



INTERVIEW WITH DIANA ALGRA – JUNE 27, 2012

Our State of Generosity, a project of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy (JCP) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), in partnership with the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC), and GVSU Libraries' Special Collections & University Archives present:

An interview with Diana Algra on June 27, 2012. Conducted by Kathryn Agard, primary author and interviewer for *Our State of Generosity*. Recorded at the Johnson Center for Philanthropy in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This interview is part of a series in the project, *Our State of Generosity* (OSoG). OSoG is a partnership of scholars, practitioners, and funders from four institutions – the Johnson Center; CMF; MNA; and MCSC – that collectively form the backbone of the state's philanthropic, voluntary, and nonprofit infrastructure. OSoG's mission is to capture, preserve, analyze, and share the developments, achievements, and experience that, over a period of 40 years, made Michigan a State of Generosity.

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Abridged: The following interview has been edited to assist readability. Extraneous verbal pauses and informal personal conversation not related to the topic of Michigan philanthropy have been deleted. Footnotes to the transcript have been added clarifying any factual errors in the memory of the person interviewed.

Text of the interview questions are as asked. Individuals interviewed have had the opportunity to add or edit their answers in order to provide their most accurate answers to the questions. For these reasons, the edited transcript may not exactly reflect the recorded interview.

Kathy Agard (KA): Okay so, here we go. You have played roles in the Michigan Community Service Commission, the Council on Michigan Foundations, the Michigan Nonprofit Association and some with the Johnson Center on Philanthropy (and you are one of those people who have had relationships with all, and in many cases has started some of these). Tell us a little bit about these.

Diana Algra (DA): Sure. And one that you forgot was the Michigan Campus Compact, which also dealt with civic engagement and higher education. I have been very fortunate; I think I was at the right place at the right time. I'm trying to think back when we started this, it could have been in the '80s when we began the work. For me, I have had an opportunity to really interact with some

really great people in the state. I have had an opportunity also to see people that used to work for me, that I work for now. And that is really a great to see life come full circle for me.

I had [00:01:00] one of my great opportunities (really when you are looking at this particular segment of the population that you want to deal), I got the opportunity to be the first Executive Director of the Michigan Community Service Commission [MCSC]. That was done under Governor Engler when there was a lot of new legislation that had been passed at the federal level and the Corporation for National Service was formed; and so each state, if they wanted to access those federal dollars, needed to create a state commission. Michigan was a little bit ahead of the time and we created [MCSC], right before the legislation was passed, knowing that that was going to be critical for us. Our governor, I think, always thought ahead. His wife was very gracious and so we were very fortunate to have the First Lady chair the commission; and we were also very strategic about who we placed on the commission at that point.

We had a lot of the great leaders in the philanthropic community, (Dottie Johnson, we had interaction with Joel), we had people from business, [00:02:00] (Terry Pruitt from Dow came), so we had a lot of great people that really understood what it was to be engaged civically and how volunteerism (or volunteering in a community) really enhances what you do with the money that you have to address community needs. We were first.

We were also very willing to take risks, which I think is really important in this field and I think is something that I learned in looking at how the Kellogg Foundation took risks all their years in the beginning. I was always very proud to say that I was a grantee of the Kellogg Foundation, because I always felt that – especially when they were dealing with national organizations that wanted to have a presence or a project – Kellogg always wanted a project in Michigan. “We will give you money but where's your Michigan touch point,” and that for us gave us an opportunity to really interact with some great national organizations in this field specifically (Youth Service America, the Constitutional Rights Foundation in San Francisco [00:03:00] and YLC). There were a number of them that really were all looking at engaging individuals, whether they were in K-12, higher-ed or as adults in the community, so we were very fortunate to have that.

(KA): Remind me which one came first, Campus Compact or the Commission?

(DA): Campus Compact came first in Michigan because I did that first before I went to the Commission.

(KA): Can you tell us the story about how that began?

(DA): Campus Compact began probably, I am trying to think, it could've been in the '80s. I'm trying to think nationally; it was a movement that was housed very early on at Brown University and Susan Stroud was its first national director. At that point it was institutions across the country,



whether it was two or four year institutions, public or private, whose presidents felt that, a sense of civic duty and also felt that instilling that civic duty in their students was critical and should be part of higher education. They also felt a commitment, not just to their students, but also to their faculty and their staff, [00:04:00] and their relationship that that institution could have with the community where that institution was housed. That was critical. It wasn't for the institution to do research, let's say, on civic engagement and keep it to itself, but how do we interact with the community; how does our research or our work or are teaching impact the community and also, how can we take our knowledge and learning and skills in our students and try to address those issues in the community – not issues that we think are important, but issues that the community thinks are important. So how can we mesh that? So when Campus Compact nationally wanted to say, "Hmmm, can we do this at a state level?"

Back then John Marshall, who was at the Kresge Foundation (I think was involved with the national Campus Compact), said, "maybe we could do that in Michigan." We were very fortunate, with his leadership here, that he convened a group of individuals; we had John Marshall, we had Dan Poteet from Albion College (was the Provost there), we had Joe Orosz, we had Dr. MaryLee Davis at MSU. Those were sort of the, I would call, [00:05:00] back room guys that kind of were saying, "How we do this here, how do we implement that here?"

We were very fortunate too, that Kellogg felt really strongly about the position as did Kresge. Kresge used one of their own staff members to create the first proposal that went into Kellogg to say "how do we take and match our things? Match the institutions. Who could be our inner circle of institutions that are willing to come forward?" So we were very lucky that early on we had ten institutions – we had community colleges, we had private institutions, we had four year institutions – and their presidents were very, very committed to the initiative. Actually what happened in the country was that the State of Michigan, California and Pennsylvania all established Campus Compact within months of each other.

Now, we were the most fortunate, because we had the Kellogg Foundation funding and support and probably, at that time, because membership into the association required a large financial commitment on the part of the institutions [00:06:00] and back then Michigan's financial commitment from the colleges was fairly high. We were the highest, plus we had the grant. Pennsylvania based all of its things on the, what we would call, dues structure that they established and they struggled a bit, too. Then California had such a huge system in California and they also had support, I think it was, from the Hewlett Foundation in California. There are a number of them that provided support and their dues were much less because they had so many institutions to partner with, but we all came together to say that this is something that is very possible today.

