

Gena Valdez Broomfield Out Lou...rview (2024-02-23 09_03 GMT-7)

Fri, Feb 23, 2024 10:26AM • 47:02

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Broomfield, CU, Marching Band, Hinkley high school, kids, aurora, years, Clinica, Birthing Center of Boulder, people, community, Covid, funny, good, nurse, nursing school, Masters program, pandemic, friends, McKays Landing, Meridian school, Westlake Middle School, Health Board, wanted, love, part, husband, belonging

00:00 David Allison

Gina, thank you so much for meeting with us today. I appreciate it. I wonder if you could just maybe start by introducing yourself and sharing a little bit more about you?

00:19 Gina Valdez

Yes. My name is Eugenia Valdez; I go by Gina and I am a nurse. I'm a mom. You tell me how far you want me to go back.

00:33 David Allison

No, that's great. That's a great start. Yeah. I wonder if he could just share maybe a little bit more about your family background and that sort of thing?

00:42 Gina Valdez

Yeah., so I was born in Mexico City. And I got here when I was about six, and then I grew up in Aurora. So I spent the rest of my childhood in Aurora and then I went to CU. I didn't get into nursing right away, I was interested in the medical field, but I didn't really know what I wanted to do yet. But, CU really does round you to make you into a whole person and make you realize all the stuff in the world that you're interested in. So I know that really was impactful in my life. And so then, I ended up with a psychology degree first, and then I worked with kids in the behavioral treatment center for many years. I met a lot of friends there, because you go through a lot of traumatic experiences with those kids. So you've become really bonded with those. And then through them, I met some friends and then they set me up with my husband, which was kind of like a blind date. And so I knew my husband from that time; then we got married. Then I was like, "Yeah, I want to go to nursing school." And he's like, okay, like, that sounds, of course you do or something like that. (Laughter)

And so I know and then, so I got into nursing school, and then you we live in Aurora, and we're able to manage and pay off all school as I went and that sort of thing. So then when I graduated, we moved to Broomfield and now it's going to be 14 years. Yeah, it's gonna be 14 years on April 12th. And I remember, because I got hired, and we closed on the house on the same day. I got hired at Clinica in Lafayette, which was April 12. I know that because everybody sees your hire date.. And so that was

fun, because I interviewed and they're like, "so I noticed you live in Aurora". And I was like, oh, yeah, we're buying a house right now....

03:10 David Allison

Oh, wow.

03:11 Gina Valdez

...in Broomfield.

03:12 David Allison

and very momentous

03:15 Gina Valdez

That all came together. So I worked at Clinica for many years, and I loved it, because I speak Spanish, you know, that was my first language. So I thought that was the perfect job, really, for me because I can be a nurse, I can speak Spanish, I can help underserved people. That was really a lot of, you know, basically the core of everything that I believed in, and you know, that I wanted to do. And so that was perfect. Then I had my son and I wanted to work less as most moms do, right?

And so, I did work a little bit less. I think I still worked more than 30 hours, but I probably only got paid for 30 hours. But you know, I worked longer probably because I was the one that was in charge. I was the nurse manager. Then I had my daughter. So then I really wanted to work less, more like halftime and it was really hard. Those jobs are really hard to work halftime. And so then I'm like, Well, what should I do? What should I do with my life now? Like, what else can I do with nursing? Luckily, there are a lot of avenues and so I opted to go to St. Anthony's North and in labor and delivery. And so I did that. That's how I got into labor and delivery work there and I worked nights because you had to start at nights then. About a year I was there and I didn't really like the hospital work. So then I left and worked at the Birth Center of Boulder.

