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00:17 Hi, everybody. Welcome back to our returning listeners and welcome if this is your first time listening. We're so happy to have you all here with us today. Thank you for joining us for season two, episode three of the Lion Pride cast, a podcast created by the Lansing Unified School District 469 located in Lansing, Kansas.

00:33 And the purpose of this podcast is to inform our Lansing stakeholders being our community members, students and staff about all things education. We are your host. I am Miles Azzeh, Director of Teaching and Learning in Lansing USD 469. And I am Sharon Burns, the Director of Communications and Marketing. And so I'm well aware that I think I say this every single time, but I'm very excited about our next guest. I say it every time, don't I? You do say it every single day. But this one I am really excited. Yes, because student on.

01:03 And it is the one and only Mr. Austin Strehlow, who is a senior at Lansing High School. Hello. I'm excited to be on. Yeah, thank you for being on. And Austin, you were actually our first. Oh, that's not true. I was going to say first student, but we had Hunter and Aubrey on last high school student. First high school student. So congratulations, first current high school students. How does it feel to be in the hot seat? A little nervous for talking on a mic, but I know we talked about doing this like a year ago, I think, maybe, and I'm just excited we were getting to it.

01:34 Yeah. Here we are. We made it. It's gonna be a good time. So I've known Austin since he was in elementary school, and I think he's one of the most thoughtful humans that I know. So it was natural to have you on. So thank you again. That's a big deal that she thinks that you're super thoughtful. She thinks the exact opposite of me. So congratulations. Can you tell us a little bit about you, your background, why she thinks you're thoughtful and what I can do to maybe improve in that area? Yeah, I think. I think I grew up with a really big family.

02:03 So I have seven siblings and I'm the youngest of all of them. So I think having that many older siblings, you kind of have to be a little more more mature at a younger age. And I just try to think about things and my actions. And yeah, yeah, yeah. I know your family is a big reason why you are the way you are. And you did talk about the fact that you were the youngest, which I think is pretty cool of that many kids. And your mom, you obviously think highly of your mom.

02:31 I was telling a story to Miles here before we started about Austin went with us because you're friends with my son, Merrick, went with us to St. Louis to hear my other son perform and he had a song and it said something about a sigh and you got emotional because it reminded you of your mom. And I thought it was the sweetest thing because Miles and I here also love our moms and our listeners know that. Good to have a fellow mama's boy on the podcast. I feel like by myself. Did you talk about that at all?

03:00 You know, your mom and your family in general, how they've impacted. I think my mom definitely is a big reason of like who I am and why I think I get along with so many different people in school or just in my life is because I mean she had a really

rough life growing up and she had to raise eight of eight really spontaneous children and she was always just so positive and lighthearted throughout it all. And I think that's really helped me throughout like going through school is just taking everything with a light heart and not taking things personally from everyone and like I don't know just really letting her be an example in my life for how to treat other people.

03:36 Yeah, that's nice. I like that. How many of your siblings have went through the Lansing School District? Yeah, so we were all we all started being homeschooled and then we started going to school at different levels. So like the oldest kids didn't go to high school until later and I started second grade. But I think all of my siblings except my two oldest brothers went through Lansing. Okay, that's really cool. Do you feel like not like anything's better or worse than something else?

04:07 But are you happy that you have a chance to go from homeschooling to the public education system, like being in a system instead of just being at home? Do you think your siblings feel the same way? Yeah, I think I think homeschooling does have its benefits.

04:23 You can kind of go at your own pace and learn in the way that's best for you, which I know you can do that in school too with all the resources, but it's definitely nice to have a place, like a structured place like school to offer these different communities for you to go into because like when you're homeschooled, you have your mom to hang out with and your siblings and then maybe your church friends or but when you're in school, you have all these different opportunities of like you can join sports or you can join choir and that just it just allows you to have all these different outlets to let things out or to, you know, go about your life.

