



**Lacey Resch**

**Community Health Works**

**Macon, GA**

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Interviewer: Diana Dombrowski

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Diana Dombrowski: Okay. This is Diana Dombrowski. I'm here at the Southern Foodways Alliance on December 21st with Lacey Resch. Lacey, if you could, please tell us when and where you were born.

Lacey Resch: I was born in Springfield, Missouri in 1975, but I grew up right outside of St. Louis, Missouri when we moved there in 1979.

Diana Dombrowski: Great. And what was it like to grow up there? What did your parents do?

Lacey Resch: It was great to grow up there. We were in an unincorporated part of a county that was about 30 minutes outside of St. Louis down a really long gravel road. Couldn't get pizza delivered. That's how far out we were.

Diana Dombrowski: Wow.

Lacey Resch: We didn't get cable until the mid-[19]80s, probably. But it was wonderful. We were just in the middle of nowhere and we ran out and played in the woods and went barefoot and did all kinds of crazy 1980s outdoor kids' stuff that people would just faint over today. So it was a lot of fun.

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We had dogs and ran around and played in the creek and had forts and clubhouses. And my folks had a big garden, so we did a lot of gardening. And my dad worked in insurance and my mom just had jobs here and there, but mostly she was home with us. They started a catering company in the late 80s, which was my first introduction to a wider array of foods.

Diana Dombrowski: All right.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: So it sounds like gardening maybe planted some seeds for you for what you're doing right now. Would you say that's true?

Lacey Resch: Absolutely. We didn't have a lot of money growing up, so we had to grow a lot of our own food, and that was a priority. And we also put a lot of stuff up, too, and we shared a lot with our neighbors.

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, that's great.

Lacey Resch: Not a rich neighborhood. [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: But you made it work, yeah.

Lacey Resch: We did, yeah. We had great neighbors the whole time we lived there, so everybody took care of each other.

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So I think that, along with gardening, really set the foundation for wanting to make sure everybody has enough. That's kind of one of my core things in my life, so, yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: That's great. And what brings you to Georgia?

Lacey Resch: Love. [Laughter] I met my boyfriend in St. Louis back in 2010 and we moved down here for his job. He's a biomedical photographer. So we moved down here in 2012 so he could go to work at a big local hospital, which is a level-one trauma hospital and a teaching hospital. And he takes pictures of everything. So we moved down here for that. And I ended up getting this job as just a-- well, I interviewed for the position of just a market ambassador through Georgia Organics, because we were doing the **My Market** program here.

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And they put our organization in charge of finding their own ambassador for the market. And so I came in, and one of the requirements to apply was to also write an essay on why I felt like I would be a good fit for that position, and I wrote one about our garden growing up and how we helped our neighbors, and so on and so forth. And I got in here and my boss said, "I think you'd be a good fit for that, but I'd really rather just hire you at our organization to eventually run the market in general." So that's kind of how that happened. I came down expecting a six-month contract and left with a full-time gig. So that was in 2013. I took over the market and then I also took over a number of other programs that we do here. And here we are, so . . .

Diana Dombrowski: That's pretty impressive.

Lacey Resch: It was wild. I got home and-- at that time he wasn't even my fiancé yet-- my boyfriend was, like, "Well, how'd it go?"

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I was, like, "Well, I have a job." He goes, "Well, I know you got the job." I'm, like, "No. I got a job job with insurance and stuff." So that was a remarkable way to spend a Tuesday.

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, good, good.

Lacey Resch: Yeah, yeah. So that's how that happened, and I've been here ever since. And we've done a lot of growing and shrinking over the years, depending on the administration and funding and things like that. And now I just do a whole bunch of stuff and . . .

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: Now a do a whole bunch of stuff.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, yeah.

Lacey Resch: And it just **happened like that**.

Diana Dombrowski: I can imagine the last couple of years have been a little bit lean in terms of resources--

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: --that y'all have. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Yeah. Our biggest initiative was Insure Georgia, which basically we were funded by CMS, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, to serve the whole state with assistance in enrolling in the Affordable Care Act.

