My Meadville interview with Lindsay Scott

Interviewer: The people from My Meadville go around and ask the Meadvilians, like, what they like about Meadville, or what they think could be included.

Interviewer: They go around and like, ask people, like what they want to include in Meadville, and they do it, if there is enough people. They take a bunch of ideas and they do it together, not before asking the people who live here, so it’s like, all about the community.

Interviewee: Sounds like a good idea.

Interviewer: Now I’m going to redo that question. What do you like about Meadville?

Interviewee: Like I said, I was born here. I’ve been a lot of different places in my life, but I don’t really like the heat uh, so anywhere south of here would be a bad idea for me. But also I know the whole community, pretty much. I mean I can go to any store or any street or any business and know three or four people that work there, and that’s important.

Interviewer: Does something, like really make you love Meadville? Like, do you really love something that happens here, or like something special to Meadville?

Interviewee: I think it’s probably just the people that I’ve known my whole life that do, that have come back here. A lot of us left and went to college, but a lot of us came back, and it was pretty much a lot of great people that did come back.

Interviewer: And how was your like, upbringing in Meadville?

Interviewee: Umm. Good, when I was younger I played a lot of sports, I had a lot of friends, so I did pretty well in school. Umm. Anything more specific?

Interviewer: Like, if you want to go more specific that's always, like, appreciated.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Like things you loved to do when you were a kid in Meadville, or...

Interviewee: Um. I loved dance classes. I loved um, honestly causing a lot of trouble with my friends in my later teen years which should not be repeated by my child, and if he ever finds out about that he's gonna find out it's like public knowledge. It's fine. That's one of the down sides actually of having everyone in a small town like this know you so well, which they do. And my child will be hearing stories pretty much his whole life about his mother when she was younger. So I have pretty low expectations about that to be honest. Um. But that's the double edged sword with that. Um. But, yeah lot of too much fun in my teen years. Still kept it together well enough to go to college, I joined the service when I was eighteen. Um. Came back though.

Interviewer: Is there something you enjoy like, that happens special in Meadville. Like the second Saturday thing, or like anything specifically related to Meadville that happens?

Interviewee: I actually just came back from uh, well I didn't leave it was here, but this weekend just happened, operation wounded vets. It's a uh. motorcycle/cycle/adult beverage crawl that raises money for wounded veterans that are local to Meadville. This isn't like one of those giant federal charities the dulls money out to everyone in like the nation that has issues it's specifically just this community. So that was great those kinds of things there are those kinds of things and there's also, um, you know a lot of different walks and things they do downtown that bring a lot of business to the downtown stores and things like that. Those are for adults they're always fun. You know, they have charity golf and I really like to golf. I really like to do those and participate in those and so do a lot of my friends. Um. so that's kind of the things that I like to do aside from the normal like go to the movies, check out the new restaurants, you know.

Interviewer: Gotcha

Interviewee: And you know there is annual stuff, you know I love the fair and I'm super excited to take my kid to the fair when he gets older. I'm not excited about pushing him in a car seat or in a stroller this year at all. But once he can walk it will be really fun and you know like Thurston classic and everything else, that will be really fun.

Interviewee: Why do you like those types of things, like the vet thing?

Interviewee: Well they are going to help people that can't get help any other way. So these people that maybe their medical coverage doesn't cover their ailments anymore or their medications are toi expensive or um their home needs fitted, for instance they can't shower in a normal shower anymore because they can't walk. They give you adaptable things, they can help you install adaptable shower systems. So these people can take a shower and still live at home. You know, that's super important. That they stay with their families and not end up you know, in a nursing home.

Interviewer: That is pretty important. So you like doing all the like, charity type of stuff that helps the civilians of Meadville?

Interviewee: Yes, definitely. Were always finding ways to make it fun too, like there is a side activity happening like a dart game or golf or something. But the money, the fact that the money stays local and goes to charity is actually the best part about it because it's not just an excuse for all of us to just, you know mess around for fun, there is like an underlying good cause to it.

