[00:00:04]

You are listening to Tell Me Your a Story where we connect to HLS staff on a personal level. Hello everyone. This is Edgar Kley Filho from HLS Human Resources Department. My pronouns are he, him, his. Today we're talking to Ciara Swan from also HR, who will tell us about her life, how long she's in this position at HLS and what she does. Thank you for joining us Ciara and please tell me your story.

[00:00:39]

Hi, Edgar.

[00:00:39]

Hi.

[00:00:40]

Thank you for having me.

[00:00:42]

My pleasure.

[00:00:42]

I'm so excited to be here.

[00:00:44]

I'm really, really excited that you are here. We're planning this for awhile.

[00:00:49]

Yeah, we have been.

[00:00:51]

We have been with quite a few folks and now you're preparing for an our own conversation. [LAUGHTER] We are here together for Melanie.

[00:01:01]

There we're. This is a second episode, right?

[00:01:03]

Yes.

[00:01:04]

Yeah, it's been awhile.

[00:01:06]

[LAUGHTER] Tell me about you. How you identify yourself, tell me about your family if you can. Are you from Massachusetts, New England area or where your families from?

[00:01:18]

Happy too. My name is Ciara Swan. I use the she, her series. I am a daughter and a sister. I'm a dog lover. I am a coffee lover. [LAUGHTER] It's a necessity in every day. I am a beach lover. That is my happy place as being on the beach. I love to go to the cape, it's a big part of my life. My parents are born and raised in Massachusetts.

[00:01:49]

Oh, Massachusetts?

[00:01:50]

Yeah.

[00:01:50]

Wow.

[00:01:51]

I've been here my whole life aside from college in Connecticut. But yeah, I love Massachusetts, I love Boston. I don't know if I'll ever lived anywhere else. [LAUGHTER] Maybe we will see what life has in store. I have one older brother. We are six years apart.

[00:02:08]

Nice.

[00:02:09]

We're very close though.

[00:02:11]

Do you know how far back your family is here in Massachusetts or not?

[00:02:17]

My grandparents parents came from Ireland.

[00:02:19]

Ireland?

[00:02:19]

Yeah.

[00:02:20]

So you have your Irish backgrounfd there?

[00:02:21]

Yeah, that's my very Irish name and my Gaelic name. [LAUGHTER]

[00:02:28]

What specific town you grew up?

[00:02:31]

I grew up in Milton.

[00:02:32]

Melton?

[00:02:33]

Yeah, just outside of Boston. It's pretty close. I didn't move too far from home. [LAUGHTER]

[00:02:37]

How was growing up in Massachusetts, the typical New England style cheering for Red Sox.

[00:02:48]

Oh yeah. Thank Boston sports fan. It was funny actually when I went to school in Connecticut. A lot of my friends were from New York and New Jersey so a lot of Yankee fans there, a lot of New York Jets and Giant. We had [OVERLAPPING] a lot of attention. I watched the Super Bowl by myself in college. When the Patriots came back and when I was watching it by myself and my dorm, my roommates were not happy with me, [LAUGHTER] my screaming and cheering. That's probably my core memory for that of me in college.

[00:03:20]

Where in sports do you like New England sports gear?

[00:03:24]

Of course.

[00:03:25]

Really?

[00:03:25]

Yeah, proudly.

[00:03:26]

Never had any problem? It's funny. I have an issue, I'm always worried about that. I don't know why. I like sports in general. Not that much but I learned how to really get involved more here. I was able to see the entire denote all the four main parts here.

[00:03:45]

Yeah, we have been lucky.

[00:03:47]

When I see students at HLS walking through the hallways with New York Yankees or whatever. Sometimes Giants have some of them from different parts of the country too. I feel like, aren't you worried about someone during a hard time? But I guess it's not that bad.

[00:04:03]

I think you just wear it proudly. I think we've been very lucky.

[00:04:07]

But nobody was ever too nasty, was just teasing.

[00:04:09]

Oh, no. It's always teasing. I think maybe a little bit of jealousy. [LAUGHTER]

[00:04:15]

Yes, that's the main reason. How much have you heard about how much they hate Beatrice or?

[00:04:22]

Oh my gosh, all the time.

[00:04:23]

I understand the rivalry between Red Sox and the Yankees. That's very typical, embracing soccer as well. Because it depends on real some Paolo or depends on the states. That is very common. They'll go through a very dangerous line sometimes the way that they cheer for their teams there, the different clubs can be very sometimes violent to be [OVERLAPPING] there are some bad situation. I always admired level of sportsman shipping general and even the fence, is rare to see something getting really out-of-control.

[00:04:59]

Definitely, I think it brings people together. Have you gone to a parade?

[00:05:04]

No, I have not.

[00:05:06]

Oh my gosh. If you can experience going to a parade from one of the championships you should.

[00:05:11]

Wow, and I had so many that I should have tried.

[00:05:13]

I will say when I was in school and which was in Connecticut and the Patriots won, I drove all the way home to Boston to go to the parade. My best friend came too from her school, which is in New Hampshire. It was a little bit of a shorter drive for her, but yeah, I drove three hours home to go to the parade.

