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Joanna Meyer:

You're listening to the Faith and Work Podcast, where we explore what it means to serve God, neighbor, and society through our daily work. Hi, and welcome to the Faith and Work Podcast. I'm Joanna Meyer, Denver Institute's Director of Public Engagement and founder of Women, Work and Calling. And today, I'm joined by Abby Worland, our Vice President of Operations and Finance. Or, for the purposes of today's conversation, should I call you Ms. Worland?

Abby Worland:

Oh, man, that's taken me back to another life, Joanna.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah. Our listeners may not know this, but before joining Denver Institute, Abby worked for two... is it two years in rural Mississippi doing Teach for America, working with students, and then you were an administrator at a rapidly growing charter school network here in the Denver area. Just fascinating. What led you to be working in education, Abby?

Abby Worland:

Yeah. Well, first of all, if you look at the research, education is a key determiner of so many different life outcomes, from your income levels to your health outcomes to your life expectancy, all these different sorts of things. And I wanted to be involved in education, partly because I myself loved going to school but also because education is at the root of everything that kids can become, and thinking that excellent education and access to it is a human right and a civil right. And I wanted to be part of providing that to students.



Joanna Meyer:

Yeah. I know you have been doggedly committed to that. You were just in Mississippi celebrating the graduation of students that you had known as junior highers, which is just amazing.

Abby Worland:

Yes, yes. It was so fun to see them graduate.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah. The last few years have just been tough ones for educators. We've seen teachers and administrators try to navigate the pandemic here in the Denver Metro area. We have seen school boards become more activists in nature on both ends of the political spectrum. School conversations have been more contentious. And I am thrilled about today's guest because she is one of the most hopeful stories that I have seen in education in a while, and I know our listeners will be intrigued by what she has to share.

We'll be hearing from Tracey Beal, who's the founder of School Connect. It's a collaborative movement in Arizona that has grown outside the boundaries of the state to work in school districts nationwide to really help bring together business, faith communities, government, and non-profit organizations to collaboratively serve the needs of a local school. Abby, tell us a little bit more about Tracey.

Abby Worland:

Tracey Beal is the founder and CEO of School Connect, a model of strategic collaboration that helps schools accomplish their goals while fostering partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders. In 2022, they served more than 350,000 students in Arizona in over 700 schools and saw significant improvements in teacher retention and kindergarten reading scores in the schools they serve.

Prior to founding School Connect, Tracey served in Pastoral and campus ministry. Tracey, I'm so excited to talk to you. I was telling Joanna before this that I was competing with other staff members to get to be on this podcast and learn from you today. So welcome. Tell us a little bit more about School Connect. What exactly do you do?



Tracey Beal:

Oh, I'm so glad that I'm able to be here, Joanna and Abby. It's such a privilege. Love the Denver Institute and very excited to get to share about what we do with School Connect. Our mission is connecting schools to their community because it takes a village to help every single child reach their potential.

And so what we mean by that is we want to build strategic partnerships, businesses, nonprofits, faith communities, civic groups, all at one table at the school, really identifying how they can make a difference in all the elements of what will make that school successful. So we're really creating an ecosystem right around that school to give support.

What we hope for on a school level is that teacher retention will increase, school culture will transform, parents will become more engaged, and of course, academic achievement will go up. And in that process that faith communities will have the opportunity to win trust and get to share Jesus. So that's what we do.

Abby Worland:

I love that. Could you talk a little bit more about some of the specific initiatives you have at School Connect? I know we're going to talk about CAFÉ a little bit later, but you all do a lot of different things. Could you talk a little bit about those?

Tracey Beal:

Sure. So what we look for is catalytic events that will bring everybody together on behalf of the good of kids, right, the common good. So one activity, one beautiful event that we have is our Love Our Schools Day, which we do in the fall. And this is an opportunity not only to do a service day for a school but with a school. So our goal is to have some students, some parents, some educators, and a local church, a local business at the table.

They get to serve on a Saturday together and build relationships. We do this because 70% of the people in neighborhoods around schools don't have children in those schools. So they don't know what is really happening in their own neighborhood, and unless they get a bond or override postcard or something on the television, we want to change that. We want to build relationships.



So that's in the fall. And then in January, the end of January, we have a huge summit that we host at Grand Canyon University. It's usually around 800 or more top leaders, superintendents and principals, business, faith, nonprofit, and government. Everybody at 72 round tables talking about on a higher level, how can we impact schools together. So that's a beautiful experience. And then, in the spring, we host the Champions of Education Awards.

