



Asis Gonzales

Asis Gonzales: [00:00:00] I think the strongest feedback I have is when I go back, and they remember things I told them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:06] Exactly.

Asis Gonzales: [00:00:06] So, they'll be like, "Oh, can you show us this moon again?" There's a moon called Io. You know, like that one is a very colorful moon description. So, people remember that moon from Jupiter. So, that's kind of like the best gauge I have right now of kids remembering what I told them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:28] Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning and the future of work. This is Annalies Corbin, Chief Goddess of the PAST Foundation and your host. We hear frequently that the global education system is broken. In fact, he's been billions of dollars trying to fix something that's actually not broken at all but rather irrelevant. It's obsolete. A hundred years ago, it functioned fine. So let's talk about how we re-imagine, rethink, and redesign our educational system.

This is Annalies Corbin. Welcome to the next episode of Learning Unboxed. And once again, we are on the road. We are in beautiful Santa Fe, New Mexico. And I cannot tell you how awesome that is, given the weather back in Columbus, Ohio. It is beautiful. It's gorgeous. It's a sunny fall day. And we have the privilege of getting to be at the Santa Fe Children's Museum today. And we are going to be talking planetarium, In fact, planetarium programs that go far and wide and have amazing impact on a variety of students in and around the community. And our guest today is a Asis Gonzalez, who is the Planetarium Coordinator for the Santa Fe Children's Museum. So welcome.

Asis Gonzales: [00:01:44] Hello. And thank you for having me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:46] I am very excited to talk about Stargazer, which is the portable planetarium program. And for our listeners, I just got to take a tour. You don't. Although maybe we'll be able to find a little video and a lot of photos that we will post for you. But Asis does a wonderful job of telling a variety of stories. Asis, start just telling us a little bit at the highest level about the Santa Fe Children's Museum, its generalized mission, I guess, if you will.

Asis Gonzales: [00:02:12] Well, our generalized mission is to basically teach through play. So, we don't—we're not a museum that has, you know, all sorts of, you know, science and everything. We try to actually keep that to a minimum. So, we have a lot of play exhibits where you just play. And, you know, throughout your adulthood, sometimes you'll remember something from when you were a kid, and maybe playing with this thing helped you learn about physics and that sort of thing. And so, you can drop a ball, and see where it goes, and all sorts of things. You know, it's learning through play is the main mission.

Annalies Corbin: [00:02:46] Which is a pretty amazing thing, if you step back and think about it. We should all be so lucky, quite frankly, a lot later in life as well. Yeah?

Asis Gonzales: [00:02:53] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:02:55] So—but specifically, your role here is with the planetarium program, with Stargazer. So, tell our listeners what exactly Stargazer is. And why would a small museum in Santa Fe have this program?

Stargazer Planetarium is kind of like this giant inflatable balloon. And inside is like a movie theater. But instead of, you know, a rectangle, like a movie theater, you get a giant circle, a big window into space. My mission, my personal mission is to get kids interested in learning about their environment and the surrounding areas more than just, you know, structured kind of just homework and stuff like that. I want them to be excited about learning. Basically, the planetarium was actually a gift, an anonymous donation to the museum. And then, they decided that they were going to use that gift to help our community around us. So, people worked, we got grants, and that pays for me to go out to schools. It is free to public and Title 1 schools. And so, I think that's the thing for our listeners to really sort of dig in the most. So, lots of folks know what planetariums are. You go some place or these big, massive, almost monolithic structures that are erected in, you know, massive either science exhibits, or museums, or universities. Some universities have them. Sometimes, your city might have a standalone. But it's pretty unusual to actually have a planetarium that actually comes to you instead, which is part of what I love about the Stargazer, you know, idea. So, how big is this thing? And how on earth do you take it away from here?

Asis Gonzales: [00:04:36] Well-

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:36] Because that's going to be one of the questions every teacher wants to know. Will it fit my classroom?

Asis Gonzales: [00:04:40] And that is the thing. When I e-mail teachers, I send a picture because it's hard to envision what it is. It's basically a 20-foot wide, 50-foot tall balloon made of a blanket.

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:51] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:04:52] And basically, it folds up. The balloon itself, you can fold it up like a sleeping bag, put that in the case, and then I put the projector in this case, and the fans and everything. So, you get these three cases. And then, it's about 150 pounds, I have my cart push them in. It is tiring, I want to say, but it fits in a—it can actually fit in a passenger car.

