

FALL 2019

LINCOLN, NE

FOUNDRY

magazine

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

An in-depth interview with
Community Learning Center
director, Nola Derby-Bennett.

PINCURL GIRLS

Jen Landis is redefining
bravery in young girls.

ADVENTURE AHEAD

Exploring the past and forging
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Executive Director
Randy Hawthorne

Graphic Designer
Jordan Geisert

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Chief Operating Officer
Jesse Bergman

Content Strategist
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear friend,

I often get nostalgic this time of year. Fall is my favorite season filled with so much activity. This year happens to be a little more special for firsts. Five years ago we were putting the final coat of paint on the walls of what has become The Foundry — I still can't bring myself to pick up a paint brush.

As I peruse our first newsletter that was published in Autumn 2015 I see a lot of progress that was made in the first year, but now I can reflect on just how much more has happened in the subsequent four. On page nine, we talk more about our past year at the Foundry.

We recently celebrated our annual tradition of our member Thanksgiving. Seeing our table grow over the years has been so energizing as 30 of our 150 members joined in the festivities of sharing a meal together.

There's some level of indescribable connectedness at The Foundry. Whether it's people that have just had a few meetings with us, made this their study spot for a semester, called it home for a little while or the entire time we've been a thing, we all share some sort of special bond to this place.

Our Founders are certainly a special group of people that have lifted us up. I am so grateful that you have believed in our mission of building this community both within our walls but also our community. You can see everyone that has helped build this community at **thefoundry.co/founders**.

And I'm so excited to announce our new group — the Foundry Adventure Club. You can learn all about in this issue. This is a community designed for newer donors to have some exclusive fun with us on our collective journey.

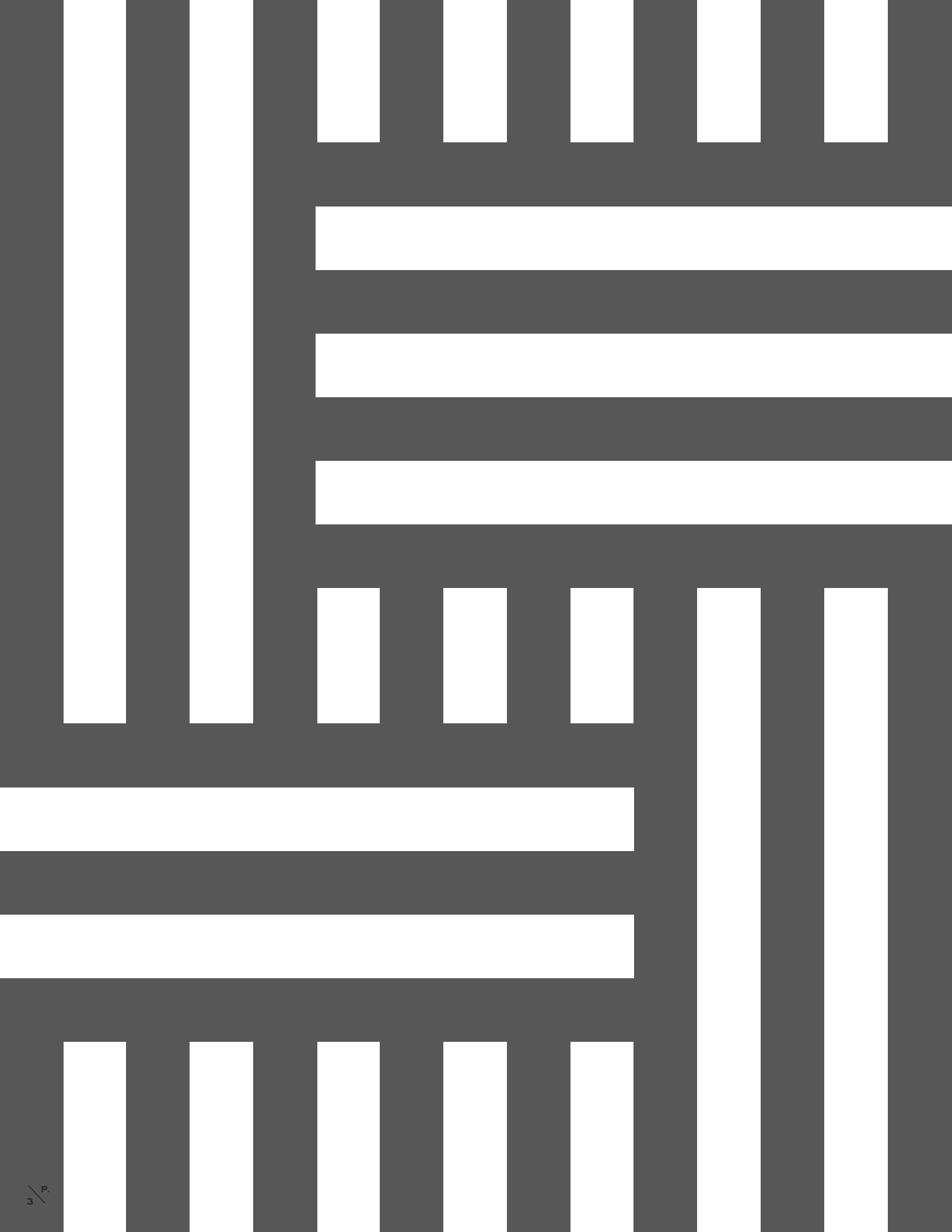
In 2020 we'll take a pause on our journey to reflect on five years of coworking, coffee and community. Keep your eyes open to events and other fun we're planning!

