

COMMUNITY ARCHIVE: COVID-19 EXPERIENCES ORAL HISTORIES

Tricia Lynch Interview

October 21, 2020

Virtual Meeting, Mason, Wyoming

Reuther Library Oral History ID: WSR002947_OH_020

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ROBYN PIERCE: My name is Robyn Pierce working in conjunction with the Reuther Library at Wayne State University. Today's date is October 21, 2020. This interview is of Tricia Lynch and about the effects of COVID on her ability to work. The interview will go into detail about her job as a cosmetologist both before and after the shelter in place order was issued. Tricia lives in Mason, Michigan and works at Salon Blush.

This interview is being recorded remotely and will be housed at the Reuther Library which is part of Wayne State University. The Reuther Library will keep administration information about this oral history project such as interview releases, and deeds of gift in its case files. Case files are in a locked nonpublic area of the building accessible only to the Reuther Library staff. In the event of a criminal investigation or legal discovery proceedings, the Reuther Library could be compelled to turn over holding and case files that are otherwise closed to the public including the case files for this oral history project. [00:01:04]

So, the first question I ask everybody is, do you have an affiliation with Wayne State University?

TRICIA LYNCH: I don't. My brother-in-law got his masters there, that's the only thing that I— yeah.

ROBYN PIERCE: Oh, very cool.

TRICIA LYNCH: But, that's it.

ROBYN PIERCE: So, could you give me description of what your job entails?

TRICIA LYNCH: My job entails cutting hair, coloring hair. I have to do all my own, like, recording of sales and monthly reports and all that. So yeah. A lot of hair services. Waxing.

ROBYN PIERCE: So you basically own your own business, and then you rent space from the salon you are working out of, is that correct?

TRICIA LYNCH: Correct.

ROBYN PIERCE: So, I have a timeline here. [00:02:04] So, the first case [of COVID-19] was confirmed in Michigan on the tenth of March, and it wasn't soon after that, that salons were shut down. So, I'm assuming since they all were, that your salon was shut down as well.

TRICIA LYNCH: Yes, yeah.

ROBYN PIERCE: So did you, during that stay-at-home portion of the COVID relief that we've been dealing with—during that portion of time did you get, pick up a new hobby or anything while you were stuck at home?

TRICIA LYNCH: I started being a Pampered Chef consultant.

ROBYN PIERCE: Nice. Do you enjoy that?

TRICIA LYNCH: I do enjoy it. I was doing it through Facebook, and then now, with working full time, I backed off a little bit. So I only do a little bit of that now.

ROBYN PIERCE: But during the stay-at-home, where we were really staying home you were able to do all your sales on Facebook, right?

TRICIA LYNCH: Yes. [00:03:05]

ROBYN PIERCE: That's cool. Did you do the live videos, the live sales too, or just virtual sales?

TRICIA LYNCH: Just virtual sales.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. Were you furloughed during the stay at home order? Like, in the sense that you received assistance from the state.

TRICIA LYNCH: Yes.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. Was like, was it a monthly or biweekly, or bimonthly check? I forget.

TRICIA LYNCH: So we didn't get paid like for—I feel like I got my check like six weeks into it because everything was so backed up, and then it was biweekly after that.

ROBYN PIERCE: Okay. [00:03:50] Did you find that that was sufficient to cover the finances that you would have made if you were working?

TRICIA LYNCH: I actually made more than working.

ROBYN PIERCE: Nice. Very cool. So, how long were you furloughed?

TRICIA LYNCH: March 22 was the first day we were off work, and then June 15 was my first day back.

ROBYN PIERCE: That's a long time.

TRICIA LYNCH: Yeah.

ROBYN PIERCE: So okay, when the salons opened what—I know that kind of went in small phases for you guys to get back into the salons and move into where you are now, as far as productivity. But, so could you walk me through those different steps that you guys went through?

TRICIA LYNCH: Well first we had to get certified in all these, like, Barbicide and cleaning procedures. And then we started, and then our capacity was at 25% and—which all the stylists at my work could still work just because our area is so large. [00:05:06] But we couldn't have—like, a lot of people double-book. So like, if you're doing a color you can do a haircut, like while the color is processing. And we couldn't do that. So we were losing money that way. But then we had to book more time, because we had to clean. And we still—

ROBYN PIERCE: Oh yeah.

TRICIA LYNCH: —I still book more time because I just don't want to be behind and you have to, like, clean all. Not—we already cleaned a lot, but we have to clean more now. But now our capacity is—I mean it's still fine, but we can double book now, and I think it's still probably at 25%. I'm not really sure. Just because we never had to cut back on capacity because our salon has—it's a big enough space.

