

Season 2 Episode 1: Food Entrepreneurship

[introduction episode music *Sun Through the Shade*]

Hannah: Imagine you are an aspiring entrepreneur in the U.S. hoping to open your own restaurant. You've worked extremely hard to develop a menu that you think will appeal to your community, and you're excited to get started, but you don't know where to begin with the business side of this process.

Abby: This challenge is a familiar one to food entrepreneurs - they are confident and highly skilled in developing and creating their food products, but they may not have the business background, financial resources, or space to make their dreams a reality.

Hannah: Supporting food entrepreneurs is vital to building strong local communities. In this episode, we will hear from Sumiya Khan and Cortney Renton at CitySeed. CitySeed is a food systems nonprofit organization that supports food entrepreneurs to overcome barriers in the current system. City Seed primarily works with women, people of color, low-income individuals, immigrants and refugees and their programs include food business incubation services, commercial kitchen, Food Business Accelerator program, and Sanctuary Kitchen program. Sumiya leads the Sanctuary Kitchen program, which partners with immigrants and refugees.

Abby: Before we get started, though, here's a quick quiz. [bell noise] Can you name the country and year where people first began eating in restaurants? We will reveal the answers to this question at the end of the episode.

[cue episode music]

144

00:18:47.580 --> 00:19:01.110

Hannah Kinzer: Okay, well I guess if you want to get started, you can, we can do that. So the first question is, can you tell listeners. Your name position and the work your organization does

145

00:19:02.280 --> 00:19:13.860

Sumiya: Okay. My name is Sumiya Khan and I'm the kitchen, program manager at the seed city seed is a local New Haven nonprofit that focuses on

146

00:19:15.120 --> 00:19:36.720

Sumiya: Creating an equitable and just food system. We do that through a couple of different ways. The first being running all the New Haven farmers markets in order to increase access to local and fresh and healthy food to the New Haven community in the various neighborhoods.

147

00:19:38.040 --> 00:19:39.330

Sumiya: We provide

148

00:19:40.860 --> 00:19:57.840

Sumiya: Food Business Incubation services through our commercial kitchen as well as our food Business Accelerator which is aimed at increasing economic opportunity in the New Haven area and also reducing barriers to entry into the food business.

149

00:19:59.730 --> 00:20:10.620

Sumiya: And then lastly, we run the sanctuary kitchen program, which I also manage that focuses on refugee and immigrant chefs.

150

00:20:11.700 --> 00:20:15.570

Sumiya: And building economic opportunities.

151

00:20:16.680 --> 00:20:21.600

Sumiya: Through food as well as creating connections in the community.

152

00:20:23.010 --> 00:20:29.430

Sumiya: Between new residents. Sorry. Yeah, new residents and longtime members of the area.

156

00:20:48.780 --> 00:20:54.780

Cortney Renton: So I'm I'm Courtney Renton I'm the executive director of city seed.

157

00:20:55.380 --> 00:21:09.000

Cortney Renton: So that's kind of a parent program or parent organization of Sanctuary kitchen. And then we run a couple other programs as well, including farmers markets as well as food Business Incubation for early stage food entrepreneurs.

158

00:21:13.890 --> 00:21:19.470

Abby: Thank you both. And could you tell us a little bit about how you became interested in your current work.

161

00:21:30.060 --> 00:21:35.040

Cortney Renton: I've only been at CitySeed for about six months still pretty new to the team.

162

00:21:36.090 --> 00:21:40.890

Cortney Renton: But I have been working on Food and Agriculture issues for over 10 years

163

00:21:42.210 --> 00:21:59.040

Cortney Renton: And moved to New Haven. About three years ago and got my master's degree in environmental management, with a focus on agriculture, food systems and climate change. And so I was lucky enough to have the chance to stay in New Haven and to work with City Seed, which is really

164

00:22:00.960 --> 00:22:09.570

Cortney Renton: A really unique organization and the city that's taking this more systemic approach to food systems issues by working across all these programs and different issue areas.

