

Kasie Whitener (00:00):

Welcome into the Moore School podcast. Moore Impact. I'm Dr. Kasie Whitener, and today's guests with me. Reagan Gonzalez, center Manager for the Center of Executive Succession, and Alantis Skel, center Manager for Smart State Center for Innovation and Commercialization. Did I get that right? Yes. Okay, good. So, welcome Alantis and Reagan. Glad to have you guys both with us. You're here because we went to Lake City on Thursday together and got to spend time in Darla Moore's hometown experiencing art fields, which is a two week art competition and showcase where every business that participates, I should make sure I say that. The ones that participate become live art galleries. And we walked around the town, we had lunch in the town and got a chance to experience art fields for the first time ever. So I'm gonna start with Reagan. What did you see? What did you hear at Art Fields and what was the experience like?

Reagan Gonzalez (00:50):

Yeah, so it was so interesting. I think that, um, the idea of like a town turning itself completely into an art gallery was like the coolest part about it. Um, everywhere you went had art, and I just think it, it shows the value of art in that town. Um, and even though it, it is a small town, it felt big when I was like able to walk through every place. Um, everyone was so kind. Everyone was so happy, and it just felt like a little hug from a small town. Um, and I, I really enjoyed it. I thought it was awesome. Had

Kasie Whitener (01:22):

You ever been to Lake City before?

Reagan Gonzalez (01:23):

No, I've not. Never actually even heard of it. So <laugh> until completely new. Let's

Kasie Whitener (01:27):

Go to art fields. Yeah. <laugh>. That's really cool. All right. Does it remind you of any other small towns you've been in, either in South Carolina or elsewhere?

Reagan Gonzalez (01:34):

Um, yes. My best friend is from Andrew, South Carolina, which is also like going towards the coast. Um, and it's not as large, I would say, as Lake City. Um, it's more residential, but it did have the same kind of like country, warm style, southern hospitality feel. Everyone that we interacted with was just like so kind. Um, and they were so happy we were there and very encouraging. So that was, that was really nice.

Kasie Whitener (01:58):

That's really great. Alantis, what did you think it was it first time at Art Fields? First time in Lake City?

Alantis Seckal (02:03):

Yes, it was my first time in Lake City and Art Fields. Um, I love that they had the community come together and just embraced all of the, um, the artwork that Darling Moore were able to bring into Lake City. And then I love that you can see all of the juniors that were in grades from six to eight. They were amazing. I love that. Um, you can feel what they were feeling in the moment while you were looking at their art and stuff like that. Um, I think it made me personally wanna get into art more <laugh>. It

wanted me to embrace my creativity. I actually was looking at, um, one of the arts that one of the sixth and eighth graders made, and I was like, oh, now I wanna do crocheting, <laugh>, <laugh>.

Kasie Whitener ([02:46](#)):

Yeah, there was the one. So let's talk about that specific exhibit. Mm-Hmm. We kind of stumbled into that exhibit, not really knowing that that's where we were headed, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And we walked in, it's this gigantic building right there on the train tracks in Lake City. The train goes right through downtown, which is like a little bit shocking if you haven't seen it before. And you can like, reach out and touch this train as it's racing by. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and one of the building, most of the buildings that are right up against the train have been renovated by the Darla Moore Foundation. And this building is no exception. And it was just this kind of long, uh, narrow open space that might've in the past been some kind of grain building or something like that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But it was fully outfitted to be a gallery for this youth art.

Kasie Whitener ([03:25](#)):

And it was from grades four to 12, I think, or eight to 12. I can't remember exactly what the grades were, but they were all young people. And then when we first walked in, like, I didn't think of it as, uh, I just thought like, oh, we're just in another gallery. And then you realize you're looking at kid art. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And some of the stuff was like very clearly kid art, but like others of it was really exceptional. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> in terms of the, the themes they were dealing with and the, the emotions that were in these pieces. Like, that was one of the, like the first gallery really that we walked through. And it was all this kid art. Really impressive stuff. Mm-Hmm.

Reagan Gonzalez ([03:55](#)):

<affirmative>. Yeah. I don't know if it was because it was the first one we went into, or if I just thought it was special, but that was my favorite one that we walked into. And also, I loved the descriptions on every single art piece, like the little plaque on the wall. Um, I felt like the, the juniors descriptions were so well thought out and really deep and like, you know, later on when we got to the adult art, it was more like about color and how it speaks to you and like, you know, all those kinds of things. But with the kids, it was almost like, I had this experience and I want you to like, feel it. Or this is what I think like falling in love feels like, or you know, like really intimate, like sweet, deep thinking that you wouldn't assume that like a child could really produce. But it was, so that was my favorite art to see because it was just so, it felt very intimate to like see their art on that level.

