



**Emmersyn, Maddie, and Joy East**

**Walnut Cove, NC**

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Danille Christensen: We're actually recording now. So I'm Danille Christensen. It is July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. We're in Stuart, Patrick County, Virginia, and I have with me *three* narrators. Emmersyn, can you tell us your name and how old you are?

Emmersyn East: I'm Emmersyn East and I'm twelve years old.

Danille Christensen: And Maddie?

Maddie East: I'm Maddie East and I'm twelve years old.

Joy East: I'm Joy East and I'm forty-three years old.

Danille Christensen: And I'll just throw it out there, I'm forty-eight years old. [laughing] So um—today we're talking about Emmersyn and Maddie are participants in the Rise and Shine Market that is here in Stuart. And so, Emmersyn, why don't we start with you. Can you tell us just a little bit about yourself, what you like to do?

0:00:58

Emmersyn East: Well, I do gymnastics three to four times a week and, um, I just like to do that a lot. I like to sew, and I like to bake, and I love to jump on the trampoline.

Danille Christensen: How about you, Maddie?

Maddie East: So I do like recreational gymnastics. I do that once a week. And I really enjoy jumping on the trampoline with my siblings and kind of just like doing crafts.

Danille Christensen: And where do you live? I know you don't live in Stuart itself?

Emmersyn East: So, we live in Stokes County, Walnut Cove, which is kind of small really? We don't have lots of restaurants. We don't have lots of gas stations. It's like, if we bring friends over to our house we're just kind of like, "This is our little small town of Walnut Cove."

Danille Christensen: And what do you think about Walnut Cove?

0:01:59

Maddie East: So, it's a small town, like Emmersyn said, but um, we have just like a lot of family in Walnut Cove.

Danille Christensen: So these are people who are directly related to you or are good friends; how would you define "family"?

Maddie East: People that are related to us.

Emmersyn East: I'd say like friends, family, it's all kind of-- really everyone's almost related around here, so.

Danille Christensen: And how do you interact with each other? Do you get together for ah, family dinners? Do you help each other out with work? Do you just get together to play?

Emmersyn East: So, um, we have some friends who have a corn maze? and so we'll go over there and help with that. [0:02:59] Um, we go to farmers' markets around here. We do this one in Walnut Cove, and everybody sets up along the street and we all set up things. We all talk with each other. It's all just kind of fun.

Danille Christensen: So you go to a farmers' market in Walnut Cove *and* the one in Stuart?

Emmersyn East: Um, so it's kind of more just like a market. They have antiques and we have soap, so yeah.

Danille Christensen: Tell me, when you get together with family or friends, what's the kind of food that people—how does food play a role in getting together with your family?

Emmersyn East: So we have, ah, chicken stew sometimes because when we go to *big* gatherings, we'll do chicken stew? which is made in a big pot over a fire, because it's cheaper to make, and so it can feed lots of people? [0:04:01] And if we go to more small family gatherings it'll mostly be vegetables, really? Not much meat because um, like, Stokes County used to be more of a poorer county because everybody was tobacco farmers, so they wouldn't really be able to pay for meat? But everybody just made what they grew, and they would make large amounts because they would just share with everybody. So that's kind of where chicken stew comes into play, because that you can make *so* much of it, and you can just share with everybody.

Danille Christensen: And do people bring different things to contribute or is one person in charge of making it?

Emmersyn East: It kind of depends like, who it is. You may bring different stuff or there might be somebody or a few people who make the whole thing.

0:04:58

Danille Christensen: There's a lot of traditions like that around the country of like, you know, the big caldrons that you put over the fire—and it's never exactly the same, but it's always delicious. Maddie, what do you like to eat when you get together with family and friends?

Maddie East: Um. That's kinda hard.

Joy East: When we go to Pauline's, what would you eat?

Maddie East: I would try everything.

Danille Christensen: [Laughing] So there's usually a lot of different kinds of things?

Maddie East: Yeah, kind of.

Danille Christensen: And are you a desserts person, or are you a meat person? or do you have a specific vegetable that you like?

Maddie East: I'm like a dessert person.

Danille Christensen: Yeah. Like what kinds of things do people make?

Maddie East: So our Nana [Bonnie Whitt] makes really good chocolate chip cookies and brownies and banana pudding, and our Granny [Linda East] makes chocolate éclairs.

Danille Christensen: Oh, wow. So your baking, is that something that you learned from your grandmothers or . . .?

0:06:02

Emmersyn East: Um, so, really, we learned how to bake from our *mom*, but *we* would sometimes go over to our Nana's and bake cookies or brownies, just really anything.

Danille Christensen: And how did that work, did she let you measure things out? or did she just tell you when to add stuff.

Emmersyn East: I think she would let us measure stuff out. She would make cookies to take to work, or to take to people she knew, and so if we were hanging out over there with her we'd ask if we could help and we'd help.

Danille Christensen: And what's her name?

Emmersyn East: Bonnie Whitt.

Danille Christensen: Is that W-h-i-t-t?

Emmersyn East: [**Yeah** 0:06:51].

Danille Christensen: Bonnie Whitt. Excellent. And did she ever teach you how to make banana pudding?

Maddie East: No.

Emmersyn East: I wish. I want the secrets!

0:07:01

Danille Christensen: [Laughing] What do you like about banana pudding? Everyone makes it differently.

Emmersyn East: The only part I don't like about banana pudding is the bananas. [laughing]

Danille Christensen: [Laughing] So really you're just a cookies and pudding kind of gal?

Emmersyn East: Yeah.

Maddie East: I like the pudding part.

Danille Christensen: And do you know if she makes the pudding from scratch, or does she use a box? Is it vanilla pudding or banana pudding?

Emmersyn East: No, she makes it from scratch. No, she doesn't?

Joy East: No. She uses a box.

Emmersyn East: I thought she did.

Joy East: No. She uses the box.

