

Transcript of Interview with Sue Buettgen by Jack Nord

Interviewee: Sue Buettgen

Interviewer: Jack Nord

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Location (Interviewee): Minneapolis

Location (Interviewer):

Abstract: University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire student Jack Nord interviews a Minneapolis based six grade teacher, Sue Buettgen. In this interview Sue discusses her initial feeling when she first heard about the COVID 19 pandemic and how it changed her day-to-day routines. She discusses her transition from classroom to online teaching and all the new struggles that presented. She talks about her fears for her student's safety and their individual home environments are affecting them. Sue dives into discussing social disparities and how the pandemic has highlighted the issue. Sue also discusses science experiments that she was trying to still make fun for her students and how her community has come together to help others. The interviewer, Jack Nord, also chimes in to briefly discuss his life as a college student. They both discuss farming and agricultural problems that have arisen. Sue finishes off by discussing how her home life has been impacted, how her family is coping and keeping safe. She discusses her hopes for the future before ending the interview.

Sue Buettgen 00:01

Um, my phone ever cuts out tell me sometimes it's weird.

Jack Nord 00:05

Yeah, it's it's kind of spotty here too. So the time is 12pm or 12am and 12pm[inaudible]. Today is May 16 2020. And just as a reminder, any answers you provide will be included in a publicly accessible archive. So please do not share any information that you would not like to be publicly available. Okay. And then we'll get into the background questions. So what is your name? And if you're comfortable, do you mind sharing your age and ethnicity?

Sue Buettgen 00:37

Yeah, well. Sue Buettgen its spelled B U E T T G E N. And it's really Susan bear because and I'm just, I'm [inaudible] in March. And as far as parentage backgrounds, my family's generally Irish and German and some English thrown in there English, Spanish. But I suppose if you were looking at a forum, I would probably have to check Caucasian.

Jack Nord 01:11

In general, where do you live?

Sue Buettgen 01:13

[inaudible] Better?

Jack Nord 01:17

I'm in general, where do you live?

Sue Buettgen 01:23

[inaudible]

Jack Nord 01:29

One second, you're cutting out? Let me go by the window. Can you hear me?

Sue Buettgen 01:35

Yes, I can hear you.

Jack Nord 01:37

Can you hear me now? Okay

Sue Buettgen 01:40

The address, or just the state like I live in South Minneapolis. My time and like,

Jack Nord 01:44

No, that's perfect.

Sue Buettgen 01:46

Okay

Jack Nord 01:47

um, when you first learned about COVID-19, what were your initial thoughts about it? And how have your thoughts changed since then?

Sue Buettgen 01:55

Okay, well, it was kind of interesting, because I heard a lot on the radio, you know, they were telling a lot of stories about actually people that were teaching English or teaching classes in China at the time and how they were stuck inside. And that was back in January, I think. And, and really, I had a lot of students that were looking up and very stressed out about it and worried, you know, they, they heard a lot about it. And at first I wasn't, you know, at first, I didn't realize how bad it was gonna be. And I thought, but then, you know, I thought more like flu virus, were okay. But then when I started hearing that, you know, they were not allowed to go outside. You know, then I'm like how this is a little more

serious. So I guess it was just some stories that I was hearing about Americans that we're teaching in China that they're, they're sharing their stories about, you know, being a member of state, they were actually teaching their students through zoom and through different things face to face, even though they were like kids teaching kindergarteners, English. They were a little kids, but they were using computers that keeps them and they were staying there. So that was interesting.

Jack Nord 03:04

What thoughts of concern you the most about COVID-19?

Sue Buettgen 03:08

Oh, I didn't ask the second half about what I think about it. Now, I'll kind of do both of those. No, I really think it's a serious thing. I think it's a worldwide pandemic, for sure. I think we just watched last night's a show about the New York, Brooklyn, men and women that are doctors and nurses and ambulance drivers. And it was really eye opening even more, just how serious it is. And, you know, people do need to take it seriously. Maybe not for them, but for other people that around them that could get set. And that I think it's one that eventually we'll find a vaccine for I feel that, you know, maybe we'll pick a shot, like we do the flu shot every year and help. But I think it's, you know, it's something that happens in our world where we get new viruses, and we have to figure out how to deal with them. But this one was a lot more spirit than a lot of others. And so I'm hoping people take it seriously. You know, we need the funding to help with that we need people to, you know, try to stay away from people if they can and treat it safe. And I'd say the most concerning thing for me is, you know, what's happening with my students and my families and my family and our people being safe? What will happen if they do get sick? How's that gonna affect them? Are they going to be part of that 20% that needs a hospital? Are they going to be part of that percent that needs an ICU. I'm proud of our state for trying to slow it down and long enough where we can get enough or we can get enough respirators and things that they need. And now we did we had like 230 And now we have over 2000 and with close to 4000 that we can have already. So I think I think we've been doing well with that and really listening scientists need to do. So. You know, I guess it's most concerning because, you know, I think people are patients especially in our country, I think there are patients and just want to do what they want to do. And we've sort of lost that idea of we need to think of the greater good as well, and that we are human community, and we need to help each other.

