



# Bernadette Souza

Bernadette:

Tanya Oliveira 119 was my babysitter. My mother worked Star Store, which is now UMass Dartmouth. Tanya was the babysitter for many people. She just passed. She was 98 years old. She just passed.

Interviewer:

Oh, wow.

Bernadette:

I can remember just waiting to see my mother, oh, come around that corner. Oh my god. And here she comes and ... Tanya was tough, but that's where I first learned respect. You see what I'm saying? She taught me respect. I'm going to just point out different ... okay?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

That's where I got respect. It was a daycare, so ... Well, I was about four, five years old. Oh my god, look. I can now touch it. You know how this right here [crosstalk 00:01:04], if you could jump and touch this-

Interviewer:

You were a big kid, right?

Bernadette:

... and hang, you made it as a big kid. And this we played so many times. Chin-ups. I can't do it now, but chin-ups.

Interviewer:

Right.

Bernadette:

That's where we did our chin-ups. And these lines. Clotheslines. Fresh clothes on the line.

Interviewer:

The people don't use them. They're not being used.

Bernadette:

Well, I don't know. You always had clothes on the line. Winter time it would be so cold and your parent would still tell you to put clothes on the line. [Akeia 00:01:38]. We would take these clothes off and couldn't stand the jeans, because they were frozen.



Interviewer:

Oh, right. Yeah. Stiff.

Bernadette:

And I always never knew [inaudible 00:01:45] that. I said, "Mom, what about [inaudible 00:01:48]." "What? Why do you make a [inaudible 00:01:49]." You didn't have to worry about ... And people, like I said, with the Bay Village it was a project. Let's build these projects. Let's put all these people. Let's see how they live together. It was a project. That's why now I correct it because it's a housing development. Real people with good jobs, they work here.

But back when you had a lot of moms who were on welfare. And I say moms because dads, I don't remember seeing a lot of men with the women. It was a lot of women. Sheila, Avis. Ready for this one? [Mari Batche 00:02:32]. Cape Verde woman. Mari Batche. That's what we called her. Mari Batche. And she would always come and she would ... It's funny how ... I wonder if ... Because she was always so well-groomed. Coming from Cape Verde, that's what they-

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Oh, right. Yeah.

Bernadette:

You see? So it's funny. Look at that.

Interviewer:

Yeah. You sweep the porch and you-

Bernadette:

It's still there. Do you see?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

But if you look, that [inaudible 00:02:54] too. But if you look. When you look at certain ... it's just ... But look at this.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

Because I could always remember a well-groomed ... That's awesome.

Interviewer:

I wonder if that's left over from when she was here.



Bernadette:

I don't know, but think about it. I don't know. That's a good question. Uncle John. 131. He used to play the numbers for everybody. So my mother would give me the 50 cents or a dollar and go play 289. And I had to run to uncle John. And he had a gold tooth and he would sit there. And he had this straw hat. And you would go in. I'd give him the paper. He'd write it down. And the way he would go to ... I thought he was such a cool cat. And take the numbers and then give it back. Uncle John.

Now, she still lives here and I'm trying to remember her name. I swear, she would throw candy right out that window to us.

Interviewer:

Oh my goodness.

Bernadette:

She would throw candy right out the window to us. 137. Marie [Gomes. 139, Louise Grace. Okay? Right? 218, Happy Gomes. 216, Mildred. All these women. Maya, 135. Old Cape Verde smoked a pipe. Loved the smell of her pipe. This tree.

Interviewer:

Oh wow.

Bernadette:

Isn't as big as it ... This tree ... And so look at this tree today. You know how many times we sat up against this tree, and the stories that were told? I'm going to take you around the corner real quick. And right back here, these were a chain link fence and on the hot summer nights we would set up tents, which we did with clothes pins from the fence. It came down and we would bathe there and we slept underneath.

Interviewer:

Oh, wow. Get out of the hot house.

Bernadette:

And nobody bothered you.

Interviewer:

Of course. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bernadette:

It was safe. Come on. You didn't have air-conditioning. So when it was hot, we would open that door and then on the other side your mother would open the other door and we would all sleep in the living room. The parlor. We called it the parlor.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). I remember that at my grandmother's house.