[00:05:30]

That's really interesting.

[00:05:31]

I wouldn't miss it.

[00:05:33]

Let's go back then. You lived most of your life in Melton?

[00:05:38]

Yeah, my whole life.

[00:05:39]

How was going through a school?

[00:05:41]

I would say for me, I did love school. I went to the mountain public school system. It was great. There's four elementary schools, one middle school, and high school. It's cool to see everyone coming together from being all individualized. That's cool. Then you come and you meet everyone at middle school and then you are altogether for high school.

[00:06:01]

That was from all the way from I wouldn't say elementary but [OVERLAPPING]

[00:06:05]

Sixth grade. [OVERLAPPING] Everyone's all the other. I loved it. I was very fortunate to have a really great close-knit friend group. We're all still best friends.

[00:06:16]

You're still friends?

[00:06:17]

All 15 of us that are still really, really close.

[00:06:21]

Fifteen? That's wonderful.

[00:06:21]

Yeah, we're very close. I'm grateful for that. It was interesting when we all went off to college, we all went to different schools. There was only two people that went to the same school, which was UMass Amherst specifically. The rest of us we're all at different schools.

[00:06:38]

All at different school. [OVERLAPPING] How we do get together?

[00:06:42]

Just for holidays.

[00:06:44]

Assuming that they all come back to Boston, right?

[00:06:46]

Yeah, if everyone was able to come back, it would be for Thanksgiving and Christmas and we will make the most of it. Then we'd have the summers, of course. But I'm really fortunate that we're all still so close. It's crazy going from 6th grade and meeting these people and becoming friends. Now here we are all in our careers [LAUGHTER] and still super close. Very, very special. Some of us have moved away. Some of my friends live in New York. Some live in California, but we're all still really close. I feel very fortunate, very grateful for that. A lot of my friends from school would be shocked when I would say, I'm going home because there is a tournament that my friends are putting together [LAUGHTER] or whatever it maybe, we would just find reasons to all be together. It would be an annual thing. We do friends giving every year before Thanksgiving.

[00:07:42]

That's nice.

[00:07:44]

I think it's important to find opportunities and reasons to bring people together. When you make it a tradition, it just feels that much more special. I don't think it's necessarily common, but I have and I know that. I think it makes me even more grateful and appreciative for them. But we're always there to support each other.

[00:08:06]

Yeah, I think your story is very unique and is beautiful in that way. Because when you can say that you have 15 friends that went off from the 6th grade all the way to the end of my high school and you're still friends until now, that's a completely different way to look into it.

[00:08:24]

I think there's been a lot that has brought us together.

[00:08:29]

As for proximity, you leave it nearby.

[00:08:31]

Yeah, actually, it's funny because obviously now none of us are at home. But when we were in high school, we had all drive to each other's houses to hang out and recently I was driving over to one of my friends' families house. I was like, oh my gosh, I haven't driven it over this way in so long. I used to drive over this way almost weekly after school all the time and a lot of my friends lives on one side of town and I lived on the opposite side of town. I was always the furthest one away. But yeah, I think just from living close to one another, going to school together for middle school and high school, we've had hardship in our friend group. One of my best friends, her dad unexpectedly passed away senior year of high school. All of us coming together to be there for her, I think, really solidified our friendship, in being able to support her through something that was so unexpected. I think in certain way is they're more than my friends, they're like my family.

[00:09:36]

It becomes a very special support group.

[00:09:39]

Yeah, absolutely. We all went on Monday to go watch one of my friends from the marathon. Even still to this day we're there for the highs and the lows and the changes in careers and moving to different states and finding ways to keep in touch and still maintain that I think is so important. I have two questions on that.

[00:09:57]

Sure.

[00:09:59]

All of your friends are female?

[00:10:02]

No.

[00:10:03]

You haven't mixed boys and girls?

[00:10:05]

Yeah. We do.

[00:10:06]

Right now after all these years, how many have married and how many still single?

[00:10:10]

Actually, no one is married.

[00:10:13]

Really?

[00:10:13]

I shouldn't say that. It's funny. A few of my friends are in relationships in their friend group, but just it's funny. But one of them, they're engaged now. That's exciting.

[00:10:25]

That's nice.

[00:10:25]

We having a wedding in 2024. That's really exciting. [LAUGHTER]

[00:10:30]

Did you have, for example, the ones that are engaged in serious relationship here now, did you have a vote to say that person works with that person?

[00:10:41]

Oh, no. Of course, they're already accepted. They are in the friend group. We love them no matter what but some of us do tease we're like, come on, we're ready for a wedding.

[00:10:51]

We had a joke with some of our friends because well, I have a much smaller group of friends.

[00:10:57]

Yeah.

[00:10:59]

It's funny when one would be starting dating someone.

[00:11:03]

Yeah.

[00:11:03]

We would say, okay, you need to pass this background check for us to see if, fill out.