165

00:22:10.110 --> 00:22:16.440

Cortney Renton: So it's been really exciting to join the team and to kind of bring some of my background to the work that we're doing now.

166

00:22:21.480 --> 00:22:31.980

Sumiya: My background is as a registered dietitian. I've been in public health and community nutrition for over 15 years with a focus on prevention and cooking education.

168

00:22:40.050 --> 00:22:52.500

Sumiya: Is, you know, in various programs that I worked in. So for me the programs that City Seed has now is kind of a natural fit to continue that work and to broaden it

169

00:22:53.850 --> 00:23:00.390

Sumiya: To include my background in social justice issues and being the daughter of immigrants. So sanctuary kitchen basically was kind of a synthesis of my professional background and my personal interest in food and nutrition and

171

00:23:11.430 --> 00:23:14.190

Sumiya: You know, bringing cultures and communities together.

172

00:23:18.810 --> 00:23:19.290

Thank you.

173

00:23:20.610 --> 00:23:26.820

Abby: Our next question is how would you describe food entrepreneurship to someone who knows nothing about it.

174

00:23:35.880 --> 00:23:48.030

Cortney: well, we really just so we work with early stage food entrepreneurs. And so what we mean by that is, people who are just getting started, starting any kind of food business really

175

00:23:49.530 --> 00:23:52.650

Cortney: And our programs are specifically designed to

176

00:23:54.570 --> 00:24:01.470

Cortney: Create equitable food entrepreneurship inclusive entrepreneurship and sort of create resources and opportunities for folks who

177

00:24:02.490 --> 00:24:08.310

Cortney: Might have a harder time, you know, accessing those resources, otherwise. So women, people of color immigrants, refugees.

178

00:24:09.720 --> 00:24:19.620

Cortney: So we work with people who want to start, you know, a hot sauce company or a food truck or a catering business or there's tons of different types of food businesses but

179

00:24:20.670 --> 00:24:27.750

Cortney: You know, we're kind of at that early stage, thinking about like how do you write your business plan, marketing, how do you get

180

00:24:28.260 --> 00:24:31.620

Cortney: Your certifications with the health department and you're sort of safe.

181

00:24:32.490 --> 00:24:49.740

Cortney: So really, kind of like those first logistical hurdles that you need to overcome that maybe otherwise nobody's giving you like a guide and how to do it. And we try to do it through

our programs pretty quickly so that people can get, you know, past that stage and start running their businesses.

184

00:24:57.810 --> 00:25:08.550

Hannah: Which maybe be able to like expand a bit about what the different like the major barriers are to starting food business at least that you've seen with the people that you've worked with

185

00:25:12.450 --> 00:25:16.290

Sumiya: Or specifically for refugees and new immigrants.

186

00:25:17.700 --> 00:25:26.520

Sumiya: The barriers are even more. I feel like then to the average person, namely because

187

00:25:28.170 --> 00:25:35.700

Sumiya: You know, they're new to you know American culture and American bureaucracy.

188

00:25:36.720 --> 00:25:41.760

Sumiya: And all the requirements that are necessary to get a business off the ground so

189

00:25:43.170 --> 00:25:47.580

Sumiya: Learning about those processes all the licensing and insurance like Courtney mentioned

190

00:25:49.020 --> 00:25:57.480

Sumiya: Is is challenging to navigate. And then when you add a language barrier, it's even more so,

191

00:25:59.250 --> 00:26:08.640

Sumiya: You know, we do try to ease that process and in making sure that the language is understood whether that's through interpretation and translation.

192

00:26:09.750 --> 00:26:10.680

Sumiya: And also,

193

00:26:13.860 --> 00:26:20.520

Sumiya: Explaining and supporting them through those processes of getting established and really

194

00:26:21.660 --> 00:26:31.620

Sumiya: walking them through that it's it's confusing, even when you do know the language and our, you know, grew up in this area, so

195

00:26:33.780 --> 00:26:36.600

Sumiya: We've also learned a lot in that process.

