

**Jullie Wheaton 00:17**

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**Mike Hoffman 00:27**

Hi. Welcome to our podcast today: Coffee in the Swarm. It's part of Project Zion Podcast and I'm Mike Hoffman, the campus minister at Graceland University. And today, I have Jullie Wheaton with me who is going to talk about all kinds of things in her experience at Graceland. So, so anyway. Jullie, so, why don't you just tell, let's start with you just telling me a few things about yourself. Like, why or how did you get to Graceland? So,

**Jullie Wheaton 01:00**

Um, well, I got introduced to Graceland, um, through church camp called Spectacular. And I only had one year to go, unfortunately, my freshman year, and I absolutely loved it. I love the campus here and I know ( . . . ). So, that really, um, brought me in and, uh, now that I'm here, I absolutely enjoy it. Um, I'm a major in music education. And I, I absolutely love it.

**Mike Hoffman 01:31**

Cool. So, when, when you're, when you say you only had one year of Spec, was that be, obviously, we would sit here and know that that's because of COVID. (Right.) Yeah. So you missed out on a couple of years maybe? (Yeah.) Oh, wow. Okay. (And they're letting us come back next year if we want.) Really? (Yeah, yeah.) That's cool.

**Jullie Wheaton 01:49**

I'm not exactly sure. I think it's ( . . . ) (Yeah.) because my freshman year was IYF and I didn't have a chance to go because it was a family vacation. (Gotcha'.) And, so, um, our senior year they were gonna' bring back IYF again, like every four years. (Right.) But instead they're letting us do, like, every, like, three after the first one. So, I thought that was really cool being able to go, but then we couldn't because of (Because of Covid) Covid.

**Mike Hoffman 02:07**

I sort of lost track of that. I was involved with IYF a few years ago. So, yeah. So we're good. And you said you're a music education major. (Yeah.) What do you want to do with that?

**Jullie Wheaton 02:33**

Uh, I want to be a vocal, like a choir director.

**Mike Hoffman 02:39**

Middle school, high school?

**Jullie Wheaton 02:41**

High school.

**Mike Hoffman 02:41**

Okay.

**Jullie Wheaton 02:42**

Yes. Um, I had an amazing teacher Kim Carson at Truman High School. She's amazing. (Right.) She just, I just loved doing it. Like, music has always been a passion. And I feel like, um, it's the perfect way for me to, like, follow into that career.

**Mike Hoffman 02:58**

Cool, very cool. Yeah. I, I was in choir in high school. I loved it. I auditioned. We didn't have a show choir. But we had this little madrigal choir I was in and I pretended. Yeah. And then I went through this phase watching Glee and all that (Yeah!) kind of stuff.

**Jullie Wheaton 03:12**

Yes! Oh, my gosh. Yes! I, I've been in choir since fourth grade. (Oh, yeah.) Yeah. We have an elementary school choir and I was really happy, um, my sophomore year I made my top choir at high school, in high school, and it was amazing. Like, oh, I'm so excited.

**Mike Hoffman 03:32**

That's good. And as it, as we sit here tonight, I know there's a Concert Choir tonight (Yes.) actually, so, I'll be, I'll be hearing you. So, that's great. Yeah, we're sort of fortunate here at Graceland to be able to go back, at least, you know, we're still masking in groups or social distancing, but we're able to go back sorta to normal, you know, have choir concerts and things like that. So,

**Jullie Wheaton 03:54**

We got permission to, if we all get COVID tested, that we can all sing with our masks off tonight.

**Mike Hoffman 04:01**

Ahh! That's why you had a COVID test recently. Okay. That's cool. Now, you also play sports, don't you?

**Jullie Wheaton 04:07**

I do. Yes.

**Mike Hoffman 04:08**

So what do you do?

**Jullie Wheaton 04:09**

Um, I play volleyball. (Volleyball.) And it, it gets very busy here at Graceland. Um, this year especially because our gym hasn't been done to where we get practice in there. So, we've been having to drive to the high school to have practice and it, it gets really busy because we have four volleyball teams.