As I finish all my letters, feel free to reach out to have a drink of your choice with me anytime.

Our adventure starts here.

RANDY HAWTHORNE

Executive Director, The Foundry





Pincurl Girls: Redefining Bravery in Young Girls

By Olivia Layne

What does it mean to be brave? This is a question that Jen Landis has been exploring over the past 10 years through her business: Pincurl Girls. Teaching young girls to be brave and develop a positive sense of self has been one of Jen's priorities for a while now. But it all started because she was needing someone to teach her the same things.

When Landis was in graduate school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln studying art and graphic design, she started doubting herself.

"I lost all of my self confidence," she said. "I started comparing myself to the other grad students. All of a sudden I was in this community where I thought everyone was smarter than me."

So she started drawing her feelings. It started out as her drawing her inner child — small, self-conscious and afraid — and she would write messages on it saying how she wished

she was good enough. But what started as a representation of Landis's insecurities became more and more positive over time.

"I kept drawing these girls because they kept coming like from me, and the messages started to become more positive," Landis said. "And so whenever I have something that I'm working through, I draw one of the girls and then a positive message would like come to me and I'd write that down."

Landis wanted to share her growth with other girls going through the same thing, so she decided to turn it into a business. When she was thinking of a name for the company, she remembered how her mom would put pin curls in her hair as a child, and connected that memory to the inner child that was coming to her in her drawings. And so the name Pincurl Girls was born.

Through Pincurl Girls, Landis works to develop her artwork and she puts it on calendars, posters, bags, t-shirts and really whatever else you could think of. She also has a program that sends a daily motivational text message to 400 people to brighten their day, and a scholarship program for young girls to pay for art classes, STEM camps, dance or music lessons, anything they might be interested. The scholarship gives \$200 every quarter to help a driven tween achieve her goals. She also recently launched a podcast called the GIRLBRAVE Podcast, talking all about what it means to be brave.

Landis has also created an event called GIRLBRAVE. It's a touring festival around the midwest dedicated to teaching girls how to be brave in their own way and own their personalities. She hosted a GIRLBRAVE event on Sunday, Oct. 20th in Lincoln, and she plans to host five more over the next year in different cities — Omaha, Kansas City, Des Moines and Kearney.

At GIRLBRAVE, girls 10-15 years old come together to have fun and to learn more about each other and the adversities they've overcome. The girls could have their picture taken in a photo booth in different "power poses," and participate in a theatre exercise with local playwright, Becky Boesen, and then listen to a panel of girls their age who have overcome adversities in their lives. They would hear their stories and get to talk about how they got through it and their advice for other girls.

