

## Agency for Change Podcast: Laura Schwartz, Executive Director at Papillion Community Foundation

### **Announcer:**

Welcome to Agency for Change, the podcast that brings you the stories of people creating positive change in the world. We explore what inspires these changemakers, the work they're doing, and how they share their message. Each of us can play a part in change, and these are the people who show us how.

### **Kelley Peterson:**

Hello, fellow changemakers. This is Kelley Peterson, Nonprofit Creative Director from KidGlov. Welcome to another episode of the Agency for Change podcast. Today, we're talking with Laura Schwartz, Executive Director at Papillion Community Foundation. In 1998, a group of dedicated volunteers with the intent to carry on local traditions and engage the community founded the Papillion Community Foundation. Over 20+ years, the foundation has built its claim to fame through their flagship annual events, Papillion Days and Winter Wonderland.

### **Kelley Peterson:**

The Papillion Community Foundation works to enhance the quality of life through remarkable events that highlight local culture and embrace inclusivity. I can't wait to learn more. Laura, how are you today?

### **Laura Schwartz:**

I'm good, thanks. Thanks for having me.

### **Kelley Peterson:**

You bet. Laura, the Papillion Community Foundation has been around for more than 20 years. Can you tell us about your organization's vision for the next 20 years?

### **Laura Schwartz:**

Absolutely! I really love this question because sometimes when you start something, it's cool to see where it goes after it's been running for a while. We've been doing this now for a little over 20 years. It amazes me every day how we can make changes to make our community better. In 20 years, I see us really following our mission of identifying, developing and supporting this community by starting a brand-new program that will enhance what we're doing. It will be in cooperation with the events that we do, but it will also take care of our community through feeding those in need.

### **Laura Schwartz:**

In 20 years, I want people to look at the Papillion Community Foundation and say we are feeding the Papillion community and the surrounding Sarpy County area and providing locally grown healthy food options for those in need.

### **Kelley Peterson:**

Wow! That is a new thing added to your vision from 20 years ago.

**Laura Schwartz:**

One hundred percent, but it does play into the same intent. Their intent when they started the foundation was to continue helping and supporting the community, whether through leisure activities and things that bring everyone together or by combining those with programs that make a difference in people's lives when they need it most. I think that is the most important thing.

**Kelley Peterson:**

That's great. Let's quickly talk about those leisure activities. In the opening comments, I mentioned the foundation's work to enhance the quality of life through your flagship events. Can you talk specifically about these events? Let's start with your community festival fondly called Papillion Days.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Papillion Days is a tradition. It's a way of life for us, and it brings us all together. It showcases where we used to be, where we are now, and where we're going. It's a place for people to come together and relax, have fun and just enjoy being around people. Papillion Days is a place where you can see your neighbor. Even though you live next door to your neighbor, sometimes you don't always see them, but you see them at Papillion Days.

**Laura Schwartz:**

It's a time-honored tradition. We have the most amazing parade I've ever seen. It shuts down the city's Main Street, and we celebrate each other and the organizations that bring us all together to a fireworks show that thousands of people come out and watch or plan their evening around. We bring a bunch of local artisans and nonprofits, and local businesses together to just have a cool little marketplace.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Then we have our time-honored tradition like Monarch Rules that the Boy Scouts make. People come to Papillion just to eat a Monarch wing. Papillion Days hits, and they celebrate the start of summer and being together with families, and then it culminates with the Sunday of Father's Day. We celebrate dads and families. It's a really cool way to bring the community together. When you're sitting there watching the parade, you're not thinking *Wow, we live 10 minutes from the city of Omaha*. You're thinking, *This is a small town that we are celebrating in a big way*, but that small town feel is still there.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Absolutely! You can't deny a parade and fireworks.

**Laura Schwartz:**

There's nothing more American than that. Our fireworks show is one of the best. I'm not from Nebraska. I'm not a native of Nebraska. I've lived in some large cities, and Papillion really is one of the best I have ever seen. Every year, Mr. Bellino donates the fireworks show to us just because it's such a big piece of what this community does during that time. He's so amazing. Every year it seems to get better.