Kasie Whitener ([04:46](#)):

And then this visual representation. So Alantis mentioned the crochet. There were two different pieces. One of them was like a scarf, almost a, a, a wrap, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And then there was another one that was a full dress. Yes. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> at the far end. And so that even that textile art was there and represented by those young people. It's really amazing. All right. So we get into this gallery that's we, before we got to the gallery, we walked through a hallway, which is just kind of an open space brick, uh, kind of connects main street back to the green space, which is in Lake City, this huge kind of park area. And they were setting up for live music and they had food trucks there and all that. But we walked through the tunnel. And in the tunnel were these hanging cherry trees? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And we all took pictures in the hanging cherry trees. Do tell, describe the hanging cherry trees so that people can kinda understand what we were seeing there. 'cause Alantis, we took your

picture there. Yes. The pictures are great of you by the way. Reagan took, um, of you standing in front of these cherry trees. What was that all about?

Alantis Seckal ([05:41](#)):

So they had the trees hanging from the roots when, um, the leaves were spread out in the top or whatever like that. And, um, it was about five or six of them just hanging. And I was like, that is so cool. Everyone. Like, I, it's not, um, being pulled up by the leaves that would be hurting leaves and stuff like that. Um, but it was so neat to see and just to see that someone even thought of that, I wouldn't even thought to do that.

Kasie Whitener ([06:07](#)):

Yeah. And there were, um, they were in a, so it's like a hallway. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And it's the actual tree itself with the branches and with the leaves. And then the under on the bottom of it was like a bag that had all the root structure in it. And so it's like the kind of thing you would buy at a hardware store. Yeah. If you were gonna buy that tree and take it home and plant it. But rather than planting it in the ground, they were hanging from the ceiling, which was like this really sort of weird kind of, I don't know. It was, it was an interesting experiment. But like, also then you read the plaque. 'cause Reagan mentioned the plaques for the kids' art. I read the plaque for this art and I was like, what <laugh>? It was like, it was like, about a sense of home and understanding roots and this kind of thing. I was like, okay, I could get it. Maybe. I don't know. It was like super interpretive.

Reagan Gonzalez ([06:51](#)):

I didn't even know that that was art. I thought that was just like a part of the city all the time. I miss the art plaque on that actually entirely. I didn't see Yeah,

Kasie Whitener ([06:58](#)):

No, that, that was absolutely an actual art exhibit. That's really funny. <laugh>. So, so not one of the ones that placed or won, but it was a live a, an installation of an actual art piece, just organically put in this tunnel inside the building. So you guys walked through some of the stores before we even met up with you. Did you see any of the art being on display in the stores?

Reagan Gonzalez ([07:22](#)):

Yes, we did. We walked, it was like you had to find them. Um, and sometimes you could ask the employee like, Hey, where's the art? And they direct you to it. Um, but I think we walked into the restaurant that we ate in the Green Frog. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, is that what it's called? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Um, and they had their art in like the back room. Um, there was a huge mural of Dolly Parton and that was personally my favorite. Um, and then we walked into a, like a thrift store, um, maybe it was called The Vault. 'cause it was like there was a big vault in the back. Um, and they had actually an art piece of Williams Brice Stadium, which was really cool. That was probably one of my favorites.

Kasie Whitener ([07:56](#)):

Yeah. Connect right back to the Carolina campus. Yes. Nice. Yeah. Yeah. And then we found you guys there at the Vault and you're making purchases. Yeah.

Reagan Gonzalez ([08:03](#)):

<laugh>. Yeah. Okay. You didn't have to expose us.

Kasie Whitener ([08:07](#)):

You do little shopping and, and art viewing at the same time. But that's the whole point is to interact, bring the art into these venues so that people can interact not just with the commerce, but also with the art itself. And then we went into the Mercantile, which is one of the Darla Moore Foundation stores that has a lot of original crafts and things like that. Like there were, um, different handmade plates and glasses and all this kind of thing. And we, um, as a matter of fact, Sandy Briley and I took a picture with a hand painted towel that said, I'm unsupervised in Lake City. Right. <laugh>. Yeah. Um, and the, so they typically sell kind of artistic type products anyway, but hanging on the walls, they actually had contestants in the Artfields competition that were hanging on the walls. And so again, you kind of recognize them by the plaque that went next to it and explained who the artist was and where the piece was from and what their interpretation of the piece was. And some of them really, uh, easy to understand. Like some of them kind of really basic, like, this is exactly, this is the type of materials I use, this is the imagery I was using. And some of them a lot more sort of, um, I don't wanna say artistic, <laugh>

Reagan Gonzalez ([09:12](#)):

Philosophical.

Kasie Whitener ([09:14](#)):

There you go. A lot more philosophical. Uh, so just kind of a wide range of the kind of artists that were being represented there. And we learned yesterday that I didn't know this, but, um, people have to apply to get in and when they put in their application, they send pictures of their work and they send these paragraphs about it. And then there's selected, there's thousands and thousands of people who apply every year. And the pieces that we saw were the ones that were selected to be there. So even if they didn't win the competition, they'd already won something by being selected to be there.

Reagan Gonzalez ([09:40](#)):

That's awesome.

