

[virtual] Denise _ David oral ... Loud (2023-11-10 11_00 GMT-7)

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David: Hey. Alright Denise, first of all, thank you so much for meeting with me today and

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David: sitting down to share your story a little bit. And I guess I'd first love for you to introduce yourself, just share your name and just a little bit more about yourself.

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Denise: My name is Denise Price. I've been living in Broomfield for 31 years this December. I started out as an elementary school teacher, I taught elementary school for six years in California. And we moved here and then I started doing informal education. So I've worked at the Butterfly Pavilion, the zoo, the aquarium. So I've always been into education.

David comments: And it's fantastic.

01:00

David: Yeah, no, I so I, you know, I'm curious kind of like, what, what are your motivations? Or how did you get into some of that sort of work?

01:07

Denise: Well my master's degree is in environmental education. So that was always a love. When we moved here, I had a nine month old son. And then we adopted my daughter when Devin (son) was 18 months old. So I had two little ones. So working in formal education, I substituted for a while. But working in informal education gave me a chance to be home more. So but also, that's, I don't know, that's just my passion. I love teaching. But informal education is easier because usually the kids want to be there.

01:58

David: Absolutely.

02:06

So when you when we were thinking about kind of stories to highlight and groups that are interesting, you know, one of the things we were thinking about is, you know, the kind of preschool nature walks and some of those things that we were doing at open space, and I was wondering if you could share just a little bit more about that.

02:28

Denise: Okay, so, and I've had to do some thinking to remember back that far. So this year, we have been doing the nature program for 29 years. So next year will be our 30th year. You know, I was, I was a young mom, I had little kids in the house. So I was looking for things to do. So one of the things I did was do a training class for Boulder County Parks, Boulder County Parks and Open Space, and became a volunteer naturalist with them. So at some point, I met Ellie McKinley, which I'm sure you know, Ellie.

David: Yes.

Denise: Okay. So and I'm not sure exactly how we met or how it started. But it's funny because I talked to Ellie last night and I found, found out something and I guess it's no longer secret because I'm going to tell you, she originally did her training with Boulder County Park and Open Space only because she wanted to be able to do that in Broomfield. So she did her training. I did my training sometime after that, and then she's like, okay, you know, there's absolutely no reason we can't have a program in (*Broomfield*). You seem distracted. You need to do something else.

04:14

David: No, no, please. Good.

04:17

So, so Ellie was the catalyst. She was like, okay, Broomfield needs a nature program. So she ran it for a couple of years. And so that would have been like 1995. Then she passed it on to me, and subsequently Karen Steele. So the funny thing again, that I did not know was Ellie just assumed we would run it for a couple years and then pass it on to somebody else. But she didn't tell me that. So 30 years later, they're still doing it.

04:57

David: Wow. Wow. That's amazing.

05:02

Denise: So, Karen and I met through a babysitting Co-Op with the Broomfield Methodist Church. So I would watch her kids, she would watch my kids, we would watch other people's kids, but that's how we became friends. And so after I had taken the training with Boulder County Parks and Open Space, she took the training with Boulder County Parks and Open Space. And that's how we kind of both fell into it. It's a funny story. Do you know John Ferraro?

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David: I do not. I know, Melanie.

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Denise: So when I first saw the (*different family*), that when I first started working with the City, Paul Durda was director. Bob Prince was assistant director and John Ferrara was headed the Parks and Rec Department. So he, Nancy Ferraro, his wife is also a volunteer with us. And she told us that John came

home one night and he goes, these ladies in the city want to start a nature program. Because there's no way anybody's ever going to come. It's going to be a flop. And so now, almost 30 years later, it wasn't a flop. You know, came but it was just funny that we had no idea that they doubted us from the beginning that didn't think that it would happen. But you know, especially with the preschool walks, it only takes one mother and she talks to somebody else, and they talk to somebody else. And that's how we get our kids.

David: Amazing.

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David:: Yeah, it's kind of that word of mouth. And people hear about it and are excited about it. And then waned to keep it going. I think that's amazing.

07:00

Denise: Yeah, we've never, you know, discriminated. If we know somebody is from Westminster or Erie, whereve, we don't care. You know, it's just whoever comes. So, yeah, we've, we've seen a lot of kids through the years, you know, because we average 500 to 800 people a year with all our programs.

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David: That's amazing. One of the things that I remember seeing on the form that you filled out was a story about Josh's pond and a snake.

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Denise: Yes. So that was so there's actually a couple snake stories from Josh's pond.

David: All right.

