Agency for Change Podcast: Michaella Kumke and Amanda Fahrer, Food Bank of Lincoln

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Michaella Kumke: 0:01

So what if your voice quivers? So what? Say what needs to be said and trust that that is courage and the sound of compassion.

Announcer: 0:15

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman: 0:39

Hey everyone, welcome back to another episode of the Agency for Change podcast. This is Lyn Wineman, President and Chief Strategist of KidGlov. So today's guests are leading the charge in the fight against hunger right here in Nebraska. Michaella Kumke, President and CEO, and Amanda Fahrer, Communications Director, are part of the incredible team at the Food Bank of Lincoln, which actually serves most of Southeast Nebraska as well. Together, these two help lead an organization that goes far beyond distributing food. They are fighting hunger through advocacy, through innovation and compassion, and they're serving their neighbors with dignity and care. We will talk about food insecurity, leadership and the power of communication to inspire change. Plus, stick around, I've got a little surprise to share later in the show, so stay tuned. Let's dive in. Amanda and Michaella, welcome to the podcast. I'd love to start by having one of you tell us more about the Food Bank of Lincoln. With a name like Food Bank, people generally have an idea of what you do, but I'm guessing you do a lot more than that name suggests.

Michaella Kumke: 2:02

We sure do, Lyn. Our name, as you said, Food Bank of Lincoln, is slightly deceptive, because not only do we serve Lincoln, Nebraska and Lancaster County here in Nebraska, we serve in total 16 counties in southeast Nebraska and our mission is to alleviate hunger in that 16 county service area. And we do that through a variety of partnerships, frontline service, various programs, and one stellar team.

Lyn Wineman: 2:32

I love that. I have heard that you have a stellar team, Michaella, and I'm so glad that actually both you and Amanda are on with us today. I mean one thing that I want to ask you about the Food Bank, and this is going to sound like the silliest question in the world, but I think the answer is going to be deeper than we expect. Why is addressing food insecurity so critical, and not just for individuals, but why is it critical for communities as a whole?

Amanda Fahrer: 3:07

As we have shared, I'm a mom of two right now, and so when you can see the impact and you can hear the impact and you can feel the impact when there's not enough food going into the bodies of those little bellies, there's not enough food going into the bodies of those little bellies, and so it makes it really difficult for kids to have energy to focus, to be able to learn, but also to be in a state that makes them open to doing all of those things. When we're hungry, we aren't as mentally excited, right and able to focus, and it makes us a little more angry. And so, for kiddos at least, and especially for mine, I know what that's like when there's not enough food on the table or food going into those bellies. Those same effects are felt from adults too. We don't outgrow the importance of food, so it's really significant to be able to have access to that on the daily.

Lyn Wineman: 4:01

Amanda, way to pull at our heartstrings right there. Because, being a mom and a grandmother myself, I have two thoughts about that. One is I always hate the thought of having to tell my family you know, no, or you can't have that, or we can't provide that. And to take that to something that is such an important need like food, I mean, I can't imagine what that must feel like as a parent. Second thing that comes to mind I just got back from a three-generation family vacation and our strategy for the family vacation was the moment somebody gets grouchy, give them a snack, like that was the strategy and the mantra of the whole trip. And so, once again, like knowing that you're starting your day, you're ending your day, you're trying to sleep, you're trying to go to school, you're trying to go to work, with hunger, that's a that's a difficult, difficult thing. Michaella, I'd love to have you weigh in on this. You know, from a community level. Why is addressing food insecurity on a food community level that important?

Michaella Kumke: 5:14

Yeah, I think about it. Simply taking Amanda's words a step farther, would be the stability, the safety that comes from having enough food to eat. Like when, when food, when food seems scarce, are we tend to go into this worry and fear and sort of a danger mode, right like it can be cranky, if you know that you actually are going to have access to food. But if you grew up in an environment or you're in a current situation where maybe that's not a given, the brain can do funny things. And I think about community safety, community stability, health of our community matters. That is what food provides and then, just like cutting to the core, is the human dignity that we all need food and water. And so that's why this work, on both a very narrow lens but in the wider scope, matters so much to both of us and to our team.