[00:11:09]

I think that's the case if you do outside of their friend group. I think if you're already someone that we love and accept that.

[00:11:16]

Oh, if you already have an idea?

[00:11:18]

Yeah. Exactly.

[00:11:19]

Yeah. That makes much easier.

[00:11:20]

Otherwise, then there's a task.

[00:11:21]

You need to definitely have to be passing by your homeboy to see if it's okay or not. Assuming going to Connecticut for college, college was also easy, was what expected, surprised or not?

[00:11:35]

I think for me at first it was challenging. Just being away from home, I'm very close to my family. I feel very fortunate that I have such a great relationship with my parents and my brother that being away was really hard for me at first. But then I grew to love it. I was very fortunate to have my cousin there. He was a year older and then pretty funny. His younger sister, who was a year younger than me, she went there as well.

[00:12:03]

Wow.

[00:12:05]

I was very fortunate to have family close by and it was only a few hours away. For family weekends and stuff, my parents would come to visit. But I love Sacred Heart. That's very once.

[00:12:15]

It's interesting, makes me think about my own. Of course, I was much older when I decided to come to US. But I was dead attached to family as well and when I came here, the intention was to stay here just for six months, learn English, improve English, and go back to Brazil to get a better job there. I remember my sister and brother saying, you are not going to stay more than 30 days there. Because the way that you are here, you are not going to survive far from home. It took me 15 years to be able to go back to see them again just via phone. Remember aging very well myself here, even for the first, I would say 10 years of 2000s, we didn't have that easy connection like a video connection, because they know. I think Skype was the first one we styled.

[00:13:17]

Yeah. Oh my gosh, I forgot about Skype and then became FaceTime and now here we're on Zoom every day.

[00:13:23]

Now with WhatsApp, you have defined in the video in such a freeway. I think I still have a bag of international phone cards that I bought because I had to call my mom every week, sometimes twice a week, share thoughts with them and see. I kept, I think, most of them just to see and I have such a big bag of international cards and they were considered at that time a cheaper way. You could not make a call from our landline. Making a call from landline international would be a fortune. But then if you use the international phone cards with $5, I wouldn't be able to call twice a week and still to talk a lot. Now you have WhatsApp or whatever.

[00:14:14]

You just download it on your phone.

[00:14:19]

WhatsApp, Telegram and there's another one that I don't remember Signal, I think it is, that are the international systems that you can call for free.

[00:14:29]

It's amazing.

[00:14:30]

Video freeze and all this kind of a thing.

[00:14:32]

We're so fortunate to have that now.

[00:14:35]

The change in terms of then when I see you talking about Iowa schools with my family and I went to school in Connecticut and that felt too far. I keep thinking, I understand why my family gets mad with me for being so far because that's really [OVERLAPPING].

[00:14:52]

It's the connection, right?

[00:14:53]

Yeah.

[00:14:53]

They want you to be right there.

[00:14:54]

Yeah. After you finish college, then we start working?

[00:15:02]

Not exactly. I actually went to Sacred Heart specifically for a program. I was initially pursuing my doctorate in physical therapy. When I was applying to colleges, I only applied to schools that had that program.

[00:15:17]

Oh, wow.

[00:15:20]

I limited myself for sure in my search so I wouldn't change anything, but it's definitely something that I've reflected on now in my life. I wonder where things would have went if I didn't do that. I went to Sacred Heart, I was pre-accepted to the graduate program for PT. I changed my undergrad degree. I was initially doing athletic training, basically as a prerequisite for PT. I changed that and I did exercise science. I loved exercise science. That's where I met a lot of my best friends from college. I'm super grateful I did that program. I graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and Nutrition and then I went on to do PT. I was doing very well academically, but I knew that that was not what I saw myself doing for the rest of my life.

[00:16:12]

Then you realized that was the master's degree?

[00:16:15]

It's the doctorate.

[00:16:15]

A doctorate? A PhD?

[00:16:17]

Yes, it's three years of education. For me, I did have this inkling of doubt, of is PT really what I want to do when I was a junior and a senior and at that point I was so far into my program. I just kept thinking to myself, this is the whole reason why I went to Sacred Heart. This is the only reason I came to the school and not that I would change anything about my journey and going through college there and the people that I've met and everything, the organizations I partook in, it was amazing. But I really just felt this sense of I owe this to myself to at least give it a try. I did. I was doing very well academically, but I was probably the most unhappy I'd ever been in my life in that program. I made the decision to leave. It was a really hard decision.

[00:17:15]

You were already to second year?

[00:17:17]

No. I was actually only a month or two into the program.

[00:17:20]

Okay.

[00:17:21]

I just knew this is not for me.

[00:17:26]

What you think clicked because you have a plan, you have goals, you have everything that you thought, oh no, this is a path and then when you go to a different school and you are a month into this program, that would be a three-year program?

[00:17:40]

Yeah.

[00:17:41]

What clicked? What made you feel like, no, this is not it.

[00:17:46]

I think for me the real reason I initially pursued physical therapy was that one-on-one with an individual being able to help them develop and progress. A lot of times people come to PT because they're going through something, right?