196

00:26:37.620 --> 00:26:54.210

Sumiya: And and we've also been able to partner with the right people in, you know, the health departments and and in the city to really support that process to remove those barriers that exist in general, not just for refugees and immigrants.

200

00:27:00.480 --> 00:27:01.920

Sumiya: Another barrier is

201

00:27:04.080 --> 00:27:08.460

Sumiya: Access to like capital and resources so

202

00:27:10.200 --> 00:27:25.500

Sumiya: We do our food Business Accelerator. That is another area that we try to support all ventures are eligible to receive some seed funding after they graduate from the program to help them get started. We also spend time on

204

00:27:28.650 --> 00:27:34.650

Sumiya: Teaching about where what are other funding opportunities that are available for them and making those connections.

205

00:27:35.940 --> 00:27:41.100

Sumiya: And lastly, we have a we have commercial kitchen space that is

206

00:27:43.410 --> 00:27:48.060

Sumiya: That is affordable and accessible to early stage entrepreneurs.

207

00:27:55.980 --> 00:28:04.020

Cortney: You, you nailed all the ones I was gonna say see my we've actually done like surveys and some studies in the city of New Haven to identify those barriers and

208

00:28:04.740 --> 00:28:14.340

Cortney: I think you might just hit everyone. And so then we intentionally designed our programs around that. The only one I don't know if you mentioned was lack of access to markets.

209

00:28:15.450 --> 00:28:28.230

Cortney: So even once you start your business. Let's say you have everything ready to go, you obviously need places to sell and there's unique barriers to that as well. And so because we also run farmers markets, you know, entrepreneurs who kind of go through our

210

00:28:29.940 --> 00:28:41.160

Cortney: Different programs have the opportunity to, you know, sell or do tastings there or will kind of use our network of connections in New Haven to try to plug people into other other markets.

211

00:28:45.240 --> 00:28:53.070

Hannah: It's really neat. I like hearing about all the different aspects of how cities even sanctuary kitchen are involved in that whole process of getting food

212

00:28:53.640 --> 00:29:05.700

Hannah: Entrepreneurs started. So next question is why is food entrepreneurship, something that we should care about in public health and what are the potential consequences of ignoring it.

213

00:29:21.930 --> 00:29:23.760

Sumiya: I think it has to do with

214

00:29:25.980 --> 00:29:29.010

Sumiya: Creating and strengthening the local food system.

215

00:29:30.390 --> 00:29:31.260

Sumiya: And

216

00:29:32.790 --> 00:29:33.930

Sumiya: You know, supporting

217

00:29:36.090 --> 00:29:38.190

Sumiya: Local sustainable agriculture.

218

00:29:39.390 --> 00:29:43.020

Sumiya: Partnering and promoting, you know, kind of Connecticut farmers.

219

00:29:44.400 --> 00:29:56.880

Sumiya: And and making those connections between them and new food businesses and it's about access and availability of, you know, how the local food.

220

00:29:57.960 --> 00:30:02.130

Sumiya: Were in a city like New Haven. We do have food deserts.

221

00:30:03.510 --> 00:30:04.920

Sumiya: In areas where

222

00:30:06.540 --> 00:30:11.640

Sumiya: Access to, you know, basic nutritious food is is is difficult.