Kasie Whitener ([09:40](#)):

Yeah. You mentioned we had lunch at the Green Frog, which is true. Uh, and the Green Frog had a gallery in the back. What did you notice about the folks, the people that were there, um, that were part of the restaurant? Either working in the restaurant or, or part of the, the community there? Anything?

Alantis Seckal ([09:55](#)):

Um, everyone was welcoming. They made it seem as if we lived there with them and they knew us for a while. And I enjoyed that, honestly.

Kasie Whitener ([10:05](#)):

Yeah. Felt a little bit like a community. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

Reagan Gonzalez ([10:06](#)):

Everybody had a country accent. <laugh>. Yes. It was so cute. It did feel like a community that everyone was really nice. Yeah.

Kasie Whitener ([10:14](#)):

We were all branded in our Darla Moore stuff 'cause we knew we wanted to take a lot of pictures while we were there. Yeah. We walked the length of Main Street into, uh, multiple stores there. We walked through the tunnel, we went into the green space. We went into the Kid Gallery, and then we went into the other gallery as well. And I, I'm then blanking on the name of the other gallery, but it's a permanent gallery. So that, um, second one that we went to there by the Farmer's Market was a permanent gallery. Did you see anything there that stood out to you? Or can you remember anything that stood out to you?

Reagan Gonzalez ([10:43](#)):

I do remember one, I don't know if it was that in that exact room, um, but it was, uh, someone who, I think the title of it was called The Porch, and it was like eight different paintings of different views from the same porch throughout the year. So, you know, she talked about like a gray August and then she talked about like a, you know, a like a happy spring and all that. Um, and how like sitting on her porch was like witnessing stories around her and like, living in her community and how she like, found so much joy sitting on her porch. And so every, it was like, you know, eight of these plaques next to each other, or, you know, canvases and you just, it looked like a different setting every time because the colors would change and the background would kind of like alter a little bit. Um, and the view would change. Like she'd move to a different section of her porch to paint. And that was probably my favorite just because I love porches and I feel like so much magic happens on porches in the south. <laugh>.

Alantis Seckal ([11:35](#)):

She actually got teary-eyed

Reagan Gonzalez ([11:37](#)):

<laugh> I did.

Kasie Whitener ([11:38](#)):

How amazing though, that the art was able to bring that to you? Bring that level of emotion to you. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. That's really amazing. Yeah. I don't, I feel like I didn't see that one.

Reagan Gonzalez ([11:47](#)):

Will you miss? I have a picture of it. I can show it to you. <laugh>. Okay.

Kasie Whitener ([11:49](#)):

Yeah. And then I saw there was one that had, uh, pillows that were hanging from these, uh, it was like a mobile right. With these pillows hanging. And the farthest one on the very bottom was a fox. And then the other ones above it were all birds. And so all those pillows were birds and it looked like the fox was chasing the birds, was kind of the vibe of that one. Which I thought that one was really interesting too. I took a picture of that. And then there was one that was, um, paintbrushes that were all put on their side. And Sandy and I stood over that one for a couple minutes. Like, what's happening with the paintbrushes? <laugh>? Just not really understanding what the artist was trying to do or what they were trying to say. And I thought like, um, to be befuddled by the art is probably part of the experience.

Kasie Whitener ([12:33](#)):

Yeah. Right. To be a little bit, what does that mean? What's it all about? <laugh>? Um, and then one of the other ones in that particular gallery was the paint lids from abandoned paint cans. Do you remember that one? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. It was across the wall. They were all in, um, very neat rows, like perfectly spaced, like four, I think it was four rows, uh, deep and really long, like maybe 18 or 20 that went across from left to right. And they were all different colors. And the idea was about, I think the, the interpretation was something related to sustainability and people buying things and not fully using them. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and that sort of thing. Like, it was pretty deep, the interpretation of it. But they really were just paint lids. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that had been preserved.

Reagan Gonzalez ([13:14](#)):

Well, I love that one because at the beginning of the description about it, um, the artist was talking about how like, uh, relating the abandoned paint lids to like, um, people abandoning their culture and how we're like, when you morph into like a new culture, you let go of some of the things in your own culture. And that really resonated with me because I'm from a Cuban family and like, you know, as I continue on in my life, I notice more and more that I'm like abandoning that side of myself. So I was like, that is such a beautiful way to represent like abandoned paint cans in your garage because everyone has that and everyone can like almost relate to that experience. So connecting it to culture was really, really interesting.

Kasie Whitener ([13:54](#)):

That's exactly right. So Todd James, I'm surprised you remembered that. I like had to go and find it in my pictures. Todd James from Raleigh, North Carolina. The name of the, uh, exhibit was Remnants and he said discarded. And uh, uh, I can't read it all 'cause I'm old and blind. <laugh> "discarded and miss-tint house paints are manifestations of culture as they're forgotten in basements, garages, and closets and left behind by previous owners. Mm. Mis-tint house paints are orphaned in hardware stores by customers unsatisfied with their original color choices." So yeah, I mean, it was, it was pretty interesting. And the whole wall just full of these mist tints. Oh, I, I'm getting it wrong. I said it was only like four deep, it was like nine deep and about 30 wide. Yeah. So it was a really big exhibit.