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:14] Wow! That's pretty amazing.

Asis Gonzales: [00:05:15] You just have a back seat. So, it does fit into this nice three-case package. And I have my own stuff. I have activities and stickers that I give out.

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:23] [] And so, the programming then. So, let's talk a little bit about that because the programming that happens, is it very rote, is very [indiscernible], is the same all the time, or is it pretty dynamic? How do you like to operate?

Asis Gonzales: [00:05:35] I'd like to kind of just play it by ear, you know. I'd like to—it's majorly focused on the solar system, which is what I love and study, but it's also based on their questions. So, there is no, kind of, script. I'm basically just gonna go with the flow. And it does—you know, it always changes once in a while, besides kind of like the central point of the solar system. But sometimes, sometimes, I will just talk about planets. Sometimes, I'll talk about the moons, which are a lot—you know, most of them are a lot more interesting than planets themselves.

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:04] Than the planets themselves, yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:06:05] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:05] Yeah, yeah, yeah. That is truly awesome for them to feel like, you know, another planet is about this squash them.

Asis Gonzales: [00:06:15] And then, they keep asking for it. That's the problem with that one.

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:19] I love it.

Asis Gonzales: [00:06:20] Every time we visit some of the planet, they are like, "Make it smash into us."

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:25] That's perfect.

Asis Gonzales: [00:06:26] And depending on the age, you know, we'll talk a bit more about the moon, the formation, or the craters and so forth. There's different kinds of craters on the moon like [indiscernible] , and then the regular [indiscernible] . So, one of the things I've learned to do with this planetarium is actually not only just VR but using video to make it seem like I can do things that the planetarium cannot actually do like flying through the rings. And actually, most because nowadays, you know, the rings aren't actually solid. They're made of, you know, pieces of ice and rock. It's mostly ice. So, 99% ice. You know, again, with the whole, there is actually water in the solar system. Most of it is ice. And you either dodge the rings or you beat them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:07:23] And so, when you interact with the students or you work with a teacher to go into a particular school or classroom, is there a lot of prep work that you're doing or that the teacher's doing ahead of you coming? Sort of set the stage for us for how to get the greatest value out of the experience, because we have listeners from around the world that will hear this and say, "Hey, that's really intriguing. I'm going to reach out to Asis, and say, 'Hey, you know, what may this be like?'" But you're also probably going to have a fair number of folks from the region, some of whom know that this is available to them and others who have no idea, and they're going to want to have you come.

Asis Gonzales: [00:07:57] Well, that's one of the more difficult things because no one actually knows what to expect. I can explain it as much as I can, and then I'll get there, and then people are like, "Oh, is that what it is?" And so, I try to describe it. Like I said, in my e-mails, I put a picture of myself with it, so that they know what it is. But all the plan work is, usually, I'll e-mail a teacher. They'll e-mail back with their interests. We'll schedule a date. There's no real formal way of doing it. And then, what I have them do is they make a schedule. So, I don't know what their hours are like for me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:08:31] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:08:31] So, I try to meet about five classes per day. Generally, each class will have about an hour. And I have them make a schedule for me. And that way, I know when to show up and everything. So, I have them do that. And then, there's a surprise of me showing up with the stuff. They know what I need in terms of space.

Annalies Corbin: [00:08:47] Right, right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:08:48] And so, I have this whole list of things I need from them. And then, there's no problems with that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:08:55] And so, then, how does the actual program, you have a projector, but is this material created by the Santa Fe Children's Museum, or is it materials that come as part of Stargazer? Because Stargazer is a thing, right-

Asis Gonzales: [00:09:09] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:09] ... that you were gifted to the museum. And so, do you create new stuff for it or how does that work?

Asis Gonzales: [00:09:17] Well, I create stuff for it. I do, actually, do that. I use the Adobe programs to edit videos, and I put pictures in there myself.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:27] Okay.

Asis Gonzales: [00:09:27] So, actually, a lot of it is my stuff that I put in.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:32] So, a lot of it is Asis' creative programming.

Asis Gonzales: [00:09:34] I didn't make the program itself.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:36] Right, right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:09:36] That's Digitalis.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:37] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:09:39] But I do try to make my own content, and I try to use—because the software itself is a little bit limited. So, I had to use video and VR to actually extend what I can do with just the base software.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:53] And so, for our listeners, while I was getting my brief tour of Stargazer, one of things that we did was we were talking about water in the solar system.