05:04 Gina Valdez

And the Birth Center of Boulder is a freestanding birth center, where it's run by midwives. So it's just all midwives, outside of the hospital, and you have natural births. And so I loved that; that was again, really empowering as far as helping women and, you know, going through this amazing thing with them. So that was great. I loved that job, too. That was good. And then COVID hit. And I was like, Well, you know, how can I help? You know, what can I do? The schools are going to need a lot of help. Because, you know, it's COVID. I knew it was going to be a mess because, you know, we should have kids in school, but then we should not, because we should follow public guidelines and people were dying at the time. So of course it was kind of like, oh, wow, this kind of apocalyptic moment, oh my god, what, what are we gonna do? My family is okay, but how can I help other people and so I opted to go work for the school district and that's where I am now. And so it's the same school district that my kids go to, so we have the same schedule. And I can go with them on field trips and help out the school, you know, and do other stuff and be a nurse, all at the same time.

06:36 David Allison

That's fantastic. So your children, by 2020, were school age then?

06:45 Gina Valdez

Yes. So yeah, my daughter was in kindergarten and so it's hard to learn to read on Zoom when you're starting to really build your foundation of hearing sounds and stuff. And it was really hard, that school aspect for me. I think most parents are where you're ever like, Oh, my God, I am not a teacher....

07:10 David Allison

... .but having to do this.

06:45 Gina Valdez

Exactly. So I don't know how to teach my kids to read. We can do the extra little things, but I don't know how to. I don't have the foundations for how to teach them to read. So that was fun. (Laughter) And it was a lot; it was really hard. And I think a lot of parents would be like that, "That was really hard. That was a really hard year." And of course, since it was really hard, I was, well, we did online that following year and we stayed online. We partnered up with a friend and she used to be a teacher before she had kids and her kids are the exact same age as my kids. So we created a pod and we saw them; they were in our bubble and we didn't see anybody outside that. You talk to people on the phone or whatever, on Zoom, but we didn't see anybody for, I don't know, like a year and a half. Barely our family outside of that.

08:08 David Allison

Yeah. Yeah. So I am wondering if you could share a little bit more as you were growing up, and what that kind of experience of coming to Aurora and the community there in that place. And then you know, your experience in high school. And then how you decided to end up at CU. So a little bit more about childhood.

08:42 Gina Valdez

It was all by luck.. Well in Aurora, obviously, there's more minorities there; you know, definitely very diverse, more than it was at CU. I didn't know how the rest of the world was, because you were, you know, you grew up with your community and you get to know the people and that's kind of all you really know. And you know, like growing up in high school, it's not like I was like, Oh, I have a lot of friends or whatever, but you know, I did like school. I did enjoy learning. I think that was it. I did really enjoy learning and I liked science a lot. But I think the key that was really that helped me with the difference from being in a really diverse high school with a lot of kids and then going to CU, which was completely different, is because I got into the marching band. I played the flute since I was like 10 and so I still played it in high school. You know, I tried to be drum major, but my best friend got it, so I was first chair. I think that was what really helped me because it was kind of really a big culture shock from Aurora to CU. And my father actually passed away when I was 18. And so, there was also that financial piece where I didn't have a lot of money to join sororities, to do any of the other groups or whatever. But what really kept me going and staying with it, is belonging to a group. And it was because I belonged in the marching band. I didn't tell anybody that I spoke Spanish. And I think because early on, there were a couple of people that I met, and they're like, "Oh, you speak Spanish? Oh, when did you come here?" , kind of already had, you can see, their own biases are there, like preconceived notions or whatever.

And so I really learned that really quick. And so I didn't even tell anybody. I just, you know, other than, like, my friends that I went with, from high school, that knew me, which was only one like my best friend, and she was the one who got drum major. She said, we're going to try out for the band at CU. I was like, I thought we were done with that. That was a high school thing. But she's like, No, we're gonna try out, we're gonna go try Band at CU. And I was like, okay. So yeah, so of course, we're there. And I remember one time, one of my friends was like, "Oh, wait, do you speak Spanish?" And they're like, yeah, she was like, "Oh, I would have never known" and I think, you know, because I had met just, I don't know, the wrong people, or like, different people that I thought were like, I was a bad, like, I really couldn't be myself. You know, I was like, oh, yeah, I should not say, I should not say that I was born in Mexico, or should not say that I spoke Spanish.