Jack Nord 05:09

Perfect. And then we can get into the employment questions. So what is your job? And what do you do on a day to day basis?

Sue Buettgen 05:19

Well, I'm a sixth grade science teacher, I've been a science teacher for years. And before that, I was at nature centers, museums, always in education. I'm in the backyard. So I, on a day to day basis, I teach 120/6 graders, physical science, so we're doing physics and chemistry. But I always try to work nature

into it too in the environmental ed into it as well as we try to get outside and we can to tie a tie to the real world. And so it's a lot of hands on experiment. I have a very diverse group of students, pretty much all ethnicities pretty much within our states, and lots of different languages better spoke lots of different abilities as far as kids with disabilities. So it's a really wonderful mix in a real range of abilities, which I love. And just working to make that all fun learning community is one of the things that I'm really proud of. So. So that's what I do on a daily basis, usually, now on a daily basis, I'm in front of a computer at home, which I don't like, it's really hard not to see the students. And I'd say that's the saddest thing about it all is they really want to do well, I mean, I've never met a kid who doesn't want to do a good job they do they want to do well, they want to please you, they want to please themselves, they want to please parents, they want to do good. And this is very difficult for a lot of them, or even students that are normally functioning at a very high level. Now being isolated, it's very difficult for them to stay motivated to not feel lonely to not feel like you know, to get it all done, when they see it, it seems like a lot, when we're not guiding them through everything day by day. I mean, they don't do eight hours of schoolwork, they they're guided in communities, and they're, they're guided as a class and they're guided how to get started. And, and, you know, even though they do work independently and with groups a lot, where they're getting going, and we're there when they need us. And so now it's really difficult, even though they can use the technology and reach me anytime they want. It's amazing how even though we've had every kid with a computer, how they didn't do that they're unable to do things independently, that usually their partner would go Oh, click that button, or we'd be like, oh, here, let me help you that night, you know, and now they're on their own. And for a lot of them, they don't have a parent sitting next to them, exploiters. There are a lot of parents that are working, particularly students that either a single parent or they are an immigrant family, you know, there's so a lot of people that are working, and so the kids don't have backup, even though their parents would love to be there and give them backup, they can't. So, you know, we've, we've heard from a lot of parents who didn't even have parents that are there, it's really difficult for them, they're not a sixth grade science teacher, they're not a sixth grade math teacher, you know that. And so it can be it can be really difficult for them to look at the list and go, Okay, now what are we going to do now. And so it's, you know, everybody, I think, wants to do their best, but it's very difficult. Well, and we even have most everybody has internet, we gave them hotspots, if they didn't, so they could pull up the internet. And we had every kid with a computer, a lot of places don't have that. They don't have every kid with a computer or every kid with internet or computer.

Jack Nord 08:33

And you know, even college students are struggling incredibly with this. And a lot of college students don't have access to internet. So the campus library actually had to buy computers, and give them out to students that could check them out. And it's

Sue Buettgen 08:51

Like the libraries, everybody, everybody wants to help. I mean, that's what's really cool is you're really seeing people wanting to help wanting to do what they can to help everyone and really get this done. So that's been really cool to see. But I know like families that only have one computer, they got four kids,

very trying to do four hours of homework a day, it's impossible. You know, at least at least at our school, every kid does have a computer. And it's still very difficult.

Jack Nord 09:23

Has the curriculum changed for students because of this?

