short-term, temporary change, it serves as a lesson to us on the environmental crisis we are currently going through.

Air pollution is simply one aspect of a much bigger picture. Due to widespread social distancing and quarantining orders, the demand for oil products and other fossil fuels has been significantly decreased, which leads to even more of a positive change. There is even heavy evidence to support the fact that this has caused a significant reduction in dangerous emissions to the atmosphere. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the European Space Agency (ESA), the nitrogen dioxide air pollution had significantly reduced in Wuhan and many other Chinese cities. The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air has announced that CO2 emissions were down by 25% two weeks after the Lunar New Year celebrations in China, which happens to be the time of the pandemic. If you are not already aware of the harmful effects of air pollution and global warming, then here is some information on it: There has been a significant increase in air pollutants in the atmosphere, which can lead to the spreading of many different bacterial and viral respiratory diseases, as well as the coronavirus. Not only will we be more susceptible to diseases like this, but we will also be more likely to pass them on to loved ones because these pollutants affect vectors, pathogens, and hosts which all cause diseases.

This pandemic will eventually end, but the environmental crisis will still be present. Even though the measures being taken now are temporary, we can take the lessons that this pandemic has left us with, both medically and environmentally. Some alternate options of getting things done can continue to be used in efforts of reducing our carbon footprint. Some examples of this would be to use video conferencing instead of travelling, and limiting our recreational outings and food waste to the bare minimum.

In conclusion, the coronavirus has left us with major changes in our lives, but not all of those life changes are negative. The widespread decrease in air travel as well as the use of fossil fuels has led to a significant decrease of the carbon emissions into the atmosphere. There is sufficient evidence to show us that the world began to heal itself once the pollution levels were reduced. We should take this pandemic as an eye-opener and begin to get more conscious about the decisions we make and how it will affect our carbon footprint and make the changes where necessary. If we successfully do this, then maybe we will be able to live in a world where “the sky is blue and the sun is shining” as said by the Global Boy Group BTS.
Breast cancer awareness month is recognised in October, to acknowledge the individuals who have fought or is currently fighting breast cancer and to raise awareness. It is an annual international health campaign organized by major breast cancer charities to raise awareness, gain funds and reduce the stigma of breast cancer through education on symptoms and treatment. As human beings, we tend to forget the importance of educating ourselves on the risks and challenges that we face with the human body.

Breast cancer is a type of cancer that starts in the breast. Cancer starts when cells begin to grow out of control. Different kinds of cancer exist and developing breast cancer is determined by which cells in the breast are abnormal. In spite of the fact that inherited genetic factors do not cause any cases of breast cancer, they are associated with somatic mutations in breast cells that are inherited and do not cluster in families over the lifetime of an individual. The way it is inherited depends on the gene involved in hereditary breast cancer. Although the risk of males contracting cancer is very low, there is a high risk for women as they age. Both men and women may get breast cancer. For men, the lifetime risk of getting breast cancer is about one in 833. For women, the lifetime risk of getting breast cancer is about one in eight.

There are four types of breast cancer: ductal carcinoma in situ, invasive ductal carcinoma; inflammatory breast cancer; and metastatic breast cancer which is classified as stage four breast cancer. This stage means the cancer has spread to other organs or areas of the body. For breast cancer, there are several symptoms you can watch for so that you get checked by your doctor as soon as possible. Once a year, women and men are advised by their home doctor to get a full check-up which includes a mammogram.

Mammography is a procedure in which low-energy X-rays are used to view the human breast for diagnosis and screening. The aim of mammography is the early detection of breast cancer, generally by the detection of characteristic masses. The procedure is usually painful for some individuals and others don't feel a thing. The percentage of men getting mammograms is quite low. Since breast cancer is more common in women than men, most women make it their objective every year to get tested. Women between the ages of 40 and 44 should have the option of beginning annual breast cancer screening with mammograms (X-rays of the breast) if they want to do so. Women between 45 and 54 years of age should have mammograms every year.

Women 55 and older should have mammograms every two years or can undergo an annual screening. For men, it is recommended that those who may have inherited a gene mutation such as BRCA2 or BRCA1 should have breast cancer screening. Starting at 35, these men should have a professional breast exam every year. There are signs and symptoms you should be on the lookout for at all times to see if you may be a possible candidate for breast cancer. A painless lump or thickening of the breast tissue changes to the skin that protects the breast, such as dimpling, puckering, redness or scaling, thickening or swelling of part of the breast; irritation or dimpling of breast skin and redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast are just a few of the signs and symptoms women should be on the lookout for.