Asis Gonzales: [00:10:01] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:10:01] And so, share with us a little bit about how you explained all that to me because I thought that was a pretty novel way because you modify what was going on in there and created a thing to make it more meaningful for me.

Asis Gonzales: [00:10:12] So, I'll do that different ways actually. Sometimes, I'll just show the Earth. Sometimes, I'll fly towards the Earth, towards the ocean. And then, I think you can play this—one of the video, VR videos I have is this hammerhead shark feeding area in the Bahamas. And the kids love the sharks, of course. And they all like go, "Hammerhead shark," and stuff. So, they'll be swimming around. And that's a good area to start off with. How unique Earth is as far as we know where even just water itself, we're the only planet in the solar system with liquid on the surface, on the—there's lots of water in the solar system, but most of it is frozen, you know. And having water on the surface is very helpful for life. So, that's one of the unique things about the Earth that's connected to the solar system. I also talk about sharks. You know-

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:00] Kids-

Asis Gonzales: [00:11:00] ... sharks are curious.

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:01] Kids love sharks.

Asis Gonzales: [00:11:02] They do.

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:02] Right, yeah. You can't go wrong with stars and sharks.

Asis Gonzales: [00:11:04] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:05] Oh, my gosh. You're like amazing.

Asis Gonzales: [00:11:06] And, you know, humans have fingers, we can touch things when we're curious. And sharks don't. They have teeth. And they test things with their teeth. That's bad for us, but most of the time, they're not attacking if someone else want to—I do actually have a lot of life stuff in VR. So, sometimes, if—especially for the little small ones, I'll do more Earth and life, that sort of thing.

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:31] And so, the kids, obviously, I'm sure, have no doubt [A], it's really exciting for this thing to come to their school. That's always exciting for kiddos. But back to my point, kids love sharks, kids love stars. I mean, they're a captive audience. I mean-

Asis Gonzales: [00:11:44] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:44] ... they're excited to see you. So, you get that joyous benefit, but I also would assume that means you get an awful lot of questions, some of which I assume from the kiddos, there's a sort of a standard sort of expectation of questions that you're gonna get. So, I'm really curious about some of the questions that you see frequently.

Asis Gonzales: [00:12:06] Well, I'm always bad about remembering stuff like that, but the questions I always get asked about black holes, you know. Can we see a black hole? Where are they? People ask about wormholes. They ask a lot actually about the more cosmological stuff. And I-

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:20] Really?

Asis Gonzales: [00:12:20] And I do actually have VR black hole stuff to supplement those questions. I get asked about planets, you know? What color is Pluto? People actually—a lot of people don't know that Pluto is reddish brown. I see a lot of people assume it's blue.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:42] Just a frozen ball of ice out there-

Asis Gonzales: [00:12:44] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:44] ... floating around. Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:12:45] They think it is blue, but it's not, you know. Mars, you know, people assume it's hot. That's also another question I get about Mars. It's not. It's very cold on Mars. The Sun, what is it made out of? And stuff like that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:59] [] And so, do the kids go on journeys with you in the sense that do they lead you in directions that you weren't necessarily experiencing [crosstalk] .

Asis Gonzales: [00:13:09] [] Some more so than others. I'm sorry if I [crosstalk] .

Annalies Corbin: [00:13:11] Yeah, no, no.

Asis Gonzales: [00:13:11] Some more so than others. I will get classes that are just like, "Can we go to Venus?" And then, they'll go to Venus. Other times, I'll get like 10 kids asking me at the same time, "Can we go here? Can we go here? Can we go here?" And then, just kind of try to go in the order of things you've heard, you know, Some kids are way more excited about it. So, yeah, actually, I do. Since I don't really have a script, I try to tether it to their questions, what they want to see because I think that also makes them more excited about what they're looking at.

Annalies Corbin: [00:13:41] What's the follow-up? So, again, you know, thinking, putting my school teacher hat on, right? And-

Asis Gonzales: [00:13:50] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:13:50] And to make this more than just a field trip, so what is the follow-up that happens, or is there any? Do the schools do anything back with the museum on the heels of this, you know, even if it's just from follow up units? Do they communicate with you? Do the kids ask you questions ongoing? How does all that work?

Asis Gonzales: [00:14:11] Well, that is always a hard one to do because we actually do want to be more in communication with schools. I have my own list of activities, and I think books that are worth reading for the kids and the adults that I give out to teachers. I have service. I think the strongest feedback I have is when I go back and they remember things I told them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:34] Exactly.

