

GERMAINE JENKINS

Fresh Future Farm, North Charleston, South Carolina

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Marion Square, Charleston, South Carolina

Interviewers: Kate Medley, Sara Wood

Transcription: Shelley Chance

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Project: Charleston Food + Wine Oral History Bus

[Begin Germaine Jenkins Interview]

00:00:00

Sara Wood: Did y'all--you guys said you had a work day today on the farm?

00:00:08

Germaine Jenkins: Well it--we--we turned out not to have a work day on the farm. We had--we're supposed to have them put our irrigation in today but there have been water main breaks with the weather fluctuating, so--.

00:00:19

SW: Did the pipes freeze?

00:00:21

GJ: Not where we are. We're getting pipes you know pipes put in but other parts of town where the water company--they're volunteering to do our work, but the job called so they spent this weekend fixing popped pipes, so--.

00:00:36

SW: Um, I mean I feel like a terrible school teacher right now. Can I get you to spit your gum out?

00:00:55

GJ: Yeah; no problem.

00:01:01

SW: Thank you; sorry about that.

00:01:19

SW: And if you'll just sort of square up your shoulders with Sara and the only rule here is to try not to look at the cameras or me, to--

00:01:28

SW: It's kind of weird, yeah.

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GJ: Yeah; uh-huh.

00:01:31

SW: So it's really just you and Sara.

00:01:33

GJ: Okay.

00:01:35

SW: And I'm not quite rolling yet.

00:01:36

SW: I'm actually going to--this is just to get a good level on your voice. Will you tell me what you had for breakfast this morning?

00:01:43

GJ: I had chicken and rice.

00:01:44

SW: You did?

00:01:44

GJ: No, actually waffles; my husband likes to eat like at 4 o'clock in the morning, so I forgot.

00:01:49

SW: Why does he eat so--does he get up that early for work or just--?

00:01:51

GJ: Yeah; well just--he gets up that early for work but it doesn't matter that it's a weekend, so--
. He likes not to be alone when he's awake, so he makes me breakfast. [*Laughs*]

00:02:00

SW: Do you get up at 4:00 being a farmer, or is that something that you don't really--?

00:02:04

GJ: Not--we haven't got to that part yet but I--I look forward to doing that. But I--I get up when he gets up and sometimes I go to bed late or go to bed early like a farmer. Seven o'clock I have been crashing, so I'll wake up at 2:00 or 3:00; yeah.

00:02:23

SW: All right; that should be--. Okay, okay--

00:02:34

SW: All right we're getting official here; you ready?

00:02:37

GJ: Uh-hm. [*Claps*]

00:02:40

SW: All right so we're rolling. Germaine, will you start just by saying hello and introducing yourself and telling me who you are and what you do?

00:02:47

GJ: Good afternoon. I'm Germaine Jenkins and I am the CEO and Farm and Market Director for Fresh Future Farm in North Charleston.

00:02:57

SW: Okay, and could you tell me a little bit about what Fresh Future Farm is?

00:03:01

GJ: It is a startup, urban farm--

00:03:04

SW: I'm sorry; I don't mean to interrupt you--because my questions will be cut out will you start by saying Fresh Future Farm is--?

00:03:09

GJ: Got it. Fresh Future Farm is a startup urban farm in the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood which is now a food desert. Our goal is to not only grow vegetables there but we want to sell the produce where it's grown and also sell other groceries to the neighborhood. And as we grow and get the hang of things we want to be able to train other people to use our urban farming methods to be able to manage a plot of their own and just generate a--the economy again in North Charleston.

00:03:39

SW: I wanted to talk to you a little bit about North Charleston and I have some questions for you about the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood.

00:03:45

GJ: Sure.

00:03:45

SW: But before I do that I want to know where you come from. Where did you grow up and have you always been involved in farming? Have you always wanted to farm?

00:03:51

GJ: *[Laughs]* That's a funny story. Did I always want to farm? I grew up or was born randomly in the PD area of South Carolina. My dad got a scholarship to go to college in Ohio so at three years old from three to twenty seven I was there. And at the ripe old age of five I went to a daycare center that happened to take us to a city farm across the street. And after being able to harvest our own vegetables my brothers and I were hooked into eating fresh food. We were vegetable eaters ever since and that's something that just carried over. I still remember that you know 40-some years later almost.

