

# Transcript of Oral History Interview

**Interviewer:** Sean Perkins

**Interviewees:** S & M (anonymous mother and daughter)

**Date:** Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Location**

Central Library  
140 Sockanosset Cross Rd.  
Cranston, RI 02920

Transcript of oral history interview with S & M, a mother and daughter who live near Mashapaug Pond. S and M discuss their relationship to the pond, how they came to know it, and what they've learned from it. M's youthfully optimistic perspective is complemented by S's experiences as a long time resident and Thai immigrant.

**Note:** at interviewees' request, this interview was made anonymous. The transcript and recording have been edited to delete their names and address. They appear in the transcript with initials: S = mother, M = daughter.

**Sean Perkins:** Okay. So my name is Sean Perkins and it's 1PM on Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and I'm here with two residents from the Crescent Street side of Mashapaug Pond for an oral history interview. Would you both like to introduce yourselves?

**S:** Sure. My name is [00:019-00:023 cut] Street, Providence. It's near Mashapaug Pond. I'm here with my daughter.

**M:** Hi, my name [00:029-00:030 cut] and I live with my mom and my dad, at the same address, and I've been living at the Mashapaug Pond area... neighborhood... type for, actually since I was born, which is 11 years. So, yes.

**Perkins:** Great. So... so you've [M] lived there since you were born. How long have you [S] lived at your current location?

**S:** I've lived there since 1991.

**Perkins:** 1991. Okay, and where did you live before that?

**S:** I came from Thailand.

**Perkins:** Thailand.

**S:** That's my first... Yes.

**Perkins:** And what made you choose this neighborhood?

**S.Ea:** Actually my husband bought the house in that neighborhood.

**Perkins:** Oh yes?

**S:** Yes. So I, I don't know at that point why he bought the house in that area. So.

**Perkins:** Yes. Have you... have you enjoyed living there?

**S:** Yes, pretty much. Yes.

**Perkins:** Cool. And how... so you said that it's... you actually weren't aware of Mashapaug Pond for...

**S:** Not...

**Perkins:** ...until recently.

**S:** ...not at all at that point. No.

**Perkins:** And... and your daughter told you about it. So how did you [M] come to learn about Mashapaug Pond?

**M:** When I went to my new school, called Community Prep, for art class Holly came in and she told us about the Mashapaug Pond. And I live near there, coincidentally, and so we had this project where we had to make fences out of natural materials and we would put them up at the Pon... where the boathouse was in the area. And then people would be able to go there and they would be able to write their wishes and stick them on the fences and I thought that was a really cool idea.

**Perkins:** Cool. And you said it... it was made out of natural materials. What did... what did you make yours out of?

**M:** It was a group project and it was mostly made out of sticks and some rope and, like, tire edges and rubber and all that kind of stuff.

**Perkins:** Cool. How many times have each of you been to the pond?

**S:** When they have the processions...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...during like either early June or mid-early June. We join them like three years now. We have been with three processions so far. Yes.

**Perkins:** Cool. And what do you feel you get out of... out of that experience?

**S:** I heard the procession is about to educate the neighbors in that area, try to help the pond is... to be cleaned, water, safe environment and try to stop manufacturers that, like, drain the water to the pond, which is bad for the water.

**Perkins:** Cool.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** And so do you feel you've... you've learned something from this Urban Pond Procession or were you familiar with some of these things before and this was an opportunity to share that knowledge with other people?

**S:** I learned from the procession.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes, I did learn from processions.

**Perkins:** Cool.

**M:** And I heard a rumor from off the street and in my school that the pond was infected and people just saw, like, abnormal animals everywhere, like frogs that had, I don't know, three eyes or something like that and I didn't know if that was true or not. So then when I actually got to go to the pond with some of my other friends the rumor wasn't exactly true, but it was kind of real at the same time, that the pond was infected. But I'm not so sure about the three-eyed frogs or anything like that.

**Perkins:** Yes. And that's something that other... other kids at school have said?

**M:** [4:52] Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Has... did... has the Urban Pond Procession or... or Holly in particular tried to inform any of you guys about things like that, what's going on with the wildlife or what's going on with the water?

**M:** Well Holly has said that the company that used to... the building that used to be there did pollute the pond with all their... I think it was...

**S:** Silver.

**M:** Silver...

**S:** Yes, they put...

**M:** ...and all their materials that they dumped into the pond...

**S:** The chemicals...

**M:** So she did say something about that, about being polluted.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Do you... do either of you feel strongly about environmental issues like... like the pollution of the pond, or...?

**S:** Yes, we... we kind of like concerned and hopefully, you know, the... the... some department that's in water can make that pond clean up...

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...for the better environment and to be safe for the neighborhoods. Yes.

**Perkins:** And... and so who do you think is... is responsible for that primarily? The... the, the city? Residents? Other organizations? Environmental groups?