Sue Buettgen 09:27

I absolutely, um, we're definitely not getting to as much. Again, we've had to cut way back to what we can expect of them. Just because so what they have to do in the morning, they they're supposed to by ten, but we were like counting that they log in at all because like we have kids that are at a daycare, their parents are first responders or whatever, they're at a daycare, or they have to work and so they're not even starting to get help until three, four o'clock. So, but they have to log into this thing called the hub and that's where the school takes attendance like if they log in there and look at their schedule for the day. I got there assignments are listed, then they get counted present. You know, they're not absent. And then they look at this list. And it might say, science, go to Google Classroom map, but a Google Classroom, go to Moodle and do these assignments, look at this video. So there's a list of what they have to get done. Sometimes it can be really daunting. So we've definitely cut back the amount that they're doing. Definitely, like, I tried to do fun science videos for them. So like, totally buckets of water, talk about centripetal force, you know, popping Jiffy Pop popcorn to talk about conduction, and they are popper for convection, you know, so I'm trying to do things in a fun way, which we did, we wouldn't do some, I mean, a lot of fun things are done at school, but you can't do it now. Unless you show them with a video. And then you can encourage them, you know, you've got this try at home, like you're grownups, no one tried at home. But, you know, it's not like replicating the experiment for them for sure. Or having them do a hands on themselves. It's just not. So yeah, we've definitely cut down what they're doing. In fact, these last three weeks, we've cut down where every course because they not only have their five, you know reading math, social studies, language arts and science, but now they have homework and choir and band and fax, which is like homework. And, you know, tech ed, and you know, all those exploratory classes, and art. So they have, they have like, eight classes that they have assignments in. So we've, we've cut it back to every class, two assignments a week, 15 minutes. Otherwise, we just felt like we're gonna lose them. And we'd rather have them learn something than nothing. So but I think I've done pretty good with, with my stand, I mean, every everything, if people are going to standard base for sure they're reaching their standards, just they're just not getting to everything they want to for sure. So So I think I've reached, I've touched on everything I wanted to touch on, but it's definitely it's not the same.

Jack Nord 11:53

Actually, in college labs are doing like for labs, we're doing the same thing, you know, before it was extraordinarily hands on. And now, it's just like, Okay, watch a video, or we were doing on different soil horizons. And they were like, you know, if you want to, you can go outside and dig a hole and look at

the soil horizons, right? You know, but a lot of people don't do that. So you have to watch a video to really understand.

Sue Buettgen 12:22

And then for us, like, there's things I'd love to have them go outside and try or do or look for, like, I really started off the very first week we did this, I really started with this nature observations, what's happening at Spring, and that really just look out your window. We have to and they really liked that. Sorry, puppies in the neighbor's dog. But, but they're 11 and 12. I can't say go outside and go do this. I'm not exactly sure where they all live. If it's safe to do that, to start with, if they can do that, if they're not, you know, some a lot of my kids that are sixth graders are at home alone watching for other little siblings, you know, they can't go outside to do something. So there, there's so many kids that are helping their family and, and are alone and can't, can't go do that. I have one girl, she's just the brightest student. She's a sixth grader. But she she came, like two weeks to our country before this all happened before school was sent two or three weeks. So she was just meeting friends. And her family. They worked in the health care industry. So they're in that home. So she's home alone. And she doesn't really have a lot of friends yet, because she was just meeting them off. So she can't just wander outside for seminars she got here. It's so hard for so many that and then I have one set, both parents are home, they're taking them outside, they're going on walks, they're doing trial experiments, you know, it's it's a it's a range of what they're able to do. But but the one thing is they all want to try and they all want to do well. I mean, that is so clear. Nobody's just like forget it. I'm playing, but they're not doing that. They're bad when man he he wrote me this long, beautiful email. He's a lovely student, but he did have a little bit of trouble this year. And he said, I know I'm a little behind but I'm gonna work to catch up and I'm so sorry I gave you any trouble this year. Like it made me cry. It was the sweetest He's a lovely person and always had grown up you know, in dealing with stuff but he was just so introspective and so wanting to do well and and, you know was given it as all you know, but it's just such a different, different thing when you're on your own trying to do this.

Sue Buettgen 14:35

If you still email them or call or you know, chat or whatever, then I'm constantly just, and most of those haven't been about how to do the work. Most of it has been what do you do when I got a new puppy? It's my it's my birthday. Don't forget, Tomorrow's my birthday. Like they want you to remember they're there. They want you to talk to him. They missed us. We are for a lot of kids. You know, for a lot of kids, no matter But their ability no matter what their economic level, we are their stability. We are, you know, the level ground all day. And they, they miss that. And they miss talking and laughing and students and community shows it's really hard.

Jack Nord 14:35

What do you want to know?

Jack Nord 15:16

What do you worry most about your students and the transition?

