## Fly Control

## Season 1, Episode 19

**[Intro]**

KH – Kara Harders

JH – Joshua Hofer

BS – Billie Sutton

KS – Kelsea Sutton

0:00

KS

I hope everyone remembers Burke had a hard time and Burke did something beautiful after that and we can do that again and again.

0:10

BS

Ya, you never give up, you never quit – you keep moving ahead.

0:16

KH

Welcome to Home Starts Here, a podcast seeking out the individuals, businesses and ideas that are sparking vibrant communities across South Dakota. We sit down with rural changemakers, striving to understand their place in their local ecosystem.

0:31  
JH

Today, we’ll be talking about how communities encounter and work through disasters and tragedy.

In our work, we’ve found that it’s through relying on relationships that communities withstand challenges from inside, and outside their community. Some of these challenges emerge from deaths in the community, economic challenges, natural disasters, and more. We know our communities can be torn apart and fractured in these times. But occasionally, these times can be special moments of action and unity in a community.

Today we speak with Billie and Kelsea Sutton, community members of Burke, a town of 700 located in south-central South Dakota. Listen as they tell us how the community of Burke rallied through tragedy to create something called Lenny’s Lilypad. As you hear the Sutton’s share about their work in the Burke community, consider how Billie and Kelsey’s experiences and evolving roles in the community shifted the conversations during a challenging time in Burke.

We believe in a time of challenge, the community of Burke came together to make something beautiful. Together, they are making it something more than an address. We believe through their work, they are making it Home.

1:46

KH

Welcome. My name is Kara Harders, and today I am joined by my colleague, Joshua Hofer and Billy and Kelsea Sutton, here in beautiful Burke, South Dakota. Today we're going to be talking about the Suttons and a project they've completed here in town. So, would you guys like to tell us a little about yourselves and introduce yourselves?

2:06

KS

Hi. I'm Kelsea, Kenzy Sutton and I live here in Burke with my husband. I’m a bank lawyer, a historian, a former county commissioner, and a mom to Liam Lenny, Lake, and Louie

2:18

BS

Yep and I’m Billie Sutton, I was born and raised here in Burke. And my roots are here, it's pretty safe to say. I went to the University of Wyoming, and then I came back. After that I'm an HR Representative here at the bank, I'm an investment Rep. I ranch with my family, which was where I was born and raised. I'm also a husband to Kelsea and a parent to the kids, and that's me.

2:46

KH

Awesome, one of the things this podcast is really interested in is when a place that you live becomes home, rather than it just being your address and technicality. Kind of a place you actively invest in. So, was there a moment or a period of your life where you felt that kind of click and shift as adults rather than just being a kid in a hometown?

3:10

BS

I think, for me. I mean growing up here. I always viewed it as home, but I remember when I was graduating high school I couldn't wait to get out of this place. But I once I left, it just creeps in that, you miss, you know, “home”. I always knew that I wanted to come back. My story is a little bit unique, and how I came back I didn't see myself coming back in the way that I did. I had a rodeo injury in 2007 that shifted my life drastically. I was paralyzed from the waist down, and I was kind of trying to find myself again. And, by coming home I did, in fact, find myself again, and had a new sense of home. I ran for legislature and was elected after I came home, and that really solidified my place here, I think. And then, when I start working with bank that snowballed, and then Kelsea and I got married, and then it was definitely we felt, I felt really solid in, you know, being back.

4:15

KS

Yeah, I think for me it might it. I remember feeling it really towards the end of law school. So we got married in 2011. We had a house here, and a house in Vermilion at the University, and we commuted, you know, back and forth on the weekends a lot. But by my third year of law school I was ready to not be in an academic setting anymore. I was feeling like I want to go home. I want to take this education. I want to help people at home. I hadn't planned on coming home. Billy sort of was the one that felt really sure about that a lot sooner than I did. And then I got there. But then, about the same time, I was feeling that feeling. I distinctly remember my dad starting to say “you should join the Fitness Center board”, I think you'd be good at that, and I don't want to. And I'm going to get off the economic development board, so I think that you should probably run for that board position. And he started to kind of … I see it a little more clearly now than I did then. Sort of pushing me towards some of those involvement roles, and that's what when it started sort of solidifying.