And so I really just kind of went with the flow, and tried to just fit in, which I think is also kind of common. I wasn't one of those, Oh, I'm different or whatever. No, you just really tried to fit in, but I really enjoyed my experience over there. I really did. I think that's really was, like I said, the foundation because he learned so much about different cultures, different ideas, other people have other ideas in you. And you're like, wow, it just makes you a better person. And I know that that really had an influence on me for sure. Even though there were hard moments at times, but no, not even hard. It was just like I said, I just didn't tell anybody that I spoke Spanish. I just kind of kept it to myself. I'm like, just like everybody else. And you know, nobody asked me questions, and nobody thought anything. Because it was different from high school and there weren't many people from Hinkley, because I went to Hinkley. And, it's always been known, kind of like the bad high school or whatever. And so I feel like people are like, "you went to Hinkley?" And sometimes, people who know me now, they don't almost don't believe me. I was like, "Yeah, I graduated from Hinkley"; like, "you did not." And I said, "Yep, I sure did"

13:19 David Allison

It's funny how those reputations get started.

13:22 Gina Valdez

Yeah, I went to Aurora public schools. Yeah.

13:27 David Allison

I'm wondering too, just kind of, you mentioned, I don't know about fear, or just that sense of wanting to fit in, and maybe how's that changed over time, since that experience in college.

13:46 Gina Valdez

When you're younger, I feel like you really want to fit in, you really want to be in a group you really, you know, that's kind of where you feel, you know, feel some type of love and belonging. And then in college, I think I was still like that, because I was young. I was young, and you know, you're not, you're not very confident in myself, or didn't really know who I was. It's all those years when you're thinking of like, who am I? What do I want to be? But now, it's now it's an evolution, what legacy do you want to leave and like, Who do you want to affect or impact? You know, now, I think about how I want to help young women, you know, minority women. So I do do a lot of that. In all my jobs at every point when I was a nurse, I always did mentoring and liked to have students with me, because I think it's important, you know, helping them figure out who they are and what they want to be. I also think it's important, how when you try to impact people, you want to help them grow. That's so fun to see, you know, and I

do do that a lot. I do try to develop women and I think part of it came from when I worked at the birth center, So like I said, I do that, I do. I always have students at work or whenever you know somebody needs that, I know I can help. I do that kind of support.

15:40 David Allison

Yeah, that's great. So I was thinking too, about your experience in college. And it sounds like you didn't quite know what you wanted to do going in. But then how did you discover that nursing was your passion?

15:51 Gina Valdez

Yeah, I, you know, my kids actually asked me that yesterday, asked me questions. And my daughter was like, "How did you know you wanted to be a nurse, mom?" And I said, I Well, I think since I was little, I always was interested in the medical field. I just wasn't sure what I wanted to do. Yeah, you know, I always liked to play doctor or something or be the vet helping animals. It was always something of that sort. And in college I always liked science, and I really enjoyed chemistry and stuff. And so at one point, I was like, Maybe I should go into pharmacy school, but then I shadowed a couple pharmacists, and they don't have the best interactions with people and it's very limited. And so they didn't really didn't really encourage me. (Laughter)

And so right, maybe you're right, because they were like, well, you're counting pills. I mean, you do have machines that help you, but you're basically counting pills. And when you do interact with somebody, they usually are mad because you didn't provide the right medications or you mess up or the timing is wrong. They want their medication sooner than then they're able to and so they take it out on you. And I'm, Oh, thank you, yeah, that does make sense. I could see how that would be a bummer. And so yeah, like I said, they didn't, they really didn't encourage me. They're like, Oh, yeah, you probably shouldn't. So I still kind of had that in the back of my mind. But I think now, there's other avenues that pharmacists do a little bit more clinical stuff, but I didn't know that then. And so then I was just applying to nursing school.