04:54 Yeah. I would have rebelled if my parents tried to homeschool me. I'd have been like, that's not happening. They tried to put me into an all boys school at one point. That's hilarious. Yeah, I think recess was pretty long for all of us. Yeah, that part would have been pretty cool. Kind of stay outside for a couple hours. I don't know. Maybe homeschooler would have been that bad. Yeah, it was pretty late. Okay, hold on a second. Homeschool and I would like to rethink. Okay, so you know the Lansing community pretty well. How would you best describe the Lansing community, someone who's never been here before?

05:26 And this is good for us to hear. We're on the recruitment tour a lot and trying to get people to come here. And when they come and visit, they really do fall in love with our community and the schools. But what would you say about our community or describe it to someone who's never been? Yeah, I think like when I go anywhere else, like I go to a different state and they're like, where are you from? Or like I'm somewhere else in Kansas and I tell them I'm from Lansing. People don't really know about it because it's a smaller town. And maybe when they think of smaller towns, they're like, oh, it's, I don't know, maybe they have like a negative outlook on it.

05:55 But when you're really a part of a smaller community like this, it kind of just gives the opportunity to be more close knit with everyone you know, whether it be teachers or students. Like you have a way of personally connecting with everyone. Whereas if you're in a community that has so many people and so many things happening, you don't really get that chance to feel like it's really like this big family if you if you make it that way. And I also think since we are a military town technically for Leavenworth is and we're kind of connected with them.

06:26 It makes us all like students and teachers alike really accepting of new people. Like we don't think, OK, we've been here our whole lives and we're all this small community people and we all just know each other. So when new people come, you're you're the

outcast or whatever. But it's like, no, we're all of us kind of came here at different points and some of us have been here longer, but it just allows us to accept people. Yeah, I noticed that when I moved here. It's a really good way to put it. Definitely a welcoming community. Yeah. Except for Sharon. He knows that's not true.

- 06:56 If you had one piece of advice to give your younger self, what would it be? That's interesting. Yeah, if I was looking back to my younger self, probably just to really cherish all the moments like the in school better. Thinking back, I think I had that mindset of, OK, I just need to rush through this. I just need to finish fifth grade and then I'll be fine because middle school is going to be the best, you know, like and I wish I really just cherished each of those stages wherever they were, even like elementary school or middle school or my freshman year.
- 07:32 And it's like because they all just give so many different opportunities and. You can just have so many different moments throughout them. I just wish I kind of held on to them a little longer. Yeah, you said a quote once. Do you remember? Yeah. I think it was a couple months ago I was reading a book, maybe watching something. I don't know. But I saw this quote that said. We weren't made to be human doings. We were made to be human beings. And it kind of changed the way I was thinking about my life because when I heard that I was thinking about college and I was like, OK, I just have to do this, do this, do this, and I'll get here.
- 08:05 I just have to finish this class and I'll be fine. I just have to finish high school and I'll be fine. Then I just have to get a job. And it's like I just realized if you're always like thinking about doing things like I just have to see all these places, do all these things, meet all these cool people and like be successful, get this money. It's just you'll never be satisfied with your life or where you are and you'll always just be longing for the next stage in life, you know, because people like to think that I know like there's people in high school that say I hate school.
- 08:36 I just can't wait till I'm out of school. And they they don't realize when you're out of school, now you're in real life. You know, now you're going to be like, I hate my job. Just can't wait till I'm done with this job. And then you get a family. This is so stressful. I just need to get away. You know, like it's just if you start looking at life as you just need to be content and it's hard to find that contentment. But once you can just realize just wherever you are, there's an opportunity to learn something or to help someone else or to, you know, just make life exciting and beautiful like it is.
- 09:09 Appreciate the moment. Yeah, I appreciate the moment. I think a lot of adults, they just get into that grind and live their whole life that way. So I love that. Yeah, very astute. So going on with that, like the idea of and Sharon says you brought this up, but like the idea of being doing something bigger than just for yourself, you know, being a part of something you brought that up earlier. Can you tell us how you're involved in things that are bigger than just yourself?
- 09:39 I know I got to see you in the choir room perform the other day or yesterday. That was fantastic. So maybe that or sports or what are other things that bigger than just yourself? Yeah, I think I've definitely become a choir nerd for sure in the last couple of years. But a lot of people talk about school as a community in itself, which I think it is. But I think school is more so a place that gives opportunity for you to find your true communities, whether that be you're a sports lover and you're on this team or for me it's choir and I just feel like.
- 10:13 Like being a part of something like our choir is just so amazing because you realize that. If you really like hold up and you're confident in yourself and you meet all these

other people who are confident, you can just create this beautiful thing. And I don't know.