Reagan Gonzalez ([14:45](#)):

It was huge, yeah.

Kasie Whitener ([14:46](#)):

On that wall. Um, there were a few that were that way I think I didn't get the, uh, plot. Here's the one that I showed you guys about the, with the birds with the, um, pillows. Yes. I know our listeners can't hear, but we'll add this art to the show notes so that they can see it <laugh>. Um, and then one of the exhibits I went to that I think that, well we all walked in together was, uh, Corrine, um, who she does repurposed textiles. And she had in the one side of the studio was free clothes and the other side of the studio was where she was cutting those clothes up and making new things out of it. And we spent a little bit of time with her yesterday in our Maymaster class too. Uh, which we'll have another episode that's about that.

Kasie Whitener ([15:23](#)):

But, um, talk, her messaging was about sustainability and was about, um, not being sort of taken over by this fast fashion greed and instead really thinking about reusing products so that we can protect the

earth and that kind of thing. So yeah, that one kind of stuck out to me as well. She was actually teaching people how to do the things she does. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> inside while she was doing it. And then she had a bunch of banners that were in there with, um, words on them, like end human supremacy and, um, <laugh>, uh, abolish mansions and these kinds of things. Like, it was really interesting. And my students were there yesterday. They had some interesting thoughts on her work as well. So just a wide swath of, um, artists being represented there. We also went to the farmer's market.

Reagan Gonzalez ([16:09](#)):

Yes.

Kasie Whitener ([16:09](#)):

What'd you think of the farmer's market?

Reagan Gonzalez ([16:11](#)):

Elena said, you have to answer this because you stayed in that thing for so long talking to that popcorn man.

Kasie Whitener ([16:17](#)):

You talked to a lot of people there, but the popcorn man kind of had your attention. <laugh>, we

Alantis Seckal ([16:20](#)):

Were talking about my glasses, but, um, <laugh>, I loved, I love fresh food. I try to eat as much fresh vegetables and fruit as I can and try to get away from the frozen stuff. So that was up my alley. Um, but he had dill pickled popcorn. I've never seen that before.

Kasie Whitener ([16:39](#)):

Interesting. I mean the popcorn itself wasn't pickled, it was just the flavor. Yeah. Yeah.

Alantis Seckal ([16:45](#)):

And hot cheese. I was like, what is this <laugh>

Reagan Gonzalez ([16:48](#)):

Hot cheese flavored popcorn. Yeah. Love it.

Kasie Whitener ([16:50](#)):

So just really curious about that. Yeah. <laugh> um, the farmer's market folks were interesting because they were only there for the day and they didn't seem to be getting very much foot traffic and they seemed a little disappointed. I was kind of asking 'em about being a vendor there and that kind of thing, and they were sort of like, like they were really excited to be there, but then it turned out to not be what they expected it to be. So I wonder about that too, as far as expectations of Artfields. Did you know anything about it before we went? Other than this is gonna be it. I know I sent a link to like, this is what it is, but did you take a look at that or you just like showed up and get surprised by it?

Alantis Seckal ([17:24](#)):

I did look at the link, but I didn't know anything about it prior to going.

Reagan Gonzalez ([17:28](#)):

Okay. Yeah. I do know it's like widely known because I posted about it on my Instagram and I had so many people swipe up and they were like, you get to go to Artfields for work. Like, that's so fun. And I was like, yeah. Like, oh my God, <laugh>. But I, I never knew what it was and I genuinely thought it was like fields of art. Yeah. Like I was like, oh, we're gonna go frolic through some fields. But <laugh>, that was not what it was in fact. But

Kasie Whitener ([17:51](#)):

<laugh> No, it was the actual town

Reagan Gonzalez ([17:53](#)):

Building. Yeah. Yeah.

Kasie Whitener ([17:54](#)):

It was buildings. Um, we went into the, the two permanent installations that we were in, uh, the one that we just mentioned, the one that had the paintbrushes and the paint. Um, that one is there all the time. So people who are going to go visit Lake City, you can go into that, uh, anytime you want. And then the other one we went to was Tracks. And that was the one that was on the backside of town by the bird houses. So in that, um, gallery, did you see anything that stood out to you in that gallery at Tracks?

Alantis Seckal ([18:19](#)):

I seen this beautiful, beautiful, um, it was, it was three different parts. It was one on the left side, one on the middle, and then one on the right. And the topic was about, um, asthma. So it was the medicine that they had to use for their asthma. And it created like an image of her like flowing and like the air was blowing and stuff. That's what it was supposed to. She was like invisible disease or something like that. I was like, wow, this is

Kasie Whitener ([18:45](#)):

So cool. That was the one, it's like a 3D art piece. 'cause there were little bottles of medicine, right. And they were all glued and they were blue and white and some of the bot, the, the, that they weren't white, they're like clear bottles, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But they were on a white background, so you had a lot of the clear bottles and then the blue ones were the ones that were creating those shapes inside of it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. That one was really amazing. Three, three full pieces of that. Yes. Um, and so you had, like, you, when you walked in, you were sort of immersed by it, which I think is kind of the, the the point. Right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> if it's about asthma, it's about an invisible disease, but how, um, it can be ever present for the people who are experiencing it.

