

Kids Writing Samples - Diversity, Inclusion and Social Emotional Learning, Ages 6-10

By Chad Chenail

chadchenail1@gmail.com

www.chadchenail.com

Content:

Monty the Canola Oil, Understanding Colonization	2
Isabel Mavrides-Calderon, Learning About Disability Rights Activists	6
Meggy Eggy Stands Up For Herself, from the Mystery Recipe Podcast	8
Paola Velez, Bakers Against Racism, Learning About Racism	10
Greg's Intro, Learning About the Autism Spectrum	12
Frenchy Has Big Unresolved Sad Feelings, from the Mystery Recipe Podcast	15
Miss Ruth and the Texas State Fair, Learning About Segregation	18
Parkers Intro, Learning About Pronouns	21

Monty the Canola Oil, Understanding Colonization

[Molly] It's just about time for The Scoop! Adelina, can you hear me?

[Adelina] Loud and clear Molly! Today I'm here with Monty, a bottle of Canola Oil! How are you today Monty?

[Monty] Oh I'm doing just fine here Adelina, thank you. How about you, how are YOU doing?

[Adelina] I'm doing great too, thanks! Monty, can I get you to introduce yourself for us?

[Monty] Well you most certainly can. Alright then, my name is Monty and... I'm a bottle of Canola Oil, as you said. Uh, what else is there... I'm from Canada, that's for sure... I don't know! What else? What else do you want to know?

[Adelina] We've learned a bit about Canola oil last season, it's a type of vegetable oil. Can you tell me more about where Canola comes from, for anyone who needs a refresher?

[Monty] Well sure, Canola Oil like you said is a type of vegetable oil. I'm made from the seeds of the rapeseed plant, which is a type of plant that's got these beautiful yellow flowers. It's in the same family as, oh say cabbage and broccoli and Brussels sprouts. They grow great big fields of it up in Canada, it's sure is a sight to see. That's why it's called Canola oil even! There's no Canola plant you know.

[Adelina] There isn't? Then where does the word Canola come from?

[Monty] Canola is short for Canada Oil, Low Acid. You say that fast and shorten it down, eventually it becomes Canola, eh?

[Adelina] Huh, that's pretty neat! So Canola Oil is mostly from Canada?

[Monty] Oh definitely, Canola Oil is a VERY Canadian product. It was originally developed here. Canola production is a big deal for the Canadian economy as well, and there are 43,000 canola farmers in Canada. Also, at over 20 million acres of seeded area, canola is the second largest Canadian crop.

[Adelina] Wow! That's a lot of farms. So, can you tell me more about Canada?

[Monty] Oh sure, I'd love to! Canada is a country. It's in North America, a lovely country I'd say. But I am a little biased. It's just north of the United States of America. Fun fact, actually, Canada and US share the longest border in the entire world!

[Adelina] Really?

[Monty] Yeah! It's amazing, the southern border of Canada, the one between Canada and the United States, is about 8,890km long. That's about 5,500 miles, or 97, 204 football fields!

[Adelina] Wow. That's a lot of football fields.

[Monty] I know!

[Adelina] So, a border is the edge of a country?

[Monty] Exactly right, yes. A border is a way to mark where one country ends, and another begins. In this case, on one side of the border you are in the United States of America, on the other side of the border you are in my beautiful homeland, Canada.

[Adelina] Interesting, just like states in the US have borders, countries have borders too.

[Monty] That's it, yes. Borders that separate countries, like the US and Canada, are called "international borders"!

[Adelina] And are these borders all straight lines?

[Monty] Oh no! Not by a long shot. Borders are all kinds of shapes! Many borders follow the shape of natural structures like mountains, rivers or oceans, so they can twist and turn all over the place.

[Adelina] Huh. So one side of the river might be one country, and the other side of the river would be another country.

[Monty] Exactly. Sometimes borders are straight lines though. In addition to being the world's longest border, the border between the US and Canada is also, mostly, a straight line!

[Adelina] Who decides where these borders are set?

[Monty] Well, that is the million dollar question. Perhaps a little history of Canada is in order, do you mind?

[Adelina] Please!

[Monty] Now, you might hear people say that Canada was established in the year 1867, we even celebrate a holiday called Canada Day on July 1st every year to mark this event.

[Adelina] That's sort of like how we celebrate independence day on the fourth of July in the United States!

[Monty] Sure is! But that isn't exactly the whole story. You see, people didn't just arrive in Canada for the first time in 1867. Just like they didn't first arrive in the US in the 1700s. Some people and their ancestors have been living on this land for at least 12,000 years, arguably longer. In Canada we refer to these people as Indigenous or First Nations people of Canada.

[Adelina] We refer to those people as First Nations, Indigenous Americans or Native Americans in America, but I also know a lot of times people prefer to be called by their specific tribe name.

[Monty] Sure do!

[Adelina] So was it the Indigenous people of Canada who set the borders?

[Monty] No, it wasn't, and this is an important point. Indigenous people inhabited all different parts of Canada for thousands of years, and belonged to different tribes. Tribes like the Cree, Haida, or Blackfoot people had their own borders and had their own places to live. But a few hundred years ago, these lands were colonized.