Lyn Wineman: 6:19

You know what comes to mind for me. I don't know if this is a quote, I don't know if it's a proverb, but you can't be a great community unless you take care of everyone right, and it seems like food insecurity

is the most basic of needs. So I love what you're doing. I'm curious for both of you. I'm always on the podcast, very interested in how people got into their current roles, and so, like Michaella, I'm imagining you on the playground as a child saying you're going to be the CEO of the Food Bank. Is that how it went?

Michaella Kumke: 6:57

Well, that's funny, Lyn. I will tell you it's maybe yes. At one time when I was a young girl, I thought I wanted to be a nun.

I don't know exactly what that is, but life is a funny mystery and I'm from a family of 12 kids. First of all, I'm number 11 of 12.

Lyn Wineman: 7:25

Big family. You had a community in and of yourselves, didn't you?

Michaella Kumke: 7:29

Yes, we sure did, and like every or most every family, food was always the thing right. It was what brought us together at celebrations. It's the chore that we had to do, whatever, whatever. So I think I came into this work both because of that sense of big family and community and the gardening that we did growing up and all those things. But then at some point I also thought maybe I would be a journalist or writer and fast forward, I had great influencers and mentors in the nonprofit space and my heart has always felt like this is the kind of work for me, nonprofit work. And when I ultimately landed at the Food Bank of Lincoln I say this to people, I know it sounds cheesy, I admit it, I get it but it felt like I was exactly where I was meant to be. And 10 years later, after being at the Food Bank and four years as president and CEO, I don't waver from that feeling at all, and so it feels like a gift to be here.

Lyn Wineman: 8:39

Michaella, I love that so much and that would be my wish for every single person, right? Because when you have landed in that seat, when you have found your calling, when you get up every morning, that doesn't mean every day is easy I know things aren't easy but it does mean that there's a bigger reason, there's a bigger why that gets you out of bed every morning and has you doing that work. Amanda, I'm curious about your journey. How did you get in this role at the Food Bank?

Amanda Fahrer: 9:13

Yeah, Lyn. So I never really knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. The closest I got was I'm going to be on TV, and I pursued a career in journalism, being really naive, thinking that you didn't have to report the news, that you just got to read the news. And so in my first semester of college I went out and attempted a broadcast news story and put together what I thought was a pretty great piece, only to realize I had not hit record on any of those interviews that I had done.

Lyn Wineman: 9:45

I'm going to peek and make sure we're recording right now. That's my greatest fear. I'd probably check. If you see my eyeballs looking to the upper right, it's because I'm going. Are we recording? We are recording, in fact. So, Amanda, but I feel you there. I feel you.

Amanda Fahrer: 10:01

And it broke things a little bit, but I still said you know, I enjoy news and I enjoy writing. So away with this electronics business, I'm going to go to paper and pen. And so pursued a career in written journalism and after that, found myself teaching for about eight years, but the world of higher education was not for me for much longer. And so in the middle of the pandemic Lyn, there was this job opening at a Food Bank here, and the stars just kind of aligned.

It was passion meets skillset and right timing, and so I felt pretty unqualified at the time but thought I'd throw my hat in the ring anyway. And luckily one. Michaella at the time was the hiring manager and took a, took a leap of faith and was happy to stay put. And so I have been here, just coming up on five years and, like Michaella, shared, even though I never really knew what I wanted to be when I grew up, once I settled into the work have found what I want to be when I grow up.

Lyn Wineman: 11:03

I love that. Amanda, I am a huge fan of the College of Journalism at the University of Nebraska and I've talked to so many people who have that experience of getting that journalism degree, that have gone into other fields but find that that critical thinking, the question asking a lot of those skills from a journalism background benefit them in many different ways, and I can see that as you tell your story as well. So now I want to turn the page a little bit into how you, in your roles right now, are finding new and effective ways to meet the growing needs of the community as it relates to the Food Bank and food insecurity. Who'd like to jump into that one first?

Michaella Kumke: 11:48

I'll give a go. Okay, all right, and then here's what I'm going to say up front to everybody, not in Amanda's role. She always makes me sound smarter. She edits my writing and it always sounds a little bit better. Like hire people who are better at things than you. And I'm man, I got lucky when, I hired her.