There were three when we started, today there is about 40 state compacts around the nation all supporting the same work. So I think that laid in Michigan a foundation for us to consider



because it was during the compact years that there was stuff happening in DC talking about – back then it was called the Commission on National and Community Service. [00:07:00] What they were doing, they were doing some what we would call demonstration projects. Michigan was able to reap some rewards from that, taking in some. We did a major expansion in Michigan on the youth volunteer corps model that had come out of Kansas City and we were able also to fund some other, what we would call, youth corps (because at that time we had also, probably the year before, lost all of our youth corps in Michigan). We were one of the big states in the early years that really did a lot with youth corps and helping individuals from inner-city to take an opportunity to see new ways to get involved in their communities, giving back to their communities – mostly in an environmental setting, but it was really wonderful for those individuals that had that opportunity.

During the time that I was at Campus Compact, the whole legislation passed at the federal level and the commission was being formed in Michigan. Honestly, I was not the first person that was thought about for the position. There was another individual that the First Lady reached out to and that individual did not; so then they called me and said [00:08:00] “Do you want to try this?” I said well...I was very frank with her, I said, “Who didn’t want it to begin with?” She goes, yes, so she told me who it was and he was a great guy, we all worked very closely with him too, but at this point in time in his life, he didn't want to necessarily take on that. I said, “Oh sure, why not?”

And so we did it. It was really wonderful. We had a lot of flexibility and we were also very fortunate at the time of starting our state commission, that while it was myself and another staff member, the Points of Light Foundation at that time had instituted the Yes Ambassador program. We were fortunate in Michigan to get two young individuals who were assigned to us, funded by the Points of Light Foundation, to give sort of that, what I would consider, youth voice perspective which was wonderful, which was what we wanted. They did a lot of foundation work for us in getting out the word, and talking about what the commission would do and helping us sort of lay the first level of grantwriting that we needed done (mini applications to communities to get involved in the process). So they really worked very hard. [00:09:00] A couple of those Yes Ambassadors, and Michigan was very fortunate we had many of them in our state... Cynthia Share was one of the first ambassadors, she went to be one of the Vice Presidents of the Points of Light Foundation; now she lives in Australia. [Trey] was another first one and he's with a foundation right now – it might be in the district, but I'm not sure. But they all of had great opportunities and have taken leadership roles in the field of nonprofits, which we all should be very proud of.

(KA): How did you come to that job to Campus Compact and why do you think it worked?

(DA): I was fortunate, too, that when the opening was advertised in the faculty/staff bulletin at Michigan State University, I was heading up the division of women’s programs on campus. So I was an MSU employee already and I had been working there for about nine years doing women's programming (we dealt with women faculty, [00:10:00] staff and students and things like that). I



had also come to the realization back then, at that point, that I needed to leave a field that only saw you either because you were a woman or because you were a minority (because that was the perspective that they wanted you to bring to the field). That was all well and good, but I said, there has to be more than me having a woman's voice for this, and not that lobbying for women's issues was not critical, it was, but I had done that for nine years and I said, well what I have to do? Let me put my application in, what could happen? I was very fortunate too that Dr. Mary Lee Davis, who had been working on the Campus Compact piece, had also been an individual that I reported to because she worked within the Vice President of business administration (which is where the working woman on campus was represented by a woman's commission there). I had, okay I'll try. I got interviewed; she wasn't the only person, I had Joel interview me and Dan Poteet did, too. [00:11:00] It was great to see that opportunity and I thought, I think I can do this. I was always willing to say, I think I can do this and I know that if I can't, I will be honest with you and say I can't. But I think it worked out really well and we had great support.

I think when we went from Campus Compact to the Commission, the Commission was so supportive and they realized that we would have a number of years where our numbers may not necessarily grow because you need to establish a foundation. We were very fortunate too, with the money from Kellogg we were able to quickly institute sort of mini grants (what we called venture grants) to the campuses so that they could see a return on their investment. So they could get faculty engaged to say "Is there something I can do to my class, modify my class to bring more service learning pedagogy to how I teach;" or we could have student groups who say "You know, we would love to do this student project, how can we get some small resources to do that?" Those venture grants that we started in the beginning are still going today. That is a long time when you think; it has been over 20 years that Campus Compact has been in Michigan and so has the Commission [00:12:00] been in Michigan – and has been, I think, very instrumental in bringing the right people to the table and continuing to nurture those that may have gone but are still connected in their own communities to realize that they were, what I would call, the front and center people for us in the very beginning.

(KA): So Campus Compact continues, is it in your suite of work? Tell us about what it is like now.

(DA): Sure. Over the course of time, both Campus Compact and the Volunteer Centers of Michigan (which also has a 20 year history in our state) used to be associated with the Michigan Nonprofit Association. Then we were very fortunate for a short period of time to create the ConnectMichigan Alliance, another nonprofit that took pieces of things that were working within the Michigan Nonprofit Association or within the Michigan Community Service Commission and said "Let's put some of these things that, while they still have focus within both MNA and the Commission, they might be better off if they were working more collegially or more closer [00:13:00] together." Within the ConnectMichigan Alliance, we merged – I shouldn't say we merged, we brought affiliates in which were the Volunteer Centers of Michigan, the Michigan



Campus Compact, Michigan's Promise and the LEAGUE Michigan all came under that rubric, under that umbrella of the new nonprofit that was formed.

And also with great support from a wonderful endowment that was really brought forth because Gov. Engler too, before the end of his term, felt that he wanted to leave a lasting legacy in Michigan; and the ConnectMichigan Alliance endowment served that. It was a public/private, he was willing to put up 10 million of state dollars – which you don't hear of any more today – and the great community that we have in the philanthropic world in Michigan, both in the sense of foundations and also corporations that have foundations came forth and said, “We will raise 10 million.” So it started out as a \$20 million endowment and we have been very fortunate that that has continued to support the work that, [00:14:00] what we are doing right now.

We had the ConnectMichigan Alliance for about three or four years. Then, with leadership changes, the time came that maybe we should merge the ConnectMichigan Alliance with the Michigan Nonprofit Association. We all were working in the same space, we all shared a suite of offices (which has also been very good I think, because we've been able to tap the resources and the knowledge from one agency or one affiliate across the spectrum and so we are very willing to do that). We have all known each other, I think, one of the things that I have always said and I think I might've mentioned this to you before, is that I think knowing each other and feeling safe with each other and trusting each other in this field, cannot be diminished.

I think the fact that all the players, whether they were our most eminent Dr. Mawby or Dottie Johnson or the John Marshall's of the world or the Joel's, or any of the leaders that we've had in our organizations, they really felt that they were there not for their own [00:15:00] edification, but for the community, for the work that could really make our state front and center. I think they all trusted each other, they all believed in each other and if we stumbled, it was okay because someone would be there to pick you up and say “You did all right, were just going to tweak this a little bit.” I think even as a grantee of funders in our state, I don't think I have ever felt that they had a mentality it of the “I got you.” They had the mentality of, “You know what, that struggle, that would've happened to me too. This is how I think we can modify that or tweak this; or have you considered this?” It was always in that sort of learning mode that I think allowed us to nourish and to flourish too, as a group of individuals very committed to each other. [00:16:00]

(KA): Continuing on with this part of the story, people change hats, they change roles. When everybody retires, will the same level have been passed on, or if not, what happens?