Interviewer: And how often do you say you do those type of things?

Interviewee: Well if you include the fact that I do them for work also, because my organization also fund raises for the people with mental health intellectual disabilities. I do them probably on a month or bimonthly basis, but definitely when the weather is better we have better turn outs for different things.

Interviewer: And you really enjoy doing that type of stuff?

Interviewee: Yeah, I like planning it, I like inviting people, I like harassing people to get them to go. I like harassing local vendors to offer you know, prizes for people to donate even more money so for instance, uh, you know, in Conneaut lake. Antonio's donated a twenty five dollar gift card to auction off.

Interviewer 2: What do you mean by harassment?

Interviewee: You know, like calling them, you know on the phone, asking them to donate. Do you want to come to this, do you want to support this?

Interviewer 2: Their is only on definition and it's a bad definition.

Interviewee: No, well yes. But I'm using it in more of a sarcastic manner. Not in an actual like aggravated harassment, that would be really bad and I'm pretty sure the Meadville PD. wouldn't appreciate it, if that was the case. Yes, definitely not in a negative way, I'm not going to stop by their homes and knock on their doors at all hours of the night. I would just make a couple phone calls, make sure I followed up. Cause there is always an initial phone call and you always want to follow up afterwards and you always want to remind them of what a good cause it's for. But you know even that simple twenty five dollar gift card that might not cost them the full twenty five, it might be giving them a little bit of profit. Basically so much more of that money would be donated to the tickets going in to get the auction, like everyone wants to go there for dinner and it'd be free for them, so let's throw these tickets in there but they bought those tickets and those ticket monies support the charities, so it's a good way to get money for charities.

Interviewer: Are those types of charity events like really really big in Meadville? Like they are really significant and a lot of people go to them and like them?

Interviewee: I want to say the one I was at Friday was really well attended. I think that they said more than three hundred people got involved between bikers and walkers and last year, I don't know what they made this year yet, but last year the made thirty five thousand dollars that would be used for just the veterans in this town. So I mean that a couple hundred people doesn't sound like a lot but these people do regularly go out and give money for these types of things. And there is a lot of other charities that other people are more like personally dedicated to. Like I'm dedicated to that personal charity and a lot of my friends are. But you know there is also cancer local charity functions that we get invited to and those are a bunch of really big ones, those golf ones can have a couple hundred people at a time and the tickets for those, you know a team, is a few hundred dollars and that all goes to charity so, I mean after the costs of the fundraiser, but yeah I'd say that it's a huge thing for my group, age group twenty five maybe and above that they do like to do that as a social, it's their social time and also like a giving back time.

Interviewer: So do you like go to those things because you like them and like you like helping the community and it's a good thing to do, or do you like also have like relationships with some of those people that like they are funding?

Interviewee: Both, almost always both and then my friends are going we all kind of, you know not the same friends every time but there is a group of us that maybe, "Hey are you going to go to this one, will you be in town this day." And if we are friends and they aren't doing anything that day they buy a ticket and come.

Interviewer: Gotcha. Moving on, What's your favorite memory you have of something you did in Meadville? Or something that happened to Meadville?

Interviewee: Um. Let me think. there is like a lot of things I probably won't remember right of the top of my head. I know that we had a lot of different things happen when I was younger that gave Meadville some attention. I remember when I was in elementary school this girl, her name was Vicki and she had actually flown a plane and she was like one of the youngest people whatever distance I can't remember the specifics but it got a lot of national attention here. I know that a lot of people from her family I think are still around and her friends too. Um. I don't know. There were a couple of things that I'm not really remembering.

Interviewer: That's fine

Interviewee: But yeah there were definitely things that gave us like some national attention, especially back when I was younger that I remember were really cool. That would be nice to have something like that happen again. Or maybe not just specifically like that but something with positive attention.

Interviewer 3: Like this past year with Journey Brown. Breaking the state record in track.

Interviewee: And I know that the high school athletics have been really good lately, gotten us a lot of positive attention which is great.

Interviewer: So you don't exactly have something that you remember you love about Meadville or a really good memory you had in Meadville?

