



Lillia Callum-Penso
The Greenville News

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Michelle Little: So today is May 29th of 2020. This is Michelle Little interviewing Lillia Callum-Penso for the Southern Foodways Alliance Oral History Project on COVID-19, and we're conducting this interview today remotely via Zoom and Zencastr. Lillia, could you just give a brief introduction of yourself, full name, age, your occupation, where you're based?

[0:00:33.6]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Sure, yeah. So my name's Lillia Callum-Penso. I'm the food reporter for *The Greenville News* in Greenville, South Carolina. That's where I live currently. I am thirty-eight years old, two kids, twins, who are crazy these days.

[laughter] But, yeah, I'm based in Greenville.

[0:01:05.3]

Michelle Little: And can you give me a little bit of some background on your career as a journalist? How long have you been at it? Have you always covered food? Where all have you worked?

[0:01:22.7]

Lillia Callum-Penso: So I am kind of rare, because I've actually been at *The Greenville News* for almost my entire career. I studied magazine journalism at the University of Georgia, so I guess you could say that I'm doing what I actually studied, which I think might be rare too. I first got a job with a weekly newspaper in Greenville. It was also part of *The Greenville News*, which is owned by Gannett, and so they were doing this new

experiment with—they called them young reader publications, and at the time I was twenty-two, and they hired me to be one of the first reporters for this new kind of experiment. So I did that for about a year and a half, covered all sorts of things, but I think my heart was always in, like, features and that approach to journalism, just coming from magazine study background, and so they pushed me into the features. I got a job in the features department at *The Greenville News*. Side note, that no longer exists.

[Laughter] We've had many, many layoffs and kind of restructuring since then. But I was a features reporter and I covered everything from, like, home and garden-related trend stories to fashion, if you can believe that. A lot of what I wrote, though, was centered around people, so people in the community, things like that that were interesting. So, yeah, I think I did that for about maybe six or seven years, and then we restructured and I ended up in the business section, so I covered business, but with a focus on entrepreneurs, I guess. So I was part of a team of three reporters that did really extensive profiles on entrepreneurs in the community, and it was really interesting. That effort faded after a while, too, and we restructured again. This whole time, I'd always kind of been writing about food, too, because people like to read about food, and I had always enjoyed interviewing chefs and I thought food was interesting. I thought it was a really interesting medium to—a good way to talk to people, and in a neutral way, was to kind of start with food, so even my non-food stories, I would end up talking to people about food sometimes. [Laughter] Food and football and weather, those are three things I think you can, like [Laughter]—if you want to, like, neutralize a conversation and then dig deeper. So at the time, we didn't really have a full-time food reporter. I was just kind of doing it on the side in addition to my main beat. So when we restructured, they created a food

writer position and my other position was no longer there, so I applied for the food writer job and that's what I got, and so I've been covering food I guess since—that was, I guess, about five years. It's been about five years now that I've been mainly covering food, unless there's, like, an election, and then I'm covering politics or whatever, or unless I'm working the cop shift on a weekend. [Laughter]

[0:05:29.1]

Michelle Little: Oh. Does that happen often?

[0:05:31.5]

Lillia Callum-Penso: We rotate. We have a rotating weekend schedule, so a breaking news schedule. So, yeah, I do that probably three or four times a year, maybe, yeah.

[0:05:43.4]

Michelle Little: Okay. And so what were some stories and, like, some of your routines prior to coronavirus, just some things you were working on?

[0:06:00.1]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Oh, gosh.

[0:06:03.0]

Michelle Little: Do you remember? [Laughter]

[0:06:05.6]

Lillia Callum-Penso: I've got to think back. Gosh, well, I had actually just come off working on a big desegregation project, so I guess that's not food-related, but I was part of a team that was doing something on the fiftieth anniversary of desegregation of schools in Greenville, so I, like, was doing something on that and I was kind of getting into the next thing. I guess I was starting to do a kind of quirky, fun story. I had been doing some interviews on asking people, like, to define what a Greenville food was, like, to help me determine, like, well, what is a food that Greenville's known for, you know, because the upstate of South Carolina gets lumped into the Low Country, like shrimp and grits and all these dishes that are actually really-- I mean, they do have roots, like, on the coast or the Low Country. So the Upcountry, as it's called, is more mountains. So I was starting to have some really interesting conversations around that, actually, looking into that, exploring that a bit, but that never came to fruition. [Laughter] I feel like there were definitely some other stories I was starting to work on too. I was starting to do things that-- I wanted to look at, like, the liquor laws in the state and kind of explore some of the beer, like, alcohol laws, because there's been some movement among brewers and some of the spirits producers to change some of those. So I was trying to educate myself a bit about that in anticipation of maybe doing something related to that. But, yeah, then coronavirus kind of took hold and it really impacted small business, and that meant it impacted every single restaurant here.