Bernadette:

We'd all sleep in the parlor and you got that cross breeze throughout the night. You hoped you got the cross



breeze throughout the night, you see? [Cordey 00:05:35], 143. Cordey was ... Oh, she was the Sun Goddess, we called her. Always loved to lay out in the sun in the back. They found her. She had a heart attack.

Interviewer:

Laying out?

Bernadette:

Laying out-

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

... in the sun. Kelly-

Interviewer:

She went doing what she loved.

Bernadette:

Louise's daughter Kelly found her. She just was red and that's how she passed.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

Laying out in the sun. But she had four boys. And this playpen, we had some serious action. Baseball. Because you think like, "Baseball?"

Interviewer:

No but-

Bernadette:

We did.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

We did it. It was weird. Not with a hard ball, but the baseball. You'd do the dodge ball. We did the volleyball with the ball over the ... Lena, Lady. See? All these women.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).



Bernadette:

And I lived ... I'm not sure. Well, first it was 143. I was really young. And then my mom moved to 200, which is right over there. And this whole pod right here was the main ... This was our playground.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Oh, I can imagine.

Bernadette:

This was our playground and parents didn't have to ... If you went out, they didn't ... Because-

Interviewer:

Everyone's watching everyone's kids.

Bernadette:

Everyone was watching everyone's kids and we always had a friend to play with. So I'm just going to stand. I haven't been here for a while. I'm going to stand in front of 200 Acushnet Avenue because this playpen right here, yup. That little shower. It looked like so ... When you looked out the window, you couldn't [inaudible 00:07:28]. Look at how small that window is. Oh my god. 200 Acushnet Avenue. This is me.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

So growing up, like I said, we had these parents, we had these different moms and I even felt compelled where I wanted to do something. The corner house was the community center. Way on the first part of that when we first came in, that was like an open community center. So what we did, my friends, we started ... it was called SOC. So at that time that park saw a lot of actions. We're going to sit on the wall. You're going to see what it feels like to sit on Monty's Park wall, because that was the coolest thing you could ever do-

Interviewer:

Okay.

Bernadette:

... is sit on Monty's Park wall. You have people from the '40s, '50s sat on that wall. '60s sat on that wall, '70s sat on that wall. '80s, crazy times. You wouldn't want to sit on the walls.

Interviewer:

Yeah, right.

Bernadette:

'90s, crazy times. You wouldn't want to sit on the wall, you see?

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).



Bernadette:

Because it was tough. There was a lot of riff between West End and South End. And in here, we saw a lot of action. There was gunfire. I can just remember my mom. "Don't look out the window. Put your head down. Da, da, da, da." It was crazy. I don't know. People [inaudible 00:08:59]. It was just ... So it was crazy. So we started this program called SOC, Saving Our Children even at that time, right? And we would get all the little kids. We'd bring them to the community center, like on Saturdays, and we would do arts and craft and little things. So that's where it birthed.

Interviewer:

Wow. How old were you.

Bernadette:

We were, what? 13, 14.

Interviewer:

Wow. And you took the younger kids.

Bernadette:

That's where my passion to work with youth ... Because we always had somebody coming to the village working with us. Do you see what I'm saying?

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bernadette:

They will come in a van with all kind of stuff to play with. And I always thought that was so cool. I did. I said, "That is so cool. Thank you." Like, "Wow!" And we thought it was gold. "Wow! Here's a hula hoop. Here's a jump rope! Oh my god! Chalk!" But we did. We felt compelled because at that time there was a lot of violence and we said, "What can we do with the little kids?" Well, so we asked the manager, Anthony Monteiro, which is Gene Moneterro's brother.

Interviewer:

Oh, wow.

Bernadette:

He was the manager of Bay Village.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

And his office was right here. The end building-

Interviewer:

On the end? Mm-hmm (affirmative).



Bernadette:

... that was his office and he was like our big papa. We loved Anthony. He took care of every ... You see what I'm saying?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

And he allowed us to have that little space and to have kids to go there on Saturdays.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

And that's how it ... Even with the church, then I got really involved with Our Lady of Assumption, which is right up the street. You would walk right to church. And that's where I did the confirmation and that's how it all just started with working with youth and trying to give back. But these women, they worked hard. Some were on welfare, yes.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). But that doesn't mean-

Bernadette:

My mother had assistance, but she worked [inaudible 00:10:58] store. Worked hard, right?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

And today I think back and I said if it weren't for Dorothy Pope ... Oh, I loved ... She's still alive. 90-something years old.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

Dorothy Pope. Loved her. Michelle, 155. Boyfriends would always be there and all that. It was tough though. She was one classy woman though. Dressed to the nines. But Michelle had a story. Antoinette lived 150 ... Yeah, Antoinette lived here with Louisa. That was her mother's name. Cape Verde. Louisa.

