

Frederick Factor- The Culture Factor Transcript

Welcome to the Frederick Factor. My name is Sandy Dubay, and I'm the Season One host. Everyone who's lived in, worked in, or visited Frederick County, Maryland, knows that there's something special about this place. One of those things is the incredible, diverse community that continues to grow. Here on this podcast we will be bringing Frederick's underrepresented business owners, entrepreneurs, and community leaders into the spotlight to share their stories with you and find out, what's their Frederick factor? Our guest for today's episode is Elizabeth Chung, the Founder and Executive Director of the Asian American Center of Frederick. The AACF brings together cultures, helping people to become citizens of the United States, and supports immigrants with essential skills so they can be independent and successful contributors to our community. With passion and dedication, Elizabeth shares her journey creating AACF and growing the many successful programs that are powerfully impacting individuals, strengthening communities, and creating ripple effects throughout society at large.

Sandy: Today, I'm excited to be speaking with Elizabeth Chung of the Asian-American Center of Frederick, and I invited Elizabeth to come and hear more about her story. So, Elizabeth, welcome.

Elizabeth: Thank you, Sandy. It is, you know, just a great pleasure to be with you today. I'm excited to share!

Sandy: Awesome. Let's start! What brought you to Frederick County, Maryland?

Elizabeth: Well, what brought me here is really my husband's practice. And when he finished his residency in orthopedics, one of my friends had come over to Frederick County, Maryland, because he worked for Fort Detrick. I said, "*Frederick? How far would I have to go to get Chinese food?*" And he said, "*Oh, it's only half an hour, you know, like forty five minutes to the southern counties*". And I said, "*Okay, and how far would it take me to go to New York, or to see a symphony?*" And he said, "*Well, New York is only about three and a half hours. Symphony, we have a wonderful Baltimore Symphony.*" So, I said "*Got it, so it's a lot of cultural richness, and my Chinese food? So, I am on my way!*" So, I came twenty-seven years ago.

Sandy: I love it! So, tell me about the Asian-American Center, ACCF, here in Frederick.

Elizabeth: "AACF."

Sandy: Oh, god! Thank you. AACF.

Elizabeth: Really, you know, actually, I've actually started as Life and Discovery, Learning Institute for Enrichment and Discovery. And it's all because when I first came 27, seven years

ago, I did a lot of after school, you know, running around as a mom and for my son, you know, I want him to learn more, right? So, because there was not too many... there wasn't anything I can put my son into as an after school program, so I thought, "*Well, why not do something for the kids?*" You know, in terms of learning, as an immigrant family, I know that we need that. So, I started the Learning Institute for Enrichment and Discovery. And was only later on, you know, because I'm Chinese, people say, "*How about, you know, Chinese language camp?*" Because I'm public health, they say, "*Oh, we need to do something about, you know, community health.*" So, evolving from 2005 then around 2008, I'm remembering now, after our first strategic planning the consultants said, "*Look, you need to change your name into who you are and what you want to do.*" So, that's what AACF is, the name now is Asian-American Center Frederick.

Sandy: But you guys serve so much more than just the Asian-American community. Tell me a little bit about that.

Elizabeth: Well, it's because, right, the beginning part of this, you know, the whole idea is to promote more services or education enrichment for the immigrant family. So, the immigrant families have always been my passion here. How can they not be? We [all] came to this land in a beautiful American Dream, as immigrant families. Particularly those who do not necessarily have the resources or know the system, or know where to go, they need these services, too. So from my standpoint, I always look at it like we are one big human race. You know, I'm so proud of my Asian heritage, and it is really, the community's needs that come first. So, we open our doors and even til today, we don't turn anybody away.

Sandy: So, if I wanted to come in and utilize the services, what type of services would I be utilizing?

Elizabeth: Oh, my goodness. So, head to toe! So, of course, you know, our whole idea is that we're proud of being Asian, yet I'm proud of being American. So, the American Dream said it is a country for equality, justice, and fairness. So to me, that's really the guiding principle. So, because of that and because we focus on immigrants, so we need to be, you know, part of our communities. So citizenship, ESL classes, a must. We're so proud. We're the only agency in Frederick County, oh, you know, probably around our area. We provide free naturalization services, you know, meaning that we help people to become a citizens, they are legal resident immigrants. Think about, you know, the Mayflower; they came to this land and became American residents. It's only later on that we needed to be citizens, right? So now that, you know, at that time, nobody needed any paperwork, they just came on board from the Mayflower. Think about that!