Danille Christensen: Do you know if it's a like a vanilla Jell-O pudding or . . .?

Joy East: I actually think she uses the cheesecake pudding.

Danille Christensen: Oh, okay.

Joy East: Yeah.

Emmersyn East: Really?

Joy East: Um-hm.

Danille Christensen: So all the banana flavor comes from the bananas themselves.

Joy East: Yeah. But then, on the other side of the family, on Daddy's side of the family, they *cook* their banana pudding. They do a completely different kind of banana pudding than on my side. So

Danille Christensen: And Joy, I don't know if I had you introduce yourself at the beginning, but this is Joy East.

0:08:03

Oh, you did?

Joy East: Yes.

Danille Christensen: You did. Okay. Um, All right. So, let's—tell me a little bit more about chicken stew before we move on. Do you know what kinds of ingredients are in it?

Maddie East: So it's, like, butter, milk and some chicken. And I think that's it.

Emmersyn East: Salt and pepper.

Maddie East: And then, you can eat it with crackers and bread.

Danille Christensen: And do you put the whole chicken in it? cut up or—with the skin and everything so it makes it really rich and creamy?

Emmersyn East: So, um, I think probably. I just know that when I get my chicken stew it's more of like a stringy kind of—like the chicken is—you more get little strings of it.

Danille Christensen: So it's not chopped up in chunks—

Emmersyn East: No.

Danille Christensen: —it's kind of shredded?

Emmersyn East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: Uh-huh. And tell me about your gymnastics because I know that plays a part in why you're baking for the markets.

0:09:01

Emmersyn East: So, the competitive gymnastics is more kind of expensive, I guess? because you have to pay to get into meets and you have to pay for leotards and your bookbag and your warmup suit. And so we started making the zucchini bread because we have lots of zucchini from our garden. And so we wanted to raise money and so we started making zucchini bread.

Danille Christensen: And have you always put chocolate in it? So, I bought a loaf of your chocolate zucchini bread at the market last week. I took it home and it also had a million

chocolate chips in it, so it was *so* delicious I cut it up in slices and put in my freezer and then just had a slice every day. But has that recipe altered at all? Have you changed it based on feedback that you've gotten from people?

0:10:01

Emmersyn East: So, I don't really think we've changed at all? We just looked for a recipe that we thought would be *really* good, and so we just tried the double chocolate zucchini bread because we love chocolate? and I think we've always really kept that recipe. So.

Danille Christensen: And have you baked other things for the market before?

Emmersyn East: Um, I've, um *we've* baked cookies.

Danille Christensen: Emmersyn, you and Maddie have baked cookies?

Emmersyn East: Yes. I don't think we've really brought them to the market yet. I was last time we were gonna come, but we were given zucchini from a friend and so I decided to make zucchini bread instead. [0:11:01] But I have made back to school cookies before and I've sold those.

Danille Christensen: And what are those like?

Emmersyn East: So I've made square ones, and I think we made a pencil, a square, and a star, I think was it.

Danille Christensen: So these are like sugar cookies that are decorated?

Emmersyn East: Yes, um-hm. And so the star was like a piece of lined paper with an A+ on it, the square was a chalkboard with a ABC 123, and then the pencil was just a pencil.

Danille Christensen: And how did you learn how to decorate cookies? That's a tricky thing, especially when you're putting so much detail in it.

Emmersyn East: So, ah, my mom had a friend [Erin Selbe] from . . . college?

Joy East: High school.

Emmersyn East: High school, and she is *really* good at decorating and making cookies and she came over and taught me how to make them and decorate them, so.

0:12:01

Danille Christensen: So can you explain that process for me?

Emmersyn East: So she kinda just came over and we put all the ingredients in, and we mixed it together and then we put it in the oven.

Danille Christensen: This is for the dough?

Emmersyn East: Yes, the dough. Actually, you make the dough and then you have to put it in the refrigerator for like an hour, two hours? and that's always the part that takes longer so I'm kinda just waiting for it. And then you roll it out and you cut them out and then you put them in the oven. And then, while they're in the oven, I'll make the icing. And then, when they come out, you let them cool. And then you put the icing in the piping bags and then you decorate them.

Danille Christensen: So what kind of icing is it? Do you remember how you make it? Is it a buttercream icing or is it a royal icing?

Emmersyn East: It's gotta be kinda thin.

Danille Christensen: Uh-huh.

Emmersyn East: It's gotta be thin at some points and thick at others. [0:13:01] So the first batch I'll make will be a little bit thicker because it'll be what I use around the edge. Really, I think it's just egg whites, powdered sugar, and vanilla. But, how much I put in is really the key of how thick or thin it will be. So first, like I said, I'll make a thicker batch and put it on the edges of the cookies. That'll be like the outlining. And then I'll go back and make a thinner layer and I'll put it in and it'll spread out because it's thinner. And so the outer layer will keep it on the cookie but it'll keep it and it'll make it really nice and smooth.

Danille Christensen: Yeah. It looks so pretty. I think they call that flooding when you put that thinner bit in.

Emmersyn East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: And how long did it take you to get the consistencies right?

0:14:00

Emmersyn East: So, it'll take—sometimes it'll be thicker than others or thinner than others, but really the friend taught us how to do it? So it was definitely easier that she came and taught me how to do it.

Danille Christensen: So you think it's easier to learn in person then. Have you ever tried to learn anything off like the internet or anything like that? Do you ever watch cooking videos or?

Maddie East: So we used to use cookbooks, but now we kind of—if we go eat somewhere we're kind of like, "Let's try to make that." So then we look it up and then we try to make it.

Danille Christensen: And what kinds of things have you found that you really like?

Maddie East: So right now we're making sourdough bread bowls for, like, soup?

