



Raising Superstars and Fighting Food Insecurity | Maggie Baird

[00:00:00] Guest Intro

Darin: Hey everybody, welcome to the show 2022. This is The Darin Olien Show. We've revamped some things. We've reinvigorated the show. We are stoked. This is our first episode of this year, and I can't be more stoked about my incredible guest, Maggie Baird. She is a powerhouse. Maggie is the mother of two music icons, Billy Eilish and Finneas Eilish. It's not surprising because she has a huge career herself, raised obviously two prodigy children, but she has studied theatre and dance all of her life, been on Broadway, many TV shows from Friends and X-Files, and Six Feet Under. She's been a member and teacher at the Groundlings. She had an incredible documentary with her son Finneas in 2013, called Live Inside and Out, which received multiple awards. And because she's been in the limelight, she can help navigate her own children, and clearly, she's doing a hell of a job. So it kind of felt inevitable that her and I would meet because she's really working hard for food insecurity that's happening throughout the United States. She was featured in a new documentary with John Lewis, They're Trying to Kill Us. She's done a bunch of stuff. But during COVID, Maggie founded a nonprofit called Support and Feed where she filled in this gap where people obviously were struggling from the pandemic. So what she did is she stepped in to provide plant-based meals for the homeless here in Southern California, and it quickly became a massive success of getting plant-based meals prepared from local restaurants, and also supporting people that had less and less access to quality food. Since March of 2020, it's expanded to four cities and fed over 60,000 people. Come on, man, that's it. And like I said, it only launched in March 2020 and she even received PETA's 2020 Company of the Year. This is an incredible conversation with a charging powerful woman who saw something that she can do something about. I love this because I've been diving into understanding food insecurity around cities of America and it's astonishing. Food waste is even a thing. We're throwing away good food. We actually have statistically enough food to feed over 10 billion people right now, but we're wasting our food, a lot of it and we dive into this. Again, raise your coffee cups, raise your tea mugs, raise the roof, and enjoy this great conversation with my new friend, Maggie Baird.

[00:03:12] Podcast Intro

Darin: You are listening to The Darin Olien Show. I am Darin, and it is my life's mission to find and share healthy and sustainable ways of living. In this podcast, I talk to inspiring people and professionals from around the world to uncover ways that we as humans can improve our lifestyles, strengthen our mindsets, and take better care of this beautiful planet we call home. If you're looking for motivation to take the next steps towards a happier, healthier life, then you're in the right place, and I'm stoked that you're here. So let's do this. This is my show, The Darin Olien Show.

[00:03:55] First Part of the Interview



Darin: It's so great to get to reconnect with you after that event. It's so wonderful to touch base and to see what you're up to and to know what you're up to. Obviously, a lot of things align with what you're doing, and I couldn't believe how quickly The Support and Feed Program. Holy shit, I was thinking you're doing it for years and years and years and you literally just started. Talk to me about that, you just saw a gap and you saw this need.

[00:04:28] How Maggie and Billie brainstormed to fight food insecurity locally

Maggie: To be honest, when it started, it was a real emergency response. We were home from Billie's tour. The tour had very much for me been about sustainability. We had Reverb on tour with us. I was doing little Instagram lives from showing The Green how we were making the venue green, and here's all the vegan catering, and here's this, and here's our composting. We came home and about four days in, I was wow this is going to be so devastating for people who are going to need food, and small businesses are going to close, and Billie let's order a bunch of food and have it sent to a place. So, it started out as the most basic, not thought-through idea. We just bought a bunch of food on Postmates or something. We had it delivered to the Midnight Mission. Then I was like, you know, this is a good idea, but it's so much bigger than this. I've sort of thought about it all night. You know when you have that thing in life where you're like, I think I'm about to step into my life being taken over by something, and you're not quite sure, you're like, I could just walk right by this idea. So I just called some people the next day, I was like I had this idea. It's the beginning of COVID, the very beginning in March, people were unemployed, everyone was like, I will help you. So we launched our website in five days, and we were delivering food in seven. But originally, we just thought we'll just feed a lot of people, and we'll help people raise money, and we'll keep small businesses, plant-based businesses because those are the ones where people discover plant-based food, which is more nourishing, it helps the climate, the whole ball of wax. And very, very, very quickly, we realized this is a missing link in programs that feed people, the connection of food justice and climate is missing. We just realized that there was this much bigger mission. It seemed long, but when I look back like you say, we started in LA. We were in New York within like two or three weeks, we were in Philly not long after, we were in DC. When you have this strong, passionate urgency, and you don't have any time to waste, it's amazing what you can accomplish. Then we really, really focused in like, where can we be the most impactful?