Sue Buettgen 15:21

Again that that, for one thing, do they have enough food? I talked to one students, and we were talking recipes. And I said, Whoa, did you have been to that? And they go, we're out of beans. Like they don't have it, you know, so I worry, they have enough food. I worry they're alone. And for some of them that alone with a free access to a computer? What are you watching? What are you doing? What are you talking to? I worry that there's a lot of young people watching other young people, their little siblings, and you know, how's that going? I worry, they're gonna get sick, I worry their parents are gonna get sick. You know, I worry that a couple of them out playing basketball with their buddies like what are you doing? And I worry when sons login, do when they log in? They're logging in at three in the morning, why are you up to three in the morning, you know who's watching you. So not, but I just worry about their safety, not worried about them being too far behind, there's some that will get farther behind that we're behind. Because they're just, we're not doing as much. I think, particularly in areas like that, you know, that it builds so much off of it. But, you know, we can we can deal with that we can do that I worry more about do they have enough to eat? Are they in a safe place? What's happening? You know, and? And is their family safe? Are they safe. And during this time, too, there's a lot of research that's showing, you know, where their first responders if anybody's being hurt at all, we're the ones that often see it and report it. So they've they found an uptick in different places in, you know, in emergency rooms of kids that were hurt by abuse or something. And, and because there was nobody that reports because we're at home. So I just I worry about a lot of them. And are they okay, and what's going on. So it's more of the safety piece 100% than the academic piece, we'll fix the academic piece, that's not a big deal. I want it to be safe.

Jack Nord 17:12

How about the transition from in class learning to online learning been for you.

Sue Buettgen 17:17

It's been an adjustment, I'm really loved being in front of kids as being with kids and working with them and watching them work together and getting them to be a community. And I'm not much to sit in front of a computer, I hate it. I hate to be in front of a computer. And so, but it's been fun learning some cool technologies and, and got stuff on YouTube now. I've learned a lot of you know more about how to do some different technologies and that kind of thing. So that's, that's always fun, you know, and using them in a fun way to have kids connect. So, so that's, that's fun. But overall, it isn't fun to sit in front of a computer and not be able to grab them and pat him on the shoulder and hug him and say good morning, every every day and say goodbye and to be safe and and, you know, get excited when they learn and and have them get so excited when they learn something new and say, Look, I did look at this, you know, it's just not as fun.

Jack Nord 18:16

Do you experience any technical difficulties in the transition from in class learning to online learning?

Sue Buettgen 18:21

We've been we were really good that Friday 13th of March, our district actually sent kids home two hours early and we were the tech people were like all over us as a computer working. What do you need? You need a new one? I don't have them today. There's a record. Do you know how to do this? Are you logged into the hub? Are you connected? Are your all your your calendar connected like so we just worked and then the next Monday, we too were just solidly working with our, our media specialists and our tech person to get everybody ready. And then, you know, i LUCKY i live in a place that has internet but there has been a couple of times, which is unusual that we've lost power. And I don't think it has anything to do with this. But there's been I don't know, like five or six times when the power go out. My stuff is working the other teacher, she's now she's working in one room, I'm working on the other and the power goes out news internet. And then you're like, oh, okay, so I guess we're just gonna go see how the gardens grown right now. We're gonna, we're gonna go because we can't do anything. It's all on computer. So we have to wait till it comes back up. So it hasn't been a long time every time but assessment weird. But other than that, not really. I would say that I am. But we've had a lot of students that didn't know how to do something that they did. For example, just getting on the computer and logging into the hub. They have a username and password they use all the time but they didn't know or having like even a Google meet where you you put your calendar where it says Google needs like join us meet like you click the words. Well, a lot of students don't know you put those words it's not intuitive. It's just blue words. And sometimes they're not even blue, they're a different color. So that's the kind of thing we're, especially students that are English language learners, or kids that have some disabilities, but really a lot of different kids. They just, they didn't understand the ins and outs of how to get places. And we didn't know that. Because when you're working with a group, and you have a community to help each other, and which is good, they're supposed to help each other. And they weren't doing an answer for somebody they were getting where they were supposed to start. So then we're like, oh, okay, it isn't intuitive to know how to do a Google meet. We didn't really do a lot of those with kids at all. But so and it isn't intuitive to know that when you see a slideshow, you click the blue words and get to BrainPOP you have to say click on these words, and or show them. So it's been really fun to do like Screencastify and do videos. And you can literally show them the screen and they can watch this video and and they can they can see how to do stuff because it was a kid that didn't have to do step or that. And that was weird. So I think I'm and then we have had lots of training, like almost every day, and they put trainings up about how to use Zoom, or how to use Screencastify. Or how to add captions to Screencastify classifier, you know, all these little, you know how to use Flipgrid you know, all this stuff that teachers can use if they want. And then you got to if you're gonna use it, you got to make sure kid to music. And that's, that's another whole ballgame.

