

Katie: Hey, we're Katie and Caitlin coming to you from our library living room. We are here not just as children's librarians, but as people who are parenting our own children.

Caitlin: Each month. That will bring a new conversation about parenting with helpful resources from our library and beyond. This is "Your Family, Your Library," and we're your librarians.

Katie: Before we jump into this month's topic, we want to remind our listeners that though we are pretty good at finding resources, and we have experiences parenting our own children, we are not child development experts. Our choices don't need to be your choices. There's no judgment here. We're all doing our best with the health and well-being of our families in mind.

Caitlin: Katie, I'm so glad that we chose such a lighthearted, easy, breezy topic to talk about this month.

Katie: Yeah, me too.

Caitlin: I think, you know, sometimes you just need a break. And I'm glad that this month we decided to talk about climate change.

Katie: Yes.

Caitlin: And the feelings and emotions that come with it. There's a lot of them, right?

Katie: Yeah. The easiest topic of them all.

Caitlin: The easiest topic of them all. Easy to solve, easy to live through. It's a moment, right?

Katie: Yes. When you hear climate change, how does that make you feel?

Caitlin: It makes me feel profoundly anxious and it makes me feel really sad.

Katie: Mm hmm.

Caitlin: When I was a kid, my parents got a divorce when I was 12, and it took them a long time to figure out that that was what they needed to do. And so I overheard a lot of arguing, and a lot of, it was kind of rough in our house for a while. And in my head, my, like, pretty adolescent brain. It was like, "just deal with this. Like grown ups, just move on. Like this is bad for everybody." And I had a nightmare that has stuck with me since that time. I dreamed that my mom was poisoning my dad and I knew it. I knew that she was poisoning him and I went and told him. I was like, "please don't drink your coffee every

night Mom's pouring poison into it. Don't drink it." And he just looked at me and he's like, "well, if that's what your mom wants to do, then I guess that's what has to happen." And in my dream, like, I can't think of a more stressful thing than that. Like, in my dream, I was so, like. Like upset and scared and sad and helpless and hopeless. Like, I can see that this bad thing is happening. It is unfolding right in front of my face in real time. And I am telling you what you need to do to fix it. And you are not fixing it. In fact, you're telling me that I'm wrong, that there's nothing that can be done about it when like there is clearly something that you can do right there. And that has stuck with me my whole life. I still think about it a lot. Obviously, it's one of the worst dreams I've ever had. It really bothered me and I feel like that's the moment that we're in now, that feeling of "I can see what's happening and I can see what needs to happen. And I don't understand why we're just letting it happen." Like, why are we poisoning this planet? Why are we putting ourselves in jeopardy? Why aren't we fixing these problems?

Katie: Yeah. How did it come to this?

Caitlin: How did it come to this? Yeah. How does that make you feel?

Katie: It makes me feel sad and also fearful, you know, not just for me and my kids, but fearful for, you know, the people of the world. I don't know. Just in situations that people are in right now that are no, are like just pure heartache, that we're because of where we live and the country that we live in. We're not really feeling so much now, but I think it weighs on me that knowing that, that's people's reality every day.

Caitlin: It's—it's coming. I mean, I think yeah, I totally agree with you. And it is really interesting to be able to see what we can see, you know, through the news. And because we have access to the Internet, I think we see a lot more than what we could see when we were kids. When we watched that webinar last week. One of the things that I thought was really interesting, we watched a webinar about mothers and babies and climate change and what the effects are. And what I thought it was going to be about was how do we feel about bringing kids into this world? What was interesting was that the—the webinar was not about like, how do we deal with these feelings and what are some concrete things that we can do? But it was like, here we are in climate change and here's how we help people that are dealing with dehydration and effects of extreme heat and not just in faraway places. The scientists that was talking to this group of it. was it teachers and librarians and maybe doctors as well.

Katie: she's a nurse practitioner.

Caitlin: Oh, I think that's exactly what it was. Nurse practitioners. She's from California. And she said that they're experiencing these

droughts over there. So it's, you know, it's coming.

Katie: Yeah, I think it's, it still feels rare sometimes to get that point of view with things like people who just are like, we're not going to sit here and, like, beat around the bush. It's like, this is, this is it. And like, we're here to talk about it. And I appreciate that.

