

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 0:00

I'm Jon Goehring interviewing Deneen Griffin, Deneen, can you just tell me a little bit about your family life growing up, and how you grew up, where you grew up, and what your experiences were like then?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 0:13

Well, I come from a really diverse family. My father is biracial. So, most of the time when people saw him, they thought he was white because he like really, he's lighter than you like he sentience. Like he turned into lobster red it's really funny. But his parents were black. My grandma was white. My grandfather was black, and he came from like a medium sized family. My mom on the other hand, my grandparents, cuz my grandparents on my dad's side, they got divorced and all that stuff, but my grandma and grandfather on my mom's side they were both black, but they were married for like 50 years. They had 11 kids and yeah very big family. I was like really close with a lot of my family members coming up someone cuz my mom, she worked a lot, so my grandma actually raised me most of the time and that's where I've lived in the household with my mom and my grandma. So, it was pretty cool. I went to Catholic school. Most people said my mom had a lot of money a lot of the times because we had a really nice house like we live in a city of Rochester so in our area isn't as urban as most places so like it's like down the street from a Randy Quaid a lot of people in our neighborhood like owner homes very okay neighborhood, I guess. As I stated, I went to Catholic school, so definitely in my own little bubble. Got a rude awakening when I went to public school because all my family members basically were in public school and I wanted to be like the rest of everyone else and I switched in and hated it actually ended up dropping out. Got Yeah, I got my GED though right away. So actually, got my GED at like 16. So, I had to wait to the following semester to actually enroll in college where I did at MCC. So, I did have a little rocky period where I didn't want to go to school. So, I think I took like a year off or something and just ran the streets and most of the time I took care of kids. That was how I made my money. I did home daycare for like seven years. And it was pretty nice. Easy until I had kids on my own and then of course that was after I graduated college though, but it was still like yeah, step away from this and it was a lot going on. So, I actually ended up taking five years off after I ha my daughter, and here I am now started school again. Five years later was different way different. Seems like everything being that I did drop out of high school. I didn't have I want to say a well-rounded education because then you mix middle school and stuff with Catholic school and they go into the city where I was learning stuff like, from like when I was in middle school and I just wasn't interested, and it was different. So, I don't know I missed out on a lot especially like when it's U.S. history and I'm like learning about stuff I would have liked in like high school and I'm like, miss this chapter. What who is these people? So, it was definitely kind of a challenge, especially being out of school for so long, like having to remember stuff from high school again. And it was Yeah, great difference.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 3:50

What was so different about Catholic school versus then going to public school?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 3:55

Like one of the things, I did say was it was ahead, so like the things that I was learning, like, I'm like, why are we learning this? Like, I learned this in middle school This is it. Like, right level. The teachers, you had some that really cared. And I remember like, being in Catholic school and I was close with my teachers and then it was a smaller school of course, they knew what they were nice to us. Whereas public school, I found maybe one teacher I connected with and even my connection with her like, it was wonderful, and she was like, always telling me how smart I was and everything but then I have another teacher who said like, Oh, she's cheating. Yeah, and he had to like to prove that a teacher because I was in like the problem children, I guess. So, when I like went to this program called ASAP I actually excelled in a different environment, I guess and it wasn't a classroom full 30 to 40 people, kids and stuff like, that's another difference Catholic school. Like, we have maybe 20 kids in each class. And then we all had our regular classes. And then we went to like, switch classes everyday like a schedule. We had math class, science class, then we go to history class. That was like so different because when I went to public school, we only have four classes a day. And then like they so it was like, what is they doing? I felt like really remedial. It felt like a remedial experience, like all the way around just a really remedial experience the instruments down the music, music class, like we never had our own instruments and stuff. So, then no one like I had cousins that did go to like pearl Mac and stuff like that. And they're getting violins and stuff. I'm like, wait a minute, and we didn't even have flutes. Wow. Yeah, so that was our music experience. And I just thought it was just a really neat experience even in Catholic school, like you had choices of the band, like different teams like public school when I went to Marshall, it was they had a borrowed team meaning like, they didn't have their own basketball team. They actually share teams with other schools. So, yeah, so they have like a mixed team like they would go leave school and go to the practice at the other school because they had a mixed team like that's how the fundamentals I guess, or whatever the case may be, but here I am, like, we don't even have, you know, funding for real football team or basketball team here. And then when I left Catholic school, we have like these musical recitals, plays and here we are, like, it was way different. And then like the middle school I went to was called Bishop Hogan. So, we were actually connected to Bishop Karn. So that's the school I was set to go to high school for, but I actually switched to public school.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 7:02

Okay, did you ever regret that? Yeah, thanks back and be like, Oh, yeah, was that Carney now?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 7:07