This is where we highlight students, teachers, principals, superintendents, school boards, as well as business, faith, nonprofit partners so that we can actually honor the incredible work that they do together. And then the CAFÉ is really that smaller right at the school experience of building a village with a principal right at the school.

Abby Worland:

That's awesome. Thank you.

Joanna Meyer:

The scope of what you do, Tracey, is absolutely amazing, especially when you look at some of the stats that Abby had shared in our introduction. What fascinates me is that you didn't start your career in education. You started your career as a pastor. So how did God lead your vocational journey in this direction?

Tracey Beal:

Yeah. Well, interestingly, at the time, I had started Young Life College at Arizona State University, the downtown campus on the West campus, and I was in partnership with Pure Heart Church, where I'm now a pastor. And so, at the time, I was taking college students on service opportunities around the world. I was in Peru and I had these wonderful college students, Young Life, and church people, kids too, but college. And we were serving a special needs public school in Peru.

And I had this aha moment from the Lord that schools are a portal to every need in a neighborhood. That blew my mind. I started to realize, "Oh my gosh, homelessness, refugees, food insecurity, mentoring, parenting, drug addiction, you can access all this need as a believer, right through a school." And there's a school in there every neighborhood. And then I'm like, "Oh, my mind is blown. Why aren't we focusing on schools, right?"



And then the second big idea was, "Why am I doing this only in other countries? Why don't we come back and try to do this in the City of Phoenix?" So that's where that came from. I immediately came back from Peru, and I gathered churches, and I gathered the university and businesses and artists, and we started building the model that would become School Connect.

Joanna Meyer:

That is amazing. And when you said that a school is a portal to every need in the community, it's true and kind of mind-boggling. It so echoes what we talk about a lot at Denver Institute, about the gospel being as large as the needs of the world, and that as a Christian, we learn to love our communities and see the needs of our communities as we respond to them. I'm wondering, I'm guessing Arizona's different than Colorado, but there probably are some common needs as you look at public education, not just public education, just local education.

Tracey Beal:

Uh-huh.

Joanna Meyer:

What needs do you see from your perspective?

Tracey Beal:

I think that, right now, across our country, we would have what's being described as culture wars. We have a lot of controversy, polarization. And I feel like this is the opportunity with the School Connect model to bring people together around a common good that they can work on together. And I think it's just absolutely crucial that we do that because every kind of school needs a village of support around it. There's no way educators can do everything that is required to make kids successful, or even families. We need parents to be engaged.

Well, they need the support of parents and community to all come together on behalf of kids. They are our treasure. They are our future. And so I really do think that sometimes some of that controversy and polarization, I'm not trying to in any way suggest that the topics aren't worthy of discussion or working through. They are absolutely. But where Jesus is, where His kingdom goes, children are fed and they're clothed, and they have a great education, and they have adults who invest in them, and they have a quality family. These things are part of the Heart of Jesus Christ.



And so it's a true honor that we get to bring the community together, the village to together. And then I would also say that, "Wow, what an incredible opportunity for the Christian in every sector, right." From the church to the business, to the nonprofit or government leader to come to the table and use their business, their organization on behalf of kids, right. I mean, it's a rallying point, and it's just a beautiful thing.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah, your collaboration between sectors is just astonishing. It's rare. I've rarely see things like that.

Abby Worland:

Yeah, I like that phrase. It's almost the anti polarization. You're bringing people together around a common good. I'm glad you started talking about your villages because that's what I would like to learn a little bit more about. Tell us about who's part of these villages that you assemble around schools and how do these villages actually work in support of the schools and the students who attend.

Tracey Beal:

I'm so glad you asked that because we could describe this as we get businesses and churches and nonprofit and civic organizations together to do work at the school. And that would be true, but it wouldn't be the real heart of what we're trying to do. And what we're trying to do is build a village, which means everybody gets to know each other. They get to understand and value each other at the table and they get to become a community, an extended family of the school.

And I think that's really important because that's healing for all of us, and trusted relationships are exactly the fuel that accomplish anything, right. So I would say a village is a whole group of people who have built trusted relationships with the school and with each other. And then we have something that we describe as the CAFÉ model, which fits right into this concept because when you think of a cafe, you think of a table, right. You're sitting around a meal and with family or friends. And that's the idea behind this, a building a village.