These two ladies right here. Clarise, Nancy Martin. They had the most ... At this time, it was like a regular screen. You had gold, and on the bottom of the doors you had a gold plate. They were so neat. Their house was neat, neat, neat. They had a competition of who can have the shiniest-



Interviewer:

Oh, that's funny.

Bernadette:

... gold plated door, mail letter and ... They were so ... And, oh, pristine. I can remember these ladies. And that grate right there. This was a hangle at night. All the kids ... Moms will be here. It was safe and we would all come here and we would chill out at night. And I would sing to my friends. No word of a lie. I would sing to my friends and we would just act stupid. But we had so many great memories right here.

I learned a lot from my sisters as they were growing up. My sister, Susan, had a baby at 15. My sister, Vanessa, I don't know what happened. She ended up getting lost in drugs. My sister, Jacky, later on ended up getting messed up with drugs. But I always said that I was going to go that route. There was something ... I wasn't going to do that, you know what I'm saying? And that's where I took that where I was going ... "No, let's get these kids. Let's do something."

And my other friends, they were, "Let's do it." And we did it. And, I don't know, I hold true to that. I feel my way of giving back. And that's how I looked at everybody just gave. What little they had, they gave. But collectively, it was enough.

Interviewer:

Almost like those rent parties that people used to have back in the day.

Bernadette:

It was enough. If my mother didn't have food, we went to the nextdoor. They fed us. If they didn't have food, they would come to my mother's. She would feed them.

Interviewer:

Right. And that's a community.

Bernadette:

It's a community. It was a community and that's how ... And then like I said, this park ... Let's go to Monty's Park. This place is such a ... And this is where, okay, yes, Bernadette was a little tom girl.

Interviewer:

This is where the magic happened.

Bernadette:

I was a little tom girl and this is where I played with the boys. I didn't have time for these girls doing cheerleading and everything. I said, "Nope. I want to be with the boys." This is where I learned the game of basketball. I played here until wee hours of the night. It was safe, once again, at that time, because at some point you could not be seen to hang at Monty's Park. It was bad. This was [inaudible 00:14:37] store. This was [crosstalk 00:14:37] variety store.

Interviewer:

Oh, wow.





Bernadette:

Look at it. [inaudible 00:14:49]. Colleen, who still [inaudible 00:14:50] this building, she tries every now and then. Open it up and do a little restaurant and ... But it doesn't ... I don't know. It doesn't seem much. But come on in here. Let's sit on the wall. I should take a picture of you sitting on this damn wall.

Interviewer:

[inaudible 00:15:10].

Bernadette:

No, no, no, no, no. It's all right. This was the wall. This was happening. Just picture this, right? You're young. Isn't it comfortable?

Interviewer:

It is.

Bernadette:

But this whole wall would be filled with people and everybody would just talk and there was so much camaraderie. There was so much like ... Guys will be playing basketball. Fine guys at that. Uh-huh (affirmative). Yup. And then the summer lunch truck would come and feed us during the summer. Best time ever. They did a good job of fixing it up. They did, because this park at one point went ... It was scary. I saw my good friend, [Keithie 00:15:59], get murdered right across the street.

Interviewer:

Oh my goodness.

Bernadette:

There's stuff. There's like stuff, you know what I mean? That you have etched in your memory that ...

Interviewer:

I'm just looking at what a small-

Bernadette:

Right.

Interviewer:

... area out of it. It's so small, but when you're younger-

Bernadette:

But it was so big.

Interviewer:

... it's your whole world.



Bernadette:

It was so big.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

That's what I'm saying. I'm walking through that and I'm like, "Are you kidding me?" And the parades. 45 years of parades.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

And the toreador. That band coming. That's where I learned drums.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Bernadette:

From listening. I could play a beat that they played, man. I have it etched in my memory [crosstalk 00:16:47]. As a little girl sitting over there, couldn't wait to see that parade come down.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

That's why it killed us to not have a parade this year.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

First time ever.

