

NMSU Archives  
Oral History Collection

New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

**Mesilla Valley Community of Hope**

2018

**Hope Stories**

Interview 2

**Jardin de Los Niños with Audrey Hardman-Hartley**

Interviewed by David Lee del Norte

9 March 2018

La Paz Room at Jardin de Los Niños

Sponsored by Doña Ana County Historical Society

Copyright Audrey Hardman-Hartley — Copyright David Lee del Norte

**Table of Contents**

Jardin de Los Niños with Audrey Hardman-Hartley	i
Recommended Citation	iii
Recording Information	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Project History	v
Narrator Summary	vii
Index of first hour	viii
Index of second hour	xi
Interview 2 of Hope Stories — March 9th, 2018	1
Interview 2 second hour — March 9th, 2018	47

### **Recommended Citation**

Hardman-Hartley, Audrey, interviewed by David Lee del Norte, 9 March 2018. Hope Stories oral history project, New Mexico State University Library Archives and Special Collections.

### **Recording Information**

Hope Stories 002 — 1h 37m duration. Recorded 9 March 2018 at Jardin de Los Niños La Paz Room on the Hope Campus.

## Acknowledgement

With guidance from public historian Dr. Jon Hunner, and support from Dr. Elizabeth Horodowich and Dr. Peter Kopp, in early 2018 Doña Ana County Historical Society awarded the Hope Stories project generous transcription funding through the Mary and J. Paul Taylor NMSU Student Scholarship.

Archivist and oral historian at New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, Donna Wojcik transcribed eight interviews of the project, provided invaluable knowledge about transcription craft, and kindly orchestrated narrator appreciation artwork from Ray Ortiz. Donna's interpretive insight and professional workflow support is unmatched.

Kara Andrea Lory's *The Cultural Geography of the Homeless in Las Cruces, New Mexico* remains must-read research. Available in the NMSU Library Archives and Special Collections, Lory's 2003 thesis is an excellent historical source on the consolidated services model at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, an important first step to learning more about Doña Ana County poverty and Las Cruces homelessness.

I am especially thankful to each of the sixteen Hope Stories narrators whose invaluable time, insight, and personal engagement with the homeless community cannot be highlighted enough. Seen together collectively with project oral history transcription and audio recordings, it is my wish as researcher that New Mexico citizens recognize each narrator's contribution alongside the many unnamed individuals who work to end homelessness and hunger in Las Cruces.

## **Project History**

The Mesilla Valley Community of Hope (MVCH) is a homeless services corridor in Las Cruces, New Mexico. In the 1970s, Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church began Soup Kitchen service which later became El Caldito. As need for food and healthcare clinical service increased throughout the 1980s, the Las Cruces community supported Saint Andrew's congregation members with the opening of Saint Luke's Health Clinic. With a long history of compassionate services for visitors, the City of Las Cruces recognized the importance of limiting distance and travel-time between public health and human service organizations located throughout different parts of the city.

Incorporated as a non-profit in 1991, additional support continued to form what became known as a collaborative alliance with operations at 999 Amador Avenue nearby to downtown Las Cruces. In 2011, following a particularly harsh Las Cruces "Deep Freeze" winter that caused health concerns for the housed, and deaths for the homeless due to exposure, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope staff banded together with clients to appeal to the City of Las Cruces for sanctioned overnight camping status to found the Camp Hope transitional living program.

In 2018, the Hope Stories project collected fifteen oral history interviews to learn about the development of the consolidated services model at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope. The term "Corridor of Care" refers to a perspective in the healthcare industry known as the consolidated services model that helps people access health and human service related programs in centrally located "hub" or "node" areas.

This public history graduate project asked participating narrators questions about how the Las Cruces community first began to advance, reinforce, and collaborate through the actions necessary to become the Hope Campus at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope. Rather than conduct interviews with those who experienced homelessness, the project features staff and volunteer narrators who shared community engagement stories about the consolidated services corridor concept.

Two additional perspectives from outside the Hope Campus, the fourth interview with Glenn Trowbridge took place at CARE Complex in Las Vegas, Nevada, an out-of-state counter-balance to the history of homeless consolidated services in the United States; and the fifteenth interview with Kit Elliot and Meg Long occurred at Aggie Cupboard on NMSU campus, a satellite food pantry inspired by Casa de Peregrinos.

Today's work to help the homeless in Las Cruces is the result of a compassionate, multi-organizational approach by non-profit service providers. In 2018, these five core non-profit homeless services include Mesilla Valley Community of Hope; Casa de Peregrinos food pantry; El Caldito soup kitchen; Jardin de Los Niños educational program; and Amador Health Center (formally Saint Luke's Health Clinic).

With Hope Campus the geographic center of non-profit homeless service providers in Las Cruces, it is important to note resources offered by City of Las Cruces, State of New Mexico Health and Human Services, and many other local organizations not located at 999 Amador Avenue. For a comprehensive listing of community service organizations, including for those experiencing homelessness, use online search term "Las Cruces Community Resource Guide," or ask for an updated copy.

## **Narrator Summary**

Audrey Hardman-Hartley was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, raised in El Paso, Texas and Hilo, Hawaii, and returned to Las Cruces to attend New Mexico State University. Twenty six years after completing a master's degree, following a career in the medical field, Hardman-Hartley again returned to NMSU to study Early Childhood Education and serve as Executive Director of Jardin de Los Niños from 2014-2018. A lifelong volunteer who has committed time to the board of directors for Las Cruces Public School and March of Dimes, Hardman-Hartley also fundraised for Camino de Vida Center for HIV Services' events.

Recipient of the 2018 John Paul Taylor Social Justice Award, in this interview Hardman-Hartley advocates for children's literacy through the Dogs Who Read program, the practice of therapeutic intervention developmental screening at Jardin de Los Niños, and increased need for Early Childhood Education in New Mexico.

To outline 2018 health and human service resources available to children aged eighteen and under on Mesilla Valley Community of Hope campus, Hardman-Hartley speaks about collaboration with Amador Health Center to open a pediatric clinic located at Jardin de Los Niños. Because best practices that concern young children remain stringent and subjected to continuous oversight from the State of New Mexico, the level of security at Jardin de Los Niños allows for respite and calmness unlike other spaces on the Hope campus.

While many people may be surprised that children are present in this setting, Jardin de Los Niños provides a vital function to parents and children experiencing homeless by allowing the time, space, and appropriate resources to recover from family hardships unseen by most.

## **Index of first hour**

- 00:07 - Interview Introduction
- 01:03 - Role at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope
- 01:37 - Born in Las Cruces
- 01:48 - Education at NMSU
- 02:16 - Snow in Las Cruces
- 03:46 - Volunteerism
- 04:53 - John Paul Taylor Social Justice Award
- 06:54 - Nominee and symposium speaker
- 08:23 - Becoming executive director of Jardin de Los Niños
- 10:20 - Hardman-Hartley: family involvement
- 11:45 - First experiences with homeless children
- 13:05 - Grandmother Marion Passant Hardman NMSU Dean of Women
- 14:22 - Importance of childhood interpersonal communication
- 17:29 - Marion Passant Hardman of Hardman-Jacobs Learning Center
- 19:15 - Colors for Michaela children's book
- 22:35 - "Dogs Who Read" child literacy program
- 23:42 - Early Childhood Education (ECED) curriculum in New Mexico
- 26:21 - Therapeutic Intervention assessment
- 28:13 - Jardin de Los Niños children's health clinic

**Index of first hour (cont.)**

- 31:15 - Maintaining health for homeless families
- 32:01 - Parenting class requirement to break cycle of homelessness
- 33:44 - Parent volunteerism and self-paced courses
- 35:20 - Jardin client to Jardin employee success story
- 36:28 - Pre-K to Mayfield high school graduation
- 37:12 - Clients moving on from Jardin
- 37:52 - Las Cruces Community Resources Guide
- 38:50 - Mesilla Valley Community of Hope partnership
- 40:28 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- 42:09 - Jardin de Los Niños funding sources
- 43:10 - La Tienda de Jardin “Unique Boutique”
- 44:43 - Las Cruces community donations
- 46:27 - Cuidando Los Niños in Albuquerque
- 47:42 - New Mexico FOCUS program Quality of Care measurement
- 49:50 - McKinney-Vento descriptor of “homelessness” and “near-homelessness”
- 50:37 - New Mexico ranks 49th for child well-being
- 51:22 - Root-cause analysis for homeless children
- 51:56 - Engage New Mexico coalition

**Index of first hour (cont.)**

52:54 - Soup kitchens and child nutrition

55:49 - Monthly nutrition classes at Jardin

57:18 - 2nd annual Celebrity Chef Championship Gala for children

## **Index of second hour**

- 01:00:48 - Mesilla Valley Community of Hope organizational fundraisers
- 01:01:27 - Tool kits to overcome substance abuse and mental illness
- 01:02:48 - Consolidated services model to help the homeless
- 01:03:34 - Need for centralized services in Albuquerque
- 01:05:26 - Joy Junction and Cuidando Los Niños
- 01:06:10 - Toward consolidated homeless services in Albuquerque
- 01:08:03 - Effective Las Cruces coalitions at New Mexico Legislature
- 01:09:24 - More funding for Early Childhood Education
- 01:09:58 - Personal experiences with homelessness
- 01:11:12 - New Mexico governor and NMSU Chancellor Garrey Curruthers
- 01:13:53 - Self-care and Zen room for Jardin staff
- 01:15:24 - Therapists and developmental milestones
- 01:17:10 - Jardin staff trainings for work-life balance
- 01:19:28 - Jardin teacher healthcare needs and options
- 01:20:34 - Obamacare, Medicare, potential free healthcare services for women

**Index of second hour (cont.)**

01:22:04 - “Imperfect system because the overall system is a broken system”

01:23:17 - Healthcare for the homeless and proper nutrition for children

01:24:23 - Understanding and empathy for those experiencing poverty

01:28:05 - Non-profit organization work compared to private sector

01:29:47 - Positive change of “wants and needs” with family values

01:33:21 - Expanding the consolidated services model

01:34:27 - Future of Mesilla Valley Community of Hope





## Interview 2 of Hope Stories — March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018

\*\*\*\*

**David Lee del Norte:** —the particulars, and then it's all questions.

**Audrey Hardman-Hartley:** Okay.

del Norte: This is the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope Stories, a public history project at New Mexico State University. Today's narrator is Audrey Hartley. The interviewer is David Lee. The file number is 18HOPE\_199.wav. The recording is being held at Jardin de los Niños La Paz Room, or the Zen Room, on the Hope campus. Today's date is the 9th of March, 2018. Audrey, could you tell me your full name.

Hardman-Hartley: Audrey Marion Hardman-Hartley.

del Norte: And your date of birth?