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And it inspires what we're starting to do today.

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SW: Can you tell me a little bit more about the farm when you were five like what do you remember about it?

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GJ: I--I remember getting my hands in the dirt. It was--it was all of the sudden we were there. We had these radishes and assorted lettuces and carrots that we harvested, my brothers and I, like Grayson like was running **[inaudible]** into the house at the same time so we were like shoulder to shoulder can't get in, and then we were washing the lettuce like we think we're supposed to and we immediately like prepared the dirtiest salad you ever wanted to taste. But you know we were hooked, so--. Yeah; I loved that and loved to be able to have introduced my kids in a similar fashion to vegetables.

00:05:12

SW: Excuse me real quick y'all. I just need to adjust--.

00:05:29

SW: Okay; Germaine will you tell me a little bit about--so you said originally from the PD area of South Carolina, can you talk a little bit about what the PD area is for people who aren't from South Carolina or know that region?

00:05:42

GJ: Well that's--well most people will know it if you follow racing at all. That's where the NASCAR race, the Darlington races are. I was born in the Hartsville area, so that's where we're from.

00:05:52

SW: And the farm that you're talking about up--was it in Ohio?

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GJ: It was in Cleveland, yeah. It was--it was across the street from my daycare center and we were you know like--like an inner-city daycare with this inner-city farm and we became inner-city veggie lovers at a young age as a result.

00:06:09

SW: I mean I'm sure maybe--I don't know if you were aware of this then when you were five but looking back on that you know you're talking--as you're talking about this, did that seem to be kind of a rare thing that was happening in Cleveland, I mean being a city and can you talk a little bit about--?

00:06:22

GJ: Yeah; it was--it was very rare because you know we--we lived you know back when I was that age and in a community center to Chicora Cherokee, except with snow, essentially that's the biggest difference. And there was this one--one farmer right across the street from where we were and you know you fast forward 30 years and now Cleveland is a hub of urban agriculture. So it's funny that you know this one guy was randomly doing it so many years ago and now they're known for their open agriculture, so it's exciting.

00:06:50

SW: Do you know his name?

00:06:52

GJ: I--I don't remember that gentleman's name. Thank you whoever you are. *[Laughs]*

00:06:58

SW: Do you--can you--okay so you mentioned Chicora Cherokee, before I ask you about that though, how do you get from Cleveland to North Charleston, South Carolina?

00:07:10

GJ: Okay; it's a meandering story. I moved back to South Carolina. My family moved here again after--and after I had a--a daughter of my own. I was a single mom. I decided to move back with family. And I spent a couple years in Florence like working like a corporate job, the way I had always done after you know doing some college and happened to get into the point where I was baking for [inaudible] work. I loved it so much I was staying up at night to bake and I decided to move to Charleston to go to Johnson & Wales University.

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And when I was a student, I was a student with two young children, a four year old and an eighteen month old and soon after starting college we had a need for food. And I said this-- you know it sucks. Once we get out of here we're going to have a house and that house is going to have a garden. And that's where it started way back. I think I told my kids that in 2001 and in 2007 we had a house and in 2008 that house had a garden. And I had gone through mastering gardening class in that same year and just studied on my own how people who had limited resources were able to produce healthy organic vegetables. So you know I spent you know several years learning about permaculture and that's what we intend to apply at Fresh Future Farm.

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SW: How did you have time to do all that 'cause you were going to school, you were the mother of two?

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GJ: Yeah.

00:08:36

SW: Were you working as well?

00:08:37

GJ: I couldn't work. That's the--you know they thought--well they didn't know my situation when I called and said could I work because I was working a 9:00 to 5:00 job. But it turns out Johnson & Wales for like baking and pastry arts that I was doing went from 1:30 in the evening to 7:30 at night. So there was no way for me to work around my school schedule. So we had a need for food immediately like after I started college or we started college.

00:09:01

SW: How did you fill that need?

00:09:02

GJ: I happened to find a kids café which was a program with the Low Country Food Bank where you know where I didn't have the food but this program after school was able to provide meals for my kids and they did it like a couple days a week and then my kids needed more food, I would volunteer and cook for everybody's kids that are a part of this program five days a week. And then got into not only working with my kids, but other kids teaching them like how to cook their own food and like it and having as many vegetables as I could in the spaghetti sauce, so--.