**Laura Schwartz:**

People sit on their driveways with their families and their friends, or sit next to people they don't even know and just enjoy it. It's an amazing event. We just love that.

**Kelley Peterson:**

The Papillion Foundation is definitely lighting up the sky in the summertime, but you light up other things too in the winter. Tell us about all the ways the Winter Wonderland event makes the seasons bright.

**Laura Schwartz:**

In the last couple of years, the thing people have come to enjoy during the holidays are Hallmark movies, the Christmas Hallmark movies. Well, we have a Hallmark movie right here in our town during Winter Wonderland. It's an amazing partnership with the city of Papillion. They put up over 800,000 lights every single year. They start putting those lights up in September, and people see them going up and know what they're for. They're super excited.

**Laura Schwartz:**

They build that joy that it's coming. It starts in September, and then it culminates the Saturday after Thanksgiving when we light up those 800,000+ lights from City Hall to City Park. As you crest the hill on 84th Street going south, it really does become a Winter Wonderland. There are lights on both sides of the street. Everything is lit up through the downtown area all the way to City Park, which is lit up with different displays, and the trees are lit up.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Having Winter Wonderland is just the start of the holiday season. It's that festival of lights that really kicks off everything. Usually, we're able to bring everybody together and we have free carriage rides and a parade. Another parade. We like parades here. We have free hot chocolate, and we have fire pits that line the Main Street. We're not fighting traffic, because the traffic is shut down, which is amazing because it just becomes a foot zone for people to walk around and enjoy their city.

**Laura Schwartz:**

We have music, we have reindeer, we have Santa, we have the carriages, and the carriages are carrying people throughout the city. You hear the sleigh bells ringing, and the music, and people are drinking their hot chocolate. You never see an upset person. Everybody is happy to start the holiday season.

**Kelley Peterson:**

It sounds like so much fun. For years, people were telling me, "You need to come because it's like nothing you've ever seen." I thought, *Really? Lights in the town. Okay.* Well, I had no idea that it was 800,000 lights. No wonder. It is named extremely well, because when I did go, it truly is a winter wonderland, and very, very magical. Hats off to everyone involved in that.

**Kelley Peterson:**

I also love the aspect that you have a partnership with the city of Papillion in putting that together, because you wouldn't be able to do it without one another. That is such a neat relationship and partnership you have.

**Laura Schwartz:**

We're very fortunate to be in the city with the city government we have. They are very supportive of these types of activities and events. We certainly couldn't do it without them. We couldn't do it without

them because they put up all the lights. We couldn't do it without them because they help provide first responders and traffic control. They pretty much give us the run of this whole area. They're part of the planning and they have their families there.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Again, it really brings everybody together and it gives us a chance to talk to people on a different level or different setting, where it's not so formal and we can just enjoy it.

**Kelley Peterson:**

The Papillion Days and the Winter Wonderland are two events that you are definitely known for, but you do so much more than those annual events. In addition to the events, what other community initiatives do you lead and/or support?

**Laura Schwartz:**

Another partnership we have with the city of Papillion is Veteran's Park. It is a park here in Papillion, but it honors all veterans who have served who are from Sarpy county. Any veteran who has served, lived here, gone to school here, or served here in Sarpy county is able to put their name on that Honor Wall. These could be people who are still serving or recently retired.

**Laura Schwartz:**

It may be someone who has passed away and it's a way to honor them. It's an amazing project. Papillion is a very patriotic town. We support military and military families, which is important. They see the value of service and appreciate it. We really like to celebrate those who have heard that call. We have the Honor Walls which are beautiful the way they're set into that park.

**Laura Schwartz:**

It's a city park. It's a public park. It's set on a main corner here in town. It's a serene place. When you walk from the parking lot or from the sidewalk into that park, you know you're in a different place even though it's a city park and it's a public space. We've tried to make it a contemplative place where people can reflect and see the names of their friends and family, or people they know who have served, people who are gone now or people who are just starting to serve.

