

Pandemic Voices: From Online Journals to Public Exhibits

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Project Synopsis

The Pandemic Journaling Project (PJP) was co-founded in 2020 by Dr. Sarah Willen (UConn) and Dr. Katherine Mason (Brown) to give people—especially those often left out of history—a space to document how COVID-19 affected their lives. Participants shared journals, photos, and audio. The project later inspired *Picturing the Pandemic*, a visual exhibit reflecting on the emotional and social impact of the pandemic.

Background

- The Pandemic Journaling Project (PJP) began in 2020 to document everyday experiences during COVID-19, especially from underrepresented communities.
- Over 27,000 entries were submitted by 1,800+ participants across 55 countries.
- The subproject “*Checking In: Voices of Immigrant Women in NYC*” centered on 34 Latina immigrant women through journals, interviews, and group sessions.
- In 2024, the team published a public report, “*We Were the Ones Who Kept Things Going*,” and a peer-reviewed article, “*Engaging Immigrant Women in Online Journaling*,” to share key findings.

Action Plan/Your Role

As a research assistant for the Pandemic Journaling Project and *Picturing the Pandemic*, I focused on the subproject “*Checking In: Voices of Immigrant Women in NYC*.” My role included:

- Translating and transcribing journal entries and videos (Spanish ↔ English)
- Reformatting and transferring content to UConn’s Aurora platform
- Organizing and editing materials to help preserve and respectfully present the stories of immigrant women

Reflection

I was moved by the raw stories I translated—many reflected my own pandemic experience. Helping build the website showed me how these voices were shared across the U.S. and globally, from Mexico to Toronto and locally in Hartford. This work reminded me how powerful storytelling can be in connecting communities.

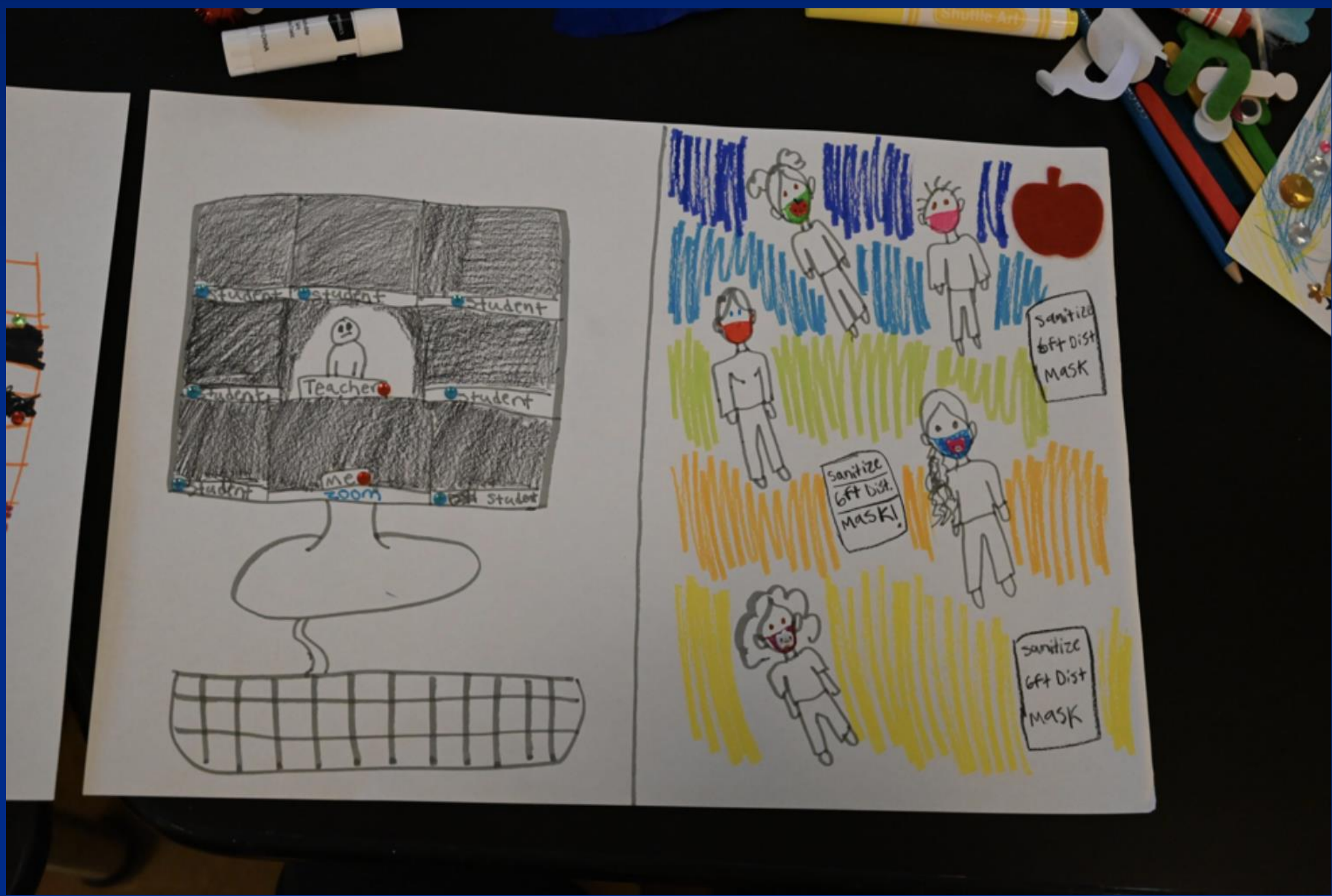
Next Steps/Acknowledgements/Credits

Thank you to Dr. Sarah Willen and Heather Wurtz for their guidance, the UConn SHARE Summer grant for its support, and the participants for sharing their powerful stories.

Visual Stories from the Pandemic



A playful window display submitted to PJP promotes vaccination with humor.



A child’s drawing from the Hartford exhibit shows school life during the pandemic.



Visitors at Hartford Public Library in 2022



This PJP photo captures the isolation of travel during COVID-19.