You're getting everyone to one table at a school, and you're asking, "Okay, what are we trying to do? Are we trying to impact teacher retention or school culture or parent engagement or academic achievement?" And then it's matchmaking the organization, what it does well that the school needs. Now you're not forcing anybody into a mold or trying to get them to do



something that they're not good at. You're like, "Okay, we've got the ecosystem together. We've got the village together. What are you good at that the school needs?" And then we work at it together as a community.

Joanna Meyer:

Okay. [inaudible 00:13:23], I want to believe that the CAFÉ model works, and I know that it does, but I've seen enough television video of contentious school board meetings where people get up to the mic and they yell, and that doesn't seem to be the situation at the CAFÉ. So tell us, what is it actually like to bring all these parties together around a table, and how do you have a constructive conversation?

Tracey Beal:

Yeah. If we were leaving that to chance, we'd be in trouble. So you're exactly right. I would even say that one of the reasons why parents end up at school governing board meetings is because they don't have a voice at the table of the school. And so it's important that we understand that, "Man, we want to give... When we bring a village around a school, it includes parents. It includes students, as well as those school leaders and the business nonprofit and faith leaders." And the person who gets to drive this little gathering is the principal.

They get to say, "Hey, this is our strategic plan for this school. We have this many students who are homeless, and they need laundry detergent." Or, "Oh, we have had kids who've experienced tremendous trauma." And look at there are these chaplains that happen to be present in a business or a church who could come and visit their families in the hospital, right. I feel like the reason why it works is because there's a principal with real needs, real kids, real families, and they're able to say, "This is the common good we're going to work toward." The CAFÉ is not about having fights over all kinds of controversies.

It's like, "What can we agree on as a village that we want to work on together?" And then I guess the other thing I would say is sometimes, unfortunately, schools can come across like, "Just give me money, give me what I need." And we are here to say to schools, "This is going to be a partnership. This is going to be a trusted relationship. No organization is going to continue to serve a school if they're not also accomplishing their own goals at the same time." So if you're a business leader, of course, you want to get more business. You also want to make sure that your employees have a chance to have meaning and purpose in their company and in the community, right.



Maybe you want to create a pipeline of employment that happens with high school college students. We actually have a nonprofit called ACE Mentoring that brings architecture, construction, and engineering industry leaders into high schools to mentor kids for a semester. It's all free. Why do those leaders do that? Because they need a pipeline into those industries, and they know if they invest down at the high school level, they'll get them in trade school or college. Matter of fact, they offer them scholarships and internships. So that's the kind of mutuality we're looking for.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah. I appreciate hearing about how business leaders can be involved in education because that may not be a natural fit. I know that they care deeply about the job, the school-to-work pipeline, but having practical ways to serve is pretty impressive. I'm wondering if you could give us an example of a school where this model has worked well. And practically, how have the different sectors come together to serve? What have they each contributed? And you have some amazing stats for how these villages shape schools, so I want to make sure we highlight. We kind of praise the amazing work that's happening.

Tracey Beal:

Yeah, I mean, one story that is really cool is Mountain View School that is 1500 preschool through eighth-grade kids. It's in a part of Phoenix that has a lot of drug addiction and homelessness and violence there. And when we started, they had one faithful church that was amazing who was still there. So we were so happy about that. But there were two things that were to turn the school around. The two things they started out with was creating a school culture where kids were safe and respectful, where they could learn, and keeping teachers.

So teacher retention is directly connected to all of the rest ending in academic achievement. And so the village grew. So we had multiple churches, and we had nonprofits, and we had a city neighborhood specialist, and we had businesses. And one of those businesses was AAA Automotive and they were a part of the Hatcher Urban Business Coalition right in the heart of that community, which is a very Spanish-speaking Latino community would remind you of a little Mexico if you can get that picture in your head. And they were working on teacher retention.

And so, one of the churches said, "Well, we're really good at making food. So every time there's parent-teacher conferences, we can provide a meal for teachers." And that way, 150 staff with all those kids, they'd have a chance to eat that night, right. And then a business said, "Well, we



know that you use the program of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, which is really helping kids behave well and giving them incentives to do that. And they said, "How about if we give a gift card for every classroom so that they're able to get incentive prizes so that when kids behave well, they have something that they're not pulling out of their own pocket."

