

Maureen and Mike

Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Archives and Special Collections

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

The transcript with its associated audio recording was provided to Archives and Special Collections by the University of Montana COVID-19 Oral History Project.

Oral History Number: 475-010

Interviewee: Bridgette Parsons

Interviewer: Riley Erion

Date of Interview: June 24, 2020

Project: University of Montana COVID-19 Oral History Project

Riley Erion: My name is Riley Erion, and today is June 24, 2020 at 11 am. I'm interviewing Bridget, who is the owner and co-founder of Hype House that's a spin studio in downtown Missoula, as part of documenting the impact of COVID on Missoula County in an oral history project. Thank you for meeting and talking with me. First question is just like a little brief description of who you are, where you're from, how old, stuff like that?

Bridgette Parsons: Cool. Okay. My name is Bridgette, I am 40 years old. Oh, it's fine, it's fine. I grew up in Montana, I was raised, South East of here, about 80 miles southeast of here in this really tiny town called Phillipsburg. It's a very small towns like a population of 1000 people, really really small school system. I had 30 kids in my class. And that was a huge, huge class for that year, the class underneath me had eight. So that's, and I think that average is about 12 to 16 so tiny, tiny little school. I work in healthcare part time 24 hours a week and I have always worked in health care. That's what I went to school for, I was in school to be an X ray tech and I've been doing that since 2007 and I also started teaching fitness classes in 2007 and the first format of fitness classes I ever started teaching was cycling. And so I've taught cycling now for 13 years and a couple years ago, Allison and I met working for child protection services and we both like, I had seen her at the gym where I was teaching I had seen her there regularly. And so when we started working together and was, like, Girl, you should teach fitness classes because I see you at the gym, all the time, so you should teach fitness classes and she started teaching. That's how we kind of came to work together and an instructor capacity and then we just kind of started tossing this idea around of cycling studios because she went to them in California. I had never gone but I'd always wanted to like I always told people going to take a Soul Cycle class was on my bucket list and so when she mentioned that to me. I was like, I think it would do phenomenally here and things just kind of went from there.

RE: I know that's so funny. How did you get into like cycling and all that stuff?

BP: Yeah, so it was really interesting. My very first ever spin class, I bet I was like 26 years old when I took my very first ever spin class and that was probably one of the very few actually group fitness classes that I've ever taken. Because growing up in Phillipsburg this really teeny tiny tow, there's no gym there. So there was no group fitness kind of classes I was never exposed to that and I went to school at Rocky Mountain College right out of high school and I just didn't get exposed to any kind of group fitness there either. So then when I got to Butte, which is why I went to school for my x ray degree, I was going to the YMCA there and I would walk past this room all the time where there is this loud music playing these people were on these bikes and it looked like they were working so hard, and they were all in such good shape. And I was like, okay, want to try this. So I took my very first ever spin class when I was like 26

years old is probably in 2006 and then I just started going all the time. Like, I loved it. I loved how hard it was it was the hardest workout I'd ever done in my life. It still is. I always tell people, spin classes, the hardest class in the gym, there's not there's nothing like it. It's the hardest class because of the cardio, the endurance that you have to have, it's, it's the hardest class in the gym. Um, so yeah, I just started going all the time. And then one day the instructor was like, we're going to have a training here to train some more spin instructors and you come every day. So you might as well go to the training and give it a go. And so that's how it happened. And in 2007 I started teaching cycling.

RE: So fun. Okay, so how has it been working in healthcare and then since everything happened with like COVID and when did you start to realize that it might affect us here.

