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Neharika: [00:00:01] This is Neharika Palivela and I'm here interviewing.

Josie: [00:00:04] Josie Cruzan.

Neharika: [00:00:06] So Josie you're a sophomore at Carmel High School and I know that you're very involved in politics. So can you talk a little bit about how you got involved?

Josie: [00:00:17] So way way back in like I would say mid 7th middle seventh grade. I started like CA I like sort of paying attention to the news a little bit more because I knew it like the election was coming up but I'd start to kind of learn about politics and about activism especially about like kind of the political landscape both globally and nationally. And my parents were always the kind of people who taught me like I should be loving and accepting of everyone no matter who or what they are. And so because I had that view going into learning about politics I kind of became really really passionate about humans human rights issues and just like things like that. And so. And so I kind of how that mindset going into my freshman year of high school especially after the 2016 election which made me just really really really angry. Understandable and growing in my freshman year I was like the activities I think it was and there was a booth and it was for the Young Democrats Club and at the time I identified as a Democrat and I still do because both my parents are not just the political party that I align the most with. But the Young Democrats Club had a booth of the freshmen Activities Fair and the former president Jose he was standing there and we had a whole conversation about politics and about why I felt the way that I felt. And that kind of surprised when we say oh hey this club might be kind of interesting I should go to that and the same thing kind of happened with action together which was at the time run by key county areas. And through that I kind of went to the first meeting for meetings for both of those. And I just kind of met a lot of people who are really really of like minded. And from there I just kind of dived into it because this was something I could do with other people because I was passionate about it and because they were passionate about it as well.

[00:02:44] So what exactly do you do in each of these clubs.

[00:02:48] So currently they'll like more politically oriented clubs I'm involved with are just young Democrats see US action together and DHS teens are the choice. What the choice is basically the pro-choice club. And we do mostly discussion based things as well as fund raising. Like this year we're fundraising for both Vale and the Jullien center and then in action together we also do discussion that we do more kind of like activism oriented things so we're having a voter drive at some point this year. And like things like that and we had one last year as well. And then young Democrats it's a lot of going out right now especially because we're so close to the election but going out and canvassing and talking to people and trying to get people to vote for the candidates that we support as well as talking about our political views and talking about current events what's been like your favorite thing that you've done through these clubs so far. So back in January January as a whole club the Young Democrats and we are probably 20 strong at the time we all went to the women's march together. And that was really fun because there was just really a sense of solidarity between us because we felt it felt like a family. And so we were able to go out and voice our opinions and to make our voices heard. And we were able to do that as a group and it was just really really powerful to experience to be standing now and walking there chanting alongside a bunch of my close friends.

[00:04:29] You know I agree the experience was definitely amazing. So what about politics like right now. What is the thing that angers you most.

[00:04:41] I'm just astounded at certain people's disregard for human life and human well-being. You can call people out in the sun. OK I Republicans

[00:04:55] I am disgusted by the Republican Party's inability to put the needs and the needs and rights of others over their own fiscal and moral greed and that issues it's infuriating because you feel a little more specific things like health care. Why is it that the increase of wealth of old white people is so important that it becomes more important than insuring 30 million people of which I am included with health care because if the Affordable Care Act is taken away and 30 million people won't won't be insurable because of preexisting conditions and I have re existing conditions. And so it's really important to me but I just conceptually cannot understand why people think that access to health care and access to housing access to clean food and water is not as

important as lobbying or getting more money for yourself. There's just something so incredibly selfish about that that just makes me so mad.

[00:06:12] I want to scream. Yeah that is very relatable feeling. So do you plan on like going into politics in the future.

[00:06:25] So I honestly have no idea where I want to go for undergrad in terms of like colleges and universities. But what I want to do is I want to major in psychology and minor and Poly's political science for undergrad and that I want to go to law school then I want to practice for some time at least because I think it's really important to get that experience beforehand and then I want to run for a state legislative position. And then a federal one. And actually I want to run for president in 2052.

[00:06:56] Amazing.

[00:07:04] So why do you think that there's been such an increase in youth participation in politics.