223

00:30:17.340 --> 00:30:22.650

Cortney: Yeah I would totally, totally agree with that. I don't have a public health background but

224

00:30:24.180 --> 00:30:35.130

Cortney: I think certainly the connections through sustainable agriculture that Sumiya mentioned I also think kind of really zooming out and thinking on the neighborhood scale and the community scale we see

225

00:30:36.150 --> 00:30:45.150

Cortney: Inclusive entrepreneurship as a path towards economic development and community development and wealth building and shifting resources to communities that

226

00:30:45.750 --> 00:30:56.910

Cortney: Often don't have access to those resources. And I think all of those have you know a direct effect on on health. I'll be maybe, you know, through the system and not so directly linked, but I think it's

227

00:30:59.040 --> 00:31:02.370

Cortney: I think it's all connected and building healthy communities through

228

00:31:04.050 --> 00:31:15.120

Cortney: Job opportunities through you know opportunities to reimagine what businesses are in a neighborhood, all of those things, I think, contribute to individual health as well as kind of community and economic health

229

00:31:16.500 --> 00:31:19.560

Sumiya: Right, it's all interconnected and, you know, if we

230

00:31:21.180 --> 00:31:31.560

Sumiya: Want to make improvements in public health economic development, all that we need to have a very holistic perspective and address all of those

231

00:31:34.350 --> 00:31:34.890

Sumiya: You know,

232

00:31:36.420 --> 00:31:46.320

Sumiya: All of those because they they have a trickle down effect they affect each other and you can't solve one problem without it having an effect on on the others.

233

00:31:51.780 --> 00:32:10.860

Abby: I guess, building off of that question. Um, can you share a specific example of how food entrepreneurship affects health on among other people in the community that you serve.

234

00:32:13.680 --> 00:32:29.490

Cortney: One example that comes to mind, especially the spring in the kind of early wake of COVID hitting New Haven, one of our ventures that went through our food business accelerator program in the past. It's called Sopa and they do.

235

00:32:31.020 --> 00:32:39.240

Cortney: Soup really really lovely soup and kind of pop ups and they kind of jumped into the COVID response.

236

00:32:40.980 --> 00:32:46.830

Cortney: Ecosystem in New Haven and shifted their production from

237

00:32:47.610 --> 00:33:03.030

Cortney: Kind of their traditional model of, you know, paying customers to doing more like emergency food response. And so I think having more food entrepreneurs in the system, who are producing at small scales to feed neighborhoods and can pivot really quickly. In that way, had like a pretty immediate

238

00:33:04.680 --> 00:33:12.240

Cortney: Impact, at least on, you know, the people that they were serving. And so you can imagine if you like extrapolate that out to a whole network of food entrepreneurs in a

239

00:33:13.320 --> 00:33:24.270

Cortney: Really resilient food system that if a crisis hits, whether it's a pandemic or climate change or whatever, a natural disaster, the ability to sort of like immediately feed the people around you and

240

00:33:25.590 --> 00:33:29.580

Cortney: Especially if there may be isn't as much access in certain neighborhoods to stores or

241

00:33:31.020 --> 00:33:36.990

Cortney: Healthy restaurant. So that's one, one that comes to mind. And there are some great articles written about the work that they did.

243

00:33:42.660 --> 00:33:44.070

Sumiya: I think in general.

244

00:33:45.240 --> 00:33:53.040

Sumiya: Frontline foods came in to New Haven, which is a branch of real tangible kitchen to provide

245

00:33:55.320 --> 00:33:58.110

Sumiya: Food and other assistance to frontline workers.

246

00:33:59.430 --> 00:34:06.480

Sumiya: They were able to tap into smaller food businesses food businesses run by

247

00:34:08.160 --> 00:34:17.160

Sumiya: people of color and women to really support their businesses as well. So there was that mutual benefit.

248

00:34:19.260 --> 00:34:21.900

Sumiya: And really, again, like highlighting

249

00:34:23.670 --> 00:34:25.710

Sumiya: Those businesses as well as

250

00:34:27.300 --> 00:34:28.710

Sumiya: resources in the community.