[00:06:44] Making Support + Feed as impactful as possible

Maggie: Every meal that Support and Feed delivers to someone who replaces an Omni meal. Our meals are all plant-based, so every meal that we do we automatically make some impact on what we know is impacting climate from the animal agriculture. But how can we be more impactful? First of all, we focus on organizations in communities that are in food apartheid that generally have lack of access to nourishing food. We can help those recipients even more. We can expose people to food that they may not have had. We can work with community orgs that need support. Then we can add an educational component on both sides. So on the side of the recipients of the meals, when people are open to it, add some information about the health benefits of the food, how nourishing the food is. We have board members who are physicians if people want to talk to someone. On the other side, we started a really active social media platform because we realized we had all of these wonderful fans of my children really, who wanted to learn about sustainability and the climate



crisis and plant-based food and food justice. So on that side, we started an education platform really to inform people about all of those things. So that's how we are trying to magnify what we do. It happened so fast.

Darin: That's amazing. Let's unpack this a little bit because I'm deeply fascinated and been enlightened around food and security and food, call it food justice wrapped in the same kind of thing in terms of, it's literally happening right here in our cities around the country. It's not the far-off problem and we're all good, that's the disparity. So food insecurity, there's literally communities in LA, in New York, you name it, that don't even have access, don't even know what a whole food looks like, let alone what a whole plant looks like, and they're reaching for 7/11.

[00:08:55] The disturbing facts of food insecurity

Maggie: They're reaching for 7/11 because that's all that's close to them. It's all that's affordable, and all that's even available. You're hitting on it, that 38 million people are food insecure in our country. Currently, I'm sure that number has actually gone up. But between the last time I read it and now, we know that food insecurity is more prevalent in black and brown communities as is the climate crisis affecting those communities more. As you say, lack of access, my eyes were open. I have to be honest I'm completely guilty of having been very obsessed with the climate crisis and not really being as aware as I should be about my own backyard. One of the things that really happened to me was, I was really doing a lot of the food delivery, as we all were on our massive volunteer team. I remember the summer of 2020, I would be driving meals to South East LA, literally, at the same time, I'd be listening to NBR talk about the climate crisis and how that in areas of our cities the temperature can be two degrees hotter, and it was the middle of the summer. I was literally driving to areas that were hotter with no trees because that's a whole other subject of absentee landlords and so there are no trees, etc., and kind of experiencing sort of, I wouldn't say it's firsthand because it's observational, but this climate affecting people and then driving through neighborhoods and really there's no grocery store here. There's no grocery store. Forget Whole Foods, there's nothing. There's not a Bonds, there's not a Safeway, there's nothing. There's a 7/11 and a bunch of fast-food restaurants. I've been a plant-based eater for many, many, many years. I've been a vegan forever, not forever, but for many years, and there's a real privilege in that world. There's a lot of misconceptions. I mean, I've heard a lot of wonderful people say things like, well, rice and beans are cheap, or anybody can get that sweet potatoes. It's like, well, first of all, there's so much wrong with that statement. I can't even begin to get that. But second of all, that's not even true. Many people can't go get a sweet potato. You're going to take two buses to get your groceries and then not be allowed to carry more than two bags on the bus. The laws are complex and ridiculous, and the systemic racism in the food system is intense. If you don't start thinking about it, then it all seems, like you say, quite easy, I'll just throw this bandaid at it.