Sandy: If you had a boat ticket, you know, you were in.

Elizabeth: So right now, it's important to have a policy. It's important, you know, to have a process. So, many of our, you know, legalized residents hold a green card and they want to be an

American citizen. Why not? Proud being American citizens. But they have to go through a test, and go through the, I don't know, 30 page application, and they need an attorney. But if you are a working family, it's very hard to, you know, sometimes the cases are maybe, complicated, so we have a, you know, staff to provide citizenship help and even to get them to prepare for ESL class and then to prepare for citizenship class. We are so proud. We have probably over 100 every year, and this is many years. So that just is really, if you ask me of all the programs we have, the citizenship and naturalization program, which is not very well known in the communities, is our job because we really lift up our communities and they can continue to be, you know, that American citizen.

Sandy: That's beautiful, I mean, because yes!

Elizabeth: America the beautiful!

Sandy: I was born here, I didn't have to go through that process, but I can imagine it's really daunting and intimidating and expensive and all of the things. So for AACF to provide that as a service-

Elizabeth: But it's not just a test itself, though. I really felt it's really important for our community to understand what it means to be American? Right? To serve our country. And we have a responsibility, register to vote, voice our opinion. This is a democratic country, so it's not just a good opportunity to have a job, to have a good education, we need to give back. You know, there's really no country on this planet Earth, I'm so proud to be an American citizen, because it is who we are. Building on strength, and building on who we are to have a democratic country, so we can do what we want to exercise, you know, the gifts that we have. It's great.

Sandy: That's beautiful. I'm sure that our listeners can, you know, see your passion through your voice, it's great. It's good to hear.

Elizabeth: Oh and we also have Russian- and you know, we really frankly have folks that came even, I don't know, 50, 60 some years ago. I had one lady that she's actually blind, and she wanted to take the test, and she's in her 70s. Well actually, two now, we have another one, they want to become, you know, just citizens. Because they want to be with their children, right? Their children are citizens and then they want to come and, you know, spend the rest of the time and then they support their kids through school, and all that and now that they want to stay and be part of it. So, we also have senior citizens in our town who want to become American citizens.

Sandy: That's lovely. That's lovely. So what other services, what else?

Elizabeth: Well, because my background is public health and also that it is a, you know, it is important for me to see, you know, equities in health care services. So, we have a lot of different

health care services, you know, to work with different partners. Then of course, you know, we do a lot of leadership, and also, you know, workforce development. It's a kind of wrap around, because you cannot just take care of ...just the language and not take care of housing, or working, or school. Then we have a lot of wonderful services in Frederick County. That's a Frederick factor. You know, Frederick has a lot of wonderful services, really caring entities who want to make you the best, to make a very beloved and caring community, but because language and cultural barriers kind of make that very challenging. And that's where we see ourselves. We are really having those interpreter services, translation services, mentoring, afterschool programs, senior volunteer services, all of that. We just simply cannot say no. So, it's hard.

Sandy: When you talk about cultural, obviously, you know, one of the things I think that bridges cultures are events. Tell me a little bit about some of the events that you have planned or have coming up in the future.

Elizabeth: Well, I think events, really, you know, when you think about events, you think about food, right?

Sandy: We do. Yes. Yes, I do. I think about food!

Elizabeth: And you think about, you know, really, activities, you know, enjoyment, enlightenment. So events; we have several different kinds. But if you're referring to a cultural events, you know, every year, we...we'll do our Chinese New Year or the Vietnamese New Year – it's just marvelous. And then we also have Heritage Month, we do that. And we have done the ethnic festival for the immigrant communities, we also bring everyone to come together. There's a lot of common threads, right? They'll come from different origins, yet we're here to have the same dream. So, there is a reason why you know, Sandy, you love, I think, you know, Chinese fried rice, right? But I can also, you know, make German fried rice, right? Or you like to make Lo Mein noodles, but we can use spaghetti to do stir fry. So, think about that. It is just amazing to see that it's just we came from different parts of the world based on, you know, our favorite cooking and all that is based on where we came from. But you think about it, it's the same kind of basic four food groups... seven food groups? Bring it together, it's a beautiful meal and it is just different. But they taste great. That's why we love fusion food. Love it, you know?