[00:18:03]

Yes.

[00:18:04]

Being able to work with them and to be their confidant and to really help them develop and encourage them and give them a development training plan and to see their success and to be there, to guide them was really what I loved about PT. What I didn't love was the hands-on physical medical piece.

[00:18:22]

Okay.

[00:18:22]

I thought it was really interesting the learning aspect, but the applied piece I didn't love as much. That's where it clicked for me of I love working with people, I love helping people, I love developing people, but maybe not in the medical way, the way I thought, so what else could I be doing?

[00:18:41]

Do you think that was really the academic prior to having to learn all that magical part of biology and everything else physical?

[00:18:50]

I think for me, I love to learn. I think I've always been a very dedicated and passionate student.

[00:18:58]

We don't know that it was, oh, my goodness, I need to sit down and need to read this textbook and I'm going to have an exam on 14 chapters next week. You know what I mean? It wasn't that that was daunting to me. I think it was more so knowing when I get this degree in three years, there's going to be three years of my time that I now have no work experience, I'm spending three years of time investing into something, three years of money of education, and I'm going to be so limited to only doing this when I'm not sure if this is truly what makes me happy.

[00:19:33]

Yes.

[00:19:35]

I didn't want to limit myself to figuring that out.

[00:19:37]

You already had a sense that it was not because I assume that mood changes. The mindset is kind of I'm frustrated here, I'm sad here.

[00:19:48]

I think a part of me too was feeling honestly really lost and confused because I was feeling like I did this entire degree for my undergraduate for something so specific, and now am I just going to not do that, and then what do I do? I feel like I'm essentially starting over.

[00:20:09]

How did you make the decision?

[00:20:11]

Yeah, it's pretty funny. I mentioned to you I'm very close with my family. I wanted to call my parents and ask for advice. They were in Italy on vacation. [LAUGHTER] When we talk about making international goals, that was when I really needed, but I knew they were on vacation and this was a decision that I was going to have to make myself. They could give me advice and they could tell me that they're going to support me no matter what. But in the end, they're going to tell me it's my decision. So my parents were in Italy, and as I mentioned, I'm very close with my brother, so I called him.

[00:20:48]

So you talked to your brother.

[00:20:49]

Yeah. I talked to my brother. Like I said, I'm on WhatsApp messaging my parents. Having this time in my life where I'm making a really hard decision, I don't know what to do and I just need someone to make that decision for me. But of course, no one can make that about myself. I just called my brother to talk to him and he said to me, you have to do what makes you happy, and you're always going to have a support in you and whatever decision you make, and if you really feel like this isn't the one for you, then you'll figure it out, it's going to be okay.

[00:21:26]

Yeah.

[00:21:28]

I think I just needed to hear that. I, of course, knew my family was always going to support me.

[00:21:34]

I think the doubt is really hard on us.

[00:21:39]

I think especially at this time that I was making this decision, all of my friends had already graduated and were in new jobs after school, and here I was a few months after graduation just making this entirely different career change.

[00:21:55]

Yeah.

[00:21:57]

I think it was probably one of the hardest decisions I've had to make in my life.

[00:22:01]

At a young age and having all this pressure.

[00:22:05]

Yeah.

[00:22:05]

Amazing. You took the decision and laughed.

[00:22:08]

I did and I laughed.

[00:22:10]

What was the next step after?

[00:22:12]

I did a lot of development on myself to figure out where my interests lie, where my passions lie, so I did a lot of career tests. You can just do them online. You put in information about yourself and where your interests are and where you think your strengths are, and it'll tell you different professions that you think you would fit. We had talked about this a little bit.

[00:22:35]

Yeah.

[00:22:35]

Remember you said it when you did some career test? [LAUGHTER]

[00:22:37]

Yes, mine was very specific. You have the choice to be a priest, a psychologist, a pastor, or dealing with the vocation, our people in general.

[00:22:48]

Mine basically all pointed me towards people, sales, and human resources. One was a translator, which I thought was very interesting because I am not fluent in any other language. So I was like, well, that's interesting. [LAUGHTER] But yeah, so I was geared towards HR, but it's pretty interesting because my mom works in human resources. My entire life I grew up and I saw all the hard work that my mom does and how amazing she is with people, but I always have been told, my mom's name is Gretchen. People would call me little Gretchen. People think we look very much alike. We actually alike, all this stuff. So I always was like, I'm never doing what my mom does, I'm not going to do that. And here I am [LAUGHTER] now in HR, which is funny. But I did all these tests and I just talked to her and she's like, yeah, I think you would really enjoy it. I think you would enjoy working with people and being able to develop them in that way, and be a part of their journey, and guide them, and give advice, and coach. I was able to shadow a little bit to get some experience of what the day-to-day might be like, then I just said, all right, let me see what is out there for HR. I applied to the HR assistant position, and yeah, that's how I got started.

[00:24:20]

This all happened in your first job was already at Harvard?

[00:24:24]

It was. That's where I started.