Darin: You hit it right on the head with a throwaway statement like that in terms of most people say, well, hey, just eat whole food. Well, if I'm a teenager, and I live in this community, and I really haven't been around beyond a five-block radius, and within that five-block radius, there is literally no grocery stores, there's no access to it, there is just what I see at these markets, and quite frankly, more alcohol ridden stores than anything else. So what have you learned now from the feed and support process from when you started to now? What's the



biggest shock? You've done so much. You got the Peta's 2020 award, 60,000 plus people you've got food. Come on, that is amazing. What keeps you thriving now, and what's the most shocking thing that you've discovered?

[00:12:15] Shocking things Maggie has learned about food insecurity

Maggie: Well, 60,000 meals were also just in 2020 so that was in nine months. That was in the months we got. Let me just say to this, what makes Support and Feed different is on many levels. We don't really think of ourselves as a food charity. We think of ourselves as food justice and climate crisis, and we support small businesses too. We support the local community, let me rephrase that. The reason I say that is because we are paying also a fair wage for the meals. Sometimes the meals are donated to us by restaurants, etc., but mainly we're purchasing them with donated money because we're also supporting local communities. Our restaurant owners employ a staff that food came from a farm. So this is one of my big takeaways. People do not get what the cost of food is because our government subsidizes meat and dairy. It's subsidized as sugar, it's subsidized. It's viewed, but it doesn't really subsidize having a farmers market in a community with no grocery store. So the cost of food, people really don't understand it. That has been a real eye-opener and a challenge for us to have a nonprofit that is paying a fair wage for a meal, to begin with and that is a delicious chef-created meal. I don't even want to say sometimes the unbelievably surprising things that I hear from people who have money, to be honest but don't understand that you should feed a human being a nourishing, delicious meal that was paid for fairly. So that has been very eye-opening and a bit of a hurdle for us because there's a lot of great food programs in the world that if you're leaving out that dignity and fair wage and the climate. If you're feeding millions and millions and millions of meals, and you have no plant-based meals in your arsenal, you're missing this massive opportunity to address climate and to enlighten and to give people healthier food. So that has been the biggest takeaway of this kind of in the food side of it. It has been shocking to me. Listen, I always have empathy for people because you don't know till you know. There's so much I've learned and my ignorance is profound so I get it, but we're so indoctrinated in our country with misconceptions around food starting with what's a healthy meal. That's a hurdle we've had to overcome or that's one of the things that we really address. People grow up with indoctrination about what makes a healthy meal. Culturally, in whatever their families in all of our lives, we're fed food that becomes associated with home and health and well-being, and it often has nothing to do with what actually is healthy and certainly not what's healthy for the planet. But learning to address the introduction of healthy food because we are competing with these misconceptions. Many people may not have even eaten a meal that is fully plant-based as far as they know. So you have to kind of meet people where they are, give them food that feels right to them that they're willing to try and ease into like, alright, maybe if you like this, would you like to try this? The dignity of that too of not just saying, here's your food, but what would you like, what is something that seems good to you. Then working your way toward an area where you're enjoying it, and maybe we're making it healthier for you, and we are addressing the climate as well. Those are some of the big obstacles and challenges that we have realized that we need to do better and really focus our energy at. It's really like everything probably comes down to information and education on all sides, and that's donors, and our social media audience, as well as community organizations.

Darin: You hit on so many very important things. The awareness, as you've gained them is around to know all of these and it is indoctrinated. It is what we've grown to learn about meat costs this, a happy meal cost that, whatever that is, and then culturally, and family and all of that stuff, this is just what it is. So your organization is trying to do, on the one hand, just get food to people, but it's got amazing layers to it. Like you said you have a lot of obstacles that you have to kind of navigate through and on top of it, it's got this overarching plant-based thing that obviously it's moving in a good direction, but within the food insecurity movement, they're not thinking of that selection. They're just thinking of can I just have some food?