**S:** It should be the city.

**Perkins:** The city.

**S:** And other organizations that pollute the water...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...or the... yes.

**Perkins:** Have you been satisfied with what they've been doing or do you feel like more needs to be done?

**S:** I think they work very hard and it would be nice if, you know, they can get it done and be successful project that they're working on.

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** Hopefully one day in the future.

**Perkins:** Okay. So tell me a little bit—now that, so you've both been to visit the pond and... and been there for the Urban Pond Procession.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** What do you like and... and dislike about the pond? What are your favorite places there?

**S:** The boathouse.

**M:** The boathouse is really nice because it's more nature than buildings and all that and the view from the boathouse is really nice. Although I'm kind of disappointed that they cut down some of the trees. Yet again it will reveal more of the open of the pond. But I think it's a very nice place. But the only thing I don't like about it is that – I'm not a bug person, and there's a whole bunch of bugs—I think this only, like, a *me* problem for this, because I really dislike bugs and there's a whole bunch of bugs there. But other than that I really like the boathouse.

**Perkins:** Cool. And the... have you... so you've seen the industrial park there as well. Do you... what do you think about... about there being an industrial park there?

**S:** I think they can do better. You know, you... you can deal with the city and try not to pollute the water...

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**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...from that pond.

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** You know.

**Perkins:** Okay. And what is... what is the first thing that either of you think of when you... when you think of Mashapaug Pond?

**M:** Oh. This might sound a little silly, but to me when I look at Mashapaug Pond on a map it looks like a duck that's holding a worm. I don't know why. It's just like, whenever I see it, I always have to try to look for a duck-shaped pond. So that's really cool.

**Perkins:** Yes, that's funny. And did you know that the... the pond used to be a different shape?

**M:** Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**M:** It was really interesting to look at before and after.

**Perkins:** Yes. So, have you seen... since you've been there since 1991, how... so what... what other ponds are there nearby or... or has it... have you always kind of felt like you're just in a very urban area with... because I've... I've noticed that Mashapaug Pond is kind of hidden. You... you can easily not see that it's there.

**S:** Right, unless—yes, unless you go to the boathouse and see at that end. And I also saw the other pond... you know at Twin Oaks, the restaurant? I don't know, what's... what's the name of that pond again, behind that restaurant?

**Perkins:** I'm not sure.

**S:** Really? Yes I saw that. Another type going across.

**Perkins:** Okay.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** And can you tell me a little bit about growing up in Thailand and... and where you lived there, what your family was like?

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**S:** I lived in Thailand, yes. We lived in the... the city... and...

**M:** [10:04] She was poor. [whispered]

**S:** ...very, very... Thailand is very busy traffics. Bangkok is a busy traffic city and I would say a lot of cars, more pollution, more traffic. So at night you can get away, out of the city, when you can. Yes.

**Perkins:** Did you live near the coast?

**S:** No, no... We had to travel at least two hours to go to the beach or...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** And... and what about your family there growing up?

**S:** My family, they are pretty, yes, they are...

**M:** Poor. [whispered]

**S:** Yes, they can...

**M:** Very poor. [whispered]

**S:** No, not really because the... the first generation is from...

**M:** Well back then. Back then though.

**S:** Back then, yes, it's hard, the parents... yes, grandparents work hard, you know?

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** I've got my... my grandmother was immigrant from China so, yes, I heard she worked very hard, tried to build a family there. So...

**Perkins:** Yes. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

**S:** Yes I do, yes.

**M:** How many? How many? [whispered]

**Perkins:** And... and how many?

**S:** I have like four sisters, one brother. Yes.

**Perkins:** That's a big family.

**S:** Big family, yes.

**Perkins:** Are they still living in Thailand?

**S:** They're still living in Thailand. Yes.

**Perkins:** Do you ever get back to visit?

**S:** Like 14 years ago!

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes. That's a long time.

**Perkins:** That is a long trip.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** And... and so how would you... how would you compare your... your childhood experience to your daughter's experience?

**S:** Right now I think my... my childhood is... doesn't know much about the new technology right now. Like my daughter's childhood now, she knew everything about new technologies.

**M:** She had a dog at least.

**S:** Device...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...stuff like that, yes.

**M:** She didn't get a dog. I didn't get a dog. She got a dog.

**Perkins:** You want a dog?

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Another thing I'd like to see Mashapaug Pond in the future... like if they can build some kind of like, what do you call it, a crib walk? A boardwalk?

**M:** Oh yes.

**Perkins:** Mhmm. Yes.

**S:** So people can enjoy the view and learn more about the pond.

**Perkins:** Yes. And then, sort of, actually get around...

**S:** Yes, right. Yes even hopefully one day the... the... the water clean and safe. Even they have like a canoe or kayak.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** The activities. Have more activities that to attract the, you know, the visitor...