"Being brave doesn't mean you're not nervous or scared," Landis said.

She wanted girls to know that you can still be brave even if you're scared. Being brave is about not letting your fears control you.

"I love GIRLBRAVE because these girls are being honest," she said. "And then that lets all the other audience members be like, 'I totally get it, I feel insecure too.'"

Starting this business on her own wasn't all smooth sailing. She was still working a full-time



job and she has two kids, so it's safe to say she gets very little sleep.

"It's all been trial and error. It's something that I spend a lot of time on when everything else isn't calling for me."

She said she would wake up at 4:30 in the morning and start working on it until she went to work, then she would work late into the night or on weekends. Working as a Creative Director at Kid Glov, plus having her own business would almost be too much to handle, but she loves it.

"Sometimes it's difficult," she said. But a lot of what she learns in her day job can help her with Pincurl Girls — and vice versa.

"Being able to use that energy back and forth is really nice. I'm a total workaholic and I think I'd be super bored if I came home from work and was just like, I suppose I'll make dinner and watch TV. I couldn't do anything else really. It's just a part of me," Landis said.



Throughout her whole journey with Pincurl Girls, Landis has learned just as much from these girls as she has taught. She said she wants to be transparent with her feelings to show that no one is perfect. She still gets shy and nervous, but she said she can't shy away from her problems because she wants to be an example for these girls.

"I almost didn't do GIRLBRAVE because it just felt like too much, and I really didn't know what it was supposed to be," she said. "I could have easily cancelled it and not done it. But it's that fear that stops you from progress. And if you feel stuck from fear, those are the times where you just have to take that next step because it's so awesome what you see on the other side."

Pincurl Girls has helped her learn more about confidence and self-empowerment.

"I've learned to take my ideas as good ideas — instead of asking for permission," she said. "This is my idea. It's a good idea. I'm going to do it and not care or ask people if they would bless it or give me permission to do it."

She also talked about how she loves to hear how something she created is affecting the lives of girls and women everywhere.

"Being able to hear and connect with mothers and their daughters about how Pincurl Girls and our mission is helping them is just life fulfilling," she said. "Because it's stuff that I still need to hear."

Landis is putting everything she has learned into practice by writing a book. She's just finishing it up now. It's called, "100 Pep Talks for Teenagers". She wanted it to be gender neutral because everyone needs a pep talk every now and then.

Each chapter is divided up based on how you might be feeling. So you have a chapter if you're feeling excited, anxious, angry or like you don't fit in, and then you can flip to that chapter whenever you need a little pep talk.

You can learn more about Pincurl Girls by visiting their website: www.pincurlgirls.com





THE FOUNDRY MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

OUTNEBRASKA

by Schyler Cruse

Equality and inclusion are hot topics of conversation among those working towards social change. There are a few organizations that are committed to transforming Nebraska into a state and a culture that adopts those ideals – one of them being our very own OutNebraska: a nonprofit that empowers and celebrates thriving LGBTQ+ communities throughout the state.

The organization got its start about ten years ago as Outlinc. It stemmed out of a series of community conversations about what the Lincoln community needed to feel more inclusive. Out of those conversations came a recurring theme that they wanted a community center. While owning a physical building was not feasible at the time, Outlinc focused on programming in conjunction with existing spaces throughout Lincoln to offer a safe and inviting space for the LGBTQ+ community.

In the fall of 2018, the idea of having a statewide organization began to come up in conversations. Rather than starting a brand new organization, those involved in the discussions decided to focus on expanding an existing Nebraskan organization. Outlinc decided to take on the challenge. In January of 2019, Abbi Swatsworth was hired as the organization's president and the newly named OutNebraska began its mission to be a statewide organization.

"We really talk about being a statewide advocacy and education organization," Swatsworth said. "We haven't been statewide for all that long. We're just coming up on a year, and it's been really exciting and challenging – and slightly overwhelming."

