



AUSTRALIAN WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Pictures of Us

in the

Time of Covid-19





Foreword

In March 2020, our lives and those of millions in the U.S. were forever changed by the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic. In the months that followed, those of us living in New York City came to know a completely different way of life — one where hand-washing, social distancing and mask-wearing would mean survival. Frontline and essential workers took on the enormous task of defending the city and state as people were ordered to quarantine and lockdown in their homes. Empty streets resonated with the sounds of sirens as tens of thousands lost their battle with Covid-19. After four gut-wrenching months, our daily fatality numbers began to decrease and the state initiated the arduous task of reopening. Structured in phases, we slowly resumed work and socially distanced lives, knowing full well the world has been forever changed.

We give our thanks to the many thousands of medical professionals and essential workers who fought hard and so bravely to bring the outbreak under control in New York and the tri-state area. We give our thanks to the state government who showed strength and such resilient leadership at a time when we needed it most. We also give our thanks to our local friends and loved ones, and the Australian expat community who came together to support and comfort one another during a most challenging time. We know there are tough times ahead but we will face them together. We share these pictures of us to tell the stories of our community during a time we will never forget. — Australian Women in New York.



AWNY New Members co-lead Robyn Sunderland at Orient Point Beach, New York.

"After four months of lockdown and a great deal of suffering and loss in our home state, it's finally safer to be in New York City. Times are still tough, my emotions are like a roller coaster, but my wife and I are thankful to have our health and each other. Summer arrived, and with travel restrictions in place in over 30 U.S. states and abroad, we made the most of it by taking road trips in the Northeast's safe travel zones. Our trips to Ocean Grove, Orient Point Beach, Bucks County and Storm King Art Center provided a much needed respite from city life; they followed social-distancing guidelines to a tee and definitely helped put a smile back on my face. I called this one the #6ftSummer."



AWNY New Members volunteer Deborah Kuras with her husband, Gerhard, and their friend's puppy, Loki.

"The weird kind of silence punctuated with the never-ending wail of sirens. No hum of the distant jack hammers, trucks with their air breaks, nor horns honking. Crossing the streets and avenues devoid of all traffic on my daily walk in Central Park. Our vuvuzela and cowbells getting a nightly workout at 7pm, whilst interacting from our respective windows with neighbors never before seen, thanking those that worked for us all through the lockdown. The now-penned-in weekly catch-up with dear friends near and far. Feeling blessed to have a safe place to live, food, health and those I love most in lockdown with me."



AWNY New Members co-lead Dawn Wells-Macapia with her husband, Peter, and their daughter Delphine.

"On June 11th I gave birth to our little girl, Delphine. The reason we're healthy and happy is because of the love and support of others: friends, family, AWNY women and healthcare workers. We spent four days in the ICU and in that time we met many nurses, midwives, lactation specialists, janitors, and administrators at two New York hospitals. Covid had already drawn attention to healthcare workers' amazing bravery, but my birth experience allowed me to appreciate the skill and care with which these (mostly) women do tireless and very often thankless work every day. All of the thoughtful support and gifts from our community have helped guide us through what has been a scary time to bring a human into this world, and for that we'll be forever grateful."



AWNY Events volunteer Ann-Marie Everitt with her family in Brooklyn.

"Our boys grew, and grew, and grew, and are still growing."



AWNY community member Madalene Crow at her stand-in graduation ceremony from Columbia University.

"A hard-earned celebration without the fanfare of a big ceremony. Many thanks to the kind Aussie who loaned me their regalia, which made me look and feel like a 2020 graduate."



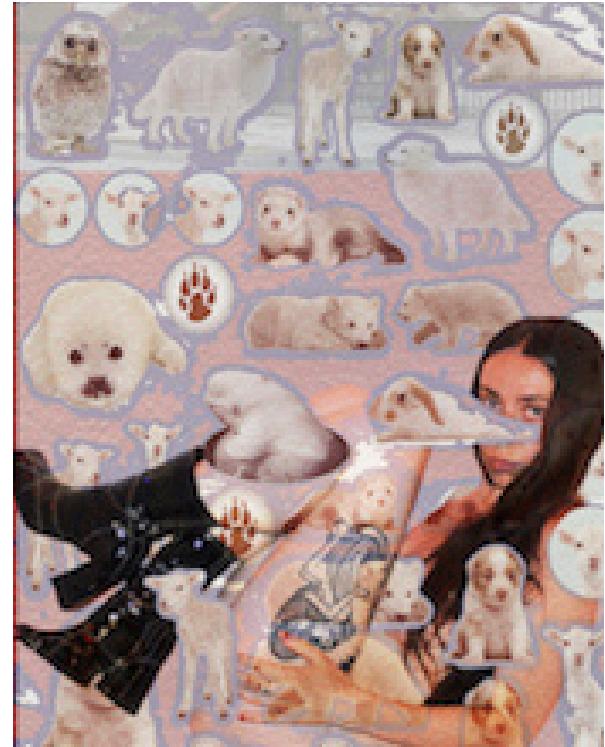
AWNY Comms/Events volunteer Hats Cheney on the plane returning to Australia.

