**OLLI Goes to Washington D.C.**

*A young college student joins two much older OLLI members to relive their multi-generational and magical journey to Washington D.C. via the popular OLLI travel program.*

**A POLAND:** Meet Tiffany Johnson Goodman, a recent graduate of California State University San Bernardino in Palm Desert. Last year she found herself and two of her classmates on a plane full of strangers… the age of her grandparents headed for Washington D.C.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** I was kind of nervous. I was like “oh my gosh I’m going with older people. Am I going to fit in? Are they going to like me?” I was really nervous about it.

**A POLAND:** The multigenerational experience turned out to be one of the most magical chapters in the amazing story of the OLLI travel program with apologies to Frank Capra, stay tuned for OLLI goes to Washington.

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**A POLAND:** Welcome to *In Conversation: The Voices of OLLI*. OLLI, O-L-L-I is an acronym for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute located at and networked with the Palm Desert Campus of California State University San Bernardino.

**A POLAND:** Last year the travel committee decided to make a visit to Washington D.C. multigenerational by inviting Tiffany Johnson Goodman and two other students at the University to join the journey. All student expenses by the way, were underwritten by donors. We invited her and OLLI members Betty Baxter and Bob Vrablik to reminisce about the unique experience. It was a conversation and a reunion.

**B VRABLIK:** Hello, how are you Tiffany? I haven’t seen you since the trip.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** I know. I’m good, how are you?

**B VRABLIK:** I’m fine, thank you.

**A POLAND:** Ok,Bob’s voice is a bit muffled by a mic misfunction by this age of the Corona Virus but bear with us. He’s a knowledgeable seasoned traveler with OLLI. Like Bob, Betty Baxter is a former educator. Once upon a time Betty volunteered at a Montessori school in New York City, and thought hey, I might like to become a teacher.

**B BAXTER: And so,** Columbia University was right across the street. So, I enrolled in there and started taking courses. Twenty years later I had a doctorate in education.

**A POLAND:**  For Betty, travel with OLLI is far more than a trip. It’s an education, no matter your generation.

**B BAXTER:** Which is one of the reasons why I am such a believer of Lifelong Learning. You never stop learning if you allow yourself to continue to be open to learning.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** I remember that in the interview they asked, “well you may have to travel with senior citizens, how do you feel about that?”

(LAUGHTER)

**T. J. GOODMAN:** And I was like well, I think that will be great because I welcome anyone that is older than me who has done work that I inspire to do, to pour into me. That is the only way the world will continue to keep going. The older generation will pour into the younger generation, then younger generation has the responsibility to pour to the next generation.

**B BAXTER:** It was such a blessing to us to have the three of you young people with us.

**B VRABLIK:** Mhm.

**B BAXTER:** So, to be able to see your generation up close and personal, living with you and being with you all the time, hearing your perspective is enriching to all of us in so many ways.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** It was such an amazing trip. I so enjoyed it. I think the oldest person that went with us on the trip was ninety. Just to see her walk from our hotel to the white house without any complains… every little bit that I was able to get from each person, I was either able to relate in some way or at least be enriched by their experience. I just appreciate everybody because I was the only chocolate girl there.

(LAUGHTER)

**T. J. GOODMAN:** I appreciate everybody for embracing me and not making me feel like “Yeah, she’s the only one.”

**B BAXTER:** You can see why we fell in love with her. Anyone with that kind of personality and attitude… willingness to learn and willingness to be a part of what we are trying to accomplish which is to make it possible to for people as we age to continue learning and enjoying life. We just fell in love with her. I happened to be part of the group of interviewers when we chose the students who we were going to invite to Washington. She was just… hands down everyone’s choice. So outstanding. Personality wise, intelligence wise, willingness to add to the learning experience that we were getting in the university, it was just wonderful. We were so excited when she applied and decided to go with us. That was just wonderful.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** I felt that embrace because I think it is awesome. Nobody knows everything, why would you want to stop learning. So…

**B BAXTER:** You know Tiffany I think you addressed a very important issue and that is we don’t necessarily choose to be with a different generation. So, the opportunity to see things, not just the historical things that were saw but the opportunity to see it through your eyes was enriching to us also because you have a perspective, and the opportunity to discuss all of this with you all about this was terrific. It expanded our horizon.

