

PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVES

Throughout history, pandemics have transformed individuals and society in a multitude of ways. This exhibit draws parallels between the COVID-19 era and Saranac Lake's history as a community that welcomed people suffering from tuberculosis.

What is your pandemic perspective?



Margaret Mundia, head nurse at the D. Ogden Mills Training School for Nurses at Trudeau Sanatorium, 1925. Historic Saranac Lake Collection.



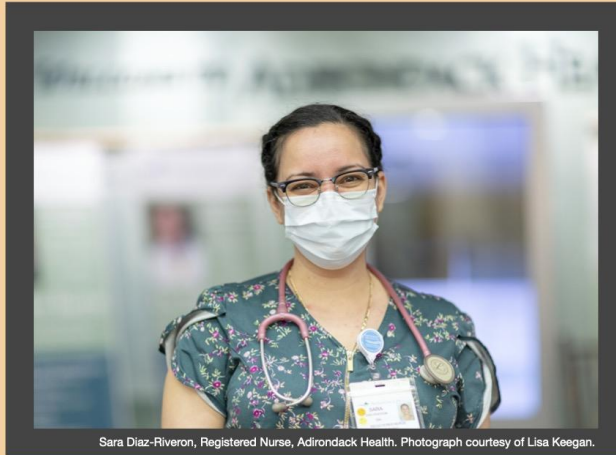
Sara Diaz-Riveron, Registered Nurse, Adirondack Health. Photograph courtesy of Lisa Keegan.

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GRATITUDE

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."
— Albert Schweitzer



Nurses, doctors, housekeepers, tray boys, and cure cottage operators served as the essential workers of the TB industry. Many patients developed close bonds with their caregivers.

What have you been **GRATEFUL** for during the time of Covid-19?

LONELINESS

"Just a line to let you know I am now at the Sanatorium. It is very pleasant. We all have the best of care. Of course it's lonesome, but hope that will soon wear off..." — Postcard written by "Maude," a patient at Ray Brook, 1952.



Patient curing outside a tent at Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium, c. 1900. Historic Saranac Lake Collection.

Many patients arrived in Saranac Lake alone and spent most of their time in solitude on cure porches. Recognizing social connection as an important aspect of improving patients' health, caregivers encouraged friendships. Many patients developed loose romantic relationships, known as "cousining."

In what ways have you faced
LONELINESS during the time of
Covid-19?

CREATIVITY

"A lonely, quiet person has observations and experiences that are at once both more indistinct and more penetrating than those of one more gregarious; his thoughts are weightier, stranger, and never without a tinge of sadness. Images and perceptions... become profound in his silence, become significant, become experience, adventure, emotion."

— Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*



Patients in the Workshop at Trudeau Sanatorium, c. 1920. Historic Saranac Lake Collection.

Long, quiet hours on the porch inspired newfound creativity. Many TB patients developed new artistic talents in the occupational therapy workshop.

In what ways have you been
CREATIVE during the time of Covid-19?

CONFUSION

“Someone should know of this. Someone should be told. Something was happening, because of the east wind and the weather, that he did not understand... Yet what could they do? What could anyone do?” — Daphne du Maurier, *The Birds*



Adirondack Daily Enterprise newspaper, May 14, 2021.

By the turn of the century, sick people were streaming into the village, and some could not find a bed. In response to the confusion, health interests organized the TB Society in 1907. The Society educated the public about sanitary measures, discouraged the arrival of hopelessly ill, destitute patients, and acted as a clearinghouse for the tuberculosis industry.

How have you experienced
CONFUSION during the time of
Covid-19?

FEAR

"In a word, people began to give up themselves to their fears, and to think that all regulations and methods were in vain and that there was nothing to be hoped for, but an universal Desolation." — Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year*



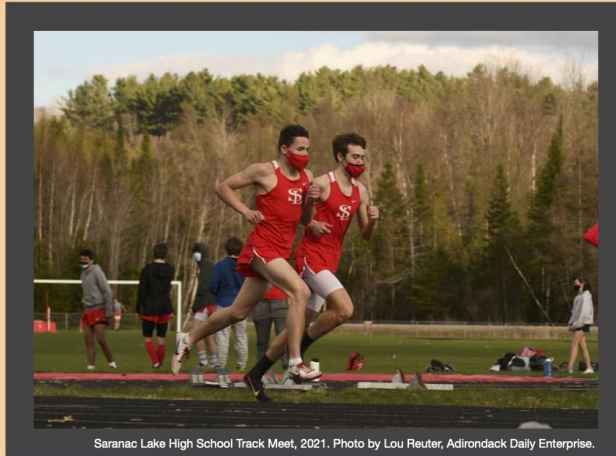
Unidentified patient at Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium, c. 1900. Historic Saranac Lake Collection.

