

Coffee in the Swarm | Callie Dennis

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Graceland University, Callie Dennis, Community of Christ, Afterglow, House council, World Conference.

SPEAKERS

Aliyah Farrell, Mike Hoffman, Callie Dennis

Aliyah Farrell 00:30

Welcome back 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 is co-hosted by campus Chaplain Aliyah Farrell, and is hosted by campus minister, Mike Hoffman. Coffee in the Swarm is where we interview students at Graceland who are connected to the Community of Christ. Today, we are here with Callie Dennis. Welcome, Callie, All right, so tell us about yourself. Tell us your story.

Callie Dennis 01:00

Okay, I'm Callie, Callie Dennis. I'm a freshman here at Graceland. I'm on Sariah. I play volleyball, the biology major, and I'm like, a 1 billion, billionth generation Graceland.

Mike Hoffman 01:14

Where are you from?

Callie Dennis 01:15

From Lee Summit, Missouri.

Mike Hoffman 01:16

Okay. Yeah

Aliyah Farrell 01:18

Pretty cool. Pretty cool. So what was church like back for you at home.

Callie Dennis 01:22

So church, church at home for me ... I attended Liberty Street congregation in Independence, Missouri, and we go every Sunday. Always go to Sunday school. My mom was, my mom and dad are both big in the church. My mom teaches Sunday school, and my dad is the CFO of our Liberty Street congregation. We also run all the potlucks at church. That was my ...

Mike Hoffman 01:44

Your family runs all the potlucks...

Callie Dennis 01:45

They're all on a team, and there's one every month.

Mike Hoffman 01:49

Oh, nice.

Callie Dennis 01:50

I love that.

Mike Hoffman 01:51

I do too.

Callie Dennis 01:52

Super fun.

Mike Hoffman 01:53

Yeah,

Aliyah Farrell 01:53

Yeah, so I'm assuming you went to church camps, went to SPEC. [Oh yes] all that. So how is that for you?

Callie Dennis 01:58

So, you would have gone back to senior high camp. Oh, it was so fun. Growing up, I went when I was really little, and then I took a break because I started playing volleyball, and it was more competitive volleyball, and so I have to do a lot of, like, summer conditioning and training in the summer, so I wouldn't get to go to camp. And then I started going again, like, after COVID, I went to SPEC for the first time. And going to SPEC made me realize, like, oh, I need to start going back to camps, because this was so much fun. And so then after that, I started every year again. Yes, I never went to middle school camp. [Okay], yeah, that's actually funny.

Mike Hoffman 02:32

And Camp Doniphan is your home?

Callie Dennis 02:33

Yes, Camp Doniphan is the best one?

Aliyah Farrell 02:37

Yeah, no, actually, at spec, like our brothers at the time, were best friends, and so they were like, well, Danny told her to come find me. Nico told me to come find her. And so, I don't even know where we were, but like, [...] "Oh, are you Callie?," yeah, that's how I met you.

Mike Hoffman 02:58

You guys are hilarious together.

Aliyah Farrell 02:59

Yeah. So it's pretty cool.

Mike Hoffman 03:01

Now you're a year, but Aliyah, you're a year older,

Aliyah Farrell 03:03

Yes

Mike Hoffman 03:04

Right, right.

Aliyah Farrell 03:06

Okay, so what brought you to Graceland?

Callie Dennis 03:08

Did you have any other schools in mind when you were applying to colleges? Or was were you kind of set in stone? Well, it was, it was a multitude of reasons. Honestly, I had a lot of strong family influence to come here. I grew up hearing stories about, you know, the good old times at Graceland, and then Danny, my older brother came or he still is here. He graduates this year, and he would tell me all the funny stories he had with experience. But then I was offered the academic honors scholarship, the full ride, prestigious honor scholarship. So I came up here, and I interviewed for that. And then the same day, I had a volleyball audition, and which it was a very stressful day to do a full day of honors panel. And then, of like, the other half of the day was volleyball, very stressful day for Callie. But I ended up winning the prestigious honor scholarship out of other other applicants. And then I also ended up making the volleyball team. And so, you know, those just were some more reasons that secured me in place. I, for a long time I didn't want to come to Graceland. I was like, I'm going to be different. I'm not going to let my family, I'm going to, like, forge my own path. And I thought about going to KU for a long time. But I also toured schools. I toured Boise State, I've got family in Boise. And I toured College of Idaho, which is Graceland size. And I also made the volleyball team there, okay? And then I also toured University of Washington, [okay], in Seattle. And those were all just, I mean, except for College of Idaho, they were all super big schools, and it would freak me out, because I'm not very good at directions, like sometimes I don't know left and right, which I know I need to work on. But oh, they were just so big that I had to use like, Apple map, like my maps to, like, get around the campus, and I couldn't find any of the buildings, and that would have just freaked me out so bad. But then it was also, like, coming to spec and like, realizing I could be here full time and do this full time, yeah, that also kind of really made me want to come here.