Maggie: One of the things that I think maybe we've done that I'm happy about is just even having conversations with other organizations that feed people because, again, kudos to all those organizations, but we have the opportunity to go like what's your plant-based, where are you in that space? To be honest, many of them are like, we don't have that. Maybe we even have special meals for other things, but we're not really focused on that. Fortunately now, I think everybody, a little late to the table, but is realizing you got to have that on your strategy. We see it at places like the COP26, etc. It's like really? Really, you're not addressing animal agriculture, you're not having plant-based food as all the food that you serve, how can that be? I think the opportunity just to talk to other orgs and go like, well, what are you doing there? If they're not doing something, I don't mind being a little elbow in the ribs to be like, well, you should. I'd love it if Support and Feed was unnecessary. All the major feeding programs could put us out of need right away. Although I think our strategy of information, education, and meeting people where they are is super highly important to what we do and will always be necessary, but I would love it if all those programs just overnight were at least 50% plant-based, that would be incredible.

Darin: You bring up such an important thing, the subsidy side of things. This is this kind of a statement, but it's also a question. A lot of people don't realize that these cheap foods that they're getting are literally tax dollars and have been going to this amount of factory farming to make what would be infinitely more expensive, which would be beautiful because the meat and omics of that would actually lower the ability for people to eat that food plus that poor quality food. It actually worked itself out. The government's come, they're throwing the whole thing off anyway. Do you know, because this is again, I don't know. Do you know how that came to be, not necessarily the history of it and how the hell can that happen? That's like our money that we've worked hard for and it just goes on, and we don't have a say about it, we don't get to vote about it, and the government's supporting crappy businesses. I just don't get it, and I don't know what to do about it.

[00:20:05] The effects of government subsidies on all of us

Maggie: I don't know how it started, but we all know it's lobbyists. It's big corporations hire lobbyists, and they donate a lot of money to campaigns and politicians are in the pocket. It's the same problem with many issues that we can talk about where it's like, how can that be, how could this be, and you want to just scream. You're like, well, it's a really simple answer, it's money. If you have a lobby, and I'm sure there's somewhere in the history where it had some kind of good intention, the American farmer and there was some kind of idea that we're going to help, and then it becomes about the money. As you say, the crazy thing is, we are paying for it. When we watch the news, and we watch farmers pour milk down the drains, that the government is subsidizing them to create the horrific suffering of the animals

involved in the workers and everything else, they're literally pouring it down the drain because they're subsidized. They have to create it, not that they create it, but you know, the animals. So what really drives me insane is how few people talk about it. Cory Booker, being the exception, the new mayor of New York City, thank goodness, Eric Adams, but they will sit and talk about anything, but it's crazy to me. They've got the same issues with the energy industries as well, but it's all about money. The funny thing is people will be so irritated about vegans. They're like, you know what you should be irritated about, you should be irritated about that your money is spent for these things like you say you have no saying and that is subsidizing an industry that is largely responsible for destroying the planet or destroying our ability to live on the planet.

Darin: Right, and like what we're talking, we're not making stuff up. There are subsidies, there are billions of animals dying, under horrible conditions. The quality of that food is so horrible that it shouldn't even be consumed anyway. We're now getting into that. I love the fact that if we go, you know, the great Paul Hawken Drawdown, Regeneration. If you follow nature, there are no side effects. It's only a proliferation of abundance. If we follow that principle, we build the soil, we build plants, we let people eat those plants, we give the power back to the farmer, take the chemicals away, let them create seeds, and give them their sovereignty back, that's the world that I am fired up about.

Maggie: It's beautifully said, and I think what we're trying to do with Support and Feed is really what you're trying to do with your show, create a market, created demand. If we have a society that basically only follows the money, and we have this horrific system of animal agriculture, and we can't get our politicians to understand, well, we start at the root. We're feeding people who need nourishing food, to begin with. Not only are we giving you nourishing food, but maybe you now learn that plant-based food is good. And maybe you now ask all the organizations where you may receive a meal, or you may purchase a meal if there's plant-based meal. Now maybe you're talking to your community organization about let's have plant-based meals here. You start a movement because you follow the money, and if you create that market everywhere, and you give people the dignity to ask for what they need and know what's serving them. The same with the documentaries and the shows that you make, opening people's eyes so that we're coming at it from the other side. Of course, the concern we both have is, I'm not sure we have enough time for that, but that's kind of the strategy we have.

