146 - REAL

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**SPEAKERS**

Speaker 2, Participant 146, Interviewer

[OUTRO]

**Interviewer** 09:29

Um, yeah, so my first question here would be, what is your sort of perception or understanding of how much people, you know, purchase their food from grocery stores versus convenience stores versus the farmers market? Do you think people in Flint are getting it more from one source or another? How basically would you rate the strength of these connections?

**Participant 146** 09:57

So — I think that that's a very complex- because it really is dictated by what population of people, um, you're-you're considering as to who's-who's shopping and who's not from what I see. The- and I get to bring up, I get to bring a different perspective to this because my new job post school retirement is I am now produce manager and store manager at a grocery store. And-and whether this is perception or reality, I'm not sure, but, um, people have at least significant populations of people with poverty who are using food stamp benefits and things are not shopping at farmer's markets. The actual percentage of SNAP benefits and things that we're taking at the farmers market is, is not significant in relationship to a total day. Most market days, our SNAP benefit take is less than 10% of the total day. Where compared to my grocery store experience, some days we can approach 30% and 40% of our daily take is on SNAP benefits. And so, so that piece is there. The other thing that I've noticed at the farmers market is that once COVID hit in March of 2020, the significant number of SNAP benefit recip- recipients who are coming to the market has declined. And sometimes I wonder if that decline is triggered by the fact that there are so many other food sources being created, such as- that would fit into that emergency sector that you talk about, um. That maybe the need to come to the farmers market for produce is drastically reduced because they're getting it from so many other sources. And so, our-our customer base is pretty loyal market day after market day. And I would say that, again, the vast majority of that customer base, are-are people that are middle income people that are working all the way to retired age. And so I think that it's a very conscious choice for people looking for a food source different than what they can acquire at the grocery store if they're going to make the time to travel to the farmers market to do that.

**Participant 146** 12:58

The other- the other- the other observation that you make when you're at the market is that the types of food being selected are interesting things as well and it goes to buying habits and what consumers are looking for. The amount- the amount of customer shopping that is targeted at something that is prepared, ready to eat versus something they have to take home and do something with, um. It is a huge percentage of the shopper at the farmers market that's coming for something prepared ready to eat.

**Interviewer** 13:50

Yeah, I apologize as this is a tangent, um. My hometown farmers market over the last 15 years or so has really transformed- I also grew up in a college town- has really transformed into a like a cute place for college students to get breakfast rather than my childhood remembrance of like really, like produce and eggs and meat and honey and like was really like, Oh cool, we're going to go grocery shopping at the farmers market and now it's like, get coffee and a croissant.

**Participant 146** 14:23

Yeah, I- our booth at the market is surrounded by a cinnamon- cinnamon roll business on one side, a barbecue vendor on another side and a baked potato spud on the other side. And a couple of years ago, the Detroit Pistons organization donated a million dollars to the market to give away to consumers in the Flint community. And those $5 coupons throughout- throughout the life of that million dollar program, on vegetables we took less than $2,000 over two years of tax. The cinnamon, the cinnamon roll guy was taking $800 to $900 a day.

**Interviewer** 15:12

Wow.

**Participant 146** 15:14

On cinnamon rolls. We just- just look at that, and the market management tried to get the Pistons organization to encourage shopping more healthy food selections, and they're like, no, we just want to help out the community, we don't care. And so those $5 coupons went to cinnamon rolls and baked potatoes and a lot of other things, but that weren't necessarily healthy food choices. And it's, and it's the same thing with the big potato bar that's across the aisle away from us. If you and again, this is a blanket statement that you just have to be careful how you interpret this. But, if you were, if you were to survey and count the physical size of the average customer buying baked potatoes, you would shake your head and say, what are we doing as a country? And, and, and I because of- because of being in the teaching role with kids we've spent a lot of time over the last 10 years talking about, is there anything we can do within food policy that would encourage better food purchasing habits and food utilization and-and that's-that's so difficult, so difficult to wrap your brain around and, and I- and I have had this conversation with multiple people because the USDA manages seven nutritional programs, WIC being one and food stamps being one. And the USDA came along and said, hey, this WIC card is only going to allow you to purchase foods that we deem to be healthy, highly nutritious foods. But then we turn around and we hand you a bridge card coming out of the same department of our government and say you can buy Coke and chips and Slim Jims and Slurpees and, and the- and- and the long term ramifications of poor diet lead to poor health. So then as we move more towards a national healthcare system, now we're not only paying for a poor diet at the beginning of this individual's life, but now we're paying for their health care towards the middle to end part of their life because of the results of poor diet. So for years, we've paid for the first side of that now we're paying for both sides of that which in my way of looking at things says it's an expensive proposition. So, I don't know. That's where- that's where that question takes me. [Laugh]