Lyn Wineman: 12:09

I am right with you. I got a whole team of people sitting outside of my office that I think are smarter and more talented than I am, and my talent is somehow to have invited them into a circle where they enjoy working together. So I hear you although you are pretty eloquent yourself. So you got to give yourself that credit there too.

Michaella Kumke: 12:33

Well, thank you, thank you. But what are we doing and what are we proud of? How are we responding?

Lyn Wineman: 12:38

Yes, how are you staying on top of and finding new and effective ways to meet the need?

Michaella Kumke: 12:44

First, thing that I would say is that we're putting an emphasis on being neighbor-centered. You know that our programs, our approach, our questions that we have about our work and about our mission, we are really putting energy and resources into speaking directly to neighbors to understand what is working and what isn't. Some of that is attached to our strategic plan, which we're in the throes of right now. But I would say, just making sure that we're hearing that neighbor voice, whether that's a quick interaction at a mobile food distribution or sitting down and having a longer conversation about advocacy and how different things are affecting folks. So we're able to be innovative because we're centering neighbors. And then after that I would say it's our partner agency network. We cannot do this work alone. I think about more than 10 million meals connected last fiscal year, and that doesn't just happen.

You know, I have heard from folks that the Food Bank makes it all look so easy and you know all these things. It's not. It is not. It is a group of team and a network of partner agencies. It's volunteers and community understanding that the work matters and it's us doing our work to help educate and inspire that. But I think the programs also. We do really big programs like mobile food distributions where we're serving, you know, anywhere from couple hundred at a rural distribution to almost a thousand at a distribution here in Lincoln. We also have other programs that are really intentionally designed to be a more intimate, slower environment where maybe senior citizens or veterans or little kids don't, you know, can't have all that noise of a bigger distribution. So trying to find ways where we can connect with folks in those more intimate ways, and then I would say innovating by looking at food sourcing. This became a major endeavor during the pandemic and is rising again when we look at growing need and shrinking resources.

So establishing new relationships and continuing those relationships, expanding them where we can and truly advocacy is another area of innovation for us. In and of itself, advocacy is not anything new or novel, but the way that we are thinking about how this organization approaches it, in partnership with our peer at Food Bank for the Heartland and other nonprofit agencies. So I think those are a few examples of ways that we're trying to push ourselves to be better in these areas for the good of our neighbors.

Lyn Wineman: 15:49

I really, really appreciate that and I want to circle back on advocacy in a minute here. But, Amanda, I want to give you an opportunity to answer that question too. You know what are some of the ways that you are finding new and effective ways actually to meet the growing needs in the community?

Amanda Fahrer: 16:08

Yeah. So of course I would echo everything Michaella said and elaborate a little bit on the communication side, because that's the perspective that I bring is Michaella referenced the volunteers and the community supporters, and that's the core that helps make those meals possible. Alongside all of the programs and partners that Michaella shared, we're constantly looking at different ways that we can reach folks within our community who want to help and how can we connect those audiences to the

work, and so exploring different communication channels and always doing a little bit of testing and trial and error to see what sticks and what lands. But knowing that there's helpers out there and finding ways to engage those helpers is also a lot of what we're focusing on, right now?

Lyn Wineman: 16:54

Absolutely, Amanda. Being in marketing myself, it seems like right now, things can just change so fast, right, and the things that we did even two or three or five years ago may not be working right now, and you've got to let a lot of people know information about what's available. You've got to communicate with all of these partners. You've got to communicate with neighbors, so I really appreciate what you said. Let's take a moment, though, and talk about advocacy, because I think this is something about nonprofit work that those who are not in nonprofits don't realize perhaps how much time or how important this aspect of your work is. For those of you that are listening to this later we're recording this in the summer of 2025. There's a lot going on right now in the economy from the political aspect, funding sources changing. Would any of either of you like to tackle a little bit more about what's going on on this front and maybe even include in there how those of us who are listening can support you?

Amanda Fahrer: 18:07

That's a big, bold question. Lyn, there's a lot going on.

Lyn Wineman: 18:11

We could take an hour just right here. Give us your best, oh, Amanda, as a journalist give us your best talking points on this issue.