BP: Right. Yeah, it was really scary. To be honest, and I think most of us in healthcare were scared like we were worried about our own health, we were worried about the health of our family that we were going home to so it was kind of a weird dynamic having owning a small business and working in healthcare, was like the opposite ends of the spectrum, right. Like my small business closed, just like the extreme end of one spectrum. And then my other job was like gearing up for this insane, crazy influx of patients, you know, we were totally rearranging the, the floor is on the hospital, what they looked like so that we could have ventilators and rooms that have never had ventilators and and before so it was just this interesting dynamic, you know, like one thing, totally dropped down and that had its own chaos involved with closing our business. And what's that going to look like. And then at the other at the other end of the spectrum. And like I was dealing with both of these things in the same day. You know, like having to like, be ready and do all of these things like going into patient rooms. Like first of all we have to do all these this big training like preparing for our first patients like how do we gown up and then down down after leaving the room. So we're not infecting anyone else when we're in and out of those rooms. And then when we finally did get COVID patients. It was really intense to put all that gear on and be in that room with that person and it was also really sad because like, you know, you can tell that they feel really ostracized, and alienated and like they're like gross and disgusting and people don't want to touch them. And it's like, no, no, no, that's not it. You know, and I just, we can't spread this to anyone else in the hospital. So it was. Yeah, it was. intense. People were scared. You know, like healthcare workers were definitely worried about what things are gonna look like for us here and then thankfully, we just got so lucky. And I think it has so much to do with Montana and the layout of the state. We're kind of isolated as a baseline, we kind of so socially isolate, you know, like our was was like 100,000 people that's so small compared to other cities that were it's basically already social isolation. So I think that that's kind of like was our saving grace and then government I think acted really appropriately and really quickly with closing things down and having people stay home. I think that was also a good move. But we did joke and healthcare probably starting about the end of April, we were all kind of joking around about because we just didn't get as many patients as we thought we were going to right, so then we were all kind of joking around it, people put all these really cute signs outside the hospital. They said, We love you. Healthcare heroes and all this really nice stuff that was actually touching like it made me cry when I first seen them. Super

touching. But then we were all joking that we should move those signs down the street to like Fresh Market and to Albertsons and stuff like that because they're like the real heroes. You know, like they're the ones who are unprotected and dealing with a lot more people you know like the hospital was slow. We were quiet, like we had two months of basically like downtime, because we just didn't have the patients that we thought we were going to get that had COVID and then we had stopped doing all of our other normal surgeries and patient procedures to keep people at home, and out of the hospital. So I mean it was just like, we'd never you know like we work so much harder than that on a normal basis when we're seeing our normal patient flow that it was like a weird thing to just get that slow and then sitting there answering a lot of people say like we're kind of just like holding our breath, especially at first, like the end of March, and the first of April, we were all just like holding our breath like waiting for it to happen and then we started to realize that it wasn't going to happen here. The way that it was happening in New York and Seattle and other places and we're all really grateful for that and felt like we were getting more acknowledgement and credit and we deserved in that the people who are working in the grocery store. We're really the people who are deserving of that.

RE: I don't think that's true. I mean I think everybody deserves credit. So, like, what were like some of the biggest changes you guys did then like at the hospital.

BP: Biggest changes at the hospital gosh, there were a few really big changes. First of all, having to have your temperature checked when you came into work every day, like they would check your temperature and, you know, if you are temperature was 100.1 or greater. You were sent home that day and you couldn't come back for a while until it was not that anymore and then going to wearing masks. All day, every day. It was a big change for most of us, there's some departments like surgery, cath lab, special procedures where they do wear a mask most of the time, they're in a sterile environment. So they're used to wearing a mask throughout the majority of their day but to go, you know, to be handed a mask as you walk in the door and have to put it on and you keep it on for the rest of the day for everyone across the hospital was a big change. And then, you know, just, I would say closing down so much stuff surgery all of our outpatient procedures and then having the hospital be so empty was so weird for us because St. Pat's is busy. It's, it's, we're like above patient status all the time like full, can't take anymore, we, you know, we're sending diverting patients over to community. That's our norm there you know like the the wings are all full of patients and to have an entire floor empty like no patients on that floor at all was just crazy. It's really creepy. Yeah, it was, it was so it was unnerving how quiet it was for sure.

RE: And then what department do you work in?

BP: So yeah, I work in the respiratory therapy department, which is actually really interesting because respiratory therapist, you know, they're the ones who put you on a ventilator. And the ones, giving you breathing treatments and they were a little bit under recognized I feel like in this whole whole thing, not intentionally. People always say doctors and nurses, right, because that's just the easiest thing, it just rolls off the tongue quickly. No one says doctors and nurses

and respiratory therapists and that's just kind of long but the respiratory therapists were truly the front line in all of this coronavirus stuff across the world. Because they're the ones who administer the breathing treatments, they're the one who put people on ventilators when they need to get intubated, and they're the ones who control those ventilators, so when we did have a couple of COVID patients in the hospital, you know, they had to wear like this big negative air pressure, we call it a positive air pressure mask over the top of their head that like plugs into like a literal machine and be in the room with the patient all day long. Like it was an you know it's it's a really intense experience and and respiratory therapist. I work with are like incredibly brave and an amazing at their jobs so yeah.