(DA): That is very interesting. I think for me, personally, I am in my 60s so I do think about that. But I do think that we have some individuals in the fields, young people that are coming up the ranks; like Kari Pardoe [00:17:00] is a perfect example – started as a little kid. I think Kyle is still fairly young and I also think Paula as the director of the Commission. We have individuals in the field I think will be ready to step up when necessary.



I do think that philanthropy is changing, you were talking about the new generation of family foundations and those that are coming up, and I was just reading the Frey Foundation and the three new women that are coming, I think that is exciting to see that. I think the days where – and I hope I'm not being disrespectful – but the days where foundations were run solely by men is gone. I think the day when the foundations were run solely by men, white men, is gone, because our communities are changing, our state is changing, our nation is changing.

I think we need to be more open to realize that everyone brings something to the table, whether it is a cultural background or perspective, a personal [00:18:00] challenge that you faced in the community or where you have lived that has given you new insights. Sometimes those insights don't just come from people of privilege, they come from other sectors of our community and we need to be open to that. I do think we are finding that more and more. I think young people are always going to be ready to serve. I think people are ready to serve today, we just have to get out of their way. I think sometimes that may be the slight, what I would tend to say, might be the slight hesitation of young people saying "I am ready right now."

I think we need to be willing to step up and step aside and to allow new thinking to come in. I think they are very entrepreneurial now, while we might not have been so much in the past, but I think that is good. I think communities and our nonprofits need to be thinking a lot more entrepreneurial; not to the extent that profit is what rules how you do, but in the sense of saying "How can I do both good for the community [00:19:00] and maintain my nonprofit existence?" Or if I'm a company, how can I make a profit and be a corporate citizen of where my community and where my company sits? I think that is crucial to us moving in this state, specifically and in this nation, forward. We have so much history that I think sometimes we lose sight of our history and we need to go back to realize that we did a lot of things first.

I am very proud to say that I was in Michigan when we did things first, but we need to step back and say, what has happened to being first? We need to move again to be first. I think maybe this particular project that you have will help us reconnect again. Sometimes we lose sight of things that we really shouldn't, and I think that is what I'm hoping will happen. We have new people on our staff at MNA, young people coming up front and center that I want them to be able to take the helm and the reins of this in the future and carry it to a new level. [00:20:00] Michigan has been very fortunate in its history, I think because of the support that we've had from philanthropy, our philanthropy partners in the state, but also in the sense that we have had individuals that are willing to take that little edge, look over that cliff and say, "It's okay, that step will be there when I jump." And so we've done a number of things that I think many other states would just have been very envious of us.

Our relationship, meaning the nonprofit world's relationship with philanthropy in Michigan, is very unique. The relationship that higher education has with nonprofits in Michigan is very unique. I



think we have been blessed with great leaders all around and I think they have been...one of the things that I really espouse is that I think we have been blessed with people that are servant leaders, first and foremost. They are not autocratic leaders, per se. They're not leaders for the sake of saying that I have a title or position, but they have been leaders that say that I will lead because I have a purpose to support and that I am here [00:21:00] to not lead, but also to serve, to serve my staff, to serve the organization, to serve the board and to serve the community, regardless of who you've been or where you have been. Michigan really can exemplify the servant leader that I think we have promoted and have seen in some of our great leaders.

Dr. Mawby for me is that perfect example of someone who never would make you feel uncomfortable knowing that he headed up such a major international foundation. You could walk into a room and he would always be gracious to everyone, kind of a thing. That, for me, is a sign that this is what we need to do and to continue to instill in the work that we do. And in the young people that we are bringing up, whether it is through the LEAGUE Michigan, in schools, getting them engaged in their communities, giving them the voice because they know what they want to do and not saying, we know, because we are the adult in the room. I think that kind of work is really critical to us moving forward.

(KA): [00:22:00] Take us to Washington DC. We are going to do some of your biography but it is also tied into policy. Michigan was ahead of the curve, because we knew it was going to happen. And then all of a sudden you are whisked away to Washington. What happened then? Tell us about the national organization.

(DA): Sure. Probably about two years into our forming our state commission here. As I said earlier, we started ahead of time. Probably about two and a half years in is when President Clinton came into being – not into being, but came into his position as president. We also then passed the legislation that formed the Corporation for National Services, the new federal agency that would merge both what had been called Action in the Past (which oversaw Vista and all our Senior Corps programs) inside this new organization – which we hoped for, let me say that in quotes, we “had hoped” would be [00:23:00] less bureaucratic than what federal government would be.

At that point in time I was asked if I would leave the Michigan Community Service Commission and come to DC to head up a sub unit within the Corporation, which was a unit that would give out all the money to state commissions and national nonprofits. When I was there we had a pool of about \$426 million that we sub granted to state commissions as an entity by which we would do this, and during that first year we were also helping states establish their commissions. We had had one here, but many of them did not exactly know what to do, and we also were dealing with national nonprofits (sort of like a City Year was considered a national nonprofit or Teach for America or Youth Build with Dorothy Stoneman). Those were all national nonprofits who also



wanted to have entrée into the AmeriCorps funding, which was coming through this new piece of legislation. I spent four and a half years there.

They were exciting years for me. I was very fortunate that my husband stayed here with my children [00:24:00] in Michigan so they had a strong, firm foundation here and it was exciting to see states move to a new level of engagement. I think it was important for us too, to realize that even from the very beginning – and it has been over 20 years now when you think about it – I got there in March and already in May the Congress was thinking about throwing the agency out with the bathwater. So it has been an ongoing process every four years or every eight years, as things have changed, to see the struggle. We have really small pots of money when you look at the bigger picture, but it has been the only pot of money at the national level that looks at the fact that citizen service or service learning in K-12 schools can have such a long-lasting impact. When you have an AmeriCorps member that generates 10 additional volunteers by their work in a community and you multiply that by the number of AmeriCorps [00:25:00] members that we can have in the country, can you imagine that power?

We are dealing with small pots of money; we are not dealing with a \$10 million gift that we are giving out. Most of the grants, while there may be one or two that might be high, maybe a million or so from national nonprofits. Many of them are a quarter of \$1 million, which in many cases that could mean a lot of money to some people, but not when you're trying to establish a core of individuals committed to a community's needs (whether they are in literacy or in homelessness or in housing—Habitat for Humanity is another big example for us too). But it is also in giving them an opportunity to say, "You know what, I can dedicate a year of my life, I don't have to worry." Even though, remember a stipend is minimal, it is about \$11,000, nobody's making \$20,000 a year here. But they are given the opportunity on equal footing, so it is not just the very wealthy that can say I can take a year off from school if I want to, or I don't need to go to work right now because I can be supported [00:26:00] by my parents, but you can take an individual that maybe doesn't have those luxuries at home and say I can also give back to my community.