TB patients feared death and dying alone. Many people responded to people with tuberculosis with fear and stigma.

How has FEAR shaped society during
Covid-19?

RESILIENCE

"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me, there lay an invincible summer." — Albert Camus, *The Plague*



Saranac Lake High School Track Meet, 2021. Photo by Lou Reuter, Adirondack Daily Enterprise.

Many people spent two years or more in Saranac Lake waiting to get better. Some patients discovered inner strength in the face of pain and uncertainty.

Have you discovered **RESILIENCE**
during the time of Covid-19?

INEQUALITY

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.” —Martin Luther King Jr, 1966



Black Lives Matter protests in Saranac Lake, photos courtesy of Lisa Keegan.

Although a diverse population of sick people came to Saranac Lake, inequalities existed in their care. Access was determined by the patients' race, class, financial status, and religion. For the majority of poor and minority tuberculosis victims, a cure was out of reach.

How have you noticed **INEQUALITY** in your community during the time of Covid-19?

UNITY

"This was a strange land where people were drawn from all ways of life and all leveled then by the common bond—the search for health and the desire to shed despair." — Dorothy Palmer Hines, *No Wind of Healing*



A group of patients on Franklin Ave, c. 1910. Historic Saranac Lake Collection.

Thousands of patients from all walks of life converged in Saranac Lake. Close friendships formed out of their common experience. Many in the village felt united by a common purpose — to care for the sick and search for a cure.

How have you discovered UNITY in your community during the time of Covid-19?

PAIN

“The pain inflicted on these innocent victims had always seemed to them to be what in fact it was: an abominable thing.”
— Albert Camus, *The Plague*



Tuberculosis victims suffered a long, painful illness and often underwent debilitating treatments. Many were shunned by their communities. It was an emotionally difficult experience for patients and their loved ones.

How have you experienced PAIN
during the time of Covid-19?

PEACE

"I know that you don't believe it, but indeed, life will bring you through. You will live it down in time. What you need now is fresh air, fresh air, fresh air!" — Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment



Tuberculosis patients spent most of their time outdoors on cure porches. There, many developed an appreciation for the natural world. Saranac Lake's cure porches were designed to provide fresh air, sunlight, and if possible, a beautiful view.

How have you experienced PEACE
during the time of Covid-19?

COURAGE

"They lived in a time which feared even a whisper of the disease from which she suffered. Things were difficult, but it was, they knew, a brave new age." — Elizabeth Mooney, *In the Shadow of the White Plague*



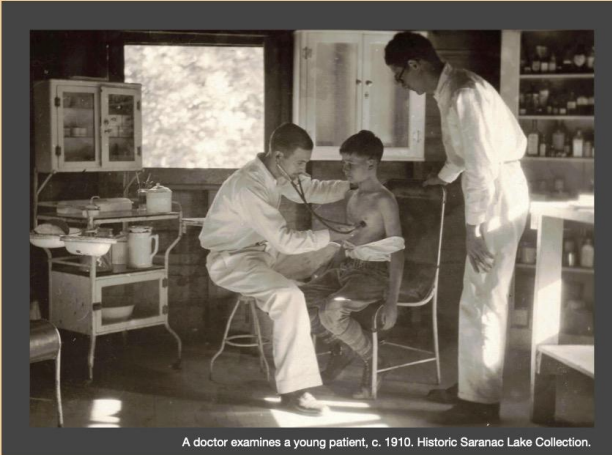
First class of the Trudeau School of Tuberculosis, 1916. Historic Saranac Lake Collection.

The Saranac Lake treatment did not promise a cure, and it demanded courage. Nurses and doctors attended to patients' mental health, knowing that a positive outlook was a key aspect of survival.

How have you witnessed **COURAGE**
during the time of Covid-19?

WORRY

"They could not continue through the long day without air, without rest, without more fuel, without... His mind raced. He knew there were so many things they needed to withstand siege. They were not fully prepared. They were not ready. It might be that it would be safer in the towns, after all." — Daphne du Maurier, *The Birds*



A doctor examines a young patient, c. 1910. Historic Saranac Lake Collection.

Tuberculosis patients worried not only about their health, but also about the well-being of families left back at home. Many worried that the cost of their treatment was putting undue burden on their families.

How have you coped with **WORRY**
during the time of Covid-19?