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Taeya: And do you know anything about your specific sort of thermostat that goes with the heater?

Speaker 2: No, I don't.

Taeya: Okay. And for a bit of demographics, could you describe your current living situation. So if you're a homeowner or renter. What sort of home you live in?

Speaker 2: We're a homeowner. What do you call it? Like row homes. In South Philly.

Taeya: And how many people do you live with?

Speaker 2: Me and my wife and my two boys.

Taeya: Okay. And just a bit more about your building. Would you say it's a newer building? Maybe something older?

Speaker 2: I believe it's an old building.

Taeya: A lot of the rural homes in south Philadelphia are kind of 1900's era buildings. Would you mind sharing your current age and employment situation?

Speaker 2: I work full time for [blocked]. It's an [blocked] for the U.S. Navy.

Taeya: And could you tell me what pops into your mind when you hear the word energy?

Speaker 2: Power. Electric.

Taeya: And could you tell us your earliest memory of learning about energy?

Speaker 2: I guess back in elementary school.

Taeya: And what did you guys learn? Relating to energy.

Speaker 2: It was the basic turning on and turning off light bulbs, kind of thing. Using a battery.

Taeya: And do you remember when you started thinking of energy as a thing on your own?

Speaker 2: The subject never really crossed my mind. I mean, even when I was growing up I just wasn't into that kind of thing.

Taeya: And so just again, to the home heating system. Do you know what sort of fuel it uses? So if it's an electric heater or maybe gas?

Speaker 2: It's a gas.

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Taeya: Do you have AC?

Speaker 2: Yes, we do.

Taeya: And do you guys ever find yourself shutting off your heater or AC to save on utility bills?

Speaker 2: Not really because we have two boys, two little boys. I mean, when the winter comes we don't want them to get cold, that's for sure. And then in the summertime we don't want it to get too hot in here.

Taeya: That makes a lot of sense. What do you know about your utility company?

Speaker 2: I'm sorry?

Taeya: What do you know about your utility company?

Speaker 2: The electric is PECO. And the gas is PGW.

Taeya: Those are the two big ones for the Philadelphia area. And were you aware of the utility moratorium that happened this past year?

Speaker 2: No. What happened?

Taeya: So the utility moratorium was kind of a set of legislation that came through during the pandemic. That said energy companies are not able to turn your water, electricity or heat off because of an inability to pay due to some people losing their jobs during this pandemic. And although a lot of them have ended, I think in May, I believe that the water moratorium is still going on. So think like PGW wouldn't be able to come and turn off the water. Just if you're behind on filters with things like that.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I just saw that on the news.

Taeya: Well, are you aware of any other sort of energy assistance programs that your utility companies provide?

Speaker 2: No. I mean, thank God we were okay. I didn't get laid off or something like that.

Taeya: And do you know if you're able to switch to renewable energy with either of your utility companies?

Speaker 2: That I don't know.

Taeya: A lot of different companies have different kind of rules around if you're able to get renewable energy. And the pricing changes that help with that as well. Could you tell me what you know about renewable energy?

- Speaker 2: Renewable? Are you talking about, what do you call those things? The one with the roof? Solar energy, I guess.
- Taeya: Yeah. So renewable energy is people talk about solar, wind, hydro, which is water. Just a lot of different ways of getting power than gas and the current we use. You use ways that are more helpful to the environment and less harmful. Have you ever learned about renewable energy? Either in schooling or just throughout life?
- Speaker 2: No.
- Taeya: And to you, how urgent would you say that the issue of transitioning to renewable energy is?
- Speaker 2: I mean, if I have to, I guess. It's not like really urgent that I, "Oh, I got to switch that or anything." If it does save me a lot of money, probably yeah.
- Taeya: And so if you had to kind of put a word to it, would you say switching to renewable energy sources is urgent or not very urgent?
- Speaker 2: Not very urgent.
- Taeya: Okay. And is there anything that prevents you specifically from purchasing renewable energy sources?
- Speaker 2: I guess money-wise. Every time I heard if you want to buy those you got to put, I don't know, some kind of down payment. Like the [inaudible 00:05:55] or something like that. That's the thing. They're expensive.
- Taeya: Yeah. That's true. So another question is going into a sort of debate that happens a lot in the world of energy. Which is, which do you believe is more urgent or more important? Creating access to energy around the world or transitioning to renewable energy systems?
- Speaker 2: I don't know. I don't know.
- Taeya: Yeah. People who kind of say that increasing access is the big issue that we need to push for. Their argument is often that water, electricity, heat, cooling, those are all things that every human should be able to have. So that if it's really, really hot, you should be able to feel cool. If it's really, really cold, you should be able to be warm.
- Speaker 2: I agree with that. Definitely, yes.
- Taeya: Yeah. And then people who say that renewable energy is the more pressing issue, say that we know that if we continue to use electric and gas, we're hurting the environment. And soon there's a lot of wildfires and a whole bunch of environmental dysfunction that