[00:24:26]

You came straight to our HR.

[00:24:27]

I did, yeah. I think one thing for me that I will always be grateful for is the chance that our HR team, and specifically Roxanne took on me. I don't have a background in HR. I did have a lot of transferable skills from the work that I did, a PT clinic, I was a Patient Care Coordinator. I was managing eight different calendars at once for a clinic and they could have up to 15 patients a day. Intake paperwork, dealing with very confidential information, being a confidant, working through workers' comp claims that were coming through the clinic. We did have a number of transferable skills, but really all you need is one person to give you a chance to say yes to show what you have to offer, and that was Roxanne for me, and so I will forever be indebted to her. This opportunity that she gave me, I don't think I would've had anywhere else, so I'm just very grateful.

[00:25:29]

I think this is an amazing thing for us to talk about a little bit.

[00:25:34]

It's all about an opportunity, right?

[00:25:35]

Yes, I will give you that opportunity, I will trust you on your own.

[00:25:40]

She had that faith in me, at least that I was going to be able to be successful in the role and be able to give her and the team the support that they needed.

[00:25:49]

I think this is not just beautiful, but credit for the vision that a leader has when they are hiring. Just see, okay, I see that there's more in you.

[00:26:03]

The potential.

[00:26:04]

The potential, that's what we need here.

[00:26:07]

Yeah, absolutely.

[00:26:07]

More than whatever your beautiful resume you show me, or even if you have experienced in the past, is how much your potential, your people skill you show up when we have this interview, when you have this conversation and everything else.

[00:26:27]

I think even phone screens and interviews, it's your opportunity to show what you are beyond the paper.

[00:26:33]

The vision from Roxanne and HR department in the process of hiring you and trusting your potential as well, of course, was credit for them, and how much that paid off because you are a fantastic professional. I'm working with you and I know, other than regardless of the beautiful human being that you are. But you are a very responsible and very serious professional in what you do, I have watched that and witnessed that. Then you think, "There you go. That's paid off." I think that's so important. I think in your story too, what is amazing on that, and a lot of people might struggle if you want to talk more about this is when you when you hit a roadblock, what do you do?

[00:27:26]

Yeah.

[00:27:26]

You just keep going and you keep suffering, I would say, because you know you were frustrated and sad because it was not what you expect anymore, there was something that changed in your mindset and your plans.

[00:27:41]

I think it's giving yourself the opportunity to do what's right for you, even though it's scary. Now, when I reflect on that decision, I think about how it was probably one of the hardest decisions that I've made, but I also credit myself knowing it's probably one of the bravest decisions that I've made.

[00:27:57]

Yes, very much.

[00:27:59]

I would just encourage people if you're at a crossroads, think about what you deserve and what you want, and one thing that actually, it's interesting, I was told this by someone in college once. When you have to make a hard decision, flip a coin, and it's not to flip a coin because you're just going to let the coin make the decision. The theory of it is when the coin is at its highest peak, you know what decision you want it to land on. You know, when it's coming down, I hope it lands on heads or it lands on tails, whatever that decision may be, and say you truly are telling yourself no, I don't care whatever the decision is, see how you feel when that coin lands. If it lands on heads and you're feeling like, oh, I really wish it was the other decision. I wish it was tails, then you already had the decision made for you. It's an interesting concept.

[00:28:59]

It is a very interesting concept.

[00:29:01]

Yeah.

[00:29:02]

I'm so happy that you are sharing. I never thought about that in that way, but it makes perfect sense for me.

[00:29:08]

I will say I did not flip a coin in making this decision, but I think it's something that I encourage people. I have done in the past, just not in this instance, but it's something I encourage people to do if you're really torn.

[00:29:20]

Because it is true. Some people might look at this as a waste of time. I don't think there is a waste in any moment in your life when you find a path.

[00:29:29]

I agree. As I was making that decision, that is something that crossed my mind of, did I just do all of this for nothing? I don't think that's the case at all. If I hadn't been pursuing physical therapy, I probably wouldn't have made the decision to go to Sacred Heart.

[00:29:46]

Yeah.

[00:29:47]

I wouldn't have met all the amazing friends that I made.

[00:29:50]

Yeah.

[00:29:50]

I wouldn't have had that unbelievable experience to go through college with my cousins.

[00:29:59]

Looking back now there's absolutely nothing that I would regret about the way everything played out.

[00:30:05]

How was your connection with Melanie? I'm talking about Melanie because you recorded her episode in podcast.

[00:30:13]

I know [OVERLAPPING] this morning too.

[00:30:14]

Yeah. She was part of the Year Up that you are also involved. Europe is an amazing organization.

[00:30:26]

She also had a moment of decision when she said that she decided to stop and leave the school and all the doubts that you had and feeling that she disappointed her family and watch her do and she was not. Then she finds Europe. Go through the program. I feel like she got a burst of confidence because you're upset. I think you are free go to Harvard Law School to work. Which that's like for someone was self doubting. That would be a joke. Then she comes a year, get a job. Comes for an internship and then go back to school.