[Adelina] Colonized? What's that mean?

[Monty] Colonization is when one country claims the land of another as its own.

[Adelina] Why would they want to do that?

[Monty] Let's put it this way. Do you have your own room at home Adelina?

[Adelina] I do!

[Monty] And it's probably filled with all of your stuff, is that right?

[Adelina] It is, it's VERY messy at the moment though. I've got kind of a lot of stuff.

[Monty] Well, let's say you were able to take over your brother or sisters room, AND you got to keep all the stuff that was there. Sound like a good deal?

[Adelina] Well, maybe. It would be nice to have more space and more stuff. But, what would happen to my sister?

[Monty] THAT is a good question to ask Adelina. This is the problem of colonization in a nutshell. One country will come and claim a "new" land as their own. But it's not really a new land, people have lived there for a very long time.

[Adelina] My sister's been in her room a lot longer than I've been in mine! Plus the whole thing is bright pink, I don't know how she can stand it.

[Monty] I like pink! You don't like pink?

[Adelina] Not THAT pink.

[Monty] Well, I'm getting distracted. What I mean to say is when one country attempts to colonizes another, they come uninvited, live on the land without permission, steal it's resources and make rules the people who were already living there must follow, if they're allowed to stay at all. It was the English, French and Portuguese who were colonizers in Canada.

[Adelina] In the US, it was mostly just the British, right?

[Monty] More or less, the french played a big part too but that's complicated. After hundreds of years or so of this harmful and unfair colonization, Britain decided to combine it's 3 colonies and form a new country.

[Adelina] Like when the United States formed and became its own country, fighting the British in the Revolutionary War.

[Monty] Correct. But for the most part, the people who formed the country of Canada and those who planned the Revolutionary War in America were colonizers, they were the people who had come to this land uninvited from somewhere else. These people originally from Britain and France created many wars, hurt many people and then decided to form a new country.

[Adelina] So people came over from Europe, said the land was theirs now, and then decided to call it Canada?

[Monty] More or less, yes. And it's these colonizers who ultimately set these countries borders.

[Adelina] Huh. That sounds like a very complicated past.

[Monty] It definitely is. Complicated and painful, for generations of people. The fact that these borders were decided against the wishes of First Nations peoples has caused a lot of problems for them that continue on today. But it's important for us to learn about!

[Adelina] Why, what difference does it make today what people decided to do a hundred years ago?

[Monty] A country's history is in the past, but the land and the people on it are in the present, and they are the future.

[Adelina] Whoa, that feels like a big idea.

[Monty] It is, let's break it down. The past, our history, we can't change that, right?

[Adelina] Right. It's over and will always be that way.

[Monty] But, what ISN'T over is the land that's always been here, and the people who are still alive today. How we think about our country and how we treat First Nations people who are native to this land is something that we can control today. What we do next is up to us as well, especially for you. Young people like you are the future. And so learning from those who've come before us is important and should be a part of how we choose to move forward.

[Adelina] Monty, that is a really valuable Scoop, thanks for sharing all of that with me.

[Monty] You're welcome, Adelina.

[Adelina] We... didn't really get to talk much about cooking though did we?

[Monty] Ha! You're right. Well, how's this for a hot tip: canola oil has a very neutral taste, it doesn't have much flavor at all. That makes it a great choice for frying or cooking when you want to focus on the flavor of the food, not the oil it's cooked in.

[Adelina] There you have it folks! Canola oil is a neutral tasting oil, borders are the boundaries between countries, and First Nations people have been living in Canada and the United States for tens of thousands of years. Back to you Molly! So, Monty, I've heard that Canada is really pretty. I think I might plan a trip to visit.

[Monty] Oh! Please! I would love to show you around! We can go to Niagara Falls in Haudenosaunee Territory, OH! OR maybe see the shores of the great lakes in Anishinaabe Territory, OR! If you like cold weather we could try ice fishing with the MicMak!

Adelina: Back to you Molly!

[Molly] Thanks Adelina! And thank you, Monty for that very important history lesson.

Isabel Mavrides-Calderon, Learning About Disability Rights Activists

[Molly] And we're back! And it's time for ask a Grown up. Who are you talking to today Chad?

[Chad] Well Molly, since its Sunflower Seed Eeek, I have been thinking a lot about planting seeds. Sunflower seeds are something we might plant today that will one day grow into a flower. They will grow into something beautiful in the future. Which reminded me a lot of the work Isabel Mavrides-Calderon is doing.

[Isabel] Hi. My name is Isabel Mavrides-Calderon. I'm 18 years old and I advocate for the rights and the needs and the visibility of the disabled community.

[Chad] Isabel is a disability rights activist. Which means she stands up for the rights of the disabled community.

[Isabel] It means I let the general public, other people know about what a community might need, what they might need to live a better life, what they might need to have access to certain things and to have the same rights that everyone else enjoys.

[Chad] Which is, unfortunately, still very important and necessary work.

[Isabel] We still need disability rights activists because disabled people, unfortunately, today still don't have equal rights to non-disabled people. I think that this is going to be an ongoing fight, and as long as disabled people exist in our world, we're going to forever need disability rights activists, especially because disabled people aren't the majority of the community.

