Interview keywords/topics: Ireland and Appalachia, Community

Interviewer: EM
Interviewee: KK

EM (00:00):

<silence> Okay. Today's November 6th 2024. We are in Belk library at App State. My name's EM and today I'll be interviewing

KK:

KK

EM:

for WRC 2202. Um, can you say your year and major?

KK (00:17):

I'm a senior and a chemistry major with a forensic science concentration.

EM (00:23):

Where would you consider yourself to be from?

KK (00:25):

So, I am originally from Michigan. Um, I grew up in a small town called Rockford. It's about 20 minutes north of Grand Rapids. Um, it's kind of like a big small town <laugh>, if that makes any sense.

EM:

Mm-Hmm <affirmative> .

KK:

The city lines are pretty big, but the actual like downtown, um, area is pretty small. Um, I've heard that my high school was pretty big, so a big small town as well, I like to call it.

EM (00:54):

Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. How many kids were in your high school?

KK (00:56):

Um, I think my graduating class was like 550.

EM (01:00):

Okay. Yeah. Um, how would you say that your time there shaped you?

KK (01:06):

So my house that I grew up in was like right on the line, um, of Rockford city line and then right above it was Cedar Springs. And my mom actually worked at the Cedar Springs School for a while and Cedar Springs was known as like the hillbilly town and like farm animals, farms, all that. So I kind of got both farm life and also more preppy where my school was. So I started off, you know, liking Rockford, staying there and then kind of as I grew up I moved more towards farming <laugh>.

EM:

Interesting.

KK:

Yeah.

EM (01:40):

What are you proudest so far of in your life?

KK (01:44):

I would probably say I'm proudest of my decision to come down here. I started out at Northern Michigan University and I realized that was not the university for me. I was not getting a very good education there. And it took me a while, but I finally accepted that I was gonna move out of state and by myself too, which I'm, I'm pretty proud of <laugh>.

EM (02:07):

Yeah. That's awesome. Um, we're still dealing with some of the impacts of COVID-19. What was your experience with that like, and how do you think that that changed you or shaped you?

KK (02:18):

So I was actually a senior in high school when it started and at first, you know, it was a typical, oh, two weeks off, really fun. Um, I'm a senior, I don't have to deal with school anymore, but then it gradually got longer and longer and I still had to do school, which I was really upset about at first. Um, I would say it definitely impacted my time at the first university that I went to because not only graduated senior, um, high school, I didn't get a graduation. Um, and then going into college with the pandemic, it was very hard to socialize and make friends. So if you didn't like your roommate, thankfully mine was good. We, we were okay <laugh>, but there was like nowhere you could go because everybody had their door shut. Nobody was going out and doing anything. Um, I have this vivid memory <laugh> the first day, um, I was up there, I was driving around with my roommate and the president of the university and um, the university cops were literally driving around shutting down any like group bigger than three <laugh>.

EM:

Wow <affirmative>

KK:

It was very isolating. Um, academic wise, I would say that it has definitely impacted me because of online learning. I'm not very good at online learning, um, especially with chemistry. And so I'm still kind of trying to transition back and yeah

EM (03:49):

It's cool to like hear someone from not North Carolina and like, I feel like Michigan's pretty far away but like have similar experiences to like me and my friends that did, are from here. Um, and like you were like, we had two weeks off and I was like, I had that like exact same like thought and time off and that's just cool that we had that like shared experience from different places. Yeah. Um, what do you think your broad social perceptions of generations Z are?

KK(04:16):

Um, I feel like it's a mix. I think that we don't get enough credit for the kind of stuff that we can do. Like everyone's big on the technology that we have and how it's so bad and like gonna take over the world and everything. Um, I feel like in a good way we know so much more about it that um, we know how to use it in a good way. But then also one thing, I was actually just thinking about this earlier today because I get really bad secondhand embarrassment <laugh> from like videos that I see people filming themselves and I've just seen, at least on campus too, so many people going around filming themselves and I just look at it like, you could be talking to someone right now. I don't know, I just, it's not me to go around filming myself.

EM:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

KK:

Um, but hey, that, that's some people's life. <laugh>.

EM (05:14):

True. Do you have friends that are in other generations?

KK (05:18):

Yeah, so I actually grew up, um, with older brothers that are millennials, <laugh>. And so, um, I also get to see how technology affects them very differently than it affects my generation. Um, and I would say that's probably the best example I can give for that one. <laugh>.

EM (05:40):

Yeah. Um, now for some App state questions. You said that you, um, started at a different university. Why did you choose App State and how did you find App State?

KK (05:49):

So I felt like I was not getting a very good education and very good opportunities, um, at my last university. And I just kept battling with myself, kind of what I should do. 'cause I did make friends there. Um, and it was really tough at first to leave them 'cause I felt for the first time, like I actually, um, grew some roots somewhere and actually had people around that town. But then I also realized it was probably doing me more harm than, than good. And I remember years ago I, I just came down here to travel for family and um, I love the area and I'm also big into forensics and App State has a great forensics program, so.

