

Coffee in the Swarm | Aliyah Farrell and Levi Triplett

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Graceland, SPEC, young adult, camp, Christ, Christian

SPEAKERS

Aliyah Farrell, Levi Triplett, Mike Hoffman

Mike Hoffman 00:28

Welcome to Coffee in the Swarm, a Project Zion Podcast production coming to you from Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa. The Swarm is our on-campus snack bar in the Newcom Student Union. This year our podcast will be co-hosted by campus chaplains Aliyah Farrell and Levi Triplett. I'm Mike Hoffman, campus minister. Coffee in the Swarm is where we interview students at Graceland who are connected to Community of Christ. This ep, episode is about introducing our two new podcast hosts for this year. Aliyah and Levi, so welcome.

Levi Triplett 01:01

Thank you.

Mike Hoffman 01:02

Thanks for being here. Aliyah, how are you doing today?

Aliyah Farrell 01:06

I'm good. How are you?

Mike Hoffman 01:07

Good. Good. I know you've got a full schedule and we have to, to make this work because you're headed to softball practice later. Let's, uh, let's find out a little bit about yourselves and share with our listeners, uh, about who you are and where you're from. So, I guess, Aliyah, why don't you go first? Tell us about where you're from.

Aliyah Farrell 01:25

So, I'm from San Antonio, Texas. It's about 14 hours south of here. And there I went to a humongous high school. There was 680 kids in my graduating class alone. (Wow.) Uh, we were a six A school, so we were, like, the highest competition. So, I mean, I wasn't able to be as involved there as I wanted to be just because there are so many kids, the competition was so, I mean even in academics in the classroom, the competition was so, like, cutthroat, like people took it so seriously. Um, (Yeah.) you had to, kind of had to step your game up a little bit. 680, what did you say, 81? Kids, 680 kids (680) that walked the stage. (Wow.) So,

Mike Hoffman 02:07

So, all right. Uh, and you're from San Antonio. (. . .) I'm connected to family in the Bandera County area or was. I (. . .) at least historically, so. Cool. Well, thank you for being here. Levi, tell us about where you're from.

Levi Triplett 02:21

So, I am from Joplin, Missouri. Well, originally I was, I was born in South Carolina, (Okay.) but I grew up all my life in Joplin, Missouri. And I went to a little, little private school called Thomas Jefferson and played sports and I was pretty involved. I was also a theater kid. (Yeah.) My graduating class had 22.

Mike Hoffman 02:45

Quite a difference. This is great. I mean, (. . .) that we planned this out after all. I have students from such a different background. So, very cool.

Levi Triplett 02:54

Yeah. So, pretty, pretty sure a little graduating reception. (Yeah.)

Aliyah Farrell 02:59

That's cute. (Yeah.)

Mike Hoffman 03:03

Well, I went to high school with, like, 455 in my senior, senior class. So, more like, more like what Aliyah went through. So,

Aliyah Farrell 03:11

Our graduation took three hours (Oh.) total. It was, it's terrible. It was to me.

Levi Triplett 03:17

(. . .) I think mine took, like, 45 minutes.

Aliyah Farrell 03:20

My friends and I, like, tried to count how many kids we knew. (Oh, yeah.) It was like 100 out of the 600 we actually knew.

Mike Hoffman 03:28

Yeah, well, Graceland's graduation is about two hours, I think. It usually starts about 10 o'clock on Sunday morning. And it's over by noon, I think, or so. Yeah, that's something to look forward to, so. So, um, I know you're both first year students, or freshman students. So, so, what are your plans? Majors, minors? That kind of thing.

Aliyah Farrell 03:48

Um, so right now I'm a biology major and a business management minor. I plan to do something in the medical field. I'm not sure, like, what route I want to take yet. I took the biology route rather than the

kinesiology route because the plan right now is physical therapy, um, and then with a minor in business management with, like, hopes to run a practice (Yeah.) and, like, kind of just be knowledgeable in the business world because that's helpful. (Yeah.) But I'm not sure yet, so, I could go anywhere in the medical field with biology. (Very good.) Uh, but yeah, that's the plan (That's the plan.) right now hopefully.

Mike Hoffman 03:49

So, Levi.

Aliyah Farrell 03:57

Um, I'm doing nursing. I'm more of a STEM kid, so. And my dad is also a doctor. (Oh, I didn't know that. Okay.) Yeah. So I have a little bit of a medical background, but really, I'm more interested in anything that gives me adrenaline. That's why at the beginning of the summer, I was taking flying lessons. So, I'm trying to get my pilot's license right now. So, hopefully, I can somehow incorporate high pressure situations with the medical field like trauma, trauma nursing or something of that nature.