And when I worked at the behavioral treatment center for kids. And then I worked at HCD (spelling?? name?). It's also like a mental health place where families came and sought counseling and a psychiatrist and they also spoke Spanish. And so the psychiatrist is like, "you should be a nurse because you're really good with people" and "you're really caring," and he's the one that first put it into my ear. You need to do more with your life, because I was like a case manager, and I would go to people's homes and help them try to sort their medications, even take them to their doctor's appointments and do all kinds of things like that. And so he really did encourage me; he's like, "You should think about being a nurse." And so then I'm like, okay, yeah. He was the first one that had told me that and I was like, that just makes sense because I've always liked the medical field, and helping people in some aspect. And so when I applied to nursing school, like I said, it happened really fast, because there's a waiting list at all the schools, but I got in pretty quickly. It was kind of like, yep, you did. Yeah, he's like, Yeah, you gotta go. Because I was like, I don't even know if I have everything that I'm supposed to.

18:58 David Allison

The requirements

19:00 Gina Valdez

And he was like, yep, you did everything good. He's like, Yep, you're in. He's like, You need a placeholder, like \$50 and you start. I think the next cohort when I started was in January, and this was like, in July or something. So it was like six months. And then when I told my husband, I was going to meet with a counselor at the nursing school and he's like, yeah, that's good or whatever. And then when I get home, he's like "So how did it go?" And I was like, oh, yeah, man. He's like, "Okay, well, how are we gonna pay for it?" I was like, Oh, yeah. So you have to find out how much it is gonna be, can we take out loans and that sort of thing? Yeah, it's pretty funny.

19:45 David Allison

Is it a year long program or...?

19:47 Gina Valdez

It's 21 months because I already had my Bachelor's. Now, they changed their name. That's why I forget. It's Denver College of Nursing. Back when I went it was Denver School of Nursing.

20:02 David Allison

Got it.

20:03 Gina Valdez

So then during the pandemic, too, I was like, Oh, I have so much free time, but I was like, I just can't stay at home and sit still. So then, through them, they have a master's program. And so I did that.

20:19 David Allison

Oh, wow. That's a good use of time.

20:23 Gina Valdez

I tell people, I got my masters during this time and they are like, "" I sure did, as you did, there's another pandemic, you know.....

20:38 David Allison

So, I'm wondering, just a little bit more about maybe some of your impressions of coming to Broomfield and what that experience has been like living here.

20:51 Gina Valdez

So I used to take the bus on 36 to go to CU and come back to Aurora. You have to live here in the dorms for a year so I did that. Because I really didn't have a reliable car to come every day because you can't opt out of that; they make you stay there your first year. And so I would take the bus, the BX Express or whatever from Denver and I'd be like, "I'm gonna live in Broomfield when I get older." And so that was basically when I knew that I wanted to live in Broomfield and then when I met my husband, his firm is in Broomfield, in Interlocken. And so we're like, oh, yeah, so we're just gonna live in Broomfield. That's where ... and so we did look at a couple houses in Thornton. And it was funny because it just didn't feel right. It was so funny. It was not meant to be. Because every time we're like, Yeah, we really do like that house, something would happen. You know, I don't know. Like, there was one house that

we found out that the foundation was cracked. And we're like, "oh no, we can't do that." So every time we just.. we were meant to be in Broomfield. I was telling the kids we were meant to be in Broomfield. We tried. We really tried to live somewhere else. But it didn't happen. It didn't work. Yeah. So when my husband's firm, like I said, he's in Interlochen, and we're like, yeah, we're just always going to be in Broomfield, and that's where we're still at.

22:32 David Allison

Yeah, you said 14 years?

22:33 Gina Valdez

Yeah, 14 years because my son will be 13 this year. And I forgot the question. You asked me a question. I don't think I answered it.

22:41 David Allison

Oh, no, just kind of your impressions or thoughts of Broomfield, like just the community itself?

22:48 Gina Valdez

Yeah. Well, our community, one of the reasons why we are where we are, is because we really liked the school. And we knew that we were eventually going to have kids whenever that was, and so we really liked the school. And so we are still in that neighborhood. Because of the school, there were a lot of young families at the time, or now they're older, but at the time, there were tons of kids playing outside. And I thought this is such a cool neighborhood, kind of like that community feel. So we should stay here. And we kind of really liked the idea. We live in McKay Landing where the garage is around the back and so the houses are really close together. And I really liked that. I really liked that it was more of a community feel versus like, yeah, you can have your big house...