Jack Nord 21:27

Do you believe that students are getting the education they deserve from online learning?

Sue Buettgen 21:33

Well, that's a tricky question. I, I'm glad they're learning something and has something to do and feel like they're still trying and working. And I think they're learning something. But no, I think they do much better when they're with us. And when they're with each other. I mean, there's research lots of research that says students are best with their peers, and they learn best from their peers. So our whole goal and as a teacher, a positive teacher is you create the thing, you get them going, and they help each other and they work together, because that's the way they learn best. So no, I don't think it's what they deserve. You know, but nobody deserves a pandemic, either anywhere in the world. So sometimes you just do what you got to do. But I do feel like we've created some things that are fun, I think we've reached out. And I don't think anyone has fallen through the cracks. On my team, or at my school, I've been really proud that that administration's reaching out to families, if they need something, they're trying to find it for them. If they, you know, everything from food to daycare to, you know, a new computer or to, you know, hotspot, I mean, they're really working on that angle to and then we're really working to make sure that we've talked to every kid that they do not have to do with me, we can we can check in with them. I mean, I've told kids, you know, call my phone number, it's right here. If you can't get through on the Google meet, we'll figure it out, you know, so I do think we're doing the best we can. And I feel like they feel like they're loved and cared for and that we're here. And they're not alone. You know, and that said, Everybody's trying for them. So I do feel good about that. But no, I think they'd much rather I mean, over and over and over kids and kids, I'd have had a hard time at school or like, I miss school, I wish I was at school, you know, when can we go back to school? You know, so, you know, they, they've been listened to, and we miss them. So I think it's, you know, they miss it. And I can't wait to get it back. But I think it's gonna be a while

Jack Nord 23:29

How have your students responded to online learning has been positive or negative?

Sue Buettgen 23:34

I think they, like I said, I think they've really tried really, really hard. I think for a lot of them, it's overwhelming. Because again, they get up, they pull up their calendar, and they have a list of all these assignments. And it's daunting, and so they kind of let them pick and choose just like, you know, just like we would do, oh yeah, I know, that's hard for me, I'm going to do this cold science instead. Or I'm going to do me this book instead. And so but to get them to go back, and if they start getting behind, then they have the rest of this list in this list. And so it can be very daunting. And then the other part of it is you don't know what's happened. Like, there's a couple of kids, you know, periodically, you don't hear from them in a while. And you're wondering, okay, are they okay? Are they are they sick with their family? Did they leave like I had a student leave and move to Missouri because they their family couldn't deal with this here. They needed to be with family to get support and help. So you know, then you wonder what's going on with them and are they okay, but but I think I think overall, they there's a few that have said I like this, this is really good. You know, I'm getting this done. And I know I have one student that just has a hard time in groups. It's loud at school, you know, because we're all busy and

and they started out doing really well at home and just really focused really getting everything done within their graphic guide and then that was that was it was really hard. And so, you know, you don't know what's going on with them as much and how to help them. And so some kids at the beginning were like, Oh, this is kind of fun. But by now they're all like, even now it's almost summer. And they're like, What I wish we were at school. I wish we could go to school. Why aren't we at school? There's a really cool song that a teacher did. It's called, I miss my school. You can look it up. It's on YouTube. The Bloomington teacher, elementary teacher, but it's a great song, you got to listen to us, because I think everyone spends my kids and grownups alike. It's called I miss my school, look it up and listen to it. It'll make it privately that made me cry.

Jack Nord 25:40

So this has been something this question kind of relates back to things we've experienced in college, and that teachers have had to consider, um, do you think that for some students, their home life has affected their ability to learn?

Sue Buettgen 25:53

Oh, absolutely. I mean, it does every day at school. But I think it absolutely is a greater impact now. Absolutely. And like I said, there's been, you know, when they're, if they're famous situations that were already tense? Well, they're amplified a million times over now. So absolutely, I think so. And then, like I said, they're responsible for kids at home. So a lot of them, excuse me, so they can't get to their work till they've helped, you know, their second third grade brother and sister do theirs, or, or they helped make dinner, or they help with laundry or cleaning, because they might be the only the oldest kid at home. You know, we're helping everybody's help. So, absolutely, they don't have enough time. And, and, and plus their kids, so they can get themselves out track to, you know, they can sit and play fortnight for four hours and go, oh, shoot, I didn't do my math, or, you know, watch tic tac YouTube videos forever, when they should be doing something else. So, yeah, I think it's greatly affected their learning. They don't have us there, you know, guiding them getting through the day, like, that's our mission, our mission is to get them to be a good community, to have them learn to be good friends and human and learn, learn different subjects. And then they don't have that happening. Now, even though again, parents want the best, they want it to go, well, they want him to learn. I haven't met one yet. That was like, you know, we should just forget that. It's very difficult for a lot of them. And they're there. It's really hard, but they want them to learn. They feel it's important. But it's hard.