(Right.) So, it's like we go one after the other teams, another team, um, and then a different team. (Yeah.) So, I think that it's, um, ( . . . ) if it's actually being helpful, for learning more skills and getting better. It's just very busy.

**Mike Hoffman 04:49**

Yeah. (Yeah.) Well, and I know, Jullie, you're in my critical thinking class, too, so that's also how we know each other. Critical thinking this year is at, well, and has been for several years, is the first year seminar class for all incoming freshmen. So, Jullie's obviously in her first year at Graceland and so I was lucky enough to have her in my class. And I sort of teased her a little bit about my class. She's very outgoing in my class. (I'm the only that talks in there.) Sometimes they can be pretty quiet. So, I appreciate your enthusiasm and energy for that. So, let's see. So, volleyball, um, we've covered your, your major. So, how would you describe your Graceland experience otherwise going on, I mean?

**Jullie Wheaton 05:31**

Um, I'm trying to be involved as much as possible. Um, so, other than being in three choirs here and playing a sport, I am the, um, academic student council rep for my hall.

**Mike Hoffman 05:42**

Oh, gosh. (Yeah.) Usually you wait to your sophomore or beyond year, so, as a freshman you're doing that.

**Jullie Wheaton 05:50**

Yeah. (That's cool.) It's pretty fun honestly. I wouldn't say exactly like my grades ( . . . ) my freshman or high school. Like my freshman year in high school they definitely weren't that good. So, wouldn't exactly see myself like, even like academic, you know, like, really about, um, but the last couple years I did really well with my grades, so, I'm kind of happy that, um, it's like, the first thing I do, like, just, you know, academics come first. So, I feel like that's a good way to put that first by (Yeah.) being, um, the rep for my hall. Um, and I really like it. It's really fun. I get to know so many people. Um, kind of feel like I'm in charge of the program, you know? Um, but, yeah.

**Jullie Wheaton 06:32**

Most definitely. Yeah. Yeah. I had really good midterm grades. Um, so, I was proud of myself for that. Um, I'm working really hard to try. Sometimes it's really hard to get out of bed in the mornings, I'm working really hard to go to class, um, um, and make sure that I'm getting all my work done on time. And sometimes, like, things get caught up a little bit and I forget that I have things to do, um, because I am so busy. (Yeah.) I think it's all about the Graceland experience, though. Like, I feel like you wouldn't get like the full thing if you are in everything possible. You know?

**Mike Hoffman 06:32**

That's, that's, that's really cool because I think, I don't know, do you feel like being on that council, the Academic Student Council, like, sort of, sort of helps you want to do better grade wise?

**Mike Hoffman 07:21**

Yes. Yes. I, I, I would say I understand, but I only understand as somebody who's seen that in other students because I didn't go to Graceland as an undergrad. But, but, yeah, so, uh, I, I get that. It's like you like to be involved in doing things and that's part of the experience. So, yeah, very good. So, so, um, you know, there's obviously we could talk about a lot of things related to Graceland. Is there anything that's caught your attention so far that you want to share with people? Like, I know we're on the verge of the next version of Graceland, which you probably have heard a little bit about. I mean, what's your first impression of that or reaction to it?

**Jullie Wheaton 08:01**

Well, Graceland right now is so cool. Like, the diversity, it just blows my mind. But I feel like, um, moving it up to the next level will just make it even greater. I'm so, um, excited to see what it'll be like because I already love Graceland and I haven't even been here for that long. Um, so, I'm really excited to see, like, what changes will come.

**Mike Hoffman 08:28**

Yeah. Very good. Well, I, I don't know whether exactly how you'll get involved with those changes, but I'm sure, based on knowing you, you will get involved. So, very good. So, alright. Um, so, you've, you've mentioned music education. So, a lot of times when I talk to students about, um, in my first year critical thinking class, we talk about, like, what do you want to get out of your Graceland experience? And academically, obviously, you want to teach, but is there anything else you'd like to see develop or happen to you while you're at Graceland. I mean, is there, I don't know, that could be wide open, so.