**Laura Schwartz:**

It's a place for them to enjoy. It's a beautiful setting. We help with that by doing all the administration for the park. We are able to help the veterans get their names on the walls. We work with the parks and facilities folks who help us physically put them up. The park is always in a finished state, so we don't start another project until one is done.

**Kelley Peterson:**

You just spoke of the community coming together, and those partnerships, and those relationships, and honoring those who have served. The Papillion Foundation certainly does amazing things. You've shared with us some of the main things, but can you talk about the impact of your work that you've seen firsthand?

**Laura Schwartz:**

One story that comes from Veteran's Park is creating partnerships with those veterans and their families, and then learning. It's given me the opportunity to learn that there are a lot of veterans in need out there. We were able to partner with another nonprofit here in town called Moving Veterans Forward and start the Pantry for our Patriots.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Unfortunately, there are a lot of veterans who have fallen into homelessness. Moving Veterans Forward works with the VA to get those veterans out of homelessness and into transitional homes and housing so they can regroup and start their lives. We were able to start Pantry for our Patriots, which is a supportive program. We purchase groceries. When that veteran is placed into that home, Moving Veterans Forward provides all of the household goods they need—from sheets and towels to beds and couches and pots and pans.

**Laura Schwartz:**

They provide all that, and then we come take them shopping at HyVee, because there's a partnership with HyVee, and provide them about four to five weeks of groceries—really sustaining food for them for free. They don't have to worry about where their next meal is going to come from. They're able to move in, get settled, and not worry about that. That's been a big thing we've been able to start.

**Laura Schwartz:**

I was able to go last Wednesday and shop with a veteran who is pulling things back together and getting his life back on track. I was able to walk through the grocery store and shop with him. It was a real honor to do that, just to see that he was able to calm himself knowing he doesn't have to worry about food for the next several weeks. He's going to be taken care of. It was nice to be able to get to know him and see firsthand how having a resource like that is calming. He doesn't have to worry about it. That was a joy.

**Laura Schwartz:**

I've seen a couple of other impacts. I know I've seen impacts through Winter Wonderland. It seems silly because it's just an event, but it really does impact people because people are able to experience what's happening downtown. They may visit a small business they've never visited before. That small business may come to us and say, "That was the largest night we've ever had in sales for the whole year." It is wonderful to know you're impacting a business like that just because you're creating a place for people to come and gather.

**Laura Schwartz:**

They are visiting those little businesses, those mom-and-pop shops that mean so much to us. It develops a relationship. We're not only having a place for people to go and shop locally, but we're also supporting that business with a day of business that can sustain them through a slower time of the year. There's a lot of impact there, and it's nice to hear that from both sides.

**Laura Schwartz:**

You hear a lot of people say, "I didn't even know that business was here, and I love it. I'm going to be a regular there." Then you have the business owner saying, "It was the biggest night we've ever had." That's really cool. That's a big impact. Then through Papillion Days, the impact that I see the most is families who plan their summer around Papillion Days. They plan how they get together, how they're going to gather, how they're going to have fun. They plan that out on Papillion Days.

**Laura Schwartz:**

What we're doing is not just putting on an event for the city. We're creating this bond with families. I think that's really important.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Wow! You specifically talked about impacting veterans, impacting businesses, impacting families. That is such a well-rounded vision that the Papillion Foundation has. When something happens like a global pandemic, not only does that throw us for a loop, it especially impacts a population like veterans who may be struggling already.

**Kelley Peterson:**

As we are in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, I'm curious how has this impacted the work you are doing?

**Laura Schwartz:**

Let's take a little step back. We look at those three words on the wall that say "Identify, Develop and Support," and say, "How do we do that better?" It's not just the status quo of running around trying to get all the events done. That can be a stressful thing. It's given us the chance to take a breath and say, "Are we serving the community and meeting those three words: identify, develop, support?" That's really important.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Through that, we were able to collect. We have a lot of nonprofits in Papillion that are making an incredible impact on this community, on Sarpy County, even the Omaha community in Douglas County. It's given us a chance to pull them all together and get on a call. We're doing monthly calls now just to say, "Hey, what's going on in your world? How can we help? What do you need?" Or maybe we have a need that they can help with.