Jack Nord 27:25

So going forward, how do you think this will affect students in the years to come?

Sue Buettgen 27:31

I don't think we're done. I have no idea. But here's my prediction, my prediction, here's my prediction, I think, come fall will probably start on computers. And I think when we come back, they'll have to do some kind of social distancing. So maybe they'll split, they'll have a task and come on one day and have

that's been told me to a timeline. Initially here, and I think it's gonna be a lot of work for teachers, a lot of work, and a lot of work for parents and kids. But I think we're gonna have a combination of online and in person. And, you know, I have no idea really making it up because again. But I think it's gonna be a long time yet. Until we can really feel like people are safe. I don't think we can just throw our hands up. Let's just go play forget about it. Cuz I think there's too many people in jeopardy to do that. I think we have to think about our neighbor and the person sitting next to us. And we need to help each other. And we need to help to from our leaders, they need to, you know, get one political ones. If we can bail out the companies and things we can bail out, the average person, we can help each other, get through this. And then we can, you know, get back. And I think a lot of places in the world are doing that, too. They're really reaching out and trying to help, you know, financially help people. So they can get through this, because this was nobody's fault. Nobody wanted this. This is the last thing anybody would want. So let's help each other and then we'll get through it. But I think it's gonna be a long time before we're back to what we would call normal. If ever I think this is one of those things that I mean, I think about your grandma. And, you know, she was born through the Great Depression. She was born in 1931. So she was born in the Great Depression. That was her early years. Then she had World War Two. And she had, you know, the other wars. And there were a lot of things that she dealt with that were very difficult, but she never forgot. She never ate potato soup. She hated it wouldn't touch it, because that's all they ate when she was growing up, because that's all they had. You know, she just didn't she wouldn't do it. And we're like, it's good. You don't like it? Like no, never. It's never gonna happen too much already. So she likes food. She likes cooking. But yeah, so I think this is going to be one of the things in their life that they're never going to forget. They're going to hopefully remember that we all work together and help each other and make sure people were saved the best that we could do. I mean, that's what you'd hope they take from it is that we got to watch out for each other and, and help each other and not give up and that, you know, it was a trying time. But no, they're not going to forget it, and it's going to impact them for a long time. I do think academically for a number of them, they're going to be a little further behind than they were, because they were already behind. But I hope that you know, that, that as far as just their family's ability to make it in the world that that that doesn't hurt too much. I think it's yeah, they're gonna remember it and attack him for a long time. And I think it's gonna be around a long time, I think until we get a vaccine, or a shot that you can take every year. It's, it's gonna be around a lot of time.

Jack Nord 30:52

So, will this change the way you teach when you return to in class learning?

Sue Buettgen 30:57

Oh, yeah. I mean, I feel like I'm a teacher already that really likes to think about kids. And, you know, helping them succeed all the time. And that, seeing them as good people, no matter what, and that they can do it no matter what. But I do think I always take stuff for granted, you know, and I just feel like I just took it for granted a little bit, and that I could have reached a few more, I could have been a little more patients, I could have gotten a little, you know, what I mean? That, that I could have gotten to

know a kid a little bit more. You know, even though I try to do it a lot. You always feel like, yeah, there was maybe I could have done a little more or appreciated a little more. I guess that's all I'm just never to take those hands on things for granted. Because I mean, that's why I like to teach anyway, hands on learning. They desperately miss it, and they desperately need it. I'll never, never not do it. It's always fun.

Jack Nord 31:56

So that ends all my teacher questions. And then I just have some additional ones. How has COVID-19 affected your households day to day activities, or your ability to communicate with family members?