5:19

KH

That's awesome. So, I know, Billy, you said you were in Wyoming, {to Kelsea} were you also in Wyoming?

5:24

KS

I went to undergraduate at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Yeah, but that is where we started dating is when we both had kind of gone West. Billy was almost done with college, and I had just started college.

5:36

BS

And I was rodeoing professionally, and college rodeoing at the same time. And so, before I got hurt, I really had no plans to come home for an extended period of time. I would come home in the summers, you know, when school was out and help my mom and dad on our place. But, when you rodeo professionally, you're going all over the country the rest of the year, and so I’d cut way down in my classes, and I was kind of being a… I was taking one semester, I think it took six credits, and so I was… I was definitely more rodeo and going all over the place. And in fact, I would fly out of Denver and Kelsea and I would meet up, and then I'd flyout and go to rodeo, and then I’d fly back in. We'd hang out, and then I’d go back school for a few days, and then I’d hit the road again, and so I really had no plans of, of not doing that. But that changed pretty drastically in 2007.

6:29

JH

One of the things that we're going to be looking at and talking to people across the State over the coming weeks with this podcast is - what are the mechanisms and competencies of a community, and what are the unique characteristics of place makers, and how they move things forward. And I think you have two, there is two really interesting areas with you two in particular, and I just wonder if you would talk, in-regards to financial capital, and your connections being employed with the bank and having the connection to the bank. How has financial capital worked into your identity as action-oriented folk in Burke.

7:17

KS

I think when I when I think about the bank- I didn't plan to work at the bank, I want to say that too. I didn’t plan to work at the bank, I was going to do justice, in a courtroom probably, but I’m really glad I work at the bank now. I enjoy my work a lot for a lot of different reasons. And I think banks do development. I think they do development. They do that obviously through loans, right? But through donations and some human capital resources too.

And so, I work here now, and I did grow up around the bank as well, and I think that's an interesting perspective to have. I grew up - my family's been in banking for a very long time, and so I definitely got to see models. Consciously or not, I got to absorb models growing up of development, charitable giving, philanthropic work that always kind of swirls around bankers and banks. And models that that I really did like, and some models I really didn’t like too, I would say.

So I had some of those models. We had some of that awareness and understanding, and in my nuclear family, with my dad and in the community, probably as a whole, I also had a pretty acute understanding of my privilege growing up in in at least some ways, and a drill in sort of sense of responsibility around that around certain kinds of development and community work. And so now I see it.

Yeah, even more clearly when I work at the bank. What a what a call, especially this kind of making We have, I think, a kind of unique thing, but it is very ingrained, and committed to the communities that it that it's in, and that it's services. And I think that the community would look a lot different without that access.

9:01

KH

It makes a lot of sense

9:05

BS

Yeah, I mean I've seen it from the outside lens too of just being would be me before I work for the bank. The bank was always the one donating at the you know, donating large amounts to hospital gala, or for projects that need to be done or sponsoring the local rodeo, or whatever event was going on in the community, they were involved. From a personal standpoint, I grew up with a family that invested in the community financially, but you also invested your time and yourself to the community. And so that was ingrained in me at a very young age as well. And so you combine the personal capital and the financial capital, and then you can actually get some balls rolling in getting some projects done that way.

10:04

JH

So, taking forward, like you say, personal capital, being from here, having a name that the community recognizes, and all the things that come with just personal family capital and the financial capital. And I'm curious. Then we have the political capital, I always think of it as the furniture in the room in the room like rearranging how the furniture sits in the room changes the conversations that are happening.

10:34

KH & KS

Yeah! Yeah.

10:35

JH

This reminds me a little bit of that, once you put yourself forward for a different sort of social interaction and leadership. It reminds me that we're turning the chairs a little bit, and we're talking in different ways. And I was just wondering, how did the rearranging of the chairs start to shift you start engaging in the political arena?

