



## Stacie Boord and Nick Wilson

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:00:00] So, welcome to Learning Unboxed. We're really excited today for our guests that we have. We have Stacie Boord with us today, who is the Executive Director of Shadowbox Live, and a very wonderful friend and colleague that myself and the PAST Foundation staff, we've had the chance to get to know over the years. We, also, have Nicholas Wilson who is the Education Liaison with Shadowbox Live as well.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:00:25] And both Nick and Stacie are here to talk about the amazing programs that they Stacie, over the years in Shadowbox, saw, and, now, with the help of Nick, have been able to build out an amazing story journey and mechanism to really bring, not just the arts alive, but, more importantly, the business and the industry of arts, and the relative, and the realism of what this entire ecosystem can sort of bring to bear. So, I'm very excited to have both of you here with us.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:00:58] Thank you.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:00:58] Yeah, thanks for having us.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:00:58] Yes, absolutely.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:00:59] Absolutely. And it's been a really, really fun journey. And to set a bit of context for our listeners as we talk about teaching, and learning, and the future of work, we're really looking at all the variety of elements, components, best practices, amazing opportunities that are out there that folks have really engaged when they're thinking about how we can do teaching and learning very, very differently. And we all agree, it's so desperately needed.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:01:31] Yes.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:01:31] Yes, yes, yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:01:31] Our current system is not working that we're getting now.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:01:34] No, it's not.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:01:35] So, we have to think very, very differently. And what I love about the work that's happening with Shadowbox, in particular, has been how you have really been able to take

the ethos of that industry and show folks the power of it across multiple careers. So, with that in mind, Stacie, I want to start with you largely with, what the heck were you thinking?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:01:55] Yeah, right?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:01:56] I mean, you've been in this business for 30 plus years-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:02:00] 30 years, yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:02:00] ... as an amazing performance and seeing every aspect of this business and industry. So, way back when, set the stage for us, why the heck do a student-based program? And what did that look like?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:02:13] It was interesting because we developed our art form. And so, in doing so, there was already a lot of teaching because we had people that came in that had literally no experience but had natural talent. We had people who had a theater background but maybe didn't sing. And, I guess, I should say our art form is sketch comedy, rock and roll. We do dance theater now. I mean, it's developed into a lot of things, but it's all centered on the rock aesthetic, which is very ballsy, uninhibited. It's all about courage.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:02:49] Bold.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:02:50] It's bold, all of that.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:02:52] Yes, bold.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:02:52] And so, when we got to about our 20-year mark, we decided, "Listen, we need to reach back into the community." At that point, we had been pretty insular. And to be honest, it was more about just focusing on the task at hand. We were developing. We were trying to get stronger and improve our artistic endeavors. And with that, a lot of education was happening. It came from a phone call that I made to Battelle where I was wondering, how does this whole community support thing, how does this work? We hadn't done any of that yet. How are all income done?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:03:25] How do we get funding?

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:03:25] How do you do this?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:03:25] How do we get funding? I see people get money. How do I get money? How does this work? And I happened to get really lucky and have a person on the phone that was a Shadowbox patron. And Christine was willing to meet with me. And she started telling me about the school called Metro School, high school, and was explaining it to me, and I was just fascinated by the model.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:03:50] And at that point, really, had no intention of starting an education program, but I was so fascinated by that. I went on tour, and I thought the whole concept was so in line with how we thought of our business and how we thought of our personal journeys of betterment. And when I realized that they didn't have an arts program, and I thought they're so innovative, and arts would align so beautifully with this. And it was -- I mean, it really was like an epiphany. It was like a vision. And I sat down, I was like, "I know what we could do. We can audition these kids. We can teach them what it's like to be a performing artists and hold their feet to the fire." And we did it.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:04:32] And it so far exceeded my expectations, but it was actually a beautiful transition because we actually had been doing it all along with our own ensemble members that, really, teaching a 15-year-old teacher and teaching a 25-year-old, there's really not much difference.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:04:49] It's exactly the same.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:04:50] It's exactly the same. And it was so successful that, really, that changed my life's path. I felt like I had truly found a calling and that I had a responsibility to continue it, and to further it, and deepen it, and improve the lives of these kids because, to be honest, it was improving the lives of us. I was becoming a better performer because I was required to stipulate why I make the choices I make on stage and, also, why my preparation is the way it is, and what you gain from it.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:05:25] And so then, to align ourselves so beautifully with PAST Foundation. And, also, you guys gave me verbiage. You said, "Oh. Well, what you're doing is a multidisciplinary approach." I'm like, "I don't know about that. I just know it works." So, it was really -- it's been a fascinating journey.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:05:38] It has been a fascinating journey, and one that when I step back and think about the last decade, 15 years or so, of PAST evolution, it's actually one of the partnerships that I am most proud of because I think that when we look across the scope and scale of the things that we've done, and we try anything and everything, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:05:57] Right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:05:58] Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:05:58] So, our cultures aligned in that sense.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:06:01] That's right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:06:01] Yeah, exactly.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:06:01] But the other piece of it is there's so much hangup - I guess, maybe is the way I want to put it - and a lot of debate as it relates to -- especially when you talk about specialty, or transitional, or transformative school endeavors, however you want to define. And we get so caught up, for example, especially with STEM as in the early going. And even still today, we get real caught up in the letters. And that's really not what it's about.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:06:25] No.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:06:25] And one of the things that I've loved, loved, loved about this partnership is that this partnership has made it possible for students who self-identify as, "I'm the nerd. I'm the science geek. I'm this particular piece of the population that somehow this isn't for me." And the reality is it is for you in so many different ways and the skills in particular. I mean, what I love about Shadowbox, and whether it'd be boot camp - and we'll talk about those in a minute - or some Rocks the Box, every time I go, I see kids who I could barely get to speak to me prior to this experience who suddenly are the most amazing human beings.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:07:05] Yeah.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:07:05] And I think-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:07:05] It's awesome.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:07:05] I think it's twofold. One is that we're able to instill in everybody. There's so many different sides to all of us.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:07:13] Exactly, exactly.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:07:14] And just because you haven't tapped into the rock star side of you doesn't mean it's not there, and you just have to have the courage-