[Laughs] It--it was a labor of love starting there.

00:09:41

SW: And when you were--when you were volunteering there I mean who did you see come in, like who was coming into this program?

00:09:48

GJ: It was other working moms like me who you know had you know so many hats that they were wearing in order to keep the lights on at the house. And having a--a family run place like the [Canter Street Y] was--we were able to you know to take one worry off of our shoulders because there was a good place you know that our kids you know felt like family and you know they were providing meals so it was--there was other moms just like me who--where they might not have been going to school they were working in order to maintain their families.

00:10:20

SW: So before I forget I just wanted to ask you this; what kinds of things were you baking when you were baking for people--at night when you were working your other job?

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GJ: I was the cheesecake capital of Florence, South Carolina. Anything that you could add to cheesecake I was doing it. It was apples and crumb tops and blueberries and every other combination in between; I made it. And my co-workers started you know paying attention and we as excited about the fundraisers as I was about making the cakes, so--. Cheesecakes are my specialty.

00:10:51

SW: Why cheesecake?

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GJ: You know that's a funny question because I don't care for cheesecake when it's baked, but the batter is much better than the cake batter. It's funny; it's just--it just pours off and you can do so many things with it. I guess I just liked being able to play around with the base, so--.

00:11:11

SW: I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about--could you kind of describe the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood for people who have no familiarity with that particular neighborhood.

00:11:23

GJ: Uh-hm; well you'd have to do a little bit of--it would have to be a conversation of history when you talk about the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood because back when the old Navy Base was open it was a predominantly white community that was well-to-do. The majority of the people that lived there were homeowners. And you know the Navy Base was the largest civilian employer in the State. And at that time all the marketplace and merchants were there for those homeowners so they had the world at their doorsteps.

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Matter of fact, that was the place that most people would come to shop in the State; that was before there were big mega-malls. And with the closing of the--the old Navy Base people moved and these homes sat empty, went to renters, and they went to decay. And all of the shops closed up. So you know there was a Winn Dixie when we moved here back in 2000; that closed and there was no store whatsoever in the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood. So it's been sitting as a food desert for the last 10 years.

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SW: Could you talk a little bit about the--like in terms of the community there now do you see white folks still in the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood or is it predominantly African American--?

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GJ: Oh the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood now is predominantly African American. There is a little bit of--you know there is some Latino and white folks but it's predominantly African American and there's not a lot of jobs there anymore where it was you know thriving back in the day when the old Navy Base was opened. Now there are scarce jobs and those jobs primarily are in like the fast-food industry or you know there's corner stores and gas stations and things like that where people work. But you know that doesn't supply enough income for somebody to be able to manage their home.

00:13:08

SW: Uh-hm. I'm wondering if you could tell me--you know you mentioned how everything has--you know the Winn Dixie disappeared--can you kind of actually just take us back a second for--I know we hear this term all the time, *food desert*, but can you describe from your experience in Chicora Cherokee and the work that you do Germaine, what does a food desert look like?

00:13:36

GJ: Uh a food desert, it looks like a desert; I mean where you know instead of tumbleweed like in the Old West there's like cartons are empty, like fast-food containers rolling down the side of the street where people don't have access to basic healthy produce in a large assortment that you would find in the suburbs. Even like in the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood there might be a store that's two miles away but because it's the only store--the people have to access by bus or by taxi if you don't have a car--the prices are more expensive.

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So you know I have the Chicora Cherokee Neighborhood is one where the average income is about 12,000-bucks and people have to figure out how to get groceries and a lot of times you know the folks that I work with are going to the corner stores to get their basic daily needs. And then you know like paying somebody to be able to make that trip if they don't have a car.

00:14:35

SW: I'm wondering if--bear with me here 'cause I'm trying to think of how to phrase this question; you know for people who live in food deserts in North Charleston you know people shopping at corner stores, not having access to the fresh vegetables or even being able to go to the grocery stores easily, could you describe like what you've seen a meal is for like--if someone sat down to dinner who lived in a food desert who didn't have that access what would they--what would their meal look like?