Emmersyn East: So my mom had a friend and she made sourdough bread, and it was *really* good and so we wanted to try to make it. [0:15:04] And so we got the starter from her? And then my mama made the bread, and it took a few times definitely. [laughs]

Joy East: It still is taking a few times.

Danille Christensen: [Laughs] Sourdough is tricky.

Joy East: Yeah. I think there's too much activity in my house, and it doesn't always rise real well.

Emmersyn East: Yeah. And our house is so cold. My dad likes to keep the house cold, so, so it's hard to rise. But it's really good when we really get it right. And so we decided we wanted to make a bread bowl because we *love* bread bowls, because they're *really* good with, like, French onion soup? And . . . so, my mom wanted to try to make it.

Danille Christensen: So tell me about your starter. How does that work?

Joy East: So we have two different kinds of starters, actually. The one they're talking about is a softer, sweeter sourdough? that we couldn't use for a bread bowl, so I just got a new starter that I ordered online that we've been activating. [0:16:03] [To girls:] Can you tell her about that?

Danille Christensen: Yeah. Maddie, how do you activate a starter?

Maddie East: So you have to, like, put some of the things that you use in a jar, and then you have to feed it, like, every . . .

Joy East: Every couple of days.

Danille Christensen: And what do you feed it? I'm assuming it's not, like, vegetables and chicken, right? [Laughter]

Maddie East: No.

Danille Christensen: What do you feed a starter?

Maddie East: Isn't it, like, sugar?

Emmersyn East: And potato flakes.

Danille Christensen: Oh, potato flakes?

Emmersyn East: Like, instant potato? you just get that and put them in.

Joy East: Um-hm. One of my starters is potato flakes, water, and sugar, and then the other one that I *just* got that they haven't helped as much with, is um, just flour and water.

Danille Christensen: Okay. [0:16:57] I know that starters all taste a little bit different, especially because they, the bacteria and things that are in your house settle on it and they kind of start to grow. So you're in the process now of kind of cultivating those home microbes?

Joy East: Um-hm.

Danille Christensen: How do you keep from—so, I've killed starters before. So do you have any tips about how to keep starters alive?

Emmersyn East: Um, make sure you feed them regularly. [Laughter]

Danille Christensen: Yeah. I feel like it's a little bit like learning how to keep a houseplant alive, right?

Joy East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: You gotta kind of get familiar with the characteristics of that particular starter. Um, and tell me, so how—Baking bread is its own challenge, right? and then you've got the extra *starter*, instead of regular yeast. So, tell me how you actually make the bread *bowls*—cause that's tricky to put them in a round shape instead of just in a pan, right? [0:18:02]

Emmersyn East: So, we haven't um, actually done it yet? They're still kind of in like that starter, I guess? So we haven't really made the dough yet I don't think, but we're actually, I thought we were gonna do it, like, I guess we're doing it today, probably.

Joy East: Yeah, we're doing it today. So I just added the sponge in the dough, um (which I don't really understand those terms but it's because they're new!), and it's rising, and then we'll add um, we'll make the bread bowls.

Danille Christensen: Yeah. [To the girls:] So you've seen a sponge before when it gets kind of frothy, in there? It's really interesting to think about food as living, right?

Emmersyn East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: Um, before we go on, I wanted to go back to—you talked about how vegetables are a really important part of the diet around here?

Emmersyn East: Um-hm.

Danille Christensen: Can you tell me what kinds of vegetables and how people prepare them?

0:19:02

Maddie East: So, um, like pinto beans, cabbage, green beans, corn.

Emmersyn East: And, ah, we don't really know how we would really prepare them? Because my *mom* isn't like originally from here, so she makes different foods than we would have when we would go to our granny's house or anything like that. So when we *go* there and we have like, pinto beans or corn, we don't know how they make it, we just know that it's really good.

Danille Christensen: [Laughs] Have you asked at all, or have they taught you how to make any of those things?

Emmersyn East: No. We're just kinda like, "It's good, we'll eat it." [Laughs]

Danille Christensen: Yeah. I *love* soup beans with a lot of pepper in them, myself. Um, what have you learned, Joy, since you—how long have you lived in this area?

Joy East: Um...

Danille Christensen: And what kinds of foodways have you, were you surprised maybe to find when you moved here?

Joy East: Um, so, I've lived here about, um, seventeen years? [0:20:00] And just how different the food *is*. The quantity of food that they make at family get-togethers, um, is very different than what I grew up with. Like We would have family get-togethers but the--

Danille Christensen: And you grew up where?

Joy East: We moved around a lot. Up near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I lived in Seattle. I lived throughout West Virginia, Charleston, Wheeling, those areas. Um, I've lived in Alabama some. We moved around a lot—but the majority of my extended family? is from Virginia, um the Bluefield area, or up in Ohio.

Danille Christensen: Okay.

Joy East: So, but ours was just very different. We would have—even with a large serving, we would have a large amount of *food* to feed everybody, but not a huge variety. So we'd have a meat, a vegetable, a bread. [0:21:00] Um, when I started coming to these family gatherings it was—

Danille Christensen: In southwestern Virginia—

Joy East: Yeah, in Southwest Virginia or Northern North Carolina, cause we're right on that border, um, it's a *massive* variety of vegetables, pintos, cabbage, collard greens. Um, that was very different. And then, breads, not a lot of meats, ever, um, and so *that* was very different. I have learned to make *some* things? Um, but it's easier to let the family do it [laughs] cause they do it well. So they've taught me how to make um, some collard greens, turnip greens, and those kind of things. My father-in-law [Wayne East] taught, he taught me how to garden and to *grow* those things, so I'm learning, but um—I don't *love* pintos? so I don't *make* pintos as often. But um, we usually just eat them at family get-togethers. [0:22:02] But it's been very different. The food culture is very different.

Danille Christensen: What were his tips or tricks with the greens? How does he fix the greens?

Joy East: Um, just to cook em—all day. He'll put some fatback or bacon in, is what he would do and then vinegar.