Mike Hoffman 04:04

And learning to pilot I mean, I could imagine, obviously, there's pilots that fly for medical reasons. (Yeah.) That's really cool. Yeah. So, maybe we'll hire you next year for campus ministries just to be our airplane pilot. (Oh, I would love that. I love that.) You would love that. So, if you're donate the, donating money to campus ministries out there, probably just kidding. I probably don't want to say that. But anyway, it would be fun to got an airplane for campus ministries then we'll just fly places. So, it's very cool.) Very good. Well, that's really cool. And I get the whole adrenaline thing. Yeah, that's, that would be pretty cool. I, yeah. So, obviously airplanes, right. I mean, not, not helicopters or anything like that. Or,

Levi Triplett 05:38

I mean, maybe, maybe. I mean, that's always a possibility. But, (. . .)

Aliyah Farrell 05:43

It could be like airlift. It could be like your own Grey's Anatomy moment. (Grey's Anatomy.) Like, that's it, when people say, like, trauma, I'm like, Tim Blade.

Mike Hoffman 05:51

(. . .) Did you watch that growing up?

Aliyah Farrell 05:55

I still watch it.

Mike Hoffman 05:56

I mean, it was, it's been on for, like, 20 years, I think. I don't know. Like my, my, my wife and I have watched it for the last five years. So, yeah, I have to remember, my kids are older and so they didn't watch. They don't have the same TV experience I do. But very good. So, yeah. Well, we'll get into that

later. So, tell, tell me about your house experience so far here at Graceland. We, you know, we've got this really unique housing system. So, what houses are you on?

Aliyah Farrell 06:24

So, I'm on Sariah. I'm a sailor. And that has been so fun. So, Kayla and Savannah, who are also on Sariah and on campus ministries, (Yes.) um, I went to summer camp, Community of Christ camp in Texas with Kayla since I was like 8. (Okay.) Growing up she's been like an older sister to me. Like, when I, like, when I was coming here since it is 14 hours away from home, my mom was, like, who, like, Who's gonna' look after you? Like, she was so nervous. And then one day I was just like, I was like, Mom, Kayla's gonna' look after me, like, (You're talking about Kayla Childress, right?) Yes. I was, like, Mom, Kayla's gonna' look after me. And I don't think she had ever thought about that before. And she was like, Oh, like that makes me feel so much better knowing that there's somebody on your hall that's there that we know that's gonna' take care of you. But it hasn't been only her that's watched over me. It's been Savannah, it's been Lexy (. . .) house president. It's been (Is Lexy your house president?) Yes. (Okay. Okay.) And, so, it's been all of them that have kind of looked out for us and then just, like, staying involved, like, playing I M soccer with everyone, especially your brother house, I think. It's just kind of kept me busy from, um, the fact that, like, I've, I have been homesick already, (. . .) um, so far, but, like, staying involved with them. And, like, them kind of forcing, not forcing you, but getting you out of your room to do things has been so fun.

Mike Hoffman 07:35

Yeah. Levi, what about you?

Levi Triplett 07:38

Yeah. I, I think, I think that I, I didn't really know anything about the housing system (Yeah.) prior to coming to Graceland. But I think I really lucked out. Um,

Mike Hoffman 07:47

What house are you on?

Levi Triplett 07:48

I'm on Agape. (Oh, okay.) And it', it seems to me, like, we're the most rowdy, involved, (Yeah. Who's your house president?) My house president is Niko, which is, (Oh!) which is your brother, Aliyah's brother.

Mike Hoffman 08:01

Aliyah's brother, Niko. Yeah. Right.

Levi Triplett 08:03

He's, he's awesome. He's really involved. And he's (Well, good.) yeah. (. . .) I'm really happy to be on Agape.

Mike Hoffman 08:09

That's good. That's good. Yeah. And houses, it's so interesting, houses seem to have personalities, not so much personality of their HPs. But sort of, they take on characteristics for a few years and then enough changes. And, yeah, that's good. I'm glad you're both having good experiences that way. So, what brought you to Graceland? I mean, was there anything in particular or any way you got here? Or?