EM:

Wow <affirmative>

KK:

I loved it. <laugh>

EM (06:40):

What year were you when you transferred?

KK (06:43):

Um, it was 2022, so I was technically like in between a sophomore and junior.

EM (06:50):

What has your um, college experience been like? Um, specifically an App or like in comparison to your other university?

KK (06:59):

Um, I would say the one at App State is probably a lot better. Um, I love, I remember when I first came down here, I loved seeing all the Greek life and just all of the, all social life on campus. Um, my last university did not have any Greek life. I think there was one sorority and there just wasn't a lot going on. Um, and so I love just seeing people actually have that college experience. Um, and it feels like much more alive.

EM:

Mm-Hmm <affirmative>

KK:

and I don't know if that's because of the pandemic and um, the switch between like 2022 or 2020 and 2022 or, I don't know. But I'll say I like it a lot better down here.

EM:

Yeah. That's good. Um, what's your favorite place on campus?

KK (07:50):

Um, on campus? Oh gosh, I do most of my time on campus studying, so,

EM:

mm-Hmm. <affirmative>,

KK:

I'll probably say study rooms, like any type of study room.

EM:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

KK:

Um, 'cause sometimes I'll get together with people in my class and we will actually like talk and hang out and have fun. Um, but then also get work done. So probably just the study room. <laugh>

EM:

What's your favorite off campus spot?

KK:

I would say probably the green way I love, um, the scenery there. Seeing people, especially <laugh>, um, when it's really warm out and everybody will bring their dogs on a walk and I love going for runs on there and yeah, it's good hiking spots. <cough>.

EM (08:39):

Yeah, I remember the first time I went it was so pretty <laugh>. Um, and I didn't even like realize or think about having a green way here.

KK:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

EM:

Um, how would you describe the community app?

KK:

Um, I would say very welcoming. Um, which is another thing that I love about App State. Um, another reason why I wanted to move south was because I was growing, um, in my faith and I was really nervous about it at first because I did not grow up in a faith based house household. Um, and I still was kind of getting my footing with everything and I came down here and I felt so much more welcomed and, um,

people were actually like wanting to listen to me and help me learn about not only my faith, but just the, um, area around here and way of life <laugh>. Um, but yeah, I've had a great time coming down here and I just feel very welcomed.

EM:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, when did you start your faith journey?

KK:

Um, it was actually like a couple months before the pandemic hit.

EM:

Okay.

KK:

Yeah. So it was, it was like really new <laugh>.

EM:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Um, if you were to tell someone years from now that is attending App State, what do you think the most important thing about community here is? They should know.

KK (10:06):

Um, I would probably say as much as it seems, I don't wanna use the word divided, but like, there are different groups of people around campus. Um, and no matter what, if something happens, I know that will all come together.

EM:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> very unified.

KK:

Yes.

EM:

Um, for a more recent question, how were you impacted by hurricane Helene?

KK:

So I thankfully was not here when the storm hit. Um, I was able to go down to Charlotte before all the rain and everything and my apartment is actually right on um, a little creek, like it is the smallest creek. You would never think that it would flood or anything. Um, but my roommate was still in the apartment

and she sent me a video like Friday morning and my apartment was like a foot away from almost flooding.

EM M.

Wow.

KK K.

And it was probably the most stressful thing because I wasn't there. I don't know if it would've been more stressful if I was there or since I was gone. Um, but it it was just crazy to see all of the damage and thankfully my apartment was not flooded.

EM:

Did you get to go back to Michigan during our time off?

KK:

No, I stayed in Charlotte. It was actually, it was really fun. <laugh>, I stayed, um, at my boyfriend's apartment and his parents, or his whole family lives in Asheville, which was hit the most

EM (11:44):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

KK (11:44):

And they were able to get out, I think that Saturday. And it was his parents, he and I, his sister and her fiance and their dog all in a one bedroom apartment. <laugh>

EM:

Oh my goodness.

KK:

For like two weeks. Um, it was a lot. It was definitely a lot, a lot of emotions, um, because they didn't know when they were gonna go back to work, um, if they were gonna get paid or any of that. And I didn't know anything about school, if we were gonna go back, um, how long it was gonna be. Um, but overall it was fun. Looking back, it was a great time to spend together.

EM:

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> That's sweet. Um, did it change your view of the Boone community at all?

KK:

Yeah, I would definitely say it did. Um, online you just see all these people like, um, Boone locals and college students, Boone locals seem to not care for college students very much normally. Um, I'm sure

most of 'em do, but they're, every once in a while you see 'em clash. But with this, it, it didn't matter. People came together and it was great to see.

EM:

Mm-Hmm yeah <affirmative>. Um, thank you

KK:

<laugh> Thank you.