- 10:29 It's just it's given me this place to be vulnerable in school and really let my true emotion out when I need to because a lot of times you're just grinding, you're doing the homework, you're trying to pass the class, but then you have this place where you can just let all of that pent up stuff inside of you out and not like anger anything, but just like you can just be yourself and you can see other people who are just loving it like and it makes you so happy because you're all like, oh, we're doing this together. It's like we're just these small people.
- 10:59 But when they're we're all together we create this beautiful masterpiece. And I think it's so helpful having a teacher like Mr. White with this too because he really makes it more. It's not just about the class and the songs, he makes it about your life and how you can take what you're learning in this class everywhere in your life, you know, like always wanting to succeed. He talks about this one saying he always says the pursuit of excellence.
- 11:27 I think it is like you're always just wanting to be the best you can and you're always wanting to push yourself and push the people around you and I don't know it just it's made me it's helped me throughout my life and like finding community with other people and I think your background is interesting and you were heavily involved in sports for a while. I know you were an excellent athlete track, football. I wouldn't say excellent. Yeah, he was. He was. And then you kind of had a shift to choir, which I think is interesting to have that athletics and the arts, which is really cool.
- 12:00 Yeah, I think I was definitely like in elementary and middle school is all about sports, which I think it's how it is for a lot of boys because sports are so fun and but I know freshman year I had a couple I had three concussions my freshmen throughout my freshman year and then my beginning of my sophomore year. So I think that was kind of part of the reason why I kind of had to stray away from sports a little bit. But I think it's nice to really just try to explore and find what other creative areas you can feel comfortable in.
- 12:31 And that's really all that matters is that you're comfortable in what you're doing and you feel like it's pushing you to strive for something more. Right. And being involved helps you learn about yourself, you learn about others, which you talked about. Definitely. Yeah, being active. Whatever that is, being involved is important. Yeah You know what I like is you can tie in a little bit earlier when you talked about that advice that you'd give to somebody younger is you know your senior years, you probably feel like it's going pretty quick, right?
- 12:59 Yeah I mean we're already approaching Thanksgiving break and then next thing you know it'll be second semester and applying or deciding where you're going and all that stuff. So enjoy it, right? Enjoy this senior year because it's gonna be done like that, right? Yeah. That was depressing. Thank you. Moving on. Everyone knows I'm here to bring down the mood. That's right. That's Miles. Mission accomplished. Can you talk about the education you received here in Lansing and all the people who have helped you along the way?
- 13:29 I know you've talked about it a little bit, but can you expand upon it? Yeah. So I came here in second grade. I was homeschooled until then, which isn't a long time, but I think it was really helpful to have certain teachers who really created a personal relationship with me. And I think going through school, you need to have those people who can truly connect with you and they're not just shoving information at

you, which I'm not saying any other teachers do, but they really take the time to like listen to you like you're important to, you know, and give you that respect.

14:03

And that's kind of all those teachers throughout elementary school or middle school or high school that I can remember that were just so special to me. It just kind of propelled me throughout the years. So yeah, I just think all the all my years were special here and I can remember a couple of teachers who I will just always be in my heart just for like what they taught me. Like I remember my first ever teacher was Ms. Delic like when I was in second grade so long ago, but she was just so sweet and like would always just talk to me and tell me like tell me things about her day or like yeah it's just when you start thinking as teachers as they're humans too, you know they're not this person above you in a way.

