

Ep.35 - Marian Reich & Jodi Michaels_mixdown

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SPEAKERS

Announcer, Ed Clemente, Jodi Michaels, Marian Reich

A

Announcer 00:01

Welcome to The Michigan Opportunity, an economic development podcast featuring candid conversations with business leaders across Michigan. You'll hear firsthand accounts from Michigan business leaders and innovators about how the state is driving job growth and business investment, supporting a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, building vibrant communities and helping to attract and retain one of the most diverse and significant workforces in the nation.

E

Ed Clemente 00:29

Hello, I'm your host today Ed Clemente. And it's a pleasure to have two guests today. We have Marian Reich, President Global Ties Detroit. Welcome, Marian. [Hi, thanks.] And Jodi Michaels, Executive Director Global Ties Kalamazoo. [Hello] Welcome to the show, Jodi. I know we've known each other a little bit, but it's getting getting to be a real pleasure to get to know you and what's going on. And let's start out, you know, why don't one of you kind of say, if you've never heard of what global ties are you both have that in your name? What is that?

J

Jodi Michaels 01:03

So we are Global Ties Kalamazoo. Our organization until July of 2021 was Colleagues International, we recently rebranded and celebrate 50 years in 2021. And what we do in a nutshell is connect Michigan, share Michigan with the world. So in my case, I'm over here on the west side of the state. And we create exchange opportunities for people. And we say people and exchange, folks usually think of students of academics, and we're really thinking everybody else. So we do some youth exchanges, but primarily adult professionals. And we bring leaders to connect and engage across all different fields, to get to know one another, and to get excited about what folks can do together.

E

Ed Clemente 01:59

And, you know, is there anything else you wanted to add Marian, by the way.

M

Marian Reich 02:04

So very similar experience here on the southeast side of Michigan. We also host lots of Department of State sponsored young leaders and emerging leaders and these people often become the heads of the state. So it's a great idea for them to come here and get to know Americans and our way of life and then go back home and lead their nations or lead in their fields of interest, and really have a great understanding of the US and work on problems that we have locally and globally.

E

Ed Clemente 02:38

Why don't you both start with you, Marian, what is your catch basin roughly like what do you what do you consider Southeast Michigan like 12 counties or something

M

Marian Reich 02:45

About 12 counties? Exactly, right. Going really the whole Southeast Michigan from Monroe up through the thumb up to Port Huron and beyond really up to Flint and over to Ann Arbor. So really connecting a lot of the Southeast Michigan what'd you think of as Southeast Michigan?

E

Ed Clemente 03:08

And Jodi, I know yours is much larger, what do you have?

J

Jodi Michaels 03:11

Michigan is big all around. But over here. We're rooted right here in Kalamazoo. But we do programming up Grand Rapids, Traverse City all along the lakeshore all along the state line over here. And I guess the only place that isn't claimed is the Upper Peninsula. We have a we have a sister organization in Lansing, that does exchange work in the capital region.

E

Ed Clemente 03:38

Oh, okay. And so both of you have a couple things in common I know. But to me, it's more interesting whenever I meet people who didn't grow up in Michigan, because a lot of our guests grew up here, but you're both from different places. Whichever one of you wants to start out first on that. Go ahead.

M

Marian Reich 03:58

Sure, this is Marian and I grew up in Baltimore, and studied there and then moved to Chicago to go to grad school. And while I was in grad school, got to study abroad in Russia and Ukraine, then went to work in Poland for a year, came back, met a Spaniard and got married. He's a professor of Golden Age Spanish, [Does he have a name?] Yes. So his name's Daniel. And so from Chicago, we moved to Michigan, where he's a professor of Golden Age Spanish at Oakland University.

E

Ed Clemente 04:34

And here comes the echo. Jodi, go ahead.