Darin: We just have to swing for the fences. We just have to do it because at the end of the day, the man and woman in the mirror what we have to face, let's just give it a go. Let's do this. I love what you're doing because it's literally putting food into people and having access to that. Because listen, I'm also under the camp of I'm kind of divorcing the term climate change. I'm not divorcing the principles, I'm divorcing the lack of understanding because it has turned political. So that's where I'm like, well, if you get plants to people, if you support the farmer, if you build the soil from dirt again, guess what happens?

Maggie: The earth heals.

Darin: Again, if you follow nature and it does, it draws down the CO₂, it kills less animals, it nourishes people, people nourished need less care from a broken health care system. It's



just, again, it's not rocket science that nature herself is infinitely powerful but if we go against her--

Maggie: She's more powerful than us. To that point, of course, we've talked about Aidan and FarmLink and all the wonderful work that they do, and we're teaming up with them to get more of that produce to the families in the communities we're feeding meals, and also get food to the chefs to make more food. We also have teamed up with Wild Elements, and we're going to be monitoring in a freight farm. So a freight farm is sort of bringing the farm to that area so it'll be all contained hydroponic at one of our community orgs, and we'll be monitoring that and training people to work in that industry. I have so many ideas, my brain, thank goodness there are smart people who can do spreadsheets because all I feel like I could do is go like, oh, and then we should do this and we could do this. I was talking to Aidan about wouldn't it be awesome to get the produce to the 7/11, get it to the Popeye's Chickens. Take it where people are going to be because, hey, you get your sandwich and you get a beautiful bag of grapefruits.

Darin: So Support and Feed, essentially you're tackling some big things. Unpack that for me. You have obviously people that need food, you have businesses that are struggling, you now are tapping into farmers that have no place to deliver their food. Then you have chefs and restaurants and people to make it, that's a lot of coordinating. Again, I think it's a missing link. So, how is that coordination happening? How do you expand? How are restaurants jumping in on this? How does that look?

Maggie: Well, you hit on the challenge of all nonprofits, I think, is how does it look because I was literally just talking to Glory at the Solutions Project. When you have this opportunity, this amazing opportunity to make an impact, and you have only so much money to do it. We operated for a year and a half, 100% volunteer. We had people working 15 hours a day, six days a week. During COVID, many people were like, I got so much sleep, and we're like, oh, we didn't sleep at all. So we were 100% volunteers, and then we started paying three people in July, and then more stipends. We need to pay more people because of course you have to start where you live and have people earn a fair wage. Also to fulfil the opportunity that we have. First of all, we have this amazing opportunity next year. My daughter, Billie, is going on tour.

[00:27:40] How Billie, Finneas and other artists are helping to support Support + Feed

Maggie: First of all, Finneas just finished a tour, and he did the same, he raised some money for Support and Feed by selling a little higher price ticket. They're meant to compete with scalpers is what they're for. But then the artist donates the money instead of it going to a scalper, they donate to a charity. So with donations from Finneas and then next year, Billie, they're donating a large amount so that we can expand Support and Feed to all the cities on the tour, have a presence in all the cities, be able to meet fans at the venues, get volunteers, establish Support and Feed all over the country, in Europe, in Australia. We need matching funds for that because of course, money only goes so far. A lot of it, like everything, is raising enough money so that you can, first of all, feed a lot of people. When you have a charity that is first and foremost, direct service, that's just money in money out. Then you've got all the costs of making these programs happening creating these great programs. So that's our big tug all the time. Then the restaurant component is an interesting one. We do have now many