Interviewer:

Right.

Bernadette:

Ever. That killed us.

Interviewer:

Yeah.



Bernadette:

But that parade is such a part of ... And believe it or not, that house right there. Not the yellow-

Interviewer:

The wood shingles?

Bernadette:

Not the yellow. The other one. That first one.

Interviewer:

Uh-huh (affirmative). Oh, yup.

Bernadette:

And then that park right here was the sand lot so we had a park there as well. It's called Baby Kenny's Tot Lot now, because it was a little boy who drowned and they named it after him, because he loved that park. He was a little boy. So it's called Baby Kenny's Tot Lot now. But that house right is where my father grew up.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Bernadette:

My father grew up.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

I can explain. It's such a long story. I don't want to go there. But anyhow ha, my father lived there, but I was five when he passed away.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Bernadette:

And that was that. But when I do tell my story it all just comes together. I'm just telling you pieces, but when I do tell my story ... And it felt so right to be on this wall. People were probably like, "[inaudible 00:18:12]. [inaudible 00:18:13]. Come join me. Reminiscent."

Interviewer:

Oh.

Bernadette:

My mother sat on this wall. How awesome is that?



Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bernadette:

I think that's awesome.

Interviewer:

Continuity.

Bernadette:

Right?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

So Thursday they're going to have games. This Thursday.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Bernadette:

They're going to have basketball games.

Interviewer:

Nice.

Bernadette:

So I don't know. I got to check it out. I saw it on Facebook. Brian Rudolph whose grandmother lived 139. He runs the leads and stuff. But now they have the nets back up. They're going to do like a little five on five tournament or whatever. It's going to go all the way to 11 o'clock at night.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

I pray that there's no problem. I do. I pray that there's no problems. And yeah, so this is going to be alive Thursday.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

Starting at 5:00 they're doing a ... yeah, pickup games, but it's going to be competitive. Hi! How are you? That's



one of my kids too. I love it. You see how happy they are?

Interviewer:

Uh-huh (affirmative).

Bernadette:

That's what it's all about. That's when you know you've made that impact on them.

Interviewer:

Impact.

Bernadette:

And I swear, Akeia, and I don't mean to boast, but every kid that I see whose grown, it's like ... You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

And that's how I felt growing up-

Interviewer:

With all the women.

Bernadette:

... with all those ... You see what I mean?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

Who made me feel special.

Interviewer:

Right.

Bernadette:

Even though others maybe thought we were less than.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bernadette:

They always said, "Never forget [inaudible 00:19:45]." They always said, "Never forget where you come from. You come from a strong upbringing. We are capable people. We are powerful people." They said, "You must believe



in self. Believe in self first that you could do anything that you put your mind to. Don't ever be afraid to look somebody in the eye." You see? Right? And that's all I needed.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

I swear. That's all I needed. And I took that and I have yet to stop running. And if I can give that piece back to another child to say, "We awesome, buddy. We do matter." Love of self first. You've got to love self first before you can start to love others.

Interviewer:

Right.

Bernadette:

We all have a story but what's so unique about that story is it's our story. It's our story. Nobody else's story. Only we lived that story.

Interviewer:

Yup.

Bernadette:

Our trials, use them to make you stronger. We needed this.

Interviewer:

Right.

Bernadette:

We needed this to grow to who we ... That was my strength and that's how I look at it. Sometimes I do feel less than. I do.

Interviewer:

The world does that to you.

Bernadette:

Amanda wanted me to ... I got to give her the answer today to be on the governance committee. Me? Bay Village Bernadette? That's what I call myself. Bay Village Bernadette? They want Bay Village Bernadette? Guess what? They do. They want-

Interviewer:

Because you bring something that no one else can.

Bernadette:

They want Bernadette because it's my story and no one else's and I come with a different lens. This is my talking. I never give anybody an answer right away. I have to think it through. Because at first I'm like, "Not me. I can't be



with governance. Oh my god." That was my first thing when I read that. So I replied back. I said, "Let me think about it. I'll give you an answer next week, which is today." But the more I think about this, I am who I am. I have to celebrate it. I have my flaws. Flaws are good.

Interviewer:

Right.

Bernadette:

Flaws are good. We've got to tell these kids that. It's okay to make a mistake, but don't do it again-

Interviewer:

Yeah, it's a lesson.