Sandy: I'm getting so hungry, right this second.

Elizabeth: I mean, I think that's a reason why we have entertainment [at our events], you know. I remember one year we had 16 performers that packed one center, I could never forget it. I think it was in 2012, and we still had a few other ethnic communities to join us. And you see all this dancing and you can see the beauty that each one of us brings. So, I feel that really the more we do together about, you know, really integrating or, you know, you can still focus on... I focus on Asian heritage because I'm so proud and rightfully so, because I have the resources and maybe, you know, down some, you know, connecting piece, but we still can bring out African-

Americans, you know, cultures, you know, or culture from Africa or, you know, our, you know, Latin America or European or, you know, Irish dance and all that. It's just really great to see the beauty of this wonderful fabric of Frederick.

Sandy: That's great

Elizabeth: Isn't it great?.

Sandy: It is great, you're right.

Elizabeth: Frederick has a lot of beautiful... It's a beautiful tapestry, fabric, but we need to appreciate, and we do. And that's something probably on the outside of the work that we do in advocacy. We find that we are still a little bit sometimes unheard, right, in not knowing where to get our voices heard. So as a center, then we felt that let's just, you know, make our voices heard of all voices if we can and connect the voices to, you know, resources, or to those who want to hear more voices. So again, we want to be that support.

Sandy: What's next for the center? What is your next big undertaking?

Elizabeth: In the next 25 years? I think that people were talking to me and I said, "*Yes, you know what we have today is what we thought about it 25 years ago.*" It's amazing. We just felt that we needed to be here like we are today. So every day, every month, every year that we kind of do something toward that goal. For me, the next thing is to really continue to be that integrator, I think. So, the center, we would really like to see another one particularly on the west side of town. We really want to see that on the west side. I know that, you know, our county knows, they're working on it. We have no libraries, no youth services, per se. And it's really still not connected to transportation. The biggest issue, our senior services, we don't have one on the west side of town. You know, it's still quite deprived of resources, but we're working on it. I know we're working on it. So, I see that AACF can be that continued support for both sides. The community, you know, certainly needs, like, after school programming. Maybe, definitely, ESL citizenship classes or, you know, hours, you know, baby showers, food assistance programs, our literacy project, you know, our ACES Project, a lot of public health projects. We still need to do that. But at the same time, do we need to, you know, connect the resources that the county already has to meet those needs. And so the center, hopefully in the next 25 years, will continue to grow to become that connector because we cannot do it ourselves, seriously. We can bring more understanding to the cultural background. You know, I can't look at Frederick, you talk about the factors, right? I'm going to give you a five element and that's where I see ourselves continue to be that connector. In Chinese culture we have five elements and which is gold, which is metal, the wood, the water, the fire, and the earth. And each one has its own uniqueness of, you know, part of the growth and development, right? But also, if you don't do it right, the fire can be, you know, put out by the water and the fire can also burn the wood. So I'm trying to say that these elements are really ecological, but we have to think about how each element supports

each other. Even to the point that as an outcome of the two elements working together, it has a new growth and development. I know this sounds a bit abstract, but this is really the beauty of us working together; that each entity really has different elements and we can look at the strength... look at how one can support the growth of the others, even at the demise of one. And yet the growth of the other element will sprout new growth of the element that has died. So I think it's hard to explain that. But that is just my own kind of Asian culture that helps me to see the beauty of this interconnectedness of all elements. And then we need to be respectful. I respect the fire, respect the water. And then, you know, so that is the facts that I see: it's very much in existence through the work that we do, with hospitals and with businesses, our own administration, and school, education, it's there, they are there. But the challenge for us is that sometimes they may not know they can do more, better, effectively, if they cannot get out of the box. And I know that we talk about institution complacency. I critique that because I want to see us being cost effective and being loving, and then open communication is needed. So, I really think someone I mean, I'm going to can I give you a couple of examples?

Sandy: Yeah, yeah, I would love it. Well, you know, it's interesting because I see a lot of that in our conversations and, you know, the work that we're doing. So yeah, I'd love to hear about some of your other communities.