I think we have also found that national service has been a tool that can really invigorate, it can empower and it can really bring about change in community. When we have strong nonprofit partners in the field that are dedicated to that work and realizing that dedicated time by individuals that give up their time, talent and treasure to a community, will make a big difference. We are seeing this not just in Michigan; we are seeing this across the country, where programs have had major impacts. I think sometimes, and I may again be disrespectful here, but I think it's time that people need to put aside their political viewpoints and say what is best for our communities, and we know that times are tight, we understand that, we know that the economy is not good.

But sometimes we need to realize that a \$10,000 investment is much better spent now than a [00:27:00] \$30,000 investment 10 or 15 years in the future, because we haven't engaged young



people the way we should right now, so they have chosen a path of not giving back, they've chosen a different path and I think people need to wake up. I don't understand how we can change that. I think there has always been that turmoil in the beltway, in the district as people would say, and I think people would really, I think when our legislators really listen, back in their communities where we have national service programs, they do get the message, but they have to listen. I think that is one of the biggest things that we are suffering in our country today, people don't really listen. People talk, but people don't give the time to listen to what the people are saying and I think that is really going to be one of our biggest challenges as we move forward.

(KA): When you were in Washington and looking back on Michigan, what did your colleagues say, we keep saying Michigan is unique, but that is because we work here. [00:28:00] So the question really is, is that true? And if it is true, what are the elements from the national, when you are wearing your national hat, when you are looking back on Michigan?

(DA): I think for us is the fact that we had done so many firsts, we were very willing. I think all our different streams in Michigan always collaborated – I think that is the word I'm looking for, really we are truly collaborative, meaning we come to the table, "I'm going to give you something, you're going to give up something, I'm going to give up something, because this is what we want at the end." I think at the national level, we have always had national voice at that table from Michigan. There hasn't been a board of the Corporation that hasn't had Michigan representation on it. We have been fortunate too, that we have brought staff from Michigan into the Corporation. I wasn't the only one, we had people that worked in NCCC [National Civilian Community Corps]; we had people that worked in training and development, we had people all across the spectrum. [00:29:00]

There was that Michigan feel, I hate to say it, Michigan feel that we really were doing it. We also had people from Michigan that worked with other national organizations. I have a nice friend and a colleague of mine, while she was an adopted child and grew up in Maryland, she went to U of M and she was Jennifer Bastress and she went to work for Youth Build for many, many years. She is actually back at the Corporation now as one of the deputy directors for AmeriCorps. It was the issue of understanding how we worked, understanding that there is a give-and-take in how we move forward and that sometimes, you might be in a setting where you do get angry with each other, but that is okay because sometimes when you get angry, you step back and you listen a little bit harder to get that point across or you try a little harder to get your point across. I think from our perspective, we have been very fortunate.

We have had great individuals like Sam [Singh] and Kyle [Caldwell] who have really been attuned in policy. How do you talk about policy? Sometimes I think the work in the policy [00:30:00] arena can be overcome with jargon [laughs], and I think people need to have that jargon diffused and really, in plain language, tell me what is the issue here. How do we say or position our position moving forward, so that Mary and Diana can understand it and we don't have to have a degree in



policy to understand what we're doing and I think that partnership that you talked about earlier between CMF and MNA has been really a lot around the policy issues. How do we talk about policy that impacts nonprofits? How do we talk about policy that impacts charitable giving? And how we know that both of them really do come together and they do mesh and they need to support each other? We also need to be willing to step back and say, our voice is an important voice. It is not necessarily a political voice, it is a voice of reason, I would tend to say in all the hubbub because a lot of the policy questions that come up impact human services. [00:31:00] We have really supported the work that human service agencies do. Foundations and philanthropy have always been really the backbone of how many of our community issues are being helped and supported by that work and so it is human service areas when you look at needs that people have.

I think it is really critical for us to realize that we've been very fortunate, we've had great leaders, even going back to Governor Romney. He was on the board of the first Commission on National and Community Service and so he gave us a voice. He was a firm believer that, excuse the expression, we should have a volunteer center in every post office; we don't need post office help, volunteer centers can deliver the mail [laughs]! He was very committed to that thing. While he realized that money was critical, he also realized that money alone wasn't going to solve the issues in our community. He was truly ingrained in the feeling that people is what multiplied the money, it wasn't just money. So that if I could give you 10 volunteers and you had 20 bucks, [00:32:00] you could probably do a lot more with those \$20 and 10 people, than if I just gave you \$20 kind of a thing because he felt truly in the belief that multiplying effect was really critical. He was another great leader that we had that was at the national level that was front and center to one of the Points of Light Foundation with help to nourish and really expand the Volunteer Center Network around the country.

Michigan has been very fortunate that while we have many volunteer centers in our state they're not in huge cities, they are sometimes in local communities, making us realize that local communities have a way to impact also and we should be just as proud of the work that they do, whether their community is a small community, that we are what happens here in Grand Rapids with a big community population because the issues...human needs are fairly about the same, no matter whether you're in a rural community or in an urban area, so we wanted to make sure that volunteering was really critical to how that community operated and [00:33:00] not for us to come across and say, we have the blueprint for your success. The success was really built within the community structure that they had.

(KA): I was going to ask you about Gov. Romney, he pretty much bullied us into...

(DA): He did! You know he did! [laughs] But it was important.

(KA): He was retired as governor, outside of Michigan... Citizen.



(DA): Yes he was. But I think he helped because he was very instrumental, too, like when Michelle took over as the chair of the Commission when she entered. He was I think a great sounding board for her, too, you know, behind-the-scenes. And Eleanor his gracious wife was always with him. When you think about it, they lived that life; they live the life of service, similar to what I would call a Dr. Mawby does. They lived that life all the time and they had had, both at the national level and at the state level and I think in their own communities, they lived that life and I think that was critical for us because you and I remember we did one campaign, [00:34:00] and we were saying, oh I don't know if this is... And he would say, "It will work! It will work." Sometimes I really do wish he were here, because he would prod us a little bit more; sometimes we can become complacent.