"Farewell, New York. My heart is heavy and full and grateful and broken and bigger than ever. I can't begin to explain the spectrum of feelings, exhilaration, challenges, lessons and self-examination that the past 14 months has bestowed on me in this curious city of excess, drive, innovation and eccentricity. It's a complicated time globally, but the US arguably takes the cake right now. From the super-important Black Lives Matter conversations/structural review, to the damaging and baffling "leadership"/administration and the devastating management of a pandemic, the country's in a very interesting (and scary) place. Ultimately, though, the pull of home (and its sometimes painful sensible-ness and familiarity) outweighed the thrill and relentless waves of challenge that New York was serving up (for now)."



AWNY Mums & Dads co-lead Nakia Gordon with her children, Chloe and Charlie, during lockdown.

"This pic was taken at Westhampton Beach. We were fortunate to escape NYC from April-June 2020, when my husband worked from home and kids did remote schooling. Now back in NYC and adjusting to summer with no kids camps and all vacations canceled, but we are safe and healthy, and there is always next summer for vacations abroad."



AWNY community member Clare Gemima's self-portrait, one of the art pieces she made in the time of Covid.

"I have spent the majority of lockdown in a state of complete artistic flux. Existential crisis to breakthroughs, relapses, discoveries and a lot of high highs met with low lows. This has definitely been a journey, but I cannot imagine what would have happened if I did not find AWNY. I was connected with the Artist Way Girls and have made so many creative, spiritual friendships. With their help, I have gained the confidence to put my work out there more. I would like to use my artistic skills towards promoting businesses, charities and visual campaigns, most specifically those that would directly benefit LGBTQI+ and BIPOC and Black communities."



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AWNY New Members volunteer Susie Lang's butterfly image, taken on one of her photo walks in Florida.

"I have missed connecting with people on so many different levels, it's difficult to find words to express my profound losses with this. Human engagement is my oxygen! In its absence, my focus has turned to the exquisite presence of nature – pure, simple, evolving and beautiful in her "simply there" statement. Wonderfully, nature is not affected by the silent enemy, Covid-19! I have felt deeply challenged for so many months with this "temporary uncertainty" – nature has become my safe haven. Somehow, the sky is bluer, the breeze is cooler, the sun is hotter, the trees are greener, the flowers are more vibrant, the birdsong is more resounding, the water is clearer and the thunderstorms are more powerfully alive. How did I miss all of this before? Did I ever stop and pay attention with such clarity? I did not! Nature continues to heal. What a gift!"



AWNY Comms co-lead Angela Cierpicki Tohl, at home with her sons, Ethan and Gabriel.

"Happy at home! Since March 16, home has become school, office and an all-day restaurant for myself, Ethan (9), Gabriel (5), and my husband (not pictured). We've been taking walks around our Staten Island neighborhood, hiking at the nearby Greenbelt and enjoying physically distant small-group playdates at our local playground, which recently opened. One of the last in-person events I enjoyed before lockdown was getting together for dinner with the friendly and talented volunteers from the AWNY Communications Team. Who knew that several months later life in New York – and around the world – would look so different? Although I miss being able to get out and about in New York City, my family and I are lucky to be safe at home. Ethan said, "Mum, this is the happiest time of my life," and Gabriel loves that he gets to hang out with the 3 people most special to him. And everyone loves being in matching pajamas!"



Above, AWNY community member and newly wed Laura Dorson with her husband, Malcolm.

"I married my New Yorker fiancé, Malcolm, on May 30th, 2020, in Mill Neck, Long Island. Our plans to marry in Australia in July were replaced with a garden ceremony with just 10 people present (and 300 on Zoom!). While we missed my Australian family, it was a beautiful and intimate wedding. We think we have had an unforgettable introduction to married life!"

Top Left, AWNY community member Paula La Rocco with her husband, Dale, and their fur-baby, Harvey.