Interviewee: I mean I remember a lot of things like um we always made a big deal for make a difference day it was really huge until I was pretty much a later teen and then it fell behind a little bit. I know that in high school our journalism group that we had for writing in the school newspaper when I was a sophomore and Junior was really interesting. We were covering a presidential election and it was a big deal for us. And. Um. Let me think. I had a lot of friends one year actually do miss Meadville and they still do reruns of it on channel two like every other day. which I find to be...

Interviewer: Is that like a pageant thing?

Interviewee: Yeah it was like a pageant thing, like I was not in it. but I had a lot of people that were friends in it from all the different communities like Chocranton, I knew like every girl in it. I knew all of the ones from Meadville. and Seagertown and everything. And I just remember and like I saw it the other day on tv and I was just like, oh my god. And it was like a huge deal because we were all like fifteen and sixteen years old and they were all in it at once and the whole community was pretty much there. I don't know if they still do that as much because that's like not really my thing right now. But um. It was very cool to watch them all perform and do their own thing and shop for dresses, they had huge cheering sections so I remember that. So that was really fun.

Interviewer: What teenage girl doesn't want to do that?

Interviewee: Some want to do it and they keep wanting to do it until they are fifteen or sixteen and then they still want to do it. And then you got the ones that are like fifteen or sixteen and they are like I never want to do that. Or they just never want to be on a stage. That's not me I definitely would not have done it, that's for sure.

Interviewer: Wow. So you said that you were born here and then like you left?

Interviewee: Mhm.

Interviewer: Why did you come back? Like what made you think, " want to come back to small town Meadville were everyone knows my mistakes and like knows me to the core.

Interviewee: Why did I want to do that? Actually, uh to be honest one hundred percent on that is I went to, I joined the military right after 9/11 and I was deployed in under a year. I had six months of college under my belt and I had to leave. And I was gone until I was twenty one.

Interviewer: When did you leave for this?

Interviewee: I left for my initial like gear up for training, I had to drop out of college in November of 2003 and I didn't come back until February of 2006.

Interviewer: How old were you when you were deployed?

Interviewee: Nineteen to twenty one I was like just turning twenty and then I was just turning twenty one when I came back. So my whole twenty to twenty first year.

Interviewer 3: I had just turned four.

Interviewer: That's why you left Meadville, but why did you want to come back?

Interviewee: Well I finished school but I wasn't having the best time at life.

Interviewer: Relatable

Interviewee: And my mom was here and she wasn't having the greatest time at life either, and I was only in Erie so it wasn't far. Um. and she really just needed people to work part time at where she works now which is the arc of Crawford County. And I worked, I became, I went from part time to full time in about two months. I got benefits health insurance it wasn't great pay but I went from that position all the way up to where I am now as a supervisor. In about five years.

Interviewer: And where you are now is like a high position?

Interviewee: No it's definitely not there are definitely people way above me that are management. But I do supervise people directly. And I mainly supervise the lives of because I don't really supervise, I supervise my staff.

But um. I more or less case manage the work social life, medical, you know different situations of about twenty five people with intellectual disabilities. so if my staff changes, my staff changes. But my consumers always stay the same.

Interviewer: So you came back to Meadville to help your mom? Who was going through trouble and you got caught in the web and stayed.

Interviewee: Well I was going through trouble too so I just wanted to be with my mom.

at the time but then the opportunity came to work kind of came up while I was doing that and I'd rather be productive than not. And when an opportunity just falls in you lap sometimes when you aren't doing anything else you should just take it. So um once I got there and once I got involved with the people I just wanted to stay.

Interviewer: That was some good advice. Just take the opportunity if you have the chance.

Interviewee: yeah, it's there you know. There is no reason if you aren't doing anything else even if it doesn't meet your expectations maybe some day it will meet other expectations.

Interviewer: And like why have you continued to stay in Meadville?