Sometimes we do feel, *okay, we are here, we've made it*. And no, I think we always need to have that one little person in the back of our mind or physically next to us sort of nudging us and saying, "No, you've got to try harder. And you know what, you're not asking the right questions. Let me tell you the question in your ear and you ask the question." Because that is how he was. I think he felt that way, too, in his roles both at the Commission on National and Community Service and then when he went from there to serve on the Points of Light board, too. He felt really important about that work and I think that was critical for our success here in Michigan, too.

(KA): Diana what do you hope for the volunteer centers? I mean, where are you in terms of goals?

(DA): That's a good question. I think it is a question that people could ask Kyle too when you look at MNA. Since we are a membership [00:35:00] organization, all we can do is bring, what I would tend to say, best practices to the field and hope that it sinks in. I do think that in the most recent years our centers are feeling economic concerns more and more. I think we are also seeing not just in Michigan...let me step back. In Michigan, more than half of our centers have always been part of the United Way family and we are excited about that. We have never decided that it had to be either/or. For us in Michigan, we felt that whatever the community felt was the best way that was the best way to deliver the service.

But I do think, nationally, the struggle of this now more and more that where we might've had a 501(c)(3) independent Volunteer Center, but they are not able to sustain themselves any longer; the funding isn't there. I would always bicker with that because I think a community should have [00:36:00] the money. We are not talking about a seven or a ten person staff, but we are talking about a commitment. Strongly I believe the United Way should be funding Volunteer Center activities regardless of whether it is a 501(c)(3) in the community or within their own cadre of programming that they do. I also believe that a community foundation should realize that it is one of their commitments to give back to the community; that their endowment, their money should also support the reengagement of community citizens into doing more with less. So I think those are two great sort of, what I would call funding streams in the community that we should not say "Oh it is their problem or no it's not my problem, it's your problem."



I think engaging community members is really critical. While we have many nonprofits and communities that have strong volunteer generation activities (because they have the name Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Girl [00:37:00] Scouts, even Habitat for Humanity, to mention a few), there are many that don't have that voice, don't have that internal infrastructure that I think a Volunteer Center comes in to help them. We don't try to do it for them but we do try to help them to realize what are the best steps for you to get to where you want to be. The community needs an unaffiliated voice, a free voice that says we all need to come together to address this particular issue and we are going to generate that enthusiasm and that campaign for giving back to your community by your time, we also want your talents and your money (but we know that if we get your time, your money and your talents will come later). We want your talents too with the time. It's not that I'm saying that they are separate, but we all know from studies that if you give to an organization because you volunteer to an organization, you feel more strongly about their mission and their impact and then you are willing to take out [00:38:00] your wallet and say, "You know what? I will give you my time but I am also going to give you some resources because we know resources are critical to bringing that organization to the next level."

What I would like for my Volunteer Centers is to realize that their voice has to be for all of the organizations in the community, not just for some. I also think it is important for them to keep on the forefront in their communities the fact that volunteers do make an impact and that they also need to be able to articulate, quite often, that people feel that volunteers are free. Yes, I do give my time to my agency freely, but you needed infrastructure behind me coming in so that I know I am being well used, that I'm getting training, that you are working with the nonprofit to connect me to make sure, so we need to realize that while volunteers, to some people are free, hell we have them in the drawer, let's just pop them out of those little sponges you put them in water they pop up like a little volunteer. That is how some people really [00:39:00] think things happen, but they don't.

You need to have an infrastructure, you need to build relationships with nonprofits who will turn to you and say that, you know what, we've been trying to recruit volunteers for this but it is not happening. So how can you work with us to get a campaign or help us to develop a campaign? That is what I hope for our centers. I hope for communities to realize that while you may not have the storefront center, but you need to bring your volunteer coordinators together and talk about what our issues, or talk about that *you know what, a volunteer in the community is a volunteer to the community*. They may give the time right now to Habitat for Humanity or to Big Brothers/Big Sisters, but when the agency begins to think that you belong to them, then the agency has lost sight about what a volunteer does, or what a volunteer is and what their work within with the community is all about. We should be willing to share our volunteers, we should be willing to recognize our volunteers regardless of which organization they are supporting, [00:40:00] because I may early in life be very willing to support Habitat for Humanity in my early years, but I may change later on to Big Brothers/Big sisters, and that doesn't make me any less a volunteer.



I would hope that all organizations in the community that I volunteer for would court me in a sense, to thank me for my time. It's not because I want accolades, I don't think that is what people are looking for. People are looking for a sense of respect because I gave you of my time and I have helped the organization move to the next level, or I have helped you during the period where you wanted to do a fundraiser and no one else would help you and I have come to your aid at that point. And that means for everyone in the community, not just those who have money, but people who have time and are really committed to the issue. Those are the ones I want to see engaged on an ongoing basis.

(KA): So you have been at a college level, you put together the federal money, you've been involved with the volunteer centers and Learning to Give and the LEAGUE, so [00:41:00] could you talk a little bit about connecting all of those dots at a systemic level for the State of Michigan, whether in your experience did Kellogg lay out a provision that said we are going to have volunteer centers in every community or how did this all come together.

(DA): It has been hard to sell that. I shouldn't say it has been hard; states have been very envious of us for the last 15 years about what we've been able to do here. I think while we have tried to lay a roadmap for them saying these are the critical partners you need to bring to the table, whether it is your foundation community like we've done here through first Dottie and then through Rob, or whether it is to say colleges can really come to your aid if you reach out to them, or you know what, there is a wealth of giving in your K-12 students, don't dismiss them because they are young; [00:42:00] they have a lot, they can do a lot of things. But I do think, as I mentioned early on today... Let me say truly that the friendships and the bonds that created that inner, I want to call it an inner circle in the sense of exclusivity, but in that realm of individuals 20 years ago that were working in the field, that it really has helped us go to the next level. I think we have been willing to switch jobs, jumped from this job to this job; you were my boss now I'm yours, no big deal. We're all here because we want to get to the next level. I think you will see that time and time again that we have been very fortunate to do that and we have been fortunate enough to have those individuals stick around.

The other thing that we sometimes may lose sight of in Michigan, that those leaders, many of those, the majority of those leaders are still here and they still communicate and they still get together and their vision is still always [00:43:00] evolving. I think that is what is exciting for us, it is always evolving. So the work that we've done with our community foundations is really critical. While there are community foundations elsewhere in the country, we know that, not to the level or cohesiveness that our Council of Michigan Foundations has been able to do with them. The young people – that we encouraged our community foundations in the early years to think about developing the YACs (the Youth Advisory Councils are committees depending on how they were in their communities) – really has formed a group of individuals today that you would be so proud of. I think it would be great to have an alumni reunion of all the young people that participated,



where they did it even for a year at their local community foundation. They are I am sure, doing great leadership things right now.