Bernadette:

... because when you make the mistake again, then there's got to be some kind of reprimand, consequence, whatever, whatever. But mistakes are good. It's okay to make mistakes and it took a while for me to know that, because I wanted to be like you. I wanted to be "doctor".

Interviewer:

But-

Bernadette:

But wait! But see? But wait. But wait, Akeia, right?

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bernadette:

Right? But there's something I got, Akeia, that you don't have and it's my story!

Interviewer:

Right. Because I was going to say, I grew up in a place like this but my story is different. I had some of the experiences you were talking about. All the women in the neighborhood, there weren't a lot of men around, problems in the park, having these spaces where we [crosstalk 00:22:58] play.

Bernadette:

And I celebrate you, doctor! Whoo hoo!

Interviewer:

We have that in common, but you were here and I was there and you had your mother and I have my mother and we're both Cape Verde. We have that, but we each have a story that we own-

Bernadette:

A different story.



Interviewer:

... and different mistakes that we made and different triumphs that we have and that's-

Bernadette:

Exactly. That's what needs to be celebrated. That needs to be put out on this common ground. Common ground. I love the common ground.

Interviewer:

You know how I got the name? Did I tell you?

Bernadette:

No.

Interviewer:

We were going to call it Mosaic because in my mind I was putting together these different looking pieces that paint a single picture, but then I was talking to Rhode Island Public Radio, The Public's Radio. They have a project called Mosaic where they focus on immigration stories and people were confusing the two. And so I was really stressed about it, because I love the name Mosaic.

So I went grocery shopping at Market Basket. I'm putting away-

Bernadette:

Hi, Lolita. Come here! Come here! One of my Bay Village moms.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Lolita:

[inaudible 00:24:07].

Bernadette:

Lolita.

Lolita:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

This is my good friend, Dr. Akeia.

Lolita:

Hi. Dr. Akeia. How are you?

Interviewer:

Hi. Nice to meet you.





Lolita:

Good.

Bernadette:

Whaling Museum. I gave a tour through Bay Village and told my story. You are a part of it.

Lolita:

I know.

Bernadette:

Didn't I tell you that? Right.

Lolita:

Yes.

Bernadette:

You and Avis.

Lolita:

You know it. Avis has been there 50 years.

Bernadette:

She's still there [crosstalk 00:24:26]. Like I said, she's on ... I told her. Remember I said the other woman that I said she's still here?

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bernadette:

That's her sister.

Lolita:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Bernadette:

That's her sister.

Lolita:

But I moved out of town. That's why.



Bernadette:

Sheila.

Lolita:

I got married, then I came back again.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

But you see? You still see them. And whenever I see them I just ... I saw Lady the other day. She looks the same.

Lolita:

I haven't seen Lady in years.

Bernadette:

Lady looks ... She's taking care of her great-grandchildren.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Bernadette:

Stacey got grandchildren?

Lolita:

Really?

Bernadette:

Huh?

Lolita:

That makes me a lot [crosstalk 00:24:53].

Bernadette:

Isn't that crazy? But you know what? You still look the same and Lady still-

Lolita:

Yeah, I'm going to be 76 on Saturday.

Interviewer:

Wow. Happy birthday.

Bernadette:

No way! Oh my god!



Lolita:

[crosstalk 00:25:04].

Bernadette:

Wow! I love it. I love it. I love it. So yeah, I was just telling her my story [crosstalk 00:25:09] and you're part of it. Yes, you are.

Lolita:

How's your son doing?

Bernadette:

My son's doing very well, thank you. Going into high school.

Lolita:

Oh.

Bernadette:

That's [inaudible 00:25:17] gets to go to high school.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Lolita:

[crosstalk 00:25:20].

Bernadette:

We don't know. Coronavirus. We don't know what's going to happen this fall. We don't know. We'll see with this.

Lolita:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

But that's it.

Lolita:

It's all in God's hands.

Bernadette:

That's it.

Lolita:

It'll pass when He's ready for it to pass.



Bernadette:

Oh, well [crosstalk 00:25:31].

Lolita:

I got to [crosstalk 00:25:31].

Bernadette:

There you go. So that wasn't for nothing. There you go. [inaudible 00:25:41]. There you go.

Lolita:

Yeah. So are you now working or are you on vacation?