Aliyah Farrell 08:32

Yes. So, I'm a third generation Graceland kid. (Ahh. Okay.) Growing up, I was like, I'm never going to Graceland. Like, who would want to go with the Amish, like, in that small little town because I lived in Texas for so long. (That's right.) I lived big (You lived in San Antonio.) Yeah. I was, I was (Right.) right in (Yeah.) the city. I was always big, big and bigger. And, so, it was between here and Texas A & M, which is humongous. (Right.) Right? So, like, what a big difference. What a choice I had to make. But I mean, I came, well, my, one my brother's here. So, that kind of also really weighed heavily into my decision because when he came back from his first year of college, if he didn't love it here, I don't think I would have been back here. (Yeah. That's fair.) But because he told me all the things he did, he showed us pictures and he just absolutely loved it. It was, like, I want to do that, too. And, then, I went to SPEC. Like, that's where I met Levi, so we actually knew each (Right.) other before coming here. (Right.) Um, and after I went to SPEC I just fell in love with Graceland even more because it's, like, you can't find the people that are here anywhere else. (Yeah.) And I think that's what makes it so special and, like, draws people to it. (Yeah.)

Levi Triplett 09:33

Yeah, I think, I think SPEC, for me, especially, especially the last SPEC, this year's SPEC had a major, major, uh, impact because Christian Biwott was, like, Yeah, you, you're now

Mike Hoffman 09:45

How would you describe Christian Biwott?

Aliyah Farrell 09:47

Three words (. . .).

Levi Triplett 09:49

Um, I mean, he's, I, I know in, in my, in my era, we would have said he sort of took you under his wing, but that wasn't really what he did.

Aliyah Farrell 09:59

He kind of, like, drags you (. . .) until you say, finally say yes.

Levi Triplett 10:04

Christian to me is kind of the idea guy. (Yeah.) He, he's, this is, this is, this isn't a bad thing, but he is the most ADHD person (. . .) and,

Mike Hoffman 10:17

Not a bad thing.

Aliyah Farrell 10:18

But when Christian wants to do something, he's gonna do it. It doesn't matter. (Yeah.) And you're going with him and it doesn't matter if you want to say no, (Yes.) you're still going.

Mike Hoffman 10:27

Yeah. And it's really lucky. You're, you're all first year students, including Christian and Christian is also a member of campus ministries this year. (Yes.) So, we're really, really glad to have all three of you on board, but, yeah. Very good. Yeah. So, he's, he was sort of influential at SPEC.

Levi Triplett 10:42

Yeah, also, um, so, before I applied to Graceland, maybe like a year, a year before I applied to Graceland, I was like, I'll probably just end up at Mizzou or KU and, you know, like, I mean it's, I, it's not as big as A & M, like, was that 80, 80, 80,000? (too many. . . .) (. . .) 30,000.

Mike Hoffman 11:04

But it would still be big.

Levi Triplett 11:05

A city inside of society. (Right.) (Yeah.) That's, that's not what I really wanted. I, I kind of wanted more of the, a tight knit community, like, like TJ was for me.

Mike Hoffman 11:15

Yeah. So, and TJ is your high school? (Yes.) (. . .) that's all right. That's why I'm here.

Aliyah Farrell 11:24

Yeah, well, I remember, (. . .) like, the first year at SPEC I asked him, I was, like, Where you going to college because you're in the same game. I was like, and we like became super good friends after the first SPEC. You know, it's like, Where you go to college? And he's like, You know, I'll probably just go to, like, KU or something. And I was, like, No, what are you doing? You have to come here, and, like, come on. (Yes.) And then the next year, I asked him at the beginning of the week, I was like, Where are you going to college? He was like, I'm still going to KU. And then by the end of the week, he like, failed to tell me or something. (As we . . .) As I'm, like, leaving, driving 14 hours to get home, he's like, Oh, (. . .) yeah, he's like, I'm going to Graceland. I was like, like, no time to explain. Just goin' to Graceland. Goodbye.

Mike Hoffman 11:57

(Yes. Yeah.) Made the decision, or (Yes.) okay. Okay. Very good. Well, that's pretty cool. So, yeah. So, I think, I don't know, do you have any more to add about your Graceland experience that's, I don't know, I mean, you've talked, both of you have talked a lot about that so far. I mean, as first year students are, I don't know what else, what else you might say about that. Um, so, um, tell me a little bit about your church experience back at home. You know, like, were you involved with Community of Christ or go to church camps or anything like that, or? I don't know anything (. . .)?