Elizabeth: I want to give a shout out to Kara. Kara is, you know, my favorite partner, and she's developed the Downtown [Frederick] Partnership, right? So, you know, she knows I don't know much about art, you know, kind of planning event plans. So far, she has really helped set up, for example, the Thai Festival. We had not too long... we didn't have that much time and so forth, but she really asked her staff to help us to put our event together and support us. It might be just through small things, that she just does anyway, every day. But boy, it might take me two or three days to figure that out. But because of that support, I think we had a wonderful event. We were able to bring the Ambassador of Thailand, you know, from the Embassy, to come. And when he saw that, when he saw that, he was so touched, he said he needed to do more, you know, economic development. And the Thai community, such as Tsunami [Ramen] or what is the name of the Thai restaurant? Sumitra? Right? So anyway, that really motivated them to do some more, you know, with the Thai Embassy. So it's huge. And then I have a staff member whose Arabic she was at that event. And guess what? She turned this whole Thai festival into Arabic, and she yelled at them through a lot of, you know, Arabic media. I don't know them. So the Thai festival is in Egypt!

Sandy: That's great!

Elizabeth: You know? Yeah! Maybe people would say, "*Where's Frederick?*" You know? "*Let's go see this wonderful county in Maryland.*" And you never know, maybe they come to visit Baltimore, but then they'd heard about Frederick, so they can also come to visit. So, you can see that kind of domino effect about 'each one teach one.' To me, those are the... it's a very

kind of what do you call that... a 'hidden gem,' right? Folks who can really, you know, open up and help. And just a small thing they might be doing, but such a great impact. They're helping us to grow. And that's really the beauty of Frederick factors. Would you think so?

Sandy: Yeah, you're right, there is definitely a willingness to help one another because of that, 'the multiplier effect,' you know? You do one thing and four or five other amazing things happen that you couldn't have even anticipated.

Elizabeth: Well Sandy, you know, your program too. Thank you for, you know, really accepting me as one of your cohort students. I learned a lot out of, you know, 10 of us, right? Aje is there. Also, Shana and Dr. Jackie Douje and Brian, so far. Think about that! And it's really a great feeling that we can help each other during that time, but also the speakers that you've brought to us. Michelle, Latrice and Kim and Mr. Hill. I mean, we love to see more of those kinds of resources to support us. We might not need everything all at one time, but I think that you just kind of illustrated, demonstrated, highlighted what coming together means, right? The EmPOWER program that you're doing, I really appreciate it. I hope that you have some more additional plans in order later on to talk to us, and I'm very indebted. I think that we need to get back to you too. So however we can give back, maybe in my case, a more cultural understanding about the Asian community to businesses and maybe how I do things. I'll maybe, you know, Dr. Douje is doing some kind of podcasting about, you know, children's immunizations, something like that. There's so much, you know, really synergy. It just takes a connector. I think you're one of those.

Sandy: Oh, thank you. Yes. The program is sponsored by the Frederick County Office of Economic Development, and I'm proud to help facilitate this program. It's the EmPOWER Group Mentorship Program. And yes, we absolutely love it. It started in the fall of 2021... is that where we are right now, in 2021? And yeah, it's an 8 week program. And it's been awesome. I have really enjoyed being there and hearing and listening. And honestly, the group I say every week, *"Aw, this week was better than last week."* Like every week. And the reason it grows, I think, is because of the connection with everybody in the team. You know, all of you that are in the program, really understanding the needs of one another and how you then might be able to help one another. And Elizabeth, I think you did that in the first week. We had one of the other mentors in the program and you said, *"You know what? I want to help you. I don't know exactly how we can do this, but I want to help you, you know, get you a restaurant and get your kitchen off the ground."* It was great. And I think that you opened the door and kind of gave everybody permission to not just think about sitting there in this room for two 90 minutes every week thinking about themselves, but thinking about how they can help to elevate another. So, thank you for that.

