

Modern day heroes

Finding essential heroes in essential workers

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Due to COVID-19 and quarantine, students had time to reflect on their priorities. In our digitized, pop culture-dependent world, it's easy to hold celebrities on a higher pedestal than essential workers. In fact, in surveying 165 students from grades 7 through 12, The Patriot Post found 18.8% of students' modern day heroes related to the arts. This is the second highest section, placed after family. Still, there was a noticeable and growing appreciation for essential workers.

The troubling ideas of heroism have faced critique for years before COVID-19. The World Economic Forum even asked in 2017 "Does modern society still have heroes?"

At the time, they found, like with our students, the majority found heroes in celebrities or family members. Even three years before COVID-19, adjunct professor at Bocconi University author Paolo Gallo proposed appreciating essential workers more.

Now, we are adopting a more positive mindset to these taken-for-granted workers.

"I have a newfound appreciation for service workers and medical professionals due to this virus," freshman Alyssa Castaner said. "It takes a lot of courage to help others when they need it most."

Recognizing this cultivates a "new patriotism" according to Politico. The magazine describes this new thought process as the populus developing the need to salute doctors and nurses at "the front lines" of the virus. Freshman Daniel Rodriguez recognizes this in a greater span.

"My modern day heroes are all of the people that are attempting to help others during this global pandemic. They are sacrificing great amounts to ensure our safety and healthiness. Some have even

sacrificed their own lives. They are not in the pursuit of recognition or glorification (though we should give it to them). We can see that they truly care about the lives of their fellow citizens," he said.

Recognizing these essential workers can lead to great shifts in perspective and priorities. Through Key Club, over 61 letters were written to essential workers in appreciation over quarantine. Students like senior Arthur Young showed their appreciation with signs outside of hospitals. Communeens and HOSA even created and donated masks to doctors and nurses when PPEs fell short in supply.

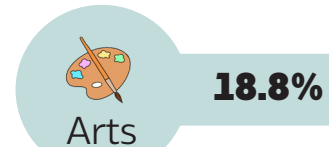
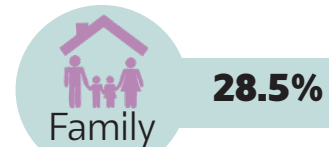
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Alyssa Castaner, 9

"Celebrities are confused with heroes these days," psychologist from Stanford University, Philip Zimbardo, said. "Now we're perhaps recognising that we should be willing to give what is, after all, a title of great honour to many more people who are genuinely putting themselves at risk, which is clearly the case for healthcare workers in particular now. Risk like this was never in their job description. What's more, they're doing it every day. That's heroism with a capital H."

After reflection at home, Gen Z's internet-dependent nature is looking past Chris Evans and Robert Downey Jr. as heroes and onto those in a constant field of risk like our essential workers.

Who's your hero?



Topics related to heroes submitted out of 165 students grades 7-12.