Kasie Whitener ([19:19](#)):

Right. Yeah. That was really good. I liked that one a lot too. And then I saw one that was a, uh, photograph. It looked like a photograph. It was a, a tree house over a train tracks. Did you see that one? Yeah. The tree house over the train tracks. I was, it was compelling. Right. So this tree house, this kid stuff and then these train tracks that just kind of stretched out into the woods sort of infinitely. Right. And I was really interested in that. I took a picture of that and like put the, um, the plaque up next to it.



And it said it's by Kyle Worthy in Charlotte, North Carolina called Oxford Gothic and says the photograph is part of a series. Um, and she says, "My father spent the afternoons of his childhood walking the train tracks of Oxford, Alabama with his grandfather. Now he's a grandfather himself and the role has helped him rediscover his youth. And so in the photograph, sunlight illuminates a tree house that hangs over the tracks," which I thought was really interesting.

Kasie Whitener ([20:01](#)):

That's awesome. Like that one probably my favorite of the entire, um, exhibit. I came back to it again. And again, just kinda looking at it, thinking the dichotomy between those two are these train tracks that are so dangerous, right. That can have so much peril and so much, uh, tragedy associated with them. And then there's this tree house, which is kind of whimsical that's in the same, in the same scene. It was really compelled that that was really compelling. Yeah. We spent a little bit of time with the CEO of the Darla Moore Foundation and we went into their offices and sat down and talked to them. He gave us the story of the foundation and kind of Darla's story. Did you know any of that before we got there?

Alantis Seckal ([20:44](#)):

I did not.

Reagan Gonzalez ([20:45](#)):

<laugh> me either.

Kasie Whitener ([20:45](#)):

Didn't know much about it. No. So what struck, stuck out to you about what he had to say about Darla's story and, and what she's doing in Lake City?

Alantis Seckal ([20:53](#)):

I think personally the fact that they're rebuilding the community and everyone's embracing it. And the fact that they're trying to bring more art into the community instead of just local. So they can bring not only their community, but also all of South Carolina too. So they're not only building up Lake City, they're building up South Carolina. I love that.

Kasie Whitener ([21:15](#)):

Yeah. That seems very, uh, in line with Darla Moore's own principles and her own stated goals, which were, uh, are related to South Carolina prosperity and our Darla Moore School, a business is a beneficiary of that. Did anything stick out to you, Reagan?

Reagan Gonzalez ([21:29](#)):

Yeah. Um, I kind of similar to Alantis, I really liked that even though she's not an artist herself, like I thought it was very interesting that she chose art to be the avenue in which she pours money into the town or supports the town. Um, so I thought that was really interesting whenever he kind of explained like, she's not an artist, but she just thought this would be a good way to like, support the town and, and bring some life into it. And, um, I just think that's really important. 'cause I think art is very, very important and I think that's gonna be something that sustains us. So.

Kasie Whitener ([22:01](#)):

It created so much accessibility too. I mean, all these different artists, their experiences, the images that we saw, such a variety of experiences and backgrounds and stories they were trying to tell through their art. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> that, uh, it, it makes Lake City bigger than Lake City really is. Right? So you get this like, just really wide variety. Although it is mostly southeastern artists, there is a little bit of a, I think a requirement of being in a southeastern state to be eligible to, to exhibit there. Um, one of the things that stuck out to me from the, from our CEO conversation, he talked about how once they had renovated one of the buildings, 'cause they started, Darla Moore started with her, a building that her father had purchased and wanted to make use of. And he had, he passed in the middle of, of repurposing that building. And so she had finished the project and he said, once you do that, you realize how shabby everything else looks. Yeah. And so then they started investing in all these other businesses too. Uh, was there a part of Lake City that stuck out to you as being, um, like it doesn't fit or maybe it should be the next for upgrades?

Alantis Seckal ([23:05](#)):

Oh gosh. Um,

Reagan Gonzalez ([23:07](#)):

I feel like I didn't get like a big enough bird's eye view of each building. I felt like I was really seeing everything up close. Um, but I will say did they, did they own that they owned the Jones building, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> The, the long one. That's, yeah, that one I think was really nice. And I think he had said they had just finished, um, the upgrades for that Yeah. And the renovations on that. So I think that one was, I definitely remember thinking, wow, this is like a really nice building. But they all still like, felt like they kept the, the essence of like an old timey like southern town feel. It didn't feel like too, you know, brand new or anything in anywhere.

Kasie Whitener ([23:44](#)):

So it doesn't have a gentrification vibe to it. Right. It has a restoration vibe.

Reagan Gonzalez ([23:48](#)):

Yeah. It didn't feel like clean cut lines and like, there's no, there's no character here. Like I think it still kept the character of the buildings, but it, it did feel like rejuvenated <laugh>.