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So that included determining if they qualified for tax credits, in the beginning helping them appeal the charges for the mandate, helping them select a program, helping them re-enroll every year, et cetera, et cetera. And incrementally the funding got cut and got cut, and so we went from being a statewide organization to a Middle Georgia organization to a tri-county organization.

Diana Dombrowski: **Um-hm.**

Lacey Resch: And then, once that funding dried up, we sent our key navigators to get licensed to become insurance brokers, and instead we just contract through the insurance companies and we're still able to help people for free, we just get paid by the insurance companies rather than the government. So, in the end, hopefully the consumers didn't really suffer too much. So that's what we've been doing with that for the last several years, but another large chunk of our funding is through the Department of Public Health with our Central Georgia Cancer Coalition.

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And so I handle our no-cost colonoscopy screening program for that, and I've done that since about 2013, as well. So I handle that, and then the market, and then I have 18 counties for our cancer coalition for my region. And, in normal times, I go to Family Connection meetings in all of those counties in person. And now we just get to go via Zoom, which is really nice. [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter]

Lacey Resch: I mean, you would drive an hour and a half each way for a one-hour meeting, and then your day is shot. I mean, what can you do on either side of that? Very little. So having Zoom as the preferred method has helped significantly.

Diana Dombrowski: That's great.

Lacey Resch: So those are my three main things, are food, colonoscopies, and driving to meetings, if you wanted **to put it** in nutshell. [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter]

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Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Okay.

Lacey Resch: But I love it. I love all of it, so I can't complain. And I still have a job, so I'm definitely not complaining.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I'm sensing that you're really a jack of all trades.

Yeah. I see that.

Lacey Resch: I think that the more you know the more valuable you are. And that's not the same as being irreplaceable, because no one's irreplaceable, but I think you can build up your value and your worth with everything that you know as best you can. And I feel like that's on us to do individually, so that's **where** I am.

Diana Dombrowski: Right. All right. Well, thank you for the introduction to what **you're** [inaudible 0:07:36.4]--

Lacey Resch: [Laughter] **Okay**. [Inaudible 0:07:37.8].

Diana Dombrowski: --especially during a normal time. So if we could transition into what's changed during COVID, do you remember when you first understood that COVID was gonna impact what you did on a day-to-day for your work?

Lacey Resch: Yeah. So in a few ways.

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First, we were watching across the country as counties and cities and states really started to put things on lockdown. And Georgia was one of the last, if not the last state to really put measures in place. And we were waiting, and we were waiting, and the city and county officials were reluctant to do anything that wasn't supported by the governor, who wasn't doing anything that wasn't supported by the president. So we had finally discovered trickle down, not like we thought it would be.

Diana Dombrowski: **Um-hm**.

Lacey Resch: And so finally our mayor said, "Okay. I am closing down bars, barber shops, gyms, restaurants except for takeout," et cetera, et cetera. So I called up my contact at the

mayor's office and I said, "Well, how will that affect the market, because we set up in a public park?" And they had canceled all events in public parks. And I said, "We're an event but we're a weekly, year-round event. We're not like a festival or something."

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So my friend at public affairs said, "Okay. Hold on." And he yells down the hall, "Mayor, what about the Mulberry Market?" And I hear him go, "Sounds like a grocery store to me." And so then we were able to be considered essential. So as a market we never closed.

Diana Dombrowski: **Hmm.**

Lacey Resch: We stayed open and immediately started looking to the CDC for the farmers' market guidelines that they were releasing to make sure that we were doing everything that they suggested from the get-go, and then would pivot as things would change. So in the very beginning we were asking everyone to wear masks-- well, the vendors. We shifted our setup from in the park kind of in the grass to in the parking lot so that we could spread out easier and be on flat surface, and we were more visible, and people could see that we were taking these precautions seriously. So you could see the distance between the tents.