Mike Hoffman 05:16

Yeah, well, and you're only overlapping with Danny, who was also this year as the chaplain president, too. So, you know, we work with him, but yeah, so only a year, so you'll be on your own for three years at least.

Callie Dennis 05:29

So in here, yeah, during pre-season, I would go over and use his apartment all the time, yeah,

Mike Hoffman 05:37

I guess I hadn't thought about that. You both have. [...] So, okay, I didn't know how that [...]. Yeah?

Aliyah Farrell 05:47

Alright, um, so describe your grace and experience this far.

Callie Dennis 05:51

Oh my gosh, it has just been the best. It has like, flown by, like everyone. Why does it grow fast? [Yeah] But oh my goodness, I can't believe we're like, like, three weeks left.

Aliyah Farrell 06:00

left, 11 days left of classes, and then finals week. , kind of this morning.

Callie Dennis 06:04

That's stressing me out a little bit, but I'm excited. I'm excited for it to be done. [Yeah], I would like a little break, but oh my gosh, it's just been the most fun year, like ever. Fall semester was my favorite, I think because it was just the excitement of being here, [sure], but also, oh my goodness. Sariah and Agape Sarape was...

Aliyah Farrell 06:25

It was fun ...

Mike Hoffman 06:26

So, just for those of you listening, I have to explain the Sarape thing. Okay? Because, because when houses, when houses pair up, sibling houses pair up, they come up with this creative names. And I've just always found them to be totally funny. I mean, Sarape is that's pretty good. I don't remember hearing that before, so, you know, so, but ...

Aliyah Farrell 06:48

Yeah, we swept homecoming, and won air band like, that's so that was very awesome.

Mike Hoffman 06:55

Yeah, yeah.

Callie Dennis 06:56

It was pretty cool.

Mike Hoffman 06:57

So I have a question to interrupt you here a little bit. So based on your Graceland experience and having now almost a year under your belt, if you had to think of a superpower related to your Graceland experience, what would that one superpower be?

Callie Dennis 07:12

Like a superpower to help you through?

Mike Hoffman 07:14

Or whatever I mean, or maybe, yeah, maybe help you through, or maybe just something related to all that.

Callie Dennis 07:22

I would say, and this is not a superpower. I would normally, like, wish, okay, I would say super speed, okay, because you're just so busy here all the time. Okay? Like, sure, there's not a ton of stuff to do in the moment, but there's always something to do on campus, [yeah]. And I always have so much homework that sometimes I have to pick and choose, like COSA event or homework. Okay, usually end up choosing COSA event, I don't sleep, because I stay up late to do my homework. So I think I would choose super speed, just so I could, like, speed through all my homework, okay, studying and still get to do all the fun stuff. [Yeah, yeah]

Aliyah Farrell 07:57

So, I mean, as a biology major, how has that been this year, I guess, adjusting to all that,

Callie Dennis 08:02

it's been busy, like I knew it was going to be more difficult major compared to some other ones, but it's, it's definitely a lot of homework, and I'm, it's going to get worse. Oh yeah, yeah, it does.

Mike Hoffman 08:16

Are you ...

Callie Dennis 08:17

I'm a nursing major as a pre-med biology major, and then I switched to [...]. Yeah, so Danny is ...

Mike Hoffman 08:23

So, right, right, right, right. So I have a question. Just, I may be jumping ahead a little bit, but what is, like what do you want to do with a biology major? I mean, I know you're a first year student, so that may be an unfair question, but you obviously had some motivation to pick biology [Yes]. So yes, what do you want to do with it?

Callie Dennis 08:42

Well, I've always loved science, [okay], honestly, I've always just loved school. I've always been kind of a school girl, [okay] I just, I really like to learn, and I'm good at it. I think.

Mike Hoffman 08:53

Yes, well, some of the things well, but you've, evidently, there's some evidence there that you do. So, okay,

Callie Dennis 08:59

But I've always loved science, and ever since I was I don't know little, I've always kind of wanted to be like a doctor. [Okay] My mom's a doctor, and she's a very big influence on my life, [sure], and I do not want to be the same thing she is. [Okay], she's a pathologist, so she just looks like

Mike Hoffman 09:14

A specific type of doctor, but ...

Callie Dennis 09:17

I want to go into medicine. [Gotcha, Okay] ultimately, I think I'd want to be a pediatrician.

Mike Hoffman 09:21

Okay, yeah,

Callie Dennis 09:23

That's something,

Mike Hoffman 09:25

Right, yeah, okay.