"I scrambled to make it on the last flight out of Hawaii to New York in March. Everything happened so fast, I was finally with my husband — which was meant to be the happiest time for us. Sadly, it was full of stress as I was now unemployed and home alone, as my husband, an essential worker, worked almost 7 days a week. I had no friends to talk to, a stepson with their mums and in-laws I couldn't visit, so we adopted Harvey the Hungry Beagle. We have built ourselves a little home and celebrated our second wedding anniversary with a (masked) walk through Domino Park. I still feel like I've missed out on experiencing the best of New York but with the support of the remaining Aussie community here, I am starting to feel more at home."

Top Right, AWNY community member Amelia Chappelow's husband, Vincent, with their son, Felix, at their 7pm street dance party in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn.

"St James Place Dance Party at 7pm — our neighborhood has streets full of life, respect and love. A regular dance party kicked off to thank essential workers and to share the spirit of 'New York Tough.' It's the street where Biggie grew up, and the DJs, who obviously lived in the street, would blast today's celebratory hits with classics from the neighborhood. Such community feeling! We are dancing to Lady Gaga in this photo."



AWNY co-president Jacquelyn Drozdkoff, vacationing in New England with socially distanced protocols (and lobster) in place.

"After many months of careful social distancing at home, we were keen to manifest a summer getaway by car to clear our heads and enjoy some nature and relaxation. The goal: low Covid numbers, proactive social-distancing measures, boutique accommodation with stringent safety protocols, charming but not overly crowded towns, good food and beautiful nature/coastal action. Was it too much to ask? Following extensive research, my husband and I hit the road for serene New England. Sure, it wasn't the Caribbean or Europe, but we were extremely grateful to have access to such a beautiful and safe part of the country to make the most of summer."



AWNY Comms volunteer Emma Cillekens, stopping to smell the flowers while jogging in Fort Tryon Park.

"While Covid-19 has wreaked havoc across the globe, for me there has been a silver lining. As an extrovert, the whole experience should be stifling and isolating; instead, I have found the isolation renewing and reflective. It's allowed me the space to get to know myself again, given me the chance to connect with my neighborhood in a way I hadn't before, and given me a chance to reconnect with nature. Above all, it's helped me fulfill my 2020 New Year's resolution — to fall back in love with NYC — in a way I never expected."



Top Left, AWNY community member Amanda Fletcher with her family in upstate New York.

"We moved to the U.S. in January. In mid-February, we moved to a house in New Jersey when there were 15 known cases of Covid. Our son attended school for one day, our daughter missed attending. By March 10, we locked down in our family bubble. This is our first family outing on a trip to upstate New York. My son's birthday. The first time all of us could cope with wearing a mask. Taking a breather, together and safe. It's far from the U.S.A. adventure we'd imagined, but our bubble is strong."

Top Right, AWNY community member Annie Thomas and her family.

"This is our family photo, taken mid-June, when restaurants started opening up again. This was our first outing since March. There was undeniable relief to be out again. We felt like we were finally doing something familiar. In the past three months, the kids became very tech savvy, we learnt from teachers around the world and we cooked new dishes. I like to think we rolled with the new normal without too much drama."

Bottom left, AWNY community member Anne Burtenshaw's sons, Chris, Tom and William.

"Our family visit to Skaket Beach, in our state of Massachusetts. We had takeout pizza because going to a restaurant is not yet a safe activity for us. This picture is special because it's the last beach day my youngest son, William, will have this year. He fell off his skateboard two days later and now has a full-length leg cast. I made the whole family lobster masks; William has his on."



AWNY Comms volunteer Fran Allison's handmade mask, laid out across a fabric print of a map of the U.S.

"This is life now. Scrambling through fabric scraps for a piece that will stretch across my face, with room for pleats. Some of us have the Holy Grail: a \$20 roll of braided elastic, to be measured, cut and looped around ears. Those who don't turn out yards of binding, burning their fingers on the steam of their irons. No longer the cutting of strappy dresses, stitched together ahead of 90-degree days. These once-adored frocks now hang unattended, wallflowers waiting to be taken for a spin. Sashaying about is on hold, for now. But the rummage goes on: the search for two layers of cotton, to be folded and sewn, so that life might be kept in, and death out."



AWNY Comms volunteer Analisa Bell, near the George Washington Bridge.

"Being a people person, I thrive on the presence of others! Don't get me wrong, FaceTime and Zoom and Houseparty have all been great, but it's just not the same. There's nothing I love more than to embrace another human in a BIG HUG! All this to say, I've started hugging myself every morning. Sounds weird, I know. But it's helped to relieve the loneliness that comes with iso-life #covid_19 #coviddiaries #quarantine #socialdistancing #loneliness #loveyourself #hug #hugs #hugyourself #nyc."



AWNY Comms co-lead Tarley Jordan with her partner, Jamal Bilal.

