Seattle-King County Cultural Accessibility Consortium,
Monday, March 11, 2019

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Lisa K. Hutchinson
Certified Realtime Captioner

>>CHARLIE: Hello.

Everybody.

Thank you.

Wow.

My name is Charlie Rathbun with 4Culture.

I told Elizabeth, I said: There's no way you can organize a forum in one month.

You can't do it.

You need committees and strategic planning and nobody's going to come.

Anyway, thank you, Elizabeth. This is quite the turnout. This is amazing.

I want to -- well, this is what happens when we occasionally stick our head up out of the sand and say: Hey, is anybody interested in accessibility for audiences with disabilities? And, boom, it just took off.

I want to acknowledge a couple people. One is Louis Mendoza standing over here on the side who came to us well over a year ago.

He is with the Washington State Fathers Network and Kindering in Bellevue.

He approached us and a couple of our partner funders to find out how we could better organize the opportunities that exist and create more opportunities for access for populations with all sorts of disabilities and including cognitive, intellectual disabilities and things like that. And he got us meeting with ArtsFund and with the CityArts office and we've been meeting for well over a year with service providers, with folks that serve the providers, looking for these opportunities, and trying to find ways that we can actually do take all of the opportunities that are out there and figure out a way to make them just more available and accessible and one -- he has been a tremendous motivator, a great facilitator for us to keep us on point on a pretty sprawling issue.

And one other person I would also like to acknowledge is Daniela Ferdico. If I got that right. Daniela, where are you?

>> Right here. (Laughter.)

>>CHARLIE: Daniela, is that your T-shirt? Sensory Access. Currently we're working with her on creating a new Web site, actually augmenting a wonderful Web site she already has to make it a lot stronger, a lot more robust, add in a lot of resources, a lot of training, and, yes, you guessed it, even a calendar. And helping to promote that regionally wide throughout King County. And so we now have some resources lining up here that are going to help us actually accomplish a very important part of what we're trying to do, which is make the arts accessible to everyone, both for audiences, for artists, for administrators, so we're just getting started on this and we're very excited. And I want to thank Elizabeth again for getting this going and organizing it and I think I'm

going to turn it over to Kathy Hsieh who is my cohort at the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture. Thank you.

(Applause.)

>>KATHY: Thank you, Charlie.

I was going to specifically introduce Daniela with Sensory Access.

The talking point was: Be sure you get her card before you leave because of that whole online resource that we're talking about that we're going to be in partnership with. We want to get you connected with that service and how you can get more resources on how to do this work and make your arts and cultural offerings more accessible to people with disabilities across all spectrums.

And my office, I want to acknowledge part of our consortium is also ArtsFund. They could not be here today but they have been a part of this year-long process of conversation and dialogue where we've been meeting with social service providers, self-advocates, and also people in the arts and culture community such as yourselves.

Thank you all for being here and thank you to Elizabeth for putting today's on.

There will be more workshops throughout the year we're also sponsoring. We look forward to being in contact with you for all of those as well.

Thanks.

(Applause.)

Now I will introduce Jeff Herrmann of the Seattle Repertory Theatre for making this space available.

(Applause.)

>>JEFF: Hi, everyone.

Welcome.

I'm Jeff Herrmann, the Managing Director here at The Rep. Really excited to have you all here and have this workshop here in the PONCHO.

This space you are sitting in was recently renovated. We opened it up in December.

You are among the first folks to be in here. These are brand new seating section, new AV, nice new wall treatments.

We've also added a hearing loop technology in the floor here in the space. So I'm really excited to have you all here. This work in access is something we've been trying to take very seriously here at The Rep.

We have added the hearing loop in all the public locations of our building.

We got the wheelchair accessible door to the front entry.

There's a lot more for us to do. I think like all of you we're trying to make progress in this area and I'm really excited about having this opportunity this afternoon to learn more about it so we can all make progress as a community together.

Just a little bit of housekeeping.

You see the Wi-Fi network and password is up there on the screen.

Bathrooms are out that door (pointing) straight out that way and then just off to the right. And without further ado I want to introduce the woman without whom none of this would have been possible, Elizabeth Ralston, who is a force of nature, if you have not met her yet.

She has a public health and not for profit background.

Her work involves building capacity with organizations to communicate their mission and inspiring ways to engage volunteers, donors, community partners, and program participants.

She has served as a consultant working on program development, fundraising and communications, event planning, and board development.