Caitlin: I appreciate it, too. When did it get on your radar? Do you remember when you first started thinking about climate change?

Katie: I think climate change specifically. I mean, I think that there were, you know, like the Save the Earth campaigns and like the various things that that meant like in the eighties and nineties. But I think the act of climate change happening around us didn't really hit me until 2012 when I was living in New York City. And Hurricane Sandy happened. I mean, the city was pretty devastated, but there are like specific parts of the city that were completely decimated and destroyed. And I think that kind of brought a different reality to things like, "oh, geez, this is way bigger than any of us thought." And just the way it disrupted life, which is like a daily thing for some people around the world, you know, in terms of climate change. But I guess that's really the first incident that I was involved in personally that really kind of shook me awake. How about you?

Caitlin: I think it was it was on my radar earlier. And my parents are big hippies and they were considerate about the environment and very outdoorsy people. And I remember being a kid and hearing about the ozone layer and, and it being really scary. It's funny because my husband Devin, is just a couple of years older than me, and for him, the threat of the Cold War and the atomic bomb was very real for him. Like he, he was telling me that he, you know, he would go to bed afraid that that a bomb was going to detonate. And he was afraid of that. And for me, I think I was too young. It just wasn't it was not on my radar. That was anything that I was scared of. But hearing about the ozone layer did really scare me. And my grandma was a hairdresser at the time, so she had just like closets full of Aqua Net like it, it's like, oh my gosh, like. And I think that's, that's kind of cool because it's an example of a change that we made that that worked. That's better. Like we improved the ozone hole. So that made me feel very bad when I was a kid that in the acid rain, I remember hearing about that too, and how that really freaked me out. And I was really lucky in that I got to go to an alternative school when I was in middle and high school that was also very progressive and ecologically minded, and we had a couple of teachers on staff that that really hammered into us that like, you know, this is the nineties, but like this is happening, this is happening fast. And here are the things that we do at this school that, you know, this is our mindset. We compost in our school, we recycle in our school, we reuse in our school. You know, these are important things that we live by. So it

got into me kind of early like that was drilled into me and I'm grateful for it.

Katie: Yeah, that's awesome. Also, I mean, thinking about Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," which I think came out when I was in high school. That was a big wake up too. I think none of us really understood. I think a lot of I don't know if I'm remembering correctly, it seemed like a lot of people kind of thought he was like a wackadoodle a little bit for being so obsessed about it.

Caitlin: Settle down, man.

Katie: Yeah, but the foresight that he had, I think he was paying attention to the science that was out there. Yeah. And, you know, I mean, obviously because of his position in the government, I think he was privy to some of that, that a lot of people or. Something I read recently was saying that, you know, basically in those like 30 years since "An Inconvenient Truth" came out, that's when like most of the, you know, dangerous climate change has been like, evolving.

Caitlin: Yup.

Katie: And it's just horrifying.

Caitlin: And if I'm remembering right, that's what he predicted, right? You like he had those charts at the end of the movie and it's like, this is what's going to happen in ten years and this is what's going to happen in 20 years. And it's like.

Katie: Oh, yeah.

Caitlin: Here we are, you.

Katie: Know, you know, given kind of like how he grew up with knowing about climate change and the different ways that we were both kind of surrounded by it or talking about it. To that affect your decision to have children in any way, or did that make you think twice?

Caitlin: Yes, actually, not specifically. I did not think that I wanted to have kids for a very long time for a lot of different reasons. And it really wasn't until I was in my thirties that my mind shifted around having kids. But I remember being pregnant with Desi in 2010, and I was listening to NPR's and I think it was Fair Climate Week broadcasts and they were talking about, you know, what's happening. And this was, you know, 13 years ago, they're talking about what's happening in the world and droughts and how, you know, they're working on genetically modifying food in order to make it so that people don't starve to death around the world. And I just kept like, I already had like the pregnancy anxiety and I just kept thinking about, like this sort of apocalyptic future that we're like walking into