14:39

I mean you should respect them because they're it's in a you're in a school setting and you know they're older than you. But when you start thinking them as humans and you realize that they have all these personal feelings too and you can connect with them and you can make their day better as they can make your day better.

14:54

It's like you create this connection of respect and it just makes school so much easier and that that's why I feel like I've done so well in our community or in school and I feel like you can ask any teacher I've ever had and they'll talk highly about me and not because I was like sucking up or like you're the best teacher ever like doing all that but I just was treating them like they were human and that's sometimes all a teacher needs like you're thinking of yourself as a student and you're like ohh I just wish this teacher would do this for me or I no one respects me and you know like I don't know some people have that mindset but it's like maybe if you just ask them how are they doing or like you just said and had a normal conversation with them then they would start helping you out and I realized teachers want want me to succeed you know they want to help me so if I can create that bond with them they'll just push me further and further throughout my school career.

15:49

He's very good at making connections with people too. Like we'll go places and he can just connect to. I can tell. Yeah. So and I know Ms. Schmidt, Rachel Schmidt, who's a teacher at the middle school sat with Austin at the homecoming extravaganza table. And after, I think she was in your office for maybe the PVC. Yes, stopped me and was like, you know, that kid, Austin Strehlow is such a good kid. I had the best time talking to him.

16:16

I told you that because I wanted to make sure you heard it because he does connect with just humans in general, which is important, just kindness and empathy. I love that. Keep that up. Yeah. You know, as you look back, you know your senior year is almost over. Here we go. TikTok, Austin. We're all like dust in the wind, sand, sand going through our anyway. No, seriously though, I the connecting with people.

16:44

But I will tell you this, like teachers can build those relationships by just simply asking, how's your day going? And it can really shift a kid to be like, wow, they make me feel like I'm a human. I'm going to give it back. Even those toughest kids. So I love that a lot of times we'll articulate that as teachers or I'll say that to other teachers, but it's great to hear as students say. So thank you. Thank you. Definitely. Beautiful thing. All right, so you're very good at connecting with people. I can tell you're like a deep person.

17:14

You strike me that way. Oh, I like that. Very deep. I write poetry, actually. Do you write poetry? I have. I write songs sometimes, so yeah. Yeah, I would try to write poetry, except I have the attention span. I cannot imagine a poem that would be very humorous. It would have rocky. Rocky. Yes, we're all yes. Sands of time.