23:32 David Allison

spread out.

23:43 Gina Valdez

Exactly. But I really felt like that was like a really cute, tight knit community. And it really kind of has been, because we do know a lot, over many years of our friends, obviously our neighbors. And so that was that but I think we really didn't become more involved in any community things with Broomfield. On occasion, we would do like some political thing, you know, like, they invite us or we're like, oh, we should go do the ice cream thing that they do over there.. You know, we would go in and I did before in Aurora, do a lot more political stuff. We also didn't have kids and so then, you know, we felt like you had more free time to do other stuff. Yeah. And we did do a lot of that sort of thing in Aurora and that was easy. Because in Aurora when I was canvassing it was a lot easier going to apartment complexes than it is here, house to house. But I think that's how we kind of got into more of the Broomfield community was through politics. Because both of my husband and I enjoy it and we like to be involved like that. Um, but not after the kids were born. I think that's when we really got more into like, what's the library doing, you know, with kids. And we would do like, you know, music things with the kids. And then now everything I mean before it was like, Oh, I got the calendar and we're like, oh, we should go do this and

this and we checked out all the stuff at the library. And then just from there, and obviously when they do the fireworks and that big...

25:28 David Allison

Oh, The Great American Picnic.

25:30 Gina Valdez

Yes, exactly, for the Fourth of July, and we still go every year, even if it gets rained out. (Laughter) That was last year and it hailed and we got drenched in the hail. The kids weren't happy about that, but we did go back and then we went home and saw the fireworks. But yeah, so I think the kids definitely helped out when they you know, with like, what can you do in your community? So it's basically like how we got around to getting to know more people in Broomfield. Which I think that's how I met you.

26:09 David Allison

Yes, I think that's right. Yeah.

26:12 Gina Valdez

Cuz I met Annie. Yeah. Because it was like, during a political thing or something. Maybe?

26:22 David Allison

Yeah. That's pretty cool. Yeah. So I'm wondering too, just thinking about the kind of neighborhood sense, and the school, is that in BVSD or is it Adams12?

26:36 Gina Valdez

It is Adams12.

26:38 David Allison

Okay.

26:38 Gina Valdez

Right, and I know Broomfield is kind of all split. Exactly. It's got a lot of BVSD. We live in Adams12 and so that's why I chose to work for Adam 12, because the kids' school is in Adams 12.

26:53 David Allison

Nice.. So what school are you at as a nurse?

26:54 Gina Valdez

So as a district nurse, we oversee schools, so we're not in an office. In the health office, we have health aides, and we oversee them, we train them, we do everything then. And we also teach some teachers, obviously, when they go on field trips, if they have a kid that's high need, you know, special need or high medical need or something that they need to know about. We let them know, and we'll teach them about anything that they want. And so I have two schools right now, because historically, in Adams 12 you would have like, I don't know, five or eight schools, a bunch of schools. And because the national average for an RN to students, it's like 750. And so that's like one school. It's like one school in our

population. So I only have two schools. I have Federal Heights, because I always want to keep a school that's mainly Spanish speaking, and Westlake, because that's where my son goes now.

28:14 David Allison

Very cool.

28:15 Gina Valdez

And Westlake is actually a very interesting place because there's a lot of diversity. It's the kids that used to go to Meridian. Well, my daughter goes to Meridian, and that has no diversity. And then Westlake has tons of diversity, so it is kind of fun to talk to parents in Spanish and even like newcomers. I just met a family that's a newcomer recently, and so helped them to get medical help for their daughter because she came into the health office and my Health Aide doesn't speak Spanish. So of course, she calls me. "Come on down and talk to this student." And she told me that she has thyroid problems. And then it turns out, yeah, she has hypothyroidism and so then it's like, "Do you see a doctor yet? Do you have everything?" And she's like, "I do have some from when we came from Mexico," but she's like, "No, I haven't seen anybody here." So I called her mom and her mom came down and we talked about where she should go and you know, like what we can do at the school for her if she needs to come into the health office. So it is really good to have that. You know, like the diversity that there is at Westlake; there's still a lot of affluent families that go there, but there's a good chunk that... It's a good mix. And it's a good mix of Broomfield for sure. And it's an older neighborhood part of this town.. And so it has a long history. And so that's fun, as well.