Amanda Fahrer: 18:21

You know, Lyn, when you say that marketing and communication changes pretty rapidly, I will argue that advocacy has been changing even faster, especially with where we are at at this point in time, as of this day, in the summer, we are currently looking at some federal activity that's happening regarding budget reconciliation, so there are some packages on the table. Nothing has been passed yet that would present some structural changes to programs that impact food security. We know that local, state, federal policies can have a really significant impact on food access and what that means for us to be able to, as Michaella referenced, access food through sourcing, but also in terms of the response and the demand that we'll experience as a result of those policies.

Lyn Wineman: 19:11

Oh yeah, I didn't think about that. It's not just getting the food, it's also balanced with how many people are going to need it because of the impact. Oh wow, that's a big deal.

Amanda Fahrer: 19:24

Right, and so when we threaten programs like SNAP and Medicaid that folks rely on to put food on the table or to access health care, when those are cut out or changed, then all of a sudden we're looking for additional dollars in our budget that may not exist, and so now we have extra gaps that we need to fill.

That's one of the big reasons why we've really leaned in to this work is to make sure that we don't put neighbors in that situation. To begin with, how can we preserve the integrity of those programs and all the good that comes along with them? So when we look at things like SNAP, there's a lot of choice involved with SNAP that agency to be able to take your own dollars into the grocery store to select the foods that work best for you, and our team always does the best that we can getting that food out the door. But it's a little bit different when you're able to choose what you want versus what we have available to share that day, and so have really been leaning into that as of late.

Lyn Wineman: 20:22

Absolutely. I want to dig into a couple of things there a little bit deeper. Just to make sure people understand. I wrote down here, you said this so eloquently and so nicely, but you said there's a structural change that would impact food insecurity. Can you just dive a little bit deeper for those of us that don't speak in that lingo like without getting political, because I know we're all trying to be very careful about all of this what does that actually mean?

Amanda Fahrer: 20:53

So there have been some things proposed and again it's ever evolving and so things change kind of every hour here. But when we're looking at structural changes, traditionally the federal government has paid for the entirety of the SNAP benefits dollars. So what goes on the cards that our neighbors can take into the stores to purchase? And there have been some changes proposed that the states could take on a portion of those costs as well. For the first time ever kind of situation. Putting that burden on states to be able to take on those extra dollars would be really significant when we know a lot of states are already strapped for cash.

Lyn Wineman: 21:33

I don't know of very many, if any, states that have excess budget this year, right, Like the states, are also grappling with budget shortfalls, budget shortfalls, and now we're shifting a burden to them which, even if they can handle it, I think one thing people don't realize about government funded programs is there can be gaps even though the money or the food or whatever is promised to you when you make a big shift from federal to state. There's potentially going to be a gap while they spin up, but yet there's not a gap in people's hunger, right, the need for food.

Amanda Fahrer: 22:13

Exactly and beyond that proposal, there's also other structural changes that come into play for some red tape that has been added in for reporting and work requirements it's a tough phrase to say. We're looking at now adding, for the first time ever, parents with kiddos that are above the age of 10 now being subject to those work requirements, when previously parents were exempt from that. And so again, that's a big structural change and we know that just because your kiddo might be over the age of 10 doesn't mean they need any less care. That could also have a really strong ripple effect to folks in our community.

Lyn Wineman: 22:58

Thank you so much for going deeper in that, Michaella. What does advocacy look like for you as president and CEO?

Michaella Kumke: 23:08

I would say, first of all, you know we talk. We talk often about like food is not a political topic. Yeah, now there's opinions like do you like creamy peanut butter or crunchy peanut butter, or can you not have any? You know those butters, but the work itself is not political work. However, food policies, that is a place where we firmly believe there is a responsibility for our organization to lock arms with other nonprofits and as part of the Feeding America Network I guess I'll go into that in a minute but just to lock arms and say folks, we're, we are on the front lines with neighbors and we're not going to speak for others. They have voice and we'll help encourage that. But here's what we see and how it affects our work. Advocacy, to me is, is another form of getting food onto the table. It is another way to feed Starts by feeding our brains with information and the facts.

And then it leads to ways that we can help our neighbors eat and access food through food and nutrition services, through USDA programs, these strong foundational programs that link farmers and business owners and folks who need food and benefit all the ways. So it's just that constant work of educating to get meals on the table.