Elizabeth: It's only because you make that happen. Think about that factor, right? So, you know, I mean, really, it is so, it's safe. It's comfortable. No, ego. I don't think so. And then it's

really nice for everybody to kind of say, “*I want to do this. I need help.*” Then another person says, “*Yeah, I mean, I can help you with that and I need help, too.*” So, Aje told me about this, you know, foundation [grant]. So, I went after it and I got it. So, I thank him for that. So, it is really a good feeling... that is the factor, I think. I hope that you'll continue to do more of those. And you know, and then we should give back to you too, right? So, maybe after this first cohort, then we can become supports to you for your next cohort, and the next cohort will help another cohort. It will grow. I really feel that that is not sometimes necessary out of funding per se, but it is. Sometimes there are certain things money cannot buy. Would you agree? I mean, really, the factors of those, you know, willingness, openness, truthfulness, and fairness. Those you cannot put a dollar on that price tag, it's priceless. And I think Frederick, for me, traveling throughout the state in other projects I have, Frederick has all these hidden gems that need to be brought up and polished. And so we shine. We shine.

Sandy: Oh, that's awesome. Super awesome.

Hi, I'm Sophie Smith from Platinum PR, and we are the sponsors of this season's Frederick Factor. Our team provides place-based marketing and communications for communities and destinations across the country. We reimagine places. Find us at PlatinumPR.com. Our contact information is in the show notes. Happy listening!

Sandy: What would you like to see in Frederick County that could boost the growth of your organization?

Elizabeth: Well, for myself, I really need... now that we have been in [business for] 17 years, I need to be more sophisticated in much of the marketing/ business development. I need to have a better... perhaps channel to work with our system. And I know the system has certain policies and procedures, and I wish that the system can be more open-minded, no doubt. And not to worry about, you know, what do we get there? But like I said, if you look at the five elements, Chinese elements, we'll get there. If you get all the elements working together. But someone has to have the leadership of the Administration within the city or county. And that's my hope; that they be open minded to look at different channels, willing to take some risks, and also really put resources to build. That's one thing that I didn't remember 100 percent, but how it is said that, you know, Starwood, where they are built and where they know and when his job is done. Then the best leaders [believe]: we all do it together. We all do it together. So we have leadership. The leadership needs to build from where we start, built on what we know. Love us, play with us, you know, teach us, learn from us. And then when the job is done, then we all do it together, and that's what I see.

Sandy: That's beautiful. That's beautiful.

Elizabeth: I think Confucius said, I remember.

Sandy: We won't quote Elizabeth Chung on that one, but it's beautiful! *Laughing*

Elizabeth: It's not me. I was really... I think that when you asked me, really to me it still boils down to the values of our country and being just, right? So Dr. King has said injustice is really, you know, a challenge, I think it's justice everywhere. So we need to be a just country. And then that takes a lot... that people have to, kind of, reflect on; "*Where am I not just?*" Me too, I need to say I've been on both sides as well to see that I have biases. I have my, you know, unconscious biases. I need to learn and in order to fully embrace justice, you really have to learn about "*Where am I not, so that I can do better?*" And then, you know, and then for those who have privileges, you know, I really oftentimes say to realize all the privileges that you have and check them at the door, and then we can become one.

Sandy: Hmm. That's awesome. And we were talking a little bit about, kind of, leveraging of resources to love to hear your thoughts on, you know, kind of that multiplier effect. How a little bit of an investment and what that can do for an organization for a portion of the population, for the whole community?

Elizabeth: I always brought about my interpreter services, which is a good one, too.

Sandy: Yeah, that's a great example.

Elizabeth: I know thanks to the Ausherman Foundation – who believe in me and who heard me saying that, you know, I don't know what year was it, 2012, maybe 2011? I said, "We've got to, for the immigrants, we have to really deal with, address the cultural barriers, language barriers." And then to me, being a health activist, that asset to health care is important. So we developed, you know, using \$10,000, you know, off of the support from the Ausherman Foundation, and they are very good at helping to build capacity. So, now that my agency has this, well, you know, organized interpretive services. And now the hospital is our greatest... it is our number one customer. But we also have, you know... it's a business. You know, we have, you know, Canam Steel, Under Armor, Bimbo Bakeries. And the true matter is that it's not just the services we get, you know, it's also the financial support, we create jobs, right? So those are multiplied factors. So, we have some funding from the Department of Commerce, CareFirst, we developed community health workers. The community health workers right now, you know, it's really become a statewide profession. And then we've continued to train them, and when we train them it creates jobs for them. It helped reduce the cost. So, sometimes the benefit and economic side is creating jobs, you know, better building, you know, health insurance, quality of life, but also promoting cost effectiveness of your program. So we use it to help workers who are in our prenatal program. I did one study for 51 women with, did you know, in three years time, a small project: no NICU baby, 100% gestational period, 18% cesarean rate versus 22% at a state level. And you think about it, hundreds of thousands of dollars. How much does it cost for one baby? You know, when they're in a NICU situation? Right? But yet we use our community health workers, very minimum wages at that time, that, you know, continue to support the home visit