Asis Gonzales: [00:14:35] So, they'll be like, "Oh, can you show us this moon again? There's a moon called Io. And like that one is a very colorful moon description." So, people remember that moon from Jupiter. So, that's kind of like the best gauge I have right now of kids remembering what I told them, you know.

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:52] Yeah, that they actually bring it back around for you. And I guess one of the things that I would wonder, and I understand that that may not be data that you have at this moment, but I do wonder how lasting those memories are, right? Because oftentimes, for kids, you know, the greatest learning is when they're so immersed in something-

Asis Gonzales: [00:15:11] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:11] ... and when you bring Stargazer to their school or just—so, for our listeners, Stargazer goes out several days a week. However, on the weekend, Stargazer is here.

Asis Gonzales: [00:15:21] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:21] So, it is available in a number of different sort of venues and formats for folks to engage with, but you know, the kids remember those things because it grabbed them.

Asis Gonzales: [00:15:31] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:31] You know, it was part of their imagination story. So, you wonder how far out the kids continue to draw on that. And I would suspect for some, for a lifetime, if it's something that they love.

Asis Gonzales: [00:15:43] That is my hope. It really is a hope. I don't have—yeah, there's no hard data on that-

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:47] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:15:47] ... that you gather besides, I get lots of schools that ask me back.

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:50] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:15:50] And they remember most of the time.

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:53] Yeah, yeah. And so, how far do you travel with Stargazer?

Asis Gonzales: [00:15:59] So, when I started here, it was within a hundred miles of Santa Fe. I kind of stretch that because I actually live in Albuquerque. So, I would like to stretch a little bit from Albuquerque just to have schools in there. But now, we've gotten extra funding a little bit. So, we're traveling all over Northern New Mexico.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:18] Okay.

Asis Gonzales: [00:16:18] Basically, anywhere above I-40, our interstate, I-40. And then, again, if they're close to it, you know, a little south, I'll still go.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:27] Yeah. That's all right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:16:28] So, basically Northern New Mexico. And the plan is actually to expand to the whole state at one point.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:35] Wow. From-

Asis Gonzales: [00:16:36] With an additive layer as well, which you're looking for.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:39] I was going to say that's more than just one person, right?

Asis Gonzales: [00:16:41] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:42] Yeah, yeah, yeah. And is it more than one Stargazer?

Asis Gonzales: [00:16:45] That is also a thing we want. Stargazers saw about 7000 kids last, my first school year. It was a little rough. That's something. I put some maintenance into it. So, the idea is we want another Stargazer, another person, and to expand a little over the state.

Annalies Corbin: [00:17:03] That's a very lofty goal-

Asis Gonzales: [00:17:05] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:17:05] ... for a small museum,.

Asis Gonzales: [00:17:07] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:17:07] I applaud you. That's awesome. Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:17:09] Well, the state is also helping us.

Annalies Corbin: [00:17:10] Yeah, yeah. So, then, as you think about the potential of Stargazer, so the things that you're not doing with it right now that you could do with it, you know, I'm sure you have ideas, but I know you've mentioned that you add all kinds of supplementary programming - sharks, you know, landscape stuff, whatever that you're bringing into it. What else could you imagine using it for as it relates to sort of thinking about sparking interest in kids? Have you given that much thought?

Asis Gonzales: [00:17:39] Expanding into other sciences. Like I said, I do the VR to do a little bit of living things. I haven't gone as far as I want to. So, I do want to talk about just living things in biology a little bit. I'm technically a geologist, so I do want to do more geology stuff. It's also something I'll do a little bit and talk about volcanoes. I do want to expand into other sciences, not just astronomy, which has been my hobby since I was 13. And I love it so much, but I do want to get more interest maybe in—so maybe something someone can find something that they never thought of before and get excited about it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:16] And we see planetariums doing that frequently. You know, there's more than just star shows going on. And-

Asis Gonzales: [00:18:23] Yes, that's exciting to me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:24] It is exciting, right? Because, again, it becomes that space, that literal bubble, right, that engages kids because we take them out of their environment, we put them in something else. and suddenly, it's left to our imaginations. That's pretty, pretty awesome.

Asis Gonzales: [00:18:39] I even do things. I'll actually a set aside usually at the end just a little bit to show something that's more just fun, more exciting. Like I actually have a roller coaster through the solar system video, which, honestly, adults don't really like, but the kids love it because it's-

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:55] Well, the little bit of zooming you did, I have to admit, it made me a little nauseous.