[0:08:30.7]

Michelle Little: Do you remember the first—and I know since you work at a newspaper, you would have been tracking it more closely than the average American, but do you remember the first time you heard about the virus?

[0:08:45.5]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Well, I remember reading about it in December just as it was happening in China and other places and kind of watching the progression, and, I mean, I do remember having discussions, but I'll admit that I didn't think that it would get to this point, and perhaps that's naïve. You know, there was so much different information, and even now, part of it is that they're just learning new things all the time, so it's just really-- yeah, but I do remember in December, I think when I started hearing more about it, thinking about, "Oh, this is something that's really going to impact the U.S.," and then, "Oh, well, it'll impact large cities like New York City, Chicago, San Francisco." And then I think it was probably end of February, early March, maybe end of February, where it just seemed like, "Oh, this is going to hit South Carolina too," and I remember because one of the other things I do with my job is we started, actually-- it's an oral storytelling project, so it combines kind of-- I guess it's oral storytelling, so people are on stage, they tell a personal story. So it's something that I've started working on with a coworker, and we've done them almost as like a dinner series. So the first one we did was with chefs, and they each made a dish and each chef told a story. And then we've done some with farmers. We were just planning this one with local athletes, and the theme was around "The day I broke up with my pro career," so each of them was, like, on a pro path, but each had to make the decision to leave that path at some point, so their stories were about

that. And we had a chef who was collaborating on a meal that fit. But I remember, like, it's a lot of work to put it on, and I was like, I don't know, are we going to be able to do this? And we did. It was like March 10th, was the event. And then March 13th, March 15th, like the next week, everything started-- like a week later, the mayor announced that restaurants would need to close.

[0:11:54.2]

Michelle Little: Wow. What was the mood like at that event? Could you tell if anyone was nervous or--

[0:12:05.7]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Well, looking back, I mean, I will say that the venue we held it, they had already stepped up. They were all wearing gloves, not masks, but they had hand sanitizer out on tables and things like that. But I can't say that-- I think there was discussion. It was almost like coronavirus was kind of a din in the background, so it was kind of like you were hearing things, but it wasn't the focus of the discussions. It was kind of a background noise at that point. So now I can't think of any interaction I've had with someone that didn't involve something pretty-- focusing the discussion on coronavirus. Yeah, so I feel like the event went really well. I do remember that.

[Laughter]

[0:12:57.5]

Michelle Little: That's great.

[0:12:59.4]

Lillia Callum-Penso: But, yeah, so I feel like it was a discussion, but it wasn't, like, the main focus on people's mind. So maybe we would have had more people attend, though. I don't know. It's hard to know.

[0:13:19.5]

Michelle Little: Yeah, for sure. And so what do you remember about that-- I mean, it was really pretty much that very next week, that middle week of March, when the world was cancelled, for lack of a better term. What do you remember about that week, just your work? [Laughter]

[0:13:42.1]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Well, I do remember work got really busy, and that same week, my kids' daycare closed, so, all of a sudden, I had them home. My mom did come up from Atlanta to help and ended up-- and so she was here with us for a while, and that helped tremendously, you know, just transition with how to care for the kids while my husband and I were working full-time jobs. I do remember that, all of a sudden, it was like, "Oh, I can't do interviews in person," or, "Should I do interviews in person?" or, "I feel like I need to do interviews in person," or, "What is my role?" Like, I kind of felt like I needed to report the news and the impact on restaurant owners and people who work in restaurants, but it was so hard because a lot of the way that I-- I guess it's the features, maybe, a lot of my interviews I do in person so that I can really get a sense of the person