I think we were fortunate. I think we had great thinkers, we had great visionaries that we were all able to – and I am not one of those, [00:44:00] those are other people like the Russ Mawby's, and the Dottie Johnsons and the Rob's, and Sam and Kyle have always been very visionary to see the next level up to say, you know it is possible. We can have a task force, but it is possible, we will do it anyway. I think that kind of work is really what has put us ahead of other states. While other states may have a lot of other foundations, and a lot of money and higher education institutions, I think we have been truly grounded in realizing that this group of colleagues knows how to work together. There were times that we push at each other and there are times where we may not always be happy with each other, but I think our vision is larger than our individual. People may say, I don't necessarily see a lot of individual ego in the group of the people that I've had the pleasure to work with over these past 20 years here in Michigan.

I have always been so proud to say... You don't want to always say this is how we did it Michigan; but you are always willing to say, "You know you might want to talk to this group [00:45:00] of individuals in your state, similar to what we did in Michigan" because I think it may open the communications or the doors to taking that next step. I think that was something that we tried really hard when we envisioned the ConnectMichigan Alliance, is how do all these partners that have supported work in different silos, how do we come together to say how do we work better, more collegially, more collaboratively? We know collaboration isn't going to be simple and we also know that not every project lends itself the true collaboration. Sometimes you have to step away from the table and say it's not going to work, but the communication has started and it may be something that can happen a number of years down the road. Collaboration takes time to accomplish, it doesn't come overnight.

(KA): Walk us through the morphing of ConnectMichigan Alliance back into it. It is an extraordinary case study of two leaders who have put the [00:46:00] organization...

(DA): As we talked about before, at the time that Governor Engler was about to leave he came up with the idea about establishing an endowment (we did know what we would call it; they called it at the end the ConnectMichigan Alliance). But it was a way to say, *how can we develop an infrastructure of funding that could support the volunteer infrastructure of our state?* So at that time, when that conversation was happening, Kyle was the head of the Michigan Community Service Commission and Sam was at the head of the Michigan Nonprofit Association (and while Sam was there, both the Volunteer Centers of Michigan and Michigan Campus Compact were housed within that organization).

So the leaders of those two respective agencies, it was Amy Smitter toward the end (who was at Campus Compact and for the Volunteer Centers of Michigan), it was Judy Tymowicz. They all



came to the tables to say they all helped fundraise in their own specific ways. There was a great leadership [00:47:00] team brought together to see how we could raise the money and people took time from their organization. So Kyle and Sam took time from running their individual organizations or did it above and beyond what they were doing all the time to say, how could we think about creating a new entity? Each one looked at, what is it within my agency that might better sit here, then as opposed to sitting within my agency now? Because sometimes programs come to agencies just because you are the agency that makes the most sense at the time that the program is being developed.

So I think that is what we were trying to do, is to say who should be part of that? Both Campus Compact at that time, and the Volunteer Centers of Michigan and from the Commission's perspective, Michigan's Promise at that time, seemed all to be perfect things that each of the entities could give up. They still would be supporting their various streams, but this would allow a more cohesive work about how these organizations happened. And so they came together. We were also very fortunate that they were very smart, the guys were smart [00:48:00] to say, we are going to create a board that represents all the partners. So it isn't just a brand-new board, it is a board that brings with it history and sort of a point of view of the original signers of this little declaration that we have here. I think that gave power and perspective to that board to realize what it was doing and what it would try to do. During the first year or so is when another group outside said, we are interested in the LEAGUE (and that was the Learning to Give) and how we bring that in; and that is how the LEAGUE Michigan came to be part of the ConnectMichigan Alliance.

About two years – maybe about three years now I'm trying to think – Sam, who had been at the head of the Michigan Nonprofit Association now for ten years, decided *oh, isn't it great to be young, and that I want to take off a year and a half and travel the world.* And I'm saying, "Oh yes, take me with you! I can carry your luggage!" [laughs] But he was at a point in time where I think he wanted to step away. [00:49:00] Ten years is a long time to head an organization, and it really had been very young when he had taken over. I think his ability to think about that and I think his friendship with Kyle allowed them to think strategically; and the boards, I think there were people on the boards, too, that had a willingness to listen to their sort of proposition that maybe at the time was right to bring the ConnectMichigan Alliance and the work that they were doing, because there were still things that they were doing that almost seemed to be the same thing. There was public policy they both did and shouldn't the public policy be only in one place, or the support of volunteer engagement because that was part of the mission that MNA had had at one time and actually they had taken it out of their mission statement when the ConnectMichigan Alliance was formed so that people wouldn't confuse things. But I think they had time to think about it, they were willing to say, "I think this could work." So another task force was formed.

We love taskforces in Michigan; we created another task force composed of their leadership and also respective members of the boards, [00:50:00] and at that time there were people from the



Community Service Commission board and also the MNA board to say and the MNA board, and also the ConnectMichigan Alliance board too, because now there were three of them to say how we think about this? So they did a study, they worked with each other and it was felt that the time was probably right. Sam was thinking about stepping aside and it would open the opportunity to maybe say that the two agencies could come together, that maybe the pre-existing president of one could remain as the new president of the new merged agency and how we would bring this forward and so it did. It took about a year. It wasn't done overnight. It took about a year, a year and a half.

Then Sam was able to go traipse off around the world and it was great because he did service, that was critical. He did service on every continent that he went to and he talked about engagement and he talked about the civic mission of individuals and what we in Michigan and also in the United States, [00:51:00] really felt very close that many countries do, they just don't use the same words that we use here to describe it. I think it was really a wonderful opportunity for him and for us it was a wonderful opportunity that Kyle was able to stay at the head of the organization and for us to come back together as one.

(KA): Tell me a story, a Michigan story about Michigan's philanthropic community.

(DA): Well, let me see. Even though you prepped me, I am stumped. You know, I think the stories for me really revolve around the people, about the people and the individuals. It's not just one story, it's about how people have impacted [00:52:00] the work that I've done. Is that okay with you? For me, probably one of the first individuals that I met in the work was Pete Ellis and he was my program officer when the Campus Compact got its grant from the Kellogg Foundation. He was a fairly big person, sort of overpowering. I was a little person; I'm short, a little person like that. It was really interesting to listen to him talk to me back then about what it meant to be a program officer and what my role would be with him.

We didn't spend a lot of time together because unfortunately he passed, but in the few times that I met with him I always realized then that he was on my side, that there was nothing wrong that I could do wrong that would be bad, that it would all be a learning moment – those teachable moments you would say. You can learn [00:53:00] from anything, no matter how bad it is. I think he taught me that just by his presence and his support of the work that I was trying to do because we were just starting Campus Compact here. I think from that perspective he taught me the fact that you will fail, and that is okay. I think the fact that a major foundation had a program officer who said it's okay if you fail, it's not going to be a personal failure, it's a failure because we didn't think about things the right way.