and so forth and have beautiful pregnancy outcomes and birth outcomes. And that is the value of those most affected. And when kids are healthy, a newborn, healthy newborn. Think about that. They have a great future.

Sandy: It could be a perfect start. I love it.

Elizabeth: Perfect start! I love it. But the thing is, is that enough? No, because we still need to now look at 0-3, 3-6, right? And eventually go all the way to, you know, finishing high school. I know that a lot of great people are looking at, you know, a more, you know, a really comprehensive way, you know. It's looking at continuing this process of development for our next generation. It does take more than a village. It takes more than the parent, more than a school or volunteer. That's why we have a volunteer program. There's a senior volunteer [program]. I mean, we live long enough now. We can write, we can really push for more time. And so we have the RSVP program, or their senior companion program. We want our seniors to be healthy and active so they can participate. They can help with our baby showers, they can come and help with our diaper drives. You know, they can help with after-school tutoring. Why not? We live longer, but we retire, so now we can give back. But how often do you really see ethnic minorities be a volunteer? So, I often joke around... in terms of what, the Red Cross? I said, blood is blood, right? You need a blood donor. So if a Chinese person comes to donate blood, it's just as good. Right? So why not, then, recruit your ethnic minority volunteers? So because language is a barrier, right? So why not utilize these ways? Maybe AACF can help. We can help because we do have a large number of ethnic minority volunteers, so we need to do that. So, I think that sometimes even if volunteers come together, there might be a different, you know, ethnic background. But they love each other! With music and fun things that we can provide for the volunteers... appreciate the volunteers. That's important. So, you can see how, why an Asian Center is... if I can do that to serve everybody, and that makes a statement, then why not, you know, others who are mandated, you know, who are supposed to be, serving all? We talk a lot about equity, inclusion, diversity, but we have to really put, you know, actually, you know, in actionable steps to make it work. But I think that we have a lot of different, you know, we have different, diverse communities. If we can use a touch of your example, the EmPOWER program, it brings in so many of us different [businesses] together and we are helping each other.

Sandy: If you want to share the specifics...you say you talked about the Ausherman, your investment of money from the Ausherman Foundation to fund your translation services. What does that look like now?

Elizabeth: Oh my goodness. I think that for that particular program, direct or indirectly... So we have... I couldn't, I can't do my math! But I'll promote our literacy project. Is it because the fact that we are able to do well, so we created this, you know, capacity. And from this capacity, we have a health literacy project and that's for the City of Frederick, four million dollars. And then

we have the ITC project during which language assets and so forth. So it's just millions of dollars, I think, for this point, right? Nine years, ten years time, that brought back. But it's not just the money. The money helped to create jobs. So, we most recently, we probably have 20 some jobs that we created. But we need to build, right? But also improve services. And that's the reason why I'm just so thankful now that we're able to give health insurance for our staff, PTO time, you know, nonprofit doesn't really make that much at the beginning. Everybody's contractors and they pay their own tax. And then you give them \$10 to only take home for \$7 or \$8 or \$8.50, \$9. It's just hard. But right now they can be employees, we take care of the tax. They have health insurance and also if they're healthy, they're happy. And I think that is those, you know, benefits based on a small project we started 10 years ago and develop into a sustainable project with years to come. But we are not there yet. I still will continue to see how we can. That's why I need marketing service, right? How I can ask the doctor to, you know, to, I mean, a doctor uses interpreters because it shortens time for, you know, communication, can make better diagnosis, you know, it can really...it is a risk management. You buy health insurance or you buy insurance, right, as a business. But, you know, having interpreters is another form of insurance, giving you what you need to communicate with the patient, even right now, with COVID. So it is even more so in a post-COVID, you know how to really communicate. It's not just the language, but also literacy. So, it is really for those who may not fully understand... what's the word "immunocompromised"? You know, I mean, you go to the vaccination center that you can't fully understand. That is why raising awareness about, you know, vaccine confidence is important. But you have to explain to them in a way that they can understand or they can, you know, they can apply to something. So the investment, as you say, the seed has been planted by the Ausherman Foundation to help us to create jobs, improve quality of life, reduce medical costs, and then the most important is equities. I think that that says a lot. So at that time, I did not know about all that, you know, now that I can see it really helping, you know, *"Oh, yeah, you know, more people getting jobs, more people mean having equitable, access to health care, social services."* Yes, you know, we can really work well together to, you know, to see doctors happy, patients happy, in our schools or in our communities, and they understand about prenatal care. They get better access to prenatal care. Having it then they can have a healthy baby. And all of that is how can you put a price on this little seed that we've planted? I don't know...I cannot tell you the exact value of that, but I can tell you that it's just a beautiful thing, right? It's a beautiful thing that we can do, you know, with the support. So maybe we can call it a beautiful Frederick factor.