Hardman-Hartley: April 24th, 1962.

del Norte: How about your location that you consider your home town?

Hardman-Hartley: Las Cruces, New Mexico. I was born here.

del Norte: And your current role at the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope?

Hardman-Hartley: I presently serve as the Executive Director of Jardin de los Niños.

del Norte: Great. Thank you. This is the biographical portion. It's pretty quick. Are you from a large or a small family?

Hardman-Hartley: I am from a family of six. Four kids, and two parents. So, I guess that's a medium size (Chuckles). I don't know what you consider a large versus a small family anymore, but yeah that's my mom and dad. Typical family growing up.

del Norte: Here in Las Cruces, all of you?

Hardman-Hartley: No. I was born here in Las Cruces, and then we moved to El Paso, and I spent from the time I was an infant until my freshman year in El Paso. And then we moved to Hilo, Hawaii. So, my sophomore, junior, senior years were spent in Hilo, and then I decided to come back because my grandmother was a teacher here, a professor at New Mexico State [University]. So, I came back, and got both my bachelor's [degree] master's [degree] here. And then, after twenty-six years, I went back, and took classes in early childhood education because of my current position.

del Norte: Can you share a story about growing up here in Las Cruces?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, we would come here to Las Cruces on weekends to visit my grandmother, and one of the funniest stories that I can tell you is we are never prepared in southern New Mexico and west Texas for snow. And my mom and dad had gone away for Christmas holiday, and I was probably five or six years old, and so my grandmother had the four of us kids. And we had coats, but no galoshes and no mittens or anything like that. So, it was snowing and snowing, and we wanted to go outside so badly, and I had a niñera, or a nanny, and she and my grandmother were taking care of us.

So, we were just desperate to go outside. Desperate to go outside. So, they decided in their infinite wisdom — my grandmother saved— She was a Depression baby, so she saved everything. So, she saved sandwich bags, so there were four kids with Wonder [Bread] bags on their hands and feet that went out in the backyard at my grandmother's house on College Place, here in Las Cruces, and had a whole lot of fun. But, that's just one of the things that goes to show you how flexible we are here in southern New Mexico.

del Norte: Ah, that's a great story. Thank you.

Hardman-Hartley: (Chuckles)

del Norte: Can you tell me a little bit about some of the highlights from your personal biography before you came to Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, and, of course, you've already mentioned time here at NMSU. Any volunteerism before arriving at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope?

Hardman-Hartley: Oh, yes. I've always volunteered. I have served on the Board of Directors for the Las Cruces Public Schools, the March of Dimes. I have been — You ask me to do it, I'll do it. Camino de Vida Center for HIV Services which is no longer in service, but [I] raised money for HIV and AIDS. I was the emcee for their fundraisers year after year after year. I've also served since 1985 (Chuckles) as the Mistress of Ceremonies for the NMSU Homecoming parade.

There have been a few years when I lived in other places in the world that I didn't do the parade, but mostly since 1985 I've been doing that parade. And it's just a lot of fun. And it's cool to be an [NMSU mascot] Aggie. And I give everybody in the parade a hard time, and I always make the joke: "It's amazing what young college students can do with toilet paper." (Laughs)

del Norte: Oh my gosh. Absolutely. How about tell me a little bit about next week, which I found out just yesterday, and I hope this isn't a surprise to you. You're the recipient of the John Paul Taylor Social Justice Award?

Hardman-Hartley: Yes, I am.

del Norte: Can you tell me how that came to be?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, it was a surprise to me when I first found out. I don't do things— I don't volunteer, and I don't do things in the community, to get the recognition, but going back, my family has been friends with the Taylor family since I can remember. Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Taylor and my grandmother were best of friends. So close in fact that when she passed away he was one of the readers at her funeral.

So, our families go way, way, way, way back. And what I've picked up from Paul is, you know, he was called, when he was a legislator, the "Conscience of the Legislature." And he's always worked for social justice. I've watched him throughout his career as a teacher, a principal, the public information officer for the Las Cruces Public Schools, and then going on to be a state legislator. He's always, always been about: "What can we do for the greater good?"

So, I have tried to work in my community service life, and now my non-profit life, to emulate that philosophy, and embody that particular spirit with him. And to be given this award— I know I was nominated by Dr. Ann Hubble at New Mexico State University, and I'm just so — People say I'm humbled and honored, but it really is when you try to emulate somebody who you respect that much — it gives you pause. You're given pause to say, "Wow, how did this happen?" So, you ask me, "How did it happen?" I don't know how it happened. I don't know why it happened. I can just tell you it's— This is the greatest personal achievement I have ever made because [of] the name on the award, and it's not Audrey Hartley, it's J. Paul Taylor.

del Norte: Absolutely. I understand. I'm excited about next week. It's next Thursday. Are you involved in the symposium?

Hardman-Hartley: You know what? I have been involved in the symposium for many, many years, and this year I wasn't invited to participate, and I'll tell you why: because they start discussing the nominees early on, and since I was one of the first nominees they didn't want me to know. (Chuckles) They didn't want me to know until the last thing, so I went to one meeting, and that was when they said, "Well, you're one of the nominees for this award." And I sat there, and I was shocked. Again, I don't do it for the recognition, so when they told me I was over the moon. I was over the moon.

del Norte: Well, I don't mean to put you on the spot. I just found out last night that you're the awardee. And I thought I'd take a risk and, hopefully, that you had already found out so—

Hardman-Hartley: Yeah. They told me because I can be a very prevalent speaker, and so, I was told, "Keep it short for your acceptance speech." So, I will. (Chuckles) So, I've decided that I will— Especially being an adjunct faculty member in communication studies, you're cognizant of the speaking time. So, I figure I'll only take about forty-five minutes of their time, and that'll be good.

del Norte: That's—

Hardman-Hartley: Just kidding.

del Norte: That's not too bad.

Hardman-Hartley: Just kidding. It'll be a five minute presentation.

del Norte: Well, I'll be there that day.

Hardman-Hartley: That will be cool.

del Norte: I'm excited for the symposium. As well to find out more about you and your work here at Jardin.

Hardman-Hartley: Well, my work here at Jardin is super important to me. So, most of the jobs I've ever had I've gotten into by accident. I've been invited to apply for jobs. It's rare that I have sent a résumé out. It's usually somebody whose said, you know, "I think your talent would fill this position." So, by and large I've done medicine, Med Surg [Medical-Surgical], and psych, and senior living. That's the complete history of most of my career, and I very much enjoyed—

The thing that I enjoyed the most out of those three components of health care was senior living. Serving seniors has just been a passion of mine for many, many years, but I happened to run into— So, I published a children's book in 2011, and I went to the CEO at Mountain View [Hospital] and I said, "You know, I really wanna go publish my book, promote my book, sell my book, do that kind of thing." So, he said, "Okay, you can give me a one year notice." Which I did. (Chuckles)

Hardman-Hartley: So, I left in 2012, promoted my book, spent some time doing some other things, and experimenting with other career choices, and just nothing seemed to fit. But, one day I was walking through a Best Buy [Electronics Company], and ran into one of the board members, and she said, “Why don’t you try this. Why don’t you try being the Executive Director at Jardin?” And I said, “I know nothing about kids.”

She said, “Well, you had two.” (Laughs) I said, “Well, yeah.” But, I didn’t have background in early childhood education. I didn’t have that kind of experience, and she said, “We really need your marketing expertise, and your administrative expertise,” which is, again, what I did in the medical field. So, my husband and I discussed it for quite some time. Our girls were older, and getting ready to graduate high school. So, we thought, “Yeah. We can still have exposure to kids if I take this job.”

And it’s been just— To see these little faces, and know what they— [To] know that they have nothing, and to be given the opportunity to give them everything, has been just an amazing journey. And my husband has jumped-in to help. He teaches nutritional components of things as a chef.

My younger daughter was our first music teacher here [at Jardin de Los Niños]. She taught the kids how to sing the Bruno Mars song, “You Can Count On Me,” and it’s become our theme song here at Jardin. She has since moved on, and we are in search of a new music teacher, but that first summer — She with her ukulele that she taught herself to play — just was an amazing summer. It was an amazing summer.

Hardman-Hartley: Our other daughter, who is a lifeguard, decided the kids needed to have pool time. So, she enlisted the assistance of her fellow lifeguards, and we took them to a local swimming pool, and the lifeguards spent their own time teaching the kids how to swim. So, we have water days where we get in the hose, but we don't have a swimming pool here. So, to give these guys that opportunity is just kind of really amazing.

My philosophy is "Spaghetti on the wall. Throw it. If it sticks, okay. If it doesn't, we're gonna try something else."

del Norte: Be adaptable. Be malleable to what the needs are of clients, and so forth.

Hardman-Hartley: Yep.

del Norte: Can you tell me some of your first experiences with children who are homeless? Was it here at Jardin or was there something before?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, back in, way back in 20--, and I can't remember. Well, it was back in the day. I was actually on the board of directors for Jardin de los Niños, and that was my first exposure. I was the marketing person for Jardin. I did all of the promotional things, and helped them arrange events and things, and then because my daughters were not healthy children I had to kind of drop out of that.

Hardman-Hartley: So, that was my first foray into homeless children, but it wasn't an extensive foray. It was literally coming here, and touching these children, and talking with them, and hearing their stories, and what they have experienced — is, kind of been an amazing journey, but that, so that was four years ago almost on the day. I am right around my work anniversary day. So, it was four years ago, and I've learned a lot.

What I've learned the most, and I'm really proud of this, is that what we apply to, with our children here at Jardin I apply to my own kids. And my own kids are good community stewards. They're volunteers. They do those things when— When the demand is presented to them they step up, and they make it happen.

del Norte: It sounds like you're a very community based family.

Hardman-Hartley: We are a very community based family.

del Norte: Is that something that you feel that you've learned in Las Cruces?

Hardman-Hartley: I think I learned it from my grandmother. I really—

del Norte: Specifically.

Hardman-Hartley: She was the one— She was the one who was the community steward. She was recognized by Delta Zeta sorority here on campus one year as the woman of the year for her service to them. She was the Dean of Women on the NMSU campus for many, many years. But, she always taught me to give back to the community. My parents did as well, but it was really my— The biggest influencer in my life was my grandmother, and secondarily, [John] Paul Taylor. Those were two, there were four adults who made a difference in my life, and number one was my grandmother. Number two was [John] Paul Taylor. Number three was my high school swimming coach, and number four was niñera, my nanny, who raised me. And, you know, it — I'm sorry.

del Norte: No, no.

Hardman-Hartley: You can edit this. (Chuckles) Well, so, when my kids were little, when our kids were little, John [Hartley] and I decided that we wanted to — We did not want them to have video games. They didn't have a— I don't know what they were even called. The little machines. The little video game machines.

del Norte: Nintendo?

