

Transcript of Interview with Dana Adkins by Jenifer Higbee

Interviewee: Dana Adkins
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Abstract:

Dana Adkins lived in Kansas City, Kansas until she was 6, when her family moved to the Lake of the Ozarks area. She attended school in Osage Beach, Mo. She changed schools her senior year and Graduated from Eldon in 2011. She still lives in the area and works at a waterfront resort hotel, a job she has worked for around 10 years. She lives with her boyfriend Kevin and five children. Jason, her nephew she adopted, stepdaughter Addison, daughters Abbigail and Allison, and son Aiden. In this interview, she discusses how the coronavirus affected her job and how the summer of 2020 differed from previous years. She also talks about how her children spent the summer and how they have coped with the changes in their lives.

JH: Hello, I am here with Dana Adkins who works in banquets at the Camden on the Lake resort in Lake Ozark [Missouri] and has five children to talk about her experience in the summer. Dana, how long have you lived here in the Lake area?

DA: I have lived here for 20 years now.

JH: Okay, and how long have you worked at Camden?

DA: I have worked at Camden for 11 years.

JH: Okay, and what do you do there? What does your typical day look like?

DA: I am a banquet supervisor there. And usually, our typical day is well, in the morning time, so we will come in, and we have a banquet for 40 to 50 people sometimes and we will set up our banquets. And then we will have a breakfast for them, and a lunch and then tear down and get ready for dinner. And we are pretty busy all summer long, we do probably about thousands of banquets for people all over the United States.

JH: And how, how is that different? In 2020 how did that change?

DA: This year, I probably have only done maybe 20 banquets this year total. And the banquets, we are doing a lot different than we have ever done before. We it is a conference to have everything set up six [apart]. So usually on a table, we could fit probably about eight to 10 people and now we can only fit four people. So that means that is less of a big conference that

we can have in the building. So that is less money for us. Uh huh. So then on the food industry, we would usually let them go and serve ourselves and stuff like that. And now we have to have more people there on staff to serve them. We all wear gloves and mask all through the day. There is a lot of hand incisors stations all over the building. Instead of using glassware, and having everything set out proper, like you would for a regular banquet. We have plastic now and we roll all silverware. We do not set it proper. So that is a lot a lot different because it is not as fancy, I do not think if we are setting up rolled. That is about my typical. It is a lot different from now than it was before.

JH: Now I am like you; I am down here as well. And I noticed a lot of people traveling from out of state through the summer, you know, do you do you notice that as well?

DA: I actually since we were slow down the banquet season, I worked up in the restaurant because they were super busy up there. Because there are a lot people coming out from all sorts of different states because nobody could go out and have a good regular vacation. So a lot of people came to the Lake of the Ozarks, if even if they flew their own airplanes down here, I talked to a couple people that did that, just to get away from their state, because there are so strict and we were kind of more lenient and laid back than other states were. So that was a very different experience.

JH: And also, you know, there's generally three big weekends in the lake, you know, Memorial weekend, the Fourth of July and Labor Day, you know, or did you notice that the business was different than from previous years as well?

DA: I think it was more actually busier than sooner than previous years. And to that fact, I think because we were more lenient on the mask, wearing a lot of people decided to come to the Lake of the Ozarks and feel like we were super risky. I help out a lot in the restaurant, which I do not like, but it is money. So, I did it. And it was great money. I mean, a lot of people were tipping still, like normal. They were not holding back on tips. And that was nice. You know, I would some days walk out of the restaurant, make it 100 to 150. And I only worked a morning shift. So, I was only there for four hours. So that is, I mean, the money was great in the restaurant service.

JH: Okay, now you take care of five kids, your nephew, your stepdaughter, and your three How did you keep them sane over the summer?

DA: Hmm. It was a pretty hard, pretty hard summer, let me tell you, five kids are a lot, we did do a lot of things outside. That was our one thing. We let them learn how to cook. We let him cook a lot. We would do activities, you know, with the whole group to kind of keep them busy. The one thing that kept me really insane where they're most excited about is, we would go for drive, because we could go to the store, we didn't go to the parks or anything like that, like we would usually do. Normally in the summertime, because, you know, there is five kids, you want to get them out, you want to you want to wear them out, let me tell you. And we used to do that stuff all the time. In the summer, I could not. So that was our most exciting thing was we would go in the car, and we live in the country. So we got to we have one drive that we could see cows and we got to see horses and we got to see chickens and goats and food drive slowly when we would admire, you know, just the scenery. And they enjoyed that. And it was a peace and quiet for me.

They were locked up now see both so I can enjoy the quiet and not have to worry about watching what they are doing. And so, I enjoyed that. And then we'd go home and we would just make activities mostly, I tell you I missed going to the park, you never know what you're going to miss until you don't have it because there's things orienting the kids out is awesome. It is a peace of mind for a mother. I hope we never get rid of family activities because those are nice things.

JH: Yeah, did you did you go on any long trips with them?