**Laura Schwartz:**

It's a place to bring them all together to chat and make sure we're all going toward the same goal, and making sure we know what services each provides. If somebody comes in here to the Papillion Community Foundation and says, "I need afterschool care for my kid, and I don't know where to go," I can send them to the Papillion-La Vista Schools Foundation, because they were in Kids Club.

**Laura Schwartz:**

If a business or somebody comes in here and says, "I'm getting ready to lose my business. I need some kind of a grant to help," I know that the Midlands Community Foundation has a COVID response relief fund that they can go talk to them about. Another small business, the Sarpy County Chamber, also has a foundation that's giving out grants to help keep businesses sustained and working and running. We can connect them to the Sarpy County Chamber because we know through this call what everybody is offering and how they're doing that.

**Laura Schwartz:**

That was an eye-opening experience for us to pull everybody together. From that, we were able to come up with our vision of the Papillion Urban Gardens, which we are getting ready to bring to the

community. A lot of people are seeing all the negatives of COVID-19 and this global pandemic. It hasn't been fun. A lot of friends have gotten sick and luckily all my friends have gotten through it, but we've seen a lot of people in the community suffer with this.

**Laura Schwartz:**

But I really see it as more of a positive for us, because it's been a chance to step back from the status quo and say, "What are we doing well? What are we not doing well? How can we do more?" That's how I see it. Certainly, it's affected the bottom line, but just keep plugging away and it's going to work out.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Laura, thank you for wearing those rose-colored glasses, because sometimes we need those in this world.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Yeah, 100 percent.

**Kelley Peterson:**

I also love what you shared about your mission and how you use it as a gauge to continue your steadfast focus on identifying, developing, and supporting the people who live within the Papillion community. You gave so many great stories right there, or examples of somebody coming in needing this, you identifying the need, and you either developing the program to help them and/or knowing the resource, therefore supporting them. You're doing it in so many different ways.

**Kelley Peterson:**

There was another event that the foundation has been involved in. As we just talked about COVID-19, the year 2020 for many reasons didn't have a lot of cause for celebration. But for the Papillion community, 2020 had some pretty historical significance. Can you tell us about how the foundation played a role in the Papillion 150?

**Laura Schwartz:**

Yeah, absolutely. We were honored to have the city of Papillion ask us to put together a committee and spearhead the Papillion 150 celebration, because 2020 marked the 150th birthday of our city, which is really significant. One hundred and fifty years ago, we were just a small farm/railroad town. Now, we are a thriving suburb in the city of Omaha.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Celebrating that, we were able to look back at the 100 year celebration and think about all the cool things we were going to do to bring some of those fun events we did 50 years ago back to life, and how we could update them and build them into things that are already going in our community like Papillion Days, Winter Wonderland, print organizations, their events and that kind of thing.

**Laura Schwartz:**

It started in 2003 and 2018, creating the plan for 2020 not knowing what we were going to experience in 2020. Bob O'Neill is the Executive Committee Chair for the Papillion 150, and he's grown up here and

really loves the city. We have a great executive committee with Bob O'Neill, Spencer Kimball from Pinnacle Bank and Andy Rikli, who is the superintendent of the Papillion-La Vista Community Schools.

**Laura Schwartz:**

They're part of that planning process. To Joe Hunter, who is our Assistant Director, myself and a group of local people (business owners, people who grew up here, came together and started that planning), the one thing we all wanted to come out of this was some kind of a public art project. We had never done a large-scale public art project in Papillion. Sarpy County had done one in the early 2000s, but that was a Sarpy County project.

**Laura Schwartz:**

With Ken Molzer and the Papillion Arts Council, and a local artist named Al Ray, we were able to come up with the butterfly benches. The wings of our Papillion butterfly benches public art project came to fruition. When we first got together, we thought, *Okay, these benches are large*. They're very large. They weigh about 300 pounds apiece—big metal benches. They were going to be an art canvas for local artists.