like, you know, it's this zombie wasteland and everybody's fighting each other for, like, the last corn cob. I, I got really scared. I, I compartmentalize a lot. So, like, I will allow myself to wade into this morass, and then I can, like, sort of put it into a jar and close it up and pretend like it doesn't exist for a while. I remember my two best friends that live in Hawaii. Their mom is one of the biggest environmentalists I've ever seen in my entire life. She is like one of those zero-waste people which I've watched her do. It is, Oh my gosh, it would blow your mind to leave it the way she does not throw anything away and like, uses everything. It's, it's a lot of work. Yeah. And she was telling us one night we were all sitting around and talking and we're talking about having kids and what it feels like. And she said that when she got pregnant with Greta, she cried. And this was in 1970, what, 1976? So she said she, she cried because climate change was on her radar then. And she was like, the world is ending and I'm bringing a kid into a planet that's dying. And then, you know, 30 years later, there was me pregnant with Desi, kind of feeling a little bit scared that the same thing was happening. What about you? Did you have the. Did you have those feelings?

Katie: I think I, with Orson, it wasn't so much climate change, those feelings. But at the time that I got pregnant with Orson, I was taking care of my mom. So I think it was more existential in that kind of way. Like, time was fleeting in a different way. But definitely, as I was pregnant and after, you know, the few years after having Orson, it was kind of like, "oh, man." You know, I mean, I started to feel the heaviness and then getting pregnant with Edwin and having him in 2017. I mean, by that point I was really in the thick of it and the responsibility of that choice, you know, it's still hard for me every day like it feels. It just feels really crushing.

Caitlin: Yeah. Are babies going to be able to grow up in the same way that we grew up? And are they going to be able to have kids? I think about that. I went down a real after I went. I went into the imagination apocalyptic landscape corn cob scenario. I went down this rabbit hole where I was like looking up every climate scientist that I could find and just trying to Google whether or not they had kids, because I felt like every time I found a climate scientist that had a child, I was like, "okay, they know what's happening. And they felt like it was okay to reproduce, so maybe I can be okay with it." You know, what's, what's great. And I will we'll put this in our show notes, is there's an article from Scientific American from just a couple of months ago where they interviewed, they interviewed several climate scientists about what it's like parenting through this landscape. And honestly, it's sad and also hopeful and uplifting.

Katie: Yeah. I think it's important to find those hopeful scenarios. There is one I can't remember the source of where I heard those, and I'll try to find if I do or put it in the show notes. But I heard someone say that the decision or the act of having children is, is

itself kind of a promise of hope or hopefulness.

Caitlin: So, yeah, I think overwhelmingly that the scientists in this article were like, it might not look the same, but the world is still beautiful and you still get to live in it. I think what the hard stuff was in it, some of it like going back to my nightmare, where it's like we didn't fix the things that we should have fixed. Our parents didn't fix the things that they should have fixed, and now we're sort of laying it on your doorstep, kids. Here's this untenable problem. And it's not it's not fair. It's not a fair ask. And it's heavy. And it wasn't fair when our parents handed it to us. And I'm sure it wasn't fair when their parents handed it to them.

Katie: But we got to figure it out.

Caitlin: After you and I talked yesterday, I googled "Skokie sustainability efforts," and there's actually a whole page dedicated to it on the Village website. I really appreciate. But they laid out, like all the things this is by 2050, Skokie and all of Cook County's climate can be expected to be 4 to 5 degrees warmer annually, and there will be 15 to 20 more days with high temperature over 95 degrees annually and 65% ah sorry, 69% more demand for air conditioning and energy needed 15% higher average annual rainfall, 30% more heavy precipitation events and 20 or more days longer growing allergy and mosquito season.

Katie: Wow.

Caitlin: I know, it's a lot. And they like really laid it out. And what's weird is that's soon. 2050 is...I mean, time goes so fast. So hearing those, those hard facts and maybe that's just Skokie. I mean, it sounds like you're reading a book, right? That's talking about what's happening more globally, right?