Bernadette:

I'm working. I'm working right now. I'm working.

Interviewer:

We're both working.

Bernadette:

Are you a medical doctor or are just a-

Interviewer:

No, no.

Bernadette:

... doctor [crosstalk 00:25:51].

Interviewer:

Yeah. PhD.

Lolita:

PhD. Oh, that's [crosstalk 00:25:53].

Interviewer:

I'm just an anthropologist but I got the title, so ...

Bernadette:

Did she just say she's just an anthropologist?

Lolita:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

I'm an archeologist too.



Bernadette:

Look at that. Oh my god.

Lolita:

So where are you from Sweetie?

Interviewer:

Well, my family came in through here and I grew up in Newport. So they moved after [crosstalk 00:26:14].

Lolita:

[crosstalk 00:26:14] family in [inaudible 00:26:16]?

Interviewer:

Yeah. So my great-grandfather came in on a whaling ship on the other side. Came in on a whaling ship. They met here, got married and went back to where ... My nana's family lives in Newport.

Lolita:

Oh, okay. Well, that's good.

Bernadette:

Yeah, I'm just telling her my story. Making the connections. She works for Whaling Museum.

Lolita:

There ain't no [inaudible 00:26:36].

Bernadette:

Yeah, that's what I told her. Yeah.

Lolita:

[inaudible 00:26:53].

Bernadette:

A lot [inaudible 00:26:53].

Lolita:

[inaudible 00:26:53] Cape Verde people.

Bernadette:

I know.

Lolita:

From what I understand, [inaudible 00:26:53] some of them are not nice to the people they live nextdoor to. They [inaudible 00:26:53].



Bernadette:

It was a community. I told her it was a community. We were all one.

Lolita:

[crosstalk 00:26:55] it's like nice and quiet.

Interviewer:

It's nice, yeah.

Bernadette:

Yeah, [crosstalk 00:27:00].

Lolita:

[inaudible 00:27:00].

Bernadette:

Yeah.

Lolita:

[inaudible 00:27:01].

Bernadette:

Yeah. Changes. What are we going to do. But I-

Lolita:

How's y'all sisters?

Bernadette:

My sisters are well, thank you. They're all well. Vanessa got to go tomorrow for a hip replacement in Boston but other than that, they're all good.

Lolita:

Good.

Bernadette:

They're all good.

Lolita:

Yeah.

Bernadette:

I just wanted you to come see what it felt like to sit on the wall.



Lolita:

Yeah, on this block wall?

Bernadette:

This block wall is iconic.

Lolita:

When I was [crosstalk 00:27:21] I was forbidden to come to the block wall.

Bernadette:

It's true. At certain times, right?

Lolita:

Yeah, [crosstalk 00:27:28].

Bernadette:

You couldn't-

Lolita:

My parents would [crosstalk 00:27:30] sneak, but they'd come and look for us and they'd take us right off this wall. I did the same thing to my kids though.

Bernadette:

I know. I was going to say. And I'm [inaudible 00:27:38] and I had three syllables. "Bernadette!" [inaudible 00:27:43]. "Bernie, your mother's calling you." "[inaudible 00:27:47] could you stop yelling out that window for me?"

Interviewer:

Wasn't that the wor- I remember that growing up.

Bernadette:

Oh my god. [crosstalk 00:27:50]. Yes, I hated when she did that.

Interviewer:

Your mother-

Lolita:

[crosstalk 00:27:54]. Embarrassed.

Bernadette:

Her son, Sean, took me to my prom. Her son, Shaun.

Lolita:

Yes he did.



Bernadette:

Glenn. Oh, such good times with Glenn.

Lolita:

You know Glenn's sick? You know that, right?

Bernadette:

Is he?

Lolita:

Yeah, Glenn got Parkinson's.

Bernadette:

Oh.

Lolita:

He's been sick for a while.

Bernadette:

Damn.

Lolita:

He [crosstalk 00:28:10].

Bernadette:

I had such good fun with your boys. All of them.

Lolita:

Yeah. [crosstalk 00:28:13].

Bernadette:

All of them. Playing in the play pen. I was telling her kickball and baseball and [crosstalk 00:28:17] how we used to play in that little playpen.

Lolita:

Nothing like that but [inaudible 00:28:21].

Bernadette:

But then they did that last time when we were here. [inaudible 00:28:24]. They'll be shooting [inaudible 00:28:26] right down at the end.