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:07:21] To get up there and do it.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:07:22] ... to get up there and do it. And I am always saying, I'm going to want you to go for that high note. What's the worst thing that's going to happen if you don't hit it? You don't hit it. And then, we do it again, and we figure out how to do it, or we change the line, but the world's not going to stop. Nobody has a disease, a terminal -- Nothing other than you learn. That's the only thing. And the more that you attempt something and maybe fail it, but you get closer to it, the less that failure and that rejection. It doesn't hurt as much anymore.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:07:52] Yeah, you train them you train them be a rock star in-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:07:54] Everything.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:07:54] ... everything they do.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:07:56] Exactly.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:07:57] Everything.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:07:57] You're acing a math test, you are a rock star at that math test. And it allows you to go into that preparation with, "This is how I have to prep to be a rock star. I'm going to do that in my classroom today." It's integrated.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:08:08] And it's awesome, and it's awing. I mean, I don't think I could say enough for you guys to hear. It is awing to sit on the other side of this and to watch it. And it's been awesome that we've been able to help coordinate in so many different things over the years, but the reality, for me, as the greatest joy is to sit on the backside and watch it unfold because it's amazing.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:08:29] So, with that in mind, Nick, your journey and your story in all of this is part of that inspiration. I mean, you were that student. So, the first time you encountered Stacie and STEM Rocks the Box, you were that kid in high school trying to figure a million things out. I have no doubt because that's what teenagers do, right?

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:08:51] Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:08:51] So, for you, why take the risk? It's the same question. It was a risk for Stacie to start this crazy program that seems -- We totally understand how it's all connected, but from the outside looking in, folks we're like, "You're kind of nutsy to do this."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:09:05] Oh yeah.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:09:07] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:09:07] But, Nick, you were truly the brave one because you said, "I'll give it a try." What were you thinking?

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:09:13] Well, I've always kind of been a go-getter and-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:09:16] And still is.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:09:16] Yeah. In high school, I was a theater kid, but my high school was all about academics, arts, and the athletics. So, you could be a popular kid in every aspect of that. So, it's like, "I wanted to be the arts." So, I did that. Both of my vocal teacher and my theater teacher said, "You need to go for this program. You just need to go." So, I was like, "Okay. So, another performance opportunity. Something else to put on my resumé," and hadn't heard nothing about Shadowbox Live, didn't know anything about rock and roll.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:09:47] So, I went in, and just auditioned, and thought, "Cool. This is a cool program." When I went in for the audition, they were rehearsing for Back to the Garden doing Somebody to Love. And I saw this big dance number, and I watched. It was like, "What did I just get myself into?" And auditioned, and it was really relaxing, and I loved it. I kind of just took a leap, and loved doing the show, and I was like, "I enjoy what you do. Can I do some more?"

