

Dave _ Pauline, Broomfield Out...rview (2023-12-14 14_04 GMT-7)

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broomfield, feel, thailand, library, spend, denver, colorado, colorado springs, school, parents, work, pauline, community, family, chicago, live, taxidermy, thought, home, connection

00:03 Davud Allison

That is not a real chicken. There's a lady in town who takes feathers off of real chickens, and then creates taxidermy style. But they're a little less realistic than taxidermy, because they're like felt and that sort of thing.

00:22 Pauline N

They're kinda cool

00:25 Davud Allison

Yeah, they are very cool and there are a couple more of the depot because we actually have a nesting box over there.

00:33 Davud Allison

So, Pauline, thank you so much for chatting with me today. I really appreciate it. And I would love to have you start just by kind of introducing yourself and sharing just a little bit more about yourself to start?

00:42 Pauline N

Sure. I'm Pauline. I am a librarian at the Broomfield Library and my focus there is programming and programming for mostly adults. I have experience with some work with teens as well. But right now, primarily, I'm coordinating and facilitating events for older adult community.

01:11 Davud Allison

Fantastic. Can you tell me just a little bit more about your background? Like where did you grow up? And why did you end up in Colorado? Or how did you end up in Colorado?

01:22 Pauline N

Sure, yeah. I was born and raised in Chicago. I spent all of my youth there through high school, both in the city; my parents owned a restaurant in Lincoln Park. And then, we had a home in the North Shore, so a suburb of Chicago. So I spent most of my time in between those two neighborhoods, which was nice, and it was very different. And, embarrassingly, what brought me here to Colorado was, I finished

high school, I didn't really have a firm grasp of what I wanted to do, or what I saw myself, the purpose. So I followed a boyfriend here.

02:08 Pauline N.

And I was accepted to a few different schools. I was accepted to the school in Durango, Fort Lewis, and also at Metro State in Denver, and then the school, the CU campus in Colorado Springs. And so before accepting the school, my parents and I came to Colorado to check out the different facilities, the campus, and particularly for them, the lodging and the dorms. And it turned out that the Colorado Springs campus had this incredible facility, it was still quite small. I believe it was about 6000 students at the time and I was coming from a high school of 4000 students. So, it felt familiar. And with none of my family, being from Colorado or familiar with the state at all, it was the first time we visited. My parents were really reluctant for me to stay in the city. So we agreed, Alright, Colorado Springs is going to be most suitable both for school and for just the socialization and safety, they wanted to be sure that I was focusing on school.

03:35 Pauline N.

Although, every time I say it, I'm so embarrassed that I followed a boy here. You know, we didn't last very long, but it was one of the best decisions I made. And it's kept me here. I've been here since.

03:54 Davud Allison

Yeah. So did you have an idea when you started school that you wanted to kind of work in libraries, that sort of thing? Or what was the.....

04:04 Pauline N.

Absolutely not

04:06 David Allison

So tell me the path.

04:07 Pauline N.

So my undergraduate degree is in women's studies and race and ethnic studies.

04:14 Pauline N.

I love sociology, I was fortunate to be able to attend some intro to sociology courses, specialized courses in high school. So that was the track that I wanted to pursue without really knowing, what am I going to do with it? How is it gonna finance my life? and I felt that way all the way through graduation.

04:39 Pauline N.

Upon graduation, I spent a few months in Thailand just to feel out something different, find out a path for myself. And then, I came back and I came back and worked. I worked at a small business as a buyer for a few years in Colorado Springs.

05:00 Pauline N.

So I returned to the college city. And in about 2008, my mom said, "Hey, what are you doing with your life?" And I said, I'm not really sure. You know, I'm barely making it financially. I don't feel much of a purpose. And she was a nurse, was in medicine quite a bit and that was fulfilling for her, and she said, "Why don't you try nursing school?"

05:32 Pauline N

Okay, reluctantly said, Okay. I got accepted to the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs nursing school, did it for two weeks; and, I came home and was just in tears, because it just didn't feel like a fit for me. And my roommate at the time, she said, "Pauline, you spend all of your free time at the library, What does it take to work there?"

06:03 Pauline N.

And that just hit me so deeply, and instilled in me some kind of like, oh, this is a pathway that seems realistic, seems like something I can enjoy, even without really knowing what the course content would be like, or where I would find work. And so, at the time, the only accredited in-person school in Colorado, was at the University of Denver.

06:34 Pauline N.

I knew I wanted to stay in Colorado. That was like, number one. And then I knew I wanted to pursue the library degree. And so I applied, and then about half a year later, I was accepted and started school in 2009.

06:53 David Allison

Wow. So there are a couple of things I wanted to follow up on. One was, you had mentioned that your family had a restaurant in the Chicago area, but then your mother is also a nurse. So was it a change in career? Or was it at the same time?

07:09 Pauline N.

it was at the same time.

07:11 David Allison

Wow,

07:12 Pauline N.