So from Pete, I went to Joel, who was also very caring and it was great, but I also felt, too, that the individuals at that point that I interacted with early on at Kellogg were always the type of program officers I felt that never had what I would consider the "I gotcha" mentality. There was always a



mentality of “We’re here to help you succeed, so what is it that you don’t get that I can get you resources or someone more experienced than you to help you think out that process?” [00:54:00] For me, those were great mentors to teach me to realize that how my role should be even though I was working with higher-ed institutions or later on as I worked with grantees in the work that I did either at the Commission or the Corporation, is that you should be there to help the people get some resources to do better. I think that is important for me.

I also think that I found in some of the leaders that I had an opportunity to work with early on that if I screwed up, they would be willing to step in for me. The perfect example is the very first Campus Compact Conference that I had. We had invited Kathleen Kennedy Townsend to be our speaker. We had mailed her the ticket, we had done everything, we had called ahead of time and so I’m looking at my clock and it is like four o’clock and she is supposed to speak at six. This woman was nowhere to be found. I said, okay, what am I gonna do, [00:55:00] what am I gonna do?

I finally got on the phone and called and I said, “Ms. Townsend?”

She said, “Hello!”

I said, “Ms. Townsend where are you?”

She said, “I’m in Massachusetts.”

I said, “Ms. Townsend! You’re supposed to be here in Michigan! What happened?”

She goes, “Oh, no, no, no, you have it all wrong, that is a couple of weeks from now.”

I said, “Oh, no, no, no. It is like this minute.”

So she apologized, I hung up and I said to myself what am I going to do? This is the keynote speaker that I had. Back then, Jackie Taylor (who was the executive assistant to Dr. Gannon at LCC and was one of our member schools – no, I’m sorry she was a special assistant, but it was not Dr. Gannon, it was Dr. Sykes, was the president then) goes to me, “Oh don’t worry, I’ll get the president to speak. She said, I’ll run back to the office, I’ll put out one of his commencement speeches, he did one recently about service, it will be perfect! I’ll just tweak it here and here and there.” And so these two individuals, who while I might’ve been working with them, they didn’t have to come to my rescue, it was like he was meant to speak that night [00:56:00] no matter what happened. So those are the little things that I have found and the little stories that I see in my life that people have always been there in this state to help me and the work that I’m trying to pursue or to help the bigger work and that I’ve been able to learn from them.



I think that has been the case with everyone I have worked with. They have been giving and gracious, they have tested me. I know that John Marshall used to love to test me all the time, that was one of his styles, but I got used to that. It was okay for him to ask a lot of questions and Dottie Johnson likes to ask a lot of questions, too, and when you think you have the answer she asks one more question and that's not the answer that you thought you were going to give. I think it's that prodding and that learning from that interaction with each other that has been very helpful to me.

The only funny thing that I can remember, it didn't happen to me, but it was when Dottie Johnson was graduating from her position and then the three guys decided to dress up [00:57:00] as girls. So we had Dave Egner, we had Sam Singh and I think it was Kyle and they all did a little dance across the stage and that to me was very funny to see; sort of what I would consider (and everybody did too in the room, considers) really strong, outspoken, well in command, dressing up with wigs and dancing because I think they felt in many cases that she had mentored all of them at different points in their lives and had given them enough sense of who they were and that moment of slight embarrassment was not something that would diminish who they were and what they tried to do for the field and the work that we did. I think those are sort of the funny stories I can think of. But I think more than anything, it's not so much fun about the interactions that I've had with the people in the field, but I think about their care and their dedication to the work that they have really believed their whole life that they have been engaged with. I think to this day whenever I see Dr. Mawby and we can hug and we can kiss and it's great to see a [00:58:00] man of that stature and that history be willing to still remember everyone that he interacts with and be so gracious about that. I would hope that, if we can all leave this world, taking that from him, we would've won a great treasure I think personally, each one of us.

(KA): So, tell us about you and how you got where you are. Maybe you could start with some of the facts about where you were born and why aren't you an investment banker or...

(DA): God, I don't know. It's really for me... I was born and raised in New York City in Manhattan. I lived in Washington Heights all my life, probably the first 21 years there and my mother was a seamstress. My mother was the head of household, she was the sole breadwinner. I also came from a family of three children, [00:59:00] but I was the baby and we were all 10 and 19 years apart, so my sister was 19 years older than I was and my brother was 10 years older than I was, so we were really like three separate families. By the time I was three my sister had been married and moved back to Puerto Rico which is where my parents were born and lived.

I came to Michigan by a fluke really. I had friends and relatives here and they had come, their kids had come to do a spring break in New York and so they talked about, why don't you come to Michigan and go to Michigan State? At that time, I was in my junior year of college and thought well we'll see. I came up for a visit and for me, coming from New York City and coming to Lansing, which may be considered a big city to a little city, but the fact that I could look around the city and



not see tall skyscrapers was amazing to me at that time. This was in the early '70s, or that people would park their cars and not lock them, or that there was a lot of green grass. [01:00:00] Even though I noticed that there was poverty in this community, it is different when poverty is a house next to another. I grew up in a tenement, literally, so that poverty was around you, above you, below you, because that is how you lived, in a high-rise kind of the thing. So for me, poverty in Lansing was very different. It was almost like, if you wanted to be poor, this would be the best place to be poor. It sounds silly, but from my perspective at that time it was amazing. I was very fortunate that I applied as a transfer student and I came to Michigan State.

I left my mother and father and of course, my sister and her husband were thinking about coming to Michigan because Puerto Rican girls are just not let to go unless you're married, so luckily my sister was coming to Michigan and so I was allowed to come up. It was really great. I had studied my undergraduate work was in Industrial Psychology, because I wanted to be an efficiency expert, I don't know why. Then, so I finished my degree [01:01:00] here at MSU, and I was very fortunate that when I did my year of study here I was able to get a position as a work-study student. It was wonderful. I got a work-study student with Model Cities, of all kinds of programs, a very community-based, oriented federal program that looked at giving grants to the community or nonprofits or even creating some of them to address community issues.

I worked there for about a year as a work-study student, I graduated MSU and they had another wonderful federal program at Model Cities called [Sita], which was like an employment program [laughs], so here I was graduating college back then to earn \$12,000 a year was hot money. I was great with an undergraduate degree. I would hate for students to think about that was making it today. I was able to stay on as an employee and at that point in time, the Model Cities program in Lansing had just received a major federal transportation grant, so we were trying out [01:02:00] propane and electric buses in our community. We were also trying to see is how we could take sort of smaller neighborhoods and combine these feeder buses to bring them into the main bus line so that people could really get around the city and also using propane or electric buses, look at the environmental impacts and so I worked with the project to kind of kick it off there.