Aliyah Farrell 09:26

Yeah. So what has been your church experience at Graceland?

Callie Dennis 09:31

I was a little hesitant to start going to church events at Graceland, just because I didn't really know what to expect. But I went to Afterglow because Danny is Chaplain President, so he also plays the piano at all the Afterglow services. And it was like the most fun, like church experience I've had in a while. It was I felt connected to God in a way that I hadn't in a while. And it reminded me a lot of church camps. [Okay] Singing the songs. Yeah. And like, I do miss hymns sometimes, because we don't sing a lot of hymns, but it is kind of fun and refreshing to just see, like, a lot of student testimonies, rather than big, long messages, and get, like, a perspective from like, my peers on their experiences with God. And so yeah, I've really liked Afterglow almost every week.

Mike Hoffman 10:20

Yeah. Good.

Aliyah Farrell 10:23

Yeah. So the question is, what are your life plans after graduation? But we talked about you being a pediatrician. So, what do you plan to do in the summer this year, like after, after you're done your first year of college, you finally get to go back home for a little while?

Callie Dennis 10:35

Yes, oh, I've been working on my summer plans for the past week. Everything all prepped. So I'm starting working on, working towards clinical hours. Um, you just look good on a resume.

Mike Hoffman 10:46

So you'll be doing that this clinical hours this summer?

Callie Dennis 10:49

I will be getting mostly shadowing hours. [Okay] Um, so I'm going to aim for like 50 to 100 shadowing hours this summer.

Mike Hoffman 10:57

For the whole summer, [for the whole] not for a week.

Callie Dennis 10:59

No, no, I don't even know if that's possible.

Mike Hoffman 11:02

No, I don't think so. But

Callie Dennis 11:04

For the whole summer, [okay] And luckily, we get out so early. Get out, like, end of April, [Right] And so I'll have a lot of time to, like, prepare, and like, work on my, what's that word called ... [application], yeah, my med school...

Mike Hoffman 11:19

Oh, yeah, Is It already time to do med school applications?

Callie Dennis 11:24

No, that won't be for another, like, two years. [Okay], You've got to get in a certain amount of shadowing hours. [Oh, I see] hours

Aliyah Farrell 11:31

you have to have, like, on hand patient care hours

Mike Hoffman 11:34

And documentation for it...

Callie Dennis 11:35

Yeah, like, how many hours? And have life phone number saying you did it, [yeah.] So I'm starting to work on this that those this summer, so that when it comes time to actually apply, I'm not like rushing to cram everything in, and I actually have time to study film the MCAT. And I just met with one of the previous rush scholars. They had Dr [...] had a fourth year med student from Des Moines come talk to us, and I had a private little one-on-one meeting with her, and asked what she did to prepare for med school. So I'm kind of following that. I've done some research, so I'm also just hoping for the future, and might go back to the restaurant that I used to work at to make some money on the staff.

Aliyah Farrell 12:17

Okay, so what's the biggest life lesson you've learned, and how did you learn?

Callie Dennis 12:22

Like, in all my life, or at Graceland?

Aliyah Farrell 12:24

In all your life, or at Graceland...

Mike Hoffman 12:28

Including both.

Aliyah Farrell 12:29

Yeah, I think both.

Callie Dennis 12:30

That's a, that's a tricky question. I think it would be to put myself out there more, because I was just, I was very shy growing up, and I was kind of not the most outgoing person. I'm usually very cautious and, like, hesitant to enter certain situations, especially if I don't know what's going to happen. And so, I think the biggest life lesson I've learned is just to trust myself and like, trust God that if I put myself out there, I'm going to be met with things that need to happen. You know?

Mike Hoffman 13:00

Did you find that that that was part of your experience coming to Graceland, that you... Like, when I went to college, I made a big decision between high school and college. I was really shy during high school, at least, not with my closest friends, but you know, and I decided that I was going to put myself out there when I went to college. Is that what, I mean, is that what you're talking about?

Callie Dennis 13:23

I think more like after COVID happened?

Mike Hoffman 13:25

Oh, okay, alright, yeah,

Callie Dennis 13:27

Weird, weird timing, I guess, yeah, I think it was just being in my house.

Mike Hoffman 13:30

And how old were you when COVID hit?

Callie Dennis 13:32

So, March, 2020, when it first hit. I was in eighth grade. [Okay], so I was like, 14, yeah.

Mike Hoffman 13:40

So after that experience...

