

01:09 - 03:44

Lucas McCurdy

Bridge the gap in three two. Welcome to Bridge the Gap podcast is senior Living podcast with Josh and Lucas. A great conversation and a great guest on today. We want to welcome Anna Hall, Chief Culture and Community Officer at Front Porch Communities. Welcome to the show. Thank you so much for having me. You know what? Sometimes we have guests on and we've really got to coach them.

You know, it's our first time on a podcast, but not Anna. She has her own podcast. Congratulations, by the way. Thank you. So it's kind of nice. We're amongst friends, our fellow podcasters here. So front Porch, you just recently launched Front Porch Podcast. Tell us all about it.

Anna Hall

Well, we wanted to tell the real stories of senior living because we think they're extraordinary. You know, in my work with purpose, I've. I've been so lucky to learn about the uniqueness of each human. And then what happens when you take these unique humans and put them into community, right where they're then interconnected and even more interdependent, which is how humans are supposed to live. We did evolve for that and then see how individuals grow and how communities grow together.

So we wanted to tell the real stories not only of residents but also of team members. So unlike other podcasts that I listen to for the industry, there's a lot of great advice about how to run the business and, you know, the business of senior living. But I think the business of senior living is our team members and our residents and the life that they have and the life that they look forward to living every day.

Lucas McCurdy

So what's one of your favorite stories that you've been able to uncover so far?

Anna Hall

I can't pick, I can't pick. We have a team member who is a housekeeper. She's started as a housekeeper, now she's lead housekeeper. She talks about how it's so much more than a job. You know, housekeepers go into the residents apartments. They really get to know people and build meaningful relationships.

We had Commander Beth Coy, who was in the military and came out and was part of me, too. I mean, incredible, incredible leaders. And then we have Dorothy, who never wanted to move into senior living. And she got there and she said, what so many people say, oh, I wish I had moved in sooner. And she's building community there and making incredible contributions. So it's a joy. Every single one is a joy.

Josh Crisp

So you've launched the podcast and you're telling residents stories. You're telling team member stories. You're talking about purpose. So this is something where the platform you're building and have launched is telling those stories. But those stories are being created every day at the communities. And that's all this cultural emphasis.

03:44 - 06:24

Josh Crisp

So was this a strategic initiative that you all had for a while, or did this just come up recently?

Anna Hall

The answer should be that it was a strategic initiative, and it is, but it actually came up because so many of us have wanted to tell these stories for such a long time. And then we realized that telling these stories helps us to kind of recast how society looks at senior living.

They think, oh, it's a bunch of old people. Well, no, it's a multi-generational community with older people and younger people and college students and interns and people at all stages of their career and families and partners. And it's it's it's, we hope, making an impact in the narrative that society has about aging, which is otherwise known as living a long time, something I think we could all be lucky enough to do about what it's like to work in senior living.

People are looking for meaning more than ever in their careers, especially the new generation coming in. I think that they're kind of revolt around the old corporate culture is a beautiful thing for all of us. That's going to make work better and more meaningful and more productive, and to show that when people live in community, you don't lose yourself. You can actually learn yourself even more.

Josh Crisp

So live and work life in a community, being told through a podcast. What has been the feedback? Have you gotten feedback so far?

Anna Hall

Yes, it's been amazing. Residents. We're hosting watch parties in our communities now, and especially at a community where resident was a featured guest. You know, they have a huge party. They're the celebrity for the day. But more than anything, it started to spark meaningful conversations, conversations about what does it look like to embrace change? What does it look like to grieve? What does it look like to fall in love again in your 80s or your 90s? It's meaningful conversation that people are really craving, and it's and it's connection that people are craving now more than ever with this loneliness epidemic.

And whatever is going on in politics, it's divisive. And so to have have this platform to bring people together and help them get to know each other and celebrate both the uniqueness of each person and community has been amazing. We also had an amazing moment last week where we had a future team member apply from a different industry because they had heard the

podcast and they said, wow, I'm coming from the tech world in Silicon Valley, but I want like meaning in my life.

06:24 - 10:36

Anna Hall

I'm going to apply here.

Josh Crisp

Well, you just touched on something that I was thinking. While it may not have been the intent, I think it will be a great outcome because that type of content, as we would use that term is so needed. I think, you know, Lucas and I have talked for years, and it's a known thing that the perception of our industry, for people that don't live or work or have an experienced is oftentimes negative just because they don't really understand it.

Maybe they've read a headline somewhere that was negative stories that make the news right. So telling the positive stories and casting a light on that, which is the majority of the stories that just aren't told, that seems like that will not only have a great impact on your communities. Just like you said, people want to be part of that mission in that purpose.

Feel proud? Yeah, but the adult sons and daughters and the potential residents, they're like, wow, I want to be part of that. That's a community I want to be part of. That's a purpose that I want to live out. But that sort of helps to change the perception. So do you think your audience is going to be more of the consumer audience that is seeking that out? It's the residents and it's the team members. Is that the intended audience for your group?

Anna Hall

Our primary audience is our front porch communities to celebrate our amazing people and our amazing culture, because it is the reason that residents stay and love their life is because we have great programs, we have great food, we have a great lifestyle, but so much of it is because of the relationships that they build with each other and team members.