**Perkins:** Absolutely.

**S:** So, you know?

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Keep the nature going and then people enjoy seeing, you may see more birds, or other thing... Yes.

**Perkins:** And... and what have you seen for... for wildlife when you've gone to visit? Aside from these legendary three-eyed frogs.

**S:** We probably see a lot of... some geese.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** I've seen those.

**S:** Yes, we saw some geese and then....

**M:** Yes, I think that's all I've seen.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** Like it's... it's not exactly like the Roger Williams.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** But it's like, we don't see geese that often though.

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**S:** Yes. Right.

**M:** There's not much wildlife around there...

**S:** Yes.

**M:** ...other than insects and birds.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** It's kind of disappointing.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** And... and you mostly go to the... the boathouse there, right?

**S:** Yes. Yes, boathouse. Yes. Because that's... I think that's the closer point that you can really look out and see the pond.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Like you can't see from outside. You... you have to go through the boathouse and see the... the... the pond.

**Perkins:** Have you ever tried to... to get to different parts of the pond?

**S:** We did too dear. What is that park? Or... or?

**M:** It's like a baseball field.

**S:** Yes, the baseball field and then the...

**M:** Yes, it's the right... It's connected to the pond, so—when did we plant the flowers?

**S:** Back in May, three years ago.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** We planted some flowers there.

**M:** Yes. And now they've bloomed and it looks nice.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** And... and what made you decide to go plant some flowers? Was it part of a...?

**S:** We decided to do the community service.

**M:** Community service, yes.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Nice.

**S:** And yes, yes.

**M:** And my friends did it too because they thought: "Oh, why not help the pond too?" because they also were in my class when they learned about it.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Cool. What kind of flowers did you plant?

**M:** I think it was tulips.

**S:** Tulip, daffodil, and one...

**M:** Yes.

**S:** ...other thing.

**M:** I forgot.

**S:** Yes. Quite a few, yes.

**M:** Like of that nature, of the common flowers...

**S:** Yes.

**M:** ...that you see every day.

**Perkins:** Cool. What... what other kinds of community service do you do?

**M:** [14:58] Oh, my friend's grandma, she owns a senior center. It's called Hamilton House and I think every – well actually I've done this only once...

**S:** Christmas.

**M:** Yes, every Christmas we go over there because I play the violin and so do my other friends. So we play for the seniors there and it's really fun.

**Perkins:** Nice. Do you [S] get involved in any sort of community service?

**S:** No. Pretty much with her, yes.

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** But, yes. Any opportunity that... thing we can help...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** She likes to do that. Yes.

**Perkins:** That's great.

**S:** Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Are there any other community organizations or... or sports or clubs that either of you are involved in?

**S:** No, right?

**M:** No... but in my school they have a basketball team, but that's only for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. But I think I'm pretty sure—I'm pretty sure I'm going to join the basketball team in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

**S:** Yes, next year right? Yes.

**M:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Cool. And you [M] play the violin?

**M:** Mhmm!

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** And do you take lessons?

**M:** Yes, at my school. I used to take piano, but the lessons didn't work out because we used to do two in one class...

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**M:** ...but it would just be like 25 minutes for each instrument and my teacher thought it wouldn't be, like, enough practice. But I still know the basics to piano too. I know violin more than piano.

**Perkins:** Cool. Let's see... Can you tell me a little bit about the... the neighborhood you live in? The street that you live on?

**S:** It seems to be very quiet. And then our street is very quiet. And then most people there, I would say, they own a house instead of a rental, which is nice because the rental property mostly people kind of come and go, so you have not really known them.

**M:** Yes.

**Perkins:** So they're only there for part of the year?

**S:** Yes.

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** Some of them maybe even a few months, and then they you turn around they disappear!

**Perkins:** Wow.

**S:** Yes. Yes.

**Perkins:** About what proportion of... of the houses would you say are rentals?

**S:** Just the whole area I believe.

**M:** What about the one next door? Somebody else, when I was like 5, somebody moved out of the house that lived next to us. And now somebody else lives in there. But I've gotten really... I've gotten really used to the... to seeing them and now I'm kind of used to them. But I used to be really used to the people who lived – I forgot who they were though...

**S:** Yes. They moved.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Yes. We don't really know much the neighbor...

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...because, like I say, you know?

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** They finally got... they come for a rental and then they leave, and then other people come along.

**M:** One of my friends from my class used to live – well, their family still lives in the house, because, like, here's my house and then right here [points to table] is my other friend's house. But he moved. I think he's going to come back in the summer though. But he used to live like right across the street from me so it was kind of easy. If I ever missed a day from school he could always bring the homework for me.

**Perkins:** That's nice. Are there other kids your age in the neighborhood? Besides them.

**M:** I think the people who moved next door are around the age 9... 8. But other than that I think I'm.... there's all adults, seniors... And then out of children, I think I'm the oldest. And then there would be teenagers too. But for children I think I'm the oldest in the street.