Katie: Yeah. "The Uninhabitable Earth" by David Wallace Wells. I think he's a staff writer at The New Yorker now, but a piece of this book, which was published in 2017, was initially published as an article in the in New York Magazine. And I have a quote that says, "since 1980, the planet has experienced a 50 fold increase and the number of places experiencing dangerous or extreme heat, a bigger increase is to come. The five warmest summers in Europe since 1500 have all occurred since 2002 and soon the IPCC, which is the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, warns simply being outdoors that time of year will be unhealthy for much of the globe." You know, and then you think about it, it's like, you know, people are going to be needing more air conditioning, but then more air conditioning emits more carbon. And the situation is just this like terrible cycle. This book, I highly recommend that I will definitely put it on our book list and I have several others, but I, I'm looking forward to sharing with you all in the book list. But this one is definitely not for the faint of heart.

I mean, it gets to the really bad and terrible truths. But I think, I mean, these are the things that we need to hear.

Caitlin: There was a survey that was recently published that we'll put in the show notes as well. It was talking about how what people think about climate change, the percentage of people in the United States that believe in it and overwhelmingly people are on board with climate change being real and being caused by fossil fuels that humans have put into the atmosphere. But also it talked about how even though we know these things, we're still moving to Florida. The Midwest is where it's at.

Katie: Yeah, for now.

Caitlin: For now. Well, hearing about that book makes me feel feels and kind of makes me want to read it and also not want to read it. Reading through that article from Scientific American where they were interviewing the climate scientists, folks that have kids, one of them was talking about how that's just a projected model. It's not the only one like everybody agrees that climate change is happening, but it's likely that it's just going to change things in unpleasant ways, you know, across the board in untenable ways across the board. And we're going to be able to find ways to survive and thrive. You know, we're going to be able to it's not necessarily going to be apocalyptic. And I like thinking about those solutions and thinking about things that, you know, I can only control what I can control. And I acknowledge fully that what I can control is not enough to actually solve the problem. But I do like to think about these small effects and how we're all thinking proactively about what we can do to solve them, like the Village of Skokie, creating that sustainability page and, you know, planting more native and pollinator friendly plants in thorough ways and pushing efforts for solar and really making composting affordable and bringing it into the public eye. I really appreciate these efforts that are happening, and it sounds like they're happening in your neck of the woods, too.

Katie: Yeah, we, uh, I think we use the same composting collective.

Caitlin: Shoutout Collective Resource.

Katie: I know the library uses that too for our staff or, you know, just for the library in general, which is really cool. But Evanston also banned plastic the use of plastic bags.

Caitlin: Go Evanston.

Katie: As of January 1st, 2023. So that was really hopeful. And then another cool thing that I've seen pop up is there's a group called Organizing for Plastics Alternatives in Chicago that's calling on Mayor Brandon Johnson and the City Council of Chicago to support

legislation that significantly limits the use of single-use plastics in the city, which I think is huge. I mean, it's as of right now, it's just a petition and they're looking to get as many people to sign it that are residents of Chicago, which we can put a link if you are a resident of Chicago. But like these are the things that are exciting to see because I think it lights the fire and other people. And it's definitely made me think like, maybe this is something we can try to go for. And, you know, the smaller communities outside of Chicago. And I don't know, it's like it's just encouraging to see like the engagement happening.

Caitlin: It's change you can see. And I think that is really helpful for the psyche.

Katie: Totally.

Caitlin: And speaking of that, I want to talk about how we approach this topic with our kids. Like, how are your kids feeling about climate change?

Katie: I mean, we definitely talk about it, maybe not as much as I should, but when we when the boys were really little and we lived in Chicago, we would put on our gardening gloves a lot and go out in our neighborhood and pick up trash.

Caitlin: Oh, that's really nice.

Katie: And a lot of it, to be honest, was something because it would kill at a time like an afternoon, like after air quotes, nap time and before my got home from work, I was actually watching a video that I took of Orson and like his little like four year old voice. And he we just had this huge, like paper grocery bag just full of trash. I mean, there just be so much trash everywhere. And to be honest, we haven't done that as much in our neighborhood now. But I mean, it was easy to do. And it's something that like it's effective.

Caitlin: It's totally effective.

Katie: People see you doing it. I mean, a lot of people would stop and be like, Oh my God, that's amazing. And it's just like, I'm just sick of, you know, walking past this with my kids and seeing, like, trash everywhere. So that's something that we would do. And then we've usually been like a one-car family for a few years. We had no car. We bike a lot. So I mean, we talk about it in that sense and I know their school now is kind of like the school that you went to, that kind of a little more alternative and they make a big point about like kind of sustainability practices, like they do composting. And I know like at school and the parent association has a sustainability green team that aims to keep events as low as possible. So they encourage people to bring like cups and utensils if there's going to be food and to have

like compostable items. So stuff like that feels good.