Sandy: A beautiful Frederick factor, I love it.

Elizabeth: You know, it's all because someone trusts us, believes in us. And we work hard. I mean, it's not easy. But then, you know, it's like ten years. It's hard to build up, to build this surface. But we do have a way to go, with telehealth, we still need to do that, community health workers, we still need to do that. But if the system, you asked me if a system can be more open minded, continue to build on what we have, what we know, to love us, play with us, learn from

us, then we can do it all together. Makes sense? Yes? I think so. Yeah, I really think so. So, so you know, I can thank all the partners and truthfully, but I'm also critical, as you can see. You know? We have a long way to go, but we need to do that, admit what we don't know.

Sandy: That is key, to admit what we don't know. Yes.

Elizabeth: Know what we don't know. We still have a ways to learn. And that's the reason why nonprofits have so much... even though we are here to serve it, we have so much we don't know. [We don't know] how to become efficient or effective in writing those proposals. So, you know, like maybe it's, you know, those who know how to help us to write a better proposal. Those who know more about data, help us to understand how to use that data. You know, help the community to really do the things that the community may not have all the resources to do, you know? The marketing, the podcasting, the communication, the you know, the fundraising in all of that. And I wish the system could have a bank, okay? A resource bank where we can – I don't want it to be free – but we can access those resources like a bank. But then we also need to put in our own investment and then use the resources from the bank. And then it can help us to grow it and help us to like, because, in the business world, you have a partner, right? You have a partners. So in this banking of resources, you can also have partners. So maybe I don't know how to help you with your marketing, but I can help you with building better relationships, say with the Asian community. Don't forget, as an immigrant community, we have so much behind us from the country we came from. Like I said to you, the Thai Festival, the Thai Embassy said, yes, we want to help you to build more trade. I know that, you know, I have colleagues that they've brought, what's the name of the chicken farm? Purdue? Yeah, they brought over the shore, you know, in Maryland. So there's also a lot of other resources at an international level because of the immigrant community, right? Coffee, right? You know, from South America. Right, right? Or, you know, certain things that we can bring India or, you know, Ukraine, you know, or others, you know, immigrants, you know, backgrounds can bring to, you know, to Frederick County. So, maybe we can develop something through the economic development team. And I don't know. I'm just saying the idea of popping up all the time! And know... I can see, you know, how it would be a great showcase. And we have wonderful Downtown, we have wonderful artistry and it's just great.

Sandy: Is there anything else that you'd like to share with the audience before I ask my last question?

Elizabeth: I truly appreciate it. I think that we have to be honest. To look at how insignificant we each are. We ourselves, or one person, you know. Yet there's always the calling and and the greatest, you know, to really, you know, I guess powers that you need to recognize about the short time that you have and use what you can do the best you can and do the most where you are needed. Do the most where you are needed with the best you can do, I think. And be grateful, you know, of the opportunities you can do on this planet in just a short time. I think that, you

know, because, I still will have to say I want to fly an airplane. I don't think I can do that now with my heart condition! But that feeling... I hope those who hear me, I know they hear me that the actualization of what you can do is so phenomenal and that is the high that I got, right? That I believe there's a place... Just dream! Don't stop! And if you want to say that you, you think you can, you can. But do your best and be humble to ask, you know, for help and get help and appreciate help. And when you can do it, it's just a great feeling. So I know that, you know, I don't know when I can start thinking and doing! *Laughter* But it's because of, you know, so much wonderful things around here that don't be afraid of difficulties. Just move forward. Move forward. Yeah, it's there for you.