I asked my mates, both male and female, if they were self-checking, and they all said they weren’t because they weren’t concerned. Some also said they don’t know how to do the self-checking procedures. I do agree that young adults should pay more attention to their bodies as they may go through phases that may lead to negative outcomes. Please keep your health in check, young people, and get checked!

Fun fact: With the use of mammograms, doctors can locate breast cancer early, sometimes up to three years before it can be felt.
Megan Thee Stallion speaks out

Despite a show-stopping year that saw her first pair of No. 1 singles and a culture-defining song (and video) that spawned a lucrative, entertaining cycle of performative outrage from the typi- cal talking heads, Megan Thee Stallion has endured her fair share of trauma in 2020. On Tuesday, October 13, she expounded on that trauma in a New York Times op-ed.

“I was recently the victim of an act of violence by a man. After a party, I was shot twice as I walked away from him,” Meg wrote, referring to a July incident involving her and rapper Tory Lanez. “We were not in a relationship. Truthfully, I was shocked that I ended up in that place.” (Meg named Tory as the shooter a month after the attack. He’s since been charged with assault.)

“My initial silence about what happened was out of fear for myself and my friends,” she continued. “Even as a victim, I have been met with skepticism and judgment. The way people have publicly questioned and debated whether I played a role in my own violent assault proves that my fears about discussing what happened were, unfortunately, warranted.”

Meg ties in her own experience to both the expectations of Black women as voters across the country — “Black women are still constantly disrespected and disregarded in so many areas of life” — and the larger framework of objectification that plagues women and “happens because too many men treat all women as objects, which helps them to justify inflicting abuse against us when we choose to exercise our own free will.”

Chadwick Boseman’s brother opens up

Shortly before his death from colon cancer in August, Chadwick Boseman told his brother that he was exhausted. In a new interview with the New York Times, the late actor’s brother, Derrick Boseman, revealed that he spoke with him about how he was feeling.

Derrick, a pastor, often prayed with his brother over the phone about his situation, but on that particular day, what Boseman said to him changed his prayer. “Man, I’m in the fourth quarter, and I need you to get me out of the game,” he said. Derrick, understanding what that meant, altered his religious request.

“When he told me that, I changed my prayer from, ‘God heal him, God save him,’ to ‘God, let your will be done,’” said Derrick, “and the next day, he passed away.”

Boseman had been diagnosed with Stage 3 colon cancer in 2016. His diagnosis came in the midst of his acting career, one that started with his first major role on Persons Unknown in 2010 and became truly official with his breakthrough turn as baseball player Jackie Robinson in 2013’s 42.

Boseman’s other brother, Kevin, also spoke to the New York Times about the early days of his brother’s career when his parents had doubts about whether being an actor would pay off or not. “A lot of people think making it means becoming an A-list movie star,” he said. “I didn’t force that. I just knew that if Chad wanted to work in the arts, he would find a way and take care of himself.”

“He always did his best,” he continued. “His best was incredible.”

Disney won’t ditch theatrical releases

Disney CEO Bob Chapek recently revealed that the company will continue to hold theatrical releases for its new movies despite its focus on online streaming services. On Monday afternoon, Disney shocked moviegoers worldwide by announcing that it will shift its primary objective to online streaming services as COVID-19 causes the continued closure of movie theatres across the globe. Streaming has so far been a success for the company, especially with the arrival of Disney+ last year, on which all of Disney’s family-friendly content can be found.

In September, Disney tested its new streaming focus by releasing the highly-anticipated live action Mulan remake on Disney+. Though the movie is very controversial, Mulan found success on the online platform, bringing in an increased number of subscriptions and a total of $35.5 million for Disney on its opening weekend. Even before Mulan, Disney released Frozen 2 and Onward on Disney+ earlier than expected as the pandemic started, looking to boost the service’s programming line-up.

Dwayne Johnson confirms Black Adam starts filming in spring 2021

Filming on Black Adam is officially scheduled to begin in spring 2021. Dwayne Johnson joined the DC family several years ago to play Black Adam in a movie. At the time, the plan was for Johnson to be the villain in Shazam! But those plans changed to give Black Adam a solo film instead. Johnson has spent years developing his DC Extended Universe debut and it was finally making some progress before COVID-19.