And then AAA Automotive, that little automotive shop I told you about, they said, "We know that it's hard sometimes to motivate teachers when they're in these Title I schools, these high poverty schools. So we're going to find an educator to give a car away." And in January, this January... This is the third time they've done this. In January, I got to stand in the parking lot of AAA Automotive. The police department was there and the superintendent and churches and all the little businesses. And this young man who received this car only thought he was coming to get a free lunch.

He had been working with special needs kids for five years without missing a day, and he did not own a car. And when they handed him the keys to that car, we all just started to cry. And this was the whole community working together. And so just as an opportunity to see the difference, they went the very first year we were trying to build a village, they had lost 30 staff members, huge. The second year, they only lost 15. The third year, they only lost six. When you all pull in the same direction, and you each do what you are good at, what you see is this beautiful transformation starts to happen. So that's one example.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Hi, I'm Jeff Hoffmeyer, Vice President of Advancement here at Denver Institute for Faith and Work. And I'd like to invite you to become a part of our new monthly partner community. Whether it's a monthly commitment of \$25, \$50, or any amount, your generosity will support Denver Institute's ongoing efforts to help men and women love God, their neighbors, and society through their daily work, including this podcast.

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Abby Worland:

It's been so interesting to listen to you talk about how you've built those communities of collaboration at the school level and thinking about making sure the principal is the one that leads those dialogues because they're the leader that has real kids in a real school with real needs.

But we don't all have a School Connect that we can contribute to, and we're all required to collaborate in different ways in our day-to-day lives. What are some of the... I suppose you could say, what are some of the transferable collaboration skills that you would commend to us? Whatever our jobs are, whatever roles we find ourselves in, what does it take to collaborate well?

Tracey Beal:

I'm so glad that you asked that question. When I think about it, the first thing I think is you do have to build trust. So you actually have to build relationship. And I know I've said that, but I have to say it again because that's an element that can never be underestimated. And then I think that you not only come with yourself, your resources, your gifts, your talents, your organization, but you also come with the ability to listen. So ask the questions of what does partnership mean to the other party? So we're asking schools to do that with their partners, and we're asking partners to do that with schools.

Let's ask, "What is it that you're passionate about? What would be meaningful to you? What does partnership mean to you? What would it look like to collaborate in a way that would be truly mutually beneficial for everyone in that picture?" And there's a sweet spot in the center. If you imagine kind of a pie with all the sectors coming to the center of the pie, they all bring their own mission, their own personnel, their own plans, their own passions, but there's a center part where they all meet.

And in that center is the magic of collaboration where now the gathering of us together and collaborating on behalf of a school or in your business or in your church is greater than the sum of its parts. And that's... So, for example, here's another just amazing story. During COVID, we knew that, in Arizona, the digital divide was just a massive struggle. There are 250,000 families as we were in 2020 who did not have computers or internet or the ability to use technology. And one of the partnerships that we had was with government. I'm on the Mayor's Youth and Education Commission, but another partnership I had with was Scottsdale Bible Church.



And then I was also friends with a business who was able to access computers at a hugely discounted rate. So Scottsdale Bible came to me and said, "If we raised a million dollars, could you help us address the digital divide in the City of Phoenix?" I'm like, "Wow, I think I could." And then I talked with the mayor's office, the Youth and Education Commission that I was a part of, and they said, "Well, we happen to know that there are 12,450 computers needed by schools in the City of Phoenix." And then, I talked with our business partner, and they said, "We can get brand new computers, laptops for \$190 a piece." And then I'm like, "Okay, sold."

And then Scottsdale Bible, they raise a million and a half dollars, and we bring in money from the city, the Cares Act money. And then the Department of Education says, "Use our warehouse." And so School Connect helps to connect businesses, churches, government, all of the education, everything together. And we gave all of those computers out to 12,450 computers to schools that were desperately needed. That's a sweet spot. That's the place where we all figured out how we could work together. And the sum was much greater than... I mean, that total was much greater than the sum of the parts, right.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah. And I think about as I watch friends and family members engage education in any form, whether it's at home or it's in your public school or your faith-based school, there tends to be some anxiety these days of, "As a Christian, how do I make sure that my values are reflected in this local school?"

And as I think about the relationships that you're building through this center set, this common good mentality, it allows respect and care to operate at the center, and you have a better chance of talking about those concerns that you have versus adopting a protective or an aggressive fighting stance. And I think that changes the conversation entirely. It's better for families. It's better for students. It's better for the education system. So I think we could all learn from your example.