[00:31:12]

She's an inspiration to me. Sincerely, I think one thing that I really respect and admire for her is she took the time to make the decision that was right for her. She let herself go through this journey and figure out, do I want to go back to school? Is now the right time? She's amazing. I encourage everyone to reach out to Melanie if you have not.

[00:31:41]

I would encourage anybody to look for both, talk to Kara [LAUGHTER] and Melanie.

[00:31:46]

Or we can all meet together. Yes.

[00:31:50]

How is now what you are doing is HR. The path that you thought that would be is still room for something else. What are the plans?

[00:32:00]

That's a great question. I am now in the HR generalists possession. I was promoted a year-and-a-half into my HR system position, which was amazing. It was unexpected. Again, another opportunity thanks to the amazing leadership that we have on our team to really believe in the team members that they have and just see their potential and to encourage them. I don't think I would have applied for that position if I wasn't encouraged to do so, it probably wouldn't have crossed my mind. There was an idea that it was mentioned to me, I think you should go for it and I did, and I was promoted and I've been in this role now, which is crazy to think. It's already been two years in this role as the HR generalist and I love it.

[00:32:55]

What do you there? What is the HR generalists?

[00:32:58]

That's a great question. I have my hands in a lot of different pots. I work very closely with the business partners and supporting them and Stacey as our director. I'll assist with any transactions that they might need. I do the same thing for student hires too, I help support that team as well. Transactionally as needed I do all the leave of absences for employees, which is probably one of my favorite parts of my job. I get to work with employees for some pretty challenging reasons if they need to go on a leave, but also really exciting reasons like they have a new baby so that I love. I get to have one-on-one connections with employees and guide managers through their process and be a liaison. They're a third party contractor. That is something I absolutely love. I also do our workers' compensation cases. I'll approve anything that Karen Gray needs me to. [LAUGHTER] Karen Gray sends me a message. I'm like, what do you need, Karen? I've got you. But different projects that I can help with basically anything. If the team needs help, I'm here to help. [LAUGHTER]

[00:34:10]

I wonder how many people do not know how much opportunity and benefits are there that if they have a chat a little bit with someone business partner, or you, or someone in HR, they would find out is the old story. Doesn't hurt to ask a question.

[00:34:30]

Absolutely.

[00:34:30]

You should try. I assume if I'm mistaken, you are doing a job that Karen Gray used to do way back in the day.

[00:34:40]

I don't know actually.

[00:34:41]

In terms of a leave of absence.

[00:34:43]

I think Karen and the business partners used to do the leaves.

[00:34:47]

Because owe my life here for Karen Gray. She was the one who was capable to go and look at everything in terms of the policies, regulations for a leave of absence in the time that I was dealing with my work permit and trying to finalize my green card process. Every two years, at least, if not every year, I had to renew my work pyramid with immigration office. I had six months to apply and receive sometimes depends on what change they would give me three months only. Not necessarily meant that even if we apply exactly the three months prior, I would have the new card coming in. If the new card with the new validation for one or two years, more didn't arrive on time I could not work because one expired the other one didn't arrive yet, so HR wouldn't have that paperwork. The only way that she could do was to give me a leave of absence. I would have wait a little bit and truly documentation was okay so I could move on with mine. I had no clue how to do that. Karen Gray was the one and would call me and say “here, unfortunately, we cannot keep working because the rules are this. You cannot work if you are not…”.

[00:36:14]

But here's what we can do.

[00:36:16]

But this is what we can do.

[00:36:18]

That doesn't surprise me like Karen. Karen is the best. [LAUGHTER] She is always figuring out solutions and she always has the answers and that's why we hashtag AAKF, always ask Karen first. [LAUGHTER]

[00:36:30]

That's true. You are doing part of what she did in the past and would be helping people with the same needs. Everything that, you happy with everything they were doing?

[00:36:42]

I am. Well, I think I still have a lot to learn and I'm very grateful for the team that we have. Opportunities that were given because of that team. If the business partners are working on something and I'm interested, I'll just send them a message and say, if you need help with that, let me know. The trust that they have a need to give me a piece of it or take the time to explain it to me or say, I'll put you on this email or I'll forward this email to you so you can see the process and how it works. But I'd still have so much to learn and I'm just getting started and then I'm just excited to see where this takes me.

[00:37:21]

Well, we are lucky to have you.

[00:37:23]

Thank you. I think we do have an amazing group of people working together.

[00:37:28]

You're very lucky.

[00:37:28]

It's really amazing relationships how we handle the events that you work with. Open is for and I will say again what you already mentioned in terms of Roxanne, to see an individual. Nobody's hired, of course, what she would say? I would love to keep you here forever, but never with intention that we have to come to work with us and stay, is learn and develop and have a chance. If you feel like you have a choice somewhere, go for it. That a vision which I think leaders should have more. I think, of course we all expect to have retention as much as we can. But when is in detriment of the person development and growth that is not a vision that you should keep. Do you have a bucket list?

[00:38:34]

I do have a bucket list.

[00:38:36]

You do. Is anything that we can share or not?