**Stacie Boord:** [00:10:15] He did. He never went away. There was always like after that program, he was like, "So, I see you're doing Rent. Could I be in the ensemble?" I mean, we haven't even thought that. I mean, he kind of was like this -- He helped me to realize the professional opportunity because he's a very strong dancer. He was still working on vocals, and the acting, and all that, but he really had a true natural talent for dance. And we're like, "Well, that's a great idea. Let's do that." And so, that's kind of where that whole thing came from just because of his desire and his courage to ask, "Can I do this?"

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:10:52] And it translates for you, correct?

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:10:53] Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:10:54] So, I mean, I think that one of the things as different communities around the country, around the globe think about, "How do we do a better job of integrating community and community culture?" i.e. whether that's the arts or anything else in our local communities, "How do those experiences then translate back in to your educational journey and your path?" because that's the critical thing. So, for K12 to say, "I want to do that. And I might not have Shadowbox Live." I mean, it's pretty rare. Shadowbox Live is amazing.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:11:33] It's something.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:11:33] It's its own-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:11:33] It's something.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:11:33] But that shouldn't inhibited anybody from trying.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:11:37] No, no.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:11:38] No, because, I mean, the fact of the matter is education is every day and in every moment.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:11:43] Exactly.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:11:44] Education is every day in every moment.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:11:45] Everything you do.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:11:45] And everything you do. And so many of the programs that I have created since then have come out of literally just everyday life, whether it is I hired a whole bunch of kids to help with the kitchen prep for a holiday because we were really slammed. We needed the extra help. I knew there were some kids who had gone through my programs. I could use the extra money. And I brought them in. And lo and behold, I have a whole different program unbeknownst to me. I'm thinking I'm giving them an opportunity, it's serving a purpose for me. But, then, all the sudden, these kids are learning culinary skills. They're learning how to get themselves where they need to be, when they need to be there, follow a schedule, making sure that the-

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:12:27] Making a priority list.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:12:28] Priority list, all of that. They're all so immersed in artistic environment. And those that actually have an interest in arts we're getting it by osmosis. And the next time I see them onstage, it's like a game changer because they have listened to it. They'd been a part of it. They had heard the conversations, the banter, the notes, and all that. But I think that's the key is that you don't have to have this big huge formalized program to be effective and have impact. You just need to have the courage to think about it and to do it.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:12:56] And those are skills that translate into absolutely-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:12:59] Everything.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:13:00] ... everything.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:13:02] Everything.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:13:02] Everything, everything.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:13:02] Which, I think, it really -- Bottom line, that's the thing. We're trying to get folks to be awesome citizens to be contributing to our communities, to be advocates for the arts, for our museums, for our environment.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:13:19] Exactly.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:13:19] And the only way for folks to really truly embrace that is to participate, to be part of, and to have learned something from it. So, I want to talk specifically about the two key programs that sort of solidified this path and the experiences that you guys have had. And, now, the fact that you're just blowing these totally out and doing other things with them. So, let's start with STEM Rocks the Box because now is that sort of moment for you, in particular, where I've never done this piece, but, suddenly, it was a life changer for you. So, tell us a little bit about STEM Rocks the Box and the premise behind it originally and sort of the iteration that is today because it is different.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:13:58] It is very different.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:13:59] Yes, it's very different from when it started with Metro, just Metro.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:14:01] Right. So, the idea was to give students a field experience of what it was like to be a performing artist. So, we went into the school. We allowed students to audition in two disciplines: comedy, music, dance, and vocals. Initially, that was all it was. And they did. And then, we selected the students. Those that did not get in were invited to ask for feedback on how they could do it better. And then, we created a rehearsal schedule. They had 30-minute evaluations with their mentor.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:14:32] So, the key was that we were doing the sketches and the songs with them. So, it wasn't a kid talent show. It was them. And so, there's a lot to be said by hanging with people that are better than you. It brings you up. And I think one of the defining molds is I wasn't afraid to kick somebody out because I already knew how to do this.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:14:50] And this is the thing I love about this program.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:14:53] Yeah, I was like-

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:14:53] Oh yeah.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:14:53] I'm like, I am very much a tough love kind of gal. And there were some kids that just didn't understand, even though I clearly outlined, and sometimes they didn't come prepared. And I said, first of all, look at the expectations that you signed. You understood that by the second rehearsal, this was to be completed. You have not done that work. So, you literally have 15 minutes to accomplish this, which I actually believe you can if you just focus and do the work. But if not, you're not moving on because I have a show to produce. This is your opportunity, not mine. And for some kids, that was the best lesson they ever -- I think so often, it's in -- You're going to get me on my soapbox. But so often, people cuddle kids, and they underestimate their abilities, and they are so much more capable than anyone gives them credit for.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:15:52] Oh absolutely. We see it everyday.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:15:53] And I treat them just like I do my -- And I tell them. I'm like, "Listen, I'm not going to treat you like a high school kid. I'm going to treat you like an ensemble member."