J

Jodi Michaels 04:38

I'm actually married to a professor of Spanish Golden Age as well, who is from Argentina. Um, and I grew up in Canada. I'm from Hamilton, Ontario, so Great Lakes Region, but east of Detroit. And I went to school out in California and I lived in New York City for a few years, Brooklyn, spent time in the Middle East and moved to Kalamazoo with Natalio and some year in the past from Montreal.

E

Ed Clemente 05:14

So, just just a little bit just to dive down and but when you say Middle East, you actually worked in Jerusalem, didn't you?

J

Jodi Michaels 05:20

Yeah, I worked in Jerusalem, and then later out of Montreal, I spent a lot of years working across this sort of broader region over there, too.

E

Ed Clemente 05:29

Wow. Okay. And I know, Mariabn, and you said you were you actually lived in Russia?

M

Marian Reich 05:36

Sure, yeah. I lived in Russia as a student. And then I lived in Poland as a teacher. Yeah, really interesting.

E

Ed Clemente 05:43

So yyou guys both have good backgrounds for your jobs, which you probably is critical. So as you guys sort of bring these folks in a sort of how, like, who do you guys work with? Like, who are partners who are stakeholders? I don't know. Jodi, you want to go first? Or is that Marian should go first. Go ahead, Marian.

M

Marian Reich 06:04

Okay. Sure. So here in southeast Michigan? Well, first, I should mention that Global Ties, Detroit and Global Ties Kalamazoo were part of the Global Ties U.S. Network. So there are Gobal Ties agencies and organizations across the country, about 90 or so. And we also work with the Department of State. So those are our two big stakeholders. But when we bring the delegations here to Southeast Michigan, we're working with a lot of different organizations. GM, DTE looking at things like you know, energy sustainability or mobility, Continental Catering. We work with a lot of universities, Wayne State, URC, Oakland University, we work with lots of nonprofit organizations all throughout this

area, access being one of the bigger ones, lots of government entities or quasi-governments such as MEDC, the SBA, Dearborn Police Department. So really just covering the sector, all sectors, depending on the interests, and the theme of the delegation that we're hosting,

E

Ed Clemente 07:09

Do you have similar hosts and guests over there Jodi with you as well?

J

Jodi Michaels 07:15

Totally, I think one of the amazing things about what we do is that we're really it's required that we be Jack of all trades, and so really understand all the different sectors. So yes, universities, Western Michigan, K-College, KVCC, Grand Valley up in Grand Rapids, and a lot of entrepreneurs, a lot of wraparound services for business, like GROW - Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women - or the SBDC. And really, we get to connect them with amazing, amazing visitors.

E

Ed Clemente 07:58

So you both have had, you know, obviously the MEDC is interested in economic development. But I know both of you have quite a few of your topics usually are right up that alley, right. You guys both have examples of some places you've worked with to do that sort of direct economic development kind of things?

M

Marian Reich 08:16

Well, I'm glad that Jodi mentioned entrepreneurship. I mean, I think that's one of the big draws to Michigan, I think it's a huge draw to Detroit is to see how is the city revitalizing, or the whole region really because of entrepreneurship. So we're working with lots of different parts of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. So our offices are located in TechTown, and that's a real hub, we'll work with automation alley, or with individual entrepreneurs as well, ISM, Inc, International Strategic Management will work with chambers such as the American Arab Chamber of Commerce. So really, a wide swath. Universities, of course, are a big player, as as so our, you know, local economic development organizations, the state, feds, so definitely a big lots of groups are looking at economic development. And then because we're a border state, they're also looking at international trade, which is a big, big topic as well.

E

Ed Clemente 09:12

Jodi, anyone else you want to mention?

J

Jodi Michaels 09:13

Sure, yeah. No, just looking, you know, at economic development from that, sort of like, you know, smaller scale side. Recently, we had a group of tech and science entrepreneurs from all around the Americas. And we had them meet with a local person in the real estate and construction field, as well as our former program manager who now does neighborhood business and special projects with the City of Kalamazoo and it just shows Marian mentioned

ecosystem but whatever your sector, if you're trying to do business if you're trying to grow or something, an idea, you need that ecosystem, you need your people, you need the wraparound services and seeing how that's being done inside Kalamazoo and core neighborhoods is really awesome.