11:00

KS

I think it changed everything. But I think you should start.

11:03

BS

No, I agree. So I ran for the Legislature in 2010, and it wasn't anything I ever thought of doing. It was never on my radar, and I don't say that to talk about, you know politics per se, but it was more about my leadership journey like, what was my leadership journey going to look like? And what was my involvement in the community going to look like, and that was just the start of a way for me to give back to the community. Because, I mean, human capital is about service and giving back. And so that was my first foray into serving my community. And I was just one way that I did, and Kelsea's done it, you know a whole host of different ways of being elected official, but also in bunch of non elected positions. Whether that is the fitness center board or starting the Farmers' market that she did, and being involved in the Economic Development Board. But you have to get involved to work with the change makers, or to encourage the change makers to get something done. And so for me, it was started by my involvement in the Legislature, and then that grew into just getting more and more involved in the community and being involved with the people that wanted to see something happen.

12:17

KS

Yeah, you know, you just learn so much from those experiences. There’s just no other course, you could go, sit down and take and understand, and by meeting people building relationships, understanding how agencies work, and how funding works, and where the resources are, and what the what the language is to use to get the resources for your community. Nothing beats that government experience. I’ve spent a lot of time ruminating on unfair systems in my life. So far, I think, about systems a lot, especially in law school. I really started thinking about systems, and how they aren’t fair, and for a while I think I really still was going through a phase of like, well, this is I just don't want this to be the problem. I'll give you an example. I don't like feed pantries, right? Because I don't want us to need them. I don't want us to need food pantries. I want us to not have a system where people are ever hungry. But we need them still, right? And that's a system, a familiarity, and something that is, that you can work on while you're working to not have an unfair system anymore. So I think for me a lot of government exposure pivoted my focus to action in ways that I could make what was within grasp and what could be done and seeing those systems a lot more clearly.

13:35

KH

I really like that example of the food that makes a lot of sense, because at first you'd say, Why would anybody say those are a bad thing? But hearing you explain it like that. It makes so much sense.

13:44

BS

Yeah, I think to get back to the to the core of it, anything you do to change something or to be involved in something is about relationships, and that's probably the biggest factor when you talk about politics. Because politics is everywhere. It's not just - when you think of politics you think of running for office, or whatever that might be. But when I think of politics I think you're surrounded by it everywhere, and it's about anything that you do, and I think it's about relationships that you build, and being in the legislature. And then, after the Legislature and all the Kelsea's done as well, has been totally about building relationships with people, building trust and finding common ground to get something done for your community. And so, I don't think that can be stressed enough is the importance of relationships, as it relates to the political world that we're in.

14:44

KS

Absolutely, and that’s what political capital is.

14:45

BS

Yes, political capital is relationships.

14:48

KH

So the thing that lured Josh and I both out here, I think most to talk with you guys is the Lenny’s Lily Pad project. The earliest mention that we could find was from back in December twenty third of 2020. Is that about when the project began for you guys?

15:07

KS

I want to say, our community had been having conversations about a splash pad for years, informal conversations at Community Club or our Economic Development Board or Community engagement meetings. People were warned up to the idea that a splash pad might really work in Burke. And then in July 2020, Billy and I lost our daughter Lenny. She was born with a knot in her cord, and she stayed with us for seven days. And we were at a time and place in our lives where we knew people would be hurting with us, and that they would want something tangible to do to help with some of that pain. it. And so, we just wanted to do a community project. That's what we wanted to do was the Splash Pad. It was the perfect catalyst for the Splash pad. So we asked for a lot of contributions to go to the community foundation to fund the splash pad project, and we lifted it off in fall of 2020, yeah, I would say. That was when we started having design meetings. We immediately, we were lucky enough to have money that we raised so we could just go straight to the designers ourselves, right with our committee.

