

MCC Campus Connections Podcast - Episode 8: Brittany Burgess & Stacey Bizzieri

Podcast Transcript

Geovanny Mayorga 0:04

Hello everyone and welcome to Campus Connections, a podcast dedicated to getting to know one another. We are recording from our downtown campus at 223 North LaSalle. I am your host Geovanny Mayorga. And you can find the podcast on Spotify, YouTube, Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, etc. You can contact us at podcast@mcccollege.edu. We look forward to any feedback you would like to provide. And today we have a dynamic duo with us. We have Stacey Bizzieri. Hope I said that correct?

Stacey Bizzieri 0:44

You did.

Geovanny Mayorga 0:45

And Brittany Burgess.

Brittany Burgess 0:47

Yes. Thank you for having us.

Geovanny Mayorga 0:49

Looking forward to our conversation. And Brittany is the director, program director, for our Surgical Technology program.

Brittany Burgess 1:01

And Sterile Processing.

Geovanny Mayorga 1:02

And Sterile Processing. And Stacey's lead instructor, correct?

Stacey Bizzieri 1:06

Yes, and clinical coordinator.

Geovanny Mayorga 1:08

Whew! Right, wonderful.

Geovanny Mayorga 1:11

Let's start learning a little bit more about Surgical Technology and Sterile Processing, what it's all about, what we offer. Brittany, as the program director, talk a little bit about your program.

Brittany Burgess 1:21

Sure. So our Surgical Technology program is our associate program. The students are here for 20 months. We, thank goodness, can graduate them shorter than two years. So we get them in the workforce a lot faster than 24 months. And our surg techs, they are learning all the knowledge and skills to be able to assist the surgeon in surgery. It's a fun job, wouldn't you say?

Stacey Bizzieri 1:51

Yeah, right? You get to see things that not everybody gets to see on a daily basis. So that's what we like to entice those potential students with when we have them come to those interviews and we get to say those things to just let them know - hey, come do what we do, because it's very interesting.

Brittany Burgess 2:12

Well, and one of the things for surg techs that we explain during interviews is, you know, as a nurse or I don't know, a medical assistant, they get to listen to a beating heart. We get to see a beating heart. So those are the things that the students get to see and deal with on a daily basis once they get out into their careers.

Stacey Bizzieri 2:33

Yep, absolutely.

Brittany Burgess 2:35

Our Sterile Processing program, on the other hand, that is a 10-month program, which ends up being 40 weeks long. These students, even though they're only getting a certificate in sterile processing and not an associate degree, the thing

about them is they are getting a base knowledge of how to clean, disinfect, sterilize, decontaminate instruments that are used in surgery. So, I mean, what would you say are some of the things you've seen that could be on instruments?

Stacey Bizzieri 3:06

Um, you can have bioburden, unfortunately.

Brittany Burgess 3:09

Explain what that is?

Stacey Bizzieri 3:11

Bioburden, sure. Bioburden is anything that's left behind from what they used in the surgery or any of the procedures. So that could be brain matter, it could be tissue, it could be fat, it could be blood or bones - it could be any of the above. So that is what comes down to the sterile processing department. And one of the things that we like to explain is that even though this is not a patient-facing position, it is just as important and as crucial as a patient-facing role. Because these positions that they have in sterile processing, they're in charge of making sure that those patients don't come down with that infection, or that post-op infection or surgical site infection, going through the sterilization and decontamination of that instrumentation and supplies.

Geovanny Mayorga 4:05

Yeah, you don't really think about that that much until you're in that position that somebody's going to be taking care of you. And I think I told you this story, but not too long ago, I had my daughter go into surgery. And initially we thought it was going to be maybe a two to four-hour procedure, turned out to be like an eight-hour procedure. And you know, as time goes by, things start playing in your head. What's going to happen or what's happening? And then the life of your child or your loved one is in the hands of the people that are taking care of them. So Sterile Processing, Surgical Technology, obviously the doctors and surgeons - it's extremely important that they know what they're doing. And the littlest thing like not having clean instruments can really wreak havoc on somebody's health or life for that matter.

Brittany Burgess 5:01

Right. And the one thing that we explain to Sterile Processing students is, even though you're just getting a certificate and you're getting a baseline - I mean, how would I say this - you're getting a start into the healthcare field, you play a big part. And we tell them that it's like a circle, and it just goes around. And so the instruments start in sterile processing, they go up to the OR. The surg techs, they're going to check to make sure, you know, there's nothing left on there. But if there is, it gets sent back down. And there's always a way to trace those instruments to know who put it together, who didn't do something correctly, so we can keep quality assurance and know what's going on.

Stacey Bizzieri 5:45

Yeah, and the other thing that we really emphasize to students is when we're training them, or when we're teaching them, is that we really need them to understand the why behind what they're doing, whether it's sterile processing or surg tech. You know, we need them to understand that sterile technique and asepsis and everything that we're explaining - don't learn it just through rote behavior, or don't do it just because we're telling you. We need you to understand the why. So that when patients - treat those patients as if they're your family, or if that were your loved one, or if that were a family member that were in that operating room - would you be okay with what you're doing right now? And if the answer is no, you need to ask yourself, how would you change what you're doing? Because it's that important in how you're handling what you're handling.

Brittany Burgess 6:41

When you tell the story about your daughter having surgery - so, my husband had to have his gallbladder removed not that long ago. And with us knowing what we know, you know, I was asking, "Are they doing it laparoscopic? Is it open?" And I try not to ask too many questions when I'm with him at the doctor, because sometimes it's better for them not to know—

Stacey Bizzieri 7:04

Absolutely.

Brittany Burgess 7:04

—who you are, and then you get the real answers. But it took a little longer. And so I was thinking, "What is going on? It's laparoscopic, it should only take this long to get into the OR." So we have that aspect of we know too much.