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You could see when you got there that we were doing all that we could. So that was when I really began to **understand** that that was gonna impact the market. What I didn't anticipate was it was going to impact in such a positive way. Because we were taking so many measures and being as transparent about it as we were, people were really drawn to that. And so, being that transparent and putting that out there in the very beginning, paired with a number of our vendors going ahead and launching an online platform so you could order ahead of time and just pick it

up or have it delivered for even less contact, was huge. And we gained a lot of shoppers that way that we previously had not had. And I think also because people were working from home they could just run up to the market and pick up their stuff. So we did have more in-person shoppers, as well; people we hadn't seen before.

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So it was positive, and it was unexpected, and everyone was glad for it, 'cause our farmers work really, really hard, and they're constantly at the whim of mother nature to begin with.

Diana Dombrowski: **Yeah.**

Lacey Resch: So for them to end up on the good side of this by and large, that made me feel really good. The other ways that I knew that it was going to impact what we did, a lot of the organizations that we work with are government entities and they said, you're not going anywhere, you're not doing anything. And so a lot of our outreach and a lot of our other initiatives really began to have to look different immediately, as well, 'cause we weren't able to go to senior centers and schools and the Department of Public Health events and see people face to face. All of a sudden, we were having to pivot and learn how to do all of it like this.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: And we're still learning. [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. I understand.

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Lacey Resch: But for the market, it was almost immediate. And I have used that as leverage, because people are tired of following these rules and people are tired of wearing masks and

taking all these precautions. But I just keep reminding our vendors that the reason we have stayed this busy is because people see how seriously we take this, and they understand that their safety is valuable to us. And so, if we want to keep this business going the way that it's been, we can't drop the ball. We can't get complacent with all of these safety measures that we're doing. Thank goodness now it's a little colder because it was really hard to wear that mask for five hours in August.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: It sucked a lot. [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: But now it's just another-- I think people are getting more used to it.

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And our shoppers have been very compliant, as well. Everyone wants to keep everybody safe. And I understand we have a different demographic than, say, a rural Walmart. But I'll take it. Everyone cares about everyone.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: I know that's been what everyone has been saying this whole time, but it's not always borne out in actions, and I feel like our market really does a good job of that.

Diana Dombrowski: That's impressive.

Lacey Resch: **It's like they have to**, because that's the rule, and if they don't want to then they can stay home.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. I can imagine how frustrating it is to see guidelines change so quickly.

Lacey Resch: **Um-hm.**

Diana Dombrowski: I know that disinfecting food is something a lot of people were doing right at the start there.

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: But from your public health orientation, it seemed like you were immediately pretty well equipped to translate into why that would be necessary when something novel like this is going on.

Lacey Resch: Yeah. Our produce vendors really took the ball with that and ran.

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They made it very clear that there's one person picking your food. It's the same person that's washing it and it's the same person that's bagging it.

Diana Dombrowski: Right.

Lacey Resch: And so while we were figuring that portion out, I would just get updates from them that I passed along to the consumers. But they really immediately were, like, well, this is what we do anyway and so we're just going to keep doing what we've been doing, except now it's in a plastic bag and you can't touch it. And people are, like, okay, that's awesome. Great.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: And in terms of the guidelines changing, they're changing because we're learning more.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: So we can't be stuck in what we thought was going on in April now. We just have to keep moving forward, and I think that's been the biggest challenge to talking to people who don't want to take it seriously to begin with because they say, well, it keeps changing. Well, that's because it's brand new and we kept learning stuff.

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It's gonna keep happening. It's gonna keep changing. And you have to be able to roll with it so that you can do the best for yourself and those around you.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: So that's largely been our message with that, is we're gonna do what we know is the best right now. And if it changes, just be confident that we're changing it for the best that we know then. And we just want to keep doing the best that we know to do.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: And, yeah, it might change a little bit, but it is what it is.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. That sounds like wise interpretation--

Lacey Resch: [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: --that could also probably be understood across the board. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: 'Cause I know in Georgia, especially a lot of the-- it's very controversial in some people's perspective--

Lacey Resch: Yes.