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:15:58] And people talk about their success stories, and being a success story, talking about I remember being in a rehearsal, and I couldn't cut it. And I was told, "If you don't get this right, you are cut from this dance," and came back the next day, knew it, and could do flips into everything you did because somebody told me, "If you don't go forward with this, I'm not putting you in. I'm not just putting you in because this is an opportunity. I'm going to make you do it if you can do it."

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:16:25] You have to earn it.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:16:26] You have to earn it.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:16:26] You have to earn it, exactly. You're not just going to just receive it just because.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:16:28] And, I think, it's very -- The arts are -- We have to be very specific. You're not singing the note correctly. Your timing is off. It's not that it's just not good. It's, "Here's where you're going wrong. And here are the tools that we're going to give you to do that." But I'm not going to do the work. I already know how to do it.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:16:47] It's design thinking at its absolute pinnacle.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:16:50] It is.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:16:51] Yeah, yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:16:51] It's to polish.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:16:52] It's the mastery.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:16:52] Right, absolutely.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:16:53] It's the idea of mastery.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:16:53] And then, you know take that note, and you apply it everything.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:16:56] That's right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:16:57] Every time you get that one note and, now, you think about it for everything you do from there until it becomes second nature.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:17:03] Right, right.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:17:03] That's right, that's right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:17:04] But I do think that one of the keys is that we truly, truly do underestimate the abilities, the potential, and the talent, and the expertise, quite frankly that kids bring to bear-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:17:21] That's right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:17:21] ... on anything we throw at them. At the Innovation Lab, as an R&D facility, we're constantly taking on an industry issue, a problem, and saying, "Let's come up with some possible solutions." And we value the fact that the kids don't necessarily have the background, the experience, the education to know why a problem has to be solved a certain way, and that there are some things that are out of balance, or constraints that we just can't overcome, the physics of that don't work. The beauty of it is that when we toss that aside and say, "Just tell us what you think," where is your creativity, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:17:57] Sometimes, being oblivious is a blessing. And I honestly believe that in my own personal journey. I have done -- I had so many roles. I've never been trained to be an executive director. I've never been trained to be an education director. I just believed in it, and you just figure it out. Sometimes, you just figure it out.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:18:19] Yeah. It's incredibly valuable for the participants, no question whatsoever. So, Nick, how does -- So, you participated in the boot camp, which is the-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:18:29] The big.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:18:30] ... big, summer.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:18:32] Oh yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:18:32] It's all in.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:18:32] Yeah, I was-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:18:33] It's raw. It's burly.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:18:35] Oh yeah.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:18:36] Oh yeah. I said when I came out with the boot camp, it was after the first STEM Rocks the Box, and I'm like, "I could put this on steroids." And that's what the boot camp was with that very next summer. And I just selected 10 kids of all different types because I wanted to see if it would work, and I made them do all the disciplines. And that's where the-

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:18:52] And that is exactly what it is. It shows you that everything's integrated because in boot camp, you're required. If you identify yourself as a singer, you're required to learn how to act, how to play an instrument, and how to dance. If you identify as one of the other, or you identify in all of them, you learn how to use them all together because I, primarily, am a dancer. I'm a dancer who can sing, and act, and play an instrument because of this boot camp program because I learned you take a dance, just like you do a song, just like you do a sketch, just like you do playing an instrument. Oh, man. We got kicked.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:19:28] What was the scariest thing or thing that you had to work the hardest to overcome? In that moment, as a high school kid figuring this journey out, what was the hardest thing?

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:19:42] The getting over myself. Getting over-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:19:47] Almost always.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:19:47] Yeah. Getting over myself.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:19:48] Get out of his way.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:19:48] Getting out of my own head. Getting out of, "I was trying to do it this way." And instead of letting your instincts take over, I just thought too much. Athletically or when I was playing sports, I always thought about what's next. When I was learning how to do math, I always think about the next step. When you're a singer, a dancer, and actor, you got to just do it.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:20:12] One of the things that I say to the students, especially when they're working in a particular discipline that they're struggling with, I'm like, "I don't care about your opinion on this. You don't have nearly enough experience or information to tell me whether you can do this or not. I'm telling you, you can. It's up to you whether you're going to actualize it. I'm not going to set you up for failure here, but don't tell me you can't do that because I'm telling you you're wrong."