Stacey Bizzieri 7:17

We know too much when it happens to us, definitely.

Geovanny Mayorga 7:21

Yeah, it doesn't necessarily have to be, you know, too much. But I mean, you have to have a clear explanation. When I went with my daughter after the procedure, I went with a specialist afterwards for a follow-up. And I was asking questions that I thought were pretty relevant to what was happening. And I kept getting answers that I didn't like. Yeah, you know, we go, "Okay, well, you should know better than I do because you're a doctor, right?" You're like, "Not sure I like what you're saying."

Geovanny Mayorga 7:57

So we have programs at our downtown campus. We have programs in Evergreen Park, which is on the Southside. How long are the programs?

Brittany Burgess 8:05

So surg tech is 20 months. So they're four months shy of a full two years. Because we're hybrid, we're able to do that where they're taking, you know, virtual classes online and then in person. And then Sterile Processing is 10 months, which is 40 weeks. So they're - I mean, for what they're going to get to do in a career, these are, I would say, good lengths of programs to get the information you need, and then get them out in the workforce as quick as possible. Because there's a shortage.

Stacey Bizzieri 8:36

Definitely a shortage.

Brittany Burgess 8:37

We're part of AST, which is the Association of Surgical Technologists. And one of the biggest things right now is trying to get the state of Illinois to require certified techs in the operating room, but there's a pushback because of the shortage. That certification is gonna ensure that they were taught everything they needed before they got into the OR to have that knowledge. And that's something that we're trying to be a part of and help with that legislation.

Geovanny Mayorga 9:05

Now we just recently - our program recently got accredited, correct?

Brittany Burgess 9:08

Correct. 2019. Yeah, surg tech became CAAHEP accredited, which is - Oh, you're probably better at knowing those than me. Look, we're both going blank. Basically, what CAAHEP does, which is C-A-A-H-E-P. They're the Commission on Accreditation for Allied Health Education Programs. There we go. Yes. See?

Geovanny Mayorga 9:32

Yeah, we got it.

Brittany Burgess 9:33

We feed off each other there. What they do is they ensure that you have a curriculum that you're following that was put together by a board of educators which include, you know, a medical doctor, surg techs, nurses, anybody who's had any kind of role in the operating room. And with that, they have the chance to sit for the certified - not sterile processing - Certified Surgical Technology exam through NBSTSA, which is—

Stacey Bizzieri 10:02

The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting.

Brittany Burgess 10:06

So that is - I wouldn't say it's the gold standard. Doesn't mean that someone who doesn't have that isn't as knowledgeable, but that just lets, you know, your hospitals and your facilities know, these students came out of a program that had a strict curriculum that they followed. So yeah, and we just went through a reaccreditation process, and we should find out in July. Fingers crossed, I think we're good. We'll get our tenure reaccreditation.

Geovanny Mayorga 10:38

Nice. Yep. Well, you spoke about that there's a difference between surgical technologist and surgical technician. What are the differences?

Stacey Bizzieri 10:49

So technician is someone who - they don't quite have the training and the knowledge base that a technologist does. So that technologist has gone through that training and the certification that Brittany was speaking about. So the, you

know, the NBSTSA, the full curriculum, versus a technician that may have on-the-job training, or that maybe started out a long time ago and hasn't gone through a program like we have.

Brittany Burgess 11:21

Right, and I, you know, my daughter just turned 15. So I'm taking her to get her permit. And I was telling her, you know, she went through driver's ed, which I didn't have that when I was younger, and I said, "You're learning all the signs and everything." I said, "If you don't have somebody to teach you that, and you just go get your permit, you're winging it," is what I say, to hope that you know what it's talking about. I said, "Versus you have the information more in depth with a teacher." That's kind of how it works for technician and technologists.

Technologists had somebody teach them the skill set and the knowledge before they got into the OR, kind of on that same process there.

Stacey Bizzieri 11:59

And they're really pushing - AST, so the professional organization that we were talking about - they're really pushing for legislation nationwide to make sure that everybody, it's required for certification. Because if you think about it, you know, people have to have a license to cut hair or to work on a car. Why do we not have to have certification to work on a human body? I think it's probably 15 states that require it, somewhere around there. So right now, only 15 states out of 50 require you to be certified as a surg tech. Illinois is not one of them. So right now they're currently really pushing - AST is really pushing right now to get people on board to make it required to be a CST.

Brittany Burgess 12:47

And I just got an email this morning from the president of AST, and it's actually going to the Senate right now.

Geovanny Mayorga 12:55

Wonderful.

Stacey Bizzieri 12:56

Yes.

Brittany Burgess 12:56

Yep.

Geovanny Mayorga 12:57

Like many people, I don't necessarily think that we all start doing what we end up doing, right?

Brittany Burgess 13:04

Right.

Geovanny Mayorga 13:04

And I know that you both started doing something different. Now, Brittany, you were a star athlete in your younger years.

Brittany Burgess 13:15

And then I had kids.

Geovanny Mayorga 13:17

What were you doing?

Brittany Burgess 13:18

So right out of high school, I had a softball scholarship. So I played at an NAIA division college, and I was a pitcher. So I did that for four years and went to nursing school at that time. So that was always my thing to do. But I actually wanted to be in the Olympics as a softball player. And they got rid of the Olympics before I could make it to that point, because we were, as USA, we were just killing the game. You know, we were beating everybody.

Stacey Bizzieri 13:50

So you wanted to be Jennie Finch.

Brittany Burgess 13:51

I did. If you know who that is.