Danille Christensen: At the end?

Joy East: Yes. Or like, when you get them—yeah. When you serve them, you serve with vinegar. So, that was kind of his—that's how he always did it.

Danille Christensen: Any special instructions on cleaning or cutting?

Joy East: Nope.

Danille Christensen: You just cook them whole?

Joy East: Um, so I cut *mine* when I've cooked them. I've only cooked them a few times. I don't know how he did his. He would do turnip greens. Well, it's just the leaves, so I think he would just cook them whole.

Danille Christensen: And then eat them with anything in particular?

Joy East: So I don't know that I've ever made them—I've only made them, like, once or twice. [0:23:02] Ah, he would eat them with cornbread and pintos.

Danille Christensen: Um-hm. And drink the pot liquor or . . . ?

Joy East: Um, I don't know.

Danille Christensen: The liquid that's left over, sometimes people drink that.

Joy East: Oh, I don't know that Papa would've drank that. I don't know. He never mentioned that. I'll have to ask Daddy. I don't know.

Danille Christensen: Or use it in other things.

Joy East: Maybe use it in other things. Ah, actually, I don't know that they would've done that. They're very funny about like, um, food, sanitary stuff. They're *very* funny.

Danille Christensen: Very careful?

Joy East: Very, very careful about food being out of date or anything like that, so I don't know that they would've used it in something else. Granny might not let them.

Emmersyn East: My Granny likes chicken, and we like steak and pork, and like, I don't like my steak well done, I like more like *medium*, and my granny will be, like, "No." She does *not* like that. [0:24:04]

Danille Christensen: She likes to cook it until it's--

Emmersyn East: Done.

Danille Christensen: -- dead. Yeah. [Laughter]

Joy East: *Everything.*

Maddie East: Everything.

Danille Christensen: Long, low, and slow is—kind of the watchwords around here, for sure.

Joy East: Yeah. They don't *eat* a lot of meat. She doesn't eat a lot of meat. My father-in-law has passed away, but *he* didn't eat a lot of meat. I mean, even now, when she cooks for herself there's just not—they just weren't big meat eaters. My husband growing up said they didn't eat a lot of meat.

Emmersyn East: That's probably why he likes steak so much now.

Joy East: We eat meat regularly now. Right.

Maddie East: Their main lunch or something would be like tomato sandwiches or, like, pinto beans and stuff.

Danille Christensen: Yeah. And so this is in northern North Carolina?

Joy East: Um-hm.

0:24:58

Danille Christensen: I've just been eating tomato sandwiches myself these last couple of weeks. How do you make your tomato sandwiches?

Emmersyn East: Cut up the tomatoes and salt, pepper, and bread. That's how I like to do it.

Danille Christensen: So no mayonnaise?

Emmersyn East: Unh-uh. I don't like mayonnaise.

Danille Christensen: Just salt, pepper, bread, and tomatoes.

Emmersyn East: Um-hm.

Danille Christensen: Do you toast your bread?

Emmersyn East: Nope.

Danille Christensen: Just--

Joy East: You have to have a good *soft* bread.

Emmersyn East: Um-hm. It has to be soft.

Joy East: It has to be a soft bread, yeah.

Danille Christensen: Let's see. Have you learned anything in terms of those vegetables about how to can them or make them into relishes? Cause usually people have some kind of seasoning, right, that they add to vegetables. What can you tell me about canning or preserving or . . . ?

Emmersyn East: So um, my mom, when we would have a garden-- we didn't have a garden this past year, but when we had our garden we would do green *beans* and my mom would can the green beans. [0:25:59] And one time I think she did pickles. I loved them. They were really good. And she cans peaches and I kind of helped with that some. My favorite part was taking the skins off the peaches because they just slid right off, and so I thought that was really funny.

Danille Christensen: And how do you get them to slide right off the peaches?

Emmersyn East: So, I think you put them in hot water then cold water, and then you take them out and it just slides right off.

Danille Christensen: Maddie, were you going to say something about that?

Maddie East: No. That's okay.

Danille Christensen: And the [gain] levels on this are a little bit low so if you guys could talk up just a little bit louder when you're speaking, that way we can make sure that we get all of your words--that would be great. Okay. So, tell me a little bit more about how you came to participate in the Rise and Shine Market. Is this in relation to 4-H, for example? [0:27:00]

Maddie East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: Tell me a little bit about that.

Maddie East: So like Emmersyn said earlier, like, we do farmers' markets and we . . . [pause]

Joy East: Do you know how we got hooked up with Patrick County? What did we do in Patrick County when we met Leigh Ann [Hazlewood]?

Maddie East: We show livestock.

Danille Christensen: So you show livestock?

Maddie East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: So tell me about the livestock that you show and how that's related to the market.

Maddie East: Okay. We show market sheep, and we show like market goats and dairy goats. So yeah, that's really fun. And then, we have *friends* that show with us, too. [0:28:01] [pause]

Danille Christensen: What's a day like when you show an animal? Do you have to get up really early? What do you have to do to prepare? What's it like when you're at the show?

Maddie East: So if it's more than one day, and if it's far away from us? We have to pack our clothes, get the sheep and goats on the trailer, and we have to like get everything that we need, like all the accessories and everything, and then we have to drive all the way out there, and then we—

Danille Christensen: Which is—where are you going?

Maddie East: Well, we go to a lot of shows. So, we went to the—I forgot what it's called.

Emmersyn East: Mountain State?

Maddie East: Yeah, the Mountain State Fair just once, and that was like a pretty long drive away from us. [0:28:58] And then—[pause]

Emmersyn East: State. [North Carolina State Fair]

Maddie East: State, yeah.

Joy East: We come to Patrick County for their fair, Surry County, Stokes County.

Danille Christensen: And what do you like about that? Cause it seems like a lot of work to raise animals. You have to wash them, get em all ready before you go, right? And then a long day at the fair. What makes it worth it?