16:24

BS

Well, and I think in lieu of, I remember, you know, posting on social media in lieu of flowers, you know, send a donation, and we're gonna do something. And that was relatively soon after we lost Lenny. And I'm trying to remember the exact amount - I don't remember the exact amount it was. It was close to thirty thousand dollars by the time those came in. So we were able to start like moving something forward.

16:55

KS

Ya, it was in the 20-30 range.

17:03

KH

That's incredible.

17:05

KS

Yeah, it was, and it was exciting.

17:08

BS

But the project cost way more than that. But that was a good starting place, and it was because we had that seed money. It made the idea a lot more tangible that the yes, a significant amount of money could be raised, and then we start putting - Kelsea was a huge part of this, putting together a plan of how are we going to find the rest of it? And it was largely private, and donations, and then a big part of it was grant writing, too. We got the Wellmark Grant, which was a hundred thousand dollars. Kelsea wrote that, and I think they only give two of those out a year in a four or five State region. That's when we knew once we received that, we're like this is happening - we're going to be able to do this thing. And then we had some really good help in the community, too. We really tapped into some of the movers and Shakers in the community. Misty Dray with the hospital and, Dr. Megan Smith, she was a huge, huge part of that, too. And we formed a committee, and they started meeting with the city council which you had to get them on board, and they were. They were good and helpful, and I think they contributed some as well. But it was by and large, you know grants and private donations that made this thing possible. And it was pretty cool to see all that come together. Now that doesn't mean it was easy, there was a lot of work involved behind the scenes to make something like this happen. But to see the finished project is pretty amazing. It's humbling to see what was created, and it wasn't just about Lenny, either. That's the neat part, I think, in that it's about remembering anybody that was lost, and like Kelsea always says, and I can let her talk about that, too. It. Our community had a hard time. We had a tornado in twenty nineteen, we went through all the Covid stuff, and we needed something, I think, to show that was good. We needed that, too.

19:15

KH

A reason to rally?

19:17

KS & BS

Ya.

19:18

KH

Place making was a somewhat new topic to me when I got this position, and whenever I kind of got around somebody that I thought was an expert in it, I would say, what makes like what is the number one thing that you think makes a place making projects successful? And every single one of them said it was the number of people in the community that you can get involved and emotionally invested of some kind. And it sounds like that was no different here, that everybody was behind it. So that's awesome.

19:49

KH

Yeah, that's exactly what happened. It was. It was hugely supported by a huge majority of the community. And that’s why it was a “go”.

19:57

JH

One thing I found really interesting. We were walking, walking in the park, and the splashpad before, and it wasn't that what I expected in that, you know, I guess. Splashpad, I kind of thought maybe it was along the main street, and it was a standalone, or maybe alongside a pool. And then it was there. But it's really - I'd encourage folks to come see it in that it’s actually a good example of built and natural infrastructure, in that it builds into, there's a football field and then kind of playground area, and the splashpad, and then a farmers' market. The farmers market is something that you have catalyzed good community things around. I was just wondering. It's that clustering that was really interesting to me, and I've seen that before really well with ideas and place making and try and and it strikes me here that that that that location and that strategy , Did you find that helpful? And what is the potential? I feel like it opens potential in interesting ways.