Geovanny Mayorga 13:53

I do know. That was a lady here - I don't know if she still plays here. So yeah, so—

Brittany Burgess 13:57

When they got rid of the Olympics, they then got the professional softball leagues, and she was part of all that. So yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 14:03

That's still—

Brittany Burgess 14:04

They still have professional leagues. Yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 14:07

Nice.

Brittany Burgess 14:07

So that was my thing. And then I had kids and hurt my shoulder. And that's why I don't play.

Geovanny Mayorga 14:13

You went to school for nursing, correct?

Brittany Burgess 14:15

I did. Yes. I tell my students I can relate to them when they talk about some of their struggles in life. I had two semesters left to have my bachelor's in nursing and had a lot of personal things go on in my life and left school and never went back for that.

Geovanny Mayorga 14:33

Yeah, it's understandable.

Brittany Burgess 14:34

I regret it every day, but I wouldn't be where I'm at.

Geovanny Mayorga 14:37

That is true. That's how life happens basically. And Stacey, you - first of all, I think it's awesome. What you did in high school was you were working at a record store, correct?

Stacey Bizzieri 14:50

Yes, I did. I did. After I left high school. I love music. I've - music has been a huge part of my life. You know, I just liked working in music, and I worked in video stores. I kind of related to the whole Empire Records movie like way back when. Yeah, I just loved music. So I did that for a while. And then I went into banking. And yeah, did banking until the mortgage crash of '07 happened, and then I needed to go back to school, which brought me here.

Geovanny Mayorga 15:21

Yeah, we had a great discussion with Dr. Resto, when I did his episode, about his time in banking and my sister has been in banking for what, 18-20 years?

Stacey Bizzieri 15:32

Yeah, I did thirteen years in banking. I started out on the teller side, on the retail side, and then it got a little too sales for me. I'm not a salesperson at all. So I kind of switched over to the underwriting side and I underwrote mortgages for about seven years of that. So that's where I left and then unfortunately worked for one of the largest predatory lenders in Chicago. So I had to get out. So I left and ended up in retail, and as a single mom couldn't sustain raising a child on retail-level income. So I decided to go to Miller-Motte Technical College in Clarksville, Tennessee, which, you know, how I ended up in Tennessee as a Chicago girl is a whole other story. But yeah, that's where I ended up in surg tech school. I always wanted to be in medicine. So medicine always kind of piqued my interest. But that's where I ended up enrolling in Surgical Technology. And that was in 2009.

Geovanny Mayorga 16:37

The interesting thing about that is that you are both from Chicago, correct? But you both ended up in Tennessee.

Brittany Burgess 16:49

Yep. That's right.

Geovanny Mayorga 16:50

You went to university there.

Brittany Burgess 16:52

I actually lived there for 20 years. My dad was in the military. So that's where he was stationed. We were in Hawaii, and then he had the choice to either go to Alaska or—

Geovanny Mayorga 17:06

Why would you ever leave? First of all, thank you to your dad for his service.

Brittany Burgess 17:11

He owns a house in Hawaii. So does my uncle. So Stacey and I have gone there yet. So you know, we still go.

Stacey Bizzieri 17:18

We went - well, we went there a few years ago. We went for our birthdays. Yeah. Because our birthdays are only 10 days apart.

Geovanny Mayorga 17:25

Look at that. You have more in common than anybody knew.

Stacey Bizzieri 17:27

That's why we're late. It's - that's what - somebody said the other day, they're like, "You guys are just like platonic soulmates," and we really are. It is very weird.

Brittany Burgess 17:39

Yeah. But to kind of touch on that, I was there because my dad was in the military. And I was her instructor in surg tech school. Actually, I was her clinical coordinator. So at that time, I was at the hospital when she was doing her externship rotation. And then we got to talking and somehow we got on to where she was from. And I said, "Wait a minute. We're from the same area. She knows some of my family members somehow through schooling and whatnot." And I said, "How in the world did you end up in Clarksville, Tennessee?" And she actually lived in the rural - yeah, country. Like, it's rare you see cars driving by type area.

Stacey Bizzieri 18:25

Bumpus Mills. Bumpus Mills was the name of the town.

Brittany Burgess 18:30

Oh, well, when I first went to her house after she had graduated and came to work for us - that's a whole other story - yeah, we'll get to it. But she said, "There's a big hill you have to go up." And I'm like, "It can't be that bad." Because I had never been out that way. I stayed in the city area. And so when I went out there I said, "No wonder why you can't get to work in the wintertime when it snows." I'm like, "This is a big—" and it literally would go up and turn really fast. Yeah. Like a mile and a half up a dirt road. So that's where she lived. Yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 19:02

And then, Brittany, you also - you got started into teaching for some reason, right?

Brittany Burgess 19:09

So I was actually working in surgery. My daughter was - what was she? - eight months old. At the time, I was a single mom. I had left her father. And I was only making \$9 an hour working in surgery in Tennessee. Cost of living is totally different there. And I thought that was good because I was making \$7 an hour before that. And then I thought, "There's no way that I can live off of this." I opened up a phone book, started looking through the phone book, called around private practices because I didn't want to work on call or nights, found a surgeon to work for, and then they didn't offer health insurance. Before the Affordable Care Act, which we know it is Obamacare, if you had under - I believe it was 10 employees - they didn't have to offer health insurance. So I had no health insurance. My old boss - my program director, when I was in school - called me up and said, "I have a position and I really want you to come take it." And I said, "Do you offer benefits? What are they?" And I said, "Sure, count me in." And that's how I got into teaching. It was not something I saw coming at all.

Geovanny Mayorga 20:20

And then that's how Stacey ended up being your student.

Brittany Burgess 20:24

Yes.