Alantis Seckal ([23:58](#)):

I think I was oohing and eyeing too much to even realize that something didn't fit. I had stars in our eyes, like, Ooh, this is nice. <laugh> <laugh>

Kasie Whitener ([24:07](#)):

They had, um, we went sort of the long way to get to Tracks from the Jones building, um, up two blocks to get to Tracks. And in between there is a gas station that they turned into a brewery. Right. And so that was kind of cool too, like to go in there and see how they had repurposed that gas station. They kept some of the original structure of the gas station. They still have the hood, um, that would go out over where the pumps used to be, but they had patio furniture out there so people could sit outside and enjoy. Uh, but yeah, it was just a bar, like right there in the middle <laugh> just where this gas station used to be, which I thought was really interesting. And then the bird houses, uh, were an installation that was right down the alley, um, where there really wasn't a whole lot there. It was just kind of like this un-purposed Alley. And they installed these bird houses as one of the installations. We all had some

conversation about like, are those real birds <laugh>? But they were like actual, uh, there were, it was sound, right. They had, uh, recordings and stuff like that in there. So that was really interesting too. The bird houses being installed.

Reagan Gonzalez ([25:00](#)):

I love that part. We actually spent a lot of time over there for like, I just remember we stood over there by the bird houses for like, at least 10 minutes and just...

Kasie Whitener ([25:07](#)):

There were dozens of them.

Reagan Gonzalez ([25:08](#)):

Oh yeah.

Kasie Whitener ([25:08](#)):

And they were all like into like Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> individually painted and they all had their own individual titles to them. Yeah. So there were, it was just a tremendous amount of art for the one, um, artist put out, put that one installation in there. But like all the pieces were very specific. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. So we walked down the street by tracks. Uh, we, so that's the other permanent installation is tracks the Jones building and then tracks. And then we get to the end of the street and there's the mom and pop market, which was, uh, kind of a fresh market with fresh vegetables and that sort of thing. And she's got a big mural on the side that talks about Papa. And then, uh, across the radio, uh, train tracks, um, on the, I guess the west side of the train tracks are new art studios that they have built. And so another one of the businesses, buildings that the Moore Foundation has renovated and they've turned them into art studios and we didn't get a chance to tour those. But those are for artists to come and rent and work and, and they're trying to attract more people to move, more artists to move to Lake City and make that a permanent home for them. And the CEO said they had a one particular problem. Do you remember what he said was the problem they were having?

Reagan Gonzalez ([26:15](#)):

Oh. That there was not enough homes for people

Kasie Whitener ([26:17](#)):

Yeah. Housing.

Reagan Gonzalez ([26:18](#)):

Or places to stay. Yeah.

Kasie Whitener ([26:19](#)):

He said housing was their challenge, which I thought was that that was interesting too. It was like inviting some folks with some creative real estate ideas to come in there and think about how can we create some affordable housing here for artists to make this a place where artists wanna come and live and work. Um, and be here year round. Yeah. Two weeks. Is that long enough for Artfields or should it go on for longer?

Alantis Seckal (26:38):

<laugh> they should do something like each quarter have something new. Um, I think

Kasie Whitener (26:45):

Some new events each quarter. Yeah. Yeah.

Alantis Seckal (26:48):

Bring more attraction.

Reagan Gonzalez (26:49):

I think there is a lot to see and I wish I could have spent more than just a day there. Um, so I feel like two weeks is probably good to get in and get your, your art fill. But I do agree. I think it would be cool to like every quarter have something new pop up or um, do like a live art something or whatever.

Kasie Whitener (27:07):

Yeah. There Christmas time, if you get a chance to go back, uh, right ahead of Christmas, they have an art competition, <laugh> downtown for Christmas. And all the stores decorate and compete for who can do the best Christmas decorations out in front of their storefront. And that was when I was there last time they were installing those pieces and it was spectacular. I mean, if you can imagine not just like your regular downtown Christmas decorations with like the tinsel and that sort of thing, but actual artists coming in and creating these like oversized Christmas ball ornaments and um, these just really funky looking trees. And it was, it was super cool. So they bring a lot of art back at the Christmas time era too. That's awesome. So if you plan to head back to Lake City, put yourself there about a week before Christmas and you'll get to see some, uh, some additional really cool art. When we think about the centers that you guys work for, so Center for Executive Succession, the Smart State Center for Innovation and Commercialization, is there a play here or is there a connection here between the Darla Moore Foundation and the economic development that they're working on and the work that your centers are doing? I mean, do you see any kind of emergent themes that maybe connect to those couple of things?

Alantis Seckal (28:17):

Definitely the innovation part. Um, especially when the CEO is talking about how they're trying to bring in more for the city to be built up. I think with our center, it'll help our students, um, if they go out there and try to figure out which ways that they can help themselves too as well. Um, and creating, uh, like different products for them to sell. Like I know they do art, but there's some other stuff that they can bring in and incorporate too as well to bring more, um, economic sustainability to the city.