29:56 David Allison

For sure. So you had mentioned ...that this is kind of skewing off a little bit, but you played flute. Do you still play flute and do your children? Are they involved in music as well? Do they like to play instruments?

30:09 Gina Valdez

Early on, when my son was...he's the oldest one, so I knew I wanted him to get the music ear.. You know, like when you have a good music ear. I don't know how to describe it to people that don't play music. And so, since he was little, I always listened to Frank Sinatra, or there's a lot of research in like, in utero, if you've listened to Mozart, that that really makes an impact. And so that's what I did. I listened to Mozart a lot. And then, when he was little, we listened to a lot of Frank Sinatra, because it's almost like the Beatles. It's very simple, but his voice is, you know, very soothing. So he grew up listening to Frank Sinatra for many years, which is so funny. (Laughter)

And then I put him in Music and Me, and, and we would go together. And we listen to music once a week and we, you know, hear the songs and sing the songs. It's funny, because he does remember a lot of it, which is hysterical. So when, because of the pandemic, they didn't have music at a lot of the schools, including Meridian, and then after the pandemic, they kind of started bringing that back. But at that point, he was in fourth grade. So now, so now a lot of time has passed, right? And the music teacher, you know, she, of course, had choir and she had some percussion and I told him, you're gonna do both, you're gonna do all of it. It's like, okay, and he actually wanted to do it, he enjoys it. Sometimes he just doesn't want to give in to me. You know, he's also like, Yes, I know. And when he was in fifth grade, it was funny, I dropped him off. And he's like, Mommy, I'm going to try out for choir. So pick me

up later, you know, like at 330. I go, "Okay, oh, you didn't tell me you're going to try for choir." And he's like, "Yeah, okay, bye." (Laughter) So then he makes the honors district choir.

32:24 David Allison

Oh, nice.

32:26 Gina Valdez

And so then for middle school, when we were doing the tour the year before, the choir teacher was like, "Oh, I see you're in the honors choir; you gonna do choir in middle school?" And he's like, "no." You can't just say no, you have to tell him why. He's like, "My mom, I have to play an instrument. My mom says I have to be in the band. So I have to be in the band." And so, it was like, God, this sounds awful. So when we were trying out instruments, I let him pick whatever instrument and he chose the trombone. So he's playing the trombone. And he's getting there, he's still learning. I tell him, you have to practice. Remember, I practiced every day. We're just doing drills like, I'll be practicing for 10 minutes, but I did it every day. He's like, Yeah, yeah. So he does little by little, and he's getting up there. But he knows that his future is in the band. So if he ends up going to Legacy, they have a great one. So, it's already all laid out. Because I know he'd do whatever he wants. But I do want him to play, you know, in middle school and in high school, because I think that, like I said, that was probably the number one thing that kept me with that sense of belonging and connections. And yeah, I'm still friends with my band friends from CU. And, I mean, it's just, ...When people think about it, they're like, "Did you enjoy it?" I was like, "oh my god, I loved it. I loved every single part of it." I loved, you know, performing, I loved wearing the whole uniform and traveling on the bus. When I went to CU there was one year when we played at the Aloha Bowl, and we got to go on a military base.

34:30 David Allison

Amazing.

34:31 Gina Valdez

So that was fun. I mean, there were so many trips we did. I was like, I loved every single minute. I was like I would, I don't know, you know, like, when you think about "Would you go back?" and you're like, Wow, no, no. But I'm like, Yeah, I think I would. (Laughter) I wouldn't go back to school, high schools that I know, everybody says the same thing. And everybody says the same thing about middle school. And when people ask my son like, oh, how did you like middle school? Uhh. You're like, Yeah, I hated it. Everybody says that; they're like, I hated Middle School. It's such an awkward time of our lives. It is tough to get yourself out there and all your friends and who you can hang out with. It's just way too... It's like those things that don't matter really, are right in your face. It hurts. You don't know any better.