00:15:03

GJ: You know what? A meal, a typical meal in a food desert, kind of sometimes depends on what's being given away like in the neighborhood churches and stuff. So on Monday this church

is giving away you know this meal for free and that might be part of what people are taking in. And again where there were once businesses there's lots of nonprofits that are giving away food. So what people are putting on their tables is what they get from those pantries. And a lot of times you know because just the capacity of the--the pantry they might not be able to access lots of vegetables. So it's primarily going to be a starchy meal; there may be some meat on the table but you know it just again depends on what they're able to--to access through those venues.

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SW: And when you say starchy meal can you be particular about it like what kind of starches would you say?

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GJ: Pasta, rice, bread are the main starches that you would see in a meal in the food desert.

00:16:08

SW: So you were working--you were volunteering with the kitchen for the kids. Can you talk about how you decided to start Fresh Future Farms, like what is it--? Well you described it earlier but like why--why did you decide to do it?

00:16:23

GJ: Well I have a friend, Todd; I call him Fresh Future Farms Collaborator and Chief. Before Fresh Future Farm was a word that like doesn't slide off your tongue, [*Laughs*] we were trying to figure out how do we engage the people in the neighborhood? And along came this South Carolina Community Loan Fund, Food and Innovation Competition, so with my love and

background for--for urban agriculture we were able to go through a next-level business plan to see all the--the winning components that needed to be in place for there to be a successful farm.

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I was then able to go and spend like six months last year completing commercial urban agriculture training with my--I call him the godfather of soil, Will Allen in Milwaukee to see like how they've been able to thrive doing city agriculture near the people that they're serving, so--. It was just putting all these pieces together, putting the puzzle pieces in and--and figuring out how we can collaborate and find the specific location in the neighborhood that would work, so we're in back of an old school, on property that the City of North Charleston is leasing to us for the next five years. The new school is being built across the street, elementary school, middle school, and then the largest fire station in the City of North Charleston will be like within a mile of where we are. And we're surrounded completely by houses, so prime time location for a farm.

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SW: Did you know that you wanted to be there as soon as you saw that location or how did you--?

00:18:00

GJ: It was--it was taken what I had learned from the next level business training class and what I had learned from growing power and sitting down with a zoning map with the Mayor and said that it had to be in a place where we eliminated or minimized barriers to access. So we're very close to the bus stop, you know the major bus stop in the cities there, only three blocks away and people are walking more than that to access those corner stores and dollar stores for some groceries. So we're in a prime location.

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And then we're only like one block away from Rivers Avenue which may seem insignificant but if you go through business plan training what they tell you is you need at least 9,000 cars to pass in order to be successful and supplement what you will do with the residents. And there's 19,000 cars that drive through Rivers Avenue every day.

00:18:50

SW: Is Rivers Avenue kind of one of the primary arteries around--?

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GJ: It is. When I first moved here it's the way I got around everywhere. Everything had to be off of Rivers Avenue for us to find it and access it.

00:19:04

SW: And I'm--so I'm wondering you know how--can you describe where you are right now with the farm and where you see yourself maybe in two years?

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GJ: Okay; well right now we're in the baby infrastructure, startup phase. We got a five year lease on an empty piece of land so we're having to put all the utilities in there, you know getting the--'cause we're right next to a basketball court which is awesome. So like 4 or 5 o'clock we got free help you know. People want to--like they can do their circuit training and play a little bit of basketball and then help build a row.

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We are working to put in all the infrastructure that needs to be in place because you know we'll have a store there, so we're about \$20,000 away and a couple months from getting that together. And in two years my hope is that not only is the farm operational, that we're generating enough money not only to stock the store but to be able to hire folks that are living in the neighborhood to run it, but that our farm is operational. We'll be able to do farm tours. And then my buddy BJ Dennis can help us do some cooking demonstrations and getting people excited about vegetables just like I was when I was a kid.

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SW: I--I felt lukewarm about vegetables as a kid but he came in last night and we talked to him and I was really excited about vegetables. He can make you excited about it.

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GJ: Yes.

00:20:28

SW: Any kind of--

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GJ: Right.

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SW: I'm wondering if you could talk about what some--well first of all--when you--when you brought this idea up and you were talking to local people in the neighborhood and the community, what was their reaction to your idea?

