



Haddonfield Civic Association
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HaddonfieldCivic.com

Bradshaw Literary Award 2021 Winner Sullivan Norton

Bradshaw Literary Award 2021 prompt

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused painful disruption to people's lives all over the world, including our local community. During this time of crisis, we have made many sacrifices both personally and collectively to protect not only ourselves but our families, friends, neighbors, and those most vulnerable. These challenging times have also brought us together in efforts to support each other and people outside of our community.

Describe one example of how an individual or community organization sought to help another person or group cope with the consequences of the pandemic and explain the significance of their efforts. If you have been involved in something personally, please share your experience.

Life Lessons in the Age of Covid by Sullivan Norton

When school transitioned to remote learning last spring and everything was canceled, like many teenagers I went from being overscheduled to facing a lot of down time. At first it felt like a welcome break, but I quickly realized that I needed to keep moving and being stuck inside was not going to work for me. What I also learned is that being busy and being productive are not the same thing. Many activities I tried felt unfulfilling and what I realized was that I felt best when I was serving others through community service.

This past summer the mission trip I was signed up for was canceled. I was deeply disappointed and looking for other ways to help. During the June protests, a container used for storing supplies belonging to a local community outreach program at the Broad Street Ministry was destroyed. I offered my help to the program director and she accepted. With socially distancing in mind, I worked toward creating safe fundraising opportunities to raise money for BSM-a program in Philadelphia that provides food and clothing to the underserved and homeless.

Since the inception of the fund-raising program, we have continuously looked for opportunities to raise money for Broad Street Ministry. This fall we organized and pulled together over 80 high schoolers to rake properties in town to raise money for our cause. On Valentine's Day we teamed up with four Haddonfield Memorial High School alum who created "singing telegrams" to send to loved ones all over the world. It was our socially distanced version of the typical candy grams. We have a couple more planned for the spring. To date, we have raised over three thousand dollars for this important group and this spring that money will be used to serve a warm dinner to over 400 people.

What I also learned from this fund-raising effort is that just raising money for a "good cause" was not enough for me. I was really struck by feeling the need to see this all the way through. Serving the community that I was raising these funds for and seeing **how** these funds impacted this underserved community was the "sweet spot" for me. I have loved volunteering in person for Broad Street Ministry and passionately believe in the mission they represent.

The lessons I have learned while living in the age of COVID is that while we may be restricted in what we are able to physically do outside of our homes, we are only truly limited by the breadth of our imaginations. Thinking of what others are experiencing beyond my front door has helped me to find purpose at a time when little has made sense. I have found comfort in helping others and what I take from this experience will last well beyond 2020 and 2021. Seeing how people have struggled during COVID was eye opening and experiencing the opportunity to help those in need has taught me about humility, hard work and stewardship.

To find out more about the HCA, contact:

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