M

Marian Reich 10:03

I just want to add one thing is, one of the things we do is fellowship programming, which is a way of having young leaders from anywhere in the world who speak English and want to learn how Americans do business. They're embedded in a company for about a month or so, right now, it's a little bit challenging because we do it in a virtual format. But what's really exciting is the host organization has the opportunity to go overseas, all state department funded so that they then have an opportunity to experience business in that home country of the fellow. And that's really brought about, I think, some new opportunities when local young entrepreneurs from Michigan get a chance to go overseas as well. So we really want to grow that that part of our work.

E

Ed Clemente 10:48

You were good at something else. Jodi, sorry.

J

Jodi Michaels 10:50

I guess I just add, Marian mentioned fellows, but really, you know, the vast majority of our visitors, the program they come through is IVLP, International Visitor Leadership Program. Marian alluded to it, it's, you know, the most prestigious, the oldest US Department of State exchange. And it's, you know, you're bringing people who are going on a life, like a life changing experience, and part of that life changing experience includes coming to Michigan. And so relationship building is even more likely, since you are really in a moment in your life.

E

Ed Clemente 11:29

I would imagine a lot of these people that come here this maybe the only time they maybe even leave their own country sometimes. And that's got to be very impactful because they want to get the most out of it. Right.

M

Marian Reich 11:42

And definitely, that's exactly right.

E

Ed Clemente 11:45

You guys are both nonprofits correct? I recommend you at least name your chair person. So that way you get that plug in. And also, you know, the boards are so important to both of your organizations. So why don't you both mentioned who your chairs are, and you know your boards a little bit. You don't have to mention names, but if you'd like organizations.

J

Jodi Michaels 12:07

So we have a board of 10 here at Global Ties Kalamazoo. Our chair is Tom Kostrzewa, who's been to some 80 plus countries, and is really a global citizen in many respects. And we have room on our board and we are seeking amazing people out in the west of the states. So join us.

E Ed Clemente 12:29

Yeah, go ahead. Marian, who do you have on yours?

M Marian Reich 12:31

Great, so our board chair is Steven Rybicki. He works at Continental and Infinity Innovation Charters. He's incredibly hospitable, wonderful business professional, also doubles as a homestay host and the dinner host and really is a warm and guiding hand for our organization really helped us through, you know, some of these challenges that have been over the past you know, 2020 being such a challenging year for international travel. We've had DTE has been a longtime longtime supporter of Global Ties Detroit, Jas Singh, is on our board from DTE Energy. We also have GM well represented on our board, as well as a lot of smaller entrepreneurial businesses like the BTL Group and International Strategic Management. We have universities represented. Oakland University, Wayne State University, so super fortunate to have a really active, wonderful board of directors.

E Ed Clemente 13:34

And, um, why don't you to both explain what a home stay is?

M Marian Reich 13:39

Sure, a home stay is really one of the most intensive and rewarding experiences. Some of our programs require that the visitors or their delegates, these young professionals stay in the home of a volunteer family and then they really get to experience what is life like in America from you know, going to bed at night, having dinner with the family getting up in the morning and going through their program. So a really intense wonderful experience that makes lifelong friendships.

E Ed Clemente 14:10

Go ahead, Jodi.

J Jodi Michaels 14:11

I can't say more, it really, I will say it's the intangibles. It's the the time that you spend outside the professional meeting, it's the hallway, it's the dinner table. So that home stay, the dinner is just at the core of where the magic happens. It's it's where those relationships really get solidified.

A Announcer 14:36

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E

Ed Clemente 14:52

So what do you guys think are going to be the bigger challenges or future trends? You think that are going to be more things you're going to have to deal with in the near future?