RE: Yeah but like, how are you feeling like emotionally like, your morale?

BP: Yeah, the morale, the morale was really good, especially so that was, I'm sorry. I kind of forgot the question you had asked me about what department I work and so I work in respiratory right now. And I do, I do EKG, which is within you can use in heart monitors, which is within the respiratory therapy department so we're like Cardiac, respiratory, we kind of all just work together, but the morale was just amazing. Like there was so much extra like love and support throughout the whole entire hospital and everyone was just doing anything they could to help each other out and no one was having an attitude about anything. It was just always like, help, help, help and the hospital is a funny environment to work in. Anyways, I think, because we do like see so much trauma and so much tragedy that everyone who works in health care has kind of this weird sarcastic attitude about everything. There's a lot of sarcasm and healthcare and I think it's a big buffer for all the tragedy and and the sad things that you see in the day. So it's just, it's really cute to see people kind of play with each other in this, you know, sarcastic way. But it's just also like so supportive and it's kind of how we support each other is by trying to make each other laugh and smile all throughout the day. So there was just a lot more of that and a lot more we use something called a voice there at work, which is basically a walkie talkie. And there was just a lot of chatter on it about like, hey, does anyone need a hand somewhere like I've got 10 minutes to help someone that needs to go to lunch. I can come take over for you just, you know, those the morale was amazing, incredible which makes me emotional so that was my, that's where I was emotionally. I was was definitely emotional. Emotional for a number of reasons. I was really concerned about Hype House and if we're going to be able to survive this. And I don't think we would have without the government assistance that was made available to everyone by Congress so I was emotional about that. And then I was also, I was really worried about my co workers, especially the respiratory therapists that I was working with about how exposed, they are to the virus when they're in those rooms with those patients.

RE: Yeah, yeah, I can imagine, both of those are so stressful. That was one of my questions that later about Hype House was if you were really able to get aid and how that process like went for you guys and stuff?

BP: Yeah, it was the easiest, you know, it was, it was an interesting process because there was very little communication by anyone in Small Business Administration. But it was incredibly simple. The application process was so easy. It was the easiest app. And one of the easiest applications. I've ever filled out in my life and then you just got an email that said your application has been accepted, you'll get more information via email in a couple of weeks. And we applied right away, like literally the first week we closed down. We had our last class on Monday, and then we closed on Tuesday we had no classes. And by Thursday we were filling out that application. It was done by Saturday and that was a, um, so then we fill that out and we got an email back right away. And it wasn't a terribly difficult application but then we were contacted you know we had tried to reach out to the SBA and of course it's this insane, you know, it tells you right away, like you're on hold for the next available representative and the waitlist or, you know, you're like number 640 on the list. So you're like okay not going to stay on this phone call, um, and then we got some information via email from our lender in town, which is MoFi, I don't know if you're familiar with them, but they're incredible, so they work specifically with startups. That don't have a lot of collateral to get started as a business and they also do like home loans for people who don't have a lot of collateral or the greatest credit and they help people get started up and then transferred over to another bank within a year or two. So there are amazing, but um, so they had reached out to us and said, okay, so the Small Business Association, just put out a different application. So they want you to go back in and reapply and we're like, okay, so we did. And then this application was literally one sheet was like four questions, was the easiest application and we filled it out and it said, you'll be contacted within two weeks to by email to let you know, and we were. And then we got some money deposited into our account like the same exact day and then we also filled out the application for the payment protection plan so that we could pay our employees, while they weren't working which we're really grateful to be able to do it wasn't a ton of money, but I think it was helpful to have something coming in every couple of weeks for them. Um, and that was also a really simple application, you know, it was like a page and a half, they got back to us within a few days and then we had the money a few days later. So our experience was really good with it. You know, I think I helped out we jumped on it so early, and that we have a small bank working for us, like MoFi is a small lender versus like if our loan would have been at US Bank or something like that, a big nationwide chain branch chain thing that is where people tended to have more problems.

RE: You know, yeah, my dad, he owns a small business in California and his bank, is Wells Fargo and he had problems with it and he applied the same day, like that morning that it released. And so it's just interesting like hearing everybody's different experiences. Yeah, Wells Fargo might have like a lawsuit against them right now because the way they like did it, they did all of the biggest ones first and then you could just see it go down. But yeah, it's so interesting.