I mean, I am so fortunate to have parents who really sacrificed everything, their time, their money, their dreams. Both my parents worked full time in the day, my dad was an electrical engineer for just a large corporation and my mom was a dialysis nurse. And then in the evening time, after school, they'd come pick me up, we'd go get the groceries from a store, and then head on to the restaurant, and then at 11 o'clock, we'd go back home, and start the day over again. So they were.... I only saw them work for a long, long time.

07:58 David Allison

Then you'd mentioned the trip between school and your job, to Southeast Asia. Did you have family that you were visiting? Or was it kind of just a trip to....

08:14 Pauline N.

Yeah, I was really fortunate growing up, my parents, during the summer breaks, they would send me over to Thailand, say a frequency of about every other year, every two summers. And once I was of age enough, high school, they'd send me on my own, but prior to that, they'd fly there with me, then I'd stay there for two months with family and then come back. Somebody would come back and pick me up or I'd fly back. And on both sides of my family, my parents come from a large number of siblings. So it was a drastic difference in family dynamics. It was just the three of us at home here in Chicago, and then there was 50 of us in Thailand. I sort of had to just develop those relationships myself; it allowed me to learn the language and so I felt a nice connection that way. And so when the opportunity came for me to spend more time there after school, after finishing my first degree, it was very comfortable and felt sort of like coming home.

09:27 David Allison

Yeah, it's great having those connections over time. So you had mentioned when we talked earlier about your initial perception of Broomfield and so, I'm curious about your career trajectory and after you got your degree in library science, then kind of where that took you and what that journey was like.

09:56 Pauline N.

(laughter) Oh, gosh, I mean, our lives are always so interconnected, right? And Broomfield was really unknown to me, especially in graduate school. I didn't come to Broomfield often.

10:14 Pauline N.

But, at the time, my best friend who we went to undergraduate school together, we were just acquaintances then. And then, I finished school, he finished school and we both found ourselves in Colorado Springs, with her social circles away. And so, we became really close. And then when I went to pursue a graduate degree, he was in Steamboat. And partway through my time in library school, he's like, "Oh, I'm moving back to Denver. We should hang out." Like totally cool, you know, we're really great friends, we got along so well. He's from Broomfield. And I'm trying to think back now, the only connection I really had to Broomfield was in knowing that he was born and raised there. Oh, that's where your family is from, when we drive past it on the way to Boulder.

11:24 Pauline N.

Turns out, about one year into library school, I'd taken an internship over the winter break to Thailand to do an internship in Bangkok. And we kept in touch. And he said, "Oh, who's picking you up from the airport when you get home?" I said, "Oh, I'm not really sure. I was just going to take the cab; hadn't really thought about it." My boyfriend at the time hadn't initiated any help, or, you know, wanted to share that load. And so, he said, "Well, why don't I pick you up? We'll just go eat at the Blue Bonnet in Denver, the Mexican restaurant that we really enjoy and then we'll just like hang out, I'm sure you're gonna be tired." I said, "yeah, that sounds great. You know, that's so thoughtful." And like, within a week of returning from that trip, I recognized that I love this person. I want this person in my life and I guess he'd been holding it in for a long, long time, too. And I told him, and I settled things with my current boyfriend. We dated immediately, hit it off. I mean, we're best friends. It's so wonderful to spend that time together. So then I finish out my degree, it's another eight months, and I still don't know what I

want to do. I know what I want to do in libraries. My track was in academic libraries and all my internships were in academic spaces. And graduation came and he goes, "Hey, there's a sub position open at the Broomfield Library. In the interim, why don't you try that out?" And I thought to myself, public library, I just, that's not really me. I don't see a fit. I don't know how to serve the public well. But, I applied; I had nothing else in line.

13:41 Pauline N.

And you know, fortunate for me, unfortunate for the staff, there was someone who was on medical leave. So I got a number of substitute hours. And then, following that another staff person went on maternity leave. So then they asked me to, you know, do more sub hours, I was feeling like, well, I'm nearly part time here for the summer and into the fall.

14:13 Pauline N.

Then in December 2012, I applied for the full time position for an adult librarian at Broomfield library and I didn't get it, and I was devastated. I thought, What am I going to do now? I do like this community and I don't mind being a public librarian.

14:31 Pauline N

So a few weeks go by, and then, at the time, there were two team services managers, and they came up to me and they said, "Hey, we've been looking for a Team Services Librarian. It's not full time. It's 32 hours. Is that something you would consider?" And I thought, ah, teens I don't know.

14:56 Pauline N

I'm so awkward and I am not really sure what programmer does, you know like, Are you sure you really want me? And like, that's wonderful. I'm so glad that you approached me for it and said, "Yeah, sure, I'll try it out." In my head. I thought I want to pursue full time, but 32 hours is still gonna get me where I need to be. And from that time onward, I've been with the Broomfield library. Yeah.

15:25 David Allison

So tell me just a little bit more about the kind of the work that you do and what is it about, especially, because it seems like your background training was more academic libraries and that kind of that side of things, like working with the public, and I know you you work with kind of all different age ranges, that sort of thing, and you have worked with different age ranges. What does that kind of look like over time for you, and how has that changed your kind of approach to the public, maybe?