happens because of the way we use energy. And they're like, we need a save point first. So both have really valid points.

Speaker 2: Yes. As I said earlier, not everybody can afford those kind of things in life.

Taeya: I hear you. And now kind of moving into the pandemic and your home energy usage. How would you say the pandemic has impacted your home energy use overall?

Speaker 2: I think you do end up an increase a little bit. Because we had to stay home during the lockdown and everything in [inaudible 00:07:52] we were home more than we were before. I mean, we're all like watching more TVs and we just used this electricity stuff like that.

Taeya: Yeah. And so you'd say it's made your utility bills higher than before?

Speaker 2: I think so. A little bit, yes.

Taeya: Have you ever been, or are you currently concerned about being able to afford utilities in this coming year?

Speaker 2: No.

Taeya: And just to be sure. Did you participate in a survey this past spring?

Speaker 2: Did I participate in what?

Taeya: Were you a part of a survey with the Energy Rights Project this past spring?

Speaker 2: I think so. I think my wife before.

Taeya: Yeah. Well, we definitely did. This is a list. It was a follow-up.

Speaker 2: I was just listening on the site.

Taeya: So would you say the survey that your wife participated in this past spring has informed either you or you both about programs which you didn't know about? Like energy assistance programs or the shutoff moratorium? For example.

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think we try for that and somehow I think we got rejected or something like that. More people deserve more. They deserve more than we do.

Taeya: Yeah. A lot of people are saying that there's kind of this phenomenon that happens with these sorts of assistance programs where everyone has just enough above what the program is for. And so there's a lot of people who are missed, who would also like assistance. Yeah. So that's really helpful to know that sometimes when you feel like you

could use the assistance or you would want the assistance that you're not able to get it or that you're rejected from that option.

Speaker 2: Right. Yep.

Taeya: Yep. Have you had any energy service disruptions this past year? So that could be power outages, loss of heat or AC, maybe intermittent wifi, wifi not working, those sorts of things.

Speaker 2: No.

Taeya: That's great. And if you were to deal with maybe like electricity disruptions, do you think you'd be prepared?

Speaker 2: No. No.

Taeya: Yeah. Something, I think we're hoping to get in our research-

Speaker 2: What are you talking about? Are you talking about a day, a week, a month? I mean, if it was only like a day kind of thing, maybe, we'll handle it. We just have to adjust. But if it was a week that would be a struggle.

Taeya: Yeah. This is one of our questions because, especially with the rise in temperature, there's a lot of record breaking heat waves happening across the country this year. There are a lot of places specifically out west, for example, where a lot of people in California are getting ready to deal with power outages because it's getting too hot for the energy grid to work as it currently does. So we're just seeing how prepared people are overall to deal with maybe a day, maybe a week, maybe just a few hours. But just the reality of having intermittent energy. Yeah. And so if that were to happen, how do you think you'd handle the situation?

Speaker 2: I guess I'm going to start running to the store, looking for [inaudible 00:11:27] or something like that.

Taeya: Would you say that your home is energy efficient?

Speaker 2: I don't know. Maybe not.

Taeya: What makes you think that it is not energy efficient?

Speaker 2: First of all, the heater the air conditioner's in the basement. I mean, on the first floor, we're comfy with that. It cools in the summer and the first floor it hits in the winter time. But on the second floor, that's where we have problems somehow the air is just not reaching up there. Not like the first floor. I guess people just telling me it's far away. I'm like, "Really?"