**Laura Schwartz:**

We thought if we get 10 of them sponsored we'd feel pretty good about it. We ended up with 34 benches. Each had its own artist selected for a piece of art that they submitted, and the sponsors chose the art, as they sponsored that bench. That's what they wanted their bench to look like. These benches became 34 very unique canvases for all kinds of different organizations and families in town.

**Laura Schwartz:**

They're gorgeous. Somehow through a global pandemic, we were able to get this done and get them all out and placed into the community within 2020. It wasn't an easy undertaking. I probably lifted those benches, each one of them, at least two or three times myself. It was a way of getting those out and having a map of all of them. It was one way to get out and experience some kind of joy.

**Laura Schwartz:**

They all started getting put out in May, and they were all out by June 2020. It became a huge family scavenger hunt for people. We printed the maps and people would go visit them, take pictures with them and submit the pictures. The creativity—not just of the artists who created these beautiful pieces of art but also the people who took pictures with their animals and their kids—was really cool. Everybody was posting pictures, and we were able to even have groups come from Omaha who wanted to visit the benches, and we would do tours.

**Laura Schwartz:**

You could do it outside, so people could be safe and enjoy it. That was a huge boost for the community. I think it brought a sense of joy to people who maybe wouldn't have otherwise had it. Those benches are going to be in our community for many, many years to come because that's how they were designed. People really enjoyed that.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Every story you have told, you've been able to pivot and make it something even more amazing than it originally would have been. You probably didn't know you had a built-in workout program when you were moving all of those benches. That was a benefit.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Exactly.

**Kelley Peterson:**

I was thinking of all the amazing stories you just told about the murals and being the change you want to see in the world. I knew you would be the perfect changemaker to be on this podcast for all kinds of reasons.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Wow! Thank you.

**Kelley Peterson:**

The Papillion Community Foundation has enhanced the quality of life for thousands of people. What are some of the greatest stories you've heard that demonstrate the outcome of your work?

**Laura Schwartz:**

There was one story in particular from this past summer, toward the end of the summer. There was a young lady. I was walking to get the mail, and when I get our mail I have to walk past the first Butterfly Effect mural we put up. It's more of a traditional Monarch butterfly color scheme and everything, and the young lady had a friend who was taking her picture.

**Laura Schwartz:**

She had a balloon. They were doing some really fun pictures, but then she got super emotional. I, of course, just happened to walk by when she got emotional. I'm kind of a sap, so I cry a lot. I had to ask why, what it was that made her emotional, and she said there was something in her life she'd had to get through and it culminated with something joyous. Obviously, she was able to come out of whatever it was, which was something bad.

**Laura Schwartz:**

To celebrate beating whatever it was she was fighting, she was going to come and have a picture taken with the mural. She said it had been up the whole time (because at that point it had been up for over a year). She does a blog, and so she was going to blog about it.

**Laura Schwartz:**

This was a major thing she was fighting. She felt like she beat it. The thing to her that was the symbol of her beating it was taking a picture there. That was pretty cool, to kind of just happen to walk to the mailbox and see what was going on. Otherwise, I wouldn't have known the story. We were able to share that story, so she knew other people knew what was going on. Something that small could really impact her. It was huge.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Another example is I was talking to someone, and unfortunately we did have to cancel Papillion Days in 2020. Sometimes you take it for granted, because you do it year in/year out and you go through the motions to get it done, but you don't think about how it really affects people if it's not there, like how it has this kind of trickle-down effect.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Her mom, who had gotten much older, was part of who they celebrated every year. Unfortunately, she lost her mom. It was sad for her not to be able to have celebrated that with her mom one last time. We talked a little bit about how they had celebrated the year before. She was able to tell me some of their traditions, which were really cool. We can share that story and keep that alive.