**Perkins:** Okay. And so the other kids that you go to school with, where are they from?

**M:** A majority is from Providence. Some are from Pawtucket. Around in the Providen... the Providence area. A majority is from Providence. Some people have two houses because their parents were divorced. I know one person whose dad moved to Massachusetts. But she must.... lives with her mom.

**Perkins:** Cool. So you think the community is... is... sort of... isolated? Or not isolated, but the... you think that people kind of keep to themselves?

**S:** Yes, they... Pretty much.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes, yes. Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay.

**S:** One thing it's nice too, you know. Nobody... you mind your own business, otherwise...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Keep... You don't bother me. I don't bother you.

**Perkins:** Yes. They're respectful neighbors?

**S:** Yes, because nowadays you don't, you know. You don't know who's... yes.

**Perkins:** [19:59] Mhmm. Do you ever... do you ever wish that there was a... a, a more close knit community? Or as you said you just kind of appreciate the... the quiet?

**S:** Yes. I, I kind of appreciate the quiet too, you know.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** I kind of want neighbors that I actually would be able to go over to their house with, because the neighbors on our street are... they're Spanish and they don't really... they play, they stick to themselves.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** And I stick to myself. But there's nobody really that can actually go over to their house and hang out with them, unless it's somebody from my class.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Yes. So when you go visit friends from school, you oftentimes have to get a ride there?

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about the... the demographics in the community? Is it young, old, white, black, Hispanic... Thai?

**S:** I think they are mixed.

**Perkins:** Mixed?

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay.

**M:** Most are...

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**S:** More like Spanish.

**M:** Yes. A majority of Spanish.

**S:** Spanish. Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** But there's some... there's mostly adults, right?

**S:** Yes. And few el... some elderly...

**M:** Some elderly people.

**S:** ...on our street.

**M:** And very few children too.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** Most are like teenagers.

**S:** Yes, but I would say the majority of that area... I would say is Spanish. Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay. Is it... are the houses... I don't know the area very well.

**S:** Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Are they very densely packed or kind of spread out a bit?

**M:** Like.

**S:** Like... [inaudible].

**M:** They have... I think it's a good amount of... of space. Mostly their kind of form or concept to the house is the same, but some houses are just like random because we live next to one really tall house and then we're like in between and then there's like a small one-floor house. So it's kind of like a random building, kind of.

**S:** Yes. More like family...

**M:** Yes.

**S:** ...like, you know... Very few houses that I spot that they have... the pond behind the outdoors area... single house! Yes, yes, few of them, single house... Their house and then the pond is right behind there.

**Perkins:** Okay.

**S:** I think on that end, more like single house than the multifamily house.

**Perkins:** Okay, cool. And can you tell me a little bit more about your school and... and what, you know... what classes do you take?

**M:** My school is in South Providence. It's around South... South Providence. It's in...

**S:** Near Women and Infant's Hospital.

**M:** Yes, so basically it's a normal day. But I mostly stick with my homeroom teacher for both... both... for most of my subjects. But for art, music—well for art and music it's the same teacher, and dance too. Art, music, and dance is the same teacher. We take Spanish class, but, like, it's not like we have a choice to. We have... it's like part of our actual grade.

**S:** Curriculum.

**M:** Yes, and we have the normal gym and all that.

**Perkins:** Cool. And what do you... what do you learn in your science classes?

**M:** Currently I'm learning about the patriotic table, which is complicated, but I'm getting the concept to it. But we have a huge book that's like, I don't know, 500 pages. And it's really hard to carry it around when we have to do our homework. It just gives me a headache.

**Perkins:** Do you... and do you enjoy learning about it though?

**M:** Yes. It's very interesting. We do more reading than mo... than more projects. But I would appreciate it if we would do more projects to actually experience what we're actually learning about.

**S:** You mean hands on...

**M:** Yes, hands on experiments.

**Perkins:** Cool. So do you think, for example, a field trip to Mashapaug Pond to learn about the water or the wildlife would be interesting?

**M:** Yes, I think that would be fun.

**Perkins:** Have you done anything like that before? To other... to other ponds or other locations?

**M:** No.

**Perkins:** No.

**M:** [24:57] We're only interested in Mashapaug Pond because it's... I actually don't really know why we're doing Mashapaug Pond, but I'm kind of glad we are.

**Perkins:** Yes, well if you had to guess why do you think?

**M:** I think it's because it's a really close distance away and it's like... because much people don't really pay attention to ponds that are polluted or they don't even know about the pond. And to hear about a pond that's actually infected can be kind of interesting to learn about and to put experiments about. So I think that's why we're doing that.