[00:38:39]

Absolutely. Well, I think one thing is probably I love music. I have been going to concerts my entire life. That's one thing that I've probably gotten from my dad. My dad loves music. He plays the guitar. He sings.

[00:38:58]

Really?

[00:38:59]

Yeah, but he doesn't do as much anymore because now our family will ask him to do it and he doesn't want to do when he's asked to perform a show, he'll just do it when he can. But he has really inspired me in music and just how much I love it and I think that is something that I'm really grateful from that I've gotten from him. But I have been to over 30 concerts. I would like to get that number to 50. Then I'm sure it will expand from there, but that's on my list is to get that number to 50. Another is going to Australia.

[00:39:37]

Australia?

[00:39:38]

Yes, I was supposed to study abroad there. That did not happen.

[00:39:41]

I have a curious about that. My only thing is how far it is and how long it takes to get there.

[00:39:47]

I know. Just stop in Hawaii first.

[00:39:49]

Oh, my God I have to [inaudible 00:39:50]. That's my budget. Australia, I don't think I can go there just for one or two weeks. I think if you go there you should you stay longer because it's a long trip and have so much. It's such a different place on Earth to visit.

[00:40:05]

Absolutely.

[00:40:06]

I know someone who went there and had a great time.

[00:40:09]

That's my goal.

[00:40:11]

It's interesting to see. What else?

[00:40:14]

What else?

[00:40:15]

I know that you went to Ireland.

[00:40:18]

I did. It's funny because when I couldn't go to Australia, I went to Ireland. I was supposed to study abroad in Australia. Oh my goodness, this is a funny story. When I was doing my undergraduate in exercise science,, my junior year of college, spring semester, all of my roommates were going abroad. Because I was in a very specific and specialized program there was only certain places that had our classes abroad, one of which was Australia, the other was single Ireland. One of my best friends in my program, her name is Kenzie. I begged Kenzie. I begged her. Please come to Australia with me in the spring. [LAUGHTER] Please come with me. I don't want to go by myself. Will you please come? It will be the best time. She is so adventurous. She's been everywhere. She'll travel. She'll do whatever she wants. She's been to Africa. She's just amazing. She told me, no, I can't go in the spring semester. I can't. I have my sister's graduation from high school, I cannot miss that. I'm going in the fall. I didn't want to go in the fall. I was being stubborn. Kenzie goes fall semester, has the time of her life. Spring semester comes around, canceled. No more exercise science program in Australia.

[00:41:35]

It's just funny how it worked out, but my other option was to go to Ireland. It was a shorter program, it was pretty short, it was only two weeks. It was one class abroad. It was in Dingle, Ireland. It was the best job I've ever bet on.

[00:41:50]

It is an amazing place.

[00:41:52]

Yes.

[00:41:52]

I have been there.

[00:41:53]

As I mentioned, my name is Ciara, it's Gaelic, it's pop Irish way, C-I-A-R-I, I often get Ciara, but that's okay.

[00:42:00]

Is there a meaning that you know of?

[00:42:03]

I probably should know that and I don't. I think my middle name is picked more so for meaning than anything else.

[00:42:10]

Some of them do, I don't think all of them have a meaning, I'm just curious.

[00:42:15]

[OVERLAPPING] I'm not sure. I should probably look that up. I should know that, my goodness. [OVERLAPPING] I can't believe I don't.

[00:42:21]

Tell me about Dingle.

[00:42:23]

It is the cutest quaintest town ever.

[00:42:26]

It is amazing.

[00:42:27]

It is. Everyone that lives there is just happy. They want to get to know you, they want to hear your story, they want to know why you're there.

[00:42:37]

I had a chance to be there too for, I think two days or a day and a half or something. It was a mistake. I went for some places there, and then my good friend, Tracy and Tom, they drove us everywhere with their mom Noleen. We went to two different cars because they have two kids. They brought us all the way to the cliffs first, that is common thing to do. Then from there we went to Dingle. She said You need to see Dingle, even if it's just quick, we're going to be there just for afternoon and go back to Dublin. But there was a problem with Noleen's car, [OVERLAPPING] and then I had to stay. They had to go back because I have to work was a Sunday. Brian does and I say Brian. "Let's stay and then you take the train next day and you go." "That's fine with me," because we love the town. The town was just incredible.

[00:43:30]

It's so cute. It's funny. Gloria went to Ireland too and I kept saying to her, "You need to go to Dingle, you need to go."

[00:43:37]

Yes.

[00:43:38]

I don't even know how to explain it. The atmosphere being there is something so different. A big part of Dingle is the school. Is a study abroad from Sacred Heart.

[00:43:49]

Sacred.

[00:43:50]

Sacred heart goes there.

[00:43:51]

What's the name of the school there, do you remember?

[00:43:53]

Oh my goodness, I don't remember.

[00:43:54]

That's okay.

