

# WSF Foundation Day 2022: Dr. Eve Lackritz

By Sophie Glassman

When Dr. Lackritz was in eighth grade, she and a handful of fellow Wyoming students had the opportunity to go to Kenya with her biology teacher. Her experience in a summer educational program in Kenya altered the trajectory of her life. She later had an epiphany; she wanted to make a difference. Dr. Lackritz developed a passion for working in Africa and helping people, whether she knew it or not at fourteen.



I had the tremendous pleasure of interviewing Dr. Lackritz, an accomplished alumna (1975) and medical epidemiologist who has worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization. She is currently the Deputy Director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.

Prior to the interview, I was rather anxious because I knew nothing about epidemiology. But I was relieved to learn that Dr. Lackritz and I have more in common than I anticipated. Like myself, she also wrote for *Horizon* and participated in film club in high school. She was active in drama, yearbook (previously called "Round-Up"), and student council. Dr. Lackritz describes herself as "not an extraordinary student" in high school but received satisfactory grades to succeed. She then attended Mount Holyoke College and graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a B.A. in psychology. At the time that she was graduating college in psychology, she changed directions and went to medical school at Ohio State University. She completed her residency at Case Western Reserve University and then discovered the CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS).

Just before the initial outbreak of COVID-19, Dr. Lackritz worked with Doctors Without Borders in a refugee camp in Bangladesh. She was supposed to be there for a year, but her time was cut short to three months. With borders closing, she abruptly left to return to the states.

Upon her return, she found that native American populations were severely impacted by the pandemic. Dr. Lackritz joined the Indian Health Service hospital in Rosebud, South Dakota, to help run medical services on the reservation and stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Despite being recognized for publishing content in *JAMA*, *The Lancet*, and *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Dr. Lackritz's proudest accomplishment is her two children, who traveled alongside her when they were younger. She is also proud of the partnerships she has built. Bringing people together is a definite passion of hers.

Dr. Lackritz's message to the students at Wyoming is to *"Believe in yourself, believe in your gifts, find someone who believes in you... learning doesn't stop when you graduate school."* She also emphasizes the importance of being aware of what's happening worldwide and encourages students to learn another language. We are fortunate to be able to go to Wyoming High School. Foundation day is a fantastic opportunity to see how Wyoming City Schools foster success for their students. Generations of alumni have been making a difference around the world and Dr. Lackritz is a prime example. Thank you to the Wyoming School Foundation for hosting foundation day and Dr. Lackritz for coming to share her story.