Diana Dombrowski: --taking it seriously in the first place.

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So I can imagine that you've come across a spectrum, although your vendors, for the most part, have kind of across the board followed what you said needed to be done.

Lacey Resch: And I talked to them, I said, "It behooves you to stay as safe as possible because this is your business, and you have to be out in the public to sell your stuff. So it makes the most sense for you to be as safe as you can while you're out here, because if you aren't, then you can't go to any markets." And I have a vendor that-- she tested positive after she'd been out for a couple of weeks on vacation, and I said, "You can't come back until you have a negative test. I'm sorry." That's just 101.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: But when you explain it to them like that and you say, "You're investing in your own livelihood continuing," that tends to help them with that lightbulb moment.

Diana Dombrowski: Gotcha.

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Lacey Resch: And if they want to think I'm a wackadoo outside of the market that's fine, but when you're here and you're enacting with your shoppers, we're gonna all follow the same rules so it's the same for everybody.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. That sounds good.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Can you speak a little bit about how you supported folks who were doing more about online setup, or if you did at all?

Lacey Resch: Yes. So we have a pretty active social media presence, more Facebook than Instagram, I would say, and nobody's willing to keep up with Twitter, so we don't do that at all.

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter]

Lacey Resch: But we also send out a weekly newsletter and it goes to about 2,000 people, and we share it on our Facebook page. But pinned to the top of the Facebook page for months and months were the links to the folks who had online platforms with instructions and cut-off times and cut-off days so that everyone could see right there up at the top the easiest way that they could order that stuff.

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And I put it in the newsletter, as well. And the vendors also had their own system at their tent to encourage people to do that, too. But we really made a good effort to get that information out there to folks as many ways as we could so that they could order online and just either have it delivered or pick it up at the market. But my general thinking is I want to support anyone who wants to take the time to do their own marketing, as well. So I always say to our vendors, please use social media. It's largely free. And tag the market because then I will share it on our market page. So you might only have 250 followers; we have 7,000. And so if you tag the market, I'm gonna share it on our page and it's gonna be amplified that much more.

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So you taking a little step helps me help you even more. And folks have gotten a little bit better about it. Some people aren't great about it still, but some people are really good about it. And we see that in their business at the market. Because people say, oh, I saw the Facebook post today. You can't argue with that.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: But in terms of the online platforms, we were always talking about it, we were always encouraging people anytime I would go on the radio, or if I was at one of my Family Connection meetings, or anytime I had a platform in front of the camera like this, I would make sure to mention that.

Diana Dombrowski: Great.

Lacey Resch: And as people started going back to work, that became another marketing point, is you can order it on Sunday or Monday and then you can roll up at 5:45 right as the market is closing and pick up your order rather than have to kind of sift through whatever's left at the end of the day. And that appealed to people quite a bit.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

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That sounds like a very proactive way to communicate and get people invested, and make sure--

Lacey Resch: **I'm trying.** [Laughter] **I try.**

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter] I know one of the things that I've noticed, too, when it comes to food security or food insecurity is the huge increases of people who are taking advantage of

food banks or at least asking for help, whether or not that's even available. And I know that the Georgia Fresh For Less program is also involved in the market. So I'm curious about whether or not you saw any increase in people taking advantage of that program and that connection?

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: And maybe what it was like to work at the market in the context of this increased need in Georgia?

Lacey Resch: Yeah. So the food assistance bill is one that I am willing to die on every day.

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Because we grew up poor. We didn't have access to that kind of assistance. But I think that we would've taken advantage of it if we had. There's just no shame in feeding your family. There never will be. Not in my eyes. And I will argue with anybody who says otherwise. So it was really interesting to see not only our longtime SNAP shoppers continue to come to the market, but to bring their friends who had recently begun to get SNAP. Or to see some of our longtime shoppers who now were using a SNAP card. But they felt comfortable doing it because they understood that it was a place of zero judgment. They could come and they could use their benefits at our market, and they were never gonna get the side eye or any kind of weird look or any kind of judgment at all. And we did see a pretty significant uptick in overall SNAP usage.