Yes, definitely. And it was just too late, I guess. And I was like 16 and then going to Catholic school, I know it wouldn't have worked out because I had missed so much time period and then be in a public school. It was remedial to me. So, I'm like, let me just go about and get my GED, which I did do pretty good on a pass the first time in the program I went to was called the MCC stage program. So, when I took the tape test, I did so well on that basically, I didn't have to do practice for the GED. I learned like life skills, banking and how to balance a checkbook and stuff like that.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 7:47

So, what inspired you then to come to Brockport now?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 7:53

I thought that I was working at Walmart and I had an associate degree, and I never had a real job. Being that I have my own daycare business for like several years so I looked for a job like for the first time and no one, and I have an associate degree I have a seven-year business I had like taxes you have to do not 1099 form on a business so I have all my records like I look you think you look great and I think I might have did like 50 job applicants Wow. Probably more because I was like in this job recruitment program where they made you go like you have to sign like where you try to get a job and it was just embarrassing and no one looked at me I didn't have experience really life experience meaning that I was only had associates in college like I went to like McDonald's jobs. They told me I was overqualified. It was really like here I am with two kids like I had a really like rough patch. So, like...

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 9:01

You were in between being overqualified and under qualified. So now that you're at Brockport, and you see like, what goes into getting our four-year degree, is it really like that big of a difference between having an associate's and a bachelor's degree?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 9:17

I'm hoping.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 9:19

Should it be though? Like based on the academic work that you're required to do to get a bachelor's degree as opposed to just an associate degree does that make you like all the more smarter or qualified it seems like regardless, associate degree is still like good enough for right?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 9:39

It should be but then when you're out here in the world, and you're actually have bills to little people to actually like looking up looking at you wanting their food, their clothes and everything else. So, it's like do I really want to like this job, or do I want a job just to get me by where I'm sad or I don't want to go to work. So, I decided like teaching was something that I was interested in, especially history. Just the fact that I think where we live at everything is so Eurocentric, if it wasn't like that, it can be a big change, because no one will be looking at things like oh, everybody's this and we will be working on breaking down those barriers and the gaps of things and not just separating more.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 10:33

So you want to be a teacher then?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 10:35

Yeah.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 10:35

And how do you think your experience in the education system growing up the differences between Catholic school and public school is going to impact how good of a teacher you're going to be? Knowing that knowing these differences, knowing how different it can be for kids.

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 10:54

I want to make it aware. I want to bring awareness to what I teach. I want it to be meaning for, for I want them to know about the stereotypes and the differences. And not only just in Mexico, but I want them to know like, you know, we live here and like, even if I do, because I definitely think I'll probably end up teaching at the City School District. I want them to know like, there is a bubble. And even though their history shows, everything shows that we're not supposed to do good. I want to show them that we can and we're going to change that and we're going to change how we look at ourselves. The community looks at us and it's kind of just an inside out thing for me. Because if we educate our children about the movies and about the guns and the robberies and how they portray black people, I want them to see the black people in the forums. I want them to know that this person in history did this. This person did this, this person did that, like, you know, just educate them in a different view a different light without being so Eurocentric.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 12:06

Yeah. Without like the culture sort of taking over and telling right they can and can't be right.

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 12:12

Yes, this Manifest Destiny, if you see like the music nowadays, everything else that kind of pushes that stereotype on how black people are supposed to be what black people are, of course, like you have people in the suburbs that think like, Oh, they only sell drugs and stuff, because then if you look at the most popular TV series or anything right now, that's how we're portrayed. So...

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 12:36

So that, making that change in culture, do you feel like that starts in the education system?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 12:42

Yes, definitely. It's just like, in terms of slavery and stuff. They usually just gloss over it. rather it be a good school, a bad school. It's just scratching the mere surface, but yet, like Slavery this country was built on slavery. And I definitely think they need to know like, the, like the horrible things that took place. Right? They say all so long ago well, it wasn't. Like the civil rights movement in the 60s and 70s. Like our parents still remember it. Yeah, they still remember it. So, we are thinking, not only shining light on those things and telling the untold History telling how the FBI follow Martin Luther King tells them like everything, because some of this stuff is like, I know, conspiracy theories is far-fetched. But when you have actual records and FBI stuff is not just a theory anymore. And that goes from not only just the civil rights movement, but other things that's in place right here in America that they don't teach about. So, I think them knowing that and knowing the bias about our country would make it a better place. Nobody would be in those bubbles. Nobody would be, you know, oh, this than the third, if you knew, like, their grandparents still remembered her parents who were whipped or whatever the case may be a few can you get what I'm saying? Like...