Sandy: That's great encouragement. Thank you. Thank you for that. So my last question that I ask every guest is, what is your Fredrick factor?

Elizabeth: I think in a word, 'risk,' right? Or the word 'dangerous.' If people recognize Chinese characters, when there is risk or, you know, danger or challenge, there's always opportunity. So, I think that we can really not be afraid of that. The factor for me is that, first of all, knowing what I don't know, seriously, then knowing the elements on this planet or this galaxy is so tremendous, but captured also, you know, that element to reach its dream that you have a different right, different element or different working to get it. But you know what you don't know. And you say, *"Okay, this one can help me with this one and I'm going to work with this, but I need to also give myself to it, not just you taking it."* It's two ways. And you're giving... give and take, right? And then the best gift, of course, to be able to give. But you're also taking. And be thankful that what you take be able to give. And so the opportunities are out there. I mean, just tremendously, you know, I mean, for us to to build. And so what it is, you know, people resources are there. So, I think that the factors in particular in Frederick, because we are smaller and close knit and yet have potential to grow into it and they just need to be more open-minded in taking those elements to work together. I think the world is there. I really do. And that might be the one factor. It is what I see no doubt for the next twenty five years, the will is there, but I just don't know how yet. And we just have to help each other to learn and work with it and then want to work together with that. I think that will of working, the will of listening, the will of supporting is there. So that will, probably is the most important factor because the will is there and it will be done.

Sandy: Wowzah. Thank you.

Elizabeth: Does that make sense?

Sandy: Yeah! It does. It's passion. It's the drive to... yes, keep moving forward every single day.

Elizabeth: But I think it's more than that. I think oftentimes these days, I think about a lot of p word, right? Of course, you know, I have a PhD, so it's a passion of health and dedication – no, that doesn't make sense. But the P is really the passion which is one of them. P for people. The P

for professional, being proficient, being in the perfect mindset. But also, too, where important P is really persistent. If you believe in something, be persistent about it. Persevere, don't give up, it's hard. You fall down, you stand up. So, think about all the wonderful letter p then. But people come first, right? The community comes first, then your passion and then you work hard. You continue and you, you know, being professional, being proficient means that you cannot be complacent. You really have to be right looking, what more can I do? Yeah, I know. Forty hours. But what more can I do to make others, you know, to make it more proficient, you know, more cost effective? So, if you have that mindset, it will be done. When we all come together, it will be done. So, if you will, put all the p words together. I can...I think I'm going to do a little what, word smith? And then to create some of those, you know, things?

Sandy: A word cloud?

Elizabeth: A word cloud with all the p words! So now that we can sit and ask, am I this p? Am I that p? And to continue to remind yourself you don't have to be perfect every day in everything you do, but in your view, keep those key word in mind, then you can say, "Okay, I want to be more of this and more with this project." And so far, so yeah, thank you so much, Sandy. I think that I've been able to reflect on all this for a long time, but you kind of give me an opportunity to do more reflections, and I appreciate that I really do. And I know that. Where do I go from here? And sometimes it's so busy every day, every day I get wrapped up in all the work that I do and don't have a chance to reflect. So I found out, you know, I'm on Platinum's ground. There's another p!

Sandy: That is another p, progress is my other favorite. One of my other favorites.

Elizabeth: And then platinum, I know. Yeah. So platinum is another. It's another element. It's a metal. Platinum is a metal, it's very precious. Thank you so much.

Sandy: Thank you. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for taking the time. Oh my gosh. A little secret behind the scenes we chatted for what, two hours before we turned the recording on here today. Wow. Three. But thank you. It's been my absolute pleasure to get to know you and talk with you today. I hope our listeners enjoyed this episode of The Frederick Factor! Until next time! Thanks for listening.

You've been listening to the Frederick Factor. Want to find out more about our diverse community and what makes Fredrick so special? Visit our website at FredrickFactor.com. You can also connect with us on Instagram and Facebook. Till next time.