As the organization has expanded to better serve the LGBTQ+ population of Nebraska, it has been able to bring in a community organizer through a grant from the Nebraska Civic Engagement Table (which is also a member at The Foundry). Swatsworth said she enjoys the cooperative aspect of the coworking space, as well as the community that The Foundry offers.

"Since we've brought on staff, it's been great to be part of a coworking space where I can go to other executive directors and talk with them about what I'm going through," she said. "I love the community feeling of the space, everybody sort of being there for each other."

The Foundry has also offered OutNebraska room to grow. When a third employee joined the staff in early November, they were able to move to a slightly bigger workspace that allowed for more comfortability, but without having to leave the building.

Along with three full-time employees in Lincoln, OutNebraska also has a part-time employee out of Omaha in an effort to get more programming started in that area. There have been some programs put on by OutNebraska in the Omaha area, as well as some programs in the Hastings, Kearney and Grand Island areas, but a lot of what the organization does is still in Lincoln.

"We do really want to be a statewide organization, and we're working on how to do that and what that looks like," Swatsworth said. "Our advocacy really affects the whole state because we lobby at the state house."

Advocacy is what Swatsworth considers to be one of OutNebraska's most important areas of emphasis. The organization is planning an event to educate and inform Nebraska state legislators on May, 11 2020. The day will begin with a group breakfast and training on how individuals can most effectively share their story. Afterwards, participants will get to share with senators and their staff at the capitol. The day will conclude with a Q&A style panel of senators.

"We're trying to help people be engaged in a larger process and trying to be a voice for them," Swatsworth said. "We talk a lot about losing young people moving away and I think we need to change the brand of Nebraska so that we're more inclusive. Hopefully the work that we're doing will start to help make that happen."

To stay up to date on OutNebraska's events and activities, subscribe to its mailing list at outlinc.org, or like OutNebraska on Facebook.



ADVENTURE AHEAD

by David Bartle

Starting off our interview with a story in true character, Randy Hawthorne said he was sitting in The Foundry's coffee shop when he saw the dean of the University of Nebraska - Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications meeting with a prospective student.

"It was interesting that they chose to have their conversation here because that's part of the advertising archetype — explorer," said Hawthorne. "We want to be a part of your adventure. The Foundry is a resting point for that next big adventure."

Hawthorne said one day, he asked a college student and regular visitor of The Foundry's coffee shop how his day was going. The student, just getting off his phone, said he just received really good news and shared he was accepted into an internship in Philadelphia.

"These are the stories that are supposed to be happening here and I love that. Just taking that moment to ask people how things are going in their world," Hawthorne said.

According to Hawthorne, the student sharing his good news with him is an example of what The Foundry community is to him. The Foundry's theme of community is what separates itself from other coffee shops in Lincoln.

"Our mission isn't selling coffee," Hawthorne said. "Our mission is building community – and so I just love hearing those stories... [That's why] I visit tables and bother people."

Looking over the past year, Hawthorne started talking about the rebrand transition from being the Nonprofit Hub to becoming The Foundry to create awareness and further the sense of community.

"We've lived into our brand over the last year and watched how quickly the new brand has been embraced. More so to the point [that] a lot of people don't even know Nonprofit Hub," Hawthorne said.

Prior to last year, there was no coffee shop or street-level access, which Hawthorne said prevented people from knowing the coworking space's mission. He said people didn't have a reason to know the Nonprofit Hub, unlike The Foundry. Within the past year, the former home of Goodcents Deli Fresh Subs, a sandwich shop, transformed into the thriving, modern coffee shop it is today.

***"Our mission isn't selling coffee," Hawthorne said.
"Our mission is building community."***

"Our biggest change is to be able to expand on the notion of our community," Hawthorne said. "[And] being able to watch the different things that happen here."

Not only has the coffee shop given the member organizations a "living room," Hawthorne said, but it also has helped build a community as a place for working students, friends, photoshoots and has even hosted events like bridal showers, baby showers and a wedding.

Hawthorne said he is interested in creating a brand that people can live into and want to own, which is why the community pillar is valuable to him.