[Chad] What Isabel is saying here is that disabled people today still often don't have the same rights as people without a disability. I asked Isabel what types of rights she often fights for.

[Isabel] Some rights I generally advocate for is the right to have education, to have equal access, to go to school like everyone else does, for the disabled community. Other rights I advocate for is the ability to access different buildings, to access different public spaces that we go to, different stores, everything that that non-disabled people are able to access. I try to advocate so disabled people also have access to them.

[Chad] That means disabled folks might not get what they need to be able to participate in school and in the classroom, or might not be able to physically get into buildings, enjoy public spaces like parks or beaches, or take public transportation like buses or trains just because of the way these places are built or made. There might not be room or ramps for someone in a wheelchair, announcements for someone who is visually impaired, or signs for people who are deaf, just to give a few examples.

[Isabel] It's often times hard to know what someone else is experiencing. It's hard to know what their needs are when you aren't in that community yourself. So I think that having someone who is within the community let other people know what's going on allows other people to know what they can do, to invite them to be more inclusive and to be more accessible.

[Chad] I asked Isabel why she started doing this kind of work.

[Isabel] I think growing up with a disability, I, I always thought that anything, any issue I faced, anything that was unfair that I faced was my fault or my disabilities fault. But over time, I

learned that when people worked to make these things more fair for me to address my needs, I could really do anything like anyone else. And it made me realize, why don't we just always make sure that things are fair for everyone? And so realizing that made me try to work to make it so everyone knows these things. I also realized that so many people in my life didn't really know what it meant to be disabled. They often felt bad for me for being disabled, and I wanted them to know that they didn't have to feel bad for me. I was very happy and I wanted them to know how good the disabled community was because I realized these weren't things I was learning at school. So I wanted to make sure that other people had this education.

[Chad] There were also some things Isabel wanted our listeners to know about the disabled community. Some seeds she hoped to plant with all of you.

[Isabel] I want kids to know that disabled people are just like them in so many ways, that disabled people can live amazing lives and can do so many things. And we shouldn't feel bad for disabled people and we shouldn't lower our expectations for what disabled people can do. They can do things just like you. They just might have to do things a little bit differently. And I think that we should listen to disabled people when they are saying that they need something.

[Chad] It is Sunflower Seeds Week, and we know that seeds are something we plant in order to create something beautiful in the future, which is very similar to what activists do, putting in work now in order to make a better tomorrow. But, just like when planting flowers, creating this type of change doesn't happen overnight. It will take time for these flowers to grow.

[Isabel] Yeah, I think that's so important. I think that oftentimes we think that the change we're making is going to happen tomorrow, like literally tomorrow. And I don't expect to wake up the next day and everything to be change. But I do think that, that with time, change will happen. And I think one of the biggest seeds I'm planting that will have a long term improvement is in within education. I think that talking to young people, to working with teachers who are going to be teaching young people, and working with parents who're going to be talking to their kids about disability, is going to be the biggest change. Because I think that if kids know about disability rights, if kids know about inclusion, and if disabled kids know about their own rights, then when they grow up that they will be the next advocates and they will be the next people creating a better future.

[Chad] So, let's all go plant some seeds. Grown ups, if you want to learn more about Isabel and her work you can find her on tiktok and instagram at powerfullyisa. Back to you Molly!

Meggy Eggy Stands Up For Herself, from the Mystery Recipe Podcast

[Door opens]

[Mitt] Knock knock! Mitt Romney here!

[Meg] Mitt Romney!?

[Mitsy] Dad?!

[Meg] Mitsy, your dad is MITT ROMNEY!

[Mitsy] Not like THE Mitt Romney. It's actually a very common name for oven mitts.

[Mitt] Hi Mitsy! Surprise! I signed up to take the tour of the office with you!

[Mitsy] You're our "Special Guest"?! Geeeeee!

[Mitt] I am! I figured you might get nervous if you knew ahead of time that I was coming.

[Mitsy] Aw, well it's good to see you dad, thanks for coming to support my side hustle. It looks like today it's just going to be you and Meggy here on the tour.

[Molly] Actually, since the episode is about over, I'd love to join too Mitsy.

[Mitsy] Really?!

[Molly] Of course!

[Mitsy] But, you know this office pretty well by now Molly.

[Molly] I know, but it would be great to hear about it from your perspective Mitsy.

[Mitsy] Gah, the nicest. Alright friends, let's get going! We're going to start in the general kitchen which is just down the hall here.

[Meg] Okay cool, I'm just going to use my white cane for the walk over there.

[Mitt] Oh! How rude of me, do you need any help?

[Meg] Oh no thank you! I'm fine.

[Mitt] No please, I insist, here let me help guide you down the hallway.

[Meg] I'm fine, really.

[Mitt] Oh no, I won't take no for an answer.

[Meg] That's alright, I understand that you are coming from a kind place but I really do not need help.

[Mitsy] Yeah Dad, Meggy has been blind for most of her life, she knows how to get around, no problem.

[Mitt] Oh, oh goodness. I'm sorry.