Geovanny Mayorga 20:25

And you got into medical because—

Stacey Bizzieri 20:26

I got into medical just because I always - I've always been interested in it ever since I was a little little kid. Which is a whole other story. But my biological father was actually a firefighter. So I kind of grew up around the firehouse until I was about 10 years old. And then my brain's just always kind of liked medical. So I kind of always been drawn to it.

Geovanny Mayorga 20:53

And you ended up teaching then. Did you actually go and practice?

Stacey Bizzieri 20:57

She brought me on to teaching. I was working at Vanderbilt in Nashville.

Brittany Burgess 21:03

Oh, hold on. Before that. Didn't you move back here?

Stacey Bizzieri 21:07

I did. So I graduated. Once I graduated, I moved back to Chicago and worked at Loyola at night. At night I was working midnights at Loyola, and my dad and my son had this bond - they were just bonded together. Single mom working midnights was really hard to find care. And my dad just said, "Just move back." So I said, "Okay." There happened to be a position open at Vanderbilt in labor and delivery, which is where I was working at Loyola. So I moved back to Tennessee and was driving 100 miles one way to work. So I was driving 200 miles round trip, just to work, which I loved working at Vanderbilt. I mean, great teamwork. Everything was amazing. But then Brittany called me up and said, "Hey, you know what, we've got a teaching position open," and I went, "Okay," and they were paying more money. And it was closer to home. And she said, "Come in and take the test." Which was a whole - that's a whole - it was a personality test.

Brittany Burgess 22:18

You know, where you have to answer the questions - you should answer the same every time. I don't always do well at those things. You should answer the way they want you to answer it, not the way you really feel. And yeah, she failed the test. My boss's boss was like, "No, we can't - she scored that - that's not going to work for us." And so we had to explain the situation and how her brain works. And we ended up getting her on board.

Stacey Bizzieri 22:48

She still to this day says, "Stacey, your brain - why can't you ever just go from A to B to C to Z?" She's like, "You've got to go from like A to R to L to Q back to C to get to Z. Like you can't ever just go straight." And it's true. I can't. I don't know. So that's what started me teaching. That's how I got started teaching. And then we just kind of followed each other. Then I ended up moving back to Chicago because my dad got sick and all our family's here. I started working at Malcolm X. And her mom had passed away. And her family was all up here. So she moved back up here and came to work with me at Malcolm X. They restructured and she came here. I stayed there. Which I guess is no secret - they lost their accreditation. And after she came here and they lost their accreditation, she said, "Give me a year and I'll bring you on." So she's been here a little over three years. I've been here for - four years in August. Right? Five, oh geez. I've been here

almost three years. So that's - that's where we've been teaching together for almost 10 years. And the last two—

Brittany Burgess 24:11

Is, you know, we tell people, if she can't lecture for the day, for whatever reason, I can just step in and lecture because we teach the same. And that's not something you always get. A lot of times you butt heads because everybody has an opinion and it doesn't mean that that's the wrong way. It's just different. And we don't have that. Thank goodness.

Geovanny Mayorga 24:34

So after you graduated, you guys have stayed in touch or how did that work?

Stacey Bizzieri 24:40

For a while, for a while.

Brittany Burgess 24:41

When I left my teaching position in Tennessee, and she was still there. There was a lot of things that went on that after five years of being there, I was just tired of it mentally. I couldn't do it anymore. And so I was gonna put my two weeks in and something happened. And I just walked out one day, which is not something I would normally do. And when I left, there was a lot of - what would you say? - like things were said about me that were so inaccurate. She was told she couldn't talk to me if she still wanted to work there. And I thought, "This is insane. Like, what did I do to these people? Besides, I couldn't take lying about things." It was stuff going on with the director. And I just said, "I can't do it anymore." So we talked for a while.

Stacey Bizzieri 25:30

It was between when you left and then when I finally decided to leave that I was like, "I can't do this anymore." And I called her up. And I was like, "Look, this is ridiculous." And I started telling her everything. And she was like, "What are you talking about?" Yeah. And that was like the end of it. And then we just started talking again. Well, yeah.

Brittany Burgess 25:50

And I told her, "I can't blame you. That was your job. They were telling you things. And you kind of had to do what you needed to do to keep your job. So no hard

feelings there." And then she came here. I came here as well. Been here since 2019. Thanks to her.

Geovanny Mayorga 26:08

Yeah, nice. We talked a little bit about you guys were at the time single - single moms. Still single mom. Yep. Working life, trying to balance work, family, home, similar to what some of our students go through now. Some of our students are single, single moms or a family to take care of. So I think for the students as an instructor, when you are able to relate, it kind of helps them out a little bit understanding and getting through some of the program. Do you encounter some of that in your programs?

Brittany Burgess 26:40

We do. It can be anything from somebody lost a parent. We had a student that we both talked to, she graduated, and while she was in school, she lost her father, and it hit her hard. She was a really good student and started to drop off a little and struggle. And so we kind of tell the students, "We get it, we've been there." We have single moms who say they're struggling with daycare, or, you know, "I can't come to class today because my child is sick. How am I supposed to make this work?" And we kind of explain it's not easy. Yeah, you got to have a backup to a backup to a backup to kind of make it work. But we do try to, you know, we tell the students we empathize with you. We understand. It's not the same situation. But we've been through things and you got to keep the communication open.

Stacey Bizzieri 27:30

Keep the communication. Don't always think that just because - don't judge. Don't judge a book by its cover. Just because you see what you see doesn't mean we haven't experienced what you may have experienced. Right. You know, we can empathize. We have been through things.

Brittany Burgess 27:47

100%.

Geovanny Mayorga 27:49

So what is the - I mean, you both been in the operating room now? Oh, yeah. Yeah. What is a day in the life of a surg tech in the operating room?

Brittany Burgess 28:01

Everybody should do it.

Stacey Bizzieri 28:02

It's go-go-go. It's go-go-go.