BP: Wow. Yes. We felt really grateful that we had MoFi to help us out. I think that that was the difference was and we were working with this tiny little bank that could, you know, was only servicing like a couple dozen clients and was easy for them to handle it.

RE: Yeah, so nice. So then, okay, I guess we'll switch over to Hype House, when did you guys like decide to create Hype House? Oh, and how would you like, describe Hype House to somebody that has like never been or unfamiliar?

BP: All right, first. Okay, let me answer that first I would describe Hype House as a beat based cycling studio so we're basically a spin class. We are clipping in, we will have rental shoes for you. We do everything to the beat of the music and we add upper body choreography. So it's basically a dance party. It's 45 minute dance party on a bike you're not going to notice that you're working out because you're having so much fun and don't worry if you think you don't have any rhythm because will eventually get it and it's easier than you think. That's how I would describe it. Yes. So what was your other question?

RE: When did you decide to create it?

BP: When, okay yeah, so we in October of 2018 is when we had our very first meeting, our very first Hype House meeting and we had a business loan in late February of 2019 so it was about four months of just pure hustling to get everything done and then we ended up opening in May of 2010, so it was, you know, four to six months of just like hustling to get all the things lined up to find a space to secure a business loan.

Interestingly, Hype House almost didn't happen. So again, we found Mo Fi at the very last minute we had gone to probably four other branch chain banks and we were denied for a business loan like four times in a row before we were directed towards Mo Fi thankfully. Because I know everyone was like, your business plan is so great and this really sounds like a good idea and I can totally see this being successful here. But at that time, neither Allison nor myself owned a home so the banks all said we don't really have any collateral for them to base the loan on something that they could come back and take if things didn't work out. Right. You know, so we got denied. Like four times by big banks in town, and we were, you know, there were tears, like we both were like very, very sad because we

were like, how are we going to make this happen. This is such a good idea. People are going to love this so much. How do we do this, you know, we were getting ready to ask like investors for money like we were going to go find just some rich person like we had a couple names and we were just going to go hit them up and be like hey we need somebody and then we found out about Mo Fi and we chatted with them on the phone and thankfully they are one of their offices

is in Bozeman, and one of the gals who's really high up in Mo Fi does spin classes at Zephyr in Bozeman, and so she's like oh my goodness, y'all need to do this, like, yeah, let's do it. And we were just like, really, like, are you saying yes are you saying like, you're going to give us the money. And she's like, yeah, it's like couldn't believe it. We're just gonna be, it hurts know so much and we were just like, just near the end of thinking it was going to be a possibility. And she

was like, Yeah, let's do it. You're just over the moon so then we had to secure a place and then you know we have been researching like before we even went to banks, we had already

figured out what kind of bikes, we wanted to use the shoes that we wanted to have for rentals, like we had all of that stuff figured out but Allison and I always joke because neither of us ever took one single business class and college, not one and in hindsight, it should be required that you take at least one business class in college because neither of us knew anything about what we were doing. So it was, it still is, an entire year later, every day I learned something new

about

how to run a business and it's funny because like all like, my background is in healthcare and biology and chemistry and she's a social worker and so her background is in like criminology, and social work and nothing on business nothing about spreadsheets. Nothing about all the

taxes

that you pay as a business and all of this stuff. So it was just mind blowing and eye opening. Yeah, so it took us about six months to get started, which is apparently pretty fast, but Allison and I are both pretty aggressive, dedicated people once we set our minds to something.

RE: I'm glad it worked out. When did you realize that Hype House might be affected by COVID?

BP: Oh gosh, so probably like we were watching all of these other studios in bigger cities closed down, One spin studio in particular that we follow in Portland, which is where Taylor came from, Burn cycle and they closed, you know, and we have been having conversations about this. Like, I think our last class was on the 16th, you know, 16th or 17th of March, and like the entire probably week to 10 days before that we were just like, just going to unless it's going to happen in LA. You know, like, what's going to happen. And then, you know, we found out, and then we actually closed down before it became a thing that you had to close your business down. We seen one cycling in Portland closed all of these studios that we are following in California had closed and then we seen sort of a cycle. And we were like, okay, we need to close, like we need to do our part. And that was really important to us. It was such a hard decision to make, for our business and we were at that point, less than a year old, you know, we weren't even when you're one years old as a business, yet we're about 10 months old and we had, we were like already planning our one year party and all of this stuff that was going to happen in May. It was going to be this huge event where we're so excited and you know, we're, we're just like we can't have people coming in here a week, I can can't risk getting our staff sick that we love like family members to us, you know, like it's not worth risking them. It's not worth our clients that means so much to us and have supported us so much. It's not worth losing someone over to keep our business open that was eventually, you know, that was kind of our, it was kind of a no brainer. In a way, but it was also just like heart wrenching to have to do because we were like, you know this, how much money we got in the bank, it's gonna last this amount of time and then we're done. Yeah, so yeah, but so we just, you know, we did it wrote an email, sent an email out to all of our clients and told everyone that night. This is the last class and we're closing down and we don't really know what this looks like, right now, but we really hope that it's not a goodbye. It's just, I will see you in a little while, kind of situation. So, yeah.