[Meg] It's okay! Like I said I know you were just trying to be nice, don't worry about it. But I get myself to work everyday, I know what I'm doing. It's actually really important to remember to ASK if someone needs your help before you help them, regardless of whether they are disabled or not. And if they say that they don't need help, you should believe them.

[Molly] That's true Meggy! Helping people is a great thing, and if someone needs help it is kind to stop to help them. BUT we don't want to ASSUME someone needs help just because they are disabled.

[Meg] And we definitely don't want to touch someone or start helping them without asking for their permission first. It'll be much easier for me to get down this hallway by myself than it would be for you to try to help me.

[Mitt] I got it! Thanks for taking the time to explain that to me.

[Meg] No problem Mitt!

[Mitsy] Well, should we begin the tour?

[Molly] Actually, before we do, maybe we can finish up this episode first?

Paola Velez, Bakers Against Racism, Learning About Racism

[Molly] And we're back! Just in time for Ask a Grown Up. Take it away Chad!

[Chad] Thanks Molly! Today I am talking with Paola Velez. Paola is the Executive Pastry Chef at the Washington, D.C. restaurants Maydan and Compass Rose, and was nominated for the James Beard Rising Star Chef of the Year award, for chefs 30 and under who are likely to make a big impact on the industry. Paola helped start an online movement that encouraged bakers across the country to bake and sell snacks and treats in order to raise money to fight racism. This bake sale movement, called Bakers Against Racism, has raised over 2 million dollars for racial justice organizations. Bakers Against Racism started in June of 2020, in response to the anger and sadness many people in our country felt when a black man named George Floyd was murdered by police. Paola's response was to find a way to use her skills to make a big impact, and she did exactly that. Paola, can I ask you to introduce yourself to our listeners?

[Paola] Hi, I'm Paola Velez and I'm the Executive Pastry Chef at both Maydan, D.C. and Compass Rose, D.C., where I make a lot of sweet treats.

[Chad] Sounds amazing. And Paola something else that I know about you is that you're also the co-founder of Bakers Against Racism. Is that true?

[Paola] Yeah, I am co-founder of Bakers Against Racism, and that's an organization that helps fight for good causes, you know, social justice causes. And, you know, it's always really easy to make sure that we can bake the world a better place.

[Chad] When did you start Bakers Against Racism?

[Paola] So Baker's Against Racism is an organization that started this year in June 20 20 when we saw the deaths of George Floyd. We really activated. We were moved and burdened and we wanted to do something that made sense. A lot of pastry chefs, all we know how to do is make cookies and cakes and a few plated desserts. But I figured that if we could band together enough of us, we could really do and make a difference using something that we know how to do, which is bake.

[Chad] That's great. And so you recognized an issue that you cared a lot about that you wanted to participate in helping to solve. And you said you wanted to try and band together a lot of bakers. Can I ask how you went about doing that?

[Paola] So the way that I was able to band together a bunch of our bakers was that there was one of the co-founders. Willa Pelini, she reached out to me once she saw that I finished a month long bake sale that I was hosting for an organization called Ayuda D.C. that helps undocumented workers here in Washington, D.C.. So once Willa saw the work that I was doing, she thought perhaps we could do the same thing locally with her restaurant and my restaurant. But unfortunately, I had just finished working for a whole month hosting this pop up, and I was only able to generate maybe a thousand dollars for a donation. But a thousand dollars, when you think about it? Maybe at a very young age, a thousand dollars seems like a lot of money, but once you get older, a thousand dollars isn't a lot of money, actually. So I wanted to make a difference. I didn't want George Floyd's death to become another hashtag or to become something that we would feel moved towards but never had a a real way to make a solution or at least help organizations that can help provide solutions for others in the black community. So when Willa reached out to me, I turned her one idea and I said, what if we had more bakers? What if we gave everything that I learned during my pop up for a month and then

taught everybody else how to do it, too? So we did that. We started making spreadsheets and well, we started making like documents on Google and we started using the Internet to our advantage. And also, I used Instagram as a tool for spreading the word. So we were able to kind of teach everybody what I had learned during this Covid pop up bake sale. And it just went viral. It was almost overnight that people were like, absolutely. This is exactly what we wanted. We didn't know how to channel our frustration. And so far, we've raised over two million dollars. Just recently, we activated for Bake the Vote. And we raised so far over fifty thousand dollars. So the amount that the bakers keep raising since June keeps increasing and increasing. Luckily, we're not doing it for a number.

[Chad] That's amazing. So you had experience creating bake sales to raise money for a cause, through these "pop ups", or temporary shops where you sell the things you bake. And when Willa Pelini approached you to do another bake sale with her, you instead suggested that you can teach people across the country how to start bake sales of their own, and all join forces to raise lots of money together and make a big difference. How does raising money help support a cause like fighting racism? Why is raising money an important part of that fight?

[Paola] So when you break it down to the simplest terms, money can help an organization run. When I was around seven or eight years old, I was living in the Bronx in New York City. And a lot of the arts programs in my after school program were cut. Actually, all of them were cut. Imagine if somebody was able to fund that program, organizations that were giving me a place to learn and to learn about the arts and music theory. How much more would I know today? So with Baker Against Racism, with fundraising, what we're doing is not just donating to Black Lives Matter or the ACLU or the NAACP. We are actually donating to Black Girls Code and to the Nova Scotia Black Surfers Fund. You know, the Black Artists Collective. Well, there's so many different aspects of what it means to be a person of color and to be predominantly black. So we wanted to make sure that people were able to kind of find a cause that is near to their homes and then to be able to bake and donate for those organizations to be able to continue, especially during a time like Covid.