252

00:34:56.010 --> 00:35:02.910

Cortney: I guess the only thing I would add that to not specifically related to public health, but I think it is and is a benefit is

253

00:35:03.660 --> 00:35:17.250

Cortney: You know, when I think about the people who have come through our food Business Accelerator and the types of food that they cook and the products they make like that is the kind of Food City that I want to live in that has products from around the world that has

254

00:35:18.630 --> 00:35:29.550

Cortney: You know, diverse flavors and kind of like unique stories that they're attached to and people bringing cuisines and influences from everywhere into the city and I think

255

00:35:30.870 --> 00:35:38.940

Cortney: Especially for a smaller city like New Haven, I think, you know, you can really build that kind of like vibrancy and culture and make it the kind of city that people

256

00:35:39.210 --> 00:35:48.840

Cortney: Want to live in and want to eat it and and want to launch their businesses which downstream. I think does have, you know, impact on health as well as just kind of like happiness and

257

00:35:50.160 --> 00:35:54.960

Cortney: Living in a place that's like delicious and exciting. So that's the only thing I would add, I think.

258

00:35:56.070 --> 00:35:56.820

Sumiya: Yeah, I think.

259

00:35:58.890 --> 00:36:03.420

Sumiya: You know, one of the things that we, our vision is

260

00:36:04.770 --> 00:36:08.820

Sumiya: Long term is is to use food and local food systems.

261

00:36:10.590 --> 00:36:24.720

Sumiya: As a means I Courtney said to bring diversity to the city, but also as a tool for cultural exchange and integration for professional development and income generation for

262

00:36:30.930 --> 00:36:33.780

Sumiya: And then also, like, you know, improving access

263

00:36:34.800 --> 00:36:38.160

Sumiya: To, you know, healthy diverse food.

264

00:36:39.810 --> 00:36:47.580

Sumiya: And so we we're seeing that on a micro level. And then, you know, as it as it expands. You see the ripple effects of that as well.

266

00:36:57.060 --> 00:37:08.400

Abby: Shifting gears a little bit here, but could you share an example of how maybe some creativity is fostered and your work or the work of the folks were linked into your network.

267

00:37:11.730 --> 00:37:14.130

Sumiya: What do you mean, creativity, like are you

268

00:37:15.150 --> 00:37:18.240

Sumiya: Like from a business standpoint or from

269

00:37:20.280 --> 00:37:21.450

Sumiya: Like Korean culture.

270

00:37:22.440 --> 00:37:29.310

Abby: Yeah, it could be anything, I guess, whatever, whatever creativity. I think like means to to you all at CBC

271

00:37:30.630 --> 00:37:32.190

Abby: If you were to highlight creativity.

272

00:37:33.930 --> 00:37:38.340

Abby: Of any of the entrepreneurs that you work with, um, yeah. What stands out to you.

273

00:37:41.010 --> 00:37:43.320

Sumiya: I mean, I think, from because of Kobe.

274

00:37:46.230 --> 00:38:04.980

Sumiya: Kobe has really forced us to think creatively and be innovative on in how to continue our mission and the work we do in different ways, you know, sanctuary kitchen is is founded on people coming together right over food.

275

00:38:06.750 --> 00:38:14.790

Sumiya: So with our events and with catering it all relies on people coming together with for, you know, coming together. And so with

276

00:38:16.170 --> 00:38:29.100

Sumiya: With the pandemic. Obviously, that's not happening. So we were really forced to kind of think differently and also think about how we could implement some of the ideas that we had in the back burner.

277

00:38:30.360 --> 00:38:33.840

Sumiya: And move them forward and, you know, selling food online.

278

00:38:35.670 --> 00:38:41.910

Sumiya: You know, doing prepared meals that are easy to pick up rather than like custom catering orders.

279

00:38:43.830 --> 00:38:48.330

Sumiya: Look, looking at an exploring other retail spaces and making relationships.

280

00:38:49.620 --> 00:38:56.040

Sumiya: In different market areas for sanctuary kitchen food, for example, and then also

281

00:38:57.540 --> 00:39:10.860

Sumiya: You know, moving things virtually in terms of our events. So we tried out a separate club model virtually we've been doing cooking classes virtually.