J

Jodi Michaels 15:01

Well, I think during this very interesting time in human history, in our field, you know, we've we've pivoted to virtual, and I think there has been just so much learning within our sector and from others toward us on how to do meaningful, engaging work in the ether, in the virtual realm. And so as we move forward, and there's a lot more international flying around, and there's more in person, engagement, everything will be hybrid. And so we're going to bring all the best of all the innovation that we've come up with over the last year and a half plus, and, and be all the better for it.

M

Marian Reich 15:51

Hybrid really does increase access this online virtual has really been a boon for increasing access to exchanges. And one of the things that I know is that, in the past, we've been very interested in international development, how the visitors overseas are taking lessons learned back with them. But I'd say in the past two or so years, two or three years, we're really looking at how are we making a benefit here in our home communities here in southeastern Michigan, southwestern Michigan, how are we impacting our young professionals, you know, in developing their skills and their competencies, to really deal with a much more, you know, a smaller world, a really globally competitive world.

E

Ed Clemente 16:40

And I should have, maybe you touched on this a little bit, but both of you, there's a whole network of your organizations around the country, right? And you two work together, but like you guys work with all the other places? I mean, I know. I know. Jodi, you you from Canada. But I also know you went to Stanford, and I know that you've probably experienced other places, too. And I know Marian lived in Chicago quite a while, is there any other experiences from those two places to sort of those areas that help [when] you came to the state? Marian, you can go first, I know you love Chicago.

M

Marian Reich 17:19

Of course, I love Chicago, and I love being here in Michigan as well. So, yeah, I think that we do have some lessons learned. But I was just gonna mention about the hybrid and the virtual opportunities. What's really exciting when we have these hybrid virtual meetings is that professionals from Detroit can be sitting around the table with professionals from San Diego, talking about, you know, economic development, or mobility or environmental sustainability. And I think that's a really rewarding feature for them. So that's been the silver lining as well, coming out of, you know, solving these problems when we can't have international travel.

E

Ed Clemente 18:00

Well, the next thing is, and this is ask every guest, but in each of you will go individually. But if you can either go back and talk to yourself in the past when you're in high school, or anyone that's maybe in a mid-career position or anything like that, what advice would you give them start with you, Jodi?

J Jodi Michaels 18:21

I mean, it's hard to think about what you tell yourself. But for me, when I'm talking to folks who are younger than me, who are thinking about what they want to do with their life, which of course can change again, and again and again. I am a huge proponent, and I will always suggest seeking. And you know, if you see something that you're passionate about, go spend some time digging into that thing before you dive all the way in, because it could take you on a totally new path. And I'm I'm just a huge proponent of experiential learning. So just you know, put yourself out there and see what happens. And you'll surprise yourself.

E Ed Clemente 19:06

Marian?

M Marian Reich 19:07

I would advise two things that affected me very deeply. One would be study language. I think when you study a foreign language, you get to learn another way of thinking, the way people construct their words, the meanings. So studying a language really lets you get into other people's mindsets. It's a way it's like a it's a beginning to explore a new culture. And then going along with that, I would say travel, travel, travel, travel, when you can. So when you get to go abroad, I think it's just keep doing it.

E Ed Clemente 19:41

Yeah, I'm sort of jealous of both of you. Because you both, not only just traveled a lot, I mean, I've traveled but you both lived in other places for extended periods of time. And I just, each of you, if you can each give just like a few seconds talking about what that meant to you to actually live in another country versus, you know, you still came back to America. So I mean, you know, what did you like about it? Jodi, you can go first.

J Jodi Michaels 20:06

Well, I think for me, and I think this is really an in like, in a core way, what we're trying to do with every project we implement, there is profound benefit to understanding our shared challenges in different contexts. And so when you live somewhere else, or when you engage with somebody from somewhere else, you really begin to learn more and more about yourself, and, and, of course, about other cultures, and you understand that the world is way smaller than you thought it was. And that is just something that, that I will always carry with me.