She has been in several interim leadership positions. In fact, she was recently Interim Operations Manager for Spectrum Dance Theater.

She grew up going to lots of theaters, shows, and museums.

Even though she has hearing loss, she does not let that stop her from enjoying all the arts have to offer.

I appreciate the work you have done to pull this all together.

We're happy to have you here hosting this.

Without further ado, Elizabeth Ralston.

(Applause.)

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you so much for that great introduction, Jeff. Welcome, everybody.

Let me see a show of hands. Who is from museums?

Who is here from museums?

Way up high.

Way up high.

Okay, great.

How about theaters?

Awesome.

Great.

And how about other cultural spaces?

Fabulous.

Welcome.

Thank you for taking the time out of your very busy day to come and spend the afternoon with us learning all about access and being with these wonderful people who also are spending the time with us to share their experiences about what it's like for them accessing the arts.

So, I want to really give a background as to how this all got started.

But first I really have to say thank you to our sponsors because without our sponsors this would not be possible.

That goes to 4Culture, Office of Arts & Culture, and, of course, the Seattle Rep for making this possible.

It's been a great ride and I know there are many people along the way who have made this possible as well, lots of volunteers and lots of community people who have given me feedback on what's needed and what's missing.

So, I want to talk a little bit about how I got started down this path.

As Jeff said, I'm a huge lover of the arts, especially theater. I grew up with a brother who took every major role he could get in the theater in high school and I would help him memorize his lines, so I got to know all the different songs from Rodgers and Hammerstein and Gilbert and Sullivan, you name it, and so I was also introduced to the theater in London where my parents lived in London.

We went a lot to theater, museums. My mom was a docent in the art museum, so she was a huge fan of the arts. So they never let my hearing loss stop me from doing whatever they wanted to do. They just brought me along. So I was eternally grateful for that opportunity.

So, when I moved to Seattle, I brought my love of movies here too and realized that none of the theaters had captioning. And this was over 20 years ago. And so I got a bunch of friends together and said: Hey, let's caption Seattle. We called our group Caption Seattle.

The first theater we worked with was Cinerama, which now has captions on all their movies, and ever since then, it has kind of spread to other movie theaters around Seattle and beyond.

And my first window caption experience was the Titanic and that was in LA.

That movie blew me away because it was the first time ever that I had been in a theater with captions and it was an amazing movie to see.

So I started thinking about equity and access, because I'm a public health junky and I have been with nonprofits for many years, and I started thinking about, well, I love going to shows, but I can't go whenever I want. I have to plan my life around one show per run of show or whatever kind of entertainment there is. So what can we do to make the arts more equitable to people with disabilities? So, I started talking with people in the community. I have met a lot of you. There are some new faces here. And started talking and seeing what is missing, what the gaps were, and what was needed. And so I also met someone in Chicago who was heading up the Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium and learned a lot about their effort and realized there were many different efforts around the U.S. and Seattle didn't have one that I knew of. And so in my research, I started finding out about the practice and efforts that were happening, such as Daniela and Louis's effort, and got really excited about the opportunity of making this a larger effort, one that encompasses all people with disabilities. So, that said, the goals of -- the mission of the consortium, the Seattle-King County Accessibility Consortium, is to ensure that Seattle-King County's thriving arts and culture arena is accessible to people with disabilities.

And so the goals of this consortium, as I see it, are to provide professional development and training like this workshop, for example, because many people in the arts, you are working with limited budgets and understaffing and a whole host of other issues and it's hard to think about accessibility when you are pressed for time, so why not have a clearinghouse of information where anyone can call up or go and get some training to learn more about how to make their organization more accessible to people with disabilities. I'm also envisioning a Web site which would have an access calendar, a listing of all the accessible spaces, and a listing of the workshops and trainings and resources.

By the way, I'm going to -- I'm happy to send this PowerPoint to you so you don't feel like you have to write notes, but just relax and enjoy (laughter) the theater experience, sort of a theater experience.

And finally, equipment sharing. As -- it would be great to have a repository of equipment because theaters -- different theaters have different budgets. Some can afford more equipment than others. Why not have an equipment sharing program where small black box theaters, for example, can borrow from this repository and allow more diversity in their audiences. So, this consortium, I would like to see a steering committee and this steering committee would be made of people who are passionate about the arts and passionate about access and passionate about seeing people of all disabilities access the arts. And so the role of the steering committee will be to guide the vision and the strategic planning of the consortium, to create these kinds of workshops. You know, we can't do it by ourselves. We need help doing this kind of thing. Foster connections between the arts and disability communities. Build membership and participation, so spreading the word, because there are so many arts organizations not just in Seattle, but beyond, in King County as well. And advocate for universal access at cultural facilities.