**Perkins:** And... and do you learn about how it came to be infected?

**M:** Oh, yes.

**Perkins:** Can you tell me?

**M:** Okay. There used... I forgot the name of it, I think it started with a G. It was a manufacturing...

**S:** Gorham, right? Gorham?

**M:** Gor...

**S:** Gorham.

**Perkins:** Gorham.

**M:** Gorham! Yes, Gorham. They built their land right on top of the pond I think. They had to extend it and I think it's currently where the high school is.

**S:** Right now.

**M:** Yes. Where that high school is. And basically they would make silver and all fancy stuff. And they would dump all of their, I think, gas...? I forget what they dumped in the pond, but that made it polluted. And it just stayed like that and also it's connected to the Roger Williams Pond. I forgot what it was called, but it's connected

there. So whatever somebody accidentally dumps into that pond can be traveled into the Mashapaug Pond. And I don't think that's a really good idea.

**Perkins:** Yes. Does it... how does it... how does it make you feel to know that the... these... these companies like Gorham and Textron have... have put stuff in the water?

**M:** It makes me kind of disappointed because the pond is such a beautiful place on the outside, but once you get to know the inside it's really sad. And people know about this, but they just don't do anything about it. They just leave it there and I guess they just let it be.

**Perkins:** Yes. Are you hopeful that it will be better in the future?

**M:** Yes, I want to grow up and see... see that one day in the news—I don't know if the newspapers will still be invented then, in the future, but I want it... for the headline I want it to say 'Mashapaug Pond Saved: No More Pollution' and then people can actually go swimming in it and do all of the water activities.

**Perkins:** And what do you think people like you and I can do to help the pond?

**M:** I think we could expose the problem a little more because right now the problem is in a little cube. But if we keep working on it, it will explode and now a whole bunch of people will know about it. And then we'll get even more help about expressing our problem and then maybe one day the government will actually do something about it.

**Perkins:** Great. That's a great answer.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** What activities do you think the pond could be used for? I know right now you can't swim in the pond. You can't always use the pond to go out with a kayak...

**S:** Yes. Canoe.

**Perkins:** Canoe...

**S:** And if you can do like a... like what I mentioned about building some boardwalk that people can go a little around it, you know...

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...like spending summertime, sit back, relax or, you know...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...enjoy the... the weather. Nice and clean and, you know, some good place for... yes. And maybe you can do some, like a racing boat...

**M:** Oh, yes.

**S:** Some... you know, like some festival.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**M:** Yes. Plus it would be nice...

**S:** Yes.

**M:** ...to actually know that you can actually walk down the street and then there'll be a lake right there that you can do all your fun stuff with.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** Go swimming... I think that's really cool.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Have you ever been to... either of you, when you were younger, been to like a... a summer camp kind of a thing where you went to... you got to do all those types of activities?

**M:** I'm not sure if it's technically a summer camp, but at my school in the summertime there's a program that goes up from grade one?

**S:** [29:57] Second grade to sixth grade.

**M:** From second grade to sixth grade and basically it's almost like summer camp, except you do... it's almost like school, but like fun school. And it would be my last year, for the summer.

**S:** Actually, I have a better idea. One day if the pond becomes safe and cleaned we can build as... as like a discovery park. You know like a zipline.

**M:** Oh my gosh!

**S:** And we do some kind of, like, more water activities. That way you can attract more visitors and, you know, bring more people...

**Perkins:** Yes.

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**S:** ...come back to the pond, visits.

**Perkins:** Cool.

**S:** But, future...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Those are good ideas.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** I don't know if Holly mentioned it, but on May 4<sup>th</sup>...

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** ...we're going to be having an event.

**S:** And yes. And then she did mention about June 1<sup>st</sup> at...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...next procession coming. So, yes.

**Perkins:** Cool. So, we'll try to get some fun activities to have.

**S:** Yes. Especially if you can have like a duck boat that people can sit on it and then go around. I don't know if you know about Blackstone River...

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...that they have that type of boat for the visitor.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Even if we collect a small fee to help, you know, some kind...

**Perkins:** Yes, sure.

**S:** ...money to help clean up the pond and then get the project going.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Even a small fee, maybe like resident in that area could be like a no charge, but let's say people from Cranston, Warwick, you know...

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...come in. They're from... not residents. So, I mean, small fee, you know, just keep the bathroom clean or view better. You know, stuff like that.

**Perkins:** Yes. Those are great ideas.

**S:** Yes. I really, I'd really like to see that pond become... Like I say, the Rhode Island is just a small state. And in the summertime it would be nice if you have that kind of park... discover activities. You know, outdoor activities. I don't know...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Maybe a little zipline and you land it in the water. I think that's so much fun for the kids. I, you know, people can enjoy that. And duck boat and canoeing and then...

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...even the paddle boats for rental. You know? Something I think. That's something that we really hope to see in the future.