Hardman-Hartley: Or Pac Man, or whatever they were—

del Norte: Oh, there you go.

Hardman-Hartley: –and you could take them with you to a restaurant. Well, we did not. Our rule was no technology at the dinner table. No technology when you're at a restaurant. So, our children were taught to interact with adults and other individuals. They were taught to communicate because I think that the art of communication is a dying art. Especially interpersonal communication.

But, the other thing is, we said to the girls when they wanted to start doing things like cheerleading, and swim, and all those things — We said, “Okay, we will, but you will stick to that one sport of choice, or that one entity, the one thing that you want to do. You have to stick it through to the end. At least for the full year.”

“The other thing that you have to do is you have to provide community service as a means of paying back what you were being given to participate.” And, I think— I'm very, very proud of them, and the things that they have done, and the ideas that they have come up with just on their own to do that.

But, we just decided at a young age that those were the kind of people we wanted to raise. And not everybody— Not every parent has done that. What I've noticed, having been on campus recently to take my ECED [Early Childhood Education] classes, is that nobody talks in the hallways. Everybody's walking down the hallway texting. I can't tell you how many people I've almost bumped into in the hallways because they're walking and texting.

Hardman-Hartley: I sure wish they'd outlaw that, but in the lounges, throughout the Ag building, in Gerald Thomas Hall, in Corbett Center, in the ECED building at DACC [Doña Ana Community Collage], all of those places there are these lounge areas that have been created for human interaction, and all you see is human techno-interaction.

They're sitting side by side. You can be in a restaurant, and you see these people: Four young men and women sitting at a table, and they're texting. Not speaking to one another, and if we lose that human contact I think we lose the ability to change what's wrong in the world.

If you feel disconnected, sure you're gonna go into a high school and shoot it up because you feel disconnected. You feel disoriented. You feel like you're not making a difference, so you have to do something. You feel desperate, and if somebody had made eye-to-eye contact. If somebody had reached out to all of these shooters that have done this, what would have changed? What would have been different?

And everyone's talking about mental illness. If somebody had reached out to one of these people, and they weren't so disconnected, they would have detected the mental illness, and they would have been able to refer.

You don't have to be an expert to know when somebody is mentally ill or not. So, I've gone down this long path of an explanation, but I wanna bring it back to the point that interpersonal communication is the most important kind of communication we can have. Human interaction, human touch is very, very important, and I think it's something that we have lost in the translation.

del Norte: This is a great segue-way to the next question, but before I ask the next question, could you tell me your grandma's name, and the title of your children's book?

Hardman-Hartley: My grandmother's name was Marion Passant Hardman. Hardman-Jacobs Hall. The Hardman-Jacobs Learning Center on the [NMSU] campus was named for her and Dr. Jacobs who was a music professor.

They were originally separate buildings that were torn down, and I was very delighted that the architect involved me in the planning of the building. And I didn't get to say, "Okay. Put a window here, and put a door here," but what I did was I gave him a bunch of pictures, and a bunch of stories about my grandmother. And she is the winner of the first Westhafer Award for Excellence in Teaching at New Mexico State [University], and so, I gave them a copy of her acceptance speech, or her acceptance— It wasn't a speech, it was an essay.

And in that essay she talks about light. "Knowledge is a light, and it should be passed on to future generations like a torch." And so, I said, "Guys, if there is one thing that I can tell you is about the light." So, if you walk into this building in the daytime, there's light streaming in from every angle, and it's just beautiful. And then at night, when you're walking on the outside it's light going out, and it's like a beacon to these students to come and learn. And I know, I know, I feel in my heart that she would have absolutely loved this. I think she's— I think there are angels, and I think they pay visits, and I think I've been visited throughout the many years since she's passed in the 1980s.

Hardman-Hartley: I really feel as though she has visited, and I certainly hope that she has visited both the inside, and the outside, of Hardman-Jacobs because it's just absolutely amazing. An amazing place like she was an amazing woman.

del Norte: Awe.

Hardman-Hartley: My book is called *Colors for Michaela*, and it is written in iambic pentameter, and it talks about teaching a young girl colors with the use of all of the other senses with the exception of sight.

So, and I wrote it about one of my dear friends from college whose daughter is blind, and it's about the time that they came to visit us one Christmas, and she and my daughters became instant friends, and she had a little white cane, and it was all tricked out with all these little teddy bears, and little, cute little things. So, she put her cane down, and I said, "Okay. So, Michaela. We have a Rottweiler here. I don't want you to step on him, or trip over him." And I said, "So, what do you want to — How do you want us to help you out here?" And she said, "I'll take your hand when I need it, but just let me figure it out."

And she was like a — you know how bats have sonar? She was very much like— She could orient herself to the parts of the house that were just amazing. So, then the three of them went back into one of the bedrooms, and they had guitars, and they were just messing around with the guitars, and hanging out, and they had the best time ever. But, it was a lesson to me.

Hardman-Hartley: All— Both of my children were very ill when they were little, and had their own challenges. Very, very serious challenges. And then there was Michaela. And I thought, there's these three little girls sitting there, not a care in the world, who have some of the biggest challenges I've ever known anyone to face. So, I just— It inspired me to write the book. And I have written several stories in iambic pentameter, and one day my husband finally said, "You know what? You have got to get this published. You've got to get these published. If you don't I am going to do it myself." (Chuckles)

del Norte: It sounds like you are a team.

Hardman-Hartley: We are very much a team.

del Norte: That's wonderful.

Hardman-Hartley: We've been married— It will be twenty-six years this year.

del Norte: Oh, my goodness.

Hardman-Hartley: So, with his encouragement, I did. And finally, after many, many "Noes," got a "Yes," and published the book in 2011, but we started the process in 2009. It took a long time, especially with a children's book, because you have to go through iterations and iterations and iterations of the drawings.

Hardman-Hartley: And I let the girls, I let— Even Michaela, who can see just a little bit. She can see a pinprick, so she would get out the magnifying glass, and said, “Okay. Well, I wish my hair was a little more blonde.” “Darker blonde.” And Blair didn’t want her hair in a ponytail, but Brock did. So, they— And when you’re working with kids that are— They were little-little when the inspiration came. Held onto it for several years. So, they were about late elementary, early mid-school. It’s amazing to work with young kids who have input into illustrations because they have their definite opinions.

del Norte: Well speaking of young kids, and reading. It’s obvious here at Jardin that you and the organization fosters a love for reading among children—

Hardman-Hartley: Yes.

del Norte: —of all ages. And you seek to create a positive association with books—

Hardman-Hartley: Yes.

del Norte: —and reading via the presence of therapy dogs.

Hardman-Hartley: Yes. Yes.

del Norte: Can you talk a little bit about that program?

Hardman-Hartley: So, the program that features our therapy dogs is called “Dogs Who Read,” and it was actually proposed to me by one of my employees who was our literacy coordinator several years ago, and she— Well, one of our volunteers had given me some information, and so, I passed it on to her because she was the literacy coordinator. And I said, “Okay. You think about what it is you’d like to do.” So, she came up with “Dogs Who Read,” and basically it incorporates the use of therapy dogs who come in, anywhere— depending on how busy we are, how many kids we have.

During the fall and spring semesters they come in once a week. In the summer they come in two or three times a week. And they sit. We have a special reading area, and they sit with the kids, and the kids read to the dogs. And it’s been an amazing thing in terms of keeping the after-school kids who are age six to ten up to par on their reading levels over the summer, but introducing literacy and numeracy to the two, three, and four year olds. It’s quite an amazing little journey.

del Norte: Can you discuss the differences between the classrooms that you oversee, and some of the traditional education in New Mexico?

Hardman-Hartley: There is no such thing as traditional early childhood education as compared to primary and secondary education.

Hardman-Hartley: As a matter of fact, there is a coalition here in southern New Mexico that have been working to get early childhood education separated out of the mainstream, and to have their own Secretary of Early Childhood Education. It makes sense because the curriculum is so varied. Curriculum in early childhood education: We talk about learning about self and others. We talk about space. We talk about fine and gross motor skill development. Those are all part of the learning curve, and part of the curriculum that have to happen there. It's not reading, writing, and arithmetic. It's a very different.

The learning is play based. In primary and secondary school, learning is not play based. It is book based. And it is: "Sit at your chair. Study. Listen to what your teacher teaches you, and — See one, do one, teach one," kind of thing. And here it's all about development. It's all developmental because we get them in the most critical stages. They start at six weeks and, again, can go up to ten years, but between six weeks and age three, that is when the most development occurs.

That is where habits are being formed. That is where the love of literacy happens. So, if the kids are being read to, and they enjoy that— If you have somebody with a nice soothing voice who's reading to them they begin to develop that love of books. So, our curriculum, you can't even compare. It's apples and oranges. They are completely different disciplines. They are completely different scopes. And I find it amazing that at the collegiate level they figured that out a long time ago because you can get a degree in education or you can get a degree in early childhood education. But, we haven't separated it out at the state-level. And that's where we have focused. We have really been focusing on—

Hardman-Hartley: And I know the state legislature just got more money for early childhood education to help develop those programs, and pay for what needs to happen in early learning centers. I think people— It's a misnomer to call [Jardin de Los Niños] a "Day care." It's not a babysitting service. There are curriculums developed for each child. Each child has a curriculum. Each child has a learning process. Each child has— And we change that plan based on where they're developing, and how.

del Norte: Can you describe therapeutic intervention, and achieving developmental milestones for children?

Hardman-Hartley: So, therapeutic intervention is something that is incorporated at every level in early childhood education. But, here at Jardin it's more important, I think, than in other centers because seventy-five percent of our kids suffer from some sort of a developmental delay.

So, when we do— The first thing that we do when someone comes to our center is an assessment, and the teachers do it along with the family services coordinator, and the children services coordinator, and they look at all aspects of the child's life. "Have they had their shots?" "Have they had their medical care?" "Have they had the things that they need to help them develop?" And most of them: "Uh, no." But, then we look at: "Okay. Where are they developmentally?"

They may be two years old, but physically not that big. They may have speech problems. They may have other disorders.

Hardman-Hartley: So, we pull in therapists to do further assessment, and work with our teachers to structure a plan whereby the therapists come into the classroom, and work with the child. And I think that's an amazing thing, too. Back in the day when I had to have speech therapy I was taken out of class to go to the speech therapist, and it was very embarrassing. Nowadays, the teachers and the therapists work in tandem in the classroom with all of the children so that one child is not necessarily being singled out. They're working with all of them, but they're doing the observation and further work with the one child that needs it.

del Norte: Can you tell me if there are clinical service and health care programs available? Does that kind of tie in with what comes afterwards?

Hardman-Hartley: The clinic. We are opening a clinic in June of this year. It will be the Jardin de los Niños Children's Clinic. And we are partnering with St. Luke's [Amador Health Center]. They will provide the medical staff, and so we will have the children get regular medical care, [and] regular clinical services.