[Chad] I think that's an amazing answer. Paola, how would you define what racism is?

[Paola] To be racist in modern day society is to not have kindness and to not have love and empathy towards another. I do believe that whenever we say Black Lives Matter, or not to be racist, or to be anti-racist, this is to be full of so much love that you can't stand to see another person be treated unfairly. So I hope that you are anti racists and that you are able to love other communities as if they were your own.

[Chad] Paola we wanted to talk to you during Chemical Leaveners Week because leaveners are such an important part of baking. In lots of the baked goods you make and sell, leaveners help a dough or batter rise up to be fluffy and delicious. But rising up as a group of people can mean something different entirely. When a group of people rise up, they might be standing up for those who have been mistreated, or rebelling against those in charge who are treating them unfairly. We might call people who rise up activists. Can I ask you what it means to be an activist?

[Paola] I don't consider myself an activist. I consider myself a pastry chef that stood in the gap when we needed it the most. What I feel like activism is, actually, is really simple. It's not as as brave as we think it is. You know, to be an activist in your community is as humble and as kind as providing your local sanitation workers with waters when it's a hot summer's day. You know, making sure that they're safe and protected when they're working to make sure that your community is clean. That's a form of activism. A form of activism also is standing up for your friend who might have the difference of opinion from the whole school, and making sure that they are loved and safe and they have somebody that supports them whenever somebody

might be bullying them or treating them differently. I think to be an activist is just to be able to find the moment in time and then the courage to act on it.

[Chad] So can anyone participate in a bake sale to support bakers against racism?

[Paola] So anybody can participate in Baker's against racism. You don't actually have to be a professional chef like me. You can go on our Web site, W-W W dot Bakers Against Racism dot com, where we have provided graphics and we have provided documents that will help you form a bake sale in your very own neighborhood or back yard. I do encourage you to use our hashtags and use the hashtag Bakers Against Racism and your local city or state and then tag us on Instagram or Twitter whenever you do launch your bake sale. I hope you have fun and happy baking!

[Chad] What advice you have for any young chefs at home who want to become bakers, who want to be involved in their communities? What advice do you have for them right now?

[Paola] A piece of advice that I guess gives young bakers or folks that really want to get involved with in their communities is to not have fear. Your voice is important and your voice is valuable. What you're learning now is going to make sure that our future is a better place. So be courageous. Be strong. 2020 is only just a year. So be encouraged.

[Chad] That's such an amazing answer, Paola. And again, the work that you're doing is so inspiring and so incredible. We are so lucky to talk to you on the show today. So thank you so much for chatting with me.

[Paola] Thank you for having me.

Greg's Intro, Learning About the Autism Spectrum

[Molly] Thanks Champ. And thanks to Sinna for those fashion tips. Coming up next, it's time for What's Cooking! But first, I need my Oven Mitt in Chief back...

[Mitsy] And.... drum roll please.

[Greg] (Makes drum roll sounds)

[Mitsy] Oh wow, very nice. I didn't mean that literally but that was excellent Greg. HERE is the recording studio! And the one, the only, the keeper of the studio keys and all facts tasty, Molly Birnbaum!

[Molly] Hello! That was quite the introduction Mitsy, thank you. You must be our new intern!

[Greg] Yes! I am. Hello Ms. Birnbaum it is great to meet you.

[Molly] The honor is all mine of course! And please call me Molly.

[Mitsy] Molly, this is Greg the Cheese Grater! Greg is going to be our new intern, he uses he/him pronouns and he is just a HOOT! Did you hear that drum roll?

[Greg] Happy to do it again if you'd like.

[Molly] No that's fine Greg, I heard it the first time and it was fantastic. Welcome to America's Test Kitchen Kids! We are so glad to have you on the Mystery Recipe Team this season! Like Mitsy told you, I'm Molly, and I use she/her pronouns.

[Greg] Thank you Molly! I am so excited to be here!

[Molly] We are excited to get to learn with you and from you all season. Care to tell us a bit about yourself? What made you want to be an intern with us this season?

[Greg] Well Molly, I did have, uh, one very specific goal for being an intern this season. I would really love to master the art of baking a cheesecake.

[Mitsy] A cheesecake!?! I didn't know that Greg.

[Greg] Yup, I am really good at grating things, being a cheese grater and all, but I never get to make desserts. And so I am super excited to learn what goes into making cheesecake.

[Molly] Well, I think we can help you there.

[Greg] Some of my larger goals this season also include broadening my understanding of things that can be grated, getting better at following every step of a recipe, and making some new friends. I hope.

[Mitsy] Well consider THIS friend MADE, Greg. I am beyond excited to show you the ins and outs of the kitchen this season. And we'll have lots of help from some more new friends along the way.

[Molly] Absolutely, you can consider me a friend too, Greg.

