

# My How, My Why, My Work: Pacific Northwest

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

visuals, center, pacific northwest, people, farmworkers, represent, science, create, ifas, materials, logo, pandemic, work, graphic design, studied, design, agriculture, team, health, printed materials

## SPEAKERS

Sarah Fish, Whitney Pennington, Phillip Stokes, Lisa Lundy, Ricky Telg, Amanda Wickman

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### Ricky Telg 00:04

This is Science by the Slice, a podcast from the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Center for Public Issues Education. In this podcast, experts discuss the science of issues affecting our daily lives, reveal the motivations behind the decisions people make, and ultimately provide insight to solutions for our lives.

### Phillip Stokes 00:31

Hello, I'm Phillip Stokes. Thanks for joining us in our series, the essential worker. This is a subset within that series titled, My How, My Why, My Work, including conversations with individuals working to make the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector safer for all of those within it. Promoting health and safety in agriculture is a long term mission, and I believe you can find amazing stories and impacts from the people working toward this goal. All you have to do is ask.

### Whitney Pennington 01:03

Yeah, so I'll actually take you like way back, not way back, but...

### Sarah Fish 01:09

My story is really about how a visual artist became a science communicator.

### Amanda Wickman 01:15

My roles changed a lot over the years, but I feel like I'm one of the products of the center.

P

**Phillip Stokes 01:22**

These conversations were led by Dr. Lisa Lundy, Agricultural Communication Professor at the University of Florida. And today's episode comes to you from the Pacific Northwest.

L

**Lisa Lundy 01:38**

Today's guest is Sarah Fish from the Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health (PNASH) Center. Sarah creates eye catching visuals for the PNASH Center communications. As an experienced graphic designer, illustrator and photographer, Sarah enjoys developing different types of graphics for print and web. These include logos, brochures, fact sheets, posters, event materials, and photography. Much of her work focuses on the creation of outreach materials related to occupational safety and health. Sara maintains a social media presence for the center, the various platforms, and select public campaigns. She is also a key member of the outreach core team. Outside of work, Sarah keeps busy with her two little children. She enjoys gardening with her family and volunteers for the Seattle Pea Patch Program at Interbay Pea Patch. All right, well, thank you so much for taking time to talk with us today. And I wonder if you could start by telling us a little bit about yourself and your background.

S

**Sarah Fish 02:43**

Hi Lisa. Thanks for having me on. Yeah, so I, my story is really about how a visual artist became a science communicator, working in the Pacific Northwest. So I started out, my undergraduate career was in visual arts. I studied fine art, painting and printmaking and photography, and really took to it. I love creative expression and visuals. But I also studied history and cultural history, in the form of art, but also kind of more media history, so printed materials. And I think that has really lent itself well to what I do now in communications. I've always been intrigued by science, but more in an exploratory way. I loved, you know, high school chemistry class. I was the kid who really loved to dissect the fetal pig in biology. I just, I really liked getting into how things work. And, and so, yeah, that's kind of my background, I came to the University of Washington so that I could continue studies in art, but I had to get a day job and I got a job in the School of Public Health in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences. And it always was kind of a mouthful to describe to people where I worked, and so I began to sort of, at the very beginning, trying to like winnow down the words and kind of come to the nugget of what we did in public health and in occupational health and safety, and it's really about ensuring the safety and health of workers. So once I finished my studies in textile design, I was offered a job in graphic design and communication for the department. And then I picked up more graphic design skills, and they sort of lent well to what I'd already learned in design. And yeah, and then I ended up getting a full time graphic design position at PNASH, the Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center. And I really feel like it's been a great journey. It's been a long journey, but, you know, a journey of like just figuring out how my skill set can lend itself to the work that's needed here. So yeah.

L

**Lisa Lundy 05:23**

I love hearing that about how you ended up working with the center. And I want to ask you about what makes your center unique. But I really appreciate what you said about how it's such a mouthful for us to just say the name of our center, but then to describe what we do. And so

a mouthful for us to just say the name of our centers, but then to describe what we do. And so, as you talk about what makes your center unique, how have you used visuals, whether it be logo design, however you want to describe that, how have you used visuals to demonstrate the uniqueness of your center?

**S** Sarah Fish 05:56

Yeah, so one of the first major projects that I took on when I came to the center was to redesign the logo. And that was really a process, an eye opening process for me, but it became kind of the model for how we design things here anyway. It involved my work, and then presenting my work to a number of people, a number of groups of people. So the science side, sort of the communication side, the academic side, and asking them, Well, does this logo represent what you think our center is? And we live in the Pacific Northwest, a beautiful place. We have trees, we have mountains, and the sea. And really, the industries involved in agriculture here reflect the landscape. So we have fishing, we have farming, and forestry. And when we were designing the logo, we really wanted it to represent all of those aspects. So if you look at the PNASH logo, we have the mountains in the background, and the fish sort of swimming at the bottom, and then the farm in the center. And so those three aspects are represented, the colors represent those natural resources too. And then of course, the purple represents the University of Washington, where where we make our homes and of course, the mountains too. The mountains can be beautifully purple sometimes. So all those aspects, the colors in the imagery, talk about where we live.

**L** Lisa Lundy 07:50

It's a beautiful logo. I have it pulled up and I was looking at it as you were talking. And I wonder if you can talk about the decision to have an older, looks like man and a child walking together. What story is that telling about your center?