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And there were a number of times where you could tell someone was embarrassed, and you don't want to say, don't be embarrassed. You just try to be as warm-- without touching them-- as possible to make them understand that it's okay. And so that was an exercise in that for a lot of

people. It was business as usual for us. We just saw more people. But I think it was interesting for a lot of folks who had never needed that assistance before to have access to it and understand there was a place they could go, and they didn't need to feel embarrassed about using it. And they probably won't have that assistance forever, but I think that we will have gained forever shoppers as a result of how we made them feel. Does that make sense?

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, absolutely. Of course, yeah.

Lacey Resch: Does that answer your question? [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

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Lacey Resch: But I viewed it as another opportunity, I guess, for us to do community service to continue to make sure people understood that there's no shame in getting help when you need it. There shouldn't be any shame in getting help when you need it. And we're a safe place where they could come and do that and ask all kinds of questions. We had people ask us questions about, well, what can I buy at the grocery store? This was all brand-new to them. They didn't know. But they trusted me more than some checker at Kroger, and so I answered all kinds of questions. I answered questions about WIC. I answered questions about hot food versus cold, why can I buy raw seafood but not steamed seafood, which, first of all, that answer makes no sense. But I had a lot of opportunities to educate people about SNAP in general.

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And both myself and my market manager take that very seriously, and we were honored that people trusted us enough to come and ask us about stuff like that.

Diana Dombrowski: That's great. Yeah, I'm aware of how difficult a moment it was for everyone personally thinking about their own health and about their own finances.

Lacey Resch: Uh-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: So it's great that you were already set up in the community as a resource that people trusted to come to. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: And so we were speaking about the farmers' market, and I'm curious, too, how your work on a day-to-day basis also **shift** when it comes to doing more virtually with people, including-- yeah. So you've mentioned that you used to drive to a lot of counties to do these visits--

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: --and they started switching online. I'm curious, were people plugged in in the say way, do you think, like the audience? What was that like?

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Lacey Resch: It was so new that I think in the very beginning people were because they had to pay attention because they weren't quite sure what they were doing. But as we slowly got used to it-- you can tell when somebody, they've got their phone and they're looking down and they're not paying attention.

Diana Dombrowski: Uh-hm.

Lacey Resch: So I feel like there was a little bit of complacency as we moved forward, but in terms of the work that we did here, we were really cut off at the knees. We didn't have access to the public anymore.

Diana Dombrowski: No.

Lacey Resch: You can go to meetings all day long, but now you're relying on the other people in the meetings to take your message to their clients, whereas before I could go to the health department or a health fair or something like that and set up shop and answer questions all day long and talk to people hours and hours and hours. And now that's just not the case.

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So moving virtually, I think it's created the need for us to be able to communicate better with one another like this, and hopefully be more trustworthy when I'm gonna say, open enrollment is right now, and if you know anyone who needs assistance getting signed up for Obamacare because they've lost their job, please send them to me. I need to be able to rely on the people on the other screens more to do that because I don't have access to those folks nearly as much as I did before. So I think accountability has changed. It's increased. Yeah. And I think we've become better networkers because we have to, because people are relying on us to be better networkers.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: Before if I went to a meeting in person, I would come back with a handful of fliers and an agenda, and I'd put some of it into Salesforce, but by and large, it was just like, eh, it ended up in a pile on my desk.

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But now you're taking notes and you're setting reminders for yourself and you're doing things because now you're the gatekeeper of all this information that you just learned for your people. So I think communication and accountability are two things that have definitely increased since we've been doing all this virtually.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. That makes sense when you're working with outside partners especially, because you have to work with what suddenly already existed instead of thinking about it as continually able to expand in the same way.

Lacey Resch: Yes.

Diana Dombrowski: And was that similar for how you all worked as a team together within the Community Health Works, would you say?