DA: Actually, we did at the very beginning of the summer. Before all the mask went really strict up in Branson [Missouri]. We went up to Branson and stayed in this hotel where there was an indoor waterpark. And it was only for guests only. And usually I would be open to the public. But for the COVID they said they were only going to do guest only anyhow to do advance reservation through them. And we did that. And it was fun. And then I want to say shortly after we were at Branson, they started them face mask, but they were not. They were really off limits like we went to world wonder works. And they did not make us wear masks or anything then. And let me tell you, this is at the very beginning of summer. So, when we were there, we did not have to wear masks. We went and rode go karts and bumper cars. We did not have to wear a mask. Now there was shows going on. But you did have to have reservation for the shows. And they were six feet apart groups. So, you could set close to your group, but you like you had to be six feet away from the next group. So usually those things are super packed anyways, but now you know that they were smaller groups. So that was the only thing that was really different and brainstem when we went up there. And I know a friend of mine, went to Branson, shortly after I did, and it was when the mask has gone through. And she said you could not walk into one building without a mask. You had to wear a mask at all times. And they were really tricky about it even in the restaurant. If she stood up to go into the bathroom. They made it wear that mask just to walk from her table to the restroom. So, they did get strict, I guess maybe a couple of months after I left Branson so...

JH: The school did have summer school did any of yours go?

DA: Yes. Jason went to summer school. He said it was a little different than normal summer school. They did they did not make them wear the mask, but it was there if you wanted the mask. um he did not get sick the whole time. I am really thankful for that. It was a problem. Probably a better normal, you know school summer for him. Besides, he had a torso wearing a mask or not?

JH: I mean, were there any other safety things other than the option of wearing a mask?

DA: Oh, no, no, no, no. I mean, now here in school there is. I mean, they have changed it a lot. But at the beginning of the summer, I feel a lot of people were more lenient, and laid back more here. When we reopened, and then kind of farther how we went into the summer, we kind of got more cautious and started, you mean being prepared and having more cleaning, you know, going around a lot of hand incisor, the toys of homeschooling your child or letting your child go to school that it's a very optional thing. Now a lot of kids are homeschooled. We know a couple of kids that are homeschool, that are Jason and Addison's friends. And usually they would be in school now. So, I feel like school has took a lot more cautious now than they were at the Summer School.

JH: Now, how do you feel that, you know, your kids handled? You know, being in the pandemic during the summer where they really could not do much? How do you think they coped?

DA: Um, my younger ones, they had a hard time understanding why they couldn't go into the stores or why, you know, we couldn't go to the park, why Miner Mike's [an arcade] was closed or why we couldn't do our normal things we did all summer long in the previous years. And that was I think one of the hardest that was trying to understand the COVID there is a COVID virus going around and everything shut off. Well, they look at me like what is the COVID virus like, we can still go to the store mom and they just quite did not understand what happened. Now my older child they did actually Jason did a report over the COVID and how it kind of affect him and he said that a lot of people were talking about the COVID and he has to wear a mask and people are hand sanitizer and nobody wants to give anybody hugs anymore. Nobody wants to do handshakes anymore and he says it's a lot different because usually in school they would all hug and stuff and now they did it and that was one of the big things that it wrote about in his report is that you know we used to be what van or walk up and give her friends hugs and now we will get in trouble even if we try to hug him because it has to be a social distance so they made up a social distance that like air hug to do and so that I thought that was pretty funny. So

JH: That is that is an interesting way to cope with not being able to physically contact your friends

DA: Yeah, and I mean you know when you are in school you when you see your friends you always give them a hug is just a kid thing and when they couldn't do that, I think it did affect them just a little because I like good hugs always good from friends. I enjoy it.

JH: Now back to you know the beginning of summer and in the state, reopening coming out of lockdowns hat Do you think the state of Missouri you know handled that in a safe manner?

DA: No, no. I felt like we could have been a lot more cautious. A lot more. We I feel like we were the ones that we were really didn't care about the COVID we were the non-wearing mass fools and Hey, don't get us wrong a lot of people want to see come and see us fools and they enjoyed it. But we did not take no cautious I feel like at the beginning of the summer. I mean the bars were more packed than they ever been. In the summertime they were head to head drinking part in like the COVID was a thing and pretty safe. There are people taking cautious and people were still dying again. I do not feel like we took any cautious when we first open. Not any of us. I mean, anywhere. The stores I feel like the corporate now Walmart and corporate people. Now since they were corporate, and they are all through the states. I feel like they were more cautious than you Any of the wake bars and resorts and hotels like that, because they were going national, you know, there, they were doing what they were doing every state at each store. So, I feel like they did do a little bit of caution. But anywhere else, I feel like we just opened back up. It is just like a normal routine. Like, here we go, we are back off and let us go Game on. Let us see how much money we can make this summer. I mean, that is what we did. I feel like so I mean, it is sad, but it is true. I mean, and now COVID has come really a big spurt, but then I mean, we are, who were not the highest numbers from were the lowest numbers either. So, I mean, it was spreading, but I do not feel like I am spreading super-fast, I guess. I thought that was kind of

interesting. how, you know, other states were locked down and stuff and they were still spreading the COVID pretty bad. And we are out here partying it up, like the COVID was not a thing. And a lot of people did not come up to COVID, which they made up, went back home and got the COVID and they are just the cold got to that state. Which if that is the thing about the lake of the Ozarks a lot of people live here is the only ones doing the code tested. So, I feel like it is hard to tell if the COVID was down there at that time, because when they go home and they get sick and they get tested is going to go to that state. Not pointed to Missouri or Lake County. Yeah, matter. Yeah,

JH: Um, well, thank you so much. It has been wonderful.