people also donating meals who see our mission. We have non-plant-based restaurants donating plant-based meals. We have Fresh Brothers donating vegan pizzas, and we're hoping to have more and more of those. We've been purchasing meals from local businesses. We'd love to get that even more local, even more community-based, and also widen our net to non-plant-based restaurants to have more plant-based options. As we go into the cities around the country, that's going to be a very big project for us because many of the cities may not even have a plant-based restaurant or maybe have only one. If we're buying hundreds of meals, we need to have more options. We'd love to have all the restaurants from the main chains that we can all think of to the mom and pops to have a much bigger awareness of plant-based food, have plant-based sections. You can call it the Support and Feed section if you want, donate a dollar to us for every meal to feed other people. We have to grow our sights beyond the converted, beyond the people who already understand. That's a big part of our mission to get to a larger scope of purveyors of food to incorporate things like FarmLink, and we are partners in Philadelphia Sharing Access. The great thing is we accidentally hit on the perfect name for what we do. In the beginning, we're just like, what are we going to do? We're going to support communities, we're going to support small community businesses and small community orgs, and we're going to feed people, we're Support and Feed. And it turned out to be a perfect name because it's really what we do, we're supporting so many community orgs that are already doing amazing work in their community. That's been very crucial for what we do. So, we didn't sort of come in and focus on us, we focus on them. So our meals are going to the Boys and Girls Clubs, or my friend's place, or the children all over the country, different ones. We are really shining a light on what they do at the same time and amplifying it. That's been amazing because we went from some community orgs that, in COVID, every charitable org, regardless of what they did, had to focus on finding food for people. It was amazing. They might have been involved in something to do with education or school or gangs or LGBTQ. Suddenly, all they had to do was find food for people. Even occasionally, they were not interested in vegan food, even with that need. Again, we kind of won our way in with like, try this food, try this, see what you like, but really shining a light on those orgs because community orgs are really where it's at. They have the connection to the people. They are right there on the ground. So, us shining what we have been lucky enough to have a bigger light because of social media and fortunately because of Billie and Finneas being willing to let this light somewhat be shared with them, shine the light on all those different people that are doing amazing things like FarmLink, and Sharing Access, and Boys and Girls Clubs, Sisters of Watts, on and on.

Darin: Well, that's the beautiful thing. It's so obvious that collaboration, you could shine the light, and you could also step on the foundation of so many of these organizations. If we haven't learned anything in this last couple of years, it is creating a future, and it's collaborative, and it's not waiting around for anybody, especially those that are being subsidized or anything else, it's us as the billions of people on this planet do absolutely have the strongest voice and can move mountains if we all understand what's going on, and also can contribute to that new world. I know that it's a lot of effort, and I know that we're scratching the surface. If people are listening here, I think there are a few different phases maybe people can help. If they're entrepreneurs, if they own restaurants, if they're in other communities, and/or if they're just inspired and individuals that want to get people food in their country, and just realize that people don't have access to good quality food, how can they help?

**[00:33:15] Help support Support + Feed and other food insecurity organizations**

Maggie: Well, supportandfeed.org is where to find us. Donations of money are always great. Donations of time, if people have time, and that doesn't always have to be, it can be delivering food because we do carefully take the food to the places. We have to pick up large amounts of food and take it and it has to be a personal connection, some of that changes with no COVID restrictions, etc., but there's also volunteering on other levels. We have a volunteer in the Ukraine who helps with our website. So those kinds of volunteers, and that would be info@supportandfeed. Then I think just following our social media is actually really impactful because following our social media is part of what we do. Education, information is part of our DNA, and following that also helps us to be honest show partners and brands and grantors that there's an impact being made. All of those people we consider on our team, everyone who's seeing me make a recipe and then making it themselves or asking a question, and that's something else people can do. I think it's a very straightforward thing to do is when you eat anywhere, you ask these questions, you ask the questions, do you have plant-based food, what do you have, could you make that plant-based, what if you had a plant-based section. I find that people are shockingly open to these kinds of conversations. While I was having them 25 or 30 years ago, people looked at you like you're insane, but now people are interested. What if I provided you with some recipes, or what have you made that one dish vegan, or do you know about Support and Feed, talking to their own local restaurants and community orgs, also, since we're going to be on tour coming to our Ecovillage, and even just writing to influence Support and Feed to tell us about places in your cities that we could look into. We were so touched that when we started Support and Feed, the non-trademarked Support and Feed sprung up around the world, which was amazing. People were like, I'm going to do it in my town. So, if you're interested, we're also happy to share what we do if there's a way you could incorporate it into your own organization. We'll be growing Habits of Waste, which is Sheila Morovati's organization. They have #8meals, and we're putting our recipes on there, as well as on our website. Again, those community partner orgs. Just follow us on social media and on our website for all kinds of tips to sort of be involved, get involved, be a part of it.