35:18 David Allison

Exactly.

34:31 Gina Valdez

It's so hard, you know, it's so hard to, to stand up, and be yourself. You know, and as you get old, like I've gotten older, so now I know. I've changed a lot, and I know who I am. And so those things aren't,

you know, that those aren't important things? You kind of learn that it doesn't hurt as much because you know who you are.

35:43 David Allison

Exactly, exactly. Where you stand on that.

35:43 Gina Valdez

Exactly. Yeah. And then you're like, I don't want to be involved in that, or I don't want to take all that much energy into that and then focus on something else.

36:00 David Allison

Yeah, yeah. I'm wondering, I wanted to ask a question kind of about what you see as some of the maybe challenging things or things that you wish were different about Broomfield and then some things maybe that you're excited about for the future? Or that you kind of envision for the future of Broomfield?

36:18 Gina Valdez

You know, what we always say, my husband and I, we always say this, and I know other people that I've talked to, even in the City Council, and that sort of thing, is that Broomfield doesn't have a Main Street, like Lafayette does or Louisville. And obviously Boulder has, you know, that's a whole different city. You know, a city similar to Lafayette, where they have a little Main Street where all their shops are, and they're, you know, places where you go, and not so much chains, but like just little small restaurants that you love going to. That's what's missing. Just little fun little places. And it doesn't even have to be like, a whole Main Street, it could just be almost kind of like a place like this where it's just, you know, like, this in here. Does that make sense? Yeah. Like it doesn't have to be like a long area. And that's what I think is missing. And I know I've had this conversation with other people, like I said, like, city council and that sort of thing. They're like, yeah, that's exactly what's missing. Because we love Broomfield and we would probably spend more time in Broomfield but there's really no places to go. You know, for a good example is the week before Valentine's Day, I had put my daughter in like one of those, like sips and art. But they had it for kids.

37:56 David Allison

Oh, that's fun..

36:18 Gina Valdez

So she did these little Valentine's plaques, so it's like hearts and a little Valentine's gnome. And you know, it's for kids. And so, we took her and her friend and it was from 6:00 to 8:30 and we dropped them off. And this was in, I think, Second Lane, Lafayette. We dropped them off and in that same, I don't know, shopping center, we walked down to a restaurant in Lafayette, right? And I forget what it's called, but it's just this cool little restaurant. There were tons of people there. And that's exactly what is missing. Something like that, where it's kind of like a shopping center, because there's a bunch of other things in there.

38:52 David Allison

But make an evening of it.

38:55 Gina Valde

And that's exactly what we did. So for our Valentine's dinner, we had dinner over there which was, you know, that's exactly what we needed. But we really can't find that here in Broomfield. We do like I- Pie that's over here to take the kids, but that's not really like a date. It's not like a date. We go over there frequently. So that's really what's missing when compared to our surrounding cities, I would say for sure. What was the other part of the question? Oh,

39:37 David Allison

Oh just like, what would you... so I guess you answered the part about the future and some of the things that you wish were in Broomfield. What would make the ideal Broomfield in the future? Are there other pieces to it, too, that you can think of? I even think about, and I'll just throw this in, you haven't mentioned it yet, but the partnership and the thing that you and Madeline do with the library. Just, you know, if that's part of that component like just the cultural diversity in this community, that sort of thing.

40:18 Gina Valdez

Right. I think Broomfield and like, like Lafayette and Louisville, I think they always like to add more cultural pieces. Because I think we know it's important to make that sense of belonging to the community and to the people that live there. So I think Broomfield does a pretty good job of that. There still is probably not as diverse as others, you know, like Lafayette, but I think, for example, Lafayette has a bilingual school, which in Broomfield, we, we don't. Obviously, in Lafayette, it's all Boulder Valley versus in Broomfield, it's, you know, three different school districts. So, I think it's harder. But that's one example of, I think, why they have it and why it's easier for them to incorporate that.