**Interviewer** 18:23

No, that was great. I — Um, sorry. Um, my next question would be sort of around, um, essentially the-the production side and I would love to get your - it's gonna be an opening question - I'd love to get sort of your perspective on, if we're thinking about mapping like the connections to, um, gardening, agriculture, however you want to term it. Um, so what you know, drives, uh people being able to or-or, barriers to people entering sort of this production of food space, um, but also sort of the-the connections out, what are the benefits, um, to the community or, I don't know, even if there's like negative outcomes of-of sort of the production, though, like local food production in Flint, again very open ended I can ask a more directed question, if that will be useful.

**Participant 146** 19:41

Um, I guess let's tackle the production side of that first —. The, we made the choice to grow, produce organically within our organization, just because nobody was necessarily filling that mark- that niche market at the Flint Farmers' Market. Um, and so it's not because I get behind the say organic is the only answer. But it was a business decision to meet the needs of that, that clientele. So do I, I eat as healthy as I can, and I eat the vast majority of what we grow. yes, but doesn't stop me from buying non-organic things when I go to the grocery store either. So-so from a philosophical perspective, the decision to grow organically was, was a business realm more so than- more so than otherwise. Um, from the perspective of the local, my, my perspective, when we started this was, my goal was to teach our students how to run their own entrepreneurial businesses. Because we started it back in 2010, when Michigan's economy was still not very good, and the after school jobs that my students normally would get were being filled by unemployed adults. And so the idea was to teach kids that there's more than, that there's ways to make a living, not relying on someone else for your paycheck all the time. And so I wanted kids to develop the ability to run their own entrepreneurial businesses. And they wanted to do that in a hands on manner, I didn't want to just do it from a book and paper in a classroom. So hence, we created the first garden area out in the school lawn and kids learn to purchase inputs and manage labor and learn to market the product and cover the full gamut all the way from production, production to sale, and manage all the resources necessary to make that-that system happen. And when we found that we can do it pretty well, that's when we started encouraging kids to replicate our model at their house. And that's, as the business grew, that's how we ended up with multiple families growing and multiple different sites. And each of those families now is treated as an independent farmer, and they get paid for what they deliver to the market for sale. And, and I never up until that moment, I never stopped to think about the-the long term impact of what this was doing in our community. And so, um, when I look at, and I look at the community of Flint, there's a couple of people in Flint worth talking to me now because they would like to consider replicating the model that we're doing in the Flint area. The idea that there is land base, and abandoned lots and neighborhoods and things throughout the Flint area that could be turned into productive local food sources that not only bring healthy food choices to the community, but at the same time, bring potential for substantial revenue to the community. And, and so those things are out there and the models, the models of how to do it so that somebody is not just recreating the- somebody's not trying to recreate the wheel, there are some very successful models out there of food production that if people were taught to replicate the model, it offers the opportunity for some very substantial income. And so those things- those things are out there. And- and I always thought back because the federal government through the NRCS, the Natural Resources Commission in each county has offered these grants for hoop houses. And there are- there are a lot of those grant funded hoop houses standing in the Flint Genesee area, but very, very few of them have actually been turned into productive business entities because what didn't come with that money from the federal government- there was no training that came with it to say, okay, we gave you the tool now here's how you turn the tool into income.

**Participant 146** 20:05

And so because of that I've been able to travel around the countryside and see abandoned hoop houses, I pull in driveways and say hey, are groups looking for them? If you're not going to use it, would you be interested in selling it and I bought hoop houses for very, very small amounts of money in some cases and put them in the hands of my students at their houses so that they can join our group as growers and, and move forward. And so I look at, I look at sometimes again, you know, whether it's nutritional choice, whether it's business choice, sometimes we put dollars of resources out there, but we don't follow up those dollars with the appropriate next set of resources that turn it into meaningful change. So that's the production side of it, I don't remember what you said, the second half of that question was.

**Interviewer** 25:41

That was great. Um, I'm just adding in something that I heard and I thought was really interesting is this mismatch between funding and training, um, that there is-is more funding and resources out there than there is training so it has not necessarily been super effective. Um.