Caitlin: It does feel good. My kids are pragmatic about it. I think they know that it's happening. They talk a little bit about climate change in their school, which I really appreciate, and I think that they don't have quite the same perspective that we have where it's not something that's like, "Lala, everything's great. Oh my gosh. It's climate change." Like for them, it's like this has been their whole life, it's just been a part of, you know, it's baked into their existence. So I think it's maybe not as jarring for them as it is for me or for you. Climate education is important to me and I think it's one of the things that that will help us moving forward as like a people. And it for me that looks like, you know, from a young age, we, we took the kids outside a lot. We spend a lot of time outdoors. You know, I've talked a lot about my semi-obsession with native plants and pollinator plants, and we've converted a lot of our yard into that, that kind of a space. And I talk about those things with the kids, you know, why are these things important? They're important because they sustain the wildlife that, you know, comes from Illinois. And that's important because blah, blah, blah, lots of reasons. I think Desi especially because he is in seventh grade and so he is a little bit more cognizant about what the future looks like. I think for him, it feels a little bit heavier and he gets a little bit worried about things. But he is also thinking about solutions, which I think is great. We were at the Museum of Science and Industry a couple months ago and they had this really cool program that was designed for girls. You know, it was designed to get more females and those who identify as females to, to get into the sciences and get into coding and, and problem solving? And they presented three problems. They were all rooted in climate change. One was urban flooding, one was the significant increase in asthma and allergies because of airborne pollutants. And then the third was microplastics. And so they show a little video and then they had the girls brainstorm a solution, and it could be anything. It could look like anything. It could be, you know, whatever. And then they build a little prototype and then each kid got to go up on stage and talk about their prototype and how it could solve this problem or how it could help solve the problem.

Katie: That's so cool.

Caitlin: I know it was so cool. It was so empowering. And I think if we give them this agency, you know, we can also come up with solutions. I think that feels good. One of the things that I kept reading about when I was researching for this episode was being a good steward of the Earth and also like showing kids those outdoor spaces that are beautiful or showing them, you know, if you're in an urban area, you know, we can beautify these places, we can plant flowers in alleyways and in parkways, and we can pick up trash and we can make things better. In our family, one of our things is, you know, we buy almost 100% of our wardrobe is thrifted, so we reuse a lot. We're

vegetarian and we talk about why we're vegetarian. And a big part of that is because we know that significantly decreasing our reliance on meat is really good for the environment and it's, it is one of the things that we can do that has that significant impact. Yeah, there are things that we can do that make it better.

Katie: There are lots of things.

Caitlin: And there's always hope.

Katie: There is that.

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Katie: So what we can do is what we are doing, which is talking about it.

Caitlin: That's right.

Katie: That's like one of the biggest things we can do, because if we don't talk about it and we ignore what's happening around us, then that's not helping further us or solve anything. One thing that I found I was listening to an NPR Life Kit episode, which we'll link in the show notes, and they link to this website called Dear Tomorrow dot org, which I had never heard of, but it encourages people to share their thoughts about climate change to people they love and make promises on actions that they plan to take.

Caitlin: I love that so much.

Katie: Yeah, I really, really liked that.

Caitlin: I think that's important. I think you're right about the talking because I think it works on a couple of different levels. I mean, one, raising awareness and finding out about different options there are for all of us. But also one of the things that I tend to do is get sort of lost in the bleakness of it. And then I start feeling very alone and very afraid. And I think I mean, even this conversation, which is not the most uplifting conversation I've ever had with you, I think, but like it does make me feel like I'm not by myself in it. There's somebody else who thinks about it the way that I think about it. And we're working on finding things that, proactive things that we can do at the same time. And that feels good.

Katie: Yeah, it does. And I think like, you know, the more that we talk, the more that we understand how each other feels about what's

happening. And I think knowing how to deal with those emotions that we feel can help to ensure that our kids learn resilience and even ourselves.

Caitlin: Sure,

Katie: It's like you can't really find the bright spot if you can't identify the feelings and work through them. So talking is great for that.