Interviewee: Well my husband is in Meadville and he's got a pretty good job right now that he recently actually got. And I had a son, and It's debatable to say whether or not I have great health insurance, but I have good health insurance and for me that's really important. Uh because I have Multiple Sclerosis so.

Interviewer 2: What's that?

Interviewee: It's a neurological disease that eventually will leave me to be probably eventually severely physically disabled.. But um yeah, having health insurance is very important, and I have been good health insurance.

Interviewer: I can imagine that’d be pretty important.

Interviewee: Yup, it is. I guess you could say I’m kind of addicted to the lifestyle of helping people. I don’t know it my personality would fit the “for-profit” industry anymore.

Interviewer 2: what do you mean?

Interviewee: like if my personality would fit the “go, go, go” of a for-profit industry.

Interviewee 2: Oh I thought you were talking about what like Bethesda did like when someone did something wrong and they had to restrain them.

Interviewee: No we don’t do that, we have the least restrictions. Actually, one of the least restrictive in the county. We try to allow as much freedom as possible, at all times. It’s a huge thing for us.

Interviewer: Sounds like a really important job you have.

Interviewee: I like to think so. I try to make it so, and everybody at work feels committed to the people we serve. It’s kind of like a way of life. And like I said, my mom works there and I was surrounded by those people when I was younger than you guys. Like my mom started working there when I was two. And she stayed. She’s still there. She’ll be there until retirement I’m sure. \*everyone laughs\* she wouldn’t leave now. So yeah, I’ve known some of these people since I was two, three years old, even the consumers. Since they were teenagers.

Interviewer: That’s amazing!

Interviewee: I used to feel forced to events because she’d drag me to fundraisers, and picnics, and you know, it’s so funny, they offered us.. We used ot have Conneaut Lake park events or train ride at Titusville events and my mother would be like “Lindsay, we’re going to Conneaut Lake park!” and she would give me the eye. And I would be like “what?” and then we’d go and it would be a work event and I would be like “well..” I mean she didn’t trick me but I didn’t even question it. It’s so funny, like, this year Conneaut Lake is doing really well and we really wanted to give back to a local organization, like we usually do Waldemere with the consumers but this year we’re going to Conneaut Lake park and we’re buying their tickets. Well our staff’s tickets and if any of our consumers were in need we would purchase their tickets. But you know, if they want to go.

Interviewer: That’s amazing!

Interviewee: And then so staff and our special services are going to be there and they’re like, “oh by the way, you can bring your kids” and I’m like.. This is how they got me into this! \*everyone laughs\* I see how it is! Almost all of the staff have roped their children into this lifestyle.

Interviewer: So it’s like a legacy type of thing?

Interviewee: It kind of is! I mean the other supervisors and staff, their kids have been teen camps counselors because teens with disabilities go for a summer camp there, you know, and do part time work there as soon as they turn 18. You know, if they’re home from college it’s the perfect part time job to get them into. So, all of us children have definitely worked there at some point or another.

Interviewer 2: I went to Waldemere with my autistic group.

Interviewee: Yeah it’s really good, it’s a good way to get everybody together and have fun rather than having to do what's on the to do list. Bonding with their staff and consumers and managers. It’s nice.

Interviewer: so with your long history of how much you know and how much you’ve been in meadville, what do you say represents Meadville? What gives off the whole Meadville vibe? What makes Meadville, Meadville?

Interviewee: Well it’s definitely places like the rec complex here, and I went here all of the time when I was a kid and up through to a teenager. You know, Conneaut Lake park, the different fun things to do. No matter what, the community changes. The different groups of people that live here, those change over time. But those kinds of things kind of keep the same. There’s always the same fair. You know, this place, and there’s always this kind of stuff to do. But I would say, like.. I went off on a tangent.. What was the question again, I’m sorry.

Interviewer: what things do you think represent Meadville? What things make Meadville, Meadville? But you actually got what I kind of wanted. You said the whole vibe is like the people here and there are things you keep on doing no matter how much it changes.