ROBYN PIERCE: Right. [00:06:06] So those Barbicide classes that you had, or certificates that you had to do, was that provided through the State of Michigan?

TRICIA LYNCH: I didn't have to pay for them. I think it just was through the Barbicide company. And then, we had to take something else that was through the state. We had to do it. It was like mandated.

ROBYN PIERCE: So was it the owner of your salon that asked you to do the Barbicide things, or was it the State of Michigan suggested that that happen at the salons?

TRICIA LYNCH: The owner suggested it. She thought it'd be good if we had that. But there was a class, and it was like two hours, that the state made us take.

ROBYN PIERCE: Okay. So, when like I've gotten my hair cut by you, I know you always clean before and after a client, but now that we have different protocols in place. What does cleaning before and after a client look like now? [00:07:07]

TRICIA LYNCH: So, cleaning before and after, we—so I mean I usually do all my cleaning after, so then it's just ready to go before my next person comes.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah.

TRICIA LYNCH: We always do Barbicide all the chairs down. Like, if anyone sits anywhere, we have to spray it down. And then, like anything that my client touches, like my—I had to, well, I alcohol my whole station, and all of the tools that I use I Barbicide. And then also put it in the UV sterilizer afterwards.

ROBYN PIERCE: Wow. Is that hair driers and curling irons too, or are you talking just combs and scissors? [00:07:55]

TRICIA LYNCH: Combs, scissors, like hair clips. Not blow driers or anything, because I don't think that they would fit in there. But like, curling irons get pretty hot so I think that, you know, just cleaning them off is pretty good.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah.

TRICIA LYNCH: But there's something else I was going to say. Oh, like even people—so my Square, like on my phone to pay, and so like even if someone touches my phone I spray it down with alcohol to, like, sign their name.

ROBYN PIERCE: Is there—at the beginning of the whole thing I heard talk of some things that Apple was trying to create, like wipes or covers for their phone and stuff. Is there something that you use for your phone—or you don't need to?

TRICIA LYNCH: I just, I mean I have a cover on my phone and then I just spray it with alcohol after anyone touches it. [00:08:55]

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. How long do you find that it takes you, now that you kind of have a rhythm to clean up after a client?

TRICIA LYNCH: Probably between five minutes and ten minutes, just depending on what I used and what I did.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. So, then when clients come into the salon to see you, how do they get to you? Like, I know that there's masks and all that stuff, but what does your salon do for that?

TRICIA LYNCH: We only let clients come—we have two doors at our salon, but we are only letting them come in the front door. And then they have to stop there, get their temperature taken. They have to—they were filling out a form, but now we just make them read all the guidelines that, like, allow them to be there. So, just making sure they don't have COVID. And then they, we just take them back, so. [00:09:57]

ROBYN PIERCE: And then obviously masks too, still.

TRICIA LYNCH: Yup, definitely masks.

ROBYN PIERCE: Are those things, those protocols—maybe you don't know, but are those protocols in, in—how do I say this?—imposed by the state? Are some of those above and beyond because your owner decided to put them in place?

TRICIA LYNCH: They were required by the state under Governor Whitmer, but I'm not really sure if they're anymore. But we're just doing it to be safe. At this point there's an emergency order in Ingham County, so I think they just did everything that the governor did before. So we also, like, record everybody's temperature too, when they come in.

ROBYN PIERCE: Has there been talk about the change in the capacity or the protocol for your salons? [00:10:58]

TRICIA LYNCH: Not as far as I know.

ROBYN PIERCE: No.

TRICIA LYNCH: Everything seems to be staying the same for now.

ROBYN PIERCE: For an indeterminate amount of time.

TRICIA LYNCH: Basically.

ROBYN PIERCE: So, I was thinking about something about asking you, and I think I forgot. So, what is the biggest thing that you had to rearrange or reestablish—because coming off of work into the quarantine time, and you had time for yourself and your family, and now you're back into work. What is the biggest thing that you had to change to make that happen?

TRICIA LYNCH: I mean it was definitely hard coming back. After you spent so much time and—. I don't really feel like a lot of change. It's pretty back to—like, it's pretty much back to normal now. [00:11:58] I mean the first week was a huge change, just because I went from not working and then that week I worked 68 hours.

ROBYN PIERCE: Wow.

TRICIA LYNCH: Because everyone was trying to get haircuts, so.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah.

TRICIA LYNCH: But I feel like it's pretty normal now. At least I don't feel like anything's different than before, like with the adjusting, I mean. Wearing masks sucks but, at least I can work.

ROBYN PIERCE: Have you slowed down on how many clients come in and how many hours you work yet?