00:20:42

GJ: Well I did a--like a test market before we got to the South Carolina Community Loan Fund Feed and Innovation Competition. We've been running a community garden in that neighborhood for the last--it'll be four years in July. And you know gone door-to-door, knocked on people's doors and told them that you know we're going to have this community garden across the street. You know what do you need it to be? And it's not only vegetables but we have a lot of social spots there, lots of seats and then in a couple weeks we'll be showing some movies. So we have movie nights, make it as social as possible, barbeque grills, all of that available for the neighborhood. And through that space folks will learn that you can grow a lot of food with not a lot of inputs and--and we also know what our customers want when it comes to vegetables. **[Laughs]** So it's like some--some very hands-on market surveys right there.

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You know what the neighborhood wants just by what they do pick up and don't in the community garden setting.

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SW: What do they want?

00:21:44

GJ: Bell peppers, hot peppers, peppers of all shapes and sizes--you cannot go wrong. Combine that with seafood in combination and that's something that growing power like stresses, they do the seafood or the aquaponics to grow the vegetables and the fish. So our hope is too in a couple years that we'll have a little bit of fish going. And if I can figure out how to grow crabs in a bucket I'll be the most popular place in town.

00:22:11

SW: I--I wonder what have been some of the biggest challenges for you to do this to see this through.

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GJ: Um, the biggest challenges to--to get Fresh Future Farm started has just been that nobody has ever seen anything like it before, because I can describe it so--but it's not until it blooms and it won't--it doesn't bloom in the winter, it blooms in the summer time, so we've been working on this since last September. But you know our--our banana trees, they're very sad right now. It won't be until those things sprout and there's proof of our--the methodology that we want to pursue that people will buy into it. When the grocery store opens and there's produce that's there in combination of those two things working together is when we'll have the most buy-in from our neighborhood because talk is cheap in North Charleston when people have lots of things to do to keep the lights on, so you got to show them that your methods work.

00:23:13

SW: Can you tell me just a little bit about you know we're sitting here, and this is something that I thought about being here at the Festival, like I'm part of it, too, like we're in Charleston

and everyone thinks Charleston--and it is--it's like there's so many restaurants and it's a food destination and look at these superstar chefs and then like 10 minutes away we're talking about food deserts. Can you talk a little bit about you know do you feel that there are discrepancies and if so can you describe them?

00:23:40

GJ: Absolutely. You know and this is the conversation again that BJ and I have had before; you know the things that are like selling top dollar at restaurants is what was--like was a farmer's day-to-day food because you lived as a sustenance farmer off of the stuff that you grew. And now it's ironic that those things are too pricey for those folks to be able to afford. So there's a huge discrepancy when you can walk you know five blocks one direction like on King or Calhoun and be you know in poverty and you know go the other direction and have access to everything you could want if you have the dollars to able to afford it, so--.

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SW: Can you talk specifically about a dish like you were just describing, something that was sort of a common person, lay person-food that now is in the top restaurants where you--?

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GJ: Well any of the [awfuls], you know you don't find chitlins on most menus but other organ meats and things are--are now, you know the belly fat and that, that's what used to season a pot when--when people could have access to meat. And now that's something that is so expensive, you know supply and demand. When nobody wanted it, it was very cheap and now that it's a gourmet item it's very expensive.

00:25:01

SW: Yeah. Can you talk a little bit about the van? I wanted you to talk about the van and I know that you were having a fundraiser for it the last time I was going to be here.

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GJ: Yeah; yeah.

00:25:14

SW: Can you talk about your idea around the van and--?

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GJ: Well it--it's an idea that came from something that the actor Wendell Pierce was doing in Louisiana, his home state with the garden--farm or--excuse me--that he started in a food desert. You know for people that spent you know x-number of dollars you got a ride home because what's happening now is if you don't have a car you're paying somebody to take you to the store whether it's a friend or a taxi. And if you have only like \$12,000 a year that's not a lot of money.

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So our hope is to be able to teach people to build wealth by reducing their expenses. So if you keep your dollars in the neighborhood we want to honor that by giving you a ride home as long as you live within two miles of the store and spend 50-bucks. We will--we will have you covered.

00:25:59

SW: What--what kinds of things--and I know you talked a little bit about you know you talked about peppers and you mentioned your banana trees; what do you see growing on this farm? Like what would you--have you thought about--I'm sure you thought about that.

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GJ: Yeah.

00:26:12

SW: Could you kind of give me a--like a sense of like what it will look like when everything is planted?