**B VRABLIK:** I have been to Washington many times but my wife had never been to Washington. So, this trip that came up with OLLI was the best thing we ever did. I can’t say anything bad about that trip. It was so perfectly timed and organized but seeing other places, it expands your whole concept of the world. You have been living in a town your whole life and can only judge by what you know there.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** And education through travel for me was the D.C. trip and it brought things to life. There is a difference between reading something and actually being there.

**B VRABLIK:** Mhm.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** So, of course I remember history class explaining the Gettysburg and all of those things, even the march on Washington. Being able to stand there where Martin Luther King stood for “I Have a Dream” speech is different from just reading it and watching it on TV but you are there. Being able to walk through the White House is surreal because these are things like Bob said, if one person doesn’t leave that hometown that they have been, they are only going to know about what they read. But when you couple with what you read and experience it yourself, you enrich life and when we walked through George Washington’s house, I did not know he had that tooth issue and then I didn’t know that— to me it is just enriching because of course I think back and this is the time when people who looked like me were slaves. I was able to see where they would sleep and where the house was, and to me it was just like we have to do better.

(FAINT LAUGH)

**T. J. GOODMAN**: They didn’t have showers so I don’t understand how you were better than them and you didn’t even have a shower. This should have focused on so much more. So, I felt like for me it was just a remembrance of where we have been and to where we have come to now and how much work we still have to do. We are still seeing each other different as different instead of the same. We are still focusing on ‘oh they are different, I don’t like that,’ and instead we got to focus what makes us similar and how we can make it better for the next. [7-8]

**B BAXTER:** the idea that most of us on that trip, I think all of us perhaps were white, and to be you and the two Latinos was an eye-opening experience in many, many ways. Not just you were younger but because you were somebody that perhaps none of us or many of us had the experience, much less the pleasure the opportunity to be with in a very close situation where we were living together and being able to learn from each other and see each other as human beings, not different and that was a true, true blessing. I kept thinking, ‘oh my god if only in my growing up in white North Texas, had I had the opportunity, I think that maybe a lot of things in my life would have changed. Not necessarily for the better or for worse, but a broader education throughout life… and I am grateful for that, OLLI gave it to me. Being part of Cal State helps us that way also the opportunity to be in close proximity and relation and give and take for people who are not like us, whatever that means. It is an incredible period of time to be living.

**B VRABLIK:** I just want to add to a little of information to what she was saying. Older people come from a different generation, lifestyle, etc. and this young generation, your generation Tiffany, who have been exposed to each other and you are going to be able to intermingle with each other and not have those little fences and differences of that’s us and that’s them.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** I do appreciate what you and your wife said that you know traveling was the easy part and when you get home, that is the job. I am forever blessed by it because not only was I able to experience this with such enriching people that have lived a longer than I have lived, who have traveled to places I haven’t and even get their little inserts while we were there.

**B VRABLIK:** I like OLLI because you are sitting in rooms with people who enjoy the same thing, learning… but when you are on a trip with them you see them in a different situation. They’re just tourists like you, but you are friends with them because you have seen them in class.

**B BAXTER:** It is a blessing to be a part of it.

**B VRABLIK:** Oh god.

**B BAXTER:** Tiffany, if you don’t please don’t mind, is your mom still alive?

**T. J. GOODMAN:** Yes. So, my mom is still alive.

**B BAXTER:** The reason I ask is that it would be wonderful if we get her involved in our OLLI program.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** I have definitely tried Miss Betty because she has a home here but she does still own one in Alabama. So, she has been back and forth. As soon as I can get her strapped down to Palm Desert, I’m walking her in there to see Sue for sure. I told her I need you to join OLLI so that we can go travel. (LAUGHS)

**B BAXTER:** Not just so you can go travel, but also so we can get to know her and let her know how special you are to us also.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** Yeah, you guys will be such a great inspiration for her. A good role model for her because like I said, in my family it was you graduate high school and that’s it. We’ve had this conversation before because I told my momma, “No, I’m breaking the cycle with my kids, I’m breaking the cycle with myself.” So, I definitely will walk her in there and sign her up for some classes for sure.