that I'm talking to and also kind of be an observer of what they're talking about, whatever it is they're talking about, and so it did feel like-- and I've still struggled with this in how to best cover this whole what's going on right now as it pertains to particularly restaurants and people who work in restaurants or who source restaurants, because in some sense, I don't feel like I can speak with authority unless I see it, but on the other sense, it's not safe, necessarily. So it's trying to pick and choose, and I don't want to put my family in danger either, so it's trying to pick and choose a little bit, like, when to do in-person interviews, and I have done some. And when restaurants reopened outdoor dining, I felt like I needed to see that. I needed to see what that looked like in order to describe it, so I did that. Yeah, so I feel like work has gotten-- it jumped, it got very busy, and journalism is busy already, but I think this, the level of change and the new information and the changing information that you're trying to keep up with, educate yourself on, I mean, I was like Googling-- I had to teach myself what PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] programs and the EIDL [Economic Injury Disaster Loan], like, what the heck that was. You know, I'm not an economist, I'm not a banker, I have never owned a small business, and that's important, but I needed to be able to understand it so that I understood what people applying for it were going through and that also so I could explain it to readers. So there was a lot of trying to educate myself, too, on the fly, which does happen with journalism in general, but I think it definitely felt, like, very stepped up, like you need to have known that two days ago and, like, that story should have been done yesterday, like, a lot of that. [Laughter]

[0:17:37.8]

Michelle Little: How many hours a day do you think you were working in those weeks?

[0:17:46.3]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Well, I will say that because I do have young kids, I can't-- I mean, that's a whole 'nother conversation, but I can't devote my entire waking hours, all of them, to my job, and I've had to have that conversation with myself, because it's not fair to me, it's not fair to them, so I did try and put limits. That being said, if there is breaking news, I would have to cover it. So, I mean, the days were longer. I definitely had, like, days that were ten to eleven hours collectively. It's not necessarily straight through. I guess you could argue that even as I'm prepping lunch for my kids, I have my phone, I'm responding to emails or I'm on a call, so that's technically working, I guess, even though it's not, like, me sitting at a desk. But, yeah, I mean, I'm not even going to put myself in the same boat as people who are, like, healthcare workers or emergency responders. For me, it's like, yes, it was a lot of work and, I mean, I'm still kind of tired, but it's nowhere near what the level of some people are dealing with, and I try and keep that in mind. I'm very fortunate in many ways, and I'm lucky to have some measure of flexibility with my management so that they know I'll get something done if I need to, and it may be that I'm doing it at 9:00 at night or I'm getting up—more often, for me, I get up at like 5:30 a.m. or 5:00 a.m. to work. So my kids are good sleepers, so they're pretty good for sleeping until like 8:30, so that's some good time there. [Laughter]

[0:20:12.3]

Michelle Little: And did the paper come up with any guidelines for the reporters as far as whether or not to do in-person interviews or, “You need to use a boom mic now”? Did they help in coming up with guidelines for things like that?

[0:20:35.5]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Yes, they did. And I will say Gannett, like, the corporate sent out information, and they closed the offices early on. They provided us-- we were able to sign up for masks, so I was able to, like, get four disposable masks from the company that they provided for those situations. I mean, it's a little bit kind of like-- but I wouldn't say there were, like—it didn't get as specific as, “If you're in this situation, do this,” or, “If this--.” So some of it is left up to us and we'd just talk to our editors. I think there might be other reporters who did more in-person interviews. Certainly the photographers, you know, that's something you have to be in person for, so they were in a completely different scenario. So, yeah, we did get direction, for sure, but, obviously, with the nature of the job, you just can't do everything from home. So, yeah, I think that's part of the hard thing. It's just a lot of it feels like you're just making decisions on the fly, and a lot of times when I get to the end of a week or a day, you realize, god, you're making so many decisions. It's like you're exhausted from work, to a degree, and also hearing just the pain people are goin-- like, the challenge. I mean, that's a lot. I'm not a counselor and I can't imagine-- I mean, but people open up to you and you're hearing so many stories or people are reaching out telling you about this or they need you to write about this, and you're just hearing these stories that are really tough. And, again, I think about what I've encountered, and I'm sure I have coworkers who have that even more so because given

the beats that they cover, but you're just making so many decisions, you know, "What story? How do I write this? Who do I need to call? Is this safe? Should I go here? Ah, I don't know." It's just-- that I think for everybody, probably, we're all being faced with having to make all these decisions every second of the day. It's exhausting. [Laughter]

[0:23:24.9]

Michelle Little: Yeah, I'm sure. And speaking of, like, what you're hearing and collecting when you're reporting, I mean, what are some of those stories that just really, I mean, were tough to report on and things you witnessed in the community during, like, the height of the shutdowns and what restaurants were going through?