RE: And then, what were you guys doing like during quarantine?

BP: Yeah, so during quarantine. We were doing so much we were, we'd apply for all those applications. We're kind of waiting for all that stuff to come in talking a lot to our lender reaching out to everyone that we owe money to on a regular basis, right, like our landlord who ended up not working with us immediately, but then he later did come back and say, okay, we can work something out. But at that point we had gotten the economic disaster injury disaster loan money, so we were able to pay it anyways but so we had reached out to our landlord. We have reached out to Mo Fi and they were like, yeah, we'll put your payments on deferment, you know, you don't have to pay anything right now while you're not making any income, we called, you know, so when you book your class through mind and body and through our app and stuff. That's a monthly payment actually, and we call them to see if they were willing to work with us just anybody that we could think of that might say like okay yeah will decrease your payment by this amount while you're closed, not making any revenue was really important to us, to try and keep our costs as low as possible while we were not bringing in any money and then Allison gets all the credit for renting the bikes out the idea of renting the bikes out she brought that to me. You know, like a few days after we closed it, what do you think about renting the bikes out. And I was like, I think it sounds like a nightmare. Like it's so hard. These are so heavy. A and to like haul them all over Missoula 25 different, 125 pound bikes all over Missoula. And then, you know, like they're worth so much money and to have them in someone's house where we can't see like that they're being cared for and maintenance to regularly and all of that stuff. And I'm just like, really Type A and she's not she's more like let's just go do it. And I'm like, No, we need to research this for seven weeks before we do anything. So she was like, and also I was working at the hospital and I you know like we were like gearing up to be really, really busy. And I was like, girl. I'm not going to be able to help you. You know, and she's pregnant at this time. And I'm like, I'm not going to be able to help you move those bikes and like that feels really bad to me to know that I can't help you do that. And she's like, don't worry about it, I'll figure all that stuff out.

You know, you just do the hospital and I'll figure out how to get all these bikes around everywhere. We put it out on the internet and on social media like would you be interested if we were going to rent our bikes out for two weeks at a time at 120 bucks for two weeks. Is that something you'd been anyone would be interested in doing. And it like blew up so yeah. So then we were busy during quarantine. We were busy doing that we we got on a really good schedule and every two weeks, reaching out to people and saying, you want to keep it for two more weeks you want to give it back and then people who would give it back, then we reach out to the next person who was on the waitlist who said, yeah, it went for a while. So then that was nice because then we were also able to keep instructors kind of going and coming in and we have to devise this really interesting plan, so that there would only be one person in the studio filming at a time. So we had a Google Doc going where people would put their name on so then no one ended up being here, you know, back to back, or when there was two people at a time. So we're doing social distancing and so we, you know, had instructors filming classes. Pretty much every single day we had at least one instructor filming usually more than one and putting those up on Vimeo for the folks who had rented out our bikes and they would just tune in and watch an online Hype House class. And so that's then how we stayed busy all through the quarantine, during that and it was really busy.

Which was great, was amazing. So then we were able to have some income, you know, not nearly what we would would make in a normal month but at least something coming in to cover some of our, our costs.

RE: Yeah. Um, and then so how did your like daily routine change because of COVID?