Lacey Resch: Yes. So we have a navigator stationed here in our office, and then we have one in Brunswick, and we have one in Vidalia. So every week we have team meetings where we all come together and report back on what we've been working on.

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Diana Dombrowski: Does that virtually come together or in person?

Lacey Resch: Virtually.

Diana Dombrowski: Okay. Okay. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Yeah. Yeah. We have started filming a health segment that requires two of us to be together in person, so our woman from Vidalia comes up and we do a little community health corner, which is not viewed by very many people and absolutely hilarious because we're still

figuring out what to do. [Laughter] But, largely, we are all virtual. I'm in the office with my two bosses and really that's it. Everyone else has been staying at home.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Great. That's smart. And was that a transition you made pretty quickly?

Lacey Resch: Yeah, it was. I have two bosses, and one, he had a pretty significant stroke back in 2018, and so he's already compromised-- his health is compromised.

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Diana Dombrowski: Hmm.

Lacey Resch: And so we told him he had to stay home pretty much right away, **forever**.

[Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter]

Lacey Resch: And so we all worked from home for about eight weeks, but then I started coming back in because I still had to come here every week to do market stuff. So I really never really totally worked from home because I had to come in here and get checks signed for vendor reimbursements, and just all my stuff is here, my stuff lives here. But even that, we started to move. So we went to an online direct deposit payment system for our vendors that everyone has liked quite a bit. And we started to do more of our reporting online, so we have been able to streamline a lot in the face of this just out of sheer necessity. Luckily, the tools all existed for us to-- it was pretty seamless. And then, when we were all working from home, we met regularly once a week.

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Now, it's kind of once a week-ish, 'cause now that open enrollment's over, there's just not a lot going on, and it's right before Christmas and--

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. Everyone [inaudible 0:30:13.4].

Lacey Resch: It comes and goes. And our 2021 work plan was just finally okayed by DPH about three weeks ago, so now we can actually start working on our deliverables. We had been waiting since, like, July for that. But I feel like 2021's going to be an extension of 2020 when it comes to things like that, because what we would've ordinarily gotten the green light on in July of this year we got in November. So it's gonna kind of shift everything forward in terms of timelines for what we say we'll have done.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm. Yeah, of course. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: You just have to be flexible and you have to be able to not get too uptight about deadlines because those are out the window largely. [Laughter]

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Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter] Yeah. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: It sounds like y'all are really used to being resilient and flexible and creative in the first place, which well-equipped you to respond during this kind of environment.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: But at the same time, there are things that you just can't plan for and end up being surprises.

Lacey Resch: Yeah. Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: So [inaudible 0:31:28.9].

Lacey Resch: And we've always run with a pretty small staff, so we've always all been able to shift and work on different things. And most of us know how to do everything, so that's been a big help in working with a small team and being able to still get everything done.

Diana Dombrowski: Uh-hm. Great. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: Good. I'm glad to hear that. I'm glad to hear that.

Lacey Resch: Yeah. Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Because that means that you have been able to do what you need to do for others because y'all are taken care of.

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

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Diana Dombrowski: And my last couple questions are really more personal--

Lacey Resch: Okay.

Diana Dombrowski: --about whether or not you-- have you personally or has your family been impacted by COVID during this time, or have you received treatment or that sort of thing?

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: You don't have to say if you don't want to. Just to whatever extent you're comfortable responding.

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: So, personally, my husband and I have not really been impacted very much. He works at the hospital, so he's had to take those extra precautions to go in every day.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: But compared to what lots of other people have gone through, our lives have largely been unaffected. We aren't really social people anyway, so we stay home all the time. My dad, who's 73, and my stepmom, and one of my half-siblings all got COVID.

Diana Dombrowski: Wow.

Lacey Resch: They had pretty minor symptoms, so nobody got really, really sick, and they ended up recovering pretty well.

0:33:04.5

And then I have a few other relatives who've gotten it who-- no one's passed away, but they got pretty sick.