- 17:42 Cherish the moments as you have them because you're going to die. All right. Yeah, yeah, no, I'm very deep, by the way. Oh my God. Austin, before we get to this next question for me, and it's okay, 'cause I think they were all done before you were born. Do you have a favorite Rocky movie? I've never seen Rocky. Okay. Is there a way to end this podcast right now? And that's not me being like, I don't watch older movies, 'cause I'm a huge movie guy. Oh, you just don't watch good movies? Got it.
- 18:12 Continue. I just never watched Rocky. No, yeah. I like how you're looking at Sharon for like help is he gonna be mad at him. Okay, all right. I think Rocky is Rocky sci-fi? It is not. Oh, okay. Okay, I got a sci-fi movie. What about Back to the Future? I knew it was coming. I mean, I don't know what else. I'm not a huge sci-fi. I mean, that's not true. I like some sci-fi, but okay, so back to the future. You have? Yeah. Have you ever thought about being a superintendent of schools? No, I've never.
- 18:41 Because our superintendent hasn't seen it yet. And his name is Marty. Marty. Oh yeah, okay, wow. Yeah. His name is Marty. Marty McFly. Yeah, I'm actually going to stop right here. You guys finished. I'm going to start writing a poem. Here we go about life being too short and you have to watch Back to the Future. Okay. Where do you see? So we talked about you being deep and you've seen Back to the Future. So that makes me happy. Where do you see yourself in 10 years, Austin? Yeah, that is a deep question for sure. Thank you.
- 19:13 Kind of complicated. I think I don't think for me it's good to put this strict place that I want to be. I mean, I think it's good to have a goal of somewhere you want to be or things you've wanted to succeed in. But I kind of just want to, you know, let the path go how it naturally does. And a lot of people say that and then they do nothing. They stay at home and their parents house for a while. But I mean, kind of just take it step by step.
- 19:39 So I was thinking about doing pre-med next year and that's where I got really stressed for a couple months. I was like, OK, I got to figure all this out. I got to get the scholarships. Got to get my ACT. I got to get these schools out, do these tours. And like that started going with the, I gotta do, do this, do this, do that, do that. Human doer. I got so stressed and I was like, oh my gosh. And I realized I was like, wait, I don't have to figure everything out now. And people tell you that, but when you get to your senior year, I feel like you just get that pressure and like you get that anxiety about it.
- 20:09 You're like, I'm really going to have to make a decision, you know, like whatever it be. But so I was thinking about pre-med for a while and because I always thought I'd like being a doctor because my dad was a doctor and my grandpa was a doctor and my mom was a nurse. And you know, it's kind of medical stuff is in the family and I just I've always had a passion for wanting to help people and connect with people. But I think now I decided I wanted really to take a gap year and do some missions trips or just travel around and that sounds loose. I just want to travel around.
- 20:38 I think that's what a lot of people say, but I really think experiencing life and experiencing people around the world can show you what your true passion is and where you really feel like your heart is meant to be. And I don't want to make a decision based on, OK, I want to be a doctor because I think I like it and there's a lot of money. You know, like I want to make it because I experienced something where I was like, OK, now I'm really passionate that and I know this is what I want to do. So now I'll go to school for it and now I'll start looking for these scholarships and looking at schools.
- 21:08 You know So I'm just going to take it step by step. Very mature. Yeah, I know. Yeah. I'm not saying this because I'm a public education and part of recruitment, but I think

you'd make a fantastic teacher. Yes, we actually talked a little bit about this. I really think you'd make a fantastic. Well, I love connecting with people and like I feel like I do have a passion for teaching just in my life, not even in a school setting, just like with my friends and with my family. Like I just love talking to people and helping them through things. So that's definitely been something I've mulled over teaching.

21:40

Yeah, I think you'd be fantastic. I think middle and high school kids would love you. Yeah, yeah. Like I really do. I think that they would love you. And I think they'd find a place that an adult cares about me and is authentically caring about me, not just like, did you do your assignment or what sport do you play asking me how I am? And I think that can go really far, like you said earlier, for a kid. Yeah So I think you'd be great at it. So whenever you're ready to sign up, you're talking to two people right here. Lansing has to be Lansing. Oh yeah, yeah. You'd be a terrible teacher out of Lance. You are not cut out for teaching.

22:10

But you're cut out for teaching here. Well, I think especially since I like I have the perspective of, OK, I understand what it's like to be on the student side of it and like how those teachers can impact your life. So then I could take if I did do this. If I did become a teacher, I could take how I felt as a student and try to help more students feel that way, you know? And I think like if there are teachers like listening to this, it's just it really does just take one little thing that students remember forever.

22:39

Like, you know, just mentioning one thing about them or like even just making them feel like they're seen or like notice. Like there's so many kids who walk around school and they just they feel like no one ever sees them because maybe they're at school and their parents don't recognize them. But it's like you go to school and you just need one person to like let you know that you exist. Yeah. And that's why I try to do that with so many kids. Like when I see kids who I feel like are sitting alone, like having a hard day, like I can tell there's just something on them. Like you don't want to be like, hey, how are you?

23:08

You need help or like, you know, like be in the face. But if you just go up to them, you're like, hey, I like your shirt, you know, and you walk away like. It just changes like one little comment. Yeah. Awesome. What are your parents names? Mark and Kathy. Mark and Kathy, you did a wonderful job with this human. They did. I hope Max and Ava turn out to be half as good as yours. Seriously, that was wonderful. Yeah Good kid right here. It is a good kid. Yeah. Okay, we're gonna lift the mood up a little bit.