Lolita:

At the end, yeah.





Bernadette:

Right?

Lolita:

But now it's different because these kids, they don't wear those mask.

Bernadette:

I know.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lolita:

They're just passing their germs all the way down the line

Bernadette:

I know. It's crazy.

Lolita:

I had to go for the COVID test because I had a [inaudible 00:28:41] done and before you got to go for the testing. But I was good.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bernadette:

Yeah.

Lolita:

I knew I was good. [inaudible 00:28:45]. [inaudible 00:28:45].

Bernadette:

That's funny.

Lolita:

Yeah. All right, my darling.

Bernadette:

Yeah, we're going to stop walking, Akeia.

Lolita:

All right. So you take care.



Bernadette:

I will, thanks. You too.

Lolita:

Are you still working down there?

Bernadette:

Yeah, I'm still there.

Lolita:

You miss the boys club?

Bernadette:

No. I've been gone nine years.

Lolita:

Now what do you do down there, Bernie?

Bernadette:

I'm executive director. I run a non-profit that works with kids, introducing them to their everyday surroundings.

Lolita:

Oh, praise God.

Bernadette:

And how we get to their destinations, they ride bike.

Lolita:

Ah [crosstalk 00:29:16].

Bernadette:

Fort Taber is our playground.

Lolita:

Oh, good.

Bernadette:

There's other things that we do that come out of that exploring but yeah, no. I've got a nice operations manager. He's taking care of everything.

Lolita:

That's good.



Bernadette:

But yeah, no.

Lolita:

That's good.

Bernadette:

You know me with kids. That's what I do.

Lolita:

Excuse me.

Bernadette:

That-

Lolita:

[inaudible 00:29:35].

Bernadette:

Yeah. That's what I do, so-

Lolita:

My sinuses are killing me.

Interviewer:

It's the humidity.

Bernadette:

It is.

Lolita:

Yeah. Okay, you guys. Go well.

Bernadette:

All right.

Lolita:

Both of you take care.

Bernadette:

Yup.

Interviewer:

Take care.



Bernadette:

Take care, Lolita.

Lolita:

[crosstalk 00:29:45] right now.

Bernadette:

That's [inaudible 00:29:51]. Yeah, so I don't know.

Lolita:

[inaudible 00:29:56].

Bernadette:

[crosstalk 00:29:56]. Are you kidding me? I know you. You're funny.

Interviewer:

I'm going to run and take a picture down here.

Bernadette:

Oh, go on. Go.

Interviewer:

[inaudible 00:30:14].

Bernadette:

[inaudible 00:30:16]. Oh, and the iconic seagulls. So that's what we see here. Check this out. So you see seagulls and you saw pigeons. That's what the birds are. When I took on the position as executive director at Youth Opportunities Unlimited and you have that pond, right? At that pond, I don't know when ... Did I ... Yeah, you came. Did you [inaudible 00:30:35] visit yet?

Interviewer:

No. Remember, we were going to and then everything got shut down-

Bernadette:

Oh my god. Oh, so you never-

Interviewer:

... like the very day we were supposed to meet up.

Bernadette:

Oh. So that pond, that's where you got the red-winged blackbird black bird. That's where you have the osprey. That's where you have the white egret. That's where you have the great blue heron. These were birds that I had no clue even in New Bedford. That's how beautiful that peninsula is. And so now, I feel so good to tell about the osprey. They've got a nest right across the street from the Warming House. I can talk about the great blue heron.



I can talk about the red ...

These were ... And when Joanne, the founder, put me in that position, and here she is, starts telling me about these birds. So what's so unique about my job, I say I introduce kids ... I ... No, we introduce kids. I learn right along with them. And then they find it so cool that Ms. Bernadette is just as excited as them.

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Bernadette:

It's true.

Interviewer:

It was the same for me teaching college. I would tell them, "I have a piece of paper that says I know a lot about one thing. As I'm teaching you about these cultures and going places where I'm learning too. Don't ..."

Bernadette:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

You know?

Bernadette:

That's what I'm saying. Each day is a learning moment. This is awesome.

Interviewer:

Ooh, that's not awesome.

Bernadette:

Oh, Akeia, we got to get [crosstalk 00:31:55].

Interviewer:

I know.

Bernadette:

I know.