The coffee shop proceeds help keep membership fees low in the coworking space, which helps around 50 nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Additional funds will be given back to nonprofit organizations in Lincoln and Lancaster County.

If all goes as planned, Hawthorne believes the Founders, those community members making initial donations to start The Foundry, will be able to start making donations in the first quarter of 2020.

Looking towards next year, Hawthorne shared his vision for the new Foundry Adventure Club to help build community and a sense of ownership in The Foundry's mission. For adventurers facing the workday or preparing for their next challenge, the Foundry Adventure Club offers a fun way to give-back to their community.

The new \$10 monthly subscription to join the club offers exclusive specials, such as a secret menu, a custom woven patch, special Friday afternoon club drinks and even an invitation to a biannual event. Hawthorne said all the money raised by the Adventure Club members goes towards helping nonprofits make a difference here in Lincoln.

"The Adventure Club helps us to fulfill the mission of giving back to the community," he said. "But it's also to build community engagement and ownership."

He said Adventurers can see that their membership not only includes them into a greater community but also that their membership makes a difference.

"It's a donation that gives twice," Hawthorne said.

Preparing Students for Success

with Nola Derby-Bennett

by Geoff Bogan

Forging the future generation of community leaders isn't an easy task, but Nola Derby-Bennett and the Lincoln Community Learning Centers (CLC) are up to the challenge. Serving as the CLC Director for the past two years, Derby-Bennett has been a mainstay in the nonprofit world for some time. She spent fourteen years at The HUB—eight of those years as the Executive Director of the organization.

With a background in applied psychology, human services and counseling, Derby-Bennett has spent her career learning from young people about the best ways to engage them. Her previous experience at The HUB made for an easy transition into her role at the CLC.

"I think that this work is really similar in the sense that we get to expand on the school day," Derby-Bennett said. "We get to give students the opportunity to dive a little deeper into areas that are interesting to them or areas that they're struggling with and maybe teach it from a different path or teach it in a more experiential way."

Listening to students has helped Derby-Bennett and the CLC find unique programs for students to join. They offer a wide variety of programs and opportunities designed for that community's specific needs.

"I think that one of the most amazing things about Lincoln's Community Learning Centers is that every single one of them is different in terms of it's addressing the needs of that particular

School neighborhood," she said. "And so what you might see at one CLC School, you might not see it another one because it's not a need there."

She has built a strong relationship with community leaders, helping to connect students and their families to opportunities that may not be offered through traditional education. Families and neighborhoods can connect through the School Neighborhood Advisory committee, a more agenda driven community gathering, or the Community Cafes which bring a more casual engagement.

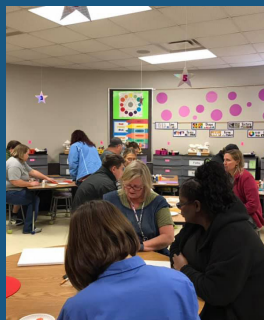
"The Community Cafe is a little bit different in that it creates a lot of really cool informal support networks," she said. "Another kind of cool thing that's come out of Community cafes is walking school buses. Parents are having to leave early in the morning and they're worried about their kids getting to school on time. And one mom goes, 'Well, I walk my kids to school and I come right down your street. I'd be happy to just stop and pick up your kids and walk them to school too.'"

In 2019, the Lincoln Community Learning Centers expanded to three schools, providing much needed services to more communities. The CLC shows no sign of stopping and Derby-Bennett is leading the charge to build the community leaders of tomorrow.

"Find a way to connect and create a relationship with people that you would never otherwise cross paths with," she said. "It'll change your life just as much as it will change the lives of the people you're interacting."



“Find a way to connect and create a relationship with people that you would never otherwise cross paths with. It'll change your life just as much as it will change the lives of the people you're interacting.”



LEADING THE GOOD LIFE

by Olivia Layne



It's incredibly important that members of our community be recognized for all the good they do. Of course, they wouldn't dream of recognizing themselves, so we're going to do it for them. Each quarter, The Foundry will recognize an outstanding leader from the nonprofit community to be featured. We'll invite them to our home at 211 N 14th Street, have some coffee and talk about how they're Leading the Good Life each and every day. This quarter, Olivia got to sit down with Jordan Gonzales, the Director of Alumni Engagement at UNL.