Caitlin: Talking is great for that. I a long time ago I heard it, I heard something or I read something. I can't remember what it was, but it was talking about the way that we talk and think about climate change and how if we focus only on the worst possible outcomes, everybody just sort of throws up their hands and says, That's it. We're all, we're all done. But if we focus on like what we what are specific actionable things that we can do, then people tend to get more hopeful and more proactive and then that's the goal.

Katie: Yeah, the same NPR Life Kit episode I was listening to, the climate psychologist that they interviewed was talking about problem focused coping, and that's like being able to talk about and identify what's going on around you and kind of talking and figuring out solutions of like what we can do to cope with these things. And it's like maybe instead of the car today, or we'll take a bike or we'll walk or we'll go pick up trash in the neighborhood or, you know, let's listen into a composting service or, you know, try to get our city to look into providing that for its residents. And then like in Chicago and possibly Skokie and Evanston soon, encouraging the City Council to look into banning single use plastics, which I know is something that I can definitely work on as I sit here with my venti Starbucks cup with a plastic lid and a paper cup that you can recycle, you know, it's like things like that where we can I can do better, I can make better choices, I can be less lazy. I cannot drink so much coffee, maybe.

Caitlin: This is one of those things where I feel like it does start to get really difficult because like, we are working so many hours and it's hard to move forward, it's hard to get ahead. We know that there are economic issues that that our generation and the generations after us are facing that our parents and their parents did not have to face. And it feels sometimes like for me, like I'm just like running on this giant hamster wheel and it's exhausting and it's, it's emotionally fraying. And in being in this middle place where it's like, what does the future look like from here? And I'm just spinning and spinning and spinning. In the meantime, you know, it's like, what even is there for me? So I think one of the hard things that I have to make space for is that there is comfort in a single-use plastic. There is comfort in going and getting that venti chai latte or whatever it is that makes you feel good in the moment. And I think sometimes it's really hard to

wrap your head around like you don't get to have that nice thing anymore. And that nice thing is part of the problem.

Katie: But I do feel like at some point, like everybody needs to get uncomfortable though.

Caitlin: Oh, 100%.

Katie: And like, I'm definitely talking to myself and it's like I do get uncomfortable sometimes, but it's only sometimes, you know? And I think there are also, like you're saying, there also has to be a place where you can like, not guilt yourself about things all the time, but it's like, you know, it's like, at what point is that just not going to be an option anymore? Oh, I don't know.

Caitlin: Oh no, no, no. I totally agree with you. I it's not that I want to ignore those things. I think the point is that that point is now and we have to get uncomfortable. But what I want is a place to put the grief. I want a place to say it sucks and it's not fair. And I just want a flippin' chai latte with a plastic lid. And I don't want to feel bad about throwing it in the garbage, but it is bad. Yeah, it. This thing that makes me feel good, that makes me feel better. Is it good? And I. I just. I'm just saying it to the universe because I think sometimes saying it out loud helps. Like it's it sucks.

Katie: Well and also I think if our society were a little different, if like we had the 1 p.m. siesta time or we all are off for 2 hours, then we can actually go and sit down somewhere at a place where we don't have to take it with us and we can just have the time. I feel like. I mean, I think that's the way our society is, but a lot of it is created by ourselves too. It's just like everything is like, has to be now has to be to go, has to be, you know, on the run. And I think that is just perpetuating our problems.

Caitlin: I think you're right. I think you're exactly right.

Katie: Another coping mechanism that the climate psychologist was talking about is was meaning-focused coping, which is like how you think about and frame the problem. So if we are choosing like, can we choose to see the positives and like trying to do that when we can and like looking out and seeing all of the solutions that people are coming up with and the ideas that are out there and the people who are really like, persevere, cheering and getting uncomfortable and motivating the rest of us, there really isn't anything better than that.

Caitlin: Nope, it's very inspirational and are a lot of people out there who are doing the work and I wish they got more publicity because it is it's impressive and it's, it's hopeful.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: And it's helpful in a way that I think we need. One of the things that you turned me on to was the Project Draw Down, which I think we're going to definitely going to link in our show notes. But it's an organization that's designed to help stop climate change. And there are a series of videos you can watch as an introduction to what the organization does. And the way that is presented is almost comically simple. But like honestly, it is kind of simple. Like we just need to stop relying so much on fossil fuels, like full stop. We just need to stop relying on them so much. And so the complicated stuff is, is what you said, that we make it complicated and we have to find a way to stop making it complicated.