After a while I really enjoyed it, it might be silly but we used to ride sometimes and people would say these buses just go around in circles. They were missing the point that yes, it was a circle in a neighborhood because we were trying to get you from different points to a main feeder line for the regular transportation system in the city. A lot of people didn't get it.

I spent a couple years doing that and then I stayed on with Model Cities, I worked for the city for nine years. I worked as what you would consider today probably a program officer with a portfolio of federally funded subprograms that we funded. Then I also moved into the division on evaluation, so we were looking at the success [01:03:00] and the impacts of the programs that we funded had. I was doing that for nine years when we were able to get a small grant from the state to establish a Woman's Bureau in Lansing. Jacqueline Warren, who was the head of the Model



Cities program in Lansing said, "Do you want to start this, do you want to work on this?" So I did and we did that program for about three years. I stayed with it for about a year and a half and we did a lot of work at that point in time in history, in our country there was a lot of legislation about displaced homemakers. Those were individuals that had been in marriages for many, many years and were now finding themselves divorced and never had really spent any time working in the world of work, but had done a lot of volunteer in community organizing in their own right. We were helping them take those skills and put in a resume so that they could present themselves to a potential employer. We were really excited about the work we did then.

From the Women's Bureau I ended up seeing [01:04:00] another ad in the paper to be the director of women's programs at MSU. I applied and I was sort of taken back that I was selected. I spent nine years doing women's programming at Michigan State University until Campus Compact and then the Commission and then the Corporation. That has sort of been my track. I did an undergraduate in industrial psychology, I worked on a masters and I got my Masters in Labor and Industrial Relations and Employee Relations and I never did a days work in either of those fields, but I do think that I met great faculty members at MSU that kind of made me think about... In labor you see the work of the unions and the impact that they have had on the work and the worker in our state, especially Michigan has always been a strong union state. It also gave me an appreciation too, working in Model Cities and stuff like that, of the fact that local communities have a voice and that that voice is critical to addressing [01:05:00] what they really want in their communities. For me it opened up a way for me to say you know what, we need to listen more – as I said earlier – and how do we take what they are saying and their dreams and try to bring it to some level of fruition, however you can do that.

(KA): Did you ever dream that this would be your career path?

(DA): No, never. I actually wanted to be a lawyer.

(KA): What good advice do you give to young people in the office who are, I see young people who want every pin – five-year service, 10 year service. What kind of advice do you give them?

(DA): I would encourage them to take as many opportunities or many – I don't want to say chances because that's not exactly the word, but to open themselves up to a lot of, no that's not the word... Let me make sure that I have the right word. I want them to be willing to take chances. I think that is one of the things that I was very willing to do all my life. [01:06:00] I don't necessarily come from a background with a mother who took chances; she believed that you work one job all your life kind of a thing.

I was never afraid to take a chance, but I was also an individual that was willing to say, "You know what, I don't know that, I need to read more about that or I need to talk to some people about that before I say I think I know that." I would encourage young people to say that you should be very



proud to say “I don't know.” I think we have a society right now that no one wants to say they don't know. They're willing to say they know everything and they really don't, or they're willing sometimes to disparage those that have been before them that have many years of experience, because they know it better. We have a better way to do that. There's nothing wrong with having new ways to do things, I think that's what makes everything so exciting, but I do think that they need to take time to understand the historical perspective. [01:07:00] I think people who don't understand our history and don't understand who the key leaders in our state were to move us to where we are today will miss a lot.

I think all our young people should strive first and foremost to be a servant first and a leader second in whatever work they do, regardless of where you are; I think you need to serve others. I think for me that is critical, and to be willing to learn more every day. You should never think that you have learned all that you could learn because you have so many degrees or because you've worked so much, I think that is important. Surround themselves with books, I think is important. Read all you can, whether it is on your Nook or iPad or Kindle, but books are really good to touch and feel and turn the page – I have both – but I do think it is important.

[Don't] be afraid to say I don't know, and not to be afraid to fail. We all must fail if we are going to succeed. [01:08:00] I don't think there is anyone that has been successful in life that can't go back and say you know what, I learned from my mistakes, I learned from the times I stumbled and I learned from the times that I was challenged. For me those are some of the key points that I would make with people.

Finally, I would say to any of them who have a group of individuals that are working for them is – one of the things I pride myself in – if your staff succeeds, it is their success; if your staff fails it is your problem. I think that is critical to me. If something doesn't work, then I did something wrong – not my staff did something wrong, I did something wrong. I didn't guide them appropriately and if we were successful, then it was their work that brought the success about, because it's the only way that we succeed. That to me is critical, something that I think I try to instill in the staff that I'm very fortunate to be able to work closely with today.

(KA): So you had the time between the first interview and this interview, and now you've had this interview and a chance [01:09:00] to think about it driving over. I want to make sure that we have captured your history. What else have you thought about that I haven't, you know, had the wisdom to ask you that you think is really important to be saved.

(DA): One of the things that I've always noticed, too – and I think we're seeing a little bit more about this happening more recently right now. I do think that the philanthropic world in Michigan and nationwide needs to begin to look like the communities that we are serving, alright? That is from a diversity and inclusion perspective. It's work that the Council of Michigan Foundations is working on and MNA is very fortunate to be part of that work, but I do think that it can't just



happen. You have to work at making it happen. You need to engage young people in the field that might be running programs, to expose them to the opportunities of what is to be in the philanthropic community, to do the work that philanthropic communities [01:10:00] do, because I think individuals may not understand that. That is my take on it. I am older. That is what I sense.

Now we do have a lot of young people that are in philanthropy around the country, but I also think that they are few and far between. If we in Michigan are going to be attentive to what our community's needs are, then we need to have people reaching out to those communities that look like them, that understand them. It is not to say that a person of a different race or color can't do that, but if you're going to be in a Hispanic community, it is important to see people that are Hispanic understanding your issues because some of them may have been brought up in those same issues.

I think that is what I would, that is the one thing that I am a little – not concerned so much, because I see the work we are doing now, but I'm a little anxious because I want it to happen right away and it is not something that happens overnight. [01:11:00] I think we do need to be deliberate, our community foundations, which is where the first step could be, need to look at themselves and say how do I engage individuals that are different than who we have right now? How do I engage young people in my Youth Advisory Councils that don't all look the same, or come from the same economic background? I need to bring more individuals with different thoughts in different upbringings. I think that will enrich the Michigan philanthropy and enrich the work that will be able to do in our communities moving forward.

(KA): Thank you.

(DA): Thank you.