**Perkins:** Cool.

**S:** Yes, when you grow up maybe M?

**M:** Yes, no offense Rhode Island...

**S:** Yes.

**M:** ...but you don't have anything that's really fun.

**S:** Yes, it's mostly...

**M:** I have to always go to Massachusetts, to Connecticut...

**S:** ...or out of state...[inaudible].

**M:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay. And... and can you tell me a little bit about what you do for work?

**S:** I am a customer service—I work for the [omitted by request], manufacturer in Thailand, and then we import and sell in the US.

**Perkins:** Okay, so when you came here it was for work.

**S:** Yes, work-related. Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay. And do you... do you think that you would like to return to Thailand at some point? Maybe after you... you retire or you you've made...

**S:** Maybe during by retirement, yes.

**M:** Yes!

**S:** I might spend wintertime there. And summertime here.

**Perkins:** Yes. Have you been to Thailand M?

**S:** No.

**M:** Not yet, but I've heard a lot about it.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**M:** A lot. So it feels like I actually have been there, except I haven't, but I really want to go.

**S:** Hopefully pretty soon, hopefully.

**M:** I think next year we might go.

**S:** Maybe.

**Perkins:** Cool. What have you... what have you heard about it? What have been some of the stories?

**M:** Well my cousin and my grandma are currently there right now. And they've sent me a lot of photos around the temples. Yet again, I don't like heat and my cousin has told me all the negative stuff about Thailand. About...

**S:** Humidities.

**M:** ...how there's humidity, the weather, a lot of insects. There's also homeless people, which I don't want to see. I don't... I don't like seeing homeless people because I feel, like, really bad. And there's stray dogs and then she told me a story about bees. Oh bees...

**S:** The insect, yes. But there are nice parts. They also have nice parts.

**M:** Yes. Other than that, if like those didn't exist, then I would be happy.

**S:** Doesn't matter. Everywhere you go they have them, you know?

**Perkins:** Yes.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Both... both sides...

**Perkins:** But you're excited to... to visit at some point?

**S:** Yes.

**M:** Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Cool. Are there... are there other people in the neighborhood from Thailand?

**S:** No, no.

**M:** [34:55] But my friends... my friend who lives across from me, their family is Cambodian. But I think we're the only Asians around... right?

**S:** Yes, I think so.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** Other than that they're act... they're other than... Spanish or African American.

**S:** Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Okay. And what about at school?

**M:** Community Prep has mixed cultures. But in my class—I think... well, there's only three Asian people and I think it's a competition between African Americans and Spanish people. Other than that... or European people.

**Perkins:** Okay. Community Prep. What kind of school is that? Is that a public or private...

**S:** Small private.

**Perkins:** Small private? Cool. And... and you guys are both happy with...

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** ...that educationally?

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** That's great. So what kind of stories can you tell me about things that have happened growing up, either one of you, or at Mashapaug? Any... any funny stories or strange things that happened?

**S:** Can you [M] think of any?

**M:** Oh! Yes. In the summer... is it in the summer?

**S:** For the procession.

**M:** I think it's like around May. Not the procession, but I think it's preparing for the procession. It's really fun because we get to do a whole bunch of projects.

**S:** Oh yes.

**M:** Last year we made tin foil hats and we would actually be able to put water in it. Sadly, I couldn't make it because I had to go somewhere with my school that was really, like, a project for school. And... but I let my mom wear my hat and she basically...

**S:** The water.

**M:** ...put water in it and then they walked all the way to Roger Williams.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** And then they went to the pond and then they dumped the water into the pond. And I thought that was a really good idea.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Cool.

**S:** [inaudible]...the water to the pond.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Yes. Yes.

**M:** Yes, when my hat broke twice, because it's basically tin foil tape and a lot of tin foil and a plastic bottle and...

**S:** Yes, because they make from the recycled...

**M:** Yes. But I think that's a good idea.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** I mean it actually fit and it was actually a hat that I could actually use and actually put water in it. Most hats that I attempt to make would just turn into a big blob. But this one I... it was successful and it was able to put water in. Like whole... I think it was like a whole soda can of water, right?

**S:** Yes, you can...

**M:** A whole soda bottle of water.

**S:** Right. Yes, you can use water bottles...

**M:** Yes.

**S:** ...and other plastic containers.

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** For recycle.

**Perkins:** Cool. And... and what about you S? Any... any stories that jump out at you?

**S:** Nothing that I can think of. Yes. Like I said, I pretty much learn about Mashapaug Pond from...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...my daughter's school. So.

**Perkins:** Well it doesn't have to relate to Mashapaug Pond. It could be anything about the... the neighborhood or... or...

**M:** My friend Isabella. She's the one who owns... she's the one with the grandma that owns the senior house. She... we learned... in third grade we saw pictures of the Native Americans that used to live there. And I think—I forgot what their name

was... I forgot the name, but her great-great-great-uncle, I think, was chief of that tribe. And I think that was a really cool coincidence that I lived there... she's my best friend... her uncle is, like, important. We learned about him.