Asis Gonzales: [00:18:59] So, that's a little bit more intense, so the kids-

Annalies Corbin: [00:19:01] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:19:01] ... really are into that because it is kind of—there's roller coasters and stuff. They like solar system. And there's arts, a little more artsy dome. There's actually a lot of dome festivals. I put a lot of art in them. And so, getting those videos and showing. The kids, I'll show the more artsy ones besides—not the roller coasters-

Annalies Corbin: [00:19:19] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:19:20] ... but the more artistic ones to kind of, hopefully, kind of get them excited even just about, you know, something really beautiful.

Annalies Corbin: [00:19:27] So, what did the teachers tell you that they do with the program? Do you get to have or hear that feedback? I guess, that's one of the things I'm really curious about. I keep coming around to this, but it's one of things that we hear all the time, right, you know. And one things that really appealed to me about Stargazer when I stumbled across what you guys are doing here was the fact that you are literally taking it, and you are planting it inside of a school or a classroom. You're living with them for a day or two, depending on how many, you know, kids you got to cycle through. But you're there for a long enough for the kids to feel like, "Hey, this thing could be tangible for me."

And so, I'm just really, really curious about what the teachers do with that, because, you know, the hope is always that, you know, field trip for the sake of field trip is not—you know, it's a fun experience-

Asis Gonzales: [00:20:14] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:14] Don't get me wrong. We all need a break from the everyday, but the reality of it is there's so much learning that takes place when we're so engaged.

Asis Gonzales: [00:20:24] Well, that's always another hard one. But I do get teachers who—very few who will ask me to like, "Can you talk about this?" And then, afterwards, on second visits is usually when I'll get like that or they'll base it off of—well, sometimes, that depends on what I talk about. But it's really as much as I've heard on that, it doesn't happen very often sadly. No, I have offered actually many times. I can always answer questions if you ever need any help in there, but I don't hear right back very often on that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:02] That's really unfortunate.

Asis Gonzales: [00:21:03] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:03] Yeah, and in so many different ways. I just can't imagine the power of what you were able to create.

Asis Gonzales: [00:21:10] Yeah. I'm hoping, at least, the kids get inspired, but I would like, you know, more teacher interaction a little bit. I have done—I've even done—I've actually done like after class, we look at maps, and they're like, "Why does this happen?" I'm like, "See this. Because the northern hemisphere has more landmass. You know, it gets colder faster and warmer faster," stuff like that. So, I've done little supplementary stuff like that before. But, again, it is not very often.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:35] So, a potential direction for the future though.

Asis Gonzales: [00:21:38] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:38] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:21:39] We do try to meet standards. So, I do have a booklet of standards for science that I carry with me. And I do, you know, at least, try to get that in there.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:48] And in the hands of the teacher to recognize that this was authentic learning-

Asis Gonzales: [00:21:52] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:52] ... not fun learning. Absolutely. So, one of the other things that you shared with me when we did our little mini tour that I was pretty fascinated about, and as an anthropologist, this was sort of near and dear to me-

Asis Gonzales: [00:22:03] That's my minor.

Annalies Corbin: [00:22:04] Yeah. Well, there you go. That was a brilliant minor on your part.

Asis Gonzales: [00:22:08] I love it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:22:08] The Geology, okay. Anthropology, that was really smart. But I love the fact that you try to show the cultural components of some of the things that you could do utilizing that tool. So, can you talk a little bit about that? Because that's one of the things that I don't think very many people have been exposed to.

Asis Gonzales: [00:22:27] Yeah. In fact, when you think about constellations and astronomy, most often, people will just default to the Greek, you know, which I think is a shame. There's thousands of cultures, each with their own, you know, different constellations. They all use it in their own way, most of it like calendars.

Annalies Corbin: [00:22:44] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:22:45] So, like I do like to—the planetarium comes built-in with a lot of cultures. So, I'll talk about, you know, Arabic cultures. They're very important for astronomy. Most star names are Arabic, but still very similar to Greek constellation. So, I'll talk about Dakota Polynesian. You know, kids love Moana.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:08] Yeah, yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:09] And they used—the Polynesians, they used the constellations to find their way around the islands just navigating.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:15] And Disney did a great job of reminding us of that-

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:17] Yes, yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:18] ... even in the movies. So, that helped.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:19] They have now a little bit different, but I think that they're really good on how—you know, these were explorers.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:25] Right, right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:26] Just kind of like went out there and discovered more violence. Just terrifying to me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:30] It is. Can you imagine? Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:32] And depending on the culture of the school, I'll do Navajo as well. That's a bit more tricky, but-

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:36] But why? Give us some context for folks who might not understand why that would be a little tougher.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:42] Some Navajo who don't like it when other outsiders talk about their constellations.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:45] Okay.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:47] So-

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:47] So, it's very personal.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:48] It's very personal. So, I don't really tell the story sometimes with kids.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:52] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:23:53] I kind of just point them out, and why some are called a little bit wild, but there's a lot of outsiders who talk-

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:01] Yeah, absolutely.