Warner Bros. and DC have recently been busy filling out the cast around Johnson. Noah Centineo is confirmed to be Atom Smasher, while Aldis Hodge is set as Hawkman. They are two of the heroes who will help form the Justice Society of America in Black Adam. However, some recently began to question the future of the film. As part of a massive release date reshuffling, Black Adam lost its December 2021 release date and Warner Bros. didn’t give it a new one. This led some fans to worry if the movie was going to be significantly delayed, but that doesn’t appear to be the case.
Get ready for Sony’s PlayStation 5

The PS5 (or PlayStation 5) is Sony’s long-awaited next-generation console. It costs $499.99 / £449.99 / AU$749.95 and will be available from November 12 (in select markets such as the US and Japan) and November 19 for the rest of the world, including the UK. Sony is also releasing a Digital Edition of the console, which removes the disc drive and costs $399.99 / £359.99 / AU$599.95.

After months of speculation, leaks and announcements, we now know pretty much everything about the PS5. Though Sony’s marketing strategy has been to drip-feed information, we’ve now seen the PS5 design (including a full teardown video and a look at the new UI), know all about the PS5 games coming to the console – including Horizon Forbidden West and Spider-Man: Miles Morales – and been given an in-depth look at the console’s specs and features. These include an NVMe SSD for super-fast load times, ray-tracing support, a built-in 4K Blu-ray player, and backwards compatibility with thousands of titles in the PS4’s game library.

However, and most importantly, we finally know the PS5 price and release date – and it’s set to go head-to-head with Microsoft’s Xbox Series X. Both consoles are going to be pretty powerful from what we know about the PS5 specs. We’ll cover them in full below, but specs-wise, the PS5 (and its digital alternative) are rocking an AMD Zen 2-based CPU with 8 cores at 3.5GHz, 16GB of GDDR6 memory, and a custom RDNA 2 AMD GPU that puts out 10.28 TFLOPs of processing power. That might sound like nonsense if you’re not up on this kind of jargon, but prospective PS5 players have a lot to be excited about.

Sony is also confirming it’s going to be releasing a PS5 Digital Edition – a streamlined, digital-only console without a disc drive. Both consoles are going to be pretty powerful from what we know about the PS5 specs. We’ll cover them in full below, but

The Sony PS5 is the next-gen PlayStation console.

• When is its release? November 12 in US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and November 19 for the rest of the world.
• What will the PS5 cost? The standard console will cost $499.99 / £449.99 / AU$749.95, and the disc less PS5 Digital Edition $399.99 / £359.99 / AU$599.95.
• What can I play on it? Loads of games! They include a new Spider-Man entry, a Horizon Zero Dawn sequel, a Demon’s Souls remake, and much more to come.

The PS5 is vastly different console to the PS4, with its space-age black-and-white colour scheme representing a noticeable shift from PlayStation designs of the past. There’s also more than one PS5 console releasing this year, too, as Sony has also confirmed it’s going to be releasing a PS5 Digital Edition – a streamlined, digital-only console without a disc drive.

• Can I play PS4 games on the PS5? Yes! The PS5 is backwards compatible with “almost all” PS4 games – earlier generations are still to be confirmed. It will launch with support for the majority of the top 100 PS4 games, but it’s been suggested support will extend to most of the PS4’s library.
• Will the PS5 support PS4 accessories? Mostly. The DualShock 4 controller will work with supported PS4 games, while officially licensed PS4 arcade sticks, flight sticks; racing wheels and some PS4 headsets are supported.
• Will PS5 have VR? Oh yes. The next-gen console will support current PSVR hardware, and there are also rumours of PSVR 2.
Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in

7 STEPS

01 Wash your hands frequently
02 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
03 Cover your cough using the bend of your elbow or a tissue
04 Avoid crowded places and close contact with anyone that has fever or cough
05 Stay at home if you feel unwell
06 If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early — but call first
07 Get information from trusted sources

TEENTIMES25
FOR THE YOUTH, BY THE YOUTH
# StopTheSpread

Proper hygiene stops the spread of the virus.

01 Wet your hands before applying soap.

02 Bring your palms together and rub soap all over the palms and backs of your hands, including between the fingers.

03 Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.

04 Wipe your hands with a clean towel or paper towel and avoid rubbing too vigourously.

Handwashing 101