Denise: Karen was doing a program one time and she can fill this in more, but a snake fell on her. In the middle of the program. I was doing one, one time on the little dock. And I had all the kids sitting down. And this snake decided to go right through the middle of the kids. Oh, no, it was like the parting of the Red Sea. And like, okay, you know it, and I wasn't, I was more afraid that somebody was gonna hurt the snake. I knew the snake wasn't gonna hurt the kids. So, yeah, we've had some interesting wildlife experiences through the years. One of the other ones that I remember, you know, when Karen and I started when all of us started, you know, we had little kids. So we had, the kids (*our kids*) were there. They were just part of it. And we had a volunteer call in her name was Alyssa **Alliance**. And I, she was doing the program, and I had her little guy in a stroller. And so I was entertaining him while she was doing the program. So I took a little side path at Josh's pond, and I saw all this fishing line. So I'm like, well, that's not good. I gotta get that out of there. So I'm pulling this fishing line in and there was painted turtle at the end of it. Oh, wow. We ended up rescuing a painted turtle. So just things like that. Denise: You know, Ellie's reason for starting it was she wanted to get people out to our open spaces. When I started we had three open spaces. It's amazing to me how much we have grown since then.

09:53

David: Absolutely. It's amazing to see and to think about just the the range of open space so is really throughout Broomfield in a really interesting way. It's really great.

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Yeah. I mean, we had. We had Westlake, which at that time it was Westlake before it was Alex and Michael's Pond. We had the 10th Avenue Pond. And we had Josh's Pond. And that was it. Yeah. So. But still, when we we tried to. When we set the schedule for the programs, we tried to get as many of our open spaces on as possible. So people are visiting them all. And we still have families that are like, Oh, I didn't even realize this pond was here.

10:46

David: Yeah, I think that's such a testament. I mean, there's just a lot to explore and to do and Broomfield and I think open space is such a key part of it. So yeah, any other any other stories or anything else from your experience in Broomfield that you wanted to share?

11:05

Denise: Oh, let's see. I will have to think about that for a minute.

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Denise: It's it's funny seeing how it's changed. One of the things that in this isn't a story. But one of the things that makes me sad is when when we first started doing it, we had all these beautiful cottonwood trees. And you know, and in some of them died. But the thing about those cottonwood trees is if you wanted to look for bald eagles, that's where you looked. So unfortunately, because of just politics, you know, we've had to take out some of those old trees, or they've just fallen. So I think that's changed, you know, some of the, you know, the bald eagles are still here. But I think they're a little bit harder to find. You know, we have, we had a program at Metzger, not very long ago, and one of the parents had her youngest there. But she also had her oldest child there. And she was getting ready to go to college. And she told us, they told us that she remembers when her mom used to bring her to the programs. And that that is a memory of hers. And you know why she has the interest that she has. There's another committee and again, Karen knows the names better than I do. But I think it's BOSAC , that there's a youth member there that used to go to our programs, you know, I will, you know, go into a restaurant or you know, I've gone into a restaurant before and see kids, and it's like, Miss Denise, what are you doing here?, you know, that kind of thing. So, you know, we've got kids in our Friday kids classes that, you know, our Friday kids classes are like six years to 12 years, and they're turning 13. And they're like, you know, we can't go anymore. And it's like, well, you can still go because I can do whatever I want, I can tell them that you can go tell your 13 Now, that's but they're just you know, the faces that just come back over and over and over. So that's nice.

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David: For sure. It really shows the impact to over time when you have those experiences of somebody coming back and saying, Hey, what, what we did back then, what you were able to talk to us about may have made an impact on me, that's pretty cool to be able to see that. That's wonderful.

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Denise: And I had one of we had a family mom in and two boys and they came every you know, to every preschool program. They were always decked out with their vests and their magnifying glasses. And one of the boys recently came back and was a helper for kids. He's way too old for the preschool program now.

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David: That's but that's great. You know, just being able to help out however you can't just because you love it so much. You want to be there you want to be around it. Yeah, that's a really cool impact.

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Denise: So you know um, I think that, one of the best things about it is that it's never been a job. You know, it's always been from the sheer joy of being out there with the kids and, you know, connecting with the families and, you know, having those experiences. We were. (laughs) We were at our fishing derby in September, and we found a little snake. So snakes will all you know, they're born, they're born in a hole, but then they will go back to that hole. And that's where they hibernate over the winter. And so we found one of those. And you would have thought that we had found gold that we kept going back (to that hole) and, you know, tried to find the snakes. So we're just nerd. So fun.