Diana Dombrowski: **Um-hm.**

Lacey Resch: And the same holds true with neighbors and people in our office building and things like that. But in terms of personal stuff, not really. I was in school but it was all online so

that didn't really change. And the market was just busier, so I had more to do on that end. But I feel really fortunate and privileged to say that it didn't really impact me. We both still have our jobs. We both still have health insurance. Neither one of us got sick. So I take that every day and use that to remind myself to help others.

0:33:59.2

It could've been way worse for me. I could've gotten sick. And God knows I'm around enough people all the time.

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm.

Lacey Resch: 'Cause I never really quarantined, not in the way that a lot of people did. So I wouldn't say it really affected me, but it made me realize how important it was to help others who were affected.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: But yeah, I don't want to say, **ha**, I'm healthy, 'cause I'm fixing to drive home, and last year I got the flu which was-- I had never had the flu before, and it was awful. It was really awful.

Diana Dombrowski: Never had the flu! Oh, my gosh!

Lacey Resch: I'd never had it before, and I was pretty sure I had pneumonia right away. And, yeah, I went to urgent care and they gave me stuff, 'cause at that point-- that was on a Sunday, and I was getting on a plane the following Saturday to go home for Christmas. And my mom had had a terrible fall that year, and there was no way I was not going home to see her.

0:35:02.4

So I was, like, you give me whatever you have to so that I am not contagious when I get on that plane. [Laughing]

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughing]

Lacey Resch: [Inaudible 0:35:09.3] sick but I'm going!

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: And I still remember how terrible that felt. And if that was that bad and COVID is so much worse for so many people, I definitely have a perspective that it's pretty awful. And I have a lot of friends who work on the front lines in healthcare who routinely lose entire families. And it's important for me to keep talking to them so that I can maintain the perspective of how truly awful it is. 'Cause I don't ever want to lose sight of that, 'cause I think that's when we grow complacent and that's when terrible things happen. But we just have a yard full of chickens and dogs and cats, and life has largely stayed the same, so . . .

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

0:36:00.0

Well, I'm glad to hear that for your sake and for the sake of the people that you work with, because--

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: --I can tell how motivated you are personally to do this job really well and be as productive as you can be in the face of these challenges. So thank you for sharing that.

Lacey Resch: You're welcome. Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Is there anything else--

Lacey Resch: [Inaudible 0:36:24.9] sitting still, so anything that requires sitting around is not my bag.

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter] Yeah.

Lacey Resch: So I keep moving, yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Good, good.

Lacey Resch: Um-hm.

Diana Dombrowski: I'm glad to hear that.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Thank you for sharing.

Lacey Resch: Yeah, you're welcome.

Diana Dombrowski: Is there anything else you'd like to make sure people know about the work you've been doing or what your experience has been like for the last couple of months?

Lacey Resch: We've really seen the best out of so many people.

0:36:59.6

We've seen some pretty bad stuff out of people, too, but I'd like to think that the good that we've seen has overshadowed the bad. There's a bunch of groups around here in Macon who have really upped the Christmas game and are adopting families and kids left and right, paying rent, paying utility bills. Because United Way and these utility programs only have so much money. So I'm in a couple different groups that have really just said, well, I can take care of that. I'll pay

that. I'll pay that. And we're all largely women who still have jobs and have it to give. And that's probably one of my favorite things that has come out of this, is just seeing how people who didn't really know how to help before find ways to help on their own that make a big impact to people who aren't used to having to ask for help and aren't good at it, and don't want to ask but don't have any other choice.

0:38:06.3

And so you've really seen that compassion and that empathy kind of wrap around people who didn't want to take it but didn't have a choice. And I think it made it a lot easier for them when they felt like that help was not coming from a place of judgment or with any strings or anything like that. So that's been probably my favorite things that's come out of this, is just seeing our little town of 120,000 people or so just really kind of-- most of us, not everybody--

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter]

Lacey Resch: --come together and help out. So I've loved that. That made me see our little city in a whole new light. So that would be my last thing to add.