21:24

KS

Let me just riff on this for awhile… \*laughs\*. I love that - I love how you can see that, because that makes me feel really happy, really pleased. At the same time we were doing the splashpad, we did our drawings, we said, we're going to do phase drawings. We're going to show other potential for improvements for the park in terms of shade structure, walkways, accessibility, safety, the whole thing. And it’s great because it’s the whole ballfield complex, and not just the park, which is great. So, let me back up for a minute. Look, we used to have the farmers market on Main Street in Burke on an empty lot, and it we thought it was great. It was a lot smaller. We had fun. We sold all our stuff every week still. But I wanted a green space on Main Street, and I did a leadership cohort training, and my whole focus was getting this green space on Main Street for the farmers market, I really wanted it, and the leadership training really backed me up into planning and asking what the community wanted and what they wanted from that space and what they wanted from the farmers market. I tried to get this really diverse focus group set up to get different opinions and perspectives about what that space may look like. And they all said the same stuff! They wanted bathrooms, they wanted shade, they wanted stuff for kids to do. They wanted it to be safer, and it just needed to be at the park. That's all that we didn't need to build a grants a green space on which I still want to do - maybe in different ways. But it just needed to be at the park, and it exploded the farmers market. It completely changed. They're so worried, you know. People won't drive by - They won't - It was an amazing change, and it's only each year gotten bigger and better, and we brought in a food truck each week so serving the meal makes a big difference and the kids just go play with each other. And so, what I love to call it, and i'm sure I stole this from someone who repeated it to me, it activated a community space. And I think that the farmers market was a part of people agreeing in a vision for the park improvements because they've been - they're experiencing a happy community setting and it - I'll say one more thing, sorry - I just love it. It showed me, like I love food systems right. And I love economic systems but the community part of it had to come first. That was the focus that brings the other changes along with it in a lot of cases.

24:01

BS

So yeah, I would add that when we did the grand opening of Lenny's Lily Pad, the splash pad, they did it during Dog Days, which is our alumni event every year, and you just would not have believed the amount of people that were down there, and they loved it. They loved that they could talk to their, you know, classmates, and they could send their kids to the playground or the Splash pad, and you didn't have to worry about being on Main Street, where they were prior during Dog Days. And so, I think it's going to grow, and I don't think that the Park Revamp project is done yet, either. There's other phases that this group is talking about, and the city council is talking about as far as sand, volleyball and basketball courts, and I think it's going to continue to grow and be an even more used space. And there's people coming from all over to see the splash pad or to play-in the splash pad, because they haven't seen it, or they don't have something like that in their community. And so, we're seeing interest from

from all over Nebraska and all over South Dakota.

25:22

KH

I believe that people are coming from far and wide for this. We're here on October seventh, so it's definitely too cold for the water to be running right now, but I was looking at all the different places the water could shoot out of on that. I thought this is really an impressive thing not every town and community can have. So that's very cool.

25:32

JH

Reminds me of parks, and right now to they put up an amphitheater. They fundraised a community amphitheater, and it has catalyzed that farmers market kind of activity in that park in a similar way, and it wasn't around a tragedy. But it's been something, and they developed a concert Music Series throughout the summer. And it's been, yeah, it's an amazing thing. And I think again clustering around those assets in in a really intelligent way in these small towns where we don't, maybe don't have the raw number of assets available, we must be more strategic.

26:14

BS

Well, I think you need that I think, for communities to continue to grow and be strong, I think you need human interaction, and I think you need to find ways of having that, because it is in a society that feels sometimes like we're moving more towards online and social media type things, it sometimes gets lost -the importance of human interaction, and what kind of change that can bring. You're seeing that with the farmers market, I mean, there's just tons of people getting together and visiting, or what people went through with Covid to like people needed. I needed more human interaction anyway, for sure. , but I think that's been an important thing to bring a community together, and the commonality that we need to have to see communities grow and succeed.

27:04

KH

So, we've talked about a lot of the good aspects of this. But were there any parts during this project where you wanted to bang your head against a wall or any major obstacle that got thrown at you?

27:16

KS

\*chuckles\* ya, always…

27:18

BS

I think Kelsea probably dealt with more of that than probably I did. She was very active on the committee that was working on this, and I mean originally the splash pad was maybe bigger, and you guys had to work through that. But I’ll let you hit on some of the things you ran into -