That includes counseling services if needed, but they will get all of their shots here. They will have all of their screenings done here. They will have their well-child checks here. When they are sick they will be seen. We will start here with the kids from Jardin, and then the eventual goal is to have all of the children who are seen at St. Luke's be seen over here at Jardin.

Hardman-Hartley: And that's.. The reason that we do that is because— And I've spoken with both of the CEOs from both of the hospitals here. They're both really thrilled with this idea because families who have no money tend to use the emergency room as their physician, and that's not good practice. It's a worst practice. Both hospitals, I know, are very interested in employing best practices, and this is sort of a best practice because it keeps the kids regularly seeing somebody that they need to see.

In addition, we will be working with the nurses from New Mexico State [University] and DACC [Doña Ana Community College], and the students from Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine. The medical students will be doing growth studies. The nurses will come in, and assist with the well-child checks, and do— They do a teddy bear clinic which teaches kids how you take, you know: “Why we take your blood pressure,” and “How to use the stethoscope,” and all those kinds of things. So, we're very, very excited to expand this program, and make it successful for these kids.

del Norte: Is there an age limit at Jardin that's included in this program? I mean, does it go up to—

Hardman-Hartley: We will see siblings up to the age of eighteen. And the other kids because you're considered a pediatric patient until the age of eighteen. So, if the needs be, then that's our vision down the road, is all of those kids who don't have the availability of services will come here. And it's a friendly environment. It's a clean environment. It's a safe environment.

Hardman-Hartley: This is probably the safest building on the Community of Hope campus because of the regulations surrounding child care. So, we have extra systems in place to assure safety at all times. So, I think that's just another reason why we need to be seeing kids here.

del Norte: I have one more question before we can take a break.

Hardman-Hartley: Okay.

del Norte: There's no rush. You've given me so much information already.

Hardman-Hartley: I talk a lot. (Chuckles)

del Norte: Just remember we can always take a break if you'd like to.

Hardman-Hartley: Nah. Keep going. Just keep a rolling.

del Norte: Let's do that. In light of the homeless and the near homeless, can you discuss some of the challenges of maintaining health, and mental and physical development when children, and their parents, are experiencing homelessness?

Hardman-Hartley: Maintaining health becomes the least priority for them. It's— They're worried about getting clothing. They're worried about getting food. They're worried about a warm and safe place to stay. Unless the kid is deathly ill, that's not the priority.

Getting a well-child check, and getting a shot, and getting— That is not the priority. The priority is “What are we gonna eat today?” “Where are we gonna sleep tonight?” So, that's why we feel it's so important to have incorporated this program because we will be able to educate the parents about why it is a priority.

And parents are required to take parenting classes because it gives them the tools to break the cycle of homelessness, which is what we're trying to do. But, incorporating that into the parent programming, in the parent education, is critical because [for] many of these parents it's a cyclical lifestyle. In other words, you become what you learn. I know a lot of my friends are doctors because their parents were doctors, or lawyers because their parents were lawyers. My dad was in sales. I'm in sales. I've been in sales, in marketing for most of my career. It's just one of those things where you have to be the teacher, and you have to be a patient teacher because ignorance as they say is bliss. I see that. It's absolutely true, and it absolutely happens.

But, it just has to— We just have to give them those tools, and we have to teach them how to make proper choices as a parent. And the good thing about that is that they, once they leave [Jardin de Los Niños] they are making those decisions.

Hardman-Hartley: They know how to manage their money. They know how to use a credit card, and pay it off every month. They know all of those things that they're supposed to know as a good parent. So, and again, we have a ninety percent success rate for those families, so we're pretty proud of that statistic.

del Norte: As you should be. From the website, I have that parents have a mandatory volunteerism of sixteen hours per week, and at least two hours of contact with their child. I think that's wonderful.

Hardman-Hartley: Well, the volunteerism is— We've sort of changed that a little bit—

del Norte: Okay.

Hardman-Hartley: —because what we decided after I came, was, okay, we were enabling parents. We weren't enabling them to find meaningful work, and to get back in school. So, we changed the rules a little bit, and we said, "Okay. If you are in school, or you are looking for a job, or working, then you do— You can take the self-paced courses, the self-paced parenting courses— We want you to work. That's the most important thing." So, those parents who have jobs, who are in school, who are being productive, do not have to do those sixteen hours. The parents who do not have a job, the parents do not any recourse at that point in time, they are required to do the sixteen hours.

Hardman-Hartley: Now, the joy about that is we have a mom who is here, I actually have three moms who are clients here. One of whom is the Pre-K teacher. One of whom teaches in our three year old classroom, in our two year old classroom. And one of whom we just hired as a cook. So, they started on the sixteen volunteerism, but then they carried forward. They are all three doing beautifully. And so again, we enjoy that success right here in our own building, and we can see it working in their lives.

del Norte: That's amazing. The ninety percent rate of success as well as that people are coming back to work here.

Hardman-Hartley: Yeah.

del Norte: That's great.

Hardman-Hartley: But, I was surprised, and the one who's our cook just started just a couple of weeks ago, and she was working in TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] for us, and doing chores, things that needed to be done, helping our maintenance guy doing things that needed to be done. So, she was a TANF worker. First she started just volunteering her sixteen hours. Then we got her on TANF, and she was still doing her TANF hours here, and doing very, very well. I mean, she's one of the hardest working women I've ever seen in my life, and has two beautiful little kids. And so, it was actually one of my staff members who said, "You know she can cook, right?" And I said, "No, I didn't know." So, she said, "Well, why don't we try her out." And we haven't had such good food here in a long time.

del Norte: (Chuckles) That's very smart of you.

Hardman-Hartley: Oh. Well, like I said: "Spaghetti — throw it on the wall. If it sticks, it's ours." So, she's turning out to be just an amazing individual. But, for me, to see these families that come to us like "Deer in the headlights," and then they leave smiling, and happy, and ready to face life. Our Pre-K teacher has a son who is going to be a senior next year at Mayfield High School. He has a 4.0 Grade Point Average. He plays soccer, and his plan is to go to New Mexico State University, and major in mechanical engineering, or some kind of engineering. And so, what we have talked about because he started here, and now his mom's a teacher here. Well, what we decided is every year we do a Pre-K graduation, and we will incorporate him into the celebration of the Pre-K graduation next year. We're really looking forward to that.

del Norte: Now, this means Pre-K students that graduate to the next level as well as students that have made it this far?

Hardman-Hartley: Um hmm. [Yes]

del Norte: Amazing.

Hardman-Hartley: And so, not every student graduates from Pre-K. We may graduate somebody from the two year old classroom who has— The parents have fulfilled all of their obligations in getting the job, securing a home, doing all those things. Once they've done that, and the child is stable, then we say, "Okay, it's time to go away."

Hardman-Hartley: And sometimes they get really mad at us because they wanna stay here. We get: “My kids doing so well here.” “Yes, but... We’re the little tiny corner of the world.” You need to— We push them out of the nest, and make them fly.

del Norte: How about some of the connections to resources available outside of the Community of Hope in Las Cruces?

Hardman-Hartley: We have a [Las Cruces Community Resources Guide] book that we give them that has pediatrician services, pediatric dentistry, just what— I mean, those are just two of the health care resources but, if they needed to have counseling services. If they needed to have— It’s just a book. It’s about a— I don’t know, several pages long, but it’s got all of those resources available to them. And, of course, if they need help— Some of them are very quiet and shy, and haven’t been out in the big world, so they’ll come back and say,

“Would you help me do ‘ \_\_\_\_\_ ’?”

“Would you help me change apartments?”

Or “Would you help me get my child enrolled into the kinder program?”

del Norte: Does that type of thing happen here at Jardin without referring to Camp Hope [Mesilla Valley Community of Hope] or St. Luke’s, or is it all in-house?

Hardman-Hartley: No. It starts at Community of Hope. Community of Hope is our umbrella organization, and if a family came to us right now, today, and said, “We need services,” we first would send them over to Community of Hope.

We don’t handle housing. We don’t handle electricity. We teach them how to get it after Community of Hope and Casa de Peregrinos has set them up. We do enroll them in the St. Luke’s [Amador Health Center] program, but we do that in tandem with the St. Luke’s folks. We obtain as much medical record information as we can, and then we get it to the St. Luke’s people, and then they take the case over, and they become the primary care.

del Norte: So, there’s a good reason to have the five organizations all right here.

Hardman-Hartley: Yes.

del Norte: Close by–

Hardman-Hartley: Um hmm. [Yes]

del Norte: –for clients as well as for professionals and staff.

Hardman-Hartley: Well, we are like a family, and we may put the “Fun” in dysfunctional, but we are like a family. I have families, for example, who don’t have— Well, at first we didn’t. Now we have food baskets on weekends. But, we did have families that didn’t have food over the weekends. So, where did we send them? We send them to El Caldito. We send our kids and parents to St. Luke’s for medical services. We send them— If they need more food than the food baskets we give them, we send them over Casa de Peregrinos. If they need help with housing, or anything like that, we send them over to the Community of Hope.

del Norte: You’ve mentioned lots of success stories with TANF.

Hardman-Hartley: Yes.

del Norte: In your experience have programs like New Mexico’s use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families helped to avoid homelessness? Have there been times—

Hardman-Hartley: It’s like teaching them to fish. You don’t give them bread and fish. You teach them to fish. Jesus had something going on there, man. The dude was pretty cool. But, it’s really about teaching them to fish because you can see it this way: “Well, they’re homeless, and so they’re homeless.” “They could sit around, and be homeless, and do nothing.”

Hardman-Hartley: Or you can put them in a work situation where they learn skills. Where they learn how a business functions. Where they learn how— In some cases, I'm sure in other [cases] people who are doing TANF, a [vocational] trade, if you will, and so, that's teaching them to fish.

So that, once the TANF money is stopped, they carry right on into a new career path just like this mom that we had who's now our cook. It works. It works. And she is living proof of the fact because then—

And the other part of that is the mutuality of the organization figuring out if they like this individual or not. It's like, "Wow. We don't have to hire you. We don't have to pay you, but we're figuring out whether we like you, and we're figuring out if we have a space for you." So, it's really nice of TANF to pay that because as a non-profit organization it's hard to— We don't have the means to do that.

del Norte: How about— Well, I wanted to jump over to funding—

Hardman-Hartley: Okay.

del Norte: —because you mentioned that. Can you talk about city, state, or federal funding programs that play a role in your work, and the differences between those sources?

Hardman-Hartley: We get— We don't get a lot of federal funding. We get CDBG money through the City of Las Cruces. So, that's the only federal trickle down. CDBG money trickles through the city, and then it comes over to us.

del Norte: Can you tell me the acronym real quick? I can't remember.