Emmersyn East: Um, I think it's just really cool.

Maddie East: So we get like, placed and everything and sometimes, *sometimes* we get first or second and very rarely we get like grand or reserve champion.

Danille Christensen: Is there a money prize that's involved with that or is it just . . .?

Maddie East: Yeah. [0:30:00] It's like how—what placing you get, that's kinda like—so there's like, there's different placings and for first place you get, like three? no . . .

Joy East: It just depends on the show.

Maddie East: Yeah. It just kinda like—

Joy East: They pay differently.

Maddie East: —depends on the show, like which one you go to.

Danille Christensen: And what do you use the money for?

Emmersyn East: Um, it probably goes—um, we might split it up, like *this* percentage goes back to the farm because we have to feed them, we have to water them, um, and some might go to our business? with the goat milk, soap, and lotion, and then maybe a percentage goes to us.

Danille Christensen: And how do you decide how that money gets divided?

Emmersyn East: I think we made—like, I don't know. I think sometimes, at the end of the show year when we get, like, how much money we've done the whole show season, um, it might

be we get twenty percent, we get ten percent, we get thirty percent. [0:31:04] It's just kinda how the show season goes.

Danille Christensen: So it's variable. You have to keep a lot of different things in mind when you're making those decisions. How does this fit in with—I know that you do homeschool, so how does all this fit in with your education more broadly?

Emmersyn East: Well, we've learned how to like vaccinate almost? Because Hadley and Coleman, our older siblings, *they* know how to vaccinate. I don't think I've ever really like, given a shot to a sheep or goat before, but I gave a de-wormer. And we also learned—because if you take an orange and a needle and food coloring and water and you can like, learn how to give—I don't know what it is, but it's a type of vaccination that goes into the muscle, I think? [0:32:04] And so you put it in, and then you can see how the food coloring goes into like the *veins* of the oranges and it's really cool.

Danille Christensen: Oh, so you use the orange as like a stand-in for the animal. You can see kind of how it goes. So this is part of um, your science education or . . . ?

Emmersyn East: We just learn how to do it just cause it's cool.

Danille Christensen: [Laughs] That seems like an excellent way to be learning things in the world.

Joy East: Yes.

Danille Christensen: Joy, do you want to say anything about how these fit into . . . ?

Joy East: Um, so we do try to keep our learning very relevant and intentional. And so, yeah, the livestock showing, it does—as far as an ag science standpoint, we do *learn* breeds, and care

and vaccinations, medications, learning how to read the labels on those for withdrawal times, um, to know when we can send animals to market and when we can't. [0:33:04] Um, but it also provides obviously just work ethic and time management, um, which is probably *more* important in our schooling. And then, the business endpoint, or side of it, which their brother does a lot of, but um they do too, understanding profits and expenses and that kind of goes into our homeschool. It's nothing super formal. It's not anything that we keep *grades* on or—but just relevant learning, learning that's relevant to our life. Um, we did botany this year. The same thing. We didn't *do* a garden this year, because we're building a house, but it's relevant to us because we *do* garden and we do plant berries. We do have bees. We need to know about pollinators. Those are all just relevant things to our lifestyle, so our learning tries to focus on some of those things, so the livestock and all of that goes into it. [0:34:05]

Danille Christensen: And when you decide you want to learn something new how do you—do you, like, propose an idea to your mom? or you just go out and you decide, “oh, I'd like to take this new kind of item to the farmers' market”? How do you go about developing your product, and—I know that you have packaging that you put it in that you design, and you have to price it. How do you make all those kind of decisions; can you kind of walk me through that process?

Emmersyn East: So a lot of the time it'll be, we go somewhere, and we find this new scent of soap, or we find this *really* cool scrub and we don't want to imitate it *completely*, but we're, like, “We could make something like this out of goat milk!” or anything like that. And so we'll find a recipe, and we'll try it out, and if it's good enough to sell, then we'll sell it. [0:35:03] And we'll kind of price it by—our dad will be, like, “It's in this big of a bottle, it was this much at

this place,” and then our dad will kind of tell us what he thinks and how it should be priced. And so we really go off of that by our dad. And then,

Danille Christensen: Sort of comparisons with how other things are selling?

Emmersyn East: Yeah. And then we just take it to the farmers’ market. And, yeah.

Danille Christensen: How do you know if something is good enough to sell?

Emmersyn East: If we like it. [Laughter]

Danille Christensen: So you mean if it *tastes* good or it smells—so you basically imagine your customers as being like yourself? is that how it works?

Emmersyn East: Kind of, yeah.

Danille Christensen: Yeah. Who *are* your customers that you usually see at these markets?

0:35:59

Emmersyn East: [long pause] I mean, I don’t think we really—we don’t really know. We have some people who I think come back? They’ll take a lotion one time and then come back and be, like, “This was great last time I got it, so I want to get some more”? Like, one time we did, in like a Walnut Cove Farmers’ Market thing, there was like this one lady who came back because she liked some of it? And so, yeah.

Danille Christensen: So, you get feedback from customers. How about you, Maddie, how do you know that something might be good to sell or, how do you imagine the people that you’re gonna sell it to?

0:37:00

Maddie East: Um, so, we go off by like, um—so we sometimes put some of the stuff like that, our store, like on Facebook or something, so they say, like they want *this*, and they want *that*, so then we go by that if people really like it. And then, by the farmers’ market, if people usually *always* keep coming back for our stuff.

Danille Christensen: So you build up a good market base. Can you think of any stories of particularly successful products or interactions with people that really stuck out in your mind?

Emmersyn East: There was this one lady who came and um—it was one of the Walnut Cove Farmers’ Markets—and she came in and she took *all* of our lotion bars. Which is,

Danille Christensen: Like, how many would that be?

Emmersyn East: I think it was maybe around, like ten? And they’re pretty good sized.