**Interviewer** 26:15

Yeah, so, uh, my question is basically sort of along the lines of, I mean, we've done- that was an incredible answer and I am excited to show you sort of how I mapped that out. Um, you know, we've talked a little bit already about sort of the-the benefits of, of this, you know, of, you know, more nutritious foods like available in the community, but also all the many, many benefits of education, um, and engaging with community, engaging with youth and their families, of-of economic opportunities and, you know, potential to make some income off of growing and selling food, um, and all the benefits of having sort of this alternative sort of thing, you know, like a local food economy, um, all the benefits for the community in general. Um, other, uh, potential, uh, tunnels or the outcomes of this. And we also talked about some of the, um, connectors or the connections in, right, of the, um, something I said is that funding and grants are-are important support mechanisms for-for, uh, local food production, um, partnerships can be useful, um, land availability, are other things that you think, um, are either aspects that support local food production, or that are-are real barriers to people getting involved in this sort of part of the food system?

**Participant 146** 27:48

One of the biggest barriers, and it goes back to why our business model is created the way it is - one of the one of the biggest barriers that I have observed in multiple scenarios, when we go to local-local food models is that it is highly labor intensive. And when we built the first hoop house at school, we realized, gosh, one or two good farmers markets, and we sold everything in the hoop house. And now we got to wait three or four weeks for the next crop to develop. And so for one person, one family to go out and try to do it on their own, and then get to a scale that's big enough to be sustainable week after week, is hugely, hugely demanding physically, mentally, everything. And so our-our group by joining forces and creating the marketing cooperative. We now have rotational plantings across the nine families. And so it allows people to have a vacation, it allows people to rotate crops from one cycle to the next, but yet the market still is satisfied and the customer base still keeps coming. Because they know week after week, they can show up at our booth that we're going to have product on the table. And early on in the game, we realized that one hoop house at school wasn't going to achieve that because we didn't have enough space, enough labor and a lot of things to make- to make sustainability 52 weeks a year practical at one location. So that's the one thing that I see, um, and growing food on small scale local because it is a lot of hand labor. A lot of people will jump into it because they love gardening or whatever. But then they realize, gosh, to do this and make money at it, it's a job and it's physically demanding and it's long days long hours sometimes to get ready to go to a market or whatever. And so the bigger broad spectrum of- it is that sometimes the enamor- the enamourment of local food with the reality of producing local food for those who choose to jump into it isn't always- perception isn't always reality. And so, again, our, our model, by sharing the workload across multiple families, our model has allowed the market side of it to be very, very stable. And yet each family has the opportunity to not have to bust their butt, seven days a week, week- 52 weeks a year. And so, that was one of the things that came out of what, what and how we evolved into what we're doing. Um, the other part that- the other part is- and I've just talked to is sometimes a hindrance is customer perception. Because frequently, customers are deterred from shopping for local food, because the perception is that local food is more expensive than what they can buy in the grocery store. And we have a lot of people that will walk right by our booth because it- oh, it's organic, therefore they're really expensive. I'm not going to shop there. And so we modeled, just as an example, we modeled our, our salad mix packaging after "Earthbound organics," boxes, which are five, five ounces each. So our salad bags are all five ounce salad bags. And Earthbound no matter where you go is $3.99 for five ounce box, I don't care if you go to Meijer's, Kroger's, Walmart, wherever it's $3.99 for a five ounce box. We, we have been at $3 a five ounce bag in the entire 11 years we've been to Flint Farmer's Market because we get above $3. I take product home because people won't buy it and I just shake my head because it's like, we are fresher, we have harvested this in less than 24 hours from harvest to your table. And yet, you sit here and say, but your more expensive. And I don't know how to break that stereotype that local food is automatically going to be more expensive.

**Interviewer** 32:31

Yeah.

**Participant 146** 32:35

We sold- we sold winter squash this year. All winter long, we sold winter squash for less than 50 cents a pound. And yet I go to Kroger's and their winter squash is $1.25 a pound all day long. It's like really, you know, and so, so again, local food perception is, oh, they're local growers, therefore, they're more expensive because they're organic, they're more expensive. And yet I sell product all day long at less than what they would pay if they went to Kroger's or Meijer's or Walmart.

**Interviewer** 33:16

Yeah, I, um, I-I live in Ann Arbor and I live right next to the farmers market. So it's a huge source of my, my, like daily food, and I have friends saying like isn't that expensive? I'm like, no, I get like, huge heads of kale for like $3, I eat it all week.