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:20:35] Yeah, I've seen it live and in action. It's entirely possible. So, as multiple iterations of this program sort of come along, and I've never seen it look the same twice from the inside looking in.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:20:49] Yeah.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:20:50] The kids decide.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:20:50] The kids do it, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:20:50] Right, right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:20:51] But I also think that as an organization, and as an institution, and as practitioners, you have learned along the way as well.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:21:00] Oh yes, so much.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:21:00] This has not been a one-sided endeavor.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:21:03] Oh no.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:21:04] No.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:21:04] So, when you sort of step back and think about from the community perspective because-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:21:08] Game changer.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:21:09] ... at the very end, this is fully entrenched in what is the community you live and operate in.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:21:15] Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:21:15] And so, from the to the community space, that conversation, because not only have your educational programs grown exponentially, they have, in terms of numbers of participants, but funders, and sponsors-

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:21:32] Oh yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:21:32] ... and opportunities, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:21:33] That's right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:21:33] How did that happen?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:21:35] Well, I think, I believe in them, and I want to share my passion, and I will share my excitement. And there's the courage to try and, also, to just kind of be upfront and say -- We have American Sign Language course that we started out of a need. I had some interpreters that came in, and they just weren't that good. And I thought I could do such wonders with these people if I had six weeks.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:22:02] And so, to just have the courage to go to Columbus State and say, "You've got this course. I'd like to help you structure a course that teaches how to sign an artistic endeavor and how to become the characters on stage, so that those that are needing the interpretation can see at a glance what character that interpreter is representing on stage." I mean, it was so much fun to figure it out, and it was effective. And it served the deaf community, it served the students, it served our audience, it served the community at large, and it served the school, the organization, the institution. So, it's a win-win. I mean, it really is a win and when people start to understand the ripple effect. I'm always talking about the ripple effect about just having the courage to have -- And if you have an idea, explore it.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:22:48] And we teach our students to have courage, and go out there, and explore, which is why we also continue to do that when we go into our education programs and trying to reach out to the community. This time, Stacie is like, "Let's go reach out to these people and just see. Let's have a conversation."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:23:02] Yeah, let's just see.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:23:04] Let's just see what happens.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:23:05] Yeah, you know.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:23:05] But what's remarkable as part of that conversation, of that journey is the the notion of teach. So, you went through this program, Nick, as a student and an intern. And you went off to college for a while, and you come back. And, now, you're the teacher.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:23:25] Exactly. And that is my favorite story to talk about. It's my favorite part about this education program. Why I feel so passionate about it is because I was there. To be one of the dance instructors, and be the dance captain, and to tell them, "You got this because I was there too." It's my favorite part of the program to see them-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:23:45] He's like my poster child.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:23:46] To see them struggle, and then give them the tools to be better, and say, "Use the tools that you learned in this discipline here. And don't think about it. Just go out and do it." And then, when they have the success, we talk about all the time even with like, "Do a butt roll." And they're like, "I don't know what that is." And then, they master it by the end of the first week, and you're like, "I told you I can do it," because I didn't know how to do one either.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:24:12] Look at him now. That's right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:24:13] Exactly. So, when you think about, then, what's possible with this program and the impact that this program has, quite frankly, it's really, really broad impact into so many different places. You've translated elements and aspects of this into schools, working with homeschooled kids, working with teachers. We haven't talked about that, but there's an entire teacher component as well.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:24:40] Yes, yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:24:40] Working with STEM schools, working with art schools, working with business and industry, working with corporate folks.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:24:46] Yeah, right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:24:47] Because quite frankly they could seriously use these skills, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:24:51] Always had been, yeah.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:24:51] Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:24:51] So, when you think about what's possible, is there a limit?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:24:55] No.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:24:56] And-