Aliyah Farrell 12:36

Yes. So, I was born into Community of Christ. (Okay.) My grandparents went here. My aunts and uncles went here. (All went to Graceland.) Yes. (Okay.) My mom went here. I mean, that was kind of like the determining factor because my mom went here and played softball. So, I was like, (. . .) Okay, well, now that's a lot (. . . her in playing softball.) Yeah. So, I was like, now that they want me for softball, it kind of really made the decision easiest to come (Yeah.) because my mom did it, so, (Yeah.) I get to, like, kind of be like her, I guess, in a way. But, yeah, I was born to the church, like, my grandma played, uh, piano at church, went to church every Sunday. (Gotcha'.) But as I kind of got older, um, we kind of, like, started to go less and less. But just because it was kind of hard for us to go and sit through services because our church is super small in San Antonio (Okay.) because we had the twins so we had Audrey and Addison Cole in the Cole family. And then once Audrey and Addison left, because they're their last kids, it went down like, (Sure.) like, (Right.) they were kind of like our people. Like we run the children's choir together. Everything and it was always the Farrells and the Coles. Are they that church? We kind of made up (. . . and then after) (. . .)

Mike Hoffman 13:38

They came a year before you (Yes.) and right. (Yes.) It's, uh,

Aliyah Farrell 13:41

So, once that kind of happened, it was harder to come, to go every (Yeah.) Sunday because our church was so small, like, we didn't have that many speakers. We didn't do whatever. So, I kind of started going to a different church. So, I mean, I was still Community of Christ, but then I started attending a different church. (Where's there were) And then (kids and things I assume.) Yes, yes. To do more stuff with the kids because I was the only kid at the church. (Ah, okay.) I mean, I'm still 18. But we had (Yeah.) no youth. (Still 18 . . .) But still a kid. Yeah. (I understand.) But yeah, and then went to church camps every summer. So, we have camp Sionito and I, oh, that place is so, so special to me. And I think to a lot of the people from Texas that (Yeah.) go there. We just were, it's just like family. It's truly life changing just like SPEC is and, (Yeah.) um, I'm so grateful to have that experience through Community of Christ because I don't think my relationship with God would be the same without it. And so I think it's so special and important to have, uh, (Yeah.) in my life. (Okay.)

Levi Triplett 14:35

Yeah, so, kind of similar for me. I, I'm, I was never a member of Community of Christ. But my mom was, my mom and now stepdad were, like, very heavily involved with it. So, I kind of just grew up in Community of Christ. (Okay.) And back home we have, we call it Camp Wakanda, that's, that's what it's called. And when people hear that they're, like, Oh, (Oh.) Marvel's Black Panther.

Mike Hoffman 15:01

Right. Where is that located? I

Levi Triplett 15:05

So, it's kind of Racine, Missouri.

Mike Hoffman 15:08

Okay. Okay. (Yeah. That) Is that the official name, Camp Wakanda?

Levi Triplett 15:13

I mean, I don't think it's the official name. But the people that have been there for years and years know it as Camp Wakanda. (Okay. Yeah.) But, yeah.

Mike Hoffman 15:22

And so you're just going to camps and things like that. (Yeah. Reunions.) And then you went to SPEC?

Levi Triplett 15:27

Yeah. So, I'd, like, sen, junior high camp, senior high camp. (Yeah.) And then each summer, we would have two reunions. (Okay.) And then SPEC obviously.

Mike Hoffman 15:37

Yeah, yeah. Okay. I think I've been to both of your campgrounds. I'm pretty sure. So, yeah, very cool. So, I know, I know, you're first year students and you might a, you've already mentioned this a little bit, but do you have any other additional plans after you graduate? I mean, you, you know, is that too far away?

Aliyah Farrell 16:00

I mean, I've always wanted to go on like a mission trip. So, (Oh!) I kind of wanted to figure out, like, if Community of Christ does mission trips, like, where we go, (Yeah.) all that. Um, go someplace foreign and kind of help, like, the people in the communities out and stuff like that. (Yeah.) That's definitely one thing I really wanna' do. It's on my bucket list (Yeah.) that I really want to do.

Mike Hoffman 16:17

(. . .) opportunities to do that. You might have to, sort of, invent your own opportunity. The, the church used to have a program called the World Service Corps. And it's not really up and running anymore, but it doesn't mean you can't do some things creatively like that. So, yeah. Cool. And you mentioned, obviously, learning how to fly (. . .) and doing some of those things. Yeah. And continuing even going to nursing, the school of nursing down in Independence too, as, sort of, but yeah. Um, you want to follow in your dad's footsteps like to be a doctor, or?