[0:37:58] She just came in and she got, like, *all* of them, and we were, like, “Okay!” And we just gave her what she wanted. So I thought that really stuck out because then we had no more left.

[Laughs]

Danille Christensen: Yeah. So did you just close up shop for the day or you were . . . ?

Emmersyn East: Well, we have the other stuff, which is we have the *lotion*, the liquid soap, the soap, so she just took all the lotion *bars*—which we made, because, um we had some friends who *liked* the lotion but it has preservatives in it because it has liquids in it, so we have to use preservatives in the lotion. And they weren’t big fans of the preservatives that were in it, so they asked if we could make, like, anything without the preservatives. Well, we really *can’t*, or it would get rotten fast, I guess? And so we made a lotion bar which has *dehydrated* goat’s milk in it, which means it doesn’t have that liquid, so we don’t have to put preservatives in it, but it’s

*dry*. [0:39:01] So it's in like a deodorant kind of thing [container] and you can scroll it up and rub it on you. It's really cool.

Danille Christensen: Hmm, that sounds really interesting. How much do you sell that for?

Emmersyn East: Um, I think it's four dollars right now.

Danille Christensen: Okay. And how did you go about researching the new formula?

Emmersyn East: Well, I mean, our mom really just like researches it. We come to her and tell her, or people tell her that they don't want the preservatives, and so she researches it and finds what she thinks about it.

Danille Christensen: So it's really a family business in all senses of the word.

Emmersyn East: Yeah.

Joy East: Yeah. Especially um, when they were younger—cause they didn't have a lot of access to the internet. So now as they're getting older they're able to research some stuff on their own, but um, typically I would try to find something that seemed like it would work, and then they would try it out. So. [0:40:01]

Danille Christensen: And what's your favorite thing about having a job like this? First of all, I guess, do you think that you have learned things from this that other kids maybe don't get to learn? And then, the second question is, what do you like about it?

Emmersyn East: Well, I mean, for the first question, I'm learning, we're learning how to make soap, bake, *sell*, like being good entrepreneurs? and that's something that you don't get to *do* every day, and so I think that's really awesome. And then, um, I like selling to people. Like

they come by and I love the *feeling* after they've bought something, just cause it's just a good feeling.

Danille Christensen: And what are your selling strategies? [0:40:58] I've seen you in action so I could say a few things [about that], but what do you keep in mind when you're talking to people and trying to convince them about your product?

Emmersyn East: I tell them what my favorite scent is, or why this is really good, um, why people like this. You just kind of give the pros about it.

Danille Christensen: So from your own experience, and other people's experience, and from a technical level, yeah, that's really smart. What about you, Maddie?

Maddie East: So, my favorite part about it is probably like making the product instead of like *selling* it? I'm not really a good like salesperson? but I mean, I can still do it.

Danille Christensen: But it's not your favorite thing to do.

Maddie East: Yeah, it's not my favorite. But usually when I'm up there doing it, I tell them like, I say, "This smells really good. This is my favorite scent." [0:42:01] Um, and they usually ask that, and so then we have to kind of tell them our favorite scents, and then they go buy it and they ask us like, what's in it and everything.

Danille Christensen: And do you interact with the other youth vendors at all at these markets? I know that you're really *busy* the whole time you're there.

Emmersyn East: Um, I mean, we do. We'll have people beside us, and there's this one girl, she sells *beautiful* earrings, and we've bought from her before, and sometimes we'll get sweet treats from other people's tables. So yeah, I would say we do. [pause]

Danille Christensen: And do you think, um--to bring us a little bit more back to the baking aspect of it, why did you decide to have-- you've got your goat milk line, right, and then baking as well. [0:43:04] Why did you bring the baking piece into it?

Emmersyn East: So, the goat milk [product line] is really for the family, and then the baking like, that me and Maddie do, is for the gymnastics.

Danille Christensen: So that's something you can keep separate, for yourselves. And about how much do you make from selling your baked goods maybe in a summer?

Emmersyn East: Well, last farmers' market I made thirty-six dollars, so that was good.

Danille Christensen: And that was profit or . . . ?

Emmersyn East: Well, I'd say that the cost of the ingredients would be—the ingredients are really not very expensive, so I'd say it'd be around seven dollars maybe? ten dollars to get the ingredients.

Joy East: Probably, yeah.

0:44:00

Emmersyn East: So in profit, I made around twenty-six dollars. And if you take time, yeah, it'd be around twenty-five dollars. So, yeah.

Danille Christensen: And you got the zucchini for free, right?

Emmersyn East: Yes. [laughter]

Joy East: And the honey.

Emmersyn East: The honey, we have bees, so we get the honey.

Danille Christensen: Do you often take advantage of seasonal things that are available at the moment? I know that you said earlier you changed your *plan* because you had the zucchini.

Emmersyn East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: Are there any other examples you can think of when you have sort of changed direction based on what's available?

Emmersyn East: Um, well, I mean, if, I still make, *we* still make the zucchini bread in the winter because if it's really warm and it's really cold outside, it's just really good and so we just get the zucchini from the store? [0:45:00] But if there isn't any then I'm guessing we would have to change to maybe making cookies or really anything like that.

Danille Christensen: How do you think your participation in the Rise and Shine Market connects you to this area more broadly? Or do you think it connects you to this people and place?

Emmersyn East: [Pause] Well, if we like meet somebody then, we could say—if they ask, like, “Where do you live around here?” we could say, “We live in Stokes County, but we do the Rise and Shine Market here.” Yep.

Danille Christensen: So it's a way to start conversations with people?

Emmersyn East: Um-hm.

Danille Christensen: Have you felt, Joy, that being involved in these public events connects you to the community in a different kind of way or . . .?