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:24:56] There's none.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:24:56] There's never a limit.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:24:57] So, if there's not a limit then, what's the stepped iteration the other folks who are grappling with the possibility of something like this?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:25:08] You know-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:25:08] Where is that?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:25:10] I think that, so often, people just are scared to take the first step.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:25:15] They are.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:25:15] If they just take -- I'm like, "Just take a step." Because, so often, we don't know, but I think that we are at an advantage because, as artists, we don't know. We don't know where the creation is heading. There's so much of - I just said last time - you show up, not knowing what the outcome is going to be, but you've got to show up, and you just got to do the work. And you do the work, and you go, "Okay, that didn't work. Let's try it again." So, that's just our standard of operating procedure.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:25:43] And being okay with it not working and fixing it-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:25:45] That's right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:25:45] ... from there.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:25:47] Because what is it, it's just knowledge. It's just telling us one step over one step closer to the right answer. And I really think that it's just that. Just try. You don't have to have it all completely figured out. You just got to take a step and see where it takes you, maybe two.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:26:03] Yeah, absolutely. But what do you say to the folks? Because I can hear the thought bubbles going, right? Anytime, as I travel around the country and around the world, having these conversations with communities about all the variety of things that you can do to truly innovate and transform your existing educational programs and systems, not suggesting that they all need to be fixed, or they need to be changed, or that they're necessarily not functioning.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:26:29] But the reality is as the time we live in is changing rapidly, we have to be adaptable to stay relevant both to our students, to our practitioners, and to our communities. And so, one of the things that I hear over and over again is, "We can't do that." That we, as the school, or we, as the educational institution, can't. How do we find time? How do we find time in the day to add this into what we're already doing? What's the conversation here?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:27:02] Well, they can't can't that to me. We are so busy, and I just make the time. Like for real. I mean, I totally get that.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:27:09] You always get time.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:27:09] Yeah. If it's a priority, you find the time, and you make the time. And, now, granted, something has to go away for a little while of that, but, sometimes, you reap the benefits so much so that whatever you lost during that time, you almost forget. Yeah, you have to make the time.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:27:31] But that's really tough, right? Because as schools step back and think about, "We're prepping kids. We've got to take tests. We have all these standards. We have to do all this stuff that's required of us, whether it'd be by the state, by my own district."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:27:44] And I think that's-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:27:45] You know, yeah.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:27:45] I mean, this is too rigid. I mean, to be honest. I mean, that's a bigger conversation. That's why Metro School works so brilliantly with what we did. Now, it was an after-school program, which we did, which was an after-school program, but yeah. I mean, but we did go into the school. It was a little bit disruptive, there's no question.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:28:07] A lot.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:28:08] A lot disruptive, okay, but you know-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:28:10] It was awesome disruptive.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:28:12] Right, but yeah. I mean, we did. We kind of turned that whole school up on it's -- upside down for a brief while.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:28:17] But the reality, I want to step really sort of outside of the box, really outside the box. In the conversations that, for better or worse, that I get to have you go through this journey, so much of it is, "I can't even imagine what you're talking about." I mean, but how many times have I heard that?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:28:37] That's why arts is so important because you have to. That's what we do, right?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:28:41] Right.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:28:41] We teach these kids to think outside their box, to imagine the impossible. It's the only way technology advances because somebody is imagining the impossible.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:28:51] Exactly.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:28:51] And that's what you have to do. Okay, in a perfect world, sometimes, we just have dreamy times. We're just, "Okay, what if we did this?" or, "What would it look like if we did this? How could we do that?" But you have to go through that exercise. But, so often, people just -- They just look at the here and now, and they're done. And you have to go beyond that.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:15] So, are you in this dream world, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:29:19] Right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:19] And you've known me long enough, Stacie, to know that. So, one of my dreams, and I've put this out there numerous times, and I do get myself in trouble for this.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:29:29] Yeah, that's okay.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:29] It's all right. It's all right still.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:29:29] Exactly.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:29:29] For me, the future of education is I drive into any community in anywhere, and I stop at the first business that I see on the edge of town, and I walk in there, and I say to the proprietor, whoever is in there, "Can you give me directions to the high school?" And they look at me, and they say, "Well, what part of high school are you interested in?" Because in my mind, the next iteration is that we embed all learning in the real.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:30:01] That's right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:30:02] Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:30:02] And if we were to do that, then, so, my question to you, guys, as you sort of -- Put you sort of on the spot here in a sense. Is there a future that might include a full-immersive, in bed, long haul, not just after school, not just in the summer, but really thinking about those types of possibilities?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:30:25] Like a full-time school? Is that we were talking about?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:30:28] Not so much a full-time school, but if you would imagine that. Again, back to my scenario, "Show me, where would I find the high school," and the response is, "Well, the kids who are studying healthcare, they're all at the hospital."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:30:38] Absolutely.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:30:39] Oh yes, oh yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:30:39] And the kids who are interested in broadcast, they're at WOCO.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:30:43] But some of the schools have that. They've got January term, they've got May term, but they get pieces of it.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:30:48] Pieces of it, right?