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GJ: It's going to be--when everything is planted, Fresh Future Farm is going to be this--this urban farm, permaculture paradise where there will not only be commercial crops, but in working with BJ we'll have some historic crops that we'll teach you know the--the school children that live nearby and the residents. And then we'll also have fruit trees. We have like 40 fruit trees in the ground right now that are on the perimeter of our space, another 70 fruit bushes, so we'll have blueberries and blackberries galore once we get started, but this will be a place where the kids can come and pick as part of their tour. But we'll also be able to harvest some fruit and then sell it at the store either as-is, you know in its like non-processed state or as part of a value-added offering, so--. It's going to be a great destination for people where you'll come and wonder what is Germaine cooking up today for us? You know it'll be something that you will be looking forward to when you come to us.

00:27:20

SW: And could you talk--just give a couple of examples; we talked about you know the fruit trees and the berries, but like some of the traditional crops, the historic crops that you were talking to BJ--?

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GJ: Specifically they are like certain cultivars of watermelon and beans and peas that we'll have there, you know because you know we--we didn't have the space to be able to grow a lot of peas at the community garden and we'll work to use the perimeter, like our fences to be able to grow a variety of peas and such. But in the historical crops we'll also grow those peas and get people used to cooking from scratch again.

00:27:56

SW: What do you love so much about farming?

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GJ: Having worked like in an office for so many years what I love about farming is that you know I can wear the same jeans and tee-shirt and get the job done and I just think farmers are rock stars because no matter what you do in life, you need food. We all have that in common and to be able to fill a need in a neighborhood directly is amazing. And I know that it will be infectious not only for me, you know I've been hooked for the last 10 or so years, but once we train residents in the neighborhood that they can have their own business doing the same thing it'll be very exciting and a way to engage the community at large.

00:28:44

SW: I have kind of a drawn out question so bear with me again for a second.

00:28:49

GJ: Okay.

00:28:49

SW: You know we're talking about food deserts and we're talking about urban farming and urban farming is sort of like you know everybody talks about urban gardens, urban farming, and you see them in all these neighborhoods in cities and a couple years ago I interviewed two women in Atlanta who have a farm on a--it's--I think they lease it through Atlanta Public Schools and it's in the west-end neighborhood, so you know there's not a whole lot of that happening there. And as the neighborhood sort of gets gentrified, their--their--their farm is in--their farm is being threatened right now.

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But they've been--you know people in other neighborhoods who have greater wealth than the west-end have invited the farmers to come farm on our farm, but like that wasn't the point. We're here because we need this here. So do you--and so I guess my question is do you find that like when you say urban farming, like people have this notion of that looks like but--but that the type of farming that you're doing is urban farming but there's like--it's not--it's not a trend; it's a necessity you know? Do you ever feel like that or do you ever have thoughts about that?

00:29:56

GJ: Well I--I absolutely have an opinion about whether or not like an urban farm is a trend or a necessity and in a food desert it's absolutely a necessity. And gentrification is something that we worry about as well because we see it happening with the development of a brand new school. That's what's going to draw some people in and displace some other folks. But our hope is that by creating an economy that meets an immediate need which everybody needs food and even though the folks in Chicora Cherokee have only had maybe \$12,000 to spend like as cash that neighborhood spent \$4 million on food using like EBT and SNAP and we'll be accepting that the day that we open.

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So taking that resource in order to generate jobs is a way that some folks can be able to stay in the neighborhood.

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SW: Are there challenges--you talked about sneaking the vegetables in your spaghetti for the kids--I'm wondering if when people have been used to a specific diet of not having fresh vegetables and eating things that they get at the convenience stores, do--is there a challenge in imagining getting people to change their diet when they have new access to this?

00:31:11

GJ: I--I say the learning curve is--is not very steep because these are things that you know the older folks in the neighborhood, you know older than me grew up on anyway because you know what I found when I started with the school garden in the same neighborhood, matter of fact our farm is not you know 500-feet from where I started a school--worked on a school garden at Chicora Cherokee, the bulk of the conversations I had every day were with the adults passing

through, talking about their experiences as children, not only eating fresh food but even foraging at a young age for what they ate.

00:31:51

So it'll just be kind of a deja-food thing I'm hoping, a deja-food thing [*Laughs*] with the adults and getting the--the seniors engaged and involved to talk about you know what they grew up eating and having those things grown; we intend to get everybody you know old and young and everybody in between engaged in what we do.