0:46:03

Joy East: Um, I think in the Rise and Shine Market yes, and in our local one. A lot of times with the Rise and Shine Market, we'll see people, um, at the market and then we'll see them at the fair when we show, and so *that* kind of—and the more you do that, the more relationship you build. But yeah, the Rise and Shine Market also got them connected with Pickle & Ash, and so it got their product in . . .

Danille Christensen: Which is a local restaurant that sells—

Emmersyn East: It's *so* good. I love it!

Joy East: It's so good.

Danille Christensen: I know. I'm so disappointed that it's only open Thursday through Saturday because I can't go to it while I'm down here.

Joy East: Oh, it's *so* good. Yeah.

Emmersyn East: It's *amazing*.

Danille Christensen: They sell your products, and do they also sell other local . . . ?

Emmersyn East: Yes.

Maddie East: Yeah.

Joy East: They have a little market out, and so—we were contacted because of the Rise and Shine. [0:46:58] And then, locally, even like in Stokes County—I had told the girls earlier, um, you know, small towns are um, often weary, or wary, or um leery—sorry, *leery* of people from outside. So it's always—for me moving *in*, from outside, it's always been, ah—I have to be very *intentional* about fitting in. And so being in the markets, you know, they'll say, “Oh, are you so-

and-so’s family?” They want to know who your people are. And then that builds relationships, cause they’ll say, “Oh, I grew up with your husband,” or “I *know* your father-in-law or your mother-in-law” or “I’m *related* to you.” A lot of times that’s the case. “Oh, I’m related to you through the Heath side or through the” . . . So I do feel like just being at any community event whether you’re selling baked goods or selling goat milk, um, connects you. [0:48:01] And, and then you *sell* better. People want to buy from people in their area, especially kids.

Danille Christensen: Right. [Laughs] And if you’ve made those other kinds of social connections, or um—that makes a difference.

Joy East: Right.

Danille Christensen: So what are the—so you’ve got the Whitts? What are the other families around here that . . .?

Joy East: So the Whitts are *my* family.

Danille Christensen: Oh, okay.

Joy East: And they’re not *from* around here, but my parents *moved* here recently. So, who are—like in Daddy’s family, we have?

Maddie East: The Heaths and the Easts.

Joy East: The Heaths.

Danille Christensen: Heaths and the Easts?

Joy East: Yeah. That’s pretty much—

Emmersyn East: And the Bennetts.

Joy East: No, that's the other side. Yeah, that's—Gina *married* a Bennett so Gina's a Heath.

Emmersyn East: Oh.

Joy East: She married a Bennett, yeah. But actually Gina's a Heath and an East. It's kind of intertwined.

Danille Christensen: [Laughs, because she has some complicated interconnections in her family as well]

Joy East: Not, like, in a bad way but . . .

Danille Christensen: I understand, yeah.

Joy East: Like, brothers married—you know, two brothers of one family married two sisters of the other family, and so the Heaths and the Easts are kind of intertwined in that. [0:49:03]

So, so like one man is an uncle and a cousin? or an uncle and a—I can't remember how it is. An uncle and brother-in-law? or—I don't know, it's weird. So.

Danille Christensen: [Laughter] Yeah. So you're learning more about your family history, too, as you're getting out and meeting people in the community? And I can tell—we've been sitting for a long time so I'm just gonna ask one final question and that is, what do you think makes a good baker? And does that connect to being a good person in any way? Can you make connections between baking and kind of, um living and other parts of . . .?

0:50:01

Emmersyn East: Well, I mean, to bake you need to make sure—especially for the public—really for the public you need to make sure you’re being exact, being clean, um, and so that’s definitely kind of what you’ve got to do there. And um, I think that baking is just a *fun* way to use your time to bake for family. Like, I one time made cookies for some of the family. It was just fun to do because I knew it was going to the family and so I think that’s just really fun.

Maddie East: So, if you’re like baking for the public, like Emmersyn said, then you have to know *exactly* like what you’re going to do, and exactly like *how* to do it.

0:50:58

Danille Christensen: Why is that important when you’re baking for the public specifically?

Maddie East: Because if you find a recipe that you just started and you want to do it for them you don’t know, like, how it’s going to really turn out.

Danille Christensen: So it kind of ups the level of professionalism that you have to have? Joy, do you have anything to add about that?

Joy East: Well, the girls and I kind of were joking on the way up here that—so they are recipe followers to the T. They measure um, everything. And we were joking it’s because they were taught by *me*. So I’m a rule follower the way that I bake, the way that I cook, it follows into my life. Um, I don’t *know* how to cook without a recipe? I’m not just a “let’s put it together” kind of person. That’s how my life is, too. I need a direction. I’m a planner. Um, I do everything very exact, a very rule follower. [0:51:56] We had joked that if *Daddy* had taught them to bake, that their baking would look very different. Like, it would be “Throw this; oh, this might be good! Let’s try this. . .”

Danille Christensen: [Laughs]

Joy East: And it would be, probably still *wonderful*, but would look very different. Um, and he *doesn't* bake—but if he were [a baker], he's *not* a recipe follower, he's not, like, a rule follower, and that shows in his life. He's got—spontaneous and fun things still come out of that, but it just looks very different. So.

Danille Christensen: It—

Joy East: Go ahead. No.

Danille Christensen: Well, I was going to say it's interesting because baking is so much about getting the chemistry right? So it does have to be more exact in some ways and so it's interesting to me that he doesn't bake, because it doesn't *allow* [laughs] a lot of experimentation in those kinds of things.

Joy East: Oh, actually, my best friend is the same way, not a recipe follower, and she's an *amazing* cook but doesn't bake. And I think it's, like you said, the same thing. [0:53:01] If you—you can't just *add* stuff into baking. It won't necessarily be—so when we get together, she cooks, and *I* provide the dessert.

Emmersyn East: Her cooking is really good.

Joy East: Her cooking is very good, yes, because she does—“Well, this will be good, and this will be good” and then she'll add it together.