282

00:39:13.080 --> 00:39:23.190

Sumiya: One of the most exciting things that we did this year was for World Refugee day where, because of covert and because things were all everything was online.

283

00:39:24.780 --> 00:39:32.280

Sumiya: We were able to partner with a dozen other organizations across the country and in Canada.

284

00:39:33.300 --> 00:39:42.120

Sumiya: Who do similar work with refugees and immigrants around food and we were able to do this virtual event for World Refugee day in June.

285

00:39:44.010 --> 00:39:51.840

Sumiya: Where we were able to, you know, support each other and and promote each other's work and and have a really

286

00:39:53.280 --> 00:39:56.730

Sumiya: lively and important conversation around

287

00:39:58.200 --> 00:40:01.380

Sumiya: The food industry and dive in diversity inclusion.

288

00:40:03.780 --> 00:40:18.570

Sumiya: Which we would never have thought to do before the pandemic and now that we're all connected virtually like we're able to have these connections outside of Connecticut outside of New Haven.

289

00:40:19.890 --> 00:40:23.130

Sumiya: And really support each other in a way that we didn't before.

290

00:40:30.780 --> 00:40:37.800

Sumiya: And then we talked a little bit about how we've also are thinking the FBA (food business accelerator) differently.

291

00:40:39.600 --> 00:40:47.970

Sumiya: Now with covered, you know, moving everything online and doing it virtually and how that has allowed us to do.

292

00:40:50.400 --> 00:40:55.470

Sumiya: You know present the information and teach in a different way

295

00:41:05.010 --> 00:41:10.410

Cortney: There's a saying I like let's let's be clear about your goal but agnostic about how you get there.

296

00:41:10.740 --> 00:41:19.920

Cortney: And I feel like that really speaks to creativity and and what I've seen with Sanctuary Kitchen and across all of our programs and without the entrepreneurs who go through our programs. It's like

297

00:41:21.090 --> 00:41:23.100

Cortney: We've got thrown curveballs all the time.

298

00:41:24.210 --> 00:41:29.460

Cortney: And so how can you kind of adapt and change so that you still reach your goal. So for us, you know,

299

00:41:30.030 --> 00:41:39.120

Cortney: I don't think the goal was like to be the best catering company necessarily even though we were. But if the goal is economic development and cultural exchange and

300

00:41:39.450 --> 00:41:48.000

Cortney: You know, professional training for immigrants and refugees catering is one way we could get there. But then there's all these other ones. And so I think being open and being creative always about

301

00:41:48.390 --> 00:41:57.900

Cortney: What the path is to get to the ultimate goal, which I think it's really exciting and. And we've done a really good job so far and kudos to Sumiya.

302

00:42:01.980 --> 00:42:15.870

Hannah: Thank you for sharing that. Yeah, that's, I think it's really exciting to hear about the work that you're doing. And the next question kind of builds a little bit off of that. What have you learned from working with the food entrepreneurs in your community.

303

00:42:31.680 --> 00:42:45.000

Cortney: I feel like...Yeah, I, I've never started a company. So I'm, I'm not an entrepreneur, but I feel like I love being like entrepreneur adjacent because you kind of get to feed off of

304

00:42:45.840 --> 00:42:52.110

Cortney: Like if you're the kind of person who's going to go out and start something you just have this energy in the spirit and this drive and I feel like that's what we see.

305

00:42:52.770 --> 00:43:07.380

Cortney: With our entrepreneurs who come through our program and and definitely our Sanctuary Kitchen chefs who I would consider absolutely to be entrepreneurs. And so I think that creativity, we just spoke about, but then also just kind of like this resilience and stick-to-it-ness and

306

00:43:09.120 --> 00:43:16.680

Cortney: You know willingness to try new things and jump into something despite a language barrier. Despite these other barriers that we outlined, it's like

307

00:43:17.430 --> 00:43:25.830

Cortney: It's pretty remarkable and puts things in perspective. And I think for, for me and for us. It's just like very energizing to be around.