Hardman-Hartley: Community Development Block Grant.

del Norte: Yeah. There you go.

Hardman-Hartley: So, we get CDBG money through the City of Las Cruces. We get health related services money from the City of Las Cruces. We get, through the State of New Mexico, CYFD [Child, Youth & Families Department] child care payments. We also get, through the State of New Mexico, Pre-K money. We are applying for early Pre-K funding at this point in time. So, that pool of money, the pre-K money, covers the entire Pre-K year. So, Pre-K is fully funded for an entire year, and that pot of money is managed in-and-of its own. The rest of the monies, mostly by and large, go to general operating expenses.

We have our own retail store called La Tienda de Jardin. It is a boutique for women— Second-hand boutique, and I've gotta tell you, most of my clothes come from there, and people tell me I look pretty nice most of the time.

del Norte: (Chuckles) I'll have to check it out for my wife.

Hardman-Hartley: Oh, yeah. Absolutely! Great deals on jewelry and—

del Norte: Now this is in town somewhere—

Hardman-Hartley: Right.

del Norte: —but it benefits Jardin?

Hardman-Hartley: Um hmm. [Yes] To the tune of about one-hundred and forty thousand dollars a year.

del Norte: Where is this?

Hardman-Hartley: It's on the corner of Alameda and Main.

del Norte: Amazing.

Hardman-Hartley: And it's got a big, big sign on the side that says, "The Unique Boutique," and the sign in front says, "La Tienda."

del Norte: I call that innovation. To get money in without having to go to city or federal funding. Was that in place when you arrived?

Hardman-Hartley: It was in place when I arrived, but it has grown, and the funny thing is we don't advertise. It's word of mouth, and we are on one internet site, but other than that we don't advertise. We just don't do it. So, we're gonna start though—

del Norte: Interesting.

Hardman-Hartley: —because as it becomes more and more well known, why not try to shoot for two-hundred to three-hundred thousand dollars?

del Norte: Why not. Absolutely.

Hardman-Hartley: So, but yeah, it's a huge, huge part of our monies, and then the other, the rest of it is all private donations.

del Norte: That's my next question. Can you talk about the importance of private benefactors, monetary support from funders, and, as well, receiving donations—

Hardman-Hartley: Yeah.

del Norte: –from the Las Cruces community?

Hardman-Hartley: We could not do it without our friends and donors. And even people who bring in clothing, and the other goods for the families [to] take them, and they use them. And if they're not being used— So, the way that it comes in, if somebody brings in a load of clothes and toys, it's sorted, and put out for the parents to look through. The parents take what they need. Then the teachers go through, and look through what they need for their classrooms because in each classroom we have what I call a "Magic Closet." And the magic closets have food— Or no, they don't have food, I'm sorry.

Water, shoes, diapers, underwear, socks, clothes. All of those things that you need for these kids. And we've had many kids who come to us with the clothes on their back.

So, we pull from the magic closet so that they have some clothing to wear. And in our big room, in our family room, we have a big magic closet where we have shoes for adults, and older siblings, and things like that, because we wanna clothe them, and we wanna feed them, so that we can— Because when your stomach is full you can learn, and when you have clothes on your back you can show up to learn. So, that's our philosophy. But, we could not do it without them. We absolutely could not do it without [donations from] these people.

del Norte: Could you tell me about the second program to Jardin in the State? I didn't see on the website what that second program is. It says, "One of two programs in the state providing these services."

Hardman-Hartley: There is another, and actually, I think there is actually a third one that has come into play since we put that up on our site, but we are not affiliated with them. It's Cuidando Los Niños in Albuquerque, [and] has been in existence for longer than we have. And what happened was when the two individuals that decided that they were going to start Jardin started doing the research, they went up to Cuidando Los Niños, and took from their page, and said, "Okay. We're gonna replicate . . ." They've since developed— We've since developed much further than that, I think, and expanded our services in another avenue. But, Cuidando Los Niños was the original one. Then it was us. I think there's a third now called "Peanut Butter and Jelly" [PB&J Family Services] in Albuquerque.

del Norte: Que es la palabra: Quindando?

Hardman-Hartley: Cuidando. Care.

del Norte: Oh.

Hardman-Hartley: Care for— Care for Los Niños. Care for the Kids.

del Norte: Would you like to take a break?

Hardman-Hartley: Yeah. Let me get some more water.

\*\*\*\*

[Recording paused and resumed]

\*\*\*\*

del Norte: Audrey, can you tell me about the FOCUS program, and the history of working with the State [of New Mexico] at Jardin?

Hardman-Hartley: The way that quality of care is measured in the State of New Mexico is by stars. One star is the lowest. Five stars is the highest. And what we do through the New Mexico FOCUS program is we have gone through several review processes to obtain the five star certification. What that means is we are employing. You know what? Stop. Let me—

\*\*\*\*

[Recording paused and resumed]

\*\*\*\*

del Norte: Audrey, can you tell me about the FOCUS program, and the history of the program here at Jardin?

Hardman-Hartley: So, FOCUS on Young Children's Learning is New Mexico's third generation, tiered quality rating system, and improvement. It's TQRIS. It was developed by the Children's— CYFD, Children, Youth and Families Department.

Hardman-Hartley: The goal of FOCUS is to foster program leadership, cultivate teacher quality, and support positive outcomes for all children. And what that means is— It's levels of care. If you have one star, and it's rated on stars— If you have one star you are the lowest quality program. If you have five stars you are the highest quality program.

So, what we have done is go through the process of obtaining certification in each one of the star levels, and we are a five star program. Now what does this mean for a child? It means that any child in the State of New Mexico would be privileged to come to Jardin because it is a top quality. You can't get higher in the entire state. The reason that we did that was because it's our philosophy that if these children have nothing you need to give them everything in order to teach them that it's okay to change your life, and do better, and search better circumstances for yourself and your family.

del Norte: I'm not sure if this relates to FOCUS program. It's federal. Can you talk about your experience with helping homeless families navigate the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act?

Hardman-Hartley: McKinney-Vento is something that we use more as a descriptor to define homeless and near homelessness. McKinney-Vento is really largely employed in the Community of Hope where it's the larger, overall program.

Hardman-Hartley: Because McKinney-Vento is much more comprehensive, we are one tiny, teeny, teeny component of McKinney-Vento, so we're not that actively involved in them.

del Norte: Understood. What is your knowledge of poverty and hunger in rural areas of the state, and especially, can you tell me about any clients that you may have worked with from New Mexico Colonias?

Hardman-Hartley: We haven't had any in the past couple of years, but I know that we have had, but let me, let me, um—

del Norte: Does that throw you off?

Hardman-Hartley: No.

del Norte: Gotcha.

Hardman-Hartley: New Mexico is forty-ninth out of fifty for child well-being in all indicators: education, medicine, all of those things. And there's sixteen qualifiers, so I couldn't quote them to you, but you can look them up.

del Norte: I'll find them.

Hardman-Hartley: So, what that means is that we are not doing a very good job of taking care of our kids, and homelessness is a prevalent component of that. But, the thing is we're a mid-size city. We're the third largest city in New Mexico, and we have one of the highest rates of poverty in the state. And what it means for us is we have got to figure out, we have to do— In the medical field they do what they call a root cause analysis.

So, if there's a mistake done in a surgery, or if something happens that negatively affects a patient, the physicians involved, the CEO, the nursing officer, the quality officer, they all come together, and they have a meeting, and they say, "Okay, what is causing this?" And I don't think the root cause analysis has been truly, truly done in terms of looking at homelessness in children.

And there is a coalition that I spoke about earlier, done through "Ngage New Mexico," and that coalition is involved in looking at those indicators, and what we need to do to change the trends here in New Mexico to make it better for all of our kids.

It's going to take a bunch of very smart people sitting down in the same room from every community, small and large, at least a couple in the north, a couple in the middle, and a couple in the south for us to really get down to that root cause analysis, and say, "Hey. Guess what? This is where, this is what we're finding, and this is where we're failing our children. And this is how we need to change it." And until we sit down, and have those difficult discussions, nothing's gonna change.

del Norte: Are soup kitchens vital to the homeless community?

Hardman-Hartley: Absolutely.

del Norte: Can you talk about that in relation to nutrition for children?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, soup kitchens are not exactly oriented toward nutritional content for children. There is a very, very vast difference. What a soup kitchen is designed to do is to take care of the immediate problem of hunger. And a child getting something in their stomach is better than nothing, but more fruits and vegetables, and fresh— “Fresh, fresh, fresh” is how we operate here. The more fresh things that we can give a child nutritionally the better off they will be. They learn better eating habits, and they learn that there is a better way than tasting canned food.

And I have to tell you that my mother could not cook her way out of a paper bag, and so I thought that green beans tasted like tin. I thought that all vegetables —broccoli, green beans, spinach— I thought all of it tasted like tin growing up. And then I met and married a chef who introduced me to an entirely different way of living. And I was not poor. I was an upper middle class family, but my mother was taught that way.

My parents were both born in the 1930s, 1940s, so they were just that, again, the cuff of struggling to keep everything. My grandmother told me stories about— My dad liked butter, so he would go, and it was hard to come by those days.

del Norte: Oh. Okay.

Hardman-Hartley: So, he would go and bite the butter. But, they grew up with the “Tin can generation,” so that’s what they knew. So, going back to the soup kitchen concept, it’s a great thing, but it’s not something that you want to have anybody living-off of on a permanent basis because it’s an immediate solution to an immediate problem.

But, I see people coming through here every day, seven days a week, and you sometimes— Many, many times you don’t see the same face twice because it’s a very transitory community. The homeless community is very transitional. They go all different kinds of places. So, for them to get that one meal where they would not otherwise, where they could starve, is a very, very good thing.

But, when you’re talking about children and young children, it’s very, very important to exercise as much good nutrition, and good nutritional habits, to teach them that that’s the way that you need to be going. Because if you show them— It’s the whole Jesus concept again. Teach them to fish. Don’t just hand it to them. Show them why this is the better way to do it.

del Norte: It sounds like this would, directly, be something taught in the milestone steps. Nutrition. Outside of the soup kitchen probably more for parents. Here at the Jardin children are looking for developmental nutrition to push them forward.

Hardman-Hartley: Absolutely. And we teach that. We have monthly nutritional classes here that we incorporate with parents if they wanna come. They usually wanna come because it's really good food, and they get really good lessons. But, we have entire curriculum that we send home with the parents that have food related activities. Recipes, menus, all those kinds of things that they can incorporate in their own homes. And the thing about it is, is we send the ingredients for these things home with them on the weekends, so that they have it over the weekend. So, again, we're trying to change thought process. We're trying to change concept. We're trying to build on what can happen, and what should happen in these peoples' lives.

del Norte: I think this is a great transition. A little bit more towards community. On Friday, April 20th, this year, 2018, Jardin de los Niños will host the second annual Celebrity Chef Champions for Children gaula [phonetically], is it gaula?