Diana Dombrowski: All right.

Lacey Resch: And [0:38:54.4].

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. Thank you. We're definitely on the same page.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

0:39:00.7

Diana Dombrowski: And I hope that when we follow up together in a few months it might even be able to be in person, so fingers crossed.

Lacey Resch: [Inaudible 0:39:10.1]

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Well, if that's a possibility, you're all also welcome to come to the market and talk to shoppers. We have a legion of people who love to talk about the market.

Diana Dombrowski: Cool.

Lacey Resch: So, yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: That sounds great. All right. Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Yeah. Come on.

Diana Dombrowski: Portable recorder, just like we did it-- what is it? Almost a hundred years ago. Yeah. [Laughter]

Lacey Resch: [Laughter] Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. Good.

Lacey Resch: **Really** old school.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: I would love to follow up and I would love to see where we are this time in a few months.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: And if that can be in person, you're welcome to come and check out the market.

Diana Dombrowski: Thanks. Thanks I'd love to.

Lacey Resch: [Inaudible 0:39:49.1]

Diana Dombrowski: I'd love to. Thank you. Thanks for sharing all this. It's really good to connect with you, even this early in the morning.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

0:39:58.6

Diana Dombrowski: And I'm so impressed by the work that you do, and honored you **made** the time to be part of this 'cause it is helpful, it's illuminating, and the kind of people who are really able to make a difference, it's just really nice to be able to speak with you. So thanks.

Lacey Resch: Thank you. Well, I appreciate you reaching out. I was thrilled to say yes.

Diana Dombrowski: Great. Thank you.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: Thanks very much.

Lacey Resch: Yeah.

Diana Dombrowski: So the next steps are just gonna be, we'll press pause on this and then the little window will do its thing, but in a larger sense we'll transcribe the interview, we'll send you the audio, and that'll all come in just a couple weeks.

Lacey Resch: Okay.

Diana Dombrowski: So, yeah.

Lacey Resch: Cool. So for now I just leave all my browser windows open for a few minutes, right?

Diana Dombrowski: Um-hm, yes.

Lacey Resch: **I can do that.**

Diana Dombrowski: All right.

Lacey Resch: Excellent.

Diana Dombrowski: Thanks a lot, Lacey.

Lacey Resch: Thank you. Well, whatever holidays you do, have good ones, and go play in the snow for me because it's, like, 60 degrees here.

0:41:01.4

Diana Dombrowski: Oh, I'm so jealous! [Laughter]

Lacey Resch: I'm so jealous of you!

Diana Dombrowski: I know, I know. That's how it works.

Lacey Resch: [Inaudible 0:41:08.1]

Diana Dombrowski: That's how it works.

Lacey Resch: It's always, like, grass is greener, always.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

Lacey Resch: And I can tell by the light that there's snow out there. Like, that's a snow light behind you, for **sure**.

Diana Dombrowski: It is. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Lacey Resch: Bright, bright, bright. [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: I wonder-- let me see if I could show you. You'll have to tell me if it works or not, but--

Lacey Resch: Oh, my gosh! Look at that. It's so beautiful. Oh, I'm so jealous.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah. I'm so grateful for snowblowers in a way that I never was before, 'cause these edges are crisp and--

Lacey Resch: Yes. **That is** very satisfying. [Laughter]

Diana Dombrowski: [Laughter] Yeah. I hope you get to use your snow boots and that it ends up being a white Christmas and you all enjoy time together resting and recouping.

Lacey Resch: Yes. Absolutely.

Diana Dombrowski: Yeah.

Lacey Resch: Awesome. Well, thank you so much. And if you have any other questions that you think of, you can always call me or email me.

0:42:02.4

Diana Dombrowski: Okay. That sounds great. Thank you very much.

Lacey Resch: All right. Thank you **again**. Bye.

Diana Dombrowski: Take care.

Lacey Resch: Yes, you, too.

[End]