27:36

KS

\*laughs\* He doesn’t even know. He doesn’t like making design choices… so he checked himself out of that portion of it. I would say this project had less obstacles than other projects I've done have had, and I could try to think of some more examples, because when you're doing a big project that requires the involvement of nonprofits, government, private funders, you're always - you just have a lot of actors, and you have a lot of people to communicate with. And so, we definitely had lot of things go our way, and we completed the project a lot faster than anyone probably could have expected. But when you're working with the Government you've got different opinions on the Council. I found that if I was having friction, at a council meeting that you know - follow up one on one meetings, follow up on our phone calls, follow up, go through the visual renderings, go through with the spreadsheets, go through the plan for funding were very effective. Those one-on-one conversations are very effective. They build more trust. They created sort of an understanding of mutual benefit for everyone and we. We smoothed a lot over when we needed to with one-on-one meetings. I wasn't worried about the money, but one of our committee members did tell me recently once everything was done. We had our big party, she said. Kelsea, you know, when you told me how we were going to fund it, and how much it was going to cost, I absolutely did not think that was possible, but I trusted you. (Everyone laughs) So I was just It's like, Okay, I'll do what Kelsea says. But, that part didn't concern me - once we got the Wellmark Foundation grant. I was pretty sure I could see the path forward on the money for this project, which can very often become a hurdle for a project.

29:32

BS

It's interesting to see on any fundraising project. I mean more money, begets more money - like when somebody donates and you can talk about how much you've raised, and the importance of raising, then more people are willing to donate. So, it's like a snowball rolling down a hill. I think it just starts gaining traction and gaining traction. I think the turning point was that Wellmark grant and we said, here, you know, we have this hundred thousand. We already had a bunch of other money raised, and it just seems so much more feasible, and then more people came forward willing to donate when they know that the project is going to happen. And so it's a lot about convincing people that it is going to happen, and then people are willing to get on-board and participate, and that was fun to see as well.

30:14

JH

I wonder, I was thinking about legacy, and what Burke in 2040 or 2050, with Lenny's Lily Pad, will - what is the legacy of taking a project forward on such an emotional topic? And I wonder if that will positively, if you see that - I would like to believe that it would - the next tragedy or the next projects, could seem just a bit more attainable, or even emotionally connected to people in an interesting way. It's almost speculative, we don't know where you guys will be in twenty years, or where the community will be. But I wonder if you've thought about that name, and how it will develop as your children get older, And as you move along, and as you move along in your careers , it's just an interesting riddle. Have you ever thought about that when you were naming it?

31:13

BS

Yeah, I’ve thought about it quite a bit, I think, for me, it comes back to - when I think about community, I think about wanting a place for my kids to grow up happy and healthy, and have a great childhood which then leads to a great life as a grown up. So, when I think of this project, I really think of resiliency that we're teaching our kids. And so I think about Liam. He's six years old, and he loves it down there, and I think about the resiliency that we teach him in this moment. He understands that he lost his sister, but he also understands that we did something to honor her, and the importance of remembering her and being resilient in the face of a terrible tragedy. That everybody is going to go through hard times in life. But it's how you deal with those times that defines you, and I hope to teach resiliency to Liam, and I hope that he then spreads that in his life, and that's the legacy I want to leave.

32:28

KS

I think that really nice Billy. I think the resiliency theme is a really good way to capture some of those feelings. And I agree, Josh, I think that ideally a project like this begets more projects like that, and creates a sense of understanding about ourselves as a community that we perpetuate. And I think that – naming things is - it can be tricky, right? Because you know, in a few generations people won't know who Lenny Sutton was. That's just how it works. But I think the story I hope that people remember whether it's explicit or not, is that that we had a really hard time in Burke. We had the worst flooding in the State in two thousand and nineteen, and a tornado that destroyed half our school multiple businesses, multiple homes. We had to pretty much clean it all up by ourselves, which is another podcast. And then not too long after that the pandemic hit right, and that was that was a hard time for a lot of reasons in the community. There was a lot of death. There was lot of conflict and tension. We lost not just money, but some other kids. And our great giant Jack Broom in that time, and I hope everybody remembers Burke had a hard time and did something beautiful after that, and we can do that again and again and again.

34:10

BS

Yeah, and then you never give up. You never quit. You keep moving ahead, and I probably credit my mom for instilling that in me, because that's what I had to do after my injury. That's what I had to do after, you know, losing the last election. And that's what we had to do after we lost Lenny - is, is you find a way to move forward and be resilient in the face of hard things. And I think any community that can do that is going to be successful. Because you're going fail, things are going to go wrong. But how do you keep moving ahead? And that is, I hope, what our community continues to do, and is remembered by.

