

Episode 2: Global Village

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:10;13 - 00:00:37;21

M2: Welcome to episode number two of our podcast. I'm Frank Bellavia the communications coordinator for Arlington public schools we are at Arlington Traditional School to talk to Diana Jordan and Jennifer Burgan teachers and the director of the Arlington Traditional School Global Village program summer program. It's a three week program. So thank you both for being on the on the podcast and I'd love to hear a little bit about just background in general for both of you. I want you doing things like that I'll start with the day.

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F6: OK. Thanks for having us. So my background is I taught World Geography at Kenmore for 10 years and then since then I've been the Social Studies specialist and part of my role is to help organize this program staff. And this year we're in our 21st year of global village and it's continued to be an amazing program.

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M1: Now 21 years. That's great. Jennifer tell us about yourself.

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F4: Well a couple of years ago a colleague of mine said What are you doing this summer. And I wasn't certain I had thought about teaching summer school I had thought about volunteering and doing other things. And this colleague said you love social studies as much as I do. You have got to apply for a global village. So I interviewed for global village and I joined the team and I've been with a global village every summer ever since. One of the things I love about global village is that it's a project based model. So before it was trendy again I was doing really deep learning with children about countries through a pilot project based lens. I also love that the children make so many connections even as young as kindergarten. They're making incredible connections about Arlington as a global village to another country. This year the children are learning about four different countries with kindergarten and first grade and they're all connecting it back to Arlington. It's amazing what they're able to retain show and connect.

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M1: So you talk about the countries that the students are studying what countries are they studying and why did you pick those those countries.

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F6: Well so we have an upper elementary group our blue team in a lower elementary or red team or Upper Elementary. Those students are studying Afghanistan Italy Mexico and how those countries relate to the diversity here in Arlington. So they are also learning about their own local community. For the red team or lower elementary they're studying Kyrgyzstan Eritrea Ecuador and Germany and tying that into the diversity of their own community. This the teachers pick the countries and we base it on the representation here in Arlington so we can use information to see you know who resides in our own

county and pick those countries and then the teachers create the curriculum which makes it so dynamic and they tie it back to these bigger themes that that Jen was talking about.

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F4: I was going to add one of the most exciting parts of the global village process is when we first get together at the end of the previous school year and we have this country list and it's from the ESOL/HILT department and it's which countries have the highest amount of representations in Arlington. And then Diana goes through when she crosses out all the countries that we have done within the past five years we never went global village to be stagnant. We always want it to be fresh. So a child who's attended since kindergarten and is going to be a rising fourth grader will get something completely new and different. So I'd love to get that list and start thinking.

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F9: And I'm I'm already emailing Diana like I need this or I need that please please please. And then she always reminds me it goes back to your team. Talk to your team and we try to represent the entire world. So on our red team we've got a country from Europe South America Asia Africa and then we've got our county here in North America. So we work really hard to be diverse and representative.

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M1: That's great. I didn't realize that there were you change countries every year so you're focusing on the same four or five countries and it's super fun for me because I try to pick countries that I'm also interested in.

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F4: So one summer I studied Sweden with the children because my family is Swedish and because I was so ridiculously excited. They're ridiculously excited so it's fun for me to do the research. It doesn't feel like work. It feels like fun right.

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M1: That's great because the children feed off of that and help and help them learn. It's interesting you picked Eritrea Izarra large population of students from that country in Arlington.

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F1: There is. I mean it's high on our list I don't know the exact percentage but Eritrea and Ethiopia. And so it's you know what's also remarkable for the students is that they see themselves in the curriculum. And you know that's one thing that we know is so empowering to students. I remember last year Morocco was one of our countries and one of our little guys you know he just his face lit up when we had our cultural informant pretty much a guest speaker who will come in who has grown up at that country and talks about what it was like growing up their customs and this little boy lit up because he was like I speak Arabic too and he really was just impacted about the connection made between his own culture the community and this idea that we are learning about his culture.

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M1: That's wonderful. So what are some of the things you do or the students are learning about these countries and then how do you tie it all together. Because it's a three week program till the end of the three weeks.

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F1: Well so teachers design they're both teams like we've said before are designed around themes so lower elementary has human needs and communications and Upper Elementary has movement and exchange and all of the lessons somehow tie back to that concept. So for example in Afghanistan there are weaving. Afghanistan is known for one of its exports as rugs and the students are weaving rugs. But they've looked at rugs and the patterns and how they communicate certain things and so it's not only part of their economy but it's representative their culture. And so students get it you know every and they get to make their little own hand size version of them. But they see how interdisciplinary that the world is connected through each activity in these things.

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M1: So this is a sit down and lecture kids is a hands on activities that they learn. So what are some of those activities that you're doing.

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F7: Do you want to share one for Ecuador. Yeah.

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F4: So yeah I'll do I'll do what I'm doing this year and then one that I've done in the past that I still to this day really really love. So this year I chose Ecuador because I recently went to Ecuador and I spent time with the people there and just I fell in love with the country. So I already had a lot of resources and background knowledge and I'm bringing it here to a global village this year. And just today my students and I read a great read aloud called Love and roast chicken. And in this story a guinea pig called a Coeey is the hero while in Ecuador. Poor Huey's are not the hero they are raised like chickens or goats and they are used as meat and so people eat guinea pig and they're not the cute little ones like we get at PetSmart. They are larger and wild but the human needs are met.

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F9: Yeah yeah. So we talked about how this is not disgusting. Danquah Dorians this is appropriate. It is different.