**Participant 146** 33:37

Yep, yeah. So, but the perception is there. And there's a lot- there's a lot of people I know that won't even go to the farmers market because the perception of the market as a whole is that oh, the farmers markets an expensive place to shop. And so they fully avoid the market in its entirety out of the perception it's expensive.

**Interviewer** 34:10

Um, my next question is so we have, um, uh, a couple like what we're calling food system values, which are different concepts and definitions that emerge from conversations and focus groups with Flint community members. And some of them I have already added to your map just because you, you talked about them, essentially, you know, uh, aspects like education and nutritious and healthy food, partnership and collaboration. You know, even like, sort of I connected sort of these local food economy and education to sort of community empowerment. Um, uh, a couple of the other ones that we could potentially talk about today, or not are, um, idea- sort of like affordability of food in Flint. There's also availability so that the kinds and amounts of food that people want are available to them on their local food system, or like in the food system in general. Or also this concept of quality of life is respected, which is sort of combining a lot of things that people want to feel comfortable and safe and, um, have choice and dignified throughout the food system in many different ways. Um, are any of the things that I just talked about things that you would potentially want to add to your map? I will say the answer can be no.

**Participant 146** 35:45

Well, one of the one of the things that I would toss into as part of what you just mentioned there, is that one of the things I had never thought about before until this conversation happened at the market one day, is that the Flint community, when you look at the demographics is- the family household is high, high, high percentage, single parent households. And, and then a high percentage of these single parent households are young moms with young children, that- that their greatest challenge is, they don't own- they don't own transportation. And so somebody painted the picture for me one day, they said, so now imagine in the city of Flint, that in the wintertime because city of Flint doesn't have a lot of money, they don't plow the side streets. So therefore, only the main roads are getting plowed and that's where the buses are. So now you're a young mom of one or two kids that are under the age of five, so they're home all day with you. And you now maybe have to walk through unplowed streets, unshoveled sidewalks two, three blocks toting two toddlers, just to get on the bus. And then you've got to get downtown, pack up those toddlers, get off the bus, go across the street to the farmers market, shop while dragging two toddlers around, and now you're going to ride that bus back. Now you're not only going to wrestle two toddlers, but now you've got all these bags of food that you've just purchased, you're going to drag that through the unplowed streets and unshoveled sidewalks as well. And when somebody laid that out for me like that, I'm like, it was just that realization of such a struggle that I had never ever given thought to before. That the same people that we would love to help and that there are tons of food programs available to help them, that the food program itself is not the help they need.

**Participant 146** 37:54

It's being able to get somewhere to utilize the food program. And I never- never thought about that before until that conversation.

**Interviewer** 38:09

Yeah, yeah, it's um it's been incredibly interesting throughout my own journey of learning with the food system, but also, um, the range of conversations we've had with folks, um, working in some way or another in the food system of just how interconnected so many different like social and economic systems are to food, um, that like affects like yea, like transportation is a huge impact on how easy or convenient or even like available food is for folks.

**Participant 146** 38:46

Which, we took our students one time down to Detroit, and there's a nonprofit organization called Earthworks that farms the abandoned blocks in-in lots and stuff in the- in the east side of Detroit. And it's located right next to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. And, and so we were there about nine o'clock in the morning, the students toured with the director of the program and things like that, then all of a sudden at about a quarter to 11 people started coming out of everywhere. They were crawling out of abandoned cars, burned out houses, out of basements that no longer had a house above them. They were coming out of everywhere. And the gentleman said the Confucian soup kitchen serves approximately 2500 meals a day. And for the majority of these people, they live within a five block radius of the soup kitchen. And- and for many of them that will be their only food of the day because they are so poor, they don't have money to ride a bus, there's no grocery stores, there's no quality food outlets, there- if they don't come to the soup kitchen their only other choice is shopping at the liquor store. And there's certainly- and there certainly is not a wealth of healthy foods being sold at the liquor store. And, and again, that learning experience because I looked at my students and I said that 2500 meals a day is more meals than all seven of the school districts and Sanilac county combined together serve in a day, and they do that in a five block radius. It's like, it just- you- so sometimes, again, for me, at least, my, my perception of the world evolves, as I've taken my students places, and we're engaged with a different culture of people. And it's like, it just takes you back because what you- what you think you know, of the world is all of a sudden altered by someone else's reality. And my daughter, my daughter, and I, my daughter is a very deep thinker, so she and I get into very deep conversations and, and she and I just on the phone the other day were talking about agricultural food policy, and the whole concept of bridge cards, and why people can buy whatever. And she very quickly pointed out, she said, this is that aspect of agriculture, where they have very big lobbyists, she said, so if you go to the USDA and say, you're going to discontinue allowing people to buy sugary beverages, she said, you know you're going to get pushback from the beet growers of, of the United States and the sugar cane producers of the United States, she said there will be lobbying actions that will say that is the wrong policy to have. And if you say that there's going to be less red meat, you're going to get pushback from the beef producers and the pork producers and things because, because they have strong lobbying agencies that are going to protect their portion of the marketplace. And they don't want people at poverty to not be able to buy their product. And she said, so even agriculture as an industry is not all moralistically well, because we all have a turf to protect. Which again, and then we got into a conversation about how you can't pull on one string of our- of our social network, you can't pull on one string without it impacting the next string in the ball of twisted up yarn. Because it is transportation and it is access to food and it is price and it is a lot of dynamics. And so it's- it's a- it's a very, very difficult societal effort that we have that, money gets in the way of doing maybe the right thing sometimes.