TRICIA LYNCH: Yes. Well, I'm not working 60 hours a week. So that's good. Yeah, things are pretty much back to normal and, I mean it's probably just the location I'm at, but I am busier than I was before quarantine.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. You like being busier or would you rather have a bit of a break?

[00:12:59]

TRICIA LYNCH: I like being busy while I'm there, because I mean, or you just sit around like waiting for your next person.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. I'm just looking through my questions here pretty quickly. So, with all the different changes in the workplace that um, you guys are following, do you feel safe going into work and interacting with people?

TRICIA LYNCH: Absolutely. Yup.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. And then, because I've been there to get my hair cut recently I'll point out that between your wash stations for hair there's partitions up as well. So there's separation there. Is there anything else that we might have glanced over?

TRICIA LYNCH: I don't think so. I mean we don't have magazines anymore,

ROBYN PIERCE: Oh yeah.

TRICIA LYNCH: Like that's not allowed. [00:13:59] Oh, and we're not serving drinks. Because normally we would have drinks. I feel like until things get back to normal—and like kids cuts, like I would make those balloon animals, and I'm not doing that or, like, have candy for kids. But, besides that I think every, I mean every station has to be six feet apart.

ROBYN PIERCE: Right.

TRICIA LYNCH: So.

ROBYN PIERCE: It's nice that your salon's big enough that you guys can do six feet apart and all be working too.

TRICIA LYNCH: Yes, that is super nice.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. So, then if you are comfortable talking about how the school has worked for your children in conjunction with how you're balancing work life, I can ask you a couple questions about that. But if you're not comfortable that's fine.

TRICIA LYNCH: That's fine.

ROBYN PIERCE: So your, everybody's kids were sent home from school before the end of school year last year. How did that work out for you? [00:14:59]

TRICIA LYNCH: Last year was awful. It was so unorganized and, I mean, no one knew what was going on so I totally understand. Yeah school—it was terrible last year.

ROBYN PIERCE: So, do you see a big difference between the way last year was kind of thrown together and how this year is being worked?

TRICIA LYNCH: I do see a huge difference. Like last year, Parker's teacher was on Zoom for like a half an hour twice a week with him. The whole class. And now like they're, every day they're on Zoom with their class for—

PARKER: —for three and a half—

TRICIA LYNCH: —three hours and fifteen minutes.

PARKER: No, I agree. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Three hours fifteen minutes.

TRICIA LYNCH: And then, um they have—

PARKER: —homework schedule.

TRICIA LYNCH: —self-paced afternoon. [00:15:59] So, they have a schedule but they work at, you know, on their own. And then an hour of time she's on in the afternoon if they have any questions.

PARKER: No. (recording interruption)—a half hour.

TRICIA LYNCH: Okay. It's my interview, not yours.

PARKER: It's one. It's the—. She—

TRICIA LYNCH: Okay, go eat your cereal.

ROBYN PIERCE: So, are you finding that it's easy enough to balance work and helping out with the school schedule and—? Because my kids have the, like a self-paced kind of afternoon in between their subjects, and I find that I have to keep them kind of focused and remind them when their breaks are over. So I wonder how you feel about balancing your portion of his school and your work schedule. [00:17:00]

TRICIA LYNCH: We do pretty good balancing. We definitely have to keep him focused. I mean he gets distracted easy. He's only in fourth grade, so. I think that's pretty normal. But he doesn't go to daycare or anything, so someone like is always home with him. Like me, my husband, a grandma. [Speaking to son] Stop Parker. So, I think that helps, just because I think if he was going to daycare or a different place it would be hard.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah. So, last question. When all of the stay-at-home or stay-in-place is finally lifted and you're able to do whatever you want, what would you do? [00:18:00]

TRICIA LYNCH: I think we—I mean, maybe a vacation would be nice.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah.

TRICIA LYNCH: We would go somewhere warm, but like I wouldn't go on a plane right now with everything going on.

ROBYN PIERCE: Yeah.

TRICIA LYNCH: When things settle down.

PARKER: When things settle down and probably when Liam gets a little older.

TRICIA LYNCH: Yeah, we would like to go (break in recording) warm vacation.

ROBYN PIERCE: That sounds wonderful.

TRICIA LYNCH: But, just not wearing masks at work sounds pretty wonderful.

ROBYN PIERCE: I agree.

PARKER: All the time. I'm getting tired of it. I'm just getting tired of it.

ROBYN PIERCE: I'm going to stop the recording but I would like to thank you for your time.

[And if you could hang out for just a minute, we'll talk about the last portion of what I need,

okay?

TRICIA LYNCH: Okay.

End of recording