Katie: Yeah, I think it's like easy to feel like the problem is too big and like, we can't find ways. I mean, we have been talking about ways that our communities are working for change and, things that individuals and families can do. But one of the takeaways I had from some of the research is that the power for this change really is at the community level, and spaces like libraries can be hubs for sharing, learning, the things that we're learning and having those conversations and introducing community initiatives that are going to help us find ways to deal with this together. And I think it's also interesting and helpful to like kind of look around at different communities around the country and see what they're doing. And there is one that will link and the small town in Ohio called Bexley and some of the things that they're doing, like they have a whole web page that's called Green Bexley, and some of the innovative ideas that they have and the ways that they're getting their residents involved. I mean, it's really cool. So I think looking to different communities and seeing what is possible is really important.

Caitlin: I agree. Did you hear the podcast or hear that, I'm sorry, I don't think it was a podcast, but it was just NPR's Science Week, and one of their bits was about the 15-minute city. Yes, I thought that was so cool. So the idea behind it is that you make a city where everything you need is walkable within 15 minutes, and it's based on cities in Europe that do this and that have been doing this for a long time. And so some lawmakers in America are kind of like, we should be doing this here. We should make it so that what we need is within reach and we don't need to be burning these fossil fuels to get the basic human things that we need to enjoy life and to live. And what I thought, first of all, I was really excited about this. I thought, this is so cool. I mean, it's one of the reasons why it's nice to live, you know, near Chicago and here in Skokie, in Evanston, where it is pretty walkable.

Katie: I mean, that's definitely one of the reasons why chose to live where we live is because, I mean, I would say it's not necessarily like walkable within 15 minutes, but everything is like everything we

need within 15 minutes biking for sure. And then work is like 25 minutes biking for me. So it's like we really intentionally, like, wanted to live in a place where you didn't have we didn't have to spend our life commuting. And I understand people have to do that and that's how it is. But I think given the choice, that's definitely what we were looking for and found. So it's possible.

Caitlin: Well, we can talk about some of the things we do here at the library that, that we think makes the world just a little bit better. I mean, first of all, we compost. Our staff compost early and often in here at the library. Thank you. Collective Resource. We also believe in climate education here. And so I know that you and I also bake a lot of nature-based learning and nature-based science into the programing that we do. During the summer. I run a nature play program and then I also have the STEAM Engines program during the year for kindergarten through fourth graders, where we talk a lot about habitat in addition to some other just fun space science stuff. You know, what does our world look like and what's our place in it?

Katie: Yeah, and next year I'm going to be doing some STEAM programs for families focused on climate change, which I'm really excited about. I'm still kind of developing what those will like, but it'll be a lot of conversation and experimentation and learning together, so it'll be super fun.

Caitlin: I'm going to come to that and I am truly very excited about it.

Katie: Yeah, me too. And then in our teen department, there's the teen Climate Crew that comes together year round to help save the environment with volunteer conservation projects. And you know, they've been working with that Oakton Community College doing kind of research and also building habitats for bees, which is super cool. And then on December 5th there will be a Climate Cafe, which is for teens and older adults to kind of have an intergenerational dialog about the climate crisis. And the discussion will be moderated and resources will be provided by staff of the Talking Farm.

Caitlin: Another thing that those teens do that's really exciting is that they plant native plants in our South Courtyard and they do monarch education. And so one of the nice things that happened this summer for me was the teens that were working on that garden project brought over the kids from nature play the toddlers and showed them the monarchs that were hatching out of the garden. And I know that they do some other educational programing within that realm, like they talk to people about how the monarchs are developing, also, why they use the plants that they use. So it's a really cool way to get the teens invested.

Katie: Love that milkweed.

Caitlin: You gotta. I kind of don't love it because it's taking over my yard a little bit, but I acknowledge it's you say respect. It's right to bring it to be native pollinators to my yard.

Katie: To be a native plant.