Kasie Whitener (28:55):

Yeah. I mean right now it's got this kind of hospitality vibe, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> where you think of, oh, I'm here for art, so I'm gonna view the art. A lot of the art really expensive, so it's not like people were there to buy art necessarily. They were really just there to see it. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But then what they were buying was the stuff they were buying in the stores, the Seven boutique and uh, the mercantile that I mentioned before. So like, there's a few of those stores there that you might shop in the store, but the art was maybe, maybe a little bit outta reach for like most regular consumers

when they're there. So you add those two things. Plus, so you have shopping, you have art, and then you have restaurants and a hotel, right? So there's like this hospitality piece there. Mm-Hmm.

Kasie Whitener ([29:31](#)):

<affirmative>. But maybe trying to find a way to create a little bit more sustainable innovation in the area. Right. Some businesses that could create products, um, do some level of design. Yeah. Work or merchandising or, um, manufacturing work. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> around that area to create a little bit bigger business or, uh, bring a little bit more revenue in the, in the area that, that I could see that being reasonable. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Um, so smart state may be interested in doing something like that, or students Yeah. Might be interested in looking at that small town model and saying, where's the innovation opportunity here? I could see that. What about the Center for Executive Succession?

Reagan Gonzalez ([30:03](#)):

So I feel like there's maybe a little bit less of a connection there just because we basically deal with like executives, um, in the C-suite and how they, um, will succeed and, um, their plans for their companies. Um, however, I do think, as you were saying earlier about like the art being a little bit out of reach, I think it would be a really cool way for them to, um, I know a lot of these, uh, companies and our partners do have like a philanthropy or, um, they do wanna give back to communities. And especially some of our partners that are located in South Carolina. I know that it would be like a really cool way for them to give back to, um, the state and also, um, just maybe get a little bit more involved there. Um, but I feel like that's probably the best way that we could connect the two.

Kasie Whitener ([30:48](#)):

They were saying, uh, too, that they're building out some, uh, conference facilities. Right. And so creating some space there to have day long meetings and other kinds of conferences. I think that might be interesting too, is to be thinking about how the more school can hold some of our events that we hold typically in Columbia. Maybe instead hold a few of them out there at Lake City, making use of their venues. Uh, the botanical gardens, we didn't get to walk through the gardens. They were locked as you guys were leaving. Um, and the other installation, the ROB, which is not always an art installation, but the couple of times I've been to Lake City, it has been filled with art. That's where the prize winning exhibit actually was. Uh, and yesterday when I took my students, when we went over to the ROB as everything was being taken down and, and packed up for shipping home, um, that installation was still in place and it was really cool.

Kasie Whitener ([31:35](#)):

It had, uh, it was a big white wall with these magnets and these pendulums that had silver balls on them and the magnets would get the silver balls moving into, uh, circles, right? So they're hanging, depending on the length of the string, they would hang and they would rotate in these different size circles. And there were chimes like wind chimes connected to each one. And so depending on how it was spinning and how quickly it was spinning, it would hit the chime and set off this kind of wind chime sort of sound to it. It's hard to describe it. Um, but standing in front of it, you're thinking like it's all just magnetics, uh, to get the movement going. And so the music is really random and you're never gonna hear the same tune twice while you're sitting there. And it was just really, really interesting.

Kasie Whitener ([32:23](#)):

And that's the one that ended up winning the grand prize. So it was a, um, kind of a, a nice moment to like, have, I saw it on Thursday when we were all there and then, uh, to bring my students back yesterday. And it was still in place. I was like, you guys gotta see this. This is the one that won all, you know, and everybody kind of, yeah, I could see why this did it. It's just really clever and it's got, uh, a a it's beautiful. And, and so there was that piece, but it also had this real serenity to it and a a sense of kind of randomness and yet the beauty of that randomness, um, and also sort of the controlling of the magnets. And I don't know, it was really, it was fascinating. Um, but trying to understand the interpretations of all these folks' art and then immerse yourself in it and feel like maybe you're connecting to another part of yourself that isn't necessarily always at the forefront. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> I think you said your friend was like, you get to do this for, for work. Yeah. How often do you get to do artistic, expressive things like that? I mean, is that, is it part of your regular life to like, go out and just be part of an artistic world?

Reagan Gonzalez ([33:23](#)):

Yeah. No, never. Like, I don't think I indulge as much as I should. Kind of how Alantis was saying earlier, like, it definitely made me feel like, oh, I, I am creative and I have a lot to like say and, and give and like, I, now I wanna go home and paint something. Or like, I wanna get my creative juices flowing. 'cause I feel like seeing art makes me feel like I have something that I wanna respond to the art almost. So that definitely encouraged my creativity.

Alantis Seckal ([33:48](#)):

Um, I've been working on a painting for like four months, so it motivated me to paint the next day to finish it. There go. I'm still not done though. But, um, it made me wanna try different things. Like I said, the crocheting, um, I seen something with the juniors again. They did a, um, I don't know what it's called, but it was art out of beads and it was a whole image. And I was like, I've never thought to do that before. I might try that too.