23:38

Negative, what's going on? Okay, this was a very positive. Yeah, the energy. Thank you. Don't call me out. Sharon's faces today. She is definitely like a little short with me. Can I just be honest? She's just ready for some trivia. I'm ready for some trivia, thank you. Yes, let's lift it up. OK. So we're going to end this episode like we did last year when we would have guests on. We're going to ask you a trivia question, okay? And you're going to have 10 seconds to answer as many of a topic that we're going to give you in a minute as you can, okay?

24:09

Okay, ready. We are pairing you up against the most competitive person in the district besides myself, which is Martin Altieri. Who's the intermediate school principal on the podcast last year. And so we've already asked him this question and timed him. I'm going to play the clip after, and you're going to see if you can beat him, okay? So I want you in 10 seconds to name as many human bones as you possibly can, okay?

24:38

I'm gonna get a timer ready. Ready? Yes. Go. We got skull, spine, clavicle, femur, tibia, fibula, calcaneus. Oh, sternum. Done. Dude, you got eight right at the end. Wow. Sorry Martin. Are you gonna play Martin's? Loser. He got seven. Whoopsie. He got seven, let's play it. Okay.

25:04 Tibia, fibula, ulna, spine, pelvis, kneecap, ankle. That's it. I don't think the ankle. Hold on, ankle. And kneecap too. The kneecap. I know this one because it's the patella. All right, I wanted to share about my story, my knee. I was being a know it all. You are being a know-it-all. They had to take my patella tendon when I had my ACL surgery. So I know that one. And I had a teacher named Mr. Patella.

25:33 And he told us that it was called a kneecap. So we'll always remember it. And I have always remembered. Good job. Good job, Mr. Patella. Thank you. I appreciate it. Yes. Yes, he never asked how I was doing. Jerk. I think pre-med is right for you. If you don't go, if you don't want to be a teacher, you're good at naming those bones. You need everything you got to know. There you go. Six bones. Yeah, that's all you need to know. Eight. You got eight. You have eight bones. You get into med school. You actually don't need to take the MCAT. Oh, congratulations or take any of the exams, the boards.

26:03 You're actually a doctor now. Okay. Sorry, Martin. You're still a principal. All right. Well, I think that that's a perfect way to wrap up this episode. What do you think? It's excellent. Thank you. Perfect. Austin, did you have a good time? Yeah, that was fun. I was not as nerve wracking as I thought it would be. A couple times I got a little tripped up, but oh no, I didn't notice. No, didn't notice it at all. You did really well, minus the Rocky thing. So I just want you to know, though. You did really well except for the trying to do poetry thing.

26:33 Yeah. Yeah, well and the humor. Yeah, the humor. Okay, wow. At first, it was fine. Now you guys got to the next level. Yeah, no offense. And Austin, come on, man. You're new. I'm expecting it from her, but I've been nothing but nice. Got a little too comfortable. Yeah, yeah, I will send you the Rocky series on Betamax for you to watch. All right. So if as always, dang it. As always, for more updates and stories and lance at USD 469, you can visit us at www.usd469.net.

27:05 And if you don't already have it, download the free Lansing USD 469 mobile app on Apple and Android. That app allows you to be the first to know about all the fantastic things happening in our district. Austin, do you have the app? I do have the app. Thank you. I think he lied. I have it on my iPad, not my phone. He looked right at me. It doesn't matter. Ken was like, yeah, I've got it and you need to get it too. Thank you. There you go. If you like our content and want to stay up to date on the latest episodes, please follow us wherever you are listening to us and leave a review to help others find us and learn more about our great district.

27:39 We are available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music, YouTube, SoundCloud, iHeartRadio, Cast Back, Cast Box, Miles' favorite, Stitcher and Pocket Cast. Don't worry about not knowing that one, it's fake. And if you'd like to be a guest on the podcast, please send us an email at Sharon.burns@usd469.net. All right, that is a wrap on episode three of season two. And as always...

28:10 Woo-hoo! Thanks for listening, everybody. Thank you, Austin. Thank you, Austin. We hope you had a good time. Yeah, that was nice. Thank you. Bye. Bye.