"The couple that masks together... Hand-made masks from pillowcases purchased from Target. White with gold pineapples. I am not a seamstress. I haven't sewed anything since Home Ec in Grade 8. But I figured it out. Day 38 of quarantine/isolation during a socially distant visit to the local farmers market, the highlight of our week."



AWNY past co-president and Bookclub facilitator Kate Lee, making one of her weekly videos.

"I have reconnected with my creative practice. I write daily and I made a year-long commitment to creating weekly videos. At first, my videos responded to the writing, but as the commitment solidified, they morphed into my grappling with the social-justice movement, the changes in the city, in me and my friends. It's hard to show up every week: I get bored, distracted, and usually have no idea what to do. But in tending to the creative conversation (between thought/feeling/sense and body, environment, video, editing), I'm navigating how to be physically, emotionally and psychologically in this space; how to listen; and how we create meaning. And I remembered again how much the analogies in creative practice map into life.



Top Left, AWNY community member Cecelia Jensen, fifth from left, picnicking in Central Park.

"These lovely ladies are a constant source of support and fun here in New York. Masks off for pic."

Top Right, AWNY community member Lauren Whyte with her family in New Jersey.

"Enjoying a socially distant day out amongst the sunflowers at Von Thun Farm."

Bottom Left, AWNY community member and "The GPS Girl" Karen Jacobsen with her family, temporarily living back home in Queensland.

"Lockdown led to a quick decision on March 16 and leaving NYC for Toowoomba on March 17, where we isolated immaculately until (the joblessness of) our son's remote schooling ended. We're in the entertainment biz so the calendars cleared fast. We craved nature and headed to a North Queensland adventure from Cape Trib to the Whitsundays. I want to be useful so I'm promoting the beauty of Queensland, giving online concerts and, yes, doing plenty of #recalculating. Not sure when we will return to our home in Hell's Kitchen — perhaps end of September. Being in the uncertainty has me in a seesaw of "Wow, what a family adventure!" to doing my head in. I'm lapping up every moment of winter in QLD. Our lives are in NYC but we are living remotely right now. That framing is working for me as of this moment!"



AWNY vice president and former president Belinda Jackson with her husband, Mr. NYC (center), and their friend Tetsu.

"Due to distancing requirements, our greenmarket has long queues to get in, so we head out early to stock up on supplies every Saturday. In late April/early May, our favorite fisherman, 'Blue Moon,' returned to the market, and wow are they popular. One day I had to wait an hour in line to buy my fish. Walking home from the market with Mr. NYC, suddenly we heard our names being called out. It turned out to be our friend from Williamsburg who had come down to Park Slope to get fish from 'Blue Moon,' and saw us departing as he arrived. We hadn't seen him since December, so it certainly put a smile on our faces. The three of us grabbed a quick selfie pic near Prospect Park, all masked up.



AWNY community member Josh Pugh (a.k.a. America Josh) with his girlfriend Stacey, relaxing Covid-style on their rooftop in Manhattan.

"After making the decision to lock down properly to keep family and friends safe, my girlfriend, Stacey, and I discovered our rooftop to be a wonderful place on warm spring afternoons. A bottle of bubbles and a wedge of Brie became a regular staple for our weekends, so we could stay away from the crowds but still enjoy some sunshine. Half the time we found ourselves not even doing anything but sitting and watching the blue sky go past! It's been a strange and complicated time for so many, and we've been lucky enough to stay safe, healthy and comfortable in our apartment for this time. We think we made the best of a difficult situation together."



Top Left, one of AWNY community member Dr. Cynthia Tan's many craft projects.

"I've taken on so many projects! A big one is plants and making my own pots."

Top Right, AWNY community member Ashleigh Paparella.

"I'm a Postdoctoral researcher at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. During the pandemic I've been fortunate to be able to return to work in order to continue my research on developing new therapeutics for infectious diseases."

Bottom Left, AWNY Comms volunteer Alice Uribe back home in Sydney.

"I bid NYC adieu at the end of February (when the virus was thought to only be in China and on cruise ships), not really knowing how big of a change the world was going to go through. I'm living back in my childhood suburb in Sydney's Inner West, and have started a new job. While the familiarity of home is soothing, wanderlust remains."



AWNY community member Dani Richardson.

"During the stay-at-home order, spending time growing vegetables and herbs from seeds, and watching my garden grow."



AWNY community member Kate Juliff.

"This must be the most boring selfie ever. Taken at the oral surgery on 41st Street. Molar extraction. First time out of lockdown and this was my experience. Survived."



AWNY Mums & Dads volunteer Rosie Cutting's street picture.