Lyn Wineman: 24:41

Yeah, one thing I've learned about advocacy work is that it's just. It's a constant right. If you wait until the moment something's been cut or changed, you are too late, and it is a lot of work to stay on top of what's going on and have your voice ever present in a meaningful way. So I appreciate what you're doing there and, Michaella, you just said this phrase that I think was a little invitation for me. You said we need to feed our brains, and so I'm curious from each of you what is one thing that you wish more people understood about hunger in Nebraska?

Amanda Fahrer: 25:23

You know at a basic level, Lyn. I would say just to understand that it is here. I grew up in rural Nebraska, a town with a booming 600 people on a good day, and was under the impression that everyone was all right in my small community. Right, we took care of each other and we did. But I'll tell you, one of the first distributions I went to when I started in this role five years ago was back to that small community and I was in shock to see over 100 neighbors come through that line in my town of 600, right, that's a one-sixth of the population.

Lyn Wineman: 26:02

Wow, that's a big percentage.

Amanda Fahrer: 26:04

Exactly, and so that was really eye-opening for me, because I did not by any capacity expect that that would be what I experienced. I think just the fact that it is here and present, and even if we may not see it I think a lot of times we can be good at hiding hunger and so just because you don't see it doesn't

mean that it doesn't exist. And if that's not your truth, know that that could be something your neighbor is experiencing.

Lyn Wineman: 26:31

Absolutely. I fully believe everyone around us has something going on below the surface that we don't know about, and, for quite a few, more than we even imagine hunger or food insecurity is that issue, Michaella, how about you? What's the thing that you wish people knew about hunger in Nebraska.

Michaella Kumke: 26:54

I would add a visual to what Amanda just said, that yes, it is here and it's here to the level of for those who are tuned in and are, you know, husker volleyball football fans, we think about Memorial Stadium. We kind of referenced Volleyball Day in Nebraska.

Lyn Wineman: 27:11

You know that world record breaking event 92,000 people in a football stadium to watch volleyball. Are you going to tell me that you could fill that stadium?

Michaella Kumke: 27:23

Yes, not once, not twice, but nearly three times with the number of food insecure Nebraskans based on our Map, the Meal Gap information from Feeding America. And so when Amanda says it's here and it's personal and it's close, it is. And Food Bank of Lincoln, alongside Food Bank for the Heartland, we serve all 93 counties in Nebraska and again, we don't do it alone. We have a great network of partner agencies, school partners, community partners and, you know, a major group of volunteers and funders. But to Amanda's point, it is here and we can't pretend that it's not. We have this strong, you know, Midwest or Great Plains pride. And that serves us so well in so many ways, but pretending that hunger isn't real is not one of those ways.

Lyn Wineman: 28:28

Yep, absolutely. Wow. You just gave me goosebumps with that example there, and I'm actually going to give you an invitation to take this a bit further, because I'd love to hear if either of you could share a story or a moment that really illustrates the impact of the Food Bank of Lincoln.

Amanda Fahrer: 28:50

So I shared recently with Michaella an exchange I had earlier in the year and it is not one of many words but the story was told in nonverbals. I was helping at one of our school pantries and a family had come in seemingly for the first time. Two parents and a teenage boy were shopping the pantry and they were very mindful of the policies and procedures, very respectful, always double checking. Can I have more of this, less of this? You know, checking in on those numbers, and the pantry was bustling that day.

So there were a lot of visitors and a lot of activity going on, bustling that day. As this family went to leave, the mother and son were checking out and the father came up to me and down to the mustache

he reminded me of my own right, so very much a quiet, soft-spoken gentleman, and he just made eyes with me, gave me a little squeeze on the shoulder and in the quietest of voices, said thank you.

And it appeared that you know there was a lot of emotion behind that, thank you, but I have never felt a message of gratitude so deeply because he didn't need to say anything more than that to be able to feel the weight of what that food meant for him and his family that day.

Lyn Wineman: 30:07

Wow, what a beautiful story. Yeah, you got me all in the feels. Amanda, Michaella, I don't know if you need to add anything, but do you want to?