**Interviewer** 42:50

Yea it's been, um, startling to learn over the last few years just the power and consolidation and like industrial agriculture, like the influence there is on national policy, you know, everything like that, like school meals and stuff.

**Participant 146** 43:20

Substantial, substantial. When Michelle Obama created the the revised school lunch program, and people thought this was going to be the miracle cure, and then created food choices that the average kid wouldn't eat because it was- because to create healthy stuff was not- was not easy to do within the budget constraint that was then put forth to buy those school lunches. And all of a sudden, we rolled back to just serving kids non-salted non-buttered number 10 can green beans that most of us adults, we wouldn't eat, we dumped them in the trash. And then we wonder why kids quit eating school lunches and they started dumping them in the trash because they were not flavorful. They weren't. They were horrible. These kids would choose to go home hungry after school instead of eat that stuff. I don't know. But the constraint is that we're asking school districts to produce a highly nutritious lunch that kids will eat for less than $1.30 per kid per day and then pay staff to fix that food, it's not realistic. And so you can't cut staff because you got to have staff prepare the food. So where do you cut the corner, you cut it on the quality of the food you buy. And the amount of school lunch trash climbed astronomically. So, interesting dynamics.

**Interviewer** 45:20

Absolutely. Um, you know, you can't necessarily see the map that we've created, um, Is there- is there anything else? You know, we started with some of these sectors, and we introduced some values that were sort of derived from the research that we've done. Um, is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like, um, to add to this map to bring up things that you think are important to the Flint food system or, or other outcomes that you think are significant that aren't really captured by these values.

**Participant 146** 46:01

Well, the one, the one that I probably have had a lot a lot of conversation on is that, um, I'm old enough to know, back in the days when school still had Home Economics classes, and the- the art of- the art of food preparation was a taught thing at school. I am amazed, sheerly amazed at the number of young moms who will openly profess to the inability to know how to take a raw fruit or vegetable and do something with it. I watched somebody one time receive a five pound bag of potatoes at a food bank. Why they bothered to take them I don't know, because they took them and threw them in the dumpster. And when questioned why they threw them in the dumpster, they said it's because we don't know how to fix them. I grew up where my mom cooked everything from scratch, so that idea that somebody doesn't have a pers- perspective of how to turn a raw potato into hashbrowns, or American fries or, or whatever. I have a hard time wrapping my brain around that.

**Interviewer** 47:16

Yeah

**Participant 146** 47:17

But then it al- then it also begins to explain why the purchasing of ready to eat, frozen, frozen food is such a big deal. I was just reading because my job here at the grocery store, I was just reading in a trade journal the other day, that the frozen food section of all grocery stores is the- is the highest shopped section of every grocery store. And I've gotten to see, I've gotten to see it firsthand. Now that I work here, how hard our frozen section is shopped every day. And it's not the frozen corn and the frozen peas and the frozen beans that are being hard shopped. It's the frozen bread products. It's the frozen pasta dishes, it's the TV dinners, it's- it's the frozen ready to eat, throw them in the microwave pieces. And in the trade journal, hot- hot pockets and pizza rolls are two, are in the top 10 of all frozen food purchases. And it's, and so you know, there's probably multiple reasons why those, because again, my daughter through intuition she- now imagine, she said you're- you're a young mom who's trying to get by and maybe you're working two and three jobs to get by. How much time do you have to be home preparing meals for- for your family. Yeah. So again, you know that comment from my daughter piques my brain a little bit because it's an angle that I've never thought about before. Because if this young mom say I'm not going to rely upon all kinds of social assistances, I am going to work I'm going to pay my bills, I'm gonna do what I can. And she's working two, three jobs to do that. And the kids are surviving on their own and mom's putting stuff that the kid can pop in the microwave to survive on their own while she gets ready to go to the next job. And I- and so again it, you know, it's just another way of looking at a problem and why those problems exist. And sometimes, sometimes the food choices aren't always made for the reasons you think they might be.