**M:** So...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**M:** I think that was pretty funny.

**S:** Yes, yes. Our land is small, yes.

**Perkins:** That is cool. Have you... do you... did you know that there was quite a Native American presence at... at the area?

**M:** Mhmm. Yes.

**S:** Yes, I did.

**Perkins:** Is that... that something else you learned in school? Or...

**M:** [39:47] Yes, and also this year there was a lady who came who learned everything about being a Native American. And she came to our class and she brought a whole bunch of props with her that the Native Americans would've used, like bones, deer feet... That's pretty disturbing. But also she had us shear corn and kind of crunch it up. And we watched a documentary. And I thought that was really cool because I actually did feel like a Native American.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes, how they lived in the past.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** Part of growing up.

**M:** Yes.

**S:** See how much things have changed now...

**M:** Yes.

**S:** ...from that time?

**M:** I like the future though.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** What was the documentary about?

**M:** It was basically about what the boys would do by, like, from a baby to, like, around toddler. And... and then teenager. And then we learned about what the girls would do. And then basically we learned about the history and actually we learned a *little* bit about Mashapaug Pond since the Native Americans used to live there.

**Perkins:** Cool. And what do you want to do when you grow up, M?

**M:** I want to be a doctor.

**Perkins:** A doctor.

**M:** That's totally random, but a doctor!

**Perkins:** Okay. And... and do you think that you... Let me see how to word this. Do you think that your experience with... with Mashapaug Pond or with other ponds—or really just with nature in general—has that had any kind of an impact on you in terms of what... where you'd like to live when you grow up or what you would like to do or what types of organizations you'd like to be involved with?

**M:** I would like to be involved with when they actually come up with the plan of how to save it. Like officially how the government's going to save it. I would love to be a part of that, to actually see what happened then and remember in my childhood to now when the park would be... I mean the pond would be clean. And I think that's a big impact of how I'm going to live the rest of my life with. Because then I'm going to be 24/7 going to that pond. And I think that's a good change that I will notice.

**Perkins:** Cool. And why do you... what do you think is the most important reason for saving the pond? Is it just because it's important that the pond is clean? Or is it that people can use it or that it will look nice?

**M:** I think it's more for the people and the animals, and the environment too. For the people, they can actually not have to go, like, and drive 2 mile... to Connecticut, to Maine... to all the places that... where... that the fun is. They can actually just walk down the street or drive like 5 minutes away...

**S:** Mhmm.

**M:** ...to this wonderful place where there will be lots of animals. And the animals would be happy. And they would be able to enjoy themselves and not actually worry about falling into the pond and then getting polluted or sick or anything like that. And the environment will be clean too. And also the residents will, because if the

environment isn't clean than it will kind of spread around the residents that are living there. And I think that's an important thing to be concerned about too.

**Perkins:** Yes. That's a great answer. And... and what... what are your [S] thoughts on that matter?

**S:** You mean the... going forward?

**Perkins:** Or just why it's... the most important reason for... for saving the pond.

**S:** Yes, like I said, good for the neighbors.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** And people live around us and then something to... to carry on for the next generation, that we still have a nice pond in Providence, Rhode Island.

**Perkins:** Yes. Okay. And... and, switching gears again back to... back to the neighborhood that you guys live in, I'd just... just like to hear a little more about that. Is... is it a safe neighborhood, would you say?

**S:** [45:06] My street, I'm not—as of now I don't... I'm not sure, because, like I say, you know, more stuff in that area... More like rental property instead of people own and live there. Like people come and go.

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** That's why it seem...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...like everything, you know, keep to themselves...

**Perkins:** So it's hard to kind of...

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** ...have it stabilized.

**S:** Yes, yes, right.

**Perkins:** Okay. Is there... is there any kind of crime or is it...?

**S:** Nothing that I know of. My street, so.

**Perkins:** Okay, that's good.

**S:** Yes, but I don't know about other streets...

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...around here, so.

**M:** Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Okay. And if there was... there was one thing that you wanted... you wanted to convey about either your community, the... the pond, your experiences growing up, your experiences in school... Just, each of you, if... if you just want to pick one thing that... that you'd like to contribute.

**M:** I think... I think the community around us... Well, for the street that we live on, it's not a bad area, except there's just some kids that like to play in the streets. And sometimes they can kind of trespass into other people's yards. But they don't do anything bad. They might just play a little hide-and-seek or whatever. But I think that kind of concerns me, until one day they think about taking something from somebody else's yard. And I think that's a really bad idea to be... but it's a good idea to be concerned about. Sometimes when I see them on the street I kind of worry that they'll come into our yard and maybe... and maybe take something from us. I have, like, a disgrace against that because I'm scared of a lot of stuff that's not necessary to be scared of. Like when I was in the car and we picked up a nice—I think we bought a table and... but it wouldn't exactly fit in the car, so we had to kind of stick it out the window. And I was really scared that it would fall out. I don't know why, I'm just scared of that happening and then it just leaving. So I think that's really bad. I don't know why I'm scared of that, but it's just weird. And also there was a house that's ne... there was a house across the street from us that... it was remade, but before people lived there, there was... I don't know. Who... who's the one with the stray dog? You know, the one in the porch that was stuck up there? Remember that?