Stacey Bizzieri 28:07

From the second you walk through the door. You lose weight, because you never sit still. You know, just as recently as May, I was in the operating room. I went back for a little while just to kind of keep up on my scrub skills. But you know, a typical day - you walk in the door at six o'clock, you look at your cases, you go prep your room. You know, you could have anywhere from three cases a day to 10 cases a day depending on what you're doing. But it is go-go-go from the second you walk in the door.

Brittany Burgess 28:43

Well, it depends on what type of shift you're working. Is it eight hours, 10 hours, 12 hours on how go-go-go you are. But yeah, we tell the students - I try to tell them, most of them have worked in - they've either bartended or they've worked at restaurants. And so I tell them, "It's kind of like working in a restaurant where once the customer gets up, we clean up and get ready for the next one." That's what we do in the OR. We work on one procedure, get everything ready for it. And then we turn around and clean it up and we have turnover times we have to hit to where you should be cleaned up. I mean, what was your turnover time? Do you know what it was?

Stacey Bizzieri 29:24

About 10 minutes, usually 10 to 15 minutes. They're expecting you to start getting ready for the next case because it's back to back. And you have board runners who are nurses - their job is to keep track of how the flow of surgeries is going and they start - it's like a puzzle. They'll start moving things around to keep the cases flowing, because that's their revenue of course. But yeah, you have to know everything from what instruments do you need, what's the anatomy of the procedure you're doing? The students always say, "Well, how do you know how you're setting the room up?" It's on the surgeon's preference card, which is a piece of paper that's printed out that is gonna say the procedure, is the surgeon right-handed or left-handed, because that's important, especially if they're left-

handed, which she is. So she teaches all the left-handed students stuff, because it's different.

Brittany Burgess 30:20

It is. It's different on how to do things if you're left-handed or right-handed. So you have to know all of that. And I like to say that we know more than everybody in that room minus the surgeon and probably anesthesia. Sometimes we know just as much as the surgeon. We have to know just as much as a surgeon, because one of the key things that, you know, we say is our job is anticipation.

Stacey Bizzieri 30:41

So, you know, there's a saying that we have that says, "Don't give them what they asked for, give them what they need," because sometimes what they ask for is not actually what they need, and we know what they need before they actually need it. So we know just as much as that surgeon does when it comes to that procedure. And that takes time, you know, at a time.

Geovanny Mayorga 31:04

Literally. You know, a lot of us get our ideas of what happens in the operating room from TV shows.

Stacey Bizzieri 31:12

Which is not real.

Geovanny Mayorga 31:15

Well, that was my next question. Is it? What's shown in the TV shows or what's actually—

Stacey Bizzieri 31:22

I was gonna—

Brittany Burgess 31:24

She loves to watch all the Chicago shows. Yeah. What is it? Chicago Fire, Chicago Med, whatever all the shows are. And her son has been in a couple of them. But we always joke - my husband as well. So my husband works in healthcare as well. And so all three of us have like a little chat. We're always talking about things. But we joke that it's not realistic. No, they have - I don't know, what do they call the people that kind of guide them? Yeah, like the advisors. They have healthcare

advisors to guide them on how to do things. But at the same time, it's TV, so we can't always have masks on because we have to see what they're saying. And you know, they do some off the wall stuff. But we have to tell the students, they tend to walk around with their hands up like this - they're sterile from mid-chest. But when you see this, you're not sterile here. And because they watch Grey's Anatomy - that's the one they always say. And so I said, "What I do on Grey's Anatomy, we're now not sterile." And so it's very—

Stacey Bizzieri 32:24

Very different. My mother will not watch medical shows with me.

Brittany Burgess 32:29

No, no, because she calls everything out.

Stacey Bizzieri 32:33

Yeah, that's not right. Like, "Stacey!" She will not - she will tell anybody when she tells them what my profession is - "I will not watch medical shows with her because she points everything out that's incorrect."

Geovanny Mayorga 32:48

I can't help it. It is - it's fine. I mean, I know they need to make it a little drama, but it needs to be somewhat accurate. I was watching a series the other day and I'm like, "There's no way doctors don't quite—" What were you watching?

Brittany Burgess 33:00

What were we watching the other day?

Stacey Bizzieri 33:02

Yeah, they were talking about schedule two narcotics. And they threw out two drugs that are clearly not schedule two narcotics. So I was like, "Oh, now the world thinks, or at least the nation thinks, that albuterol and Abilify are schedule two narcotics and they are not."

Geovanny Mayorga 33:24

You should be an advisor then for—

Stacey Bizzieri 33:27

I know, right?

Brittany Burgess 33:28

So when we went to Hawaii for our birthday - oh yeah - they were filming. It was CSI: Hawaii. And we were laying on the beach. We were in the background. We were there. We were famous.

Geovanny Mayorga 33:44

Did you have to sign a waiver?

Brittany Burgess 33:46

No, where we were at.

Geovanny Mayorga 33:47

Oh, okay.

Brittany Burgess 33:49

We weren't part of the show, per se. But we made sure we stayed there because they came up and blocked off part of the boundary. We were right next to it. But when we watched the show, we all had to watch it when it came on. And we're like, "Oh, there we are." We're blurry.

Geovanny Mayorga 34:02

Do you know what episode it was?

Brittany Burgess 34:05

The very first one, wasn't it? I don't remember which one. It's probably - it's either that or maybe it was later on. We'll have to look. But yeah, it was funny watching it and then seeing what we saw on the beach and we're trying to figure out what the scene was about and whatnot. But yeah, yeah, definitely.

Geovanny Mayorga 34:22

Look into that. Being an advisor.