**Jullie Wheaton 09:10**

I think, uh, so, during, um, Critical Thinking this year we watched a documentary called Thirteenth. And I found it very, very interesting. So, it kind of makes me want to take some classes like in social change. (Okay.) I'm like kind of wanting to do that now. Like, knowing that some of the stuff like that, uh, in the documentary was like watching that was just like, Oh my gosh, I want to like do something ( . . . ). So, I feel like, um, I think I want to, like, experiment with, like, a little bit of social change, and maybe sustainability. (Okay.) And I am a psychology minor, so, like, I'm, um, taking Intro to Psych right now. And I, I've always loved psychology. I find it so interesting to know about the brain and how it works. (Cool.) Um, so, I think I'm gonna', like, dabble ( . . . ).

**Mike Hoffman 10:10**

Yeah. Right. Right. Yeah, that's very cool. Because you mentioned a lot of really important topics. I mean, especially in relation to Thirteenth, with, if our, if our listeners are not familiar with that, that is a, a documentary about, uh, racial injustice I guess I would say in the prison system in the United States. And, um, you know, certainly you mentioned Graceland is a diverse campus. I mean, we, uh, the entering freshman class, I know, is very diverse and has been that way and you're probably living that and witnessing that, so. Yeah. So, out of all that, so, you take a few classes, do you see yourself in Graceland, like you mentioned serving on the Academic Student Council, do you want to become Graceland student president?

**Jullie Wheaton 10:54**

Yes. (Oh, okay.) Even like being on like the main board, like, I know, um, ( . . . ) really well.

**Mike Hoffman 11:04**

She's our current Graceland Student Government President.

**Jullie Wheaton 11:09**

Looking up to her, she's so cool and everything, I think it would be really awesome to be like, uh, president. (Yeah.) But I also feel like I'd be happy enough to even be in charge of, like, ASC president (Yeah. Right.) or, like, IM's president. Or something like that. (Something like that. Yeah.) Like even being on, um, like the GSG Board. (Yeah.) That'd be awesome.

**Mike Hoffman 11:29**

So, you know, one of the other leadership, key leadership positions on campus is house president. What house are you in? I'm on Shalom. (Shalom. Okay.) So, you know, that would be another possibility for you.

**Jullie Wheaton 11:40**

I'm running. I've decided I've already decided.

**Jullie Wheaton 11:41**

You want to be, run for House President.

**Jullie Wheaton 11:45**

Yes. I do. Um, my current House President, Mary, she plays volleyball with me. (Oh, yeah. Okay.) So, I feel like that's really cool. And she gets the chance to, like, know, everybody, and I, I just love the aspect of, like, still being on my hall, but, like, also being in charge, kind of like, a little bit. So, I'm, I'm definitely, I've already decided that I'm going to be running for President.

**Mike Hoffman 12:08**

That's really cool. Now you're talking about Mary Perkins. Right? (Yeah.) Yeah. Okay. I thought she was the House President for Shalom. So, that's really cool. So. So, um, Jullie, you're also involved in Inspire which is the church, Community of Christ leadership, uh, leadership program, its missional ministry program here at Graceland. So, I know you've been a very enthusiastic member in, involved with that. So, how, has that been helpful at all? You know,

**Jullie Wheaton 12:38**

It's given me so much different, like, insight on, uh, different things that happen, like, around the world, or in the church. (Okay.) Like, I've never really thought about it, sometimes the way that we talk about it Inspire. Like, um, some of the verses that we have, like, gone over and like, gone into, like, kind of, like forgotten about and haven't even realized that user, like, read what like, this is what's in between the lines. You know what I mean? I feel like it gives me a different perspective. Like, when we go through certain verses or certain chapters, like, um, we will go into depth and read between the lines it shows me a whole new world. Like, something I never really thought about. I find it really helpful.

**Mike Hoffman 13:35**

Very good. Thank you for that. So, yeah. So, um, tell me a little bit about your background in the church, like what congregation you go to? I don't know.