**S:** [inaudible]

**M:** But there... I think there were, kind of, people who didn't really respect the neighborhood and they just left their dog on the porch. And I'm not sure how long it's been there, but I think that's—I think they were Spanish? Yes, but I don't want people like that to be here in the neighborhood again because they left their dog for like a week or so without any food. And then the fire department had to come and get the dog out...

**S:** Rescue.

**M:** Yes. And I was really scared that something like that or somebody would happen... somebody would happen to come in our yard and stuff like that.

**Perkins:** Okay. And... and what about you, S? A final remark or memory or... or thoughts?

**S:** My thought. I just, like I say, I'm hoping for the pond, you know...

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** ...for the better environment and the next generation or next residents in that area, you know, can see the... the better improvements. Like I say, one day I really want to see that place have a zipline, become a discovery park for the kids to enjoy for the summer.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Yes, of course. Okay. And... and then if I... if I could get you guys to describe the pond, each in... in just one word, what would you choose?

**S:** Let's see...

**M:** [50:01] I would say, hope. Yes.

**S:** Let's see...

**Perkins:** Did she take yours [S]?

**S:** Safe. Safe.

**Perkins:** Safe.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay. And after being involved with the... the Urban Pond Procession and learning more about all these things, do you... do you guys feel like you have any sort of emotional connection with that area? Do you think of it fondly or is it just kind of a nice place to go visit, but...

**S:** Yes, a place to go to visit.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes, even for a walk.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes, for the summer.

**Perkins:** And maybe if they could get a boardwalk that would be...

**S:** Yes, right. I mean, it doesn't have to be going around, but at least some portion of it...

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...to go, you know, you can see more view at both ends.

**Perkins:** Yes.

**S:** Yes.

**Perkins:** As we're setting up our... our walking tour here we're trying to figure out what locations around the pond are easiest to access.

**S:** I would say by the boathouse.

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** But at least, the boathouse here, I think, it's off to the right-hand side. That... right now you have a lot of trees. They can cut that, you know...

**M:** Mhmm.

**Perkins:** Mhmm.

**S:** ...and make it more opening, so you can see more, better view.

**M:** And also I'm wondering, because it's behind... the opening for it is behind Job Lot and people can't really see it from there unless you actually ask somebody who knows how to get there.

**S:** Yes.

**M:** I would like to see. I would like to see that place kind of get closed and then get... have them find a different place where it's more open and people who drive by looking... and are looking for a place to relax can actually see it and actually say: "Hey, why don't I go in there and relax."

**S:** Yes, you need a sign to...

**M:** Yes. And also there's a random house, like, where the opening is.

**S:** Oh yes.

**M:** And I'm kind of wondering, is it like a normal resident house or do they have to do with the pond?

**Perkins:** That's a good question. I don't know.

**S:** Yes, the house there. Yes, one house there.

**M:** And also there's pollution, like, around that little Mashapaug Pond area. And I'm kind of concerned for that house, because the house is like right here [points to table] and then just a few more feet away is the pond that's polluted still. And I'm... I'm just hoping that that house is going to be alright, because I kind of want to see that house still be there, right there, random house, and have the pond be clean, and say: "Hey, that... I remember the time when that pond was polluted, but that house was still there." I want that to happen.

**Perkins:** That's cool. And so you were saying there's... there's not a sign out right now, by the Job Lot.

**S:** No, I don't see that. Yes.

**Perkins:** But you think that would be...

**M:** It's just like a little rock pathway that's open.

**Perkins:** Yes. Okay. Do you think the... the way the roads are kind of break the pond up because there's not really one road around the pond?

**S:** Yes.

**M:** Mhmm.

**S:** I think you have to park the car outside and then just walk to the pond.

**Perkins:** Mhmm. Well, those... those are most of my questions. It... are there any questions that you guys have or other things you'd like to say before we finish up?

**M:** Also, in order to become a doctor, I want to go to Brown.

**Perkins:** You want to go to Brown?

**M:** Yes.

**Perkins:** I think that's...

**M:** I really want to go.

**Perkins:** I think you'd enjoy it there. Cool.

**M:** Mommy?

**Perkins:** Well study hard.

**M:** Thank you.

**Perkins:** I... I have the utmost confidence in... in your ability. You're a bright young girl.

**S:** Yes. Yes.

**Perkins:** Okay, well I think that's about it.

[End of Interview]