Brittany Burgess 34:25

I would like that. I would. There's one that's on Grey's - Linda Klein? Is her name? Really? Yeah. She makes a lot of money. Her and my husband are all into that stuff because when they were - my husband used to act. He's done stuff in different shows. My aunt does as well. She's an extra or an actual actor - extras. But my aunt actually has - I don't even know what agency she is - but she does more. She

does more than just extra, so I don't know exactly what she does. But I saw her on Chicago Med one time and I was like, "Wait a minute." I had to rewind it. I'm like, "Is that who I think that is?" Yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 35:05

So there we go. You can do some scrubbing on screen.

Brittany Burgess 35:08

She says that all the time. Yeah. "You should do it." I'm against it. She's all for it. Her and my husband. I'm like, "You guys can go together. I'll stay at home."

Geovanny Mayorga 35:17

You don't have any lines, you just have to be there to scrub in. Yeah, scrub in.

Brittany Burgess 35:23

And you can walk like this and nobody can tell you not to.

Geovanny Mayorga 35:28

So that's a good segue into work-life balance, because if you're talking about doing, you know, 10-12 hour shifts, then what do you do to destress and come back to real life after working such a long shift? I mean, how do you balance work-life balance?

Stacey Bizzieri 35:47

I mean - I mean, we talked about music earlier. Yeah. Now that, you know, COVID has kind of gone to the wayside, concerts have started back up, so I enjoy going to concerts, sporting events. So you know, I've gone to a couple concerts, even though, you know, we're not going to get into the Bears and how well they did or did not do this past season. But I was able to go to the Family Fest and I actually got to go to a Bears preseason game, couple Cubs games, did get to see Hamilton before it left. We actually went to see Hamilton. We do a lot together. I like to - I like to do those kinds of things when I have time.

Geovanny Mayorga 36:32

Do you like music festivals or is it more like—

Stacey Bizzieri 36:34

I don't do the festivals. It's not that it's too many people. There's just too many groups. I don't even go for the opening acts anymore. I think I'm too old for the opening acts. Like I went to - I said I went to see Depeche Mode. Like I don't care about the opening act. I'll just go for—

Geovanny Mayorga 36:53

Really? Yeah. You've got to get your money's worth. It's expensive.

Stacey Bizzieri 36:56

I've seen so many concerts in my lifetime. Like I wanted—

Geovanny Mayorga 36:59

I wanted to go see Depeche Mode. And I totally - I wanted to see The Cure last year. Didn't get around to it. So—

Stacey Bizzieri 37:05

Good. I got - the only one I have coming up is Blink-182. I'm still working on - I want to get Justin Timberlake. I admit it. I want to get Justin Timberlake tickets. I tell her she's too old. And now Usher just came around. He's got three shows at United Center. Now I got to work on Usher tickets. I'm all over the place with my music taste. I really am.

Geovanny Mayorga 37:27

Well, I'll tell you a little bit why my music tastes - I've been lucky enough that I saw - and this will give you the range - I went to a concert in Colorado at Red Rocks Amphitheatre. If you've never been there, you have to go. Not - it's absolutely gorgeous and the acoustics are top notch.

Stacey Bizzieri 37:45

Amazing. I'm sure.

Geovanny Mayorga 37:47

I saw Willie Nelson there. Really? Amazing to see Willie Nelson. I mean, that's like one of my highlights - being able to see him in concert. And then the other extreme is I saw Snoop Dogg.

Stacey Bizzieri 38:01

Oh, see? I'm like my husband. See, I'm in the same category. I've seen - like I've seen Ice-T with Body Count at the Metro. Okay, so - and then I've seen like Harry Connick Jr. I've seen Neil Diamond. No. No, I haven't seen Neil Diamond. That's what I'm saying. Like I'm all over the board.

Geovanny Mayorga 38:20

Yeah, I've seen - I've seen Metallica. No. That was a little insane. I saw them in Denver as well. And we were at the time at the Pepsi Center. It was so loud. I thought my ears were gonna bleed. I've seen—

Stacey Bizzieri 38:36

I mean Korn is kinda loud. I've seen - I saw Korn with Snoop Dogg. So I have seen Snoop Dogg.

Geovanny Mayorga 38:45

Yeah, Red Rocks. I mean, I do want to - I want to at least have the experience of - because I haven't really - I've never been to Lollapalooza, which is here.

Stacey Bizzieri 38:53

I haven't either. I wasn't either.

Brittany Burgess 38:55

But when I first - I got stuck in traffic and she had to guide me through downtown. True. I did. When I first came for an interview to move here and I was like, "What are these people wearing?" I had no clue what it was. I hadn't heard of it. And she was like, "Oh, Lollapalooza is going on." I'm like, "This is insane." And it was daytime.

Geovanny Mayorga 39:18

Yeah. No, that's the thing. Now the fests are popping up everywhere, but I want to see at least some of the more known ones like Bonnaroo. I really want to go to—

Stacey Bizzieri 39:29

I wouldn't go to Bonnaroo. That - it gets crazy. A lot of nudity.

Geovanny Mayorga 39:34

And mud. Perfect stuff. Lots of mud. What's the one in California? Oh—

Stacey Bizzieri 39:45

I know what you're talking about. But I—

Brittany Burgess 39:48

Oh, I know what you're talking about. Yeah, the one in California.

Geovanny Mayorga 39:51

I want to see that as well.

Brittany Burgess 39:53

See, here I go to Taylor Swift concerts.

Geovanny Mayorga 39:56

Once you went to the Taylor Swift one here?

Brittany Burgess 39:59

No, we went to Nashville. Oh, you went to Nashville. I was - it was tiring. I've never been to an almost four-hour concert with a bunch of Swifties. Yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 40:09

I don't get that at all. I just can't. I don't understand it.

Brittany Burgess 40:13

I went 'cause my daughter went and I was just like, "What?"