Tracey Beal:

I do think that a lot of people are experiencing different kinds of trauma in terms of their children and what we've gone through with COVID and then what our experience is with our values and whether those are being listened to or respected in the context of school. So I agree with you so much, and I hope that our model is helping people learn how to listen and speak with one another in ways that are respectful and where they can find something that they can



work on together. You don't have to agree on everything in order to agree on something. That would be a beautiful and powerful opportunity.

And then I guess I want to, if I could, speak to Christians for a moment to say what an incredible opportunity in challenging times to take the initiative to continue to serve and listen and have honest and real conversations with people rather than to react. Wouldn't it be a beautiful thing if businesses and schools and civic organizations were to say, "Those Christians, how do they manage to keep loving and serving and having real conversations, right? They're able to have better conversations than what I'm used to, right." That would be my vision for the Body of Christ.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah, I wanted to ask a little bit more about that because, clearly, you are open about your faith. The love of Christ motivates your work, and yet you're in mixed faith environments every day. What does it look like to be authentic, meaning you're open about your faith and yet appropriate for the context that you're in?

Tracey Beal:

I think that when you live a trusting and transparent life, you understand kind of the right spaces to talk about the right things. So if I am at a school during the school hours and I'm there bringing partners together for a CAFÉ, we're going to talk about those things I just described, whether that's teacher retention or school culture or academic achievement or parent engagement. If we've won trust and there is a family that has just experienced a death, like in one school district we had...

Actually, in the same district, we had three kids who died this last semester, two of them from car accidents, and one from... one middle school girl who was just amazing took her life. Well, those are traumatic, difficult times. What we had the opportunity, because we had chaplains and we had trusted relationship is, when the school district reached out, we were able to say, "Hey, we can send people to support this family that is in the hospital, or we can host the memorial service for that person who doesn't have that, right."

And so I really do feel like if we're willing to be rubbing elbows with everybody in our neighborhood, in our community as we're serving schools, we also open the door to serve them in many different ways. And then, as a pastor at Pure Heart Church, I can honestly say that thousands of people have come to the church because of what we do in the community. And it



transforms the relationship, and it gives an opportunity to be able to share, in a verbal way, about Jesus Christ.

Abby Worland:

Tracey, when you think about your work at School Connect, it really is a labor of love, both your love for others and your love for God. When you think about your work with School Connect, what have been some of the rewards that you would identify, but also what have been some of the costs to you?

Tracey Beal:

Mm-hmm. I mean, the rewards are when you see a need fulfilled when you see hundreds and hundreds of volunteers volunteering at a school, or you see that a bunch of kids lost parents during COVID, and so now a local church has created a grief booklet and kind of care package for kids, or you see them come in early and put treats in all the teacher's mailboxes and write handwritten cards, thanking them and appreciating them. For me, it's like Christmas, right. It's even more fun to give than just to receive.

And so getting to see all that generosity, getting to see a school that says they want a garden, and then watching a business come in and help build the garden and the kids plant the seeds and the teachers explain the STEM activity about how plants grow and photosynthesis, and then understanding that this is real food and it has nutritional value, and then you learn to cook, right. I mean, this entire picture that's so beautiful. I would say that the painful part, the challenging part is so often people are very into just what they're into, and they often don't look up and look at opportunity.

They sometimes talk more than they listen. Sometimes it's very painful to know that all the parties at the table have a valid complaint or concern. But that if they were to really listen and work together on what they have in common, they could make progress. And instead, they turn their backs and they break relationship and they now have kind of judged one another. That's very painful because you look at the need. You look at the kids and you think, "Okay, the kids are going to take all of us. These are our kids. These aren't somebody else's kids." If we just go, "I'm only concerned about my children."

Well, we're going to be in trouble when your children are now in high school or when your children are growing up and they're now trying to find a job. It's really all of our children. They're our treasure. And when I don't always get to see adults understand the value of this



next generation and the investment that we need to make, this is what's going to make businesses great. It's going to make churches great. It's going to make government great if we invest in kids and if we all do it together.

Joanna Meyer:

It's always interesting being on the podcast because our listeners can't see the faces of the people. We have video running. So we can connect with you as we talk. And Abby and I are both getting emotional on the other side of the screen as we think about the gospel and action of the collaboration of the life and the goodness that comes through the work that you do. I'm wondering. We've talked about the focus into the schools and how it serves students and families and educators. How about the outward impact? How have cities been shaped by the overflow of School Connects work?