Sue Buettgen 32:13

I think it's, it's been really hard. I think, like my partner, Beverly has, you know, got us ready. She's saw it coming. She's been shopping beforehand, we had everything we needed. It was shocking how how organized and ready. She was when I wasn't really even thinking about it much yet. And she's like, Oh, this is gonna be bad. And then we have our one daughter lives with us. Anyway, Kylie, and then Stephanie came back and her boyfriend's here too. So we have five people for dogs and a cat live in here. And it's been really fun to but and I think, you know, again, I think Beverly has a good attitude. And everybody did about you know, being safe, take it, you know, we just have to understand it's five of us here. And we have to, you know, be patient with each other and just have a good time. But we've had a lot of fun, hang, hung a sheet up and watch giant, big screen movies on, you know, on the wall. And we've played games, and we've cooked fun food together. And, you know, we've taken our pictures in the woods. And we've played lots of cards. And so I think we're having fun too. But the day is stepping up, we're on the computer, she's in one room, I'm in the other room, they were both living rooms, or have a teacher in them. So the other people are creeping around, making sure they're not getting in some kind of, you know, Google meet by accident in the background, and they're quiet. Well, Stephanie does a lot of really talking to kids day to day, she works with students that are on the autism spectrum. And they need a lot of one on one talking to help and so she's got students on her computer all the time talking to her. So everybody else is preferred around quiet. When the days you know, in school day ends, then we oftentimes have some a little video and get ready for the next day. Put it on later, because you can't really put your next step on too early. Because the kids that don't get to it till later will be confused. So you have to wait till later in the evening to put down the next day stuff. Otherwise, no matter what they're gonna get confused. So then making dinner shopping and crazy worrying about who's sick. My family members, you know, we got you got ads that are working in two different places. Two of them are working at senior centers as well. So it's, you know, that's scary. I worry about you because you had asthma when you were little I worry about Maddie you know if you get sick or something like that and kind of act it and make it worse. You know, I worry about people all the time. I worry about your mom being there by herself even though she kind of likes that sometimes, but it still gets lonely and you know, I worry about everybody you know, friends and family and I worry if the family got sick and Tyler's not working right now but she's got a hopefully she'll get to get back to her preschool job and is that going to happen and when it does, is she going to be okay? I mean We sold

masks, we, we pulled up fabric we had. And we do have a number of masks that we made. So we've got those when we go out. When shopping, we touch stuff delivered, which is crazy itself to do Instacart it's amazing. It takes a really long time, and then get it delivered from shutdown map, we solution before I ever came in the house. I mean, it's been a huge process to make sure we're here safe, are we safe and sound? We've done everything that we're supposed to do. But now, I was gonna have to go back to work. Cole's gonna have to go back to work, you know? And then then you just want to know what's going to happen. So, you know, we're all doing the best we can and you're looking for work and what's been happening with that. I mean, every time I hear that you went back to Eau Claire and you're, I'm always worried that what's going on with you? Are you going to be able to be safe, and it's just that constant worry when you can't do anything about it? And we can do everything we can to try to wear masks and try to keep separate? And is that enough? You know, so yeah. Hoping for some. And then I worry that, you know, there's, there's people all over the world that are having to deal with this, and they don't have the resources we have. And there's people in my own city that don't have the resources I have, they're not sitting in this beautiful backyard, talking to you and having a food in the fridge. So I'm worried the company is empty all the time, because there's nothing on the shelves back the person that did deliver it was like, Oh, I hate it. When they sent me to that one. I'd rather go to the diner. Everything stopped. Okay, they're a mile apart. Why is that tough stopped in mind isn't? Because it's mine is in an area where there's a lot lower income? I'll tell you that. So I think there's real interesting consistencies about what's fair and what people have, and what they can get. Yeah, I mean, it's worrying all the time.

Jack Nord 36:52

Well, one of the biggest issues where we are, is the price of meat, because, you know, the, the pork plants are out here closed down, and they partially reopen, people are sick. Yeah, and the price of meat skyrocketed. And because for that short period of time, there wasn't a need in those pork plants, you know, farmers were having to go out and, you know, get rid of pigs. It's been a massive struggle around here. And, you know, Grace's family has been, you know, buying pork to try to promote local people in the community. And it's been a struggle.

Sue Buettgen 37:31

We've really found a local farm near southern Minnesota a little bit more, but the closest that we got to beat from, and they, they do the processing right there. And then we found another place that does chickens, and we got some chickens coming to. So then they've been caring type and non stop looking for another extra freezer, put it in when it gets here, because it's like, oh, my gosh, where we're gonna put it. But But here, if you walked into our club down the street from us, there wouldn't be No, no meat. I mean, so it might be more expensive there. But it's there. I mean, you can't there are a number of times when there was literally no chicken there, there's no hamburger there. There was in fact, I was there. The last time I did go to the store, which was in March. And in March, that there was a guy was just putting some hamburger out. And I was like, five, and I said, thank you. And I took one and the guy goes, so he has like 85%, or I think it was like 80%. You know, so we have like 85 or 90%. From come with them and goes, we're lucky we got less fat, you know, the higher mean, and he's like, this is all we got, you

know, it was like, Are you kidding? But this is an [inaudible]. So it's it's crazy. So that's, that's a little in? What do you do with that?