35:00

KH

I almost wish I didn't have any more questions for you guys, because that was a really beautiful sentiment. That was very well-put. So do you think the decision making or tangible action mechanisms in Burke have changed due to the lily pad/splash pad? Do you think that the community is the same place as it was before - before you guys did all of this?

35:21

KS

No, I don't think so. I think that just going through the process together in a positive and visible way, and I can get totally into doing things just on my own - that can be my bad habit, right? Give credit to Billy and I - we have a lot of skills and experience that are really helpful in our community. That's just true. We've just happened to have done a lot of things, and been excited about things that make projects like the splashpad go a certain way, and I think make the next project go a certain way. But I don't think you can take that out - you can't disentangle it from the community either right, we are a product of our community. Our marriage is a product of our community. Our parenting is a product of our community, and the success of this project builds on a foundation of the women who fundraised for the Park equipment the first time that was down there, and the woman who invested in me as a mentor in grant writing , and so I think that - yes, the project is awesome, and it's cool, and I think it's changed our community, and I think that someone else can look back and say that was a foundation that I got to build on when I was doing placemaking too. And I hope that people always are grounded in how their relationship with the community matters so much that you could have a great marriage. You can have great family have great business. But when your community thrives, all of those relationships are going to thrive so much more vibrantly, too.

37:05

KH

Absolutely.

37:07

JH

I wonder about. I wonder if placing the community in the next project, but without Billy or Kelsea. How do you think that process has changed, or, has it evolved, even just taking yourselves out of it now, after what you've done. Do you have a different perspective on the next people to come and do the next project.

37:33

BS

I think leadership is about empowering other people, and I hope that what we've been able to accomplish here is not viewed as something Kelsea and I accomplished. I hope that it's viewed as something that the community did together, and I hope that we empowered people to have the confidence to take on big things that seem like a like a pipe dream. Because I think for a long time, this probably seemed like a pipe dream. It seemed like something that, ya, people can talk about, but how do we actually do it like? How do we actually accomplish it? And so, my hope is that people see something like this and say, you know what we can do anything. We can accomplish any big goal that we want to as a community, and especially as it relates to creating a great place, to raise a family and for our kids, because that's what I come back to at the end of the day is, what can we do to create a community where our kids love it here and want to come home when they grow up. You know, when they get down with college, what are they going to do? And I want to create a place where they want to come home, and I hope that we've empowered people to do the same thing, to want the same thing, and to be proud of your community and to be excited about the future of your community for your kids.

38:54

KS

And to have fun. It's a more fun, better way to live. You know, it just is. And we've been rejected by our different communities the different ways you can find them. We lost elections and licked our rooms about it. But you just keep You just can't let it go, because it's a happy, meaningful way to live your life- is in community and outwardly focused that way.

39:21

BS

I think you had a quote about something,

39:25

KS

I was just listening to my audiobook, it’s Nor by Nettie Okarafor, I came upon this passage, and it was so beautiful, and I wanted to share it.

The character they're talking about. They say she was – “The girl who loved her home so much that she found a way to make it the most sought after place on earth, a place of infinite potential and hope.” And I thought, oh, doesn't that just capture what people want to do when they're placemaking, making it make their own place of intimate possibility.

39:58

KH

That's fantastic. I need to start reading the books you’re reading.

40:03

KS

\*laughs\*I use GoodReads.

40:07

BS

I need to read more as well.

40:11

KH Alright Well, thank you both so much for joining us in this. We are so excited to be doing this podcast and can't wait for everybody to get to hear all the things that you said and all things you shared. So, thank you so much.

40:27

KH

Home Starts Here is a podcast produced by the South Dakota State University Extension’s Community Vitality team. We look forward to releasing more episodes for you. And, if you want to learn more about our programs focusing on creating vibrant places, energizing leaders, and strengthening businesses, visit our website at extension.sdstate.edu/community.

**[Outro]**