Tracey Beal:

I think it's pretty exciting when you begin to see a particular city. I'm thinking right now of Colorado Springs. They have the City Movement Organization, COSILoveYou, so Stu Davis, and they have brought the School Connect model there. And so Gina Schmidt is our city director doing School Connect with COSILoveYou. And man, watching how they want to impact the entire city, but to do so, that means you have to actually impact all the sectors.

What's so cool about watching this is as they have been applying the School Connect model and bringing all the sectors to schools, now all the sectors are working together in the broader community or neighborhood. And that's just thrilling to get to watch that because now you have business leaders getting to know nonprofit and civic and faith leaders, and they're seeing each other as humans, and they're finding the magic of collaboration. And that impacts things like foster care.

Those things are... Or homelessness. Those things are directly connected. And so I love that because really School Connect as a model is here to amplify what City Movements are already doing. And what's cool about it is we aren't saying, "You all have to do one thing at a school." Like you have to do third-grade reading, or you have to do mentoring. Not that those aren't fabulous. They are fabulous. But it means that we can allow every organization to do what it does best. And that thought process is exactly at the core of City Movement, right, helping them all work together. So that would be one example.



In Lafayette, Louisiana, we have a team there. And one of the beautiful things that came out of the need in COVID was they found a way to provide internet. And they did this in a collaboration between three family foundations and the Department of Education in Louisiana and the city. And they created a web of internet so that kids who did not have it could get it, families could get internet. That's like a city transformation experience. When you bring internet to an entire area of a city, it's just unbelievable, right. So it's just fun to watch all that happen on a regular basis.

Abby Worland:

That's incredible. As we know, School Connect started in Arizona, and then you were just talking about Colorado Springs. Could you talk a little bit about how School Connect is growing? And if someone's listening to this episode and think, "How do we bring School Connect to our city, our community?" How do people go about that?

Tracey Beal:

Yeah. We would love that. We have expanded to eight other cities around the country, everywhere from kind of east all the way over to Orange County, California. So we're all over the country in those places. And one of the things that we love is gathering a group of potential city leaders. So we bring them together. We invite them to come to our summit in January. And then we can start a cohort, a bootcamp of new cities who want to get School Connect started. And we go through that bootcamp over seven months.

We do one-on-one coaching, and then we also invite them to join our city movement cohort. So we've got city directors as a cohort, we have the bootcamp as a cohort, and we have one-on-one coaching. And then we have all these resources. So we have a strategic plan. We have downloadable PDFs and videos. We have everything you need to be able to be successful in starting School Connect in your city. And so yeah, we would love that. And if you're interested, then I would go to info@schoolconnectaz.org, info@schoolconnectaz.org.

Joanna Meyer:

Yes. The very School Connect chapters around different states may have different web addresses, so the School Connect AZ is important. We'll put that link in our show notes. I want to give you a final question, give you an opportunity to have the last word for our listeners, Tracey. You have touched on just this beautiful philosophy of collaboration gospel-driven



collaboration for change. I'm wondering if you could give a little exhortation to our listeners to challenge to them to kind of live out those values through their daily work.

Tracey Beal:

Yeah, I'm so happy to do that. I think my challenge would be that every single person in front of you is an opportunity to live out your faith. Like every relationship that you in your circle is somebody that you get to love toward Jesus. And one of the things I love to do personally is bring people who are not yet believers with me as I do all the things that I do. So I just did that recently at a gathering. I brought a school... a top school official with me to a group of Christians who were together for several days.

And it impacted him so deeply that he decided to give his life to Christ. So the opportunity for those things to happen are everywhere. And you never know what they might be. But if you understand that Jesus is alive and has purpose and plans every single moment of your day with every person that you run into, and you're ready, and you take the opportunity, then you get to be a part of God's Kingdom expanding. And it's a joy to get to do that.

Joanna Meyer:

What a gift you are to Arizona, but also what a gift you are to us. Tracey, thanks for sharing your vision and experience and passion with us today.

Abby Worland:

We hope you enjoyed listening to our conversation with Tracey as much as we enjoyed having it. In the show notes today, there'll be a link to School Connect so that you can learn more. And there will also be a link to Tracey's podcast that explores the work that they're doing through School Connect. Thanks so much for listening.

Joanna Meyer:

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