BP: Yeah, so it changed a lot. You know, like a lot of people were joking around about like the quarantine twenty. And all of this stuff is like, Yeah, I definitely have it not because I'm like drinking or like eating sugar all the time like some other people were like joking on social media, but because I actually have time to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner now a couple days a week. Whereas, like most days, you know, like we've been so busy that year, that whole year, just starting like getting ready to start Hype House and starting Hype House we were so, so busy. You know, I would be like one meal a day, pretty much, I got really thin for a little while there and then also teaching five classes a week you know, so yeah, so my daily routine changed some I just became a little bit less busy. I still went into the hospital and my set days and worked my 24 hours a week there, so that part didn't change, but I guess it did in the fact that I went from being really busy all the time to not doing anything at work. Which was a big change. And then just not being here in the morning before the hospital in the evenings after the hospital and then all day on the days that I don't work at the hospital definitely was a big difference. My, my routine slowed down a lot. Different but we also but we stay busy with other tasks, but it just wasn't the same kind of busy. It was more busy on the computer at home versus busy running around a Hype House and all that stuff.

RE: Have you seen like a change in the customer. Since you guys have been open again?

BP: A little bit, you know, a we have definitely seen a few people who aren't ready to come back and don't feel safe coming back into this type of an environment yet, which we hold no judgment over, we're very understanding is like yep I will keep your membership on suspend as long as you need to feel safe before you come back here. There's absolutely no judgment there because people have all have unique circumstances that they're dealing with at home you know they have a baby at home or they have an elderly parent that's living with them at home or they're a young college student that lives with their grandparents and they don't feel comfortable coming in. So we 100% work with anybody, or whatever reason that they want to keep their membership suspended. Um, it's been different going from having 25 bikes in the room down to 12 to 14 bikes in the room. It's just a different energy but people have been, the people who have come back, have been amazing. Like we've had so much support. We had so much support while we were closed like people would just reach out on social media or via email and just say, I want to let you guys and know that I love you and I'm thinking about you and I'll be here when everything comes back and it was so like emotional to get those emails and know that we had all the support behind us. And then when we did open again you know people's energy has just been like off the chart like higher than it was when we closed and which is, you know, something that we kind of always said like when we open back up we're opening back up right where we left off. And we're going to keep going with this thing which we

absolutely have, like, people have just brought their energy back, people are so excited to be able to come back and move their bodies and do something that feels good for them emotionally and physically. So it's just been it's been incredible.

RE: I missed like being able to come in and just like clear my head so much.

BP: Gosh, I know, so much. Yeah, it's, it feels so good. It's such a different workout and I always tell people, like, you've got to try it because it's so hard to explain like it's this amazing workout that if it's something if changing your body is something that you're interested in. That's going to change your body, but even more than that, it does this amazing thing for your mental aspects like it just gives you this mental energy in this. It's like a, it's a high, you know, it's like you leave feeling so good and energized and happy. And you take it with you for the whole rest of the day. And that's something that we that's like our foundation of Hype House is that people who feel good do good things and the community and that's been our foundation since day one, since our first meeting in October 2018

RE: So how have you like felt about phase one and phase two and all that stuff?

BP: Yeah, yeah I think I think it's absolutely appropriate like being a healthcare worker, I probably look at it in a different lens than some other people do. But I think being it's absolutely appropriate. I think the best thing that we could do, at first was keep things small and spread out so and I think you know what a hard decision for our lawmakers to have to make. I don't envy them. I think they did a good job, because it's, you know, they, you know, that people's like livelihoods are getting absolutely destroyed by their business being closed, but it's for the sake of human life. So, I think it's necessary. I think everyone did a really good job of closing down and being really appropriate with it. And then, you know, it was interesting to watch to when we went into phase one that some businesses were like, you know, I'm not really ready not ready to open up yet, and some businesses stay closed for the first few weeks of phase one, which I think is a really, you know, great decision for them to make a lot of them were uncertain, you know, places that served food and stuff like that. So I think that was a good choice for them to make and then I don't see, I guess, the difference between phase one and phase two is that ours and stuff were able to open up and as a small capacity. Um, and I think it's good. I think people are really doing their part I think businesses restaurants, breweries are being good about saying you can't be at the bar, you have to be spaced out at tables. There's servers are wearing masks. They're cleaning everything extra before and after using disposable menus or laminated menus that can be completely sanitized when people are done. So I think it's all been really appropriate. It's concerning that we're having a little bit more increases in cases and that kind of was a concern for me. I kind of thought we should have spent a little bit more time in phase one, but how do you make that decision. You know, it's just something you don't know unless you do it and you think people are watching the numbers appropriately and will act appropriately continue to go upward

RE: How have you been preparing like Hype House, and the hospital for if there's, like, another uprising here?