[0:23:55.1]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Well, I mean, I definitely saw workers-- you know, there were people who were parents that had to care for kids and their income was cut off and then they were waiting for Unemployment [Insurance] to kick in, and it's just like such a feeling of being so stuck. I guess, to me, what was hard and what I saw some, I guess, is the people who were doing pretty well and thought they had a path they were on, and it's like you realize how unstable the ground you're walking on is, and I think talking to people as they were realizing how unstable that ground is was-- you just hear so much emotion. There's just so much emotion there, and, I mean, instinctually, I want to figure out how to help. But there are those-- and, I mean, there were restaurant owners that, I mean, they're just not going to make it, and they've poured their heart and their life savings into something, that it's just-- that's it. So I wish that-- I need to-- I mean, I heard

about, like, people, workers, also suffering-- being kind of taken advantage of by employers, so people being very unsavory in this situation. I just think these sort of things bring out the worst and the best in people, maybe.

[0:26:10.9]

Michelle Little: Yeah, that's a good way to put it. And then you personally have had to deal with furlough, right?

[0:26:26.0]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, so about a week into all this, the company announced mandatory furloughs for almost everybody. It would be three weeks total, like, in this quarter, and then we'll reassess. I guess they'll reassess at the end of June how things are, and then we'll determine whether we need to do furloughs in the next quarter. So, again, I'm really lucky in a lot of ways. It's helped me understand what it's like to apply for Unemployment, so that's good, hands-on journalism, I guess. [Laughter] So I understand the-- when people tell me the stress of it, I can understand, or, like, the confusion, I get it. I'm like, I don't think I did it right either. [Laughter] But, yeah, and, I mean, my husband's salary-- or with his job, they cut-- he had just started a new job and they cut salaries across the board by 20 percent, so, you know, it's a significant cut to our income, but we're obviously fortunate too. So I feel like that's the theme I'm trying to keep with, is that I know that despite everything, we're still fortunate in many ways. The furlough-- I mean, this sounds not too-- I don't want to sound flippant about furlough, because furlough's very serious, and it is not great not getting a week's worth or three

weeks' worth of salary, but it gave me time to at least focus on my kids. [Laughter] So there was that, and I took full advantage of that.

[0:28:42.8]

Michelle Little: A bright spot.

[0:28:46.7]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Absolutely.

[0:28:50.8]

Michelle Little: So what was-- because I've heard just nightmare reports about Unemployment applications, and I know every state's a little different. I mean, did you figure it out in South Carolina or what-- I don't know, like, the furlough, Unemployment process.

[0:29:15.7]

Lillia Callum-Penso: It's a little confusing, yeah. So I was trying to apply-- we were told because of this situation, we could apply for just the week that we were on furlough, but it is hard, because some of the questions, the way they're written, it doesn't really fit just being unemployed for one week, you know, because technically we're still employed, it's just we didn't have a salary that week. So that's where some of the confusion came in. And also you have to certify every week. They require you to go in and certify, answer certain questions every week about your unemployment, and if you don't, they suspend--

they put a halt on the processing of your claim, so things just take longer. And, again, I think it was said that-- I don't know, what was it-- that everybody was supposed to get their funds within three days. Was that the original--

[0:30:19.4]

Michelle Little: For, yeah, I think there have been so many.

[0:30:22.8]

Lillia Callum-Penso: I think it took like two or two and a half weeks, and, again, that's where I'm lucky that, like, I wasn't-- like, I needed it, but it wasn't like my kids were going to go hungry if I didn't get those funds right away. So, I guess, perspective. But, yeah, I feel for people where they need that money right away. I mean, it is-- and I feel for the people who are working for the Unemployment Office, because I'm sure they are stressed to the hilt. So it's just a tough situation all around.

[0:30:59.6]

Michelle Little: So at this point in the process, I know restaurants are starting to reopen in South Carolina. What are you covering now and what does the food scene sort of look like at this point?

[0:31:21.4]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Well, yeah, now I've been talking to restaurants about how they're reopening. Some have not, and so that's also an important thing to understand.