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:01] ... about Navajo constellations. So, they're very protective of that. But actually, I went to a Navajo school last week, and they were just—they were okay with them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:09] Yeah. Well, and I it is probably pretty intriguing and interesting for, you know, any of those different settings. That's just another opportunity for them to learn about-

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:19] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:19] ... others, whether it would be today, you know, associated with the Navajo, or if you think about what's going on in Europe or any other place, right? And the dichotomy, I guess, if you will, of opportunity in those conversations. So, do the kids get it, the cultural piece?

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:37] I think the older kids do.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:38] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:39] See, that one's a—one I just started recently. So, I'm not entirely sure how-

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:43] I like it. I hope you continue that-

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:45] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:45] ... because I think that's a really, really-

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:47] It is one I'm hoping to expand-

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:48] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:50] ... because there is an important—you know, at least, to humanity, there's these stories up in the sky, and they're just not all Greek,

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:56] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:24:56] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:57] Right. Well, I also think it gives you an intriguing opportunity to get to questions about the origin, you know, once again, right?

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:04] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:04] So, just like there as many stars, there are ideas about the stars, right?

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:08] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:09] We have as many origin stories on this planet, right? And it's fascinating. But again, I digress. That's the anthropology hat coming out.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:16] No, no, no. That's kind of why I was heading into that, because, again, adding more science and throw-

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:21] Yes.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:21] ... anthropology in there. It's just a little bit.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:25] But the reality, it's all steeped in the science. It's why—how we interpreted what we could see, what we have should-

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:30] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:30] ... and our belief belief system, and so on, and so forth.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:32] It's in the-

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:32] It's all related.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:33] Some are lost to time.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:34] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:34] Like it has the Aztec constellation, and there's basically three-

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:37] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:38] ... that we know of, you know.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:39] Right. But we knew—we know that there were many, many more.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:42] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:43] They're just gone to us.

Asis Gonzales: [00:25:44] They're just lost in the time. They weren't that much into writing about them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:48] Right, right, right. No, absolutely, not at all. So, when you think about then the scaling of this across the state, so, ultimately, I would assume it's more than just time, and people, and equipment, right? Scaling across the state theoretically has some intriguing programmatic implications for you and for the museum as it relates to the programming being out there. How does any of that sort of impact what happens day to day here, or have you guys really even sort of thought about that sort of big piece?

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:21] Well, kind of our—hypothetically, we're kind of our own little arm of the museum-

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:27] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:27] ... where I'm paid by grants.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:30] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:30] That's where my-

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:31] Soft money.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:32] Soft money.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:33] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:33] So, technically, it is supposed to be a little side thing, but I'm hoping I get more people excited to come here. But that one's harder when you go further.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:44] Oh, sure.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:45] It's expensive.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:45] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:45] But we do offer free field trips. So, we can pay for the buses.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:48] Right, right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:50] But we actually help out here. So, you know, I'm supposed to kind of just be Stargazer. If they need someone to cover, I'll help cover-

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:58] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:26:58] ... and, you know, worked on designing exhibits and that sort of thing because when I started working here, I really fell in love with this museum, you know, and I want to be part of it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:10] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:27:10] And right now, helping take care of the animals because one of our animal caretakers, she had to go to school. So, she's doing that. Helping take care of the animals, helping build exhibits. And I'm out there talking to the kids. So, actually, kids would know me now. And some of them actually like going into the Stargazer.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:30] Right, right, yes. So, they take advantage over the weekend.

Asis Gonzales: [00:27:33] I hope that was a good answer.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:33] Yeah, no, it is, absolutely. And I think that sort of gets the heart of it, right? So—because, oftentimes, you know, and certainly even on this program, we go, and we talk a lot to really big museums or science centers, but we also talk to a lot of smaller museums and science centers.