BP: Yes. We have pretty regular conversations about what will we do if you have to close back down again, you know, what's that going to look like for us and we have a plan in place for that and the hospital is also still just basically ready, you know, like, now we know what it takes to flip all those rooms into isolation rooms and could do it much quicker. Now, if the need for to arise.

RE: Yeah. So then, just, I guess, like how do you think the city and the state reacted to it?

BP: I think the city, I think Missoula County always reacts to everything like above and beyond. We're just such a neat little community and one of the most diverse communities in Montana. And I think you see that, in a lot of ways with, you know, there's always a lot of kind of political presence here and more protests here, then you know in support of like different organizations and and stuff like that here than there are in other counties in Montana, like Missoula is unique in that way. I think we responded to the coronavirus in a little bit more of a unique way as well. I think we were really quick to jump on it and then Missoula County was really, they were more strict when we were opening back up. Then what Governor Bullock was putting out so they couldn't be they couldn't do anything less than what he said, but they could do more than what he was allowing and so they did. You know, keep some restrictions, a little bit heavier than what he was saying was allowed and I think that just goes back to us being more liberal city and a lot more, oh gosh, what's the word I'm trying to say. Views on things are just a little bit different here and more trending towards human safety and concerned for the community as a whole. Um, yeah. So I think that I think the state, though, did a terrific job, governor Bullock lead really well and and did a nice job. I never felt like disappointed in anything. You know, it was hard. I don't know how anyone could feel disappointed. It was really it's just so out of anyone's control. I think everyone just wanted the best for our state and for our city and was moving with intentions of just trying to do the best thing for everyone involved.

RE: Yeah, I agree. Everybody here was so, like, just, okay, doing everything that they needed to do. At home people were so angry, they like refused to wear masks and do the right testing. It was just crazy.

BP: Yep, exactly. Um, and then, you know, it was really cool. There was a lot of, you know, you heard a lot of cool things about, like the Top Hat and Log Jam like donating, like people could donate the cost of their tickets that were getting cancelled instead of doing a refund option donate that to the workers who would have worked that venue. There was a lot of cool things like that that you heard of and it's just like that's that's Missoula, you know, we just take care of each other here. And it's one of the things I like about living here. Yeah.

RE: What were you most excited for for when things started to reopen?

BP: Oh gosh, just the energy that's in here when we're like, especially when class finishes and we open that door and people start coming out and they're so happy that. I just wanted to have that back so bad, just to see people feel so good. So good about themselves, so good about what they just did and walk out the door with a big smile on their face. That's what I was excited about.

RE: And then, what were you most like worried or angry about?

BP: Just definitely worried about my employers, I was worried about my employees. I was worried that someone was not going to know that they had it and come here and get sick. I was worried about Allison, she was pregnant, you know, like very pregnant and always worried about, you know, she was going to get it from someone who didn't know that they had it because it's such a weird virus that way that you know so many people could have it and not have a clue that they have such a strange thing. Um, so yeah that was my worry. I also I have a sister, who just has some developmental disabilities and is pretty compromised in a respiratory way. And so I stayed away for a long time, which is unlike me I go home all the time. So, to not see my family for a couple of months straight was really hard. And so I still just worry. Now that I am going back a little more regularly that I'm bringing it back there, but I just tried to wash my hands and be super, super clean and not touch as much, you know. Yeah, but that's my worry was is still just that it's gonna come back and that's everyone's worry.

RE: My last question is just, like, is there anything that you would want like future readers of this interview to like know about the pandemic, or like before, during? And I know it's like such a broad question, but.

BP: Yeah yeah man, um, Gosh, I know it's like such a weird thing because it's like, who was thinking about pandemics. You know, like, you know, where these past couple months ago, like everything just keeps getting like weirder and weirder. Yeah, it's just, it's been so eye opening, so I guess I would, one thing I would say is, like, Don't take your day to day life for granted because it's really weird when everything gets kind of stripped away from you. Yeah, so don't take your day to day life for granted and as a business owner, I would say be really smart and have that three month safety net that everyone every business book tells you you need to have three months in the bank to cover all of your expenses, three months worth of money to cover your expenses in the bank, and that's your safety net and you don't touch, it stays there always so important because you just never know. You know, like a pandemic. I would never have believed you in the beginning of February. If you would have said like everything's going to shut down and no one's going to be able to go to work, unless you're essential I would have been like, okay, you know, yeah, so don't take anything for granted and as a business owner, have your safety net in the bank.