Unfortunately, I think this would be a great story. I'm having some challenges getting restaurants to talk to me about their reticence to reopen right away because they fear being thrust into a political kind of maelstrom. Unfortunately, everything has become like this political debate, so the decision to reopen, well, people were criticized, but if you chose not to reopen, restaurants are criticized, and so a lot of restaurant owners that I'm talking to are really struggling with how to navigate things. Some genuinely just don't feel like they have enough information and they just don't know how to reopen safely. I mean, I can tell you I ate out for the first time in a restaurant and sat outside. I had my mask. The workers at the restaurant had their masks. They had blue Xs on the floor. They had their signs up. Everything was in to-go containers. They were wearing gloves. But the patrons, no one else was wearing a mask. No one else seemed to-- the patrons are challenging. So I think a lot of restaurants are trying to navigate-- and then what happens if someone gets sick? And there's a restaurant here currently where they had an employee who had to be tested for COVID and now they're getting all this backlash, which perhaps there are things they could have done that were safer, but they were following the prescribed guidelines of the state. And so you do have this situation among many restaurants of "What is safe? How do you open safely? How do we ensure that people don't get sick, and what happens if people do?" And then, of course, weighing, well, when you're not in business, you're not making money. So it's a lot to—so that's kind of something I'm following. I try and just have conversations with people, as many as I can every week, whether I'm going to use it in a story or not, just to kind of keep my finger

on the pulse of how people are doing so that I can have a better understanding. But that's definitely something I feel like I will be covering, and, unfortunately, I think that there will be cases of COVID-19 that may be linked to a patron in a restaurant or perhaps a server, and I think that those will be things that we'll have to cover and try and understand in the hopes that we can find a pathway forward, I guess. But, yeah.

[0:35:09.6]

Michelle Little: How did you feel eating at a restaurant for the first time?

[0:35:13.8]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Mixed. I mean, I miss it. I think, like, a lot of people miss it. It's great. That's, like, my entertainment for me and my husband and my kids. My kids love eating out. I mean, it's like, "What are we going to eat?" That's our conversation. "What do you *want* to eat? What should we eat? What should we have?" So, I mean, yeah, it felt strange. I'll tell you, it felt really strange. Me and my coworkers who I was dining with, we were having a meeting, actually a lunch meeting, and we were the only ones wearing masks, and that-- if I'm truly honest, it is hard. Like, you feel a little out of place. Like, no one else is wearing a mask. And then I will say that's been another thing, when I interview people in person, when I was covering restaurants reopening, I was walking up and down Main Street in downtown Greenville, which downtown Greenville has like 120 restaurants within like a mile-and-a-half radius. So I spent like two hours walking up and down this street, and some people had masks, others didn't, and I had mine because we were instructed to use them. But I'll tell you, it's strange interviewing someone with a

mask on if they aren't wearing a mask, so it was kind of a lot of gauging, like trying to figure out some of that. So the restaurant dining out, I felt like it was probably safe. We sat outside. But I wouldn't guarantee that it was safe. [Laughter]

[0:37:10.9]

Michelle Little: I keep wondering how it's going to work wearing a mask-- I mean, because I haven't tried it yet, but, I mean, do you just take it off when you're actually consuming food and then--

[0:37:21.3]

Lillia Callum-Penso: I mean, I think that you'll find the technique that works for you, but I can say the one I went with was to wear my mask until it was time to eat, because that's just too messy, like, to lift it up. No. I mean, so I just took it off while I was eating. [Laughter] But to each their own. I mean, you'll just have to find a rhythm.

[0:37:47.7]

Michelle Little: [Laughter] Oh, man. Well, what do you-- I know you just covered some of this, about what you think will happen with restaurants, but, I mean, we're moving into the summer. I mean, what is the mood overall in Greenville? I know that may be tough to say, but, I mean, what do you think the summer holds?

[0:38:12.3]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Gosh. I mean, honestly, walking around, judging how the city has just kind of popped back into place, or seemingly, it feels like there's a positive mood, but if numbers start going up, I don't know. I mean, among restaurants, I will say that while many are happy to be open-- and you do hear mixed emotions, and some are not open and many are happy to be open-- you'll also hear them say that they would have a really hard time if there were a second wave and they had to close again. And I actually did-- there are a couple researchers doing research on South Carolina restaurants right now and COVID-19, and I spoke with one of them earlier in the week. The preliminary results that they are finding from the survey they sent out, which is kind of trying to gauge how people feel, or restaurant owners and operators feel, is that most are optimistic for the future, but the majority also said that they would not be able to survive if there were, like, a second wave and the shutdowns happened again. So I think people are trying to be positive and put one foot in front of the other, but cautious, I mean cautiously optimistic, I suppose. So, yeah, it's just very hard to know.

[0:40:09.4]

Michelle Little: What about do you and your family? I mean, will you be headed back to the office? I mean, how will y'all navigate the summer personally?