Hardman-Hartley: Gala.

del Norte: Gala, excuse me.

Hardman-Hartley: Gaula [phonetically], gala. Tomawto [phonetically], tomato. (Laughs)

del Norte: (Laughs) And that's to honor outstanding individuals who have served the children of Doña Ana County. Can you tell me about that?

Hardman-Hartley: So, we decided that— When looking at how people have been so generous to us and our kids, we started to see a trend in the [Las Cruces] community at large, that there are a lot of people out there doing things for kids far and beyond Jardin de los Niños.

So, we said, “Let’s recognize those people because they deserve it.” And there’s even a category called “Youth Serving Other Children,” and we have three nominees in that category this year. Three different children who’ve done wonderful things for— Two of them for Jardin, and one of them for, well, one of them for Jardin and other places. But, it’s just people, real people, do things out of the kindness of their heart.

They don’t expect the recognition for it. So, we thought it would be a really nice thing to pull it together, and we do it like an Academy Awards program, exactly like an Academy Awards program. They even get a trophy that looks like an Oscar, and it’s just our way of reaching out to the community. It is a fundraiser for us, but it’s also our way of reaching out to the community and saying, “There’s big things going on in Las Cruces.” Las Cruces, last year, was voted in [a] tie with El Paso, Texas as the number one most generous city in the United States of America.

You can count on these folks to come forward, and do the right thing, and they never expect the recognition. They always do it out of the kindness of their hearts. So, we thought, well, lets everybody dress up, and have a five course meal, and celebrate. And so, we have asked the top five chefs in Las Cruces to do a five course dinner.

Hardman-Hartley: So, it's a San Francisco style dinner where a lot of seafood will be incorporated. It starts with shrimp cocktail, and ends with Ghirardelli chocolate flourless cake, and everything in between. These five chefs come from varying backgrounds. We have Tom Drake from DACC [Doña Ana Community College], and the Spotted Dog [Brewery] and Colloquium [Catering]. We have John Hartley who is from 100 West Restaurant [Café] on the campus of New Mexico State University. We have Arturo Tovar from the Pecan Grill. Felipe Alvarez, who is from Mesilla Valley Eats and Boar's Head, and we have Felipe Chavez who is from Sunset Grill at the Sonoma Ranch Golf Course.

So, they're all highly trained, highly skilled chefs, and they've come together to make an outstanding menu. So, these guys are gonna be fed well, and then they're gonna be recognized, and we're gonna celebrate, we're gonna dance, and we're gonna have a good time.

del Norte: It sounds like a great time.

Hardman-Hartley: I think it will be.

\*\*\*\*

[End first hour of interview]



**Interview 2 second hour — March 9th, 2018**

\*\*\*\*

**David Lee del Norte:** So, in relation to the previous question about nutrition for kids, and then a gala event for the community, can you talk about how Las Cruces comes together like this in other areas? Because in my experience I've really noticed that it is an extremely generous place—

**Audrey Hardman-Hartley:** It is.

del Norte: —compared to Albuquerque. Albuquerque has lots of wonderful people, but it's a lot bigger, and the problems are—

Hardman-Hartley: Way bigger.

del Norte: —a lot different.

Hardman-Hartley: Way bigger.

del Norte: And maybe they're some of the same problems; however, it's just more access to that generosity here in Las Cruces.

Hardman-Hartley: Um hmm. Absolutely.

del Norte: Can you talk about other areas besides this event that helps clients, invites clients, anything to do with how the community bands together?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, every organization in the Community of Hope family does a separate fundraiser. Saint Luke's [Amador Health Center] for example, does a "Run With Your Doc," and physicians come out and run, and everybody comes out and runs, and it's a great fundraiser, and they always get massive support. Casa de Peregrinos does fundraisers, and again, there's not a time that any of us have gone to the community, and said, "We need to— We need to implement this" or "We need to do bigger. We need to do better." Anytime the community has been asked, they have come forward to help us.

I think when people look at homelessness they're afraid of it. And there is a lot of substance abuse and mental illness associated with homelessness, and so, people don't like to look at homeless people. They don't. A lot of them don't like to interact.

But, when we presented it this way, we said, "Okay. If you teach these people to fish, if you teach them the different ways, if you teach them the better ways, and you give them the tools to get themselves out, nine times out of ten they will do that."

Again, ninety percent success rate. And we've seen, for example, Nicole [Martinez] at Community of Hope can place a veteran, a homeless veteran, within a thirty day time period. That's unheard of.

del Norte: That's the [Functional] Zero? Oh. I can't remember.

Hardman-Hartley: The [Functional] Zero something, but yes, that's what it is. You'd have to ask Nicole [Martinez] about that—

del Norte: (Simultaneously) Yeah, I'll talk to, um hmm—

Hardman-Hartley: But, those are amazing strides that you don't see in other communities. And I can tell you this, we've been approached by several other communities in southern New Mexico, and in the eastern side of the state, western side of the state, who've said, "We like what you're doing." And they have toured our facilities, and looked at our programs, and seen how we interact with one another, and how we create this. This little tiny corner of the world is kind of the one-stop-shop for homeless people.

If you went and stood in the middle of the [roundabout] circle where all of these buildings are, and stood there for a little bit, and looked a little bit lost, there is somebody who is going come out to you to say, "What do you need?" And then you can point them. That's why it's really cool that we're all in this big circle [on the Hope campus] because you can point somebody to a service based on what they tell you their need is.

del Norte: I think that's amazing. You bring out the exact direction I wanna push my thesis, which is having an example outside of Las Cruces, that if they cannot come visit the Community of Hope they can have a document of the people who work here.

Hardman-Hartley: Sure.

del Norte: So, that's wonderful you bring that up.

Hardman-Hartley: Well, I really do believe Albuquerque is— They do have services for homeless people, but they're all spread out. If they centralized the services more towards where the homeless people hang out, which I seem to think is the bus station downtown.

del Norte: Yeah.

Hardman-Hartley: But, if they centralized the services, and replicated a model like this one on a larger scale, I think it would alleviate a lot of the crime. I think it would alleviate a lot of the headache that people have. The business on Central [Avenue], for example, and my daughter works on one of the businesses on Central. Central is not a safe place to be. Homeless people— She works at a very exclusive Italian restaurant that has outdoor seating, and these homeless people are known for approaching people in the outdoor seating to get money, and then being very aggressive about it.

The last time I was in Albuquerque I had a homeless woman [who] had a sign, "I'm homeless," banging on my car window to open it to give her money. Those are desperate people. But, desperate times call for desperate measures. So, it is time for them [The City of Albuquerque] to take measure, and to say, "This is a huge problem."

Hardman-Hartley: I mean they're putting up pylons so that people don't sleep in certain places in front of businesses, and things like that, because it's such a problem. Well, if there's a problem, and you ignore it, it's still not gonna go away. It's like a blister. It will fester. You have to cure it. You have to pop it. You have to lance it, and get it taken care of, or it's gonna get worse.

del Norte: Can you talk about some of the specific programs in Albuquerque that are trying to make headway? And then maybe even some that you've worked with or know about?

Hardman-Hartley: Two that I know about is Joy Junction and Cuidando De Los Niños. And Cuidando De Los Niños is very much like Jardin de los Niños. Our programs are a little bit different, and "Links of STAIR" [Skills Training in Affective Interpersonal Regulation] a little bit different, but their whole objective is to do the same thing that we do.

Give them that temporary stability so that parents can find their way, and they can carry forward into the world, and be successful. Joy Junction works with folks. They feed them. I do believe that they house them. It is one of the biggest organizations in Albuquerque that works with the homeless, and their mission is to try to make it better for these folks. Try to give them a better way. Try to give them the tools that they need to succeed as well.

But, if they took a Joy Junction and a Cuidando De Los Niños, and put a couple of other, you know, a tent city, and a clinic, and they put them "Together in the same circle."

Hardman-Hartley: Cuidando De Los Niños is in one part of Albuquerque, and Joy Junction is in an entirely different part of Albuquerque, and that's the problem that I see is it's not— That's a huge town. I lived in Albuquerque, and again, my daughter lives there today. It's a huge town to get around, and if you can't access the services because you don't have bus money, it'd take you two days to walk to some places in Albuquerque.

It's a very difficult process, and therefore it's not really working to break the cycle. If the city fathers came together, and said, "Hey. Let's really look at this. What's a viable solution?" We'd be happy to go up. I know I speak for myself, and my colleagues. We'd be happy to go up there, and say, "Okay. Here's our model." Or invite them down [to Las Cruces], and let them see what it is that we're doing because we've had people, again, from other towns, other— Silver City, and I believe Roswell. They've come to our place because they've heard that it is a successful model. And it is. It's not perfect.

We have our: "Would have, Should have, Could have." And "We wish we could do this, and we hope we could do that," but it's, in my opinion, one of the best things that exists in the southwest part of the United States. And just because we're a little tiny town, we don't need to be ignored. We do have a winning football team, a Bowl winning football team — (Chuckles) Which I've waited my whole life to say. (Laughs)

del Norte: Oh. Good for you. It's happened.

Hardman-Hartley: Go Aggies! So, I think the Aggies, I think New Mexico State is putting us on the map, but I think that people really need to look at some— We're considered a mid-sized town now. We're no longer a small town, but a mid-sized town like Las Cruces that is so generous, and that is so willing to take a look at itself, and build effective coalitions that really do business. I know that the Early Childhood Coalition was in Albuquerque talking with the legislators, and I know that— And our supportive, supportive legislators, and our approachable politicians—

I was at a discussion yesterday through the Greater Las Cruces Chamber, Green Chamber, and Hispanic Chamber. They did a legislative wrap-up, and one of the things that was brought up was the money that we got for early childhood education. I bet you we can go back, and do a direct correlation to the people who visited with those legislators.

I was fortunate to spend an hour with Bill Soles, who I went to college with, and unfortunately for him he just happened to enter the hospitality suite at Las Cruces Day in Santa Fe, and he got to have an hour full of “Why early childhood education should be separated out,” and “Why there should be more funding,” and he was very supportive.

He's an educator himself, and he sees the difference. He's a secondary educator. He was my children's teacher at Oñate [Organ Mountain] High School. So, to separate those out, he understands. He understands that difference, and how it needs to happen.

Hardman-Hartley: But, I'm very encouraged by the fact that the State Legislature is willing to give us funding. The City [of Las Cruces] is also willing to listen to proposals that we have, to say, this is— And the thing about what we do, especially about what we do here at Jardin, is this problem is never gonna go away because kids are always gonna need daycare, and there's always going to be some semblance of homelessness unless we get a miracle from heaven.