Interviewee: That kind of stuff are like cornerstones in the community. It’s kind of just getting people to do those things. It kind of brings people into the community, like people that have always done them, who we look at as staples, would believe that anything else would ever happen like this. Of course these things are going to happen. But bringing more people into it and making it their background is really good. And I think that the tourism in Meadville, it’s small tourism but it’s tourism. You know, it’s attractive for the area and gives us something to do here, not something to do that’s somewhere else.

Interviewer: If something in Meadville went missing that you really really love, like if you really love the MARC and it got abandoned and they tore it down, would it seem like Meadville changed significantly?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think that’s actually a lot of the reason why, for instance, Conneaut Lake park is still around and why they bend over backwards to save it. I mean it was on the doorstep of death as an entire organization, and they forgave all kinds of and gave them chance upon chance finanially to find a way to survive. And they redid the leadership until they could find the right people to pull it out of the hole it was in because it was literally such an important aspect of the community. They wanted to make sure they did everything they could do to make sure it wouldn’t fail and it wouldn’t disappear forever. And I think that’s really something that they’re doing right now. And it would be the same way for our fairgrounds or for here, like if there were any ideas that it would go away, it would mobilize people to make sure to do anything that could happen to keep it here.

Interviewer: So like, Meadville is already this cemented foundation full of people that have been raised here and want significant things to change like the MARC or the Market House?

Interviewee: I mean like to see them get bigger and better

Interviewer: You wouldn’t want to see them demolished for a mall or something?

Interviewee: No, absolutely not.

Interviewer: Or something that could help the newer people here?

Interviewee: Well, no. I mean I think there’s, for instance, the expansion of our medical facility, that’s getting a lot of different good jobs. I think that there’s space to add to in Meadville rather than to tear down. I don’t think that things need to disappear just to have them have new come in. Yeah, but I think that the farms are great, and I think there is some farming tourism that does happen. And I know that we do have the additional space. But I think we need to always check our expectations, for instance, about a large mall being built in somewhere like Meadville where there’s Grove City and Erie like 45 minutes away in either direction.

Interviewer 2: One thing about the farm is that when they don’t grow, or like the storms with thunder and lightning and tornados.

Interviewee: Well, farming is a big aspect of our culture in this town. Not necessarily right in Meadville. On the outskirts of Meadville, it’s a big deal. And I think that’s really good too. That's the thing, managing expectations that something big would come into meadville because we really don’t have a lot of the population and the jobs to support huge shopping malls and things like that when people can drive for low, well low-ish gas prices a few miles away

Interviewer: Alright, so if something really substantial, like the gardening had to disappear, how do you think meadville would recover from it? Like all of the bigs farms around here, because of how big that is to the community here?

Interviewee: we’d have a lot of issues kind of like how we have had issues with down turns periodically in the gas industry. Which a lot of people in the area are employed by or work for. The different well paying manufacturing jobs aren’t around as much. Even though there are some very good tool and die shops around, they are not as prolific as they used to be and that means not as many people having really great jobs nearby. And less people, less money for the community, less money for schools, less money for pretty much everything. So I guess making sure there are good jobs nearby is one of the most important things to make sure that this place and places like this survive. Cause people have to have money to support it.

Interviewer. What do you think Meadville has that could provide and boost for it’s future?

Interviewee: that leads right into what I was saying before. I really think one of the biggest issues we have, and bigger communities have it too, Erie has it too, it’s called brain drain. It’s when really good students leave to go to college, they can’t come back to Meadville because of what they majored in or because of what they’re interested in isn’t here. The jobs just aren’t here. Or if there are jobs similar to that, they aren’t well paid enough for people to want to be here. And so we spend money educating these people, like you guys, and then they don’t come back. So that means finding a way to stimulate the local economy so that people have higher paying jobs and want to come here, stay here, raise families here and feed the cycle in a positive way is really super important. Because a newcomer that moves in isn’t necessarily going to care as much as somebody who has lived there all their lives. You know, they would care about the community in a abstract. I care about this community because I live here, but they could always move somewhere else. You know, it’s home to me and would matter more to me, I guess.