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 14:17

It's not that far away, right? It's very even in today's culture, it's still here, whether people are being judgmental or not, you know, whether they mean to be or not people fit into stereotypes to conform to what they think they should be. And they don't realize that really, they can do anything they want, and there should be no racial barriers. But the movies we watched in class about like, the difference between Mexican and American schools, you even though it wasn't Mexican and American, like you sort of lived that a little bit because you went to both Yeah. So how is that different for you and how will that help you like now wanting to go into the education system having lived both like in your bubble and then outside of the bubble in the actual world.

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 15:11

I see the differences by those totally relevant that when I went to Catholic school we got brand new textbooks and we're always like, I remember like, teacher coming in the room with like a box of books and we all got to take our books home and even science class, we got science kits and like our science class had like, actual stuff our teachers did actual experiments and stuff and it was cool, like I believed was like biology and all this and that and we did certain this, then go into public school where we didn't have a science room we had a classroom with maybe a body diagram and whereas in Catholic school, we had a full lab. experiments and all that stuff. Just knowing the differences in a music class. I don't think that there should be any differences, like our funding and stuff. It starts with not only just culture, but our funding is backwards. So, if you live in a nicer neighborhood and you pay more taxes, you get a

better school. So, if you can't afford to live in a nicer neighborhood where your school gets more taxes and stuff, your children aren't going to learn.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 16:32

So, all the money stays in the communities. And even though it's like a state tax, right, all in the community, so....

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 16:40

Then if your school is doing poorly because they don't have the books, the resources, the instruments, literally the music instruments, the money to fund it, this the football teams and stuff to actually play sports and stuff like how do you expect them to do as well as the other schools. So, then they're still even with this the funding with the test the state test. So now they don't have as much as them. So that puts them lower. And now these tests come, and they don't have the resources and stuff to teach and learn them. And even with the SAT testing stuff is proven that it's proven that basically like, the IQ and stuff they're based on, which you know, not as much as like how, how you experience what you've been exposed to, right? So, it's just like a little kid, if you don't expose them to certain stuff, if they've never heard classical music, if they don't know who Beethoven is, you can't then put them in an environment where they're expected to know all those things, or they had that not only just to be able to like even a learning stuff the stuff that the suburban schools teach compared to the city schools like we're totally backwards. And it's, it's not only hurting the kids is hurting our actual communities, it hurts like now you see these people who look in real life, like why are their schools better? Like it was just on the news, a lady got sentence, however many years for lying about where she lived that because she wanted her kids to go to a better school. So, like...

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 18:28

And that's another thing. Do you feel that that should be changed as far as you know, these borders of where you live? You can only go into a certain school. So, if you live just across the border, you have to go to this school?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 18:39

No, I believe that it should be, school is school. I don't think there should be better schools. I think they should put everyone on an even playing field. Like if it's that, like, if it's sincerely that important. Like why shouldn't there be special schools or special schools for to People who are specially like talented like IQ of 200 or something, put them near and everybody else should have the same statewide like learning about other countries and stuff like when you hear about their public-school systems that everybody gets the same system everybody do this. You think of like, I guess when I used to think about it, I used to think all communists and you know, like everything's to say, like black and gray. But it's not really that when you're talking about education, because then you have a five-star school who gets the

best books, the latest this the updated laughter and doing construction versus the school that has 10-year-old books, no equipment, no lab for science department.

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 19:45

It's you. Yeah, equality of opportunity, like communism would be a quality of outcome, like whether you try or not, but the schools are so different, that they're on equal as far as like your opportunity, right? So, if you're a kid growing up in the inner city or whatever, you're just like, it's not your fault, but you don't have the resources it takes to succeed. So, you talked about funding. That's definitely one way to combat this. Is there? Is there anything else that you would, you would try to institute?

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 20:18

I wouldn't. So, like right now in the Rochester City School District there is like so many cases of people still in money and laundering and whatever else. I think it should be more out of the hands of single people. I don't think one person should have that much authority, that person like if we're truly a democratic society, it's just like with Trump, if you allow him to make all these rash decisions about China and stuff, no one idiot should have that control and that much power. It's just sorry to say is yeah, and it's the same thing in the City School District right now. One person might have too much control too much money, authority whatever the case may be. And now looking, they're falling. They're all being accused of stealing. I believe that everything should be done by committees and just not one of people in like high society, but everyday people it should be put more into the hands of everyday people, larger committees where there's votes and decisions and truly education of the matters. not just someone, more into the hands of everyday people, larger committees where there's votes and decisions and truly education of the matters. just someone who's up on a hill in a nice house, making a decision that only Intel's that they care about is the urban suburban. Well, the suburban schools that their kids go to if that because most of them didn't put right private school. So...

Goehring, Jonathan N (jgoeh1) 21:55

Yeah, absolutely. Well, thank you so much for your time.

Griffin, Deneen S (dgrif1) 21:58

No worries!

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