Taeya: There's a workshop I attended recently for this, with the Energy Rights Project that talks about home airflow. And so typically you'll find that like the basement especially gets extremely cold and doesn't really heat up. And then the upper floors will get really, really hot and they won't be able to cool down. Is that what you were saying you experienced?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Taeya: That makes sense. Do you know if your home has ever been weatherized?

Speaker 2: No, I don't know.

Taeya: Yeah. And that can be something that's either done, not particularly by landlord, but maybe a development company comes to offer to maybe redo your roof. Or redo windows to kind of have less cracks so that the air doesn't get in and out. Or anything you've done yourselves. Has that been something you guys have tried?

Speaker 2: Well, I was waiting for the [inaudible 00:13:33] to come. I was thinking of replacing the roof this year, but the money hasn't come in yet. So I don't know.

Taeya: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Would you say you practice energy conservation?

Speaker 2: I try to.

Taeya: Yeah. And could you describe how you try to?

Speaker 2: Just trying to heat. And then like right now instead of running the air conditioner all 24 hours a day, instead of running it off 70. We just put it like a little bit higher, like 72. And we try to go outside more now. So we don't spend in the house compared to last year.

Taeya: And where would you say you learned about this sort of energy conservation? So, if it's a little warmer outside keeping the thermostat temperature up. Opening windows instead of using AC.

Speaker 2: I just read online.

Taeya: And why would you say you practice energy conservation?

Speaker 2: It's just trying to save gas a little bit.

Taeya: And are there things that you'd like to be doing? Or ways you'd like to be conserving energy that you don't do currently for some reason?

Speaker 2: No. I don't know.

Taeya: Would you be able to describe the difference between, or if you think there is any difference between, energy conservation and energy efficiency?

Speaker 2: No. I don't know.

Taeya: Yeah. A lot of people say that these two words are kind of almost the exact same word where they're trying to save energy overall. And some people say that efficiency is just being able to move through the world with appliances that just use less energy to work. And conservation is the kind of active thought of, "Let me not turn this appliance on. Let me not put the heater up higher, or the AC up higher."

Speaker 2: Right.

Taeya: And so in our past survey that you said your wife participated in when you were in, you were hearing as well, we asked if people thought that others or people in general have the right to energy. Do you think people have a right to energy?

Speaker 2: I think so.

Taeya: So being able to use things like electricity, heating and cooling, without necessarily having to pay too much is provided for people.

Speaker 2: Not to everybody. You know what I'm saying? Maybe some people that needs help, the lower income people. Like the families maybe, are the ones that need help. If they get a discount kind of thing, like rates maybe.

Taeya: Yeah. What would you say that you think your rights are in regards to energy?

Speaker 2: I would say zero, probably, because they don't listen to us.

Taeya: But what do you believe your rights should be?

Speaker 2: I don't believe [inaudible 00:16:43] You tell them, they don't do it. What's the point.

Taeya: I can hear that. Do you think that people have a right to modern energy services?

Speaker 2: I'm sorry, go ahead.

Taeya: I was going to say that can be something more along the lines of internet connection.

Speaker 2: Yes, probably. Yes. I'm not sure on that one.

Taeya: And if you wouldn't say that necessarily the word is a right to energy. What would be another word that you think describes people's relationship to energy better?

Speaker 2: That I don't know the answer.

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Taeya: It's a lot of thinking pieces. And do you think there are energy services that are needed to be able to succeed in society?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Taeya: Yeah. What would you say those are?

Speaker 2: Electricity that's for sure. Probably just taking all of that. And then with the pandemic, they probably need internet access also.

Taeya: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. A lot of the world, and I've heard this in other interviews as well, a lot of the world is really digital. And so if you don't have access to the digital world, there's a lot you're shut out of. And so, yeah. Now we're kind of in a more reflective part of this interview. Would you say that this interview has made you think differently about energy in any way?

Speaker 2: Not really.

Taeya: That's completely all right. And do you have any questions or concerns about energy that you did not have before this interview?

Speaker 2: Nope.

Taeya: All right. Well, thank you so much for participating. I'm going to stop the recording now.