[Greg] Grate! Get it? Like great as in grate, as cheese grater.

[Mitsy] Ha, this guys funny.

[Greg] Yeah, another thing about me is that I love telling jokes. I'll keep the "cutting the cheese" puns to a minimum though. I also really love soda, and most anything carbonated. And I have autism spectrum disorder, which means that I am on the autism spectrum.

[Molly] That's good to know, thanks for sharing that Greg.

[Mitsy] Huh, uh if it's alright for me to ask, what is autism spectrum disorder?

[Molly] Would you like to answer that question Greg, or should I?

[Greg] Well, I'd be happy to, but thanks Molly. Autism spectrum disorder is a type of condition that affects the way a person's mind works, usually causing them to have difficulty interacting with others or show obsession with certain things. It's a condition that some people, like me, are born with.

[Mitsy] Huh, it affects the way your brain works, like how you learn things or communicate with other people?

[Greg] Exactly. Autism also affects every person differently, it's not always the same. Which is why it's called autism SPECTRUM disorder. People with autism fall somewhere on the autism spectrum.

[Mitsy] Right. And... What's a spectrum?

[Molly] I can help with this one Greg.

[Greg] Phew! Thanks Molly.

[Molly] A spectrum is like a range, or a scale. You can think of it like a rainbow. On one end of the autism spectrum, there are people with autism who have no problem doing everyday things, like going to school, playing sports, playing an instrument or cooking. On the other end of the spectrum, some people with autism aren't able to speak at all, but use other ways to communicate like sign language or talking with the help of a computer. And there are people with autism who function at all the levels in between as well.

[Greg] Exactly, someone with autism can fall anywhere on that spectrum. But just because my brain works a little bit differently, it doesn't mean I can't do anything any other intern might be able to! I just might approach things a little differently sometimes.

[Mitsy] Well, that's great! Greg, thanks for clueing me about autism, I hear ya loud and clear. And if you ever want to approach something differently or feel like there's something about the way your brain works you want me to understand, please just let me know. I'm all ears. Well i'm all oven mitt, but I'm all, well you know.

[Greg] Sounds good boss!

[Molly] Well, we will have lots of time to get to know each other better all season. But for now, I think it's time for our next segment.

[Mitsy] That sounds good to me! Get ready for What's Cooking!

Frenchy Has Big Unresolved Sad Feelings, from the Mystery Recipe Podcast

Theme

[Chad] And we're back!

[Mitsy] We are back. And your intro got me thinking a little bit Chad.

Door

[Frenchy] Thinking about what?

[Mitsy] Oh hey Frenchy! Hey Sam! Welcome to your day.

[Sam] Thanks! So, what did Chad's intro get you thinking about?

[Chad] Well, Frenchy and Sam, I said that Mitsy was my favorite oven mitt coworker.

[Sam] Aw, that's nice of you to say!

[Mitsy] Right, but I am also his ONLY oven mitt coworker.

[Sam] Still, a nice thought.

[Mitsy] And THAT fact made me realize, I'm the only Oven Mitt here! In fact, I don't have any friends who are oven mitts! Other than my parents.

[Frenchy] Really?

[Mitsy] Really!

[Chad] Huh, I never thought about that Mitsy. I guess other than your parents, you are the only oven mitt I've become friends with.

[Mitsy] I had lots of mitt friends growing up in Mitt City. WHICH you can read all about in the picture book Mitsy the Oven Mitt Goes to School, a Story About Being Brave. There were golf gloves, catchers mitts, ski gloves, lots of five fingered friends everywhere you looked! But ever since I moved away from home, I haven't befriended any mitts at all.

[Chad] Huh, well that's okay Mitsy! I know for a fact that you have LOTS of great friends! We all love you.

[Frenchy] That's true! We do!

[Mitsy] Gah, thanks friends. I know that you do, and I love you too! I just can't seem to shake this sort of sad feeling I got when I realized I don't have any oven mitt friends.

[Frenchy] Mitsy, I think I know how you feel.

[Mitsy] You do Frenchy?

[Frenchy] I think so. I hadn't really thought much about it, but I don't have any friends who are forks.

[Sam] You don't?

[Frenchy] No, I don't think so. Like we mentioned earlier this season, I was adopted by my parents, who are spoons. Which is great, I love my parents and I love my brother! But, I'm just feeling that same kind of hard to describe sad feeling you are Mitsy.

[Sam] Well, what can we do to help?

[Frenchy] I'm not totally sure, to be honest.

[Mitsy] Yeah, neither am I.

[Chad] Well, let's sit on this topic for a few minutes, and we'll come back to it, okay? Sometimes, all you need to move on from a feeling is a little time. Besides, coming up in just a moment is another edition of Ask a Grown Up!

OMITTED SEGMENT

[Chad] So, Mitsy, Frenchy, I've been thinking about what you said, about feeling sad that you don't have any friends that look like you.

[Mitsy] And you found a quick and easy way to help us feel better?

[Chad] Actually, no.

[Mitsy] Oh.

[Chad] Sorry. I was just going to say that I don't know what that feels like. I'm pretty privileged, or lucky, to have grown up around people who look like me, and to have a lot of friends and coworkers who look like me as well. I haven't felt the way you're feeling before, and I don't know what will make you feel better.