There's always— I don't see a way out of it, but I see it as a "Temporary situation." I have been near homeless myself. I've stayed with friends. I had to stay with friends for a long time. That's considered near homeless. I lived in my car for about a month. So, I've done all this.

del Norte: Did that experience bring you this direction? I mean, it must have been a while ago.

Hardman-Hartley: It was when I was first out of college in 1987. And so— (Chuckles)

del Norte: So, a quick story from me. I volunteer at the [NMSU] Aggie Cupboard— And I don't know her last name, Kit [Elliot] and Meg Long are developing that program, and they told me that one of the reasons they've got support from the Chancellor, Garrey Carruthers, is that he remembers students being hungry during finals, that students didn't always have a place to go. I guess there must have been some housing issues back in the day over there where students couldn't get in [to campus housing] or—

Hardman-Hartley:     Yep.

del Norte: –or something like that.

Hardman-Hartley:     They used to put them at the Lamplighter Hotel  
off of Motel Boulevard.

del Norte: Okay.

Hardman-Hartley:     You want that kind of history? Oh, my gosh!

del Norte: Well, maybe.

Hardman-Hartley:     Maybe another day. Maybe another day.

del Norte: Maybe another day. I don't know. Maybe we'll talk about  
that another— Okay.

Hardman-Hartley:     Well, Chancellor Carruthers comes from a small  
town. He comes from a small town in northern New Mexico. I call him  
“Dad” because his daughter and I are sorority sisters, and I call Kathy  
“Mom.” His insightfulness into— And his love is, first and foremost, for  
students and young men and women.

Hardman-Hartley: And, I teased him one day. We were— I was teaching his kids, his grandkids, swimming at their pool, and he was just sitting there with a smile on his face, and I said, “Dad, what are you thinking about?”

“Well, I’m thinking it’s a great day to be New Mexicans.”

Spoken like a true politician. Spoken like a true statesman. But, he has never— Of all the things that he’s done, he’s run a multimillion dollar insurance corporation. He’s been a Secretary of Energy, United States Secretary of Energy. He’s done so many things in his career, but the thing about him that I respect the most is as far out as he can get in terms of his career, and the things that he does, he is an approachable gentleman who you can sit and have a conversation with.

And his bigger interests, whenever we see them, his interest is not in talking to myself and my husband, his interest is in talking to our girls. “How are you coming in your—” The big disappointment is that one of our children went up the “unmentionable university,” and is a “Low-Blow.” [NMSU rivalry name for University of New Mexico Lobos.] But, he still— They still love and care for our kids.

del Norte: Sure.

Hardman-Hartley: And that’s super important to me. So, for him to— When he was approached with issues like this I know he always listens with a careful ear because he, again—

Hardman-Hartley: Growing up in a small town, barefoot, riding horses (Chuckles), you just don't ever forget that. You don't ever get passed that.

del Norte: Sure.

Hardman-Hartley: And so, he is a statesman, and a gentleman, and I'm proud to call him, "Dad."

del Norte: We'll get some of that history later. I've invited Meg Long and Kit [Elliot] to be interviewees on this project later in the summer.

Hardman-Hartley: Cool.

del Norte: So, maybe we'll fill that in at that time.

Hardman-Hartley: Sure. Absolutely.

del Norte: How about a transition to Hope care or as in self-care for yourself, and the staff here.

Hardman-Hartley: Alcohol. No. I'm kidding. (Chuckles)

del Norte: Well, here it is right here. In your own daily and weekly routine, what methods of self-care work best? Besides alcohol.

Hardman-Hartley: So, I got— This is funny. I take care of everybody, [and] I'm the worst at caring for myself. I admit it. But, we had, yeah— I have an anti-stress kit, and I have a big, old circle that says, "Bang your head here." Which I kind of— There are days I get that way. But, so I— We had somebody bring in a little cycle. A little exercise, little, mini exercise cycle. So, in my office, I have it hidden right now. I hide it in the electrical room. But, I take it out, and I ride it for twenty minutes a day in my office.

del Norte: Good. Yeah.

Hardman-Hartley: And it's kind of funny. I can "Feel the burn." But, it's also about taking time away. We are sitting in our "Zen room," and this room was designed to give all of the staff an opportunity to take thirty minutes, and de-stress, and de-compress because working with this population is very, very, very stressful. Some of the things that come out— These precious little kids are darling, but some of the things that come out of their mouths are things that you didn't know until high school or college (Chuckles). And yeah, it's kind of scary. But, so we have created this space for our staff to come in, and just "Zen out." They can take that thirty minutes to just process, relax. We have a book of healthy pointers. It has nutritional things. It has exercises that you can do. Tai Chi. Yoga. Right here in this room. And we encourage them to use it. We also encourage the therapists who come through to use this room if they need to.

del Norte: Before we go on with this line of thought, can you tell me about therapists at Jardin?

Hardman-Hartley: The therapists are occupational, speech, those types of therapists that are physically working with them, trying to get them to speak better, trying to get them to walk and talk, and get them to those developmental milestones. So, those are the therapists that come in and work with our kids. We will, when our clinic opens, have access to a children's therapist in the event that they need, and they do—

del Norte: (Simultaneously) A full time?

Hardman-Hartley: —many of them suffer from great stress. It will be two days a week at first. But, the eventuality is— And she will be available for consult on a regular basis as well. So, but again, this is something that you just want to do, and make sure that everybody's taking care of themselves because if they're not, they cannot provide good care to these kids. And it is— There are days when I will walk into the three year old room and leave with a headache because they are just that “Boing, boing, boing” all over the place.

And I don't know that I could or would teach in the classrooms. I'm a college professor. I'm not a teacher of young children, but I come in and do what I can, and I help when I can. I'm a champion diaper changer. I have been doing it for, well, I did it for years when my kids were young, so I know how to do that, and have not lost that good technique.

del Norte: Are there programs, that you're aware of, that help alleviate these stresses? That are outside of Jardin, or programs that have been a success, or that you've tried out? And you'll understand this a little bit more on the next question, but anything that focuses on the stresses for staff?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, there are trainings that are largely focused on the children, but there are— We do a music— We have a music therapist come in.

del Norte: So, that's sort of incorporated for staff as well?

Hardman-Hartley: Um hmm. Yeah. They can adapt it to their particular needs. Most of my staff are young women with family members. And so, they— It's a great opportunity for them to do that kind of relationship building with their children at home. So, we try to give them every tool, and every [and] any external resource that we can. I wouldn't say we have a program, but we look at any program that we think is viable, and we bring it.

We have a training day once a month that is mandated through FOCUS, and through the State. And so, we not only look at the curriculum, but we look at other opportunities. Safety, and recognizing child abuse, and all of those types of things. But, every once in a while we just like to throw in a good— We did one day of make-overs, beauty make-overs for the female staff.

Hardman-Hartley: The guys weren't so interested in that, but the female staff loved it. And so, we try to do those things, again, to give them every opportunity to show them that they are valued because if you don't feel valued in an organization you're not gonna perform.

But, we go very much out of our way to make these staff members know that we absolutely value them, and what they do for these kids, and we tell them. We show them that we know how hard it is. So, we try to do extra things. When we attained our FOCUS five star [rating] everybody got a medallion that recognized their efforts. So everybody's got that medallion, and you can see them through all of the classrooms. And then, when we re-certified this year, we had a luncheon for them. So, it's little things, but important things, that, to us, keep each other going.

del Norte: As a 501c3 organization, a non-profit, are there employer, city, or state systems which support your health care, the health care of your staff? Does that happen?

Hardman-Hartley: I wish. I wish. Now, we are at a point in, with our assets, that we will be a— We do provide like dental and vision insurance right now. We want to provide health care insurance. It's just so expensive. And so, we're looking hard at trying to develop some major [donation] gifts to come in to make that happen so that we could pay for it. So, it's definitely on the radar. It just doesn't— We're giving them what we can right now. But, again, I feel the same way about the teachers as I do about the kids. Give them every opportunity.

del Norte: Yeah. Do you think it's possible in the future that the state might incorporate something like this? I certainly don't mean to get political—

Hardman-Hartley: [Sighs]

del Norte: —however, it's important for teachers, for children, health care in general.

Hardman-Hartley: Um hmm.

del Norte: Is there a possible future where we might find teachers here having health care?

Hardman-Hartley: We would need—

del Norte: Besides donors?

Hardman-Hartley: We would need another President [of the United States].

del Norte: So, it's possible, in the future, on a federal level?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, federal trickles down to state. The health care regulations start at the federal level, and every state devises their programs against the federal, or as a result of what the federal programs dictate. The repeal of Obama Care has left everybody— Or the discussion of the repeal of Obama Care has left everybody up in the air, and again, without trying to be too political, I take everything that our president says with a grain of salt until I see it come to fruition.

I think there are things that should be edited (Chuckles), but I don't, I mean, probably many of— Unfortunately this is true, probably many of the teachers who teach here are hourly. Our hourly staff members probably do qualify for Medicaid at this point in time anyway, but we would still like to be able to afford them a better payer system, so that they could afford those health care services.

But, keep in mind that the majority of the staff are female, and the eventual goal is to provide female services free of charge. If a staff member becomes ill, they can receive services at Saint Luke's [Amador Health Center] free of charge. So, Saint Luke's will bill Medicaid— So, there's ways to work around that system. We're doing it locally as best we can.

It's an imperfect system because the overall system is a broken system, and until, again, the President of the United States along with Congress need to sit down and be taught by the medical field what a root cause analysis is because unless, and until, they get down to the root cause of what is broken, they will never fix the system.

Hardman-Hartley: And what I see in Congress, and what I see with the President, is a bunch of shouting and yelling and posturing, and I don't see a lot of concern for my families and my children. My own children and my husband included.

del Norte: I'm gonna skip over to the Hope future. We're almost wrapping up the interview for today, but this applies directly. Can you name three of the most valuable contributions or levels of support not present today that would help homeless families and children in Las Cruces immediately? Like, if there's a check that was ready to go—

Hardman-Hartley: [Whispers] A million dollars.

del Norte: Yeah. What would the services be that you would incorporate?

Hardman-Hartley: Well, one of the most important to me is the one we're trying to institute, which is health care. Health care for all of these folks because— And that's the other component is homeless people are sicker just by virtue of the fact that they don't have proper nutrition, and they don't have what they need to just be well. They don't.

So, health care needs to be provided for all of these folks, so that they can reach their highest potential. And there are studies that show that people who have poor nutrition don't develop appropriately. They don't.

Hardman-Hartley: The example of [David and Louise Turpin] the California family with all of the children. They are so developmentally delayed that the ones that are in their thirties, twenties and thirties, are developmentally at an age of a teenager. That can be directly correlated to what poorer children experience. Poor nutrition, and heaven only knows what happened there, but when you start with health care, and you start with proper nutrition, those are the two components that I see here that are huge. They are the biggest things necessary.