E Ed Clemente 20:45

Go ahead, Marian.

M

Marian Reich 20:46

Oh, I totally agree with Jodi, I also felt like it really helped define me and my values as an American. When I got to spend time abroad, you know, some of our peculiarities, some of the things that I thought, you know, were everyone's right, you know, the cars must stop when you cross the street. Well, that's not true in a lot of places all over the world. So it really, you know, it's sort of check, what does it mean to be an American? And what are some of the expectations and assumptions you make? And when you get to live and travel abroad, those things change quite a bit. And, and then you come back with, you know, perspective, and oftentimes gratitude as well.

E

Ed Clemente 21:23

Well, I'm gonna I'm about one last question. But I also want to put a plug in for both of you that I've worked a lot with the Global Ties group, but in Detroit, and sorry, you just can't say Global Ties with both of you on. But the thing is, is you really want people and I really highly recommend people to do home stays, or if you're a business. I think this Citizen Diplomacy is probably the best thing I've ever uncovered. In all my travels too, I mean, I lived in Detroit ball life, but I've met so many more interesting people just because and I don't you know, it's not that you're hidden. But I think it's something people should either want to volunteer, step up, you know, donate to, whatever. So why don't you each give your what, what where you want to go to for the find out more about what you guys do Jodi, you can go first.

J

Jodi Michaels 22:15

Sure. Thanks. So we can be found on all the platforms at [globaltieskzoo](http://globaltieskzoo.org). And on our website, www.globaltieskzoo.org.

M

Marian Reich 22:29

And Global Ties Detroit is www.globaltiesdetroit.org. So all one word, globalties, like connections, detroit.org. But definitely we are looking for people. Not necessarily, you don't have to have people live with you, you might want to just break bread with them, you might want to show them around the DIA. We need day hosts, we need people to speak with people, virtual home, home dinner hosting is super easy. You don't even have to make a meal. So we definitely need people to be engaged and welcoming to the visitors and sharing their, you know, their homes and their insights and things like that.

J

Jodi Michaels 23:07

And I would just add, I would add one thing to that which is you know, exchanges for everybody. Doesn't matter what field you're in, it doesn't matter what you do, you will find value in talking to somebody from somewhere else. So really, this is for you, wherever and whoever.

E

Ed Clemente 23:27

And your last questions your easiest one, but I know you're both transplants. I consider Jodi part of the Midwest, though. Hamilton's part of the Midwest. So she gets to go first. But what do you find favorite in Michigan?

J Jodi Michaels 23:41

Michigan is real interesting. I mean, I mentioned I'm from Hamilton, Ontario. My first visit over was CANUSA games, Hamilton / Flint rivalry a long time ago. And every engagement since and living here for 12 plus years, it's the people. I've found so many incredible people. Innovative, interesting, interested. And, you know, obviously the landscape is wonderful, but the people.

E Ed Clemente 24:11

Kalamazoo is a great city to have a lot of friends there. And that's a great community to be from. I'll tell you that. Go ahead, Marian.

M Marian Reich 24:18

That's a great answer, Jodi, I'll say the state parks. I'm really having a great time exploring a lot of the state parks. You know, the the hiking the lakes. It's just been really wonderful. Just the variety and nature has been really terrific for me, and that's somewhat new. I've always been sort of a city person. So really feel lucky to be in a state that's so beautiful.

E Ed Clemente 24:42

Well, I want to thank everybody for tuning into this international trip today. We have Marian Reich President, Global Ties Detroit and Jodi Michaels Global Ties Kalamazoo. Thank you both for taking time to do this and keep up your guys' good work and keep making America look good through these programs. And helping international exchanges for everybody. Thanks again.

M Marian Reich 25:03

Thank you.

J Jodi Michaels 25:04

Thank you.

A Announcer 25:07

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