Michaella Kumke: 30:18

I'm just gonna let that one be. I mean, I think that's the power of this work and, yes, I have experiences similar to share, but I think that's it.

Lyn Wineman: 30:31

Yeah, that says it. Well, you two, what's on the horizon for the Food Bank? What's coming up? What are you excited about? What are you working on? What should we know?

Michaella Kumke: 30:43

I mentioned our strategic planning process, you know, a little earlier in the conversation and I would say that's something that is really exciting me.

Like Amanda, I have a background in journalism and marketing and just think about what a strategic plan provides, it's not a turn by turn map. It's the big picture and I get excited about that. I get excited about the synergy that happens when we have the conversations with folks, with our neighbors, with the other partners involved. So that that to me is it's an exciting time and it's a challenging time, truthfully, because we're looking at a three year strategic plan and we think about politically, economically, what has happened in in just, you know, six, nine months. So to forecast something in a typical year that's three years out is a challenge. So there's just this added dynamic. And I say that and know that's not going to stop us, like that is what I love about Food Bankers and our network of supporters. It's hard, but we didn't sign up for easy. We never signed up for easy. We come into this knowing that's the work and it matters, and so we're going to keep at it.

Lyn Wineman: 32:12

Michaella, I love a good strategic plan because I just know, right, that it makes you more effective. It makes you more efficient, it gets everybody on the same page. And I even think, if you've got that three year strategic plan but realistically, you know things are going to change and you don't know how I always feel like you're more ready to ride the waves If you do have that plan in place and if this also might sound cheesy, but if, if everybody's rowing in the same direction, right, if the waves hit and you're all going your own different ways, you are going to be stuck. So I appreciate that, all right, I'd love to ask you this what is because you've got us in the feels here. You've pulled at our heartstrings, you've given

me goosebumps, you've told a great story. What is one small action everybody who's listening today can do and I want to use your language and honor it to help their neighbors who may be feeling food insecurity in our communities?

Amanda Fahrer: 33:17

I think it's just looking out for one another. I don't know that there's a tangible thing I would attach to that beyond keeping an eye out for your neighbors If that's offering to go and help pick up a bag of food from our distributions to be able to do some form of delivery or pickup, but again, just having those eyes open and lending a hand when you can, in whatever capacity that makes the most sense. If that's coming here to volunteer, we'd love to have you. If that's checking in on your neighbor on a hot day in the middle of summer, that goes a long way too, and so I would just say keep that eye open and lend a hand when you can.

Lyn Wineman: 33:56

I love it Just be neighborly, right Just be, neighborly. I like it. Michaella, what do you want to add to that? What's one small thing we can all do?

Michaella Kumke: 34:05

to add to that. What's one small thing we can all do? Yeah, challenge your stereotypes and biases. I would say, like we were joking earlier with your family, the three-generation vacation, right, and that cue? Okay, you don't have to know food insecurity to know a little bit about what it means to be hungry.

You don't have to experience the full blown effects to care and to understand that it is extreme for some people, enough or any food at home, if there's a home, is a real question for people, even if they are masters at hiding it.

Lyn Wineman: 34:53

Yeah, and it's a question for more. What I hear kind of part of this story is it's a question for more people than any of us suspect, more of our neighbors, our friends than any of us probably realize.

Michaella Kumke: 35:09

And to Amanda's point like what if it were you or your favorite person in the world? What if? How would you respond? How would you want other people to respond? And then do that.

Lyn Wineman: 35:28

I love it. That is great advice. Great advice. All right, Amanda, I think this one's for you, For our listeners who would like to learn more. Where can they find information about the Food Bank of Lincoln?

Amanda Fahrer: 35:42

So we'd invite you to visit our website, lincolnfoodbank.org, and we're on the socials as well Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn so give us a follow and stay up to date with the information that we have available.

Lyn Wineman: 35:55

Perfect, we'll get all of those links in the show note on KidGlov's website. All right, I have a different kind of question for you, coming from the world of marketing and branding, I mean, one thing I admire about both of you is that at the Food Bank, I know that you lead with clarity, you lead with heart, so I want to ask you a question about your brand, and that is what does Food Bank of Lincoln's brand mean to each of you personally, and how do you see it showing up in the community?