Interviewer: Like a tourist, or someone who just moved here. Can you imagine what it would be like if you were a tourist and what you think Meadville’s strong points would be?

Interviewee: well, I would not be kind about the roads, generally I would not have good feelings. And when we are in bad weather, we are rough, we are. But I would be super impressed with our, going to give my friends some props here, brewery tourism, they are really well known and they are on the up swing and it attracts a lot of people from out of town and they’ve got a lot of homegrown die hard support and i’ve been really impressed with the places around that attract places like that. I’m really impressed with just the sheer number of golf courses. You know, there are a lot of local gyms that are really fun to go to like they’re mini communities on their own. I would be really we would have like the fair and the thurston classic. More of those would probably make me more interested in staying if there were more things like that. I mean the halloween parade, if everyone can stand the cold, it;’s really great! It was really great being in it for years, but watching it i’m just going to have to bundle up a lot because i’m sure my kids would want to watch it and that it a long parade, that is a long parade. I should have a mini fire carted with me, i’m sure that’s illegal but you know something! iT’s long to be in but at least you’re moving around somewhat, maybe. But yeah that’s really fun and the Baldwin Reynolds house in the winter is really fun, we’re a short hike away from it and i’m tempted to go in there and thief and entire christmas so I don’t have to decorate it on my own. It’s really pretty. We have that kind of stuff which is really great, and you wouldn’t find that anywhere else.

Interviewer: so, that’s great. What are Meadville’s weak points right now?

Interviewee: I think that sometimes, I would say there’s three points to that. Educationally, structurally we’ve having issues. We need to be able to get the people who are older and educated on some technological skills, not necessarily during college, I mean we need some more advanced technological jobs just to give them more of a chance to have a job. Like, not minimum wage jobs, we have a ton of those. We need to bridge that gap and bring people into a higher rate of pay for them. I know several people that have 2 or 3 jobs at a time and they don’t get to enjoy anything and I think that makes people bitter. Then they lack compassion for other people and people in need. Especially in this community, they don't have a lot of compassion for each other and I think its waning. That’s not good. I actually want to see more people get more involved and because once you’re involved you have a stronger sense of community , you’re more tied to it. I Think that would be great. And between educating the older population, by older I mean like older than you guys, mid to late 20s that want to stay here and maybe have a kids or 2. Having higher paying jobs so they want to stay and can survive and have a happy quality of living. And you know, I think a lot of our local government needs to stop stepping in it’s way and stop making arbitrary decisions and just asking what we want. It’s really important and I think they don’t do that enough.

Interviewer: so you don’t think what we’re doing right now happens enough? Like they don’t ask before they make snap decisions?

Interviewee: i’m pretty sure they don’t ask at all, and if they do it’s in the Tribune as a poll and you only have the people that read the Tribune that participate. Not hating on the Tribune at all, and they have a really good and they’re so alive for a local paper, but I there are people that don’t get the local paper like further away communities, young people, people that just moved here, you know people don’t buy the newspaper. You’re only limited to 10 views online so you don’t know what’s going on! \*laughs\* that might be a small dig, but.. Yeah so that’s the kind of thing, getting people involved and getting communication out to the community so they know what’s available, sometimes they don’t even know what’s available. And if they don't know what’s available then they can't participate. Making stuff like that more available would be great. It’s not like anything around here costs a ton of money, it’s just getting there and having people know about it. So yeah, that’s pretty much it.

Interviewer: so if more things like My Meadville happened you would be like, this is chill?

Interviewee: yeah I would definitely say to anyone that wants to talk aloud to somebody or somebody who isn't afraid of going to have an interview, you know, go and say what you need to say. It’s the only way anyone’s going to find out what you have to say anyways, unless you're arguing on a message board somewhere online. Which people here do. And then that's where you can get the sense of the lack of compassion. They can be very vocal about the antagonist events towards each other and it doesn't need to be there. So may if they were invested in doing things for other people they would have more compassion. It’s a nice little cycle you got going on there.

Interviewer: Thank you! Would you please fill out this paperwork?