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:30:52] You're talking about full implementation.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:30:52] I'm talking about letting go of what you know.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:30:55] The standard, that's right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:30:55] And the constraint of "We've always done it this way," or "This is the way we should do it." And really ask the question, "But what can we do? What is horrible? And what might it look like?" That's, I guess, the question I'm posing to you guys.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:31:09] I do think. I do think that that's possible. I mean, because we -- The problem for us is because it is so segmented with those J terms. Like just when we get started with them, they're done.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:31:20] They're done.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:31:20] Right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:31:21] And we just hope that they come back for the next program, so we can keep going.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:31:23] But to have-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:31:24] But it doesn't have to be the way. We could do it-

**Stacie Boord:** [00:31:27] No, it doesn't.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:31:27] No, it doesn't.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:31:27] We could do that differently.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:31:28] Absolutely, we could do that differently.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:31:30] Absolutely.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:31:30] We should.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:31:30] We should do it differently. We should all -- I mean, that's what-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:31:34] My staff is going, "Shut her up."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:31:38] No, no. I'm with you.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:31:38] No, no. You're right. You're right.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:31:38] I know they're like, "God, Stacie is with her. Great. Oh good. She just added fuel to the fire." But, yeah. I mean, that's something that I struggle with a lot of times. I mean, even in my college experience, which I had a wonderful college experience. And I'm glad I went through it because it made me who I am today. But I will say that I graduated with a vocal degree and nobody taught me how to use a microphone. I've never been in a recording studio. All the things that you would think would be typical to my industry were not taught. And that's crazy.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:15] That is great.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:15] Just because I was an opera major, that should just be standard, but so should learning how to promote myself, learning how to present myself in an interview. All those things, life skills that we teach in our programs, I mean, those were not offered to me as part of that. And that's crazy.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:32] And they weren't going to be.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:34] No.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:32:34] Nope.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:34] And in many ways, that's not possible. I guess, that's my point, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:37] Right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:38] Because it's not immersive.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:39] That's right. It's not-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:40] It's not real.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:40] That's right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:41] There was nothing real.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:42] Exactly.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:43] It's artificial.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:43] That's right. It's like in a little box over here, and then you get out of the box, and you're like "Holy crap. Now, what do I do?" Right?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:50] Well, and the answer is scramble.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:53] That's right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:32:53] Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:53] There's a lot of scrambling going on, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:32:55] Right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:32:56] So, awesome. So, we have a new thing to do somehow.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:33:00] Right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:33:01] Somehow, and I can hear that my staff just cringing in the background, right. Fair enough. So, as we think about folks, again, who -- My hope through this series is that folks will realize there are so many possibilities out there that I don't know what the future of teaching, and learning, and work in my community is going to be, but what I know is I, as an individual, or as an organization, or as a company, or as an entity, or as a community, I have both the skills, the power, and the wherewithal to do it differently. So, with that in mind, what do you throw at folks?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:33:41] Well, I do think -- One thing I want to say is that, I think, people are different, kids are different. So, just because you try something with one child, maybe that wasn't the right fit because we get that. I have internships that are like, "Oh, my this kid is a rock star."

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:33:57] This is great.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:33:58] And then, I have another kid that's just it's not a good match. And so, it's just like with any job, right?

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:34:04] Right, right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:34:04] Sometimes, you get accepted to the position that it's just not a good fit. You're not playing to their strengths. So, fix it, change it. Don't go, "The program doesn't work." Maybe it's not the program. Maybe it's just not the right mix of people. Maybe they don't have the right mentor. Maybe they need somebody that's tougher. Maybe they need somebody that's a little bit -- So, I do think -- I mean, so much of education is personalized. And there's not a one size fits all.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:34:32] Right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:34:32] Being able to adapt.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:34:32] And that's the problem with so much of our education system right now-

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:34:36] Exactly.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:34:37] ... is there's a one-size-fits-all. And I know that even within my ensemble members, I know who I need to push differently based off of the task at hand. So, yeah. I mean, the more that you can -- that people have a willingness to, "How do can I get this job done effectively? How can I strengthen this person and think in those terms?" the more effective things are going to be, and the more life-altering it's going to be for all parties involved.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:35:06] And it should be, right?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:35:06] It should be.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:35:07] I mean, at the end of the day, we should love every day.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:35:10] Yes.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:35:11] Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:35:11] We should love what we do-