[0:40:20.3]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Yeah, well, my kids are normally in daycare and they won't be. I mean, it's tough. My husband does have to go into his office three times a week just for a little bit just for face time. Our office is not reopening anytime soon, so I'll probably

continue this work-from-home process. We'll call upon my mom as much as we can. I mean, that's a challenge, because obviously when she's here, we want to ensure her safety, so we need to make sure that the weeks prior to her visiting, we're even more conscious, and while she's here, obviously, being conscious. But it does help to have somebody help out with the kids. But I feel like I'm kind of like a lot of people, maybe, in that I'm planning week to week, to a certain degree. Like, I had trips planned. I had something special planned to honor my dad. We do a day of service in honor of him, and that had to be cancelled. So it's kind of like all these things we had planned were cancelled, so now it's just trying to-- okay, maybe I won't plan so far ahead, just take it week by week so we won't have to cancel as many plans. [Laughter]

[0:41:57.2]

Michelle Little: Well, is there anything I didn't ask you that you wanted to talk about or wish we'd covered?

[0:42:19.5]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Well, you asked a lot of great questions, so I wouldn't say that-- like, I think you asked great questions. The only thing I think that I probably should mention is that I've seen some really great outpouring from the community too. So I know you asked me about specific stories before, and these actually aren't necessarily negative stories; they're ones that I think give me a little bit of hope. Initially, I wrote about this goat farm, and they make this very delicious goat cheese feta. I mean, they make several varieties, but their feta is what they're known for and they have won awards

for this feta. And the owners who own it, they bought it about three years ago, I guess, two or three years, maybe, if that's right, so they've been converting it slowly to mainly a wholesale business. But it is a goat farm, so they have hundreds of goats and they produce milk, which they use to make this cheese, which they sell to restaurants, and they do special events. They do a lot with the Masters [tournament] during the Masters. They have restaurants in Augusta, Georgia, that they work with. Well, everything dried up, and this is their busiest time of year, because it's not only the time of year when all the events and restaurants are wanting all their stuff, but it's also the time that their goats-- it's kidding season, so the goats are having babies. So it was like this triple-whammy for them when all of this happened and everything shut down. And this is a farm that's been in existence for like thirty years. I mean, they're fairly well known, and they were on the brink of having to close or just not knowing what they would be able to do. So I did a story on them, and this is one where I went out to the farm. I mean, I felt like I needed to see it, I needed to talk to them face-to-face. Well, as a result of this story, the local community rallied and they raised money, and then they were able to connect-- they did this whole really interesting-- like, I guess you'd call it a fundraiser, but essentially they had raised these funds, enough to give, like, these different restaurants one-hundred-dollar credit to start a wholesale account with this farm. And, now, they didn't have to continue it, but they had to at least start it to get this one-hundred-dollar-- and they had a credit, and then they had to use one of the products on their menu for like a special dish. And then they did this whole social media thing, so it was like this excitement. I know that the farm-- I heard from the farm-- and, I mean, it's just been tremendous. It's really given them a boost. It's a legitimate boost. So I thought that was so great, and, really, it

was just people being aware. Like, it's not that people don't want to help or they don't care. Sometimes they just don't know. So that was one. And then I'm doing a story, this is not really food-related, but it's a local music venue, kind of dive bar, music venue, and they have like a really loyal group of patrons that have, over the past few months, come up with some *really* creative fundraisers to help out the staff at this place, and they've raised, I mean, almost \$10,000, which is amazing--

[0:46:09.5]

Michelle Little: Wow.

[0:46:10.6]

Lillia Callum-Penso: -- for this dive bar, music venue, restaurant. And, I'm telling you, creative. Like, one of them, this guy with a really epically long beard, he shaved it along with his moustache. You know, he raised funds by how much he would cut off his beard, raised over \$1,500. Another regular agreed to-- if he raised a certain amount, he'd get a tattoo of one of the bartenders on his butt. He raised like \$2,800. You know, some *really* creative things. So I don't know what that means, but it kind of made me smile.

[Laughter]

[0:46:55.8]

Michelle Little: Yeah, I mean, that gives so much weight to what you're doing, what you're working so hard to do every day, and then, I mean, just to see communities come together like that, that's such a bright spot in all of this.

[0:47:12.8]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Yeah, I think there are-- I mean, I don't want to get Pollyanna on it, but I'm looking for the bright spots too.

[0:47:23.2]

Michelle Little: I think we have to.

[0:47:23.2]

Lillia Callum-Penso: Yeah. [Laughter]

[0:47:28.5]

Michelle Little: Well, that's a good spot to end on, so I'm going to stop recording, but don't hang up just yet, because I want to make sure—

[End of Interview]