Darin: Before you jump off, let's just back. I'm so fascinated, you've had a long career yourself, actress. In that process, you homeschool your children, and then boom. The interesting thing is, I'm just gonna throw this out there, it's like an intuition or something that I feel. You've ticked off in your life. So it's not like you have these two kids that are kicking ass and doing their thing, and you're kind of riding, you're actually still kicking ass doing your thing, and you have your own autonomy. That's interesting because you see so much in superstardom of not a balance in that. You're solid in yourself, you're doing your thing, you've had multiple careers, and you've built this foundation for your kids what I can see being connected to things that really matter, but also you birthed into their passions and their inspiration. I have so many questions around that, but how has that been for you, and navigating your career and then watching your children do what they're doing?

[00:37:06] Homeschooling and parenting kids that end up superstars

Maggie: It's funny, people sort of wonder like, if you kind of know where they are now, it can easily look like there was some kind of plan to get there. But of course, there wasn't. We were just parenting, just like all parents do, or parents who love parenting do. You're



following your kids' interests. In our case, we homeschooled for a variety of reasons, not the least of which I'm from Colorado, and I was really shaken by Columbine. I was like, I don't think we need that, but we were just super-involved parents. In the homeschool world, it kind of allowed us to be very present and use kind of all of our own gifts at that point or skills. I was teaching everything I knew how to do. I was teaching aerial circus, and I was teaching cake decorating, and I was teaching drama and improv and life skills and nonviolent communication. My husband was teaching how to fix things and Shakespeare. We sort of just used everything we knew how to do. And it was really very fulfilling. We had to make a living at the same time, but we have a very small expense sheet. We live in a small house, and we don't spend a lot of money. We don't have a lot of expenses. We live very frugally, and that allowed us to, of course, with the privilege of not having to have two jobs in a day, and we were actors, we didn't work a lot, which means we got a lot of time with our kids, but we worked just enough to squeak by with some teaching. That was just parenting, and then when this started to happen, I made a movie in there, I wrote a movie, I made the movie, I was creating a lot of things along the way. When this all sort of happened, just like anything in parenting, I think the parents have a kid who becomes a basketball player, a tennis player, or a gymnast. When your children have these worlds that suddenly require pretty much 100% of your attention to that because what are you gonna do, your kid's 13 years old, and they suddenly have to go to a meeting at Interscope Records. I really didn't have a choice, I don't even think. I wanted to be there to support them. Before Billie started, Finneas had a band, and we were hauling the gear and doing all the band parent stuff. It was just kind of parenting. Then I think maybe the only thing I'll say that might be different from some parents is because she was so young, nobody questioned that I was in the room. I think if an artist takes off a bit later, maybe you don't get that kind of welcome as a parent, but I was really, really required, and so my eyes were open. I asked a lot of questions, and I had to learn a lot of stuff. I had to learn a whole new industry that I knew very little about, and just ask a lot of questions. Then because of my own interest, I would ask questions like, why do we have plastic water bottles and why do we have this, this is not a very green industry. My own personal values and interest segued. While I was learning about what's publishing and what's a writer share, what's a sync, what's a mechanical, all that music industry stuff I had to learn, I was also in the room to go, hey, can't we have composting on our set, and where's the food going after this shoot, and we want all-vegan food. So I just kind of blended the two. It sort of provided an amazing opportunity for me, really, which I certainly didn't realize in the beginning, but the ability to affect change in any way in an industry that I never would have had personally, never would have had it. I wouldn't have been in a room with Nike or Gucci. I wouldn't have been in those rooms to go like, let's see your sustainability platform. I've had calls with companies to be honest, I'm sure they're only talking to me because I'm Billy's mom, but I'm like, tell me when you're gonna have this. They'll be like, well, by 2030. I'm like, that's ridiculous. You could do that in a week. It's been an opportunity.