Kasie Whitener ([34:13](#)):

There you go. So being inspired by going to Artfields and being part of Lake City and what they're doing out there. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, it's an economic development strategy to invest in this annual event of Artfields and certainly supported by the Darla Moore Foundation and the investments that they've made in the city and in the people in the community. But as you guys mentioned, you feel a sense that the community has that ownership while they're there, that they feel committed and connected to it. There were a lot of volunteers out on the streets directing people around, welcoming them for being there, giving them some tips. Um, there was a lot of literature that you could pick up that would share. There was, there were maps. Sandy was using a map to kind of navigate us around and see where all the different installations were.

Kasie Whitener ([34:57](#)):

There were signs up in each of the businesses that were hosting the artists there. And the, uh, I, the merchants were allowed to pick the art that was going to be in their, um, in their stores as well. So a lot of the art matched what was in the store too, because it was the artists, the, the merchants were choosing which pieces were gonna be, um, displayed. So just a sense that the community comes together in something and they seem to be really proud of it and feel really, um, glad to share it with everybody else. And I think you get that vibe from the minute you walk on Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> site at Lake City. You're like, this is special and I'm part of something special while I'm here. Here. Mm-Hmm.

<affirmative>. Alright. Any final thoughts on Artfields and the Darla Moore Foundation and what will you take back to your center or to your role at Darla?

Alantis Seckal ([35:48](#)):

I think, um, it makes you appreciate the little things, like stuff we wouldn't even recognize as, not even just art words in general too. Like what the kids were saying and what the, the other artists were saying. It makes you just sit back and like, oh wow, I, I ignored this, but this actually means something bigger. So it makes you think my work might be small, but it actually means something bigger. So that's something. Enjoyment of being at Darling Moore. And it's actually my first year officially at Darling Moore, so I'm excited to see what else we accomplish.

Kasie Whitener ([36:23](#)):

That's good stuff. Yeah, definitely that critical thinking piece. Things are bigger than I am. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. And the work I'm doing matters in a much bigger way than I can even really imagine right now. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> That's great. What about you Reagan?

Reagan Gonzalez ([36:34](#)):

Yeah. Um, I think very similar to Alanis. Um, I feel like I am walking away feeling, uh, almost excited. I think my favorite part of the whole time we were there was the juniors art. And I think it made me feel excited about the new generation coming up and just like really thought provoking things, um, that were, you know, brought up. Um, one of my favorite art pieces was a clay heart, um, that somebody, it was like a, like a actual heart, like a beating heart. And it was wrapped in barbed wire. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And the, um, the plaque next to it was talking about, um, it must have been, you know, a, a young boy. Um, and he was talking about how men are, uh, the suicide rates are like extremely high for men because they're, um, normally taught to push down emotions. And so they don't let anything out of their heart.

Reagan Gonzalez ([37:28](#)):

And it's almost wrapped in this barbed wire. And it, like, by the end of the time I was reading it, I was like almost in tears. 'cause I was like, this is so, and it was like an eighth grader, like it was someone who was very young that I was like, it's so amazing that people are thinking about these things. And, um, I do feel like it's, it's really important that we do prioritize art and, um, encouraging others to do that. Um, and again, I'm really excited about the connection with Darla Moore and I'm really proud to be like a part of something, um, that does prioritize, um, things like this. And as you said, I think it'd be really cool to host events. Um, I know that they just built that new hotel, um, that he was telling us about at the Darla Moore Foundation and, um, it seems to be really nice. So doing that something, an event there, um, and using those conference spaces I think will be really cool.

Kasie Whitener ([38:18](#)):

Well, it was our first trip to Art Fields, right. And it coincided with graduation week, so a lot of people were not available to go because of graduation obligations. Uh, our friend at the Darla Moore Foundation said, art Fields is usually about a week earlier, which, you know, then coincides with Final Exam Week. And so we may run up again where, you know, not everybody's on the academic schedule, but I know that our new Dean, Dean Verma wants to encourage us to spend more time in Lake City and to draw closer to the Darla Moore Foundation and to Ms. Darla Moore herself so that we can understand a little better what our mission is at the Darla Moore School and her vision for South

Carolina and prosperity through the work that we do at the Darla Moore School. So thank you for being willing to go on the first trip to Lake City and be part of the art Fields excursion.

Kasie Whitener ([39:03](#)):

I'm, I'm grateful to both of you. Had I been there all by myself, it wouldn't have been nearly as much fun as getting to walk through and see what other people feel, uh, as they see the art as well. And I think you're exactly right, Reagan, that there's opportunity for us now with these young people that are gonna be coming in to really explore what they're feeling, what they're thinking, uh, and how we can best guide them and teach them as they move into being citizens of our community here in South Carolina. Thank you both for being here. Thank you. Thanks for having us. All right. This has been Moore Impact. When you learn more, you know more, and when you know more, you do more. Thanks for listening.