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F4: So the children are learning how to respond so instead of saying Oh that's gross or that's mean they're saying Oh that's different. So hopefully they'll connect that to when something else surprises them about a person and they won't respond with your gross or your bad. You'll say Oh you're you're different. So we read the story above and roast chicken that my librarian had read to at our school before. It's an incredible read aloud. They fall in love with this trickster guinea pig. So they then made their own trickster guinea pigs out of clay and they potted him with a little pot of soil and they're planting spinach because in the story the Kuči steals sweet grass and alfalfa and wild spinach from the farmers. So they're going to germinate their own spinach and then take it home and they're there. We will not have to steal he won't have to trick anymore in the future. We're going to look deeper at the woodcutting illustrations in this book. It's traditional Ecuadorian art and we're not going to carve wood but I was inspired by this blogger who does yarn painting and the yarn painting imitates wood cutting. So they're going to study the Andes mountains of Ecuador as well as Peru and Bolivia and they're going to make yarn painting imitate the wood cutting in the book. So it's going to be really cool to see them connect all that right.

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M1: Yeah I mean I feel whenever I see the lessons there always interdisciplinary they're always connecting back to the big idea and the larger theme of of each of the the grade levels been three weeks as each week have a different different theme associated with it or you just start at the beginning and you just have a three week lesson plan that you go through those.

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F7: Now we try to hit different themes so all of the teachers try to do a map. We try to do a folktale. Maybe some sort of cultural event like a holiday or a style of dance or we discuss food.

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F6: She'd say yeah I would say definitely there's the geography's the basis to kind of look at the physical things that might hinder movement in exchange or might promote it. You know you might be a landlocked country so how does that impact or you might have a mountain range that impacts or you might be like Italy and have a long coastline that allows a lot of movement in exchange and then you tie it into something like in Italy I saw the teacher explaining trying to bust Italian food myths and so she had all these different Italian foods and the kids had to side did this originate in Italy or did it. It's really American. And so they were going to different stations and when they got to Italian salad dressing they were just flabbergasted.

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F2: What do you mean. This is American. It says it's Italian. And so there is these conversations about what is you know what does come across and what do we change once it comes here in America can imagine what they said when they found out pasta was it from Italy.

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F5: Oh I got to say that kind of reminds me of a lesson that we did a couple of years ago when I was teaching about Nepal. And you were talking about how like the geography of a place can hinder people. So I was teaching Kender and first graders about the wind shear that comes down off the Himalayas. First off I didn't know it was pronounced homily as I always said Himalayans. So how the wind sure comes off the Malias and people cluster their houses together to protect them from the wind. So we've made a bunch of little houses. I made a mountain out of chairs and blankets. We put all of our houses together and I turned on a fan and we watched the houses stay. Then we did it again and spread the houses apart and they blew to pieces it was like Wizard of Oz and so they actually saw that it's true in the homology as if you don't put your houses together when you live at the base of the Malias your house will blow away big bad wolf style.

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M1: Yeah Oh that's amazing. That's a pretty cool lesson for kids to learning and put together. So we're talking with Diana Jordan and Jennifer Bergen of the global village summer program. For more information you can check them out a global village at apx V8 us. I know some of the things you're doing looking at the Web site there's a geo brain challenge to talk a little bit about that and what that is.

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F2: Gosh the kids are crazy for the Geo brains challenge.

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F6: So every day we have is part of our Noort morning announcements. You know just the standard news. But then we have another clip where students can participate. And so we go to teachers and we ask them questions about something students have recently learned. And for each team we ask that question the teachers broadcast that question and students fill out their answers you know to win a little prize. And really the bragging rights that they that they won the geo brain challenge so it you know that is on the website as well. Kids go home and show their parents and you know and really talk about what they learned here at GVs and that's what we want. You know that's that's the way learning as it happens in your classroom on your way home.

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F1: All around. So that's one way that we kind of connect home and school is through our geo brain challenge because kids are excited about it and they want to talk about it.

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M1: It's great. I was looking at that. I know that you've got videos on there and bunch of other stuff and resources. What are some of the other things that you hope that students actually take away from this at the end of the three weeks how interconnected we really are.

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F1: You know I think Jens guinea pig example is just one of many. But it's you know we all have certain human needs and that we rely on each other and we exchange ideas and you know at the end of the day we're more alike than different. And even if you look at our difference it's to meet similar needs. So I think ultimately I want kids to feel connected with the world not just within Arlington but beyond. And sometimes it's seeing their own culture. If it's taught that year or really learning about other cultures and appreciating.

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F5: I always hope that my students realized that America is not the only country or the most important country in the world. While we care and love our country there are other people and what we do impacts them and what they do impacts us. And like Diana was saying we're so interconnected and to know that we all make a difference even just the little ones there are choices what they learn how they respond to things. It has an impact.

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F1: And so we have to learn that our impact is meaningful and ultimately we hope that there are global citizens and they see themselves as global citizens. Absolutely.

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F7: So that you know when they when someone says Hey do you want to go try Thai food they're like Oh I've heard about Thai food let's go do it or when someone's saying like I have a friend my friends from Eritrea they'll have something to say. It's a really incredible process.

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M1: Great we want to thank both of you. Sounds like a wonderful program and for parents who are looking for something for their kids to do during the summer a wonderful opportunity for them to come in and just keep that learning going throughout the summer.

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F1: It's so much fun. I mean I think the teachers and the students we all enjoy it.

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F2: It's a great three weeks I planned my vacation around like well that's when she starts typing me like so I'm going to Ecuador. And I think that's the country I'm going to. Get first dibs on Wall Street you know in my head.

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F3: I do. But we really do talk about it. But I would encourage parents to find their children.

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F1: I mean we're you know it's out of the Social Studies Office and we're open to all students all students that are willing to learn about the world beyond beyond the U.S..

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M1: Great. Thank you so much for joining me on this episode and I look forward to talking to you both again in the future and have a wonderful summer.

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F8: Thank you. To learn more, visit www.apsva.us/globalvillage.