[Mitsy] Well... that's great, thanks so much Chad!

[Chad] Sorry! But it's just the truth! Feelings can be complicated, confusing, and inconvenient. But one thing they NEVER are is wrong. However you feel is however you feel, there's never anything wrong with having an emotional reaction to something.

[Frenchy] So, it's okay to feel sad?

[Chad] It is! I can imagine why you might feel the way you do, it's got to be hard to grow up, or go to work in a place where you're the ONLY oven mitt, or the ONLY fork.

[Frenchy] But my adoptive parents and my brother Sam, they're all so nice! I love them so much, it feels wrong to be sad that we are different.

[Chad] You can love your adoptive parents and your brother, AND be sad that you didn't grow up in a house full of forks all at the same time! One feeling has nothing to do with the other, they can both be true.

[Sam] That sounds complicated.

[Chad] It is. A lot of the time, feelings are complicated.

[Frenchy] I think I get it though. Maybe it's okay to not "fix" a sad feeling, there isn't always a way to make it go away. And that's okay!

[Mitsy] Huh, Frenchy, I think I get it now too! I always thought feeling sad or mad was bad or wrong, and that we are supposed to be happy all the time. But that's not true! Some things make you sad, and you can't fix them right away all the time, and that's okay.

[Chad] That's exactly right, Mitsy. And Frenchy. It's a hard lesson to learn! I am proud of you both.

[Sam] Yeah, I'm proud of you too Sis! I love you, you know.

[Frenchy] I know, I love you too Sam.

[Mitsy] GAH! AND I LOVE YOU ALL! Funny that you can feel sad AND understood AND loved all at the same time.

[Chad] Love you too Mitsy.

Miss Ruth and the Texas State Fair, Learning About Segregation

[Molly] I really did. Alright, it's time for Ask a Grown Up. Take it away Chad!

[Chad] Thanks Molly! Today I am talking with Ms. Ruth Hauntz. Ms. Ruth is the owner of Ruth's Tamale House, which in partnership with Smokey John's BBQ has developed fried food recipes for the Texas State Fair Big Tex Choice awards for a few years running. Her winning fried food recipes include her Fried Taco Cone, frito pie, and Fried Jello. Her repeated wins at the Texas State Fairs biggest food competition make her commonly known in the area as the Texas State Fair Queen. But she's been in the food industry for nearly 5 decades. Since founding Ruth's Tamale House in 1970 with her late husband Adolf, Ruth has weathered many many storms, ultimately partnering with another business, Smokey Johns BBQ. She has been a staple vendor of the Texas State fair since 1988, which is known for its variety of eccentric fried foods in addition to it's carnival rides and livestock competitions. How are you today, Miss Ruth?

[Ms Ruth] Fine, thank you Chad. How are you?

[Chad] I'm doing great, thank you. So, Ruth, you have been working with the owners of Smokey John's Barbecue in order to develop some winning recipes that you've been selling at the Texas State Fair, is that correct?

[Ms Ruth] Yes, yes. Other than the tamales, of course, which is a staple. We enter the Big Tex Choice Awards every year, and that's been going on since 2005. Each year we enter either a sweet or savory. And luckily, since 2016, that came with small with one Ann-Britt in 2015. We formed a little corporation. In 2016. We won the top award. Fried jello.

[Chad] That's great. I love Jello and I love fried food. So fried jello sounds like it would be a winning combination.

[Ms Ruth] It's something more this that's like deep-Fried, bennett, or jelly donut, that type thing, but it's beautiful.

[Chad] That sounds delicious. So what type of oil do you use in order to fry the foods?

MRS RUTH: Well, actually, vegetable oil. Of course you know that's a combination of a variety of oils. But because of the smoke pointing and well, because it has to be changed regularly, that type thing. For as many deep fried Jello balls that we did course we had to use lots of vegetable oil and we had to change the deep fry oil regularly and we had to leave it maybe at a frying point or a boiling point of 350.

[Chad] So, Miss Ruth, What do you love the most about the Texas state fair?

[Ms Ruth] I love them fair and it's one of my favorite favorite times of the year. Christmas, state Fair. New Year's Day. And Juneteenth (laughing). All of it for me, really. The parade. Love the parade, always did. Always did. Since I was a little girl.

[Chad] So Ms Ruth I know that you have a long history going to the Texas State Fair. Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to go there for you as a little girl?

[Ms Ruth] I began when we were about 10, 11 years old. At that time, the state fair was a segregated event. Of course, that's the way it was. We'd take the school bus and the bus driver would bring us to the state fair.

[Chad] So I want to back up just a little bit. You've used the word segregation, and I wonder if I can ask you what the word segregation means.

[Ms Ruth] Well, actually it meant at that time or still means at that time, really, it was colored and white. That in fact all the facilities were more or less, separate.

[Chad] So so there is a history, a point in our country's history where people of color and people who are white did not do the same things at the same times. Things were separated.