Amanda Fahrer: 36:27

For me and this is something I learned early on in the work and have appreciated about it ever since is our brand tries to present from the perspective of food as power. What do we do when we have food Very strength-based, focused, rather than the opposite of what happens when we don't? And so, when we think about food as a fuel for all of those things that we mentioned at the very beginning of this conversation, is that makes it possible, and that's the lens that we try to take from our branding standpoint is what can food make possible? Not the opposite of what happens when we don't have access to food.

Lyn Wineman: 37:06

Wow, that is so powerful. Michaella, I know you've got that good marketing background too. What are you feeling? How does the food bake brand show up in the community?

Michaella Kumke: 37:23

I would steal right from our vision, which is nourishing our communities to end hunger, and I think about the ways that we nourish. It is physically, through food. It is through relationships, it is providing commitment and confidence. It is by educating and bringing people in and along and forward through some of our other programs where we address root cause and help people find and create their own future story. So I think it's that sense of nourishment.

Lyn Wineman: 37:51

I love that. I also want to honor and I mentioned this a minute ago. I have heard you very carefully use the word, the term neighbor, which is so on brand. It's so fueling and empowering and providing that nourishment of the soul that ties back to what you say. So I want to recognize that as well, because I believe that words really matter. And you know, something our listeners know is that I've just published a book called Untangling Spaghetti. It's a branding fable. That's why I like to ask branding questions. But I want you to know that we're making the commitment for the month of July of 2025. All of the proceeds from that book are going to be donated to the Food Bank of Lincoln in appreciation for the work that you do, and I think the untangling spaghetti theme and your work really go together. So we are honored to do that and appreciate you joining us here on the podcast. All right, I'm going to switch gears one more time. One more switch of gears.

Michaella Kumke: 39:02

Do I get to thank you first? Oh yes, Thank you Absolutely. We're pretty big on thanking Lyn. First of all. Congratulations on the book. That is such a huge accomplishment and a dream that you made a reality. That's a big deal, and thank you for deciding that a part of this will help us feed our neighbors. Thank you

Lyn Wineman: 39:27

Honored to do it, and I'm going to say, Michaella, I couldn't have this book if it wasn't for the great team around me at KidGlov as well. So thank you so much for that, and leave it to me to not pause for a thank you and just keep plowing right on.

Lyn Wineman: 39:42

Because we are coming to. I saved my favorite question for almost the end, and it's a question I've asked on every single episode. I love motivational quotes and I am hoping that either one or both of you can provide me an original quote to inspire our listeners.

Michaella Kumke: 40:05

I would tell you this is a spin off, one of my favorites, and I would put it this way so what if your voice quivers? So what? Say what needs to be said and trust that that is courage and the sound of compassion. So what? Just say what needs to be said.

Lyn Wineman: 40:25

Just say what needs to be said. Wow, Michaella, so powerful. I need to put that on a poster and put it on the wall either behind me or in front of me. That's beautiful, Amanda. You want to add one? I'm drawing a blank right now, Lyn, I think similar to the story question. I think you had the mic drop moment on the stories, Michaella had the mic drop moment on the quotes. We'll leave it at that, All right. One final question here as we wrap up our time together today what is the most important thing you would like our listeners to remember about the work that you're doing?

Michaella Kumke: 41:03

It matters, we each matter, every neighbor, we all have worth, we all have value. And food, like Amanda said earlier, is the fuel that keeps us achieving new goals and reaching, you know, accomplishing new dreams, even if the dream is simply to get through today feeding your family.

Lyn Wineman: 41:28

Oh, that's amazing, Amanda. Anything to add to that?

Amanda Fahrer: 41:33

that's a mic drop right there. I was supposed to add to that that we're here. Right, we're here for you. If you've never visited us before, the door is open. You don't need to share your story to join us, but if our food or the food that we have to offer is able to help you or your family in any way, it's meant for you.

Lyn Wineman: 41:56

That's amazing. You know, Amanda and Michaella, I'm going to say that the two of you matter, and you matter an awful lot. I really, really believe the world needs more people like you, more organizations like the Food Bank of Lincoln, and I just really thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to talk with us today.

Michaella Kumke: 42:18

Thanks for the invitation, Lyn.

Announcer: 42:37

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