Geovanny Mayorga 40:16

I get that you go, you know, because of your kids. I just don't get the whole circus around it.

Brittany Burgess 40:22

It was insane. It was like Lollapalooza for Taylor Swift is what I felt like.

Geovanny Mayorga 40:27

Lollapalooza is more like teenage—

Brittany Burgess 40:30

Yeah. Well, but it's how they dress. Like the whole dress to go to some of these concerts is like, I feel like they spend a lot of money just to look a certain way to go and you're in the nosebleeds. And yeah—

Stacey Bizzieri 40:44

We'll have Swifties this weekend for the Super Bowl.

Brittany Burgess 40:46

That's right. My daughter's excited. How many times are we gonna see Taylor Swift?

Stacey Bizzieri 40:51

Is she gonna make it from Japan? Question.

Brittany Burgess 40:54

My daughter stays on the page and—

Geovanny Mayorga 40:58

I can't remember who told me that Taylor Swift is one of the worst polluters. Right? Because she's—

Brittany Burgess 41:06

My student just told me that. Somebody told me. So they told me yesterday that apparently she flew 13 minutes when she could have just drove and flies for everything. Yeah. I mean, she owns her own plane.

Geovanny Mayorga 41:22

She just can't go anywhere without the mob. I don't know why. I don't get that mentality at all. So anyway, back to concerts. What's been one of your favorite concerts of all time that you've seen?

Stacey Bizzieri 41:44

Oh. Do you remember? The Cure was one of them. Yeah, from way back when. I think U2's Zoo TV tour was probably one. I mean, Depeche Mode, because I've seen them like 17 or 18 times.

Geovanny Mayorga 41:59

Really? Yeah. I've never seen—

Stacey Bizzieri 42:04

Yeah. Um. Well, I would probably say those are like my top three. And then if you go like small venue that I've seen, like Beastie Boys. I've seen - yeah, that's my - yeah. And I've probably seen anywhere between 150 to 200 concerts.

Geovanny Mayorga 42:19

Yeah, I don't think I've seen that many. But I have seen a few. I have been looking to see different venues like - yeah, definitely. I can't remember the venue name. But that was similar to like the Metro. Yeah, small venue. I've been to Red Rocks. That would be amazing. The amphitheater in Indianapolis. I can't remember because they're always changing names. Yep. I've seen several concerts there. Yeah. Rock concerts in Denver.

Stacey Bizzieri 42:49

Like I've - here. Okay. Guilty pleasure moment. I've flown to Las Vegas to see *NSYNC.

Geovanny Mayorga 42:58

You shouldn't have said that.

Brittany Burgess 43:00

I don't care.

Stacey Bizzieri 43:01

She likes Justin. It's because I like Justin Timberlake. I love Usher.

Geovanny Mayorga 43:11

So he's good. Yeah.

Stacey Bizzieri 43:12

He's an entertainer. I like entertainers. That's why I like Justin Timberlake. He's an entertainer.

Geovanny Mayorga 43:18

I saw - I'm a big sports fan. I'm always like, always seeing who's gonna play the halftime shows. Yeah. There have been some good ones and some not so good. I agree. I recently saw the NHL All-Star Game which was held in Canada. Horrible music. I don't know who was doing the music booking. Sounded to me or seemed to me like there was a lot of Canadian artists. Oh, it was not good. I did not see that. I missed that. It would have been a waste if I would have paid that much money to go see that. Now, so one of my favorites, and I remember - and it's more for the atmosphere that was built around the concert - was the Gipsy Kings. Oh, I bet that was good.

Stacey Bizzieri 44:10

Gipsy Kings at Red Rocks Amphitheatre.

Geovanny Mayorga 44:13

Oh, see? It was amazing. The sound, the atmosphere. It was like a huge party.

Stacey Bizzieri 44:15

Yeah, see? And that's - I think, I bet half of it was just the Red Rocks.

Geovanny Mayorga 44:20

Yeah, like I said, if you've never been there, it's gorgeous. And then let alone the sound that comes off of it. It's just beautiful. Yeah, I bet. The Gorge. What is it in - was it in California? The Gorge. So that's another one I want to go take a look at. Yeah. So anyway, what are the things outside of music? Just being at home, work-life balance. Do you still do anything with softball? Does your daughter do softball or anything like that?

Brittany Burgess 44:51

No. So that's always your dream. You know, when you have kids, they're gonna be just like you and she's totally opposite. She is musical. So she's in musical theater and violin, hoping that the almost two-year-old is into sports because we'll have maybe better luck with him. So now she's into that. But we had season tickets recently for the White Sox. My husband - I grew up all around. I lived in Europe, Hawaii. I was born in Texas. I mean, you name it. I've lived there.

Geovanny Mayorga 45:27

Born in Texas? Were you born here?

Brittany Burgess 45:30

You were born in Texas, and you went to high school here?

Brittany Burgess 45:32

No, I went to high school in Tennessee. Started school in Germany. Oklahoma, Tennessee. I mean, you know, I went to - I believe my brother and I went to 16 different grade schools before we graduated high school.

Geovanny Mayorga 45:45

Is that because of the military?

Brittany Burgess 45:47

Yeah. Yeah. So my mom was the glue that held it together. And she was really good at - every four years, we were moving. And when we lived in Europe, we moved, I believe, two or three times just in Europe alone in Germany. And she was really big on, "Well, you get to, you know, reinvent yourself and make new friends." And she tried to make it as exciting as possible. So yeah, so I was the only one out of my mom, my dad and my brother that was born in Texas. They were all born here in Illinois. So that's me. Yay. Oh, wow. So yeah, so my husband didn't have any of that though. He didn't travel. His parents didn't get along that great. His life was a little different. So he wanted different for our kids. And he was like, "Let's go to the White Sox." And we got season tickets, and we got rid of them because of how the season went. So hopefully we get that back.