Jack Nord 38:46

So how is you kind of started talking about your local community? What have you seen in your local community? Because of COVID-19? How has it changed? You know, how are people acting?

Sue Buettgen 38:57

Yeah, well, definitely, you're seeing a lot more people with masks. And, again, my neighborhood is a little different than than other neighborhoods, because I do think, you know, we're middle middle class here. And you know, that, in that that area, so, but I think people are very concerned people have family that live in other areas are very concerned. A lot of people wearing masks. We had a dance party that the Saturday before Easter upfront, and Stephen and Cole put big circles like health circles in the street. So damage could come from other blacks. And that would be their yard. And everybody's getting their own yard. And we had a person bring out a boombox like dance music. But everybody was on their own their own front yard. Or also, they came from a different street. They were in a circle. So everybody was social distance. And it was hilarious. It was so much fun. Everybody, everybody was waving and cheering and just like you could see that everybody was okay. And that was the big thing. But then we dance, everybody's dancing. It was a lot of fun. So that was pretty, pretty cool. But I think I mean, it seems like there's been a lot of people that are doing really sweet things, but cuz I mean, if you just walk anywhere and go anywhere, and there's a lot of signs and Windows be safe, there's a lot of rainbows and Windows, you know, all that that kids are doing as far as you know that they've seen that to keep people inspired and that I know, in Minneapolis, downtown, they're doing the seven o'clock they're clapping and cheering for all the frontline people that are working nurses, doctors and emergency people. So that's kind of cool. A lot of the teachers are doing parades. Like Hale school, they pray that they have kids in this neighborhood so that they're taking cars and driving through and doing parades and honking and waving at kids. And Steffi did that for her seniors. Yesterday, she went them cold drove and she went and held up signs. And they took routes and drove past all the seniors houses and cheered and clapped and screamed, have their horns. And I know down the street, we have a woman who which I think she just turned 88. And all of her friends and people from our church pulled up in cars of this giant parade honking and waving with signs. And so I think people are trying to find ways to, and there's usually a lot of things, you know, people helping people that that don't have money or just can't get out to stores, people shopping for them. You know, so we're trying to share stuff, and people need it, you're just doing that kind of thing, we grew a lot of plants. And we're given the neighbors are given seeds, because people can't really get out to get seeds. So, you know, trying to get everybody getting gardens and things to do and things to eat. So it seems like there's a lot of that going on, that people aren't being supportive of each other. And that's kind of cool.

Jack Nord 41:33

So this is my last question, knowing what you know, now, what do you think that individuals communities or governments need to keep in mind for the future?

Sue Buettgen 41:42

Okay, well, I think we have to think of us all, as a community, we've started to I'm sorry just a second [inaudible] we just ask that the people that lead us be kind. that are willing to help everyone. We just have to this is our worlds too complicated to not have that, to not have people that are going to really watch out for everyone and and listen to scientists and experts. It isn't rocket science could be but it's not that there are people understand what happens in the world. There's, I mean, your mom's a scientist, she went to school to for forestry and different things, we have to understand that there is a level of science and technology that you got to believe, and we got to support and help each other. We just got to have people that are going to help. And that not be bigoted and not be mean, that's what I think we can do that we got it. And the things are gonna happen. But communities that help each other and watch out for each other are going to make it you know, and we can help the environment. That is one thing for the environments kind of one with this with everybody game inside and driving cars, the heirs want better. For sure.

Jack Nord 42:57

Well, even though Earth is stopped shaking.

Sue Buettgen 43:02

But maybe, maybe that's what we learned that maybe we don't have to drive around so much, or we can carpool more, or we can stay home more. And maybe we'll learn some good things out of this too, that will help each other not to mention the medical piece of each other. But it was it's a lot but we got to have people in charge. We got to people help. You know, I as far as school goes, I kind of don't always like the fact that they have computers and take them home, because there's a whole negative aspect of the things they do and see on the computer. But it sure did help us this time to have them because it was a lot harder for places where they didn't happen. So there's that. Yeah. that's it

Jack Nord 43:42

Awesome.

Sue Buettgen 43:42

This hope it has helped it helps people be kinder and more thoughtful about everybody.

Jack Nord 43:47

I agree.

Jack Nord 43:47

Well, that's it. Um, thank you for the interview, and I'll stay on and talk to you after I get done. So,

Sue Buettgen 43:56

if you think of something you forgot to ask or something wasn't clear, just text me or call me back.

Jack Nord 44:01

Awesome. We'll do and I'm ending it now.