The third component I would say you can't put a check on, and that's understanding and empathy because not every homeless person chose this life. I don't think anybody ever, at the age of thirteen, says, "You know what? When I grow up I'm gonna be homeless." I don't think they choose that as their vocation when they're thinking about their future.

But, I have seen many families fall to the victim of economics and hard times, and if we go back the Great Depression, how many people were homeless, and had poor nutrition? And if you look at the clothing of the people from the Great Depression they are, again, the size of a young, small adolescent as compared to someone who is an adult here now, that's four sizes bigger than that. So, we must seek to understand, and I'm talking to the businessman out there who is saying, "Well, homelessness isn't doing anything for me. If I give you money it's not doing anything for me."

"Yes sir, it is, and I'll tell you why. Because when you give me your hundred dollars, I'm going to use that to educate not only the child, but his or her parent."

Hardman-Hartley: “And I’m going to make sure they have proper nutrition so that they can absorb what they’re doing. And I’m going to make sure that they have clothing so that they don’t worry about showing up. And then what I do is I take that and ‘build, build, build,’ so that it’s a ladder.” They’re climbing the ladder.

They’re climbing the ladder. And the thing about it, Mr. Businessman, is at the end of the day we have taken people who have been dependent on the system, assisted them in climbing that ladder, and now they are productive contributors to society who pay taxes.” And so, if you look at any business model, and I— Most of my business experience is in private industry. That’s— You want the bottom line to be black, and you want the general population to pay their taxes, and you want people to do the right thing. That’s what businesses are all about, at least our local business are.

I think until that mindset changes, “It’s all for me, and none for you,” and that has to, again, go back to Congress. Those are a lot of rich people ruling the world, and I— It makes me a little bit uncomfortable, but until that whole philosophy changes, and until people really are ready to say, “I have a gazillion dollars. I don’t need a fifty room home. I can live in a three room home comfortably. And I don’t need four Lexus’, and I don’t need a Mercedes Benz, and I—”

“It’s what do you need, and what are you willing to give?” Because at the end of the day, okay, I go back to Jesus. I’m a Christian. Jesus said take care of your brother. It’s a pretty easy philosophy, but the Muslims say it, the Jews say it—

del Norte: It's a universal human trait.

Hardman-Hartley: It is a universal human trait. It's in the Koran. It's in the Torah. It's in the Bible. Those are the three literary sources that I can tell you right now—

del Norte: Sure.

Hardman-Hartley: —with which I have a little familiarity. In there, it's "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brother that you do unto me." [Matthew 25:40] And when the big guys learn that lesson, and the rich guys learn that it's not all about them: then the world will change. I come from a very conservative family who— Upper middle class.

And I was the only one who chose to go into a non-profit service, and I haven't been into non-profit service for very long. If I ever went back to the private sector, I would operate from an entirely different perspective. In fact, I was talking with one of my friends who works in the private sector now, and I said, "Making a third of the money that I have made in my career has been— It's tough.

It's tough to make that sacrifice for your family. But, if I ever did— And if I were you, and I were sitting in your chair—" I've learned to be much more frugal. I mean, working in hospitals, and— there's big money there, and there's lots to be had, and lots to be done.

del Norte: So, you're saying that the experience of working in a non-profit has made you a better person in business if you were outside trying to make a profit.

Hardman-Hartley: Absolutely. When I was in the hospital business—

del Norte: Interesting.

Hardman-Hartley: —at Mountain View Regional Medical Center, the CEO said, “Okay, Marketing-person. You're not going to spend all my money, so here's my lecture: If you don't have money, don't spend it. If you have money, don't spend it.” And I laughed at him because marketing people have to spend money, and I have had to spend money here [at Jardin de Los Niños] to get the message out. Not a bunch, but what I've learned is that that's the truest statement. And I didn't even really like that guy, and I know he didn't even really like me, but it's a true statement.

del Norte: It stuck.

Hardman-Hartley: Look and see what you— What do you absolutely need. And what do you— What do you want? And I gotta tell you, in terms of things that I want, I want for a lot less since I've started here. And you know what? My kids, I'll tell you, my children have learned this lesson first hand because they would be, they would say, “Ah, Mom. I want this.” “I need this for school, or I want this, or I want this, or I want this.”

Hardman-Hartley: And I taught them at a very early age, if you want something earn the money to buy it, including your lingerie. Just— I wanted them to have that lesson, and I— They knew that I had the backup. And they know that we have the backup, and we can do what we can for them now, but when we started at Jardin, and I say “We” because all four of us have been actively involved with these kids, both of the girls came to me, and said, “Mom, we’re rich. We’re rich.”

del Norte: Without a dollar amount.

Hardman-Hartley: “Compared to what those kids don’t have, we have everything.” And I said, “You know what? If you take that—” and the niñera who raised me was dirt poor. Came from a little town outside of Oaxaca, Mexico, and came to what was then the convent to study and learn, and become an American citizen, sponsored by my immigrant French Canadian grandmother, by the way—

del Norte: Wow.

Hardman-Hartley: —who was sponsored, and became a citizen. She taught me one thing. She taught me beautiful needlework. She taught me how to crochet, sew. There was a bad knitting incident that we won’t go into (Joking), but she taught me that “When you have nothing you have everything if you give from your heart.”

del Norte: Oh.

Hardman-Hartley: And if you give your talent, if you give your— Whatever talent it is. With her it was needlework and cooking. That woman could cook. I don't know why my mother never learned to cook from her, but she didn't. But, she taught me that. "Give everything that you have." At the end of the day you'll be exhausted, but then, replenish it, and don't give it because you have to, "Give it because you want to."

del Norte: Sure.

Hardman-Hartley: And when have— When we change that philosophy, the all-American philosophy has been since— I'm a kid of the 1980s, so it— Yuppies. "Woo hoo!" The sparkle jazz. Sparkle jazz— We have to change the "Sparkle Jazz" image.

del Norte: Yes. Yes.

Hardman-Hartley: We need to become a much more humble people.

del Norte: You mentioned a convent. Are you speaking of the Loretto Academy?

Hardman-Hartley: No, no. Yeah. No, no, no. Not the Loretto Academy in El Paso. It was here.

del Norte: (Simultaneously) Here?

Hardman-Hartley: Was that the Loretto Academy? I was so young when she was here. But, there was a convent here. It was Lore-, you're right, Loretto. I think you're right. The s-, and I think it was run by the Sisters of Loretto, so I think you're right.

del Norte: Amazing.

Hardman-Hartley: But, yeah, it was a convent here, and then it was taken up. It's a private home now, but the chapel still exists.

del Norte: So, maybe that was some of the history of the generosity in Las Cruces. I'll have to look further into that. I know about it. I'm learning more about Las Cruces history. Audrey, I only have two more questions for you today.

Hardman-Hartley: Okay.

del Norte: And it's fine if it takes a little bit longer. I know you have to go to lunch, and whatnot. If it takes a little amount of time that's fine as well. In thinking about the Loretto Academy, and the generosity: Are there future programs that show promise to help the homeless, and I know we've kind of been over lots of different things, but I don't wanna leave anything out. Are there any programs that are down the pipeline that might come to fruition?

Hardman-Hartley: Not of which I am aware. But, what I can tell you is that each of us [at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope], in this little corner of the world, are looking at expanding our services in whatever way we can. If we could go to other communities, and build a Community of Hope in Sunland Park [New Mexico], in wherever—Wherever it should be—

del Norte: Expanding.

Hardman-Hartley: —Expanding the service to include the same model because the model is good, and improving on the model. “How better can we interact?” And what Pamela Angel from St. Luke’s [Amador Health Center] will tell you, and I will tell you, is that we think the greatest partnership that ever existed was the one that we created for the kid’s clinic. We’re very, very excited about that. That’s thinking outside of the box.

del Norte: That’s the one you speak of that starts in June?

Hardman-Hartley: Here. Um hmm. [Yes]

del Norte: How long has that been in development?

Hardman-Hartley: A year and a half. Just about a year and a half. We thought it would take a lot less time, but then I forgot, I was in the medical field, and I forget the hoops you have to jump through but—

del Norte: Sure.

Hardman-Hartley: –We’ll get there.

del Norte: And it’s pretty much the same question because you had attended to it, but how do you envision the future of Mesilla Valley Community of Hope?

Hardman-Hartley: I see our future as very bright. I see us continuing to work together. We meet once a month, and discuss issues that we— For example, Lorenzo [Alba] at Casa de Peregrinos. He wants to build an entirely new building because they’re out of space, and they’re serving tons, literally tons and tons and tons of food annually. He needs a place, a bigger place to store it, and a bigger place for distribution. So, he’s looking at, “I wanna build a new building.”

That’s a great expansion of services. Nicole [Martinez] at Community of Hope wants to expand into the rest of the building where Casa de Peregrinos is because they’re out of space. We added the kids clinic. We’re gonna continue to see what FOCUS has in store for us, what we need to do there, and to see how other children we can involve in the program.

del Norte: Wonderful, wonderful information and interview today, Audrey.

Hardman-Hartley: Thank you.

del Norte: And before we wrap-up, and of course if you have any closing thoughts, please share them, but before we wrap-up, I'll, of course, ask you to make some recommendations for next interviews. I'm trying to do five from each organization, so that's four people that you might—

Hardman-Hartley: Do you want them from my organization or from other organizations?

del Norte: From your organization, and it's kind of, as Executive Director it's kind of— If you know someone that you really want to be involved in the project or that would benefit from this process, but as well—

Hardman-Hartley: I definitely think you should talk to— Well, there's more than five.

del Norte: And that's— Twenty-five is the limit for what I can do this year, but I'm gonna go all the way up to forty. All the way until my thesis next year. So, there's plenty of interviews that can go first.

Hardman-Hartley: So, Melissa Anderson. Miriam Gutierrez, who is our Director of Family Services. Araliz Chacón, who is her employee. Gisela [Dominguez], who's our receptionist. She's learning— learned and seen a lot of things. And Marina Flores who is our Children's Services.

del Norte: Marina?

Hardman-Hartley: Marina. That's a good start.

del Norte: That's probably more people— And that's awesome.

Hardman-Hartley: But, if you wanted to talk to, like, Board members or something like that, we could do that, but—

del Norte: It may be capstone, and we'll see how the project goes. In the future I can definitely see interviewing board members. I don't know if it'll get that big, and, as well, I need to wrap-up by May of 2019.

Hardman-Hartley: Bless your heart. I remember doing my thesis.

del Norte: I mean, if I get there. If I get there.

Hardman-Hartley: God.

del Norte: Thank you so much for your time.

Hardman-Hartley: You bet. You bet. You bet.

\*\*\*\*

[End of recorded interview]