"Came across this touching scene while walking on the Upper West Side. I think it perfectly sums up the beautiful people of New York and their resilience even during the shittiest of times!"





AWNY Comms volunteer Simone Turner.

"The smile on my face says it all. I'm standing near Times Square before the major lockdown and had just come out of a great interview. I was one step closer to living my dream – working and living in New York – something I'd planned for years. Little did I know that a few weeks later, I'd be leaving (to return to Australia) with a shattered heart. These times have certainly been challenging and I've been in lockdown for most of 2020. They say if you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere; but I also think if you make it to the end of 2020, you can do the same. I'll never give up on continuing to connect myself with the courageous and amazing people of New York. I left far too soon to call it my home, but I've taken the 'New York can-do' attitude and the energy that makes this city what it is with me. As for my heart, it belongs to New York.



Front-yard sign during lockdown in Brooklyn. Photo by AWNY New Members co-lead Robyn Sunderland.

Thank-you signs were a common sight during lockdown, as a way to acknowledge the outstanding work and dedication of NYC's front-line medical professionals and essential workers.



AWN Covid-19 and Community Outreach Initiatives:

- Upcoming Event -



Emotional Impact of Covid-19
Support Sessions



Top Right, AWNY's Chinwags hosted by New Members committee co-leads Robyn Sunderland and Dawn Wells.

AWNY's Chinwags started in April and offer a casual way to catch up over a virtual cuppa. We get together monthly to chat about what's going on, trade local tips and share some laughs. Everyone welcome. For details contact AWNYChinwag@gmail.com.

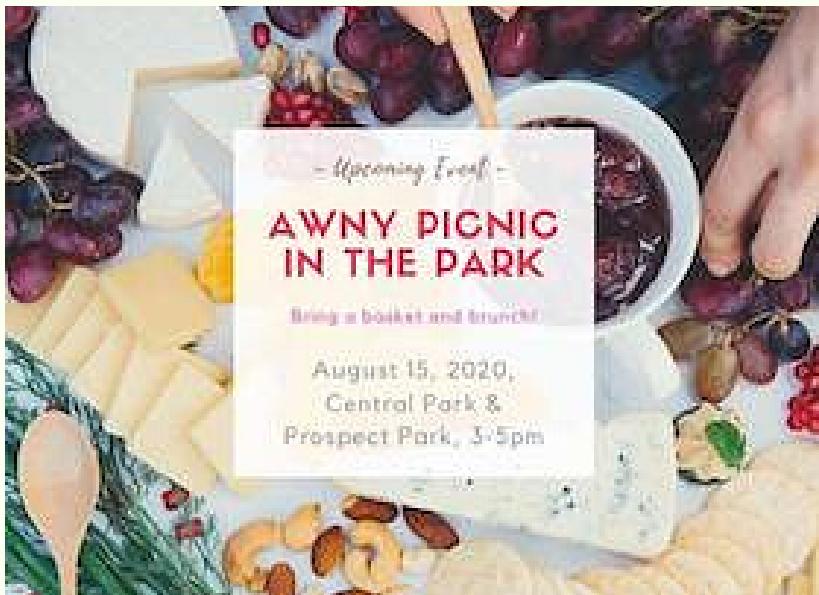
Top Left, AWNY's Emotional Impact Sessions led by Susie Lang (LMHC & NCC).

AWNY's Emotional Impact Sessions of Covid-19 began in March and are offered on an intermittent basis. These virtual sessions provide a safe and guided space to come together as a group and discuss coping with Covid-19 and adapting to unimaginable levels of change. For details contact AWNYImpact@gmail.com.

Bottom Left, AWNY's Quarantine Cookbook conceived by Robyn Sunderland and filled with love and recipes provided by the AWNY community.

Our freshly renamed "AWN Community Cookbook" continues as an ever-growing, community-created online recipe collection. We'd love to include your favorites, too: AWNYrecipes@gmail.com.





Top Right, AWNY Bookclub's current-event series: "Community Learning Race & Discrimination."

In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, past co-president Kate Lee is facilitating a three-part virtual community learning and conversation series from July through September on race and discrimination. For more details email katelee.newyork@gmail.com

Top Left, AWNY's picnics in Central Park and Prospect Park invite members and community to come together — #6ft apart.

Spend the afternoon in the parks with AWNY. Come together after being apart, bring a blanket and a basket, and enjoy a summer afternoon with us.

AWNY Events Committee's new virtual series the "Social Sizzle" is here!

AWNY's Social Sizzle, a new evening series, kicked off with a virtual bang on August 26. So grab yourself a drink and get ready to have some fun and games!

Visit AustralianWomenInNewYork.org and our social pages for community news and event updates.