Geovanny Mayorga 46:47

But they may move, right?

Brittany Burgess 46:49

Uh, yeah. Well, it looks nice, though. It looks nice. She was actually telling me where it was at. My husband looked at all that. It looks like it's going to be a nice field. I mean, I don't know.

Geovanny Mayorga 47:00

Is it official though?

Brittany Burgess 47:01

I don't know. My husband would know that. I was like the Bears. Don't like the White Sox.

Stacey Bizzieri 47:06

I'm a North Sider.

Geovanny Mayorga 47:09

We were talking about that with my cousins when we were recently - recently went to the Blackhawks game, talking about North Side versus South Side. It's crazy. I grew up actually - and I was telling them I grew up just like many of them did - going to White Sox games. At the time, Comiskey would host a lot of sporting events like soccer events, some concerts that they would host at the time. So we

grew up more - even though we've always been on the North Side - we grew up more going to the South Side than we did to the North Side for Cubs. So—

Brittany Burgess 47:46

It's funny you say that. My friend came to visit when I first moved here, and we did a tour of the Cubs stadium and my family - I had pictures and they're like, "How dare you go and do that?" And I was like, "Just the - you know, learning about everything about this." Yeah. I was like, "That was amazing. We got to go on the field and get pieces of ivy because they were trimming the ivy that day." And my family was like, "You don't go there. And how dare you go there." It was like I had a big X on me because I went there.

Geovanny Mayorga 48:20

So we feel the same thing about some of our cousins that are Sox fans.

Stacey Bizzieri 48:25

Yeah, my uncle used to work for the Tribune. So ever since I was little little, I was just kind of born into being a Cubs fan. So I've just always been a Cubs fan. My dad was a Cubs fan. So you know, once we moved back here - that was the first Cubs game over the summer. That was on Father's Day. We went to a Cubs game. That was the first Cubs game that Dom had been to. So that was his first Cubs - he was all excited. He had never been to - he'd never been to Wrigley and he'd always wanted to go to Wrigley. So that was his first Cubs game.

Geovanny Mayorga 49:00

Are there more people - I don't know why - no Wrigley over Comiskey? I don't know why.

Brittany Burgess 49:05

I don't know if it's because of the - what's the word I'm looking for? Just it's been around longer, and I don't know—

Stacey Bizzieri 49:14

They've done so much to it. It's not the same Wrigley. I mean, it is Wrigley but it's not Wrigley.

Geovanny Mayorga 49:21

Well, I mean, it's really, you know, 2020 forward, right? I mean, Wrigley was just - well, what the White Sox had to do, they had to - and I don't know if you remember when the new Comiskey was built. It was built with blue seats. Do you remember that?

Brittany Burgess 49:36

I did. Yeah.

Geovanny Mayorga 49:37

And then they switched them to green seats. And then a couple years - a few years ago they added the ivy in the back to make it a little bit - not so plastic - because the blue was just like, felt so plastic. Yeah.

Brittany Burgess 49:55

And I think if they build the new stadium with the look of it - I was telling my husband it looks the same. It does. But it's got more greenery. So I feel like that's —

Geovanny Mayorga 50:07

The trend now, right? Everything has to be a little more earthy. Exactly. Yeah. And everything's been built with restaurants. And you look at the United Center, the addition that was done. Oh, yeah. Built, you know, restaurants, bars. And a bar - when we—

Stacey Bizzieri 50:25

Went there for the Depeche Mode concert. I hadn't been there in forever. And we walked in and I was like, "Holy cow." And that was the first time my son - that was his first concert as well.

Geovanny Mayorga 50:33

Remember, the Michael Jordan statue was out?

Stacey Bizzieri 50:37

Yeah, exactly. On top of it. And he was just like, in awe. He was like, "Holy cow." Yeah, he didn't - he kind of didn't know where—

Geovanny Mayorga 50:45

Yeah. So anyway, we're coming to the end of our episode. Any last parting words?

Brittany Burgess 50:56

For me, you know, just to tell you how much you're appreciated here. And I hope we have many more years together. So don't try to leave anymore.

Stacey Bizzieri 51:05

No. I mean, where? Believe me. And she comes back. We're a package deal.

Stacey Bizzieri 51:11

Yes. I think that's just kind of - I think that goes without—

Brittany Burgess 51:15

We don't always get along. Like it's a healthy relationship, right? Where it's - we have to tell students, "I am her boss, and we don't always agree. And I will tell her, 'Hey, I need you to not do that.'" But it works. We have - I think what students always ask us, "What makes this program or these programs special?" And we say - is it really true?

Geovanny Mayorga 51:39

Really it is. It is very true. Like I said at the beginning, you're a dynamic duo. You do a lot for this program. I know we want to grow, but there are steps that need to be taken. So for sure, you know, I was very happy that you both could make it and finally record this. I think it's been great - great conversation. You are very much appreciated for all the work that you do. We have a lot of work to make the program as successful as it has been.

Brittany Burgess 52:14

Well, thank you.

Geovanny Mayorga 52:15

I think the students appreciate that as well.

Brittany Burgess 52:17

We appreciate it.

Geovanny Mayorga 52:18

Yes, we appreciate it. Thank you. Very kind of you. So we've come to the end of the episode. Want to thank you again for taking the time. I know we've had to reschedule. But I'm glad we got it done. I want to remind the listeners that you can

follow us on Spotify, YouTube, Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts. Write to us at podcast@mccollege.edu and we look forward to talking to you next time. Thank you Brittany and Stacey.

Brittany Burgess & Stacey Bizzieri

Thank you. Thank you.

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