Asis Gonzales: [00:27:48] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:48] And, you know, children endeavors in communities. And the reality of it is that it's a lot of people who are deeply, deeply passionate about providing-

Asis Gonzales: [00:27:57] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:57] ... these resources and opportunities in the communities where they live, right, recognizing that, you know, these students become—they are our next citizens. It's a really key component of the work that you do. And I can tell you without fail, I haven't met folks in these settings that are totally like you.

Asis Gonzales: [00:28:18] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:18] They're very passionate about what they're doing.

Asis Gonzales: [00:28:21] That's why—I was a park ranger. You know, I worked in a planetarium four years and a park ranger for two years. And the things about those jobs is that anyone who is there basically wants to be there. And it's pretty wonderful to see-

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:33] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:28:33] ... you know, excited people excited about doing their work.

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:37] Do you get the chance to use—so, Stargazer goes off and about in the school year. In the summertime, do you do special programming with it or does it—is it still just on the weekends in the summertime? I'm curious because that's the other question I get asked a lot-

Asis Gonzales: [00:28:52] Okay.

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:52] ... is the informal day after school and summer experiences for students?

Asis Gonzales: [00:28:58] Well, actually, last year, I got summer schools. I went to schools still. I'm just like, "Hey, I'm doing summer school. Can you?" Because I was like, "Might as well do summer schools."

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:07] Right, yeah,.

Asis Gonzales: [00:29:08] So, I did that. The problem is in July, we do our summer camp. And so, that eats up. Like this year—next year is going to be six weeks. That's more than a month-

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:18] Six weeks of summer camp, yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:29:19] ... for this. More than half of the summer already done. So, I basically have this little bit of summer that I can go to summer schools and been busy. The planetarium is here on weekends, even in the summer. There's no added cost.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:32] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:29:33] It's part of the admission price. But it's basically me doing summer camp.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:38] Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You could-

Asis Gonzales: [00:29:40] Stargazer is specific, but I do use Stargazer for the camps.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:43] Oh, you do?

Asis Gonzales: [00:29:44] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:44] So, it's incorporated into some of your summer programming. Is the summer programming specifically theme-based? So, each week is something different or it is-

Asis Gonzales: [00:29:52] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:52] Okay.

Asis Gonzales: [00:29:52] Each week is different. Last year—actually, it's not even last year yet. It feels like last year. This summer—last summer-

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:59] It is just over.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:00] It was. It is very long.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:02] I know that feeling, yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:03] That was my first summer camp. Oh, my God, I was tired. Then, it was like really quiet afterwards. And it was super weird-

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:09] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:10] ... to get used to that again, but no. It was like we had—our first week was aquanauts, which is about underwater-

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:14] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:14] So, of course, I had the underwater stuff. And then, it was biosphere. And that was harder, but it had a lot of life and the VR and stuff. And then—so, it's basically-

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:23] So, you're using Stargazer even in the summertime-

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:25] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:26] ... for the movies component.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:26] For the summer camps. It's not like 100%-

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:29] Right. Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:29] ... because I do activities as well, science activities.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:32] But you're rolling it in.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:34] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:34] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:35] And then, you know, putting it in there someway or another. If not, just to show kids the stars-

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:39] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:40] Even though it has nothing to do a little bit, but I try to-

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:42] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:43] ... fit it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:43] Yeah, absolutely. So many opportunities in that space.

Asis Gonzales: [00:30:46] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:47] So, one of the things that I get asked frequently is about, okay, in my community, I have this thing, but I really want to do something similar. Sort of how would I do that? And so, I always like to leave the program with some giveaways to the folks that are listening, right? So, Learning Unboxed is all about case studies and positive disruptions in education and in our communities, whether that's teaching, learning, or work, or take your pick. And so, folks are out there thinking, "Wow, this is really, really cool thing, but I don't live in and around Santa Fe."

Asis Gonzales: [00:31:20] New Mexico.

Annalies Corbin: [00:31:21] Right. So, as a teacher who wants to bring aspects or elements of this without a Stargazer remotely close to them, how do teachers do a really great job of teaching this? Well, what's your recommendation? Because you're living it on multiple sides of this equation, right? So, you know, you've been involved in planetarium stuff for a long time. You're a research scientist in your own right, you know, whether that be from the geology or the work that you're doing now.

Asis Gonzales: [00:31:51] That's the dream.