**B BAXTER:** Right. Wonderful. We will welcome her.

**A POLAND:** There are many lessons to learn during OLLI travel. Some lessons of the mind and many of the heart.

**B BAXTER:** Lifelong learning is not just in a classroom,

**B VRABLIK:** Mhm.

**B BAXTER:** Not just in a book, it is through travel and interaction with other people. People that we may know really well, in a different way interacting with them through a daily basis or in a situation where we are all exposed to life in a different way, when we are on a bus for hours or a plane, or in a different country. It is enriching to see how people adjust and interact with each other, how they deal with a part of life or a part of learning. So, it is a part of lifelong learning.

**T. J. GOODMAN:** To me it was just memories. I just loved it.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

**B BAXTER:** What a joy it is to be with all of you three. This was just great. Thank you so much for inviting me. Bye-bye.

(INAUDIBLE)

**A POLAND:** Betty Baxter briefed us on how the Pandemic has affected the OLLI travel program.

**B BAXTER:** We have not stopped taking plans about where we want to travel next. We are focused on just making sure that people are safe. We are not going to put anyone in any position whether or not they can’t take care of themselves or go on a trip. We have had to put on hold some of the longer-term travels. So far, we have postponed the Vietnam trip and it is now scheduled for a year from now. As far as the European river cruise that is postponed for a year. We are looking for every possible way that we can conquer the opportunity to learn about other places in the world but, not necessarily have to physically go there.

**A POLAND:** Now here are other voices of OLLI, singing the praises for our OLLI travel program and beautiful multigeneration campus.

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**OLLI MEMBER 1:** With the Getty Villa it was all about poppy and herculean artifacts. I had just taken a six-week class with Cash Baxter. So, when I went into the museum, I think it was the first time I had ever gone into a museum and actually had some understanding of some of the things that I was seeing. I mean that’s as good as it can get. I have always loved field trips as a little kid and these are adult field trips.

**OLLI MEMBR 2:** And I think that is one of the things I really like about these field trips. You can go with a lot of different tour companies and see a lot of things around California and elsewhere but we always have an educational component that comes before that. So, there will be maybe one or two classes and it depends on what the subject is. You get some background and information and pictures in your head and then you go that’s where that is and experience it and you go wow it is what it looks like. That is exciting! I get goosebumps just talking about it.

**OLLI MEMBER 3:** It is fun to get on the bus with a bunch of people and go somewhere and have a nice lunch and a nice tour. Those are fun activities too.

**OLLI MEMBER 4:** That trip to Laguna it was the most beautiful day. We saw the art museum and we went to the restaurant right above the hill.

**OLLI MEMBER 3:** Yes, yes.

**OLLI MEMBER 4:** It was so gorgeous and it was one—

**OLLI MEMBER 3:** Yup.

**OLLI MEMBER 4:** Of the highlights of my year.

**OLLI MEMBER 5:** We had gone to the Nixon library along with Coronel Brennan. It was grand… it was unbelievable.

**OLLI MEMBER 6:** Our beautiful campus out here in the desert is not just multigenerational it is multicultural. I mean when you are walking down the hallway students young enough to be your grandkids and over hearing the conversations they chatter they are flirting… it is a real education and a good one.

**OLLI MEMBER 7:** It is an opportunity that other OLLI’s don’t have because we are a young university. We are attached to a young university and this gives us an opportunity to help people that are just starting out and they want to be successful and they want to change their spot in life. You can be a little part of that.

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**A POLAND:** This has been *In Conversation: The Voices of OLLI*. Our thanks to Cal State San Bernardino in Palm Desert. Along with the communications study professor, Lacey Kendall and her media students. This podcast was produced for OLLI by Lou Gorfain and I am Dr. Arlette Poland.

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