**Laura Schwartz:**

You don't know how you're really affecting people, even with something like an event. A lot of times people don't think those are as impactful as they are. They really are. They shape people's threads and the fabrics of their lives—how they go about doing things. It is funny how people share that with you. It grounds you, I guess.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Absolutely. Events really are important. It's similar to our personal holidays and how we celebrate them. 2020 was hard. Because it's a safety net for us, it's something we've always done and welcome it to come back into our lives. When we can't have that, we really do have to step up to the plate and find the positive things. It sounds like you did with that individual, for sure.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Laura, let's switch gears and talk about your story. How did your path lead you to this kind of work?

**Laura Schwartz:**

Gosh, that's interesting. My story starts with my family. Like I said before, I'm not native to Nebraska. I've lived in Nebraska longer than I've lived anywhere else, because when I was growing up my father was a college football coach. Our lives were kind of surrounded by football season. My dad was an amazing guy. We lost him a few years ago. We moved a lot. That was one thing, we never really had those roots. We never were in a place for a long time.

**Laura Schwartz:**

But it also taught me resilience. You have to put yourself out there. You have to get to know new people. I ended up falling in love with a soldier who was active-duty military. For 12 years it was active-duty life, and then 17 years of Army Reserve. In the first 12 years of our married life, we moved 11 times. You just learn how to become resilient, adapt to each situation and make it your home, your place.

**Laura Schwartz:**

When he got out of active-duty military, we decided we wanted to come back to his hometown because he's from here. He went to high school here; he went to grade school here. For me, leaving my family in the Georgia/Florida area was tough. I feel like it was the right move for us because we had to take care

of his mom. We came out here and I've lived here longer than I've lived anywhere else. We raised both of our children here.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Even though I'm not a Nebraska native, I feel like I am. This is the place where I raised my family, where my husband grew up. We know this place very well. Being a military wife, you learn a lot about how to help others, because the soldiers are gone quite often and families have to pull together and help each other. Especially in the Army Reserve, you're not on a base, which is an Army post where everyone around you is also part of that military community. You have to pull together with those people and learn how to help each other.

**Laura Schwartz:**

That set the base for this, for me doing this type of work. Obviously, Veteran's Park is pretty near and dear to me with the military background we have, and then both of our children are deciding to take that path as well. That is how I stepped into this role. I own my own business, so I understand what people who run their own businesses go through.

**Laura Schwartz:**

I've worked for a Fortune 500 company in Omaha. I worked for Hewlett-Packard for 14 years. I know the corporate life as well. I feel like I have a well-rounded look at a nonprofit and how it needs to function. I have that deep-rooted responsibility to make sure that as the Papillion Community Foundation, we're helping and doing the right thing for Papillion. That just comes from the path I took to get here.

**Kelley Peterson:**

You have so much experience walking in different types of shoes. That can lend itself to being an incredible leader of the nonprofit that is the Papillion Community Foundation. As that leader, what advice do you have for other leaders who want to inspire change?

**Laura Schwartz:**

That's a really interesting question because I feel like our world has changed a lot in a year. I think if you would have asked me this question a year ago, I may have had a different answer, but I feel like I have a better answer now. We have to do what's best for our communities. We don't always agree on things. There is some division in our country right now, but there are also some real core things that no matter what side of the political aisle you're on, or who you look to for guidance or worship, or what the color of your skin is, or any of that, there are some core things we can get behind.

**Laura Schwartz:**

We have to put the differences aside so we can, as leaders, draw people to those core things that mean the same or close to the same to all of us, no matter how we think or believe or live. We have to focus on those core things that make us human. How do we do that? As leaders, we have to live that, and we have to be an example of that. We have to follow that mission on the wall, whatever that mission is. Have it in front of you so you can always use it as a path or a guide to get to that core where you can bring people together who maybe wouldn't normally approach it together because they believe or see things differently.

**Laura Schwartz:**

We have to leave the differences behind us, and then work on those things that are the core. As leaders, we have to be the ones who are doing that. I want people to see me for what I stand for as a human being, and what is important to help those people who maybe don't have what they need.