Darin: What have you found? Are you finding a lot of greenwashing similar to that like they're stating it, then it's 30 years later, are you finding some good people wanting to do good things? What have you been finding?

Maggie: I've found both. Definitely, both. I've been in rooms where someone says, this is eco-friendly. I'm like, what does that mean? They go, it means it's friendly to the environment. No, no, what does it mean? I've had those exchanges for sure, but I've also



seen companies that really are invested. We've been doing this for a while now because Billie started when she was young. The first few years, she wasn't in this kind of position. But once we started to have those, early on in a career, you don't have any power, you're barely making any money. So when you start to ask those questions and people push back, but I remember saying like, if you're not ahead of this, you're going to be behind. I feel that that's really, really true. I feel like everyone is just barely keeping up now and if you are not on this, you are behind. I do sense that more and more and more. Things are happening and listen, other artists are doing incredible things too like Jaden Smith and Coldplay, on and on. They've made incredible strides. Some of each, definitely some of each. Somewhere you're just like shocked. I'm not gonna name names. I was once on a call, I was like, you could replace literally everything you had with plant-based overnight, and no one would know. They're like, yeah, we're gonna do that in 10 years. That's gonna be too late, FYI.

Darin: In my own way too seeing big companies wanting to do good things. Like the company, Footprint, the overwhelming thing of single-use plastic in the world, you're like, how the hell are we supposed to change that because everything is wrapped in it, and all the convenience and all the bottles and all of the cups, and all the tops, and all of the straws. Just like, holy shit. I tell you what I was more encouraged in our conversation a couple of years ago when I talked to the CEO going, no, we're already dealing with ConAgra, we're already dealing with Walmart. Not only dealing, selling. It created a whole industry of mechanisms to create the material science plant-based fiber to then replace that at cost. Unfortunately, because money is so powerful, if you can meet them very, very close to that price point, then the adoption is instantaneous.

Maggie: There are definitely encouraging things, and most of it's coming from technology, thank goodness. They definitely are encouraging things, and we just have to keep looking at them every day, and you have to constantly question. I also heard this phrase recently, which I really appreciated, which was youth washing. There's greenwashing and there's youth washing. There are people who are saying that they're involving youth and they're listening to young people, but a lot of that's not actually accurate as well. So, being, I think, just constantly challenging. You know what else? One of the challenging things for people like my children, but not my children because they've been brave about it, but you get so much flak. When you try to do good, you get a lot of flak for not doing better. You do this and no, you didn't do that, and you said this, but you did this, and that stops a lot of people from doing anything or at least talking about it, and that's got to end. Yes, there's greenwashing, but let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. If somebody is doing something good, good for them. If they're not perfect, okay, they're not perfect, but you've got to stop beating people up. We spend so much time in our society beating up people who are doing good but not doing enough. Look at people who are doing nothing.

Darin: It's a very, very good point. Unfortunately, because it's social media and this fast communication, the people sitting back, the critics, and the criticizing is unbelievable in that way. Yeah, we just got to stop.

Maggie: Beautifully said, yes.

Darin: Well, Maggie, I could talk to you forever. There are so many great things but thank you so much.



Maggie: So great to meet you, so thrilled. I love what you're doing. I want to come see the yurt, but thank you so much for having me. I so appreciate it.

[00:45:40] Podcast Outro

Darin: Thanks for tuning in to this episode of The Darin Olien Show. I hope you took something valuable away from this conversation that will help improve your life in some way. If you'd like to learn more about my incredible guests, you can find all of their information in the show notes on my website. If you enjoyed this episode, or even you didn't like it, please rate this podcast. The team and I value your feedback so we can continue to give you the most value possible. We want you to get the most out of every podcast. So please rate, subscribe, share anything you feel called to do. I truly appreciate it, and I love and value your support. So, thank you, and I'll meet you in the next episode.