Annalies Corbin: [00:31:51] Right. But the reality of it is that you have a lot of experience to bring to the table. So, my question really is for those folks who don't have access to you or to Stargazer to come to their school, but really want to do a great job of sparking kids' imaginations, whether it'd be in space or, you know, the cultural components tied to those different things, how—what are your recommendations for folks to be able to do a good job with that?

Asis Gonzales: [00:32:16] You mean, like if they can't afford a planetarium or-

Annalies Corbin: [00:32:18] Yeah. I mean, you know, because Stargazer, I can imagine, is an easy lift.

Asis Gonzales: [00:32:23] Actually, videos are really good for astronomy.

Annalies Corbin: [00:32:26] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:32:26] There are lots of great programming out there. The BBC just did the Planet Series, which is really amazing. I actually think most of it is your own personal excitement about it. If you truly love it, like I do, and it really comes out when you talk to the kids. And so, just try to—actually, try to use visual, you know, stimuli for that kind of stuff. For astronomy, you know, just depends on the geology to be more hands on and stuff.

Annalies Corbin: [00:32:55] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:32:55] Yeah, stuff like that. So, it depends on the science. A lot of these planetariums are brought on grants. So, grant writing. There's a book called Writing for a Good Cause.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:05] Yeah, yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:33:07] That one. So, learning grant writing actually is—there's actually a lot of money out there for stuff like that. Albuquerque, actually, the Albuquerque Astronomical Society has their planetarium through grants. And actually, Belen in New Mexico has a planetarium use. The school has one. I was actually just told about that. So, I'm hoping maybe they can expand that. I told them I'd help them, you know-

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:29] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:33:29] ... if they want to learn how to use it. You know, they can do programming themselves-

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:33] Right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:33:33] ... if they need to. So, there is actually—there are actually people out there too, so they just have to find them.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:39] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:33:40] You know, they're kind of hidden.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:41] Yeah, they will, and they ask a lot of questions that they can turn around a little bit. Yeah-

Asis Gonzales: [00:33:45] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:33:45] But that's a-

Asis Gonzales: [00:33:47] It's the best as I can answer that because I've been in planetariums a lot of times, and they've been—I've been very lucky that I can use them to teach people. And the reason I actually joined here is because it is free to the community for public intelligence.

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:01] Right, right.

Asis Gonzales: [00:34:02] And that was what I got most excited about. So, yeah, you know, actually just Google. Maybe you'll-

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:08] Yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:34:08] ... find-

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:09] Oh, yeah, yeah.

Asis Gonzales: [00:34:09] ... someone out there who has it, write grants, you know. And they're pretty pricey, but maybe you can get your own.

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:17] Yeah, yeah. So, you can get one for your community. Absolutely.

Asis Gonzales: [00:34:19] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:20] Absolutely. Well, alrighty. I want to thank you very much for taking time out of your day to talk with me about Stargazer and what's going on at the Santa Fe Children's Museum.

Asis Gonzales: [00:34:30] It's my pleasure. I love our program. And if you pay for the plane ticket, maybe I can go somewhere with that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:38] Note to listeners, bring him in. He'll come.

Asis Gonzales: [00:34:42] No, I definitely love going to the schools. And I do overschedule myself because I love doing it, but yeah. And actually, can I—we're hiring for my position. Can I talk about that?

Annalies Corbin: [00:34:56] Absolutely. Sure.

Asis Gonzales: [00:34:56] So, we are hiring here at Santa Fe for a duplicate position of mine, because, again, we want to expand. The astronomy knowledge is, you know, nice. If they have a basic elementary knowledge, it's enough. We would like someone who's bilingual, Spanish and English, because that's what a lot of our community is. So, if you want to apply and if you're interested, it is a lot of fun. Indeed.com is where our position is, planetarium coordinator Santa Fe Children's Museum.

Annalies Corbin: [00:35:25] Perfect. Excellent. So, not only can you buy a plane ticket, and then have him come back to you, but if you're really, really intrigued, you can come here, and work, and share in the joy.

Asis Gonzales: [00:35:36] You should ask Susan about the plane, but just put it out there if someone asked.

Annalies Corbin: [00:35:41] There you go.

Asis Gonzales: [00:35:42] He's our executive director. Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:35:43] Thank you so very, very much.

Asis Gonzales: [00:35:45] Thank you for coming.

Annalies Corbin: [00:35:49] Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning, and the future of work. I want to thank my guest and encourage you all to be part of the conversation. Meet me on social media, @annaliescorbin. And join me next time as we stand up, step back, and lean in to reimagine education.