[00:43:55]

It's interesting because my class is actually in a gym because there's an exercise science program. It's the only gym in Dingle, and it's run by Shane Finn. He's amazing. You should look him up. He is just fantastic. There's a documentary actually about him, but he's a big runner. I forgot what number. I should know exactly what numbers. I think it's 27 marathons. He did like 27 marathons in 27 days. He was my teacher, and it was so funny. Like I mentioned, obviously my name is very Irish. My name is the only name he could remember, and so [NOISE] I kept saying, to him Shane you need to call on someone else. I can't answer every question. But everyone there is just so kind, they want to hear your story, they want to know what you're studying, they want to know what gear you are at Sacred Heart. They do really rely on tourism in Dingle, but it's just an amazing experience and actually got to go with my younger cousin, so that was a really cool experience to share being abroad together.

[00:45:01]

Now I remember the town that we stayed to go to the cliffs and then after we that going to Dingle is Killarney.

[00:45:08]

Yes, Killarney.

[00:45:08]

Then we have the St. Mary's Church, that's an amazing church, and the Abbey. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:45:14]

The Abbey.

[00:45:14]

It's called the Muckross Abbey and has the yew tree inside.

[00:45:22]

I'll have to look it up.

[00:45:24]

If you ever go back there again [OVERLAPPING], a gorgeous place because the Abbey is in a place look like a completely lost in from everything else, and then you get there, which is a cool thing. When you get to this big place where the park is, that it's a museum and a masion that was just run by the museum. There you have horses, chariots so you pay a fee there, and they bring you all the way up to where the Abbey is facing the lake on the other side and tell the entire story. I don't know why they didn't do a movie with that place. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:46:00]

Maybe they will one day.

[00:46:01]

Because it's just amazing. It is.

[00:46:03]

Yeah it is beautiful.

[00:46:05]

There are other places in Ireland that we have been there twice. I went to the North and now we went to the Southwest and South. I still need to go to Cork, I still need to go to the Northwest part of that. But I love everything there it's just amazing.

[00:46:21]

It's amazing. I cried on the way home. My cousin was making fun of me. She's like, "Oh my goodness, there's no way you're crying." I just had the best time. It was a trip that I'll never forget. I think one of the coolest things I've got to do is I went surfing while I was there.

[00:46:36]

You did?

[00:46:36]

Yes, it was really cool.

[00:46:37]

Nice.

[00:46:37]

Yes, I was freezing. We had to wear wet suits.

[00:46:40]

Of course.

[00:46:40]

It was just such a cool experience. Who can say that they've been surfing in Ireland?

[00:46:47]

I never thought about that too. Did the the coast where Dingle is, the landscape is so different they have the rocks and the pasture and then the sheep. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:46:59]

I have so many pictures I'll have to see. Maybe I can send them to you and we can find a way for them to repost it.

[00:47:04]

Yeah, why don't you release yours and we should put one. But these friends of ours Tom and Tracy, it's so interesting that relationship. A friendship that comes that they are there because they are busy there, we are busy here and you say, we didn't forget you. But when you go feel like a family, the way that he treats you and takes her everywhere. They are wonderful people. If you ever go to Dublin, I would give you the address to meet them because they are really incredible. Ciara?

[00:47:40]

Yes.

[00:47:40]

I think we talked a little bit. It's almost Jesus. I see. We're going to divide [LAUGHTER]. Anyways, it was wonderful. Thank you very much for participating in this project and decide to open up and tell your story, I think was really beautiful. I am so happy that you did. I hope it was not so scary like before. [LAUGHTER]

[00:48:08]

I know I was nervous Edgar. No, I've had the best time. Thank you for having me on here. I think this project is something so special. You just give people a forum to be heard and like you said, to share their stories, and we wouldn't have this without you. Thank you. I have a question for you. When are you doing yours?

[00:48:28]

I don't know.

[00:48:30]

Did you know I was going to ask that?

[00:48:32]

People ask that question. I don't know. I'm scared of talking with people. [LAUGHTER]

[00:48:37]

Come on.

[00:48:39]

No, I think eventually we'll have to do something. I still don't know how yet. I'm thinking about this and how I would be able to tell everything. I don't know. But thank you very much.

[00:48:51]

Thank you.

[00:48:52]

For everybody listening out there, I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. I will see you soon. Bye.

[00:48:59]

Bye.

[00:49:02]

Now, for a brief outtake, here is how it started.

[00:49:09]

I need to, what's the word?

[00:49:11]

Bird. [LAUGHTER]

[00:49:16]

Bird, bird, bird bird, bird is the word?

[00:49:17]

Yeah.

[00:49:18]

I need to speak louder. Isn't that interesting? Would you say I'm a quiet person?

[00:49:27]

I think you are. I wouldn't say quiet and I think the sense of saying quiet feels like you are too quiet, or you don't say much.

[00:49:37]

I don't project my voice.

[00:49:41]

Yeah, not too loud.

[00:49:42]

Yeah.

[00:49:43]

Usually I'm too loud.

[00:49:46]

No, you're not at all. [MUSIC]

[00:49:48]

Nice.

[00:49:51]

I loved that. That was fun. [MUSIC]