Emmersyn East: And I'm, like, “What's in this? It's *amazing*.” She's, like, “Oh, a little of this and a little of that.”

Danille Christensen: [Laughs]

Joy East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: It's also hard to re-create, right?

Joy East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: So it'd be hard to create a product for a market that you're not quite sure of what was in the recipe begin with.

Emmersyn East: Yeah.

Joy East: What goes in it, right. So. But, and that's how she lives her life, too. When she sews she doesn't follow a pattern. She gets stressed out if you say "follow a recipe," whereas me, it's calming. They [Emmersyn and Maddie] had talked about some of the things that they *liked* about baking, was following the steps and going step by step.

Emmersyn East: Checking things off the list.

Joy East: Yeah. It's—they're raised by me. I can't help it.

Danille Christensen: So does the *starter* make you nervous at all? Cause starters are kind of wildcards, right? [0:54:00] They're very context based, specifically related to the place where you *are* and the conditions of that particular *day*, if it's humid or if it's too cold or something. So is this like a new experience moving into the sourdough world?

Joy East: It is. So how many starters do I often have?

Emmersyn East: Three.

Maddie East: Four.

Joy East: So I constantly, when you discard, I'll *save* starters because I kill so many.

Danille Christensen: [Laughs]

Emmersyn East: [With a smile] Murderer.

Joy East: I do. I constantly am, well, "Let me just have a safety starter to play around with, next time." We name our starters.

Emmersyn East: It's all been, like, Susan, Susie, Suzette.

Danille Christensen: [Laughter]

Joy East: Yeah.

Emmersyn East: It's really weird.

Joy East: But then we went on vacation, and they all died so we had to start over from scratch. But it is, it's less control. Um, the sour—the bread has been hard for me, cause I can't, I can't get it just right and so we are constantly—we're determined. [0:55:00] We're determined to get it. So the zucchini bread is easier because it doesn't have to rise.

Emmersyn East: Yes. You just put it in the mixer and then put it in the pan! and just bake. It's actually really easy. That's one of the reasons we did it.

Danille Christensen: I like the quickness of quick breads, too, right?

Emmersyn East: Yes.

Danille Christensen: They don't take quite as long.

Joy East: Right. And we do yeast breads, too.

Emmersyn East: We have and they're good. I do like them.

Joy East: And they tend to be a little bit more consistent and easier.

Danille Christensen: What kind of yeast breads?

Emmersyn East: Um, I think my mom has done a rosemary bread before? braided bread.

We do a fair, the Dixie Classic Fair or Carolina Classic, and we make things to enter? and our sister's done muffins and braided bread. I've done the black-bottom cupcakes.

Maddie East: I've done um, cupcakes, too.

Danille Christensen: Any reason why you chose cupcakes? [0:56:02] They were very popular a couple of years ago.

Emmersyn East: I love cupcakes.

Maddie East: Yeah. I like doing like, adding the icing on it and everything.

Danille Christensen: So the decoration like with the sugar cookies. What kinds of decorations have you done, Maddie?

Maddie East: Well, I don't really—I kinda just add the icing on top. And then like, yeah, that's really it.

Emmersyn East: The more icing the better.

Maddie East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: So is it more about the flavor of the icing or the color? What kinds of things do you—ah, what makes food beautiful to you?

Emmersyn East: Um, the taste. There's this, like a *really* good icing. I can't remember what it's called. It's like a butter—I don't know, but you've made it before. It's a thicker icing.

Joy East: It's like a buttercream.

Emmersyn East: Yeah, a buttercream icing. And I'm pretty sure that's what you used on the cupcakes and it was *so* good.

Danille Christensen: So you've got the basic flavor of the buttercream. [0:57:01] Do you add anything to it, like mint or . . . ?

Maddie East: I think we add like, some other stuff to it.

Joy East: You just added vanilla, probably.

Maddie East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: Used the classic . . .

Joy East: Just classic. But you like the piping, right?

Maddie East: Yeah.

Joy East: The piping it on.

Danille Christensen: Oh, so the skill.

Joy East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: So do you do it like in swirls, or how do you decorate it?

Maddie East: I tried to but sometimes it doesn't turn out right. [laughs]

Danille Christensen: And then, what happens when you make a mistake, or it doesn't turn out exactly like you wanted it to?

Maddie: Then I just like—

Emmersyn East: I eat it.

Danille Christensen: [Laughs]

Maddie East: Or we try to like, kind of like just fix it [a mistake], and then if we make it worse, we just leave it for the family, to eat!

Danille Christensen: [Laughter] Well, are there any final things? I know that I sent some questions to you beforehand. Are there any things that you were thinking about that we didn't get to talk about, that you'd like to add? [pause]

0:58:04

Joy East: I will tell you that we, in talking about the chicken stew—cause that's something that is only Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin County of North Carolina. Anywhere else you go you won't really hear of, specifically, the chicken stew. So we did look up the history, cause we were intrigued by why it started, cause my husband's been doing it since he was little. It's only in the fall. They're very, very social but it was to celebrate the tobacco farming. It was a cheap way to get everyone to harvest of the tobacco. It was a cheap way to get everybody together and to celebrate that, so we thought that was cool. Um, we did a chicken stew for our *rehearsal* [wedding] dinner because it was local, it made me feel local having just moved here, and my family was coming from all over the United States, so it was fun for them to experience it, too.

0:59:03

Danille Christensen: I feel like I should've had a bigger breakfast this morning because I'm getting a little hungry listening to you all. [Laughing]

Emmersyn East: Yeah. I definitely want some chicken stew right now.

Maddie East: Yeah.

Danille Christensen: Well, thank you so much for spending some time with me this morning. I really appreciate it and I've learned a lot from you. We need to let this recording go for just thirty seconds without any of us saying anything so that we can hear what the room itself sounds like, so we'll just be quiet for a moment.

[End]