308

00:43:26.820 --> 00:43:35.370

Cortney: And I think it's really hopeful to because you know when we go back to talking about your questions earlier of like how does entrepreneurship build the food system or what's the connection. I think like

309

00:43:36.540 --> 00:43:42.330

Cortney: I want that food system, not only because it's delicious and diverse, but also because I think it's going to be super resilient.

310

00:43:42.960 --> 00:43:51.510

Cortney: And tough and you know stand the test of time. And because of like these qualities of entrepreneurs who who are building it, and that we're seeing kind of come through the pipeline.

311

00:43:52.590 --> 00:43:53.430

Cortney: Not that I would share

312

00:44:00.150 --> 00:44:01.440

Sumiya: I think resilience is

313

00:44:02.610 --> 00:44:04.260

Sumiya: For me personally,

314

00:44:07.200 --> 00:44:10.920

Sumiya: The piece that I feel has the most impact on me and just witnessing it

315

00:44:12.000 --> 00:44:26.730

Sumiya: Especially with the chefs that we work with that Sanctuary Kitchen. I mean, they've already gone through so much hardship, you know, they've had to leave their homes and you know they've witnessed, you know, hugely traumatic experiences.

316

00:44:28.380 --> 00:44:32.040

Sumiya: But throughout that they've you know

317

00:44:33.150 --> 00:44:38.730

Sumiya: Shown immense resilience, you know, coming here and starting all over and a new life.

318

00:44:40.800 --> 00:44:50.250

Sumiya: And it just helps put things in perspective. Right. You know, if they can do that and still come to work with a smile and

319

00:44:51.390 --> 00:44:57.780

Sumiya: You know, and exhibit so much generosity and pride in their work.

320

00:44:59.100 --> 00:45:06.480

Sumiya: Then we need to do whatever we can to support them in getting through the, you know, these tough times.

321

00:45:07.890 --> 00:45:11.310

Sumiya: We have it relatively easy compared to what they've been through.

323

00:45:22.230 --> 00:45:35.760

Abby: Um, I think our next question, builds on this a little bit. And I guess it's just, um, where do you think the future of food entrepreneurship is going I'm given all that you've shared about the incredible food entrepreneurs that you work with.

326

00:45:51.900 --> 00:46:00.330

Cortney: I think it's so exciting. And I think, you know, we've been doing this work for a few years, obviously before COVID before

327

00:46:01.380 --> 00:46:05.670

Cortney: The racial unrest that we've also seen in our country in the last couple months and I think

328

00:46:07.890 --> 00:46:18.330

Cortney: I think it's only going to open the opportunity more for the types of entrepreneurs that we've been working with already and so

329

00:46:19.410 --> 00:46:35.880

Cortney: You know it's in a city like New Haven. We're seeing restaurants close. We're seeing businesses have a hard time and that's that's so tough to see we're also seeing people who used to work in restaurants come to us to to rent our kitchen to start a new business. And we're seeing

330

00:46:37.830 --> 00:46:52.140

Cortney: You know, maybe those vacant storefronts are vacant restaurants are going to be occupied by a whole new kind of generation of entrepreneurs and so while it's certainly really heartbreaking to see how the restaurant industry, especially has suffered from COVID,

331

00:46:53.520 --> 00:47:06.600

Cortney: I also, I'm really hopeful and excited for what that kind of makes way for and, you know, I'm glad that an organization like CitySeed is there to kind of be that catalyst for people to get the boost that they need to jump into

332

00:47:07.860 --> 00:47:13.470

Cortney: To starting their own businesses. So I think, I think the future's bright, I think there's a lot of room for

333

00:47:15.780 --> 00:47:19.920

Cortney: For people to start their own thing and and we just got to be there to support them and

334

00:47:21.720 --> 00:47:23.130

Cortney: Yeah, that's what I'd say.