JORDAN GONZALES

Community, youth, and an unmatched passion for life. Those are the words I'd use to describe Jordan Gonzales.

He's a man of many titles: Director of Alumni Engagement at UNL, Chair of the Lincoln Young Professionals Group, Supervisor of the Young Alumni Academy, husband and father. With all of that, on top of commuting from Omaha to Lincoln every day, he's definitely a busy guy. But his passions help him to do it all.

Gonzales was born and raised in Morrill, Nebraska—about 16 miles west from Scottsbluff. Even though he grew up in a town of about 900 people, he has connections across the state.

"There was a considerable distance between each school, but we had this camaraderie, we knew each other," Gonzales said. "We all knew each other's mascots. We knew the athletic and popular people in each town. It was kind of a weird microcosm to grow up in."

Graduating from Morrill High School, Gonzales was excited to experience life outside of his hometown. It's that kind of wanderlust that most small-town Nebraskan kids get. They love where they grew up, but they've got to get out.

He didn't have to go far to find his new frontier. He enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Kearney to study political science. It was originally chosen as a precursor for law school. He knew he always wanted to be a community leader, and so he needed a law degree.

"At least that's what I thought," he said.

In his time at UNK, he decided to get involved in student government. He was elected student body president and enjoyed it a lot. He was all set to graduate and head to law school, but during his senior year, he had a change of heart.

"I fell in love working with the university," he said.

A mentor told him that law school would always be there. But if he liked what he was doing now, he should see where it goes. So he initially started working with Student Affairs at UNK, then he got a job at the UNL Career Service Office, and after a while, was offered a job working for the UNL Alumni Association.

"I essentially stumbled into the gig," he said. "Which I think is true most of life. Especially with my generation, at least it's been my experience that it's a wandering path of how we end up where we really are."

Gonzales oversees the Chancellor's Alumni Advisory Council and works with the Young Alumni Academy, as well as the alumni career services and helps with their diversity and inclusion efforts.

Even though he lives in Omaha now, his heart is still in Lincoln. Through his involvement with the Lincoln Young Professionals Group, he has been able to maintain his connections to the star city.

"I've had such an encouraging and supportive community here at Lincoln," Gonzales said. "To me, it's almost like a family. You can't really pick your family. You're kind of given your family. And I feel like I was given this Lincoln family that I really don't want to leave."

Gonzales has built up a community around working with younger people, and building future leaders of the world. He said he likes working around young people because their energy is contagious. They have so many new ideas, and each generation thinks differently than the one before them. He said younger generations have this resilience built up where they can learn from their failures and move on. While we were talking about this, he reflected on when he used to advise a student

group and how he has adapted his message over the years.

"I had to catch myself because the question I would always ask is, 'What's your dream job?'" he said. "Which I realized is such a foolish question to ask just because most jobs that we'll occupy in 10 or 15 years, probably don't even exist yet."

Now the question he asks students who are confused or lost is, "What gives you energy?" He said they could figure out the logistics of how to get there later, but finding what makes you excited to get up every day is the most important thing for young professionals to find. And he's grateful he's found it.

"I count myself very lucky. I do feel very fulfilled," he said. "The Alumni Association is challenging work, but very gratifying in that every day is different."

Gonzales is also currently pursuing a PhD at UNL—on top of everything else he's already doing. I asked him if he was crazy.

"I wanted to test my sanity," he said, laughing. "What I would not have suggested is having a newborn while starting your PhD programs."

His curiosity and love of learning are what drew him towards pursuing a PhD, but he also has a goal to one day become a university president or chancellor. He has big plans for the future. But as a fifth generation Nebraskan, Gonzales hopes to be able to stay here as long as possible.

"I love it here," he said. "I love the work that I'm doing, I love the community that I'm part of. I think that when a lot of people come to Lincoln they stay in Lincoln because of that authenticity, that genuine care and compassion that people have for one another here that I think is very unique."



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