00:32:15

SW: Kate do you have any questions for Germaine?

00:32:18

SW: You just asked my last question. That was great.

00:32:20

SW: Germaine I'm wondering, you know your son is in there; I mean would you want him to--I mean I'm wondering would you want him to farm. Does he show any interest?

00:32:31

GJ: My--my son is an architect [*Laughs*] figuring out ways to make things easier and coming up with things that we should sell is his specialty but you know as a cool kid, like getting dirty is not his bag. It was--it was when he was four but now that he's almost 16 not so much. But my hope is you know if he's not necessarily like in the soil, like he and my daughter will have some

pieces that they play in the--the orchestra that is the space--we'll be working on at Fresh Future Farm.

00:33:07

SW: And for the record will you tell me the names of your children so we have it on tape?

00:33:11

GJ: Anika and Adrian.

00:33:14

SW: Germaine I don't have any more questions for you but I'm wondering if there's anything that I missed and didn't think to ask you that you think is important for people to know about your work.

00:33:24

GJ: What I think is important for people to know about Fresh Future Farm is that there are different ways to be generous to people. And by just giving somebody a bag of free food as generous as that, you know it--it depreciates very quickly but by being able to pass on knowledge and excitement about you know the people's ability to be able to replicate what it is that we're doing, we hope to--we like to say vegecate people out of generational poverty with Fresh Future Farm.

00:34:00

SW: I really love all of the terms you have. When I left my first voice mail to you I was--I almost had to hang up and just like think about it for a second and then call back and like leave the real message.

00:34:11

GJ: Yeah; well it's--but it's changing people's paradigms about the way that they think of vegetables. You know vegetables are boring; not when you talk to me about them--they're fun. And the folks in the neighborhood will learn all the cool things that they haven't yet about vegetables.

00:34:28

SW: Can you tell me if it's--I know it might be hard but tell me what your favorite vegetable is and why you love it so much.

00:34:36

SW: And incorporate her question into your answer.

00:34:39

GJ: My favorite vegetable and why I love it so much? It is a close race between like okra and just a plain old salad, well with a lot of different ingredients. You know okra because you can do so many things with it and it--there's a lot of science going on with--with that and then the salad is because that's what my vegetable journey started with. And I--I have in the past you know like had salad-eating competitions at my jobs. And you know I will eat like a punch bowl full of salad and then get kicked off the team, so I'm all about the lettuce.

00:35:19

SW: A salad-eating contest?

00:35:20

GJ: Yes.

00:35:22

SW: I've never heard of such a thing.

00:35:23

GJ: Uh-huh; I was--I graduated from being a kids café cook to getting a job as a nutrition coordinator for the Low Country Food Bank. And to kind of get all the staff engaged in, you know these fruits and vegetables are something we got to do, we had the staff divide up into two teams and they had to watch each other eat. And the salad-eating competition was one week of our 13-week event. And yeah; I ate a punch bowl full of salad one time and got kicked off in like week two. *[Laughs]*

00:35:55

SW: Why did you get kicked off?

00:35:56

GJ: Because you know by myself I ate more than probably the entire staff and they--that's just not fair so it's to introduce people so I became a judge instead of a participant like after the second week of the competition. *[Laughs]*

00:36:09

SW: You showed them it could be done though.

00:36:10

GJ: Yes and--

00:36:12

SW: A whole other class--

00:36:14

GJ: --you know I even showed them that young people can do it because I brought my 12 year old daughter to work and she showed like my dietetic interns how to cook a healthy meal for a staff of like 30. So yeah; we--we--there's lots that we can do. We're not even like touching the surface yet and we hope to do that with the farm.

00:36:38

SW: Well Germaine, I don't have any more questions for you but I'm really, really grateful that you came down here today 'cause I know you're busy.

00:36:45

GJ: Well it's--it's cool to hang out near Jazzy Studio, like I am--I might go out and sign autographs. *[Laughs]*

00:36:51

SW: Yes; you know--

00:36:53

GJ: Start with my kid over here.

00:36:54

SW: We're going to take a picture.

00:36:56

KM: Before y'all leave I want to take a picture. Just stay here; I want you in the picture if you don't mind. And I'm going to step out and grab my camera.

00:37:04

SW: Thank you Kate.

00:37:06

[End Germaine Jenkins Interview]