16:01 Pauline N

I remember starting off being so insecure. Now I know how to work systems and software, I know how to teach the tools. But I didn't really have a good grasp on the learning styles, or the compassion piece, the patience piece, that's required in working in this role. And I feel like that's what's developed. And that's really where my heart is, that's what brings me the joy and my connection at work. Every day is helping to help another person feel confident, like I was able to get there, you can get there, we can get there together.

16:57 Pauline N

And so now, it's not so much about the tools and how do you do this? And like, what am I doing wrong, or this technology or device is giving me trouble, it's more about the person and feeling out like what really is going on. I don't have to say I see that you're frustrated, we both see that; we both kind of feel that through the engagement. And so I've been able to, I guess, refine myself and my relationships with others, both in the public and personally, just through the work.

17:37 David Allison

Super cool. And it feels like, that kind of aligns with, you know, how institutions like museums and libraries have changed also, trying to focus more on how can we meet the needs of the public? And what are the things, the connection points that people have in their lives? Libraries, public institutions are definitely among those. Yeah, I love that.

18:07 David Allison

What are some of the, maybe I don't know, challenges of the community or things that have been, you know, difficult as you get to know Broomfield? You've been here for a little while now, so just you know, yeah, what is Broomfield like?

18:26 Pauline N

Yeah. Actually, something that comes to mind is the scale and size of our community. I mean, it's so different from when I started in both the size that we are in the population, the number of people we're serving, and also the look of the people who are coming into our space, into our shared spaces.

18:56 Pauline N

I still see, you know, a lot of young families and a lot of retirees that's always been really quite stable. But now I just get to see a little bit different variety of where people are in life. And then that scalability piece, you know, we're still that same size, we're still relatively the same size of staff, even though the community around us is just so much greater.

19:27 Pauline N

And, to be able to still provide that service, that care, despite that struggle, it's been interesting to watch. It's been really rewarding and frustrating.

19:46 David Allison

Yeah. It's definitely, geographically how far flung the community is now, too. interesting. What gives you hope, though, or what gets you excited about the community?

20:01 Pauline N

Number one, the people, the conversations that I get to have. I'm not here to make these big, sweeping, impactful changes. That's just never been my style. But, I love being able to have that conversation one on one with folks, even if it's just the one time they're passing through Broomfield

20:28 Pauline N

Being at the library, particularly at the reference desk, I get to observe people in their habitat; it's like the ultimate sociological observation and experiment and I get to be both observer and participant in it

20:50 Pauline N

It's that curiosity piece, that nosy piece, that I get to fulfill in my work.(laughter)

21:06 David Allison

What I just wanted to say, what a beautiful story about your husband.

21:21 Pauline N

Yeah, yeah, it worked out so well. You know, when we first started, we were just friends like I said. I was never in Broomfield, rarely in Broomfield, and now his parents live in Broomfield, his sisters live in Broomfield. So I'm here all the time outside of work. I'm here, you know, having dinner and here, it's the holidays. And Broomfield truly is my second home now without me ever having anticipated that.

21:55 Pauline N

So I just feel really lucky to have both facets, both being a staff person and a community member.

22:06 Pauline N

I get to hear from from our users who have lived here, who are just passing by; I've been really fulfilled

22:22 David Allison

I'm just thinking too, it's such a wonderful place to be where you're able to live, work and know people. So, and then are your parents still in Chicago?

22:44 Pauline N

No, so in 2003, they separated and divorced. My dad came out to Colorado for a little bit. He tried to open a restaurant in Colorado Springs for a bit and then saw that wasn't really what he wanted to do. He was already retired at full retirement age at that time. And so now he actually spends his time, all across the US depending on what he wants to do.

23:17 Pauline N

He had a health scare a few years ago. So I was able to take some leave from work and be with him; and at the time, he was living with my cousin in Atlanta.

23:28 Pauline N

And then, when he was in recovery, he came to live with my husband and I in Denver. He fully recovered and then decided, oh, I want to live in Virginia with family friends. So he did that for a little bit, little bit being like eight months. So now, my cousin has relocated to Seattle. So he'll spend his time a few months in Seattle. He was just recently here in Denver, but then it got a little cold, so he went back to Seattle. And then, usually in the summer springtime, he'll spend time back in Virginia. So he's all over the place.

24:09 Pauline N

My mom, after Davis and I got engaged, she was at a retirement age as well. She was just reaching that time in her life. And she was like, "Well, I'd like to plan a wedding for you all in Thailand. So I'm

going to do my year of travel And then I'll end up in Thailand. I'll meet you over there." And she thought, well, Thailand is going to be temporary, or like part time. I'll spend six months here and six months living with you. That's great. That's a great idea. Within a year, she reconnected with a classmate of hers from middle school, and they married within six months. She hasn't been back. So that was 2015 when she finally settled in Thailand and married.

25:00 Pauline N

So we get to go see her and stay with them quite a bit, but she's like," No, leave my room for somebody else who needs it,you know; like I'm super happy in my ranch there." So she's still in Thailand, traveling quite a bit in Southeast Asia.

25:17 David Allison

Thank you again.

25:21 Pauline N

Yeah, thanks, David.