**Jullie Wheaton 13:45**

Um, I'm from Community of Christ. Uh, Liberty Street (Okay.) uh, in Independence, Missouri. And, uh, I've been going to church for years, um, like, a long time. (A long time.) Yeah. Since I was like, eight. Like, I got baptized there, (Okay.) um, and everything. And I

**Mike Hoffman 14:02**

Was that your first, your family's first church or did they, what, I mean.

**Jullie Wheaton 14:05**

Yeah, I believe so. I happened to be in a, a foster home with a family that went to the same church. (Okay.) So, before I was adopted, my, my foster home, um, was for Dave and Sheila, my parents now, they're in the same church. So, when I ended up going to their house as a foster home, I was in the same church anyway. (Gotcha.) So, that was really, I felt that that was really cool. So, I've been going there for extra long. I love, I love the family and the community. Everyone is so accepting and so sweet. Love going to church there.

**Mike Hoffman 14:39**

That's great. That's great. It's been a while since I've been to Liberty Street, but I actually have been there probably before you were born when I think about it. So, very good. So, so considering your place in the church and life at Graceland and all those things, do you have any particular hopes for the future of the church? I know, you know, we're in an interesting time right now for the church because some congregations because of the pandemic are back in person. And some are not. I mean, you know. So, so what do you see happening in the future? I mean, what hope do you have for the future? Maybe not what you see in the future.

**Jullie Wheaton 15:18**

I hope that people have more than open minds. (Okay.) Like, if some people like come from one church, but they're looking for another one that ( . . . ) experiment with different churches. (Okay.) And they'd be open to, like, an invitation to come and sit down for, like, a service or, even more, coming to see how the energy is. If they don't like it, then that's okay. But I just hope that in the future everyone will have like more of an open mind towards, um, um, trying something new.

**Mike Hoffman 15:52**

Okay. Alright. Thanks for that. So, so is there anything else you'd like to tell our listeners about either your Graceland experience or life in the church or anything else you can think of?

**Jullie Wheaton 16:05**

I would just say, um, I love, I love Graceland. I really do. Um, and I did have some disappointing news at first that my major was getting phased out. (Oh, yeah.) Um, and I get to finish all my major. But it also

makes me really sad for the people that can't. (Yeah.) You know, like, come in next year and do it. Um, but I'm feeling very blessed that I get to finish all and I'll still be able to, um, like, get the same education. Um, but I would also say not to overextend yourself. Like me, I'm so, so busy. And sometimes I get really overwhelmed. Like, I'm, I'm taking 18 credit hours. (Are you really? Wow.) Yeah, and, um, still managing to be in air band, do extracurriculars on my hall, and, um, I feel like you just really gotta' be able to schedule yourself, you know, like, um

**Mike Hoffman 17:03**

Are you good at scheduling? I mean, have you

**Jullie Wheaton 17:06**

I'm getting better. Yeah, and I've had to get better, (Yeah.) you know?

**Mike Hoffman 17:10**

Was that a difference between, like, high school and college,

**Jullie Wheaton 17:13**

I mean, I've always been busy. I really have. Like, um, um. And I'm trying, I had to fit like theater into my senior year of high school. And, so, I've been learning how to, like, um, fit that in there, too. So, I feel like it started, like, throughout my senior year, because I was trying to do more my senior year. Um, but this year has just gone, like, so much better. Like, immediately I, like, sat down and opened my planner and wrote down all the dates that I had in all my syllabuses that I need to go to, and stuff like that. So, I would say, um, that you have plenty of years to be involved in stuff here (Um hmm.) if you decide to stay. And, um, I wouldn't recommend overextending yourself because it just becomes mentally and physically draining honestly.

**Mike Hoffman 18:04**

Yep. That's good advice for all of us, not just, not just your age as a student. But yes. So that's, that's very good. Well, Jullie, I appreciate you spending some time with me this afternoon at The Swarm and talking. It's been good to get to know you even better outside of our class, so and outside of Inspire. So, (Thank you.) again, thank you very much and we'll talk to you later.

**Josh Mangelson 18:45**

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