**Laura Schwartz:**

I don't want people to lump me into one bucket. I want people to see me functioning in a whole lot of different buckets, because as leaders we have to think about that. We have to be in each bucket so we can then put all the buckets together and be that one pudding. It's probably not the greatest analogy, but it's what's coming to my mind right now. I'm thinking of all these buckets of sand, all of different colors, but ultimately the whole thing is to fill the one bucket with sand, no matter what was in it.

**Laura Schwartz:**

So, nobody knows what bucket you actually came from. They just know that you're there for a purpose. That's our job.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Thank you. I find what you just said so inspiring. Thank you for those words. Wow! I'm going to ask for more. Laura, could you give us a few of your own words of wisdom that could serve as inspiration to our listeners?

**Laura Schwartz:**

Yes. I thought about this, and this is what I came up with. You always have to question, and then you find the answer and the new solution to do more. It's another way of saying "Thinking outside of the box," but there's more to that.

**Kelley Peterson:**

I love that, and I think it's completely inspired by your mission of when you say identify, develop and support. That's what you're doing there with that inspirational nugget. For our listeners who would like to learn more about your work and support you, how can they find out more about the Papillion Community Foundation?

**Laura Schwartz:**

They can go to our website, [www.PapillionFoundation.org](http://www.PapillionFoundation.org). But I also encourage people to just call us. Call us on the phone. Sometimes it's easier to talk to somebody. I would love to say come visit us, and we certainly have that option as well. Our number is 402-331-3917. If you have a need or you want to be part of what we're doing, if you want to give us your input, anything, just call us because there's no better way to share your mission than to actually share it talking to someone.

**Laura Schwartz:**

If anybody wants to know what's going on, or what our events or schedule is or where we are, what we're doing, I encourage them to call us because I love the opportunity to talk to people, whether it's a person who lives in Papillion who maybe just moved here or someone who has lived here for a long time. They might think what we do is completely different than what we really do.

**Laura Schwartz:**

I know a lot of people think I actually work for the city. I don't work for the city of Papillion. We are a private foundation. I love the chance to share that mission with people by talking to them. Right now, we can't talk in person all the time, but we have a Zoom. We can do Zoom calls with people. We love to have people come and volunteer, and there are a lot of things you can volunteer to do at home.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Reach out somehow. They can call, they can email me at [LSchwartz@Papillion.org](mailto:LSchwartz@Papillion.org). They can go on our website. We have a contact form they can fill out. They can donate. They can donate their time, their talent, or their money. All three are part of what a nonprofit does, and how we sustain what we do. Reach out and we can tell you what we do.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Wonderful! As we wrap up our time together today, what is the most important thing you would like our listeners to remember about the Papillion Community Foundation?

**Laura Schwartz:**

The mission. We identify, develop and support, whatever that means to citizens of Papillion, and even greater for Sarpy County. Just remember, that's our mission. It's not just Papillion Days. It's not just Winter Wonderland. It's so many other things that we do that accompany that: Veteran's Park, Pantry for our Patriots, Papillion 150. Hopefully, Papillion Urban Garden. There are so many things that are in our mission that I don't think people realize. If there is anything they think about that could be done in the community to identify, develop or support the quality of life of our city and our county, that's what I want people to remember.

**Laura Schwartz:**

That's why we're here. We're ultimately in the customer service business. We are here to serve our customers, and our customers will assist the citizens of Papillion. Our mission is what drives us. It's what's going to take us into the next 20 years and hopefully into the next 50 years. I think it's important for people to understand what our mission is.

**Kelley Peterson:**

Laura, your story of leadership is amazing, and all of the things that you do for the community of Papillion through the work of the Papillion Community Foundation. When we first started talking, we talked about that vision for 20 years. Maybe it's a positive thing that it's changed because of COVID-19, because you were able to discover so much more that you could do to serve who you serve as a nonprofit.

**Kelley Peterson:**

I thank you so much for your time today.

**Laura Schwartz:**

Oh, thanks for having me. It was my pleasure.

**Announcer:**

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