Levi Triplett 16:53

No. My, my dad was, he spent 20 years in the Air Force and he was, he was a flight, uh, (Ohh! Okay.) surgeon. So, like, he flew like in the back of F 16s and stuff. (Wow. Okay.) So, I, I think that that's kind of a part (sort of part of what you) (. . .) comes from. (Yeah.) Also, also, when I saw um, Top Gun, Maverick for the first time, that is, it is (. . .).

Aliyah Farrell 17:18

My favorite movie. (Yeah.)

Levi Triplett 17:19

It really, it really is a good movie.

Aliyah Farrell 17:21

And we talked about that before, too. (Yeah.) (. . .)

Mike Hoffman 17:24

Cool. Yeah. Do you have any hopes for the church in the future? I mean, I, I again, you know, it says it's, it's, like, I don't know if that's too broad of a question or, you know, if there was something you wanted to tell the current church leadership, is there something you want to say to them or?

Aliyah Farrell 17:41

I don't know, is there anything I want to say? I think it's, there's just a big difference between, like, the young adult life here, at Graceland, and, like, where everybody's involved and there's a really high, uh, you know, young adult participation, (Right.) people in Community of Christ and participating and even new people that aren't Community of Christ, like, coming to our, um, things, 'cause people just grab their friends and head to house devotions or something. (Right.) Like, um, it's so easy, but I think when we go back home, it's a lot harder because there's not really as many young adults to work with (Yeah.) and, you know, all that. So, I think just getting more young adult recognition, and I think people are already working on it like Umberto, um, he, (Oh, yeah.) yeah, he goes to our, uh, he was our delegation leader for SPEC and everything. (Okay.) Uhm, and, so, he's been kind of helping us out. And he's helped Christian out a lot, too. (Yeah.) Um, I know Christian's trying to do a lot with that. And we're actually having a young adult retreat in Texas for kids, like, who have graduated out of camps, but still kind of want, like, how camp feels, so we're doing, like, a young adult retreat. So, for the first time, so, that's something super exciting that I'm looking forward to. Yeah, but I just want to keep, like, the young adult, and even younger because there's no babies. There's no toddlers. There's no (Yeah.) young kids in my church. So, it's like, How are they supposed to go to camps and experience what I've had and, like, the life changing moments I've had at those camps and they're not even going to church?

Mike Hoffman 19:03

No, that's a, that's a really (You know?) good, good thought. I mean, it's, like, I think sometimes we have to think outside the box, but I don't know where (. . . Where is the box?) Where's the box? And where are the kids that go in the box? Oh, that's sort of weird. But, you know. (Yeah.) (Yeah.) Any other thoughts?

Levi Triplett 19:17

I don't, I don't think I could have said any better. But I think my hopes are just really encouraging the youth to serve, especially people our age, (Um hmm.) um, because eventually, like, we will be the only ones left who are able to serve. So, (Yeah.) we have to start learning how to lead now. If that makes sense.

Mike Hoffman 19:39

No, I think it does. I think, you know, for people in my generation, I think we've got to start sharing the good news that the church has. I mean, for me, the enduring principles and the, and the, even the basic beliefs are really solid and make sense in the world that we live in today. It's just that I'm not sure we're, we get the word out enough. (Um hmm.) I don't know (. . .)

Aliyah Farrell 19:59

Well, I think also because, like, the way our church is so structured and like our services and what we do, I think, like sometimes when I would like bring my friends to church, I think a lot of them think it's like, not like a chore, but it's like we're going through these because we have to and they're not as, like, personable, I guess. (Yeah.) But it's, like, if you haven't been going, like, you just won't, like, understand, I guess, unless (Right.) you kind of, like, grew up in the church. So, I just feel like, like, in order to experience God, like, you need the summer camps and stuff and, (Uh huh.) and church helps it grow, but I feel like summer camp is kind of where you really find, uh, that true meaning of, like, family love and God and like (Yeah.) what it's supposed to feel like.

Mike Hoffman 20:37

Yeah, no, and camps, camps are the backbone of a lot of our children and youth and young adult ministry, so. So, is there anything else you'd like to share? Anything about Graceland, the church, your future? Have we done a good job covering all that?

Levi Triplett 20:54

I think so.

Aliyah Farrell 20:54

I think we did.

Mike Hoffman 20:55

All right. Well, listen, I, I really appreciate you both being here today, but also being our co-hosts this, uh, this year. (Yeah.) So, you know, now it's your job to go out and find some other students that (. . .) us and, and talk to us. So, that pretty much wraps things up for this episode of Coffee in the Swarm, so, thanks for listening. This is Mike and Levi and Aliyah. All right. Signing off until next time. Thank you.

Levi Triplett 21:21

Thank you.