Caitlin: Yes, exactly. You go milkweed, maybe a little less, but, but I think one of the things that was on our list of, of what we can do is exposing kids to nature and supporting kids in taking action. And I think these programs that we have at the library do that lot. I am also really excited about the suite of, of kids lit that's coming out that talks about climate change and offers specific and actionable things for kids to do. I just I, I personally am a box checker. I love, I love it when somebody is like, here is a thing that you can do and then I can do that thing that makes me feel so empowered. And I really appreciate the books that are coming out now. You can find them here at the library and they will be in our book list of, you know, proactive things that kids can do.

Caitlin: Try your hand at a new hobby with free video classes from Creative Bug. These award winning craft and art classes include soap making, crocheting, and even book-binding. I want to support your kiddo's creative side, Creative Bug also offers classes for kids, all free with your library card. Find more information in our show notes and get started today.

Caitlin: What kept you going this month?

Katie: Caitlin, It's pomegranate time. And I love it.

Caitlin: Pomegranate.

Katie: I wait for this time of year. It's like two months or three months of, like, bliss. And then they go away.

Caitlin: Talk to me about how you eat this pomegranate.

Katie: So there are very...I didn't eat pomegranates for a long time because they're intimidating.

Caitlin: They're very intimidating.

Katie: I mean, it's like, how do you even how do you what do you even do with this thing? But I watched a video and learned how to properly cut it and deseed it. And it takes time. It stains everything, but it's worth it. You just slice the top off. Okay, Just like a little bit.

Caitlin: I'm with you.

Katie: And then when you look down on it, you can kind of see the ribs. And so you just use a knife and kind of like just make incisions down the side where the main ribs are. And then you open it and it kind of becomes like quartered and then it's pretty easy to do from there.

Caitlin: I love I love how pomegranate tastes. And I did not try it until I was really old. I don't know about your upbringing, but despite having hippie parents, my, my food palate was not very big. Like I was old before I tried an avocado.

Katie: Oh, really?

Caitlin: And same with pomegranate.

Katie: I didn't eat pomegranate...

Caitlin: High school or college. I don't know what.

Katie: I feel like I lost a lot of time with pomegranate. But I made it up.

Caitlin: I think you've made up for it. All the time, I'm like, you know, I didn't used to like, whatever the thing is, that is totally normal that I'm trying to get my head to eat. And I'm like, You're going to regret this, you know, ten years down the road when you're like, I wasted ten years of my life not eating pad Thai or whatever it is. It's like.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: Yeah, you're not going to get that time back, man. You're just going have to eat the papaya granite while you can eat the paprika.

Katie: But my kids love pomegranate. Good. I mean, Edwin, like, he's just a giant bull. So you can't keep up with deseeding. I'm not fast enough. Yeah. Pomegranates are just there where, it's where it's at. I highly recommend. What's been keeping you going, Caitlin?

Caitlin: What has been keeping me going? My kids have been really awesome this month and I've been really enjoying spending time with them. We are Haven and I are in like our crafting era and it's the best. I have always wanted to have a crafting buddy and I can tell you right now that it is not Desi. He is not one for crafting. In second grade, his teacher gave the kids this awesome assignment that was

like, create a diorama. I mean, you could, they could, they had the option to do whatever they want. My soul just wants to make dioramas. And it was about like a tradition that you have in your family around the holidays, the winter holidays, that that is meaningful to you. So create whatever it is. It could be a video, it could be, you know, whatever. And I was like, we're making a diorama. And the imperative was to include your family members as well in this process. You would have thought that I was personally pulling all of his teeth to get this diorama done, but it was really cool. t's very beautiful.

Katie: Yeah, That's cool.

Caitlin: Yeah, I think that's what's keeping me going. I think it's crafting with Haven. This has been super fun. That's it from us. Thank you for tuning in and remember to keep in touch with us. We would love to hear from you. Email us at Podcast at Skokie Library Dot Info.

Katie: And don't forget, if you've enjoyed this episode or previous episodes rate and review on your favorite pod catcher.

Caitlin: This has been Caitlin and Katie with "Your Family, Your Library," produced by Amber Hayes and sound engineered by Paul Knutson.

Katie: Bye friends. See ya next time.