[Ms Ruth] Exactly. Now, when I was a little girl. We didn't talk much about- we didn't learn anything about segregation or racism in the history books and of course, uh, after growing up and looking at TV and listening to and experiencing certain things, and seeing white and colored times, not being able to try on a hat in certain department stores. That made you wonder- why? I thought my head was just as clean and pretty as anyone else's. But, The State fair. In fact, it was more or less a white event. We only had one day for a year.

[Chad] Yes, it sounds pretty unfair to me that out of the whole fair, there was only one day where people of color were allowed to go for so many years. And as someone who who has been to the fair back before desegregation, what does that mean for you now that you're able to sell food? Have a booth and even win awards at the fair today?

[Ms Ruth] Well I have flashbacks. Yes. And especially the last state fair, when we won both awards, the savory and the sweet. Can you can you imagine how it feels to- to begin going to the state fair in the segregated setting as a little girl born on a farm in the country. During the Great Depression, I was born in 1934, but now remember that. Born in 1934, little black Girl during the Depression and now. Becoming the state fair Queen.

[Chad] Let me ask you. Why do you think it's important to learn about some of the more difficult parts of our history?

[Ms Ruth] It's totally necessary. That's the only way we can move forward. Yup. If we ever forget you know you're doomed- everybody says - to repeat it. So actually talking about it and actually having conversations about it and speaking the truth. People understand and I know about you. You know about me.

[Chad] Sure even though we might be very different people. Our history might be very different too. And so learning that history helps us better understand each other. I think it's important because it's not imagining a history that is long past. Right? It's something that people who are who are still alive and working and and living and winning fairs today have had to experience in their lifetimes.

[Ms Ruth] The only way we're going to move forward is to to sit in it and actually be truthful with each other in open conversations.

[Chad] And continue to learn sort of from people like you who have so much experience that they can share with us.

[Ms Ruth] Just looking back over my life from a little girl loving to come to the state fair once a year. To becoming or being labeled. The state fair, uh- queen of the state fair of Texas? Now you just can't beat that.

[Chad] Great, Ms Ruth this has been an absolutely wonderful conversation. Again, we appreciate you taking the time to talk to us and talk to us about your past and your history at the state fair. Thank you so much for taking the time to chat! [14.4s]

[Ms Ruth] Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Chad] Back to you Molly!

[Molly] Thank you Chad! And thanks to Ms Ruth of Ruths Tamale House and the folks at Smokey John's BBQ in Dallas Texas.

Parkers Intro, Learning About Pronouns

[Door Opening]

[Mitsy] And here is the recording studio.

[Parker] Wait I'm not ready to leave the recipe lab yet. I have never seen so many ovens in my LIFE!

[Mitsy] Don't worry Parker, we'll spend LOTS of time in the lab. Come on, right through here. Hi Molly!

[Parker] What?! THE Molly Birnbaum?! Cotton fibers! I am so glad to meet you.

[Mitsy] Told you Parker was great.

[Parker] Thank you Hand Safety Officer Mitsy! Intern extraordinaire Parker the Pot Holder reporting for duty!

[Mitsy] Ah Parker I love ya. But I told you, you don't have to call me officer! That's more of an external title.

[Parker] Wow look at all these microphones.

[Mitsy] Molly, meet Parker! Parker is the first ever Mystery Recipe Intern! And that makes me a manager for the very first time in my life which is no small feat, really proud to be moving up in the world here Molly. BUT... sorry. This is about Parker! Not me. Parker is a pot holder, and will be helping and learning with us all season.

[Parker] That is correct! I am in my final semester at PotHolder University and this internship is right at the center of all my hopes and dreams. I love cooking, hot pots and pans, learning, friendship, and dance parties. My pronouns are they/them, and I am absolutely honored to meet you Madame Birnbaum. Do you all ever have any dance parties?

[Molly] Well same to you Parker. And please, call me Molly. My pronouns are she/her. And we have been known to have the occasional dance party.

[Parker] Okay Madame... Molly. (to themselves) Nice save there Parker.

[Mitsy] Um, sorry to, just to backup a little bit here. What did you mean, your pronouns are they/them? What's a pronoun?

[Molly] A pronoun is a word we use to talk about someone when they aren't here. Like, "he" or "she" or "they".

[Mitsy] Ah, so "he" "she" and "they" are examples of pronouns. For instance, if we were talking about Zoe, I'd say "SHE is the smartest ingredient guesser this lab has ever seen."

[Molly] Exactly! Zoe uses she/her pronouns. You might have heard someone use he when talking about a boy, and she when talking about a girl. But some people use other pronouns, like they or them, because it feels like the right way to describe their gender.

[Parker] Right! I'm not really a boy, or a girl. I'm somewhere in between. So please use they/ them pronouns when talking about me!

[Mitsy] I think I get it! Thanks for explaining Molly. So far Parker here has had a GREAT first day. They have already helped me clean out all the refrigerators-

[Parker] So much yogurt.

[Mitsy] Then they labeled all the spices in the spice rack-

[Parker] Did you know All Spice is actually only ONE spice?!

[Mitsy] And then they got to tour the Test Kitchen!

[Parker] I've never SEEN so many POTS! And... now I'm here! And I just wanted to say, I am so excited to learn all about the fun and fantastical side of food from you both this season.

[Molly] Well we are lucky to be working with you Parker, welcome aboard.