335

00:47:24.750 --> 00:47:35.100

Sumiya: Anything. There's also a big movement to improve the Diversity and Equity and Inclusion within food entrepreneurship.

336

00:47:36.180 --> 00:47:41.520

Sumiya: It had, you know, in the past been predominantly very homogenous and

337

00:47:42.600 --> 00:47:45.060

Sumiya: Now there is that focus to really

338

00:47:46.920 --> 00:47:49.800

Sumiya: Improve in that area.

339

00:47:50.910 --> 00:47:51.750

Sumiya: And really

340

00:47:53.010 --> 00:47:56.340

Sumiya: You know, there's more programs like ours coming up to really support.

341

00:47:58.620 --> 00:48:01.140

Sumiya: You know, women and people of color and

342

00:48:02.190 --> 00:48:05.400

Sumiya: immigrants and refugees in this field.

343

00:48:10.950 --> 00:48:27.240

Hannah: It's been a really awesome conversation. Um, how do you think people can become involved or support the work of fruit entrepreneurs.

344

00:48:28.770 --> 00:48:34.170

Sumiya: There's I you know I can think of two main ways. One is financial obviously

345

00:48:35.250 --> 00:48:44.490

Sumiya: We, you know, our program is a nonprofit and and grant supported. So we do rely heavily on

346

00:48:46.380 --> 00:48:51.120

Sumiya: Foundation Grants support to do the work that we do. So if there are

347

00:48:52.620 --> 00:49:04.830

Sumiya: You know, people who are listening and who are in that field in, you know, can offer some assistance or direction. That would be greatly appreciated. Secondly, we are always looking for

348

00:49:06.180 --> 00:49:17.670

Sumiya: People who are in the field, whether they are industry experts food industry experts who could provide mentorship or other expertise and guidance to the entrepreneurs that we work with.

349

00:49:18.870 --> 00:49:20.340

Sumiya: As well as

350

00:49:22.260 --> 00:49:24.960

Sumiya: people who have experience with

351

00:49:26.670 --> 00:49:29.310

Sumiya: the legal side of running a business.

352

00:49:30.570 --> 00:49:31.500

Sumiya: Or other

353

00:49:36.030 --> 00:49:43.440

Sumiya: other business support. So, you know, we are very fortunate like it with our food Business Accelerator. We do tap into a lot of the local

354

00:49:44.670 --> 00:50:05.400

Sumiya: Other organizations and individuals who, you know, help teach our, our classes who provide mentorship and guidance and who are who have clinics for our ventures, who you know need that extra support. And so we're always looking for individuals who knew who can

355

00:50:06.480 --> 00:50:09.810

Sumiya: Provide that. So if you have experience in marketing or

356

00:50:10.830 --> 00:50:12.780

Sumiya: building out your website or

357

00:50:14.910 --> 00:50:27.900

Sumiya: if you're a lawyer and are, you know, familiar with all the laws and rules around food businesses and so forth. Those are always critical resources that we could use.

[outro music Night Air]

Hannah: Thank you so much, Sumiya and Courtney, for taking the time to speak with us. We hope that this episode has helped our listeners better understand the topic of food entrepreneurship and food systems, and how these issues are related to public health and health equity.

Abby: Before we close this episode, let's return to our quiz. Hey Hannah, when and where did people begin eating at restaurants?

Hannah: Well Abby, according to historians, the first restaurants came to be in China around 1100 A.D.

Abby: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Perspectives. We would love to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. Please connect with us on Twitter or Facebook with the tag @pubhealthreview.

[episode outro music, Night Air]

Resources:

Cityseed - <https://cityseed.org/>

Sanctuary Kitchen - <https://www.sanctuarykitchen.org/>

Food Accelerator Program - <https://collabnewhaven.org/food-business-cohort-2020>

History of restaurants - Kiefer, N. M. (2002). Economics and the Origin of the Restaurant.

Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 43(4), 58–64.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010880402434006>