And then, you know, if you think of how we want to see Broomfield, I think it has a good reputation, you know, of just being a good community to live in, overall. We do have our ups and downs, you know, like things that they keep quiet. And I only say that, because I didn't mention this; so during the pandemic, the City Council was like, we should have a health board. Because Broomfield doesn't have a health board, because it's kind of a relatively new city. That, you know, is a city and a county. And so they elected to have a health board. So I applied to be on the health board. And so then I'm on the health board of Broomfield. And that has been interesting to learn about how they do the community assessments. And all of the things about Broomfield that.....it's funny because there was one section I remember in particular, just recently that we were talking about how many people they have found, drunk driving. And it was actually higher than our surrounding cities.

42:37 David Allison

Really? Interesting.

42:38 Gina Valdez

And it's funny because we don't hear about it. And I don't know if it's because Broomfield is good about keeping those things quiet, you know, or what, but I thought that that was really interesting. But also on the flip side of that, it was also during the pandemic, where everybody was at home and, as a community and as a society and as like a whole state. I remember when Governor Polis was, well,

maybe we should close the liquor stores. And we're like, no, everybody collectively was like, "No, that's not gonna happen." Do you remember?

43:13 David Allison

I vaguely remember.

43:14 Gina Valdez

Cuz, I think this measurement, that metric was done on that time, and so now you can think back, now alcohol is available at grocery stores. You know, before, it wasn't even allowed to get alcohol on Sundays. Remember that?

43:34 David Allison

Yep.

43:35 Gina Valdez

And so, a lot of things have changed. Yeah, obviously, that has made an impact. But how much of that has made an impact, not just from the pandemic? But I thought that was interesting, that specific metric, compared to our different other cities around.

43:50 Gina Valdez

But yeah, so I think Broomfield, because it's a City and a County, it can, it has a lot of power to get a lot of things done, that if they want, that is good for the community as a whole. And that, you know, I think slowly they are; for example, there's not a lot of affordable housing. So there's not a lot of transportation, right?

44:19 David Allison

Getting from place to place is really hard on public transportation, you can't do it all.

44:24 Gina Valdez

Exactly. Versus, you know, obviously in Boulder, there's, you know, but even in Louisville and Lafayette, you see buses all the time, but not in Broomfield. So yeah, I think that you can get it done because it is a city and a county and you don't have to talk to different municipalities. You just talk to them, and they're usually in the same building. I think Broomfield has a lot of potential and it's slowly becoming its own, because it is, you know, a fairly new city. It's learning to be, you know, to grow up and be able to reach its full potential.

45:11 David Allison

Yeah. That's wonderful. Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Before we finish up, is there anything else that we didn't talk about or that we missed that we should mention?

45:21 Gina Valdez

No! thought, okay, I forgot about the health board thing.

45:26 David Allison

Yeah. No, that's great to have that in there. And you're still doing it, you're still part of it?

45:31 Gina Valdez

I am on it, I was elected for three years. And almost all the City Council voted for me. It was so cute. It was online, so you could see it. There was a lot of process and you had to go in, and with the last one, you had to go in and talk about yourself. And so I just talked about myself. And of course they loved that. Oh, you're different. You're a different voice.

45:56 David Allison

Absolutely.

45:58 Gina Valdez

You're a different voice. I remember, one of them said that; "You're a different voice because you could hear the same ideas from other people, but you stood out." That was funny, cuz my husband was all proud of me, because he was like, Oh, see, you should run for City Council. I was like, I don't know. I don't know. (Laughter)

46:23 David Allison

I think it's not a bad idea.

46:27 Gina Valdez

He's like, "do you see how easy that was? You should totally do it." I'm like, I don't know. I don't know. Which is funny, because we do love and enjoy politics. So there's a part of me that would be like yeah, but you have to take the plunge on that.

46:45 David Allison

That's exciting to think about, though, and absolutely, very cool. Well, thank you so much, Gina. I really appreciate you coming in and chatting with me today.