And hands down, the reason team members stay is because they love being part of a team and they fall in love with the residents. And I'm using the word love on purpose. It's very true. So I think first is to celebrate our our people, but it's also to change that narrative about aging and senior living. It's not a facility that F-bomb high low.

Lorraine, you know, we don't we don't say that. It's it's a place where people can live and grow. But the other thing I want to make clear is we aren't just telling all the positive stories. You know, it's not all like ponies and rainbows. We've we had an episode about grief and loss. And that's the other real side, not only of life but of senior living.

And so you can work in this profession and you know that every single day you make a difference. But what comes with this job that doesn't come with a lot of other jobs is that you also can pretty, pretty clearly predict that you're going to lose someone that you care deeply

about. And so how do we support our people through that? Our residents, our team members, the family members? But I think it's that raw authenticity of the real story, and not just everything was great. That makes it so. That's drawing people in.

Josh Crisp

So I can tell that you're very passionate about this. Just that enthusiasm is contagious. And so I can't wait to listen and see some of these stories. But your career, what's it been like that's prepared you for doing this today?

Anna Hall

Oh, wow. Over 25 years and senior living, I've worked in aged tech, so I've been a product manager. I've worked in startups, so I've done everything because you do everything in startups. I've worked in senior living communities and sales and marketing life enrichment. As a memory care director, I worked, helped seem to oversee an evolution of bringing digital programming into skilled nursing or health care centers.

I started my own business, The Purpose Equation, which is helping me a lot now at Front Porch because we're so focused on purpose and belonging. And now, as Chief culture and Community officer, I get to do what I've dreamed about doing, which is to care about people, care about people because cared about people, care about people. And it becomes an infinite cycle

Josh Crisp

With this huge population that we have entering our industry, senior housing, the opportunity to serve that many people.

10:26 -

Josh Crisp

What's most exciting in your role about what you're going to have the opportunity to do over the coming years?

Anna Hall

The profound impact that we can make on people's quality of life. And I say people, because team members and older people and their families, you know, we're moving from what was a nursing home model. And then we moved into assisted living in the 90s.

Right. And that was more of a residential model. And now we're moving into a space where we're going to be more connected to health care. But it's not about health, it's about well-being. And so I'm really excited to connect the dots for humans about the impact of purpose and how they feel about their life and how they engage in life to the impact that that inherently makes on health care.

00:11:15:02 - 00:11:38:23

Unknown

And I think that's senior living, real opportunity to make a difference, to stay relevant and to continue to evolve is really purpose. And not just living a long time, but living with meaning and living with interconnectedness that makes life meaningful.

Josh Crisp

Well, Lucas, you know, I think back to our first year, which is hard to believe. We're in year nine. And I remember back then there was no podcast in our industry at all. And which is really the only reason why we started one. And people asking us, what are you going to do when somebody else has a podcast or whatever? And I'm like, we're going to be their biggest cheerleaders. So nine years later, there's a lot of podcasts out there.

This is a unique one. You guys paved a path though. Thank you. But it's so exciting. Big fan. Well it just so exciting to see what's happened in in the industry, these communities, these great stories. I think it's going to be really impactful, not only for you all as you're already seeing, but impactful to help tell the stories and paint a very positive picture, a reality of what happens in communities on a daily basis that's not told enough. So very exciting stuff.

Lucas McCurdy

So great, so great. So a final words. And for, you know, that younger person out there that has googled and found bridged the gap and they're like senior housing. You know I do I want to do something meaningful. What is this. How would you go about kind of I don't know what would be your recommendation for that young person out there that just says, I want to take my skills and do something meaningful.

Anna Hall

Go visit a senior living community volunteer. That's how I got started. I volunteered in senior living in high school and then again after college when I didn't know what I was going to do because I was not good at Lsat. So the law school dreams went away very quickly. The magic of connecting with people who have lived a long time and who want to share what they are learning, not have learned, but are learning that crystallized intelligence, that wisdom, that authenticity is absolutely magical.

The the reason I am where I am in my career, and I think the reason that I worked on the purpose equation and have this most amazing job at Front Porch is because older adults have been shaping my life since my early 20s, and I. I beg anyone who's even thinking about it, go visit a community. There's so much you can do.

There's finance, there's operations, there's legal, there's sales and marketing. There's I mean, life enrichment, there's therapeutic recreation. It's incredible. It's incredible. There's so many possibilities for everyone there.

Lucas McCurdy

There's room for everyone.

Josh Crisp
On the front porch.

Anna Hall
Welcome to the front porch. Come on down.

Lucas McCurdy
There we go. There we go. Such a fascinating conversation. And I thank you so much for spending time with us today.

Anna Hall
Thanks for having me. And again, thank you guys for paving the path. It's really an honor to be a guest on your show bucket list moments.

Lucas McCurdy
Well, the honor is ours as well. And you know what? For our listeners that I know, they're going to say we want to connect with Anna. We want to hear her podcast, too. We'll put that in the show notes as a direct link. You can click it and go listen to it right now, and you can go to btgvoice.com and download this content and so much more. Thanks for listening to another great episode of Bridge the Gap.