Callie Dennis 13:42

So, it didn't really, like, fully click for me until I was like, 14 or 15 coming out of COVID or going back to school, like, full time, not doing the hybrid schedule and, like, not wearing masks as much. I just felt like, you know, these are, you know, time. I guess I kind of took it for granted, [right] And then during COVID made me realize, like, oh, like, I'm not always going to have this experience. I gotta make it last. And so it really hit towards the end of high school, which I think it does for a lot of people, where you just like, [that was ...] Yeah, and so you're just willing to put yourself out there, because you know, like this point in your life is coming to an end. And so that was when it really, really strongly clicked for me. But it was also always present during camps, because church camps are just such a welcoming environment that I always felt comfortable enough to, like, put myself out there more.

Mike Hoffman 14:33

So you could really be who you sort of who you are, really, yeah, okay.

Aliyah Farrell 14:37

Do you think that, like Graceland and the housing system has, like, helped you overcome that? Or...

Callie Dennis 14:42

Sure yeah, it's so nice to just have an automatic, I mean, everyone says it's like, your automatic friend group with your house, but they really do, like, encourage you to go to events and get yourself out there and make new friends, and you meet so many, like, different types of people. That you really learn how to get along with everyone and, like, how to be yourself around more than just one type of person.

Mike Hoffman 15:09

Are you? Do you have plans for next year, like here at Graceland? Do you? Do you want to pursue a, like, a House council position or, [mmm hmm] okay.

Callie Dennis 15:17

Yeah, so I ran for COSA, [okay], rep for Sariah, and I got it. So I'm super excited because I love cosa [Okay].

Mike Hoffman 15:26

And just for you listening, COSA is the Campus Organization for Student Activities. Yes, okay,

Callie Dennis 15:35

So I'm super excited because I've loved going to COSA events, [okay] And I really like to organize and plan and help.

Mike Hoffman 15:41

There you go.

Callie Dennis 15:42

I think, I mean those just go right handed.

Mike Hoffman 15:44

They do, yeah.

Aliyah Farrell 15:45

I will say Callie is also very good at it too. Because when we do like our like for air band, we did our costume. [Oh yeah], she made our little wigs. For those of you listening, we did like trolls, we had to have little wigs.

Mike Hoffman 15:57

Oh yeah, I remember those wigs.

Aliyah Farrell 15:59

She made all of them,

Mike Hoffman 16:01

I think I heard that actually, but...

Aliyah Farrell 16:03

Oh yeah, so she's been awesome to have on Sariah. Okay, so we're going to gear more towards Community of Christ now. [Okay] So, what are your hopes for Community of Christ in the future?

Callie Dennis 16:15

I think sometimes not specifically Community of Christ, but Christianity as a whole gets a bad like, reputation, especially when it comes to, like, being inclusive and diverse and like welcoming to others. And I know Community of Christ specifically is very open to that, like, that's one of our Enduring Principles. Um, and, but being here at Graceland, I've had to explain that to people before, like, explain our Enduring Principles, and like, how we love everyone, and we want everyone to feel welcome in our churches and welcome to you know, accepting the love of Jesus. And so, I think my hope for Community of Christ and all Christianity is to take another step in that direction. And not just not so much, say that we welcome and love everyone, but show it. Yeah?

Mike Hoffman 17:03

Well said, thank you. Yeah.

Aliyah Farrell 17:06

So, what is one thing you would want the leaders of Community of Christ to know?

Mike Hoffman 17:12

Yeah, what do you, speaking of leaders? We're on the verge of the 2025, World Conference. Do you plan on going to Conference or, okay, actually,

Callie Dennis 17:22

So do you know Julie Beaufort?

Aliyah Farrell 17:24

Oh yeah, that was my mom's roommate actually.

Callie Dennis 17:32

Yeah, Julie Beauvert reached out to me a few weeks ago. Love, love that woman. Bless her heart. She reached out to me and asked me if I could attend World Conference as, like, a preschool teacher. Oh, yeah. Okay, Sunday school teacher, yeah. And so, I think I'm teaching the kindergarten class, okay, okay, for the few days during World Conference, yeah? So, I'm super excited. That's awesome, yeah. Well, good.

Mike Hoffman 17:52

It's going to be an historic conference because of the selection of Stassi Cramm to be our first, first woman, President/Prophet. So you know that's why I was sort of leaning that way. So, yeah, I'm very excited about going.

Aliyah Farrell 18:10

alright, so any closing thoughts? Anything you want our listeners to know?

Callie Dennis 18:17

I don't think so.

Mike Hoffman 18:19

She wants you to know nothing. No, I just kidding. Yeah, no, that's fine, great.

Aliyah Farrell 18:23

Well, thank you so much for being here, Callie. [Yeah] That wraps things up for today's episode of Coffee in the Swarm. Thank you for listening. This is Aaliyah,

Callie Dennis 18:32

Callie

Mike Hoffman 18:33

and Mike

Aliyah Farrell 18:33

Signing off until next time.