**Interviewer** 49:49

It's it's really interesting, sort of the- so many dimensions like how people are, like, consciously make choices about the food that they purchase and consume and how much it is decided for them in a lot of ways, I mean they don't have the time, they have to rely on something that's super convenient. And they were never taught how to cook, so they don't even know what to do with it, um.

**Participant 146** 50:19

Right? Right. Yeah, in my retirement, my vision at our booth at the market has always been now that I'm not at school all the time, I would love to start doing simple cooking demonstrations at our booth every Saturday. And when I say simple, less than- less than eight ingredients, only dishes made with common ingredients that can be found in most households. And things that can be made on a stovetop and a single pot in many cases. I might when I was teaching school, one of the, one of the classes I taught was food science, and I had students working on developing what I call "one pot wonders." How do we take all these vegetables we're growing and in one pot, make something absolutely delicious? And how do we then teach people to do that? It was a lot of fun to do that.

**Interviewer** 51:26

My next question. Um, uh, you know, one of the goals of this, this project is not only to build sort of this, this common understanding of what's going in Flint, sort of, put the pieces together, but it's also to, um, sort of like ask about and then explore what we're calling, um, leverage points, things that could be done, things that could be changed in the Flint food system that would have very positive outcomes in one way or another. So this could be something big, this could be something small. So I wrote down, you know, like cooking demos in school and the farmers market. Are there other things that you would consider to be- to be leverage points? I also sometimes say this, like, if you could run the world, how would you change the food system?

**Participant 146** 52:16

Well, again, this goes back to conversations I have with people because for most, for most of us as adults, our food eating habits were ingrained in us from our childhood. And it takes- it takes a real want to do it differently, to change what we- how we have been taught to eat. And so again, philosophically, what inspires people to change, it normally has to become so uncomfortable doing what we're currently doing that we say, I got to do something different. When it gets that uncomfortable, then we'll make that change. And so as I watch people who struggle with obesity, and you then watch so they, again, I- caution does not stereotype this, but someone walks in to the marketplace, the store the whatever and they're in excess of 300 pounds. And obviously not healthy. But yet what they fill their grocery cart with continues to be heavy, high sugar beverages, high- ready to eat foods, highly processed foods. They didn't get to be obese overnight, they got there a quarter of a pound at a time. And all of a sudden you look in the mirror a year or so later, and you say, oh my gosh, I've gained 10 pounds this year. And then you look in the mirror a year later you say, gained another 10 pounds this year. And all of a sudden your look over the span of 10 years you say gosh, I just gained 100 pounds. It's a slow evolution to a not healthy situation, but the habit of how you got there is so ingrained that just all of a sudden eating differently is kind of like the smoker that just has to quit smoking cold turkey. But the smoker at least just says I got to quit smoking. The food person on the other hand has got a food addiction problem that has to figure out, it can't just quit eating. But I don't know how to eat differently. And, and I often wondered whether I could ever pull off a food education support network through our farmers market booth where we would actually work with families who have the desire to change their eating habits to give them a system- systematic way of slowly evolving from what they're doing to something different. I don't- I think I know and I think I know a lot to help get there, I don't know if I know everything it would take to get there, but the last 10 years have been a lot, a lot of research and working with students and looking at what we're doing and why we do it, and why kids, because even the kids in my classroom are pretty stereotypical of high, high percentages overweight, not healthy. 17, 18 years of age, not in great physical shape, um. When I at 55 can go out and outwork the vast majority of the teenage boys in my room, just is a sad state of affairs. And I'm like, look at them, I say you guys are supposed to be in the prime of your life, and this old man can out walk you and out lift you and ou trun you what the heck? And so it's just deep. It's a deep, deep issue.

**Interviewer** 55:58

Yeah and I think, um, my perception, maybe I'm just changing from talking to you is that this idea of the cultural, social determinants of health of these influences on the diet and lifestyle, that are often in many ways beyond your control and super hard to change behaviors have been more and more part of the conversation recently which I think is as- hopefully steps in the right direction to then address it. Like starting early, you know, nutrition education in schools.

[OUTRO]