16:04

David: So fun. I'm curious if there are other aspects of how Broomfield has changed over time and the time you've been in Broomfield that you wanted to kind of comment on or things that you see coming in the future, maybe that you're excited about or nervous about, you know, just if you have any thoughts on those, those things?

16:22

Denise: Well, it's interesting, when we started the program, when the program was started, there was no open space department. So at the beginning, even when Kristan (Pritz) came in, you know, she was a one woman show. So we kind of stayed under the umbrella of the Parks and Rec Department, you know, so they, you know, they're the ones that, you know, made sure the schedule went into, you know, the Broomfield catalog, or whatever it is. But as the years have progressed, we were all under Kristen's umbrella now. And, you know, despite the story with John Ferrara, they have been so incredibly supportive. And, you know, we, you know, it's kind of mostly it's financially been backed by us volunteers. But through the years, depending upon who it was that worked with the city, I remember Dana Cabot used to do like, she would get grants for us than we would get stuff. So almost 30 years later, we have an unbelievable amount of stuff, you know, from skulls to pelts to, I've got a whole file folder, you know, three drawer four drawer file folder full of just information on the progress that we've done. So I know this isn't answering your question, but our hope, someday, is that we will have nature maybe a nature ag. facility, and we'll be able to, you know, you know, this is this is our dream is maybe having it at Metzger. So hoping that all this stuff will at some point that lives in my house and Karen's house, and also our houses will sometime have a home. And, you know, a new generation of people will you know, take on the nature program and keep it going.

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David: It's fantastic. Yeah.

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Denise: We seek to be appreciated. We had a this year and I don't know how she found out about it, but a lady in a mom's group, and I don't know if they've like, like planning activity, and then all the moms show up. But like our first preschool walk this year, we had all these mothers from this mother group. And it was wonderful because they you know, followed us all through the summer and into the fall. So you know, we got some new new kiddos that way. So yeah, we've been through a lot a lot of kids.

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David: It's amazing.

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Denise: But you know, I guess as far as the changes to Broomfield I mean, there's no question that Broomfield has grown tremendously but I It's a testament to Kristan and the open space department that, you know, they have made sure that our open spaces have kept up with the growth of Broomfield. And like you said, you know, they're all over the county now. You know, I remember when we went from a city to a county. And, you know, that's that's been a fantastic part of Broomfield, you know, I, there's so many people that come here, you know that we meet from other places that have moved here. And you know, talk about our trail system and everything like that, you know, I take for granted that I can go out and I can walk. And then I go someplace else. And it's like, well, where are the trails?

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David: What can I do here? Yeah,

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Denise: I'm happy to walk on the sidewalk. Oh, there's no sidewalk, you know. So Broomfield is a special place, I think.

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David: Yeah, that's really true. I think I love that. Thank you so much for sharing that. Denise, is there anything that we missed or anything that you wanted to make sure to share before we finish up today?

21:23

Well, I think that, you know, I think it would be important. And I'm throwing Karen under the bus because I did not fill out the form for you. Karen filled out the form for you. For me. I'm throwing Karen under the bus. And I think she if she had time, and her schedule would be another good one to talk to. And Ellie McKinley, without a doubt would be good to talk to.

21:57

David: Absolutely, yes. I have already spoken with Karen, which is great. And it was a lovely conversation. I really appreciated that I'm getting to know a little bit more about her and what she's

been doing in the community, which is really amazing. And I think to myself, I don't know how she has enough hours in the day to do all the things she's doing. But, but be you know, yes. Ellie McKinley is another one for sure. I was able to go on the I was part of the two ponds and a reservoir program we did back in September. Got to see her at that it was just delightful. She's really a delight. So I hope I can have that chance to..

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Denise: She is, I mean, I've known her for 30 years, and I still don't know all of the little things she started.

David: Yeah.

Denise: There is no question that Broomfield without people like Ellie would be a completely different place.

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Absolutely. And it always comes down to the people to write that there's, you know, it's nothing about the geography of the place, or the you know, the structures and the things that are there, but it really is the people and that's such a good reminder. Thank you for that, Denise.

Denise: Absolutely.

David: All right, well, hey, I really appreciate it. What I'm going to do is follow up by sending you a permission form to use the oral history to add it to our history collection. And we'd love to do that, we'll transcribe the interview and then add it on to our into our collection. So I'll send that your way here pretty soon. But in the meantime, I really appreciate you chatting with you today.

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David: It was a delight.

Denise: I think we've met before was very nice to see you again.

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David: Yes, likewise. All right. I hope you have a great rest of your day.