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:35:14] Yes, yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:35:15] ... what we experience, the journey.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:35:15] We talk about that all the time. I'm like, "Why would you go? Why would you spend your life 9:00 to 5:00 just waiting for 5:00 to show up?" That's crazy. That's crazy. You should love. I mean, I would say, "Lean into the sock," right.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:35:26] Yeah.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:35:27] Like, lean in to discover because this is -- We don't make a lot of money.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:35:31] No, no.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:35:31] We're creating constantly. We're throwing ourselves out there. And, sometimes, it's not right, and we have to just keep working. And we're there really late because the show opens in two days, and we don't know what we're doing yet, but that's the joy of it too.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:35:42] It is. It is the joy of it.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:35:45] It's the joy of it.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:35:45] It is a joy of it. And I definitely reflect on that as it relates to my own personal journey and why continued to be sort of living in this space because it's hard, and it's a lot of work, but it's joyous.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:35:57] It is.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:35:57] I mean, when I have the opportunity to see that kid get it, and you can watch, I mean, everything about the stand, they speak differently, the the light and the twinkle in their eyes is different. And it's suddenly because I am empowered as an individual. And you can see that.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:36:15] That's exactly right.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:36:15] It's tangible. You can touch it, you can feel it, you can hear it.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:36:17] Absolutely.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:36:18] Yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:36:18] And it is, in fact, life-altering. So, on that note, Nick, so, as you go towards sort of the next pieces, what's your toss back to folks contemplating this? What do people need to know?

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:36:34] You just got to go for it. You have to have the courage to just do it. And you have to do it for yourself. You can't do it for anybody else. You have to do for yourself. It's going to make you a better person, it's going to strengthen you, and you're going to think about the decision that you make just to go out on that ledge. I'll push you if you want to, to help you out there, but you have to want it for yourself. That's the program. That's education. That's life.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:37:00] What would you do differently, hindsight being as beautiful as it always is. right? Is there a choice in the journey along the way, Stacie, in particular, that you would do differently?

**Stacie Boord:** [00:37:13] No.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:37:13] No.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:37:14] Because I'm still doing it, and I'm still changing. I'm still -- I mean, even the boot camp this year. We took it a three-week program, and I'm like, "What if we condensed it to 10 days? What if we collaborated and did a social media class because that's something these kids need to know?" What if we did, instead of this, we do-" I mean, we're still doing that. I have a recap every year about, "How can we make this better? How can we make this impactful?" And I, also, interview the kids afterwards and say, "Tell me what your expectation was. Where was it different? What was good? What was bad?" And we glean a lot of information from that.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:37:52] It's really hard to regret anything that we've done because we reflect on it to see why it didn't work, and what we can do better, rather than, "Oh, no. We should have done that." It's like, "You know what, we did that. This is why it was effective. This is why it doesn't work. Let's try something else."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:38:05] The only regret I can honestly say that I've ever had was my first year, this punk kid didn't read his schedule right, and he didn't show up for his soundcheck, but he showed up the day of the show." I was going to not let him do it, but it kind of got a little bit of pressure of, "Well, he's a kid who loved it." And I let him do it, and he was underprepared. He was underprepared. He did not perform to the level that he should have. And I would have -- He would have been better served, and I would have been better served if I said, "No, you're out. And go have your parents pick you up."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:38:43] That's what I do now, but it was my first time, and I thought, "Well, maybe I'm being too hard." And then I realized, "No. You know what, actually, that's not been tough. That's been truthful." And that's the thing, a good teacher is honest. Honest of whether, "I don't know whether you can do this or not. We're going to try it together," that's honest, or "You're getting in your own way", or "This is not going to be your thing."

**Stacie Boord:** [00:39:06] Sometimes, it's -- I honestly think like, "I know you think of yourself as a singer. This is not your strength. Not right now. Maybe it will be, but this is the reality where we are right now. But I'll help you if you want to make that your strength. But to be honest, just as a little heads up, you're doing really well over here. I know you feel like you don't have any experience, but you got a natural knack for this. You ought to think about this." So, yeah.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:39:28] Yeah. But at the end of the day, you're still learning.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:39:32] Yes.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:39:33] Yes.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:39:33] You're still completely engaged in this process, and learning, and thinking, and making changes. And I guess, one of the things that I love, love, love so much about this program is that it's not dependent on an expectation tied to a grant or a cycle of an initiative. As things come and go over the years, I have watched you guys as an organization keep the educational endeavor, not just alive, but grow it, foster it, create the next version. It's completely outside of the scope and sphere of traditional expectation. And so, for that, a giant thank you for everything that you guys do. It's an amazing program. And I want to thank you for joining me today. I know that the listeners will get a lot out of hearing your story.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:40:31] Thank you.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:40:31] So, thank you.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:40:31] Well, thank you so much for having us.

**Nicholas Wilson:** [00:40:33] Thank you for having us.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:40:33] And thanks for being on my journey with me.

**Annalies Corbin:** [00:40:34] Oh, absolutely. I wouldn't trade it for anything. So, thanks.

**Stacie Boord:** [00:40:38] Thanks.