[00:07:14] I think that a large part of it honestly is social media because even though the whole thing is like fake news and stuff a lot of what we see on the Internet especially preaching than 16 which is kind of what I got into politics is in fact true or at least some part of it is true. And so that's making more and more people aware because I know that I personally got involved in politics through social media and a lot of my friends also got into politics social media. And so because of that I think the kind of it's not even that social media is educating us. But it's prompting us to become more educated because news is so much more widespread now because instead of it just being like oh your parents watch the news at 6 o'clock every night or in the mornings or whatever your dad reads the newspaper every Sunday. It's I follow BuzzFeed of noodle news on Instagram and I so they posted this thing about this thing and it made me really really passionate about it.

[00:08:17] Now I also think part of it is because everything is so much more public. People are becoming more aware of kind of what's happening globally especially with like the 2016 election because I've heard testimonies from other people that have said it was the 2016 election that made that prompted me to go into politics. And so I think for

young people especially because we live so much of our lives on social media we're seeing that and we're getting we're feeling something about it. Whether it's joy or sadness or anger but we are feeling those emotions and it's prompting us to be more active ok.

[00:08:57] So why do you think it's so important the young people are at least like kids our age like teenagers are getting involved in politics.

[00:09:06] I think it's really important because we are the future like we our lives are currently being spread out in front of us. And previously like in previous generations they were brought out in front of us by people so much older than us like people who are in their 50s 60s 70s 80s. They're the ones that are currently making want this distillation and make in like a voice. And so I think that the trend of younger people getting involved is really important because it's us saying OK no we are not going to allow you to decide what our world will look like. We're going to make our world for ourselves.

[00:09:44] Ok. So I know you're also involved with Planned Parenthood would you be able to talk about that a little.

[00:09:52] So I am on Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky teen Council. And so what that means is that I am part of their peer led sex ed council. So my primary duties for that are going to other schools and actually educating kids about sex and about safe sex in Iraq and anatomy and all that that is involved in sex. And so for example Carmel we have a rule. Has a rule that states basically that you can't have an outside person come in and teach sex. Not a lot of schools actually have that. And so at various points throughout the year I'll actually go to schools and talk to kids about sex and about sex ed and that kind of thing. But that also means kind of educating myself to educate others. So we have meetings every Tuesday in Indianapolis from like five to seven. And it's where we go and we learn about a specific topic that week. So like last week we learned about anatomy and that is what we talked about for two hours to have a more comprehensive understanding so that we could help other people understand. How did you get involved. So I vote for V.P. of Young Democrats back in February. Her name was burned Walker. She was like oh this is happening this day. And I'm going if you guys also want to go. And that's what it was

was. It was called Youth Lobby Day. It was with the Indiana youth group which is an LGBT youth center in Indianapolis and Planned Parenthood teen Council. And it was you sign up and you apply things and then you go like I missed a day of school and I when I actually lobbied for certain sex of the bill that we lobbied for it was an opt in sex out Bill that basically say stated that if you vote instead of opting out you opt in. Which was really really bad for just sex education in general because we could.

[00:11:59] Could you explain the bill little for.

[00:12:02] Ok so the bill was called the opt in sex ed bill and basically what it stated was that previously well currently because the bill hasn't officially been passed yet but currently it's instead of if you if your school is going to teach sex that you have to opt out like your parents have to sign a paper saying opt out. But if the bill is passed and I'm actually not sure if it has been passed it probably will be. So if and when the bill is passed it will say that instead of opting out your parents have to sign a permission slip says you were allowed to take that. So instead of opting out you'll opt in and part of the reason why you're lobbying against this specific bill is because it will drastically decrease the number of people that actually receive sex ed which is proven in states like Texas which have some the strict strictest sex laws in the country and also one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the country. Fun fact that it will tragically increase the number of STDs and teen pregnancy STDs in young people and teen pregnancies. So that's kind of what the bill is and we were lobbying against it so we went and we talked to senators and representatives and said hey this is why we don't think you should pass this bill.

[00:13:19] Ok. Perfect telling me. Thank you.