**S** Sarah Fish 08:06

So that was, the older man and and the child represent generation. Primarily in our region, we serve a population of farmworkers who are not indigenous to this part of the country. A lot of them are Spanish speaking and come from Mexico or South America, Central America. So we wanted to represent those people in the population. That represents, you know, who we serve. And then some of our research incorporates the safety of children as well. So we wanted to make sure that children were represented.

**L** Lisa Lundy 08:45

I really like it a lot. It's beautiful. So as you think about the importance of visuals, and telling the story about your center, and perhaps the different research projects of your center, what are some powerful visuals that you've come across in doing this work? Maybe things that you've created or things that you've just seen along the way?



S Sarah Fish 09:07

I go back to some of the photos of landscapes that we've collected over the years. I think those tell a really nice story of, like, place, of location, where we are. I really enjoy, sort of, the process of finding visuals with my team and the discussions that we have in choosing the right visuals. We've been using a software called Canva. A lot of the ag centers have been using Canva, I think, for throughout the pandemic. But one of the great things about Canva is that they have really accessible visuals and so one thing we do is we try to find visuals that represent our stakeholder population, or our key populations that we serve. So the farm workers that we serve might have a darker skin tone. And so we try to incorporate graphics that really welcome those viewers to understanding and receiving communication.

L Lisa Lundy 10:15

That makes a lot of sense. Can you think about, if you think about back over the work you've done with the center, can you think of an example of a campaign or a particular initiative and kind of walk us through your process of thinking about what was the message, and then what role would visuals play in that?

S Sarah Fish 10:35

One of my favorite examples of a project that we created was, during the pandemic, it became apparent that people needed more information. Workers needed more information about mask usage, and how to wear a mask, and what mask to wear. And at the time, we were working with our state OSHA team, they have a multicultural safety and health outreach team. And we partnered with them during the pandemic, just to make sure we got some information out to the employees and employers working in farms, because they became essential during that time period. But imagery-wise, we took a document that they already had, and it was called, "Which Mask For Which Task." And what we did is, we took maybe a 12 page document that had already been, kind of groomed for making it more accessible and understandable. And we tried to, successfully I think, really hone it down to, like, a visually-forward document that could be shared on social media, or a set of Instagram cards. And we thought that that would really quickly get the information out. But it was very technical information. And a lot of research and science was involved in, you know, making the choices that were finally in that document. So we worked with a team to pinpoint, like, what could stay, what could go. We made sure we had images of the correct masks to use, we made sure that the visuals were organized in the right way, so that, like, the most important information was presented first. And I think that "Which Mask For Which Task" project was really successful because of that collaboration and that concept review. What I guess, what I want to say is that all the elements involved in creating a successful graphic design product were there. So I think that was a really successful piece.

L Lisa Lundy 12:55

So we've talked about some of the things that you've done so far in the center and some of the strategies that you've used. What would you say looking forward are maybe some new things that you'd like to try? Or you can go in whatever direction you want with that. That's something maybe you haven't done before that you'd like to try?

S

Sarah Fish 13:13

One of the one of the great things about designing with our team has been learning about what process works best. And I've started to, on my own, I'm, you know, when I'm enhancing my design skill, and I'm learning about new concepts, I'm looking at, like, human-centered design or user-centered design, which is, at our center, we're making all kinds of design documents. So we're, all right, I'm designing printed materials, as well as digital materials like websites and apps. But I really feel like there's a lot of effort going into accessibility and user-centered design, mostly in the digital experience, so with websites and phone apps. But I think the process that is used in developing a lot of those materials applies really nicely to making materials and resources for the ag workplace. So when you're making, say, a website, and you want it to be accessible to the visually impaired, you will create a website that, having it in mind that you want to make it accessible, really does create a better product, I think, because you have it in mind that all people are going to be looking at this website. Taking that step to make it accessible to users who might not read English as well or might not be able to see certain colors or find the button you want them to press, you know, I think taking those extra steps is really helping to create a better product. That's what I'm interested in, is how user experience can be adapted to use for products and resources that we share with farmworkers and keeping farmworkers safe.

L

Lisa Lundy 15:15

I think that is such helpful advice for everybody who does outreach, for any of the centers and thinking about design. I know that will be something that will be really helpful for our team to think about. So as we wrap up, I wanted to just ask, What have I not asked you that you think would be interesting for our listeners?

S

Sarah Fish 15:36

I just want to say that, like, my work is the work of my team. I have an amazing, supportive team. And we produce materials that are in Spanish and in English. They're, I feel like, they're really easy to understand. And a lot of that can seem very simple. But there's so much work that goes on in just that iterative process of reviewing it and changing it. Throughout, even throughout the pandemic, we met weekly with the team that included our state OSHA, State Department of Health, you know, PNASH center, community organizations, and also like, just community members, a lot of our team, my team comes from the communities that we serve. So you know, they're bilingual, bicultural. So I think those aspects are not always reflected in the end product that we send out. But those things are so important in the production of what we make. And I don't think we could do it without those special people. So I just want to say their names. Dennise Drury is our outreach specialist. Idanis Cruz is our research coordinator. Eddie Kasner is our outreach director. But then there's tons more people that we work with, who are partners too. And I think the partnerships are really, really important for us.

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Lisa Lundy 17:10

Well, I really appreciate you saying that because you're right that you are trying to reach so many stakeholders, but you're also collaborating with many of those same stakeholders to

create the messages in the visual so thank you for saying that.



Ricky Telg 17:28

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