So, we need you. So if you are interested, please contact me. Feel free to email.

We can have a conversation about what that would look like, time commitment. It's a volunteer opportunity and hopefully your organization would support that kind of opportunity.

So, today's workshop, I know you are dying to hear from our panelists, so I'm going as fast as I can so you can hear what these people have to say. But today I hope to help cultural administrators like yourself have a better understanding of people with disabilities' lived experiences accessing the arts. And secondly, get insights on how to engage people with disabilities in the arts. I have heard from many of you that it's hard to sometimes meet people with disabilities and find out more about what their needs are and what they hope to experience in the arts, so this is an opportunity to do just that.

Guidelines for this: I want to make sure that you know that this is a safe space. We respect all efforts to work on accessibility issues in your organization. The fact that you are here is a big deal.

We recognize that each organization is at varying levels of accomplishment with accessibility. We are here to help you and not judge.

Questions, it's going to be an interesting format. You will have the opportunity to text questions to the number up on the screen. Or you can write on index cards. And Louis up here has copies of the index cards, and if you want one, just raise your hand and flag him down at any point. This is an informal discussion, so please feel free to ask questions on notecards or texting.

You can direct the questions to a particular panelist or to everyone. Please indicate. And due to time constraints, we have a lot to cover, please focus your questions on the lived experiences of our panelists rather than general questions on costs or solutions.

So, without further ado, I would like to go ahead and get started on with our questions.

What we're going to do is both questions and go back and forth with audience questions, depending on what we get.

So the first question for all of you is -- are you ready?

(Laughter.)

You're ready.

All right.

So the first question is -- I'm doing the questions.

So, please introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about yourself. What are your hobbies? What is something surprising that people might not know about you?

I'm going to have Mason read the bio of each person.

>>MASON: ChrisTiana ObeySumner has been an Intersectional Disability Justice Advocate (Read the PowerPoint.)

>>CHRISTIANA: Hello. (Applause.) I have always been in artistic justice as a way to express my experience of living with developmental, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities and it all came to a head when in the beginning of -- business I was a social impact consultant for the Seattle Opera and helped with inclusion of in

general, but especially for, black folks. I guess hobbies: I am an avid reader.

I have an actual library in my house to the point my friends ask me for books if I have them and I often do. I like to watch a lot of news and WWE on the television and -- and I guess a surprising fact about me is that I have -- I have done two things I have not yet found someone else while I have been in Seattle has done.

I won a national beauty pageant.

I was Mrs. American Beauties National 2016. And I have experienced every type of natural disaster that there is to experience except for tsunami and a sinkhole. (Laughter.)

So if you need emergency management tips, I am kind of -- I am kind of a doomsday prepper. I can give you tips.

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you.

(Applause.)

>>MASON: Camille Jassny has been dealing with various eye diseases (Read the PowerPoint.)

(Applause.)

>>CAMILLE: So, what a privilege to be here today.

Thank you all for coming today. About me, I have my guide dog Egan here. That's not a surprise. Anybody who probably walked in saw him here.

He is four years old. We just got back from a cruise in the Caribbean where he was the star. Everybody knew who he was and nobody knew who we were. (Laughter.) So and he did a really good job. He likes to hike and swim in the water when we get to a place where he can go play.

I have a wonderful family, really supportive. My dad and mom always said when I was growing up with lots of visual problems, and spending a lot of time in the doctor's office: I'm not handicapped. I'm handicapable. And my shoulders are broad, that's why I can handle whatever happens to me. And all these little sayings that I actually keep on saying to my children, which they say: Mom, it's enough already (laughter). I would rather be positive than negative. And I love to be -- I love music. I love theater. And I love art. And all my life I have attended different various activities, but I -- and I just find it to be so rewarding that there's actually places there to go to for people that are blind and low vision. For me, people worry that I don't have a life. I have like almost too much going on. As my son said this morning, who is almost going to have a baby any day with his wife: Mom, you have to retire. You're going to be a grandma. (Laughter.)

But something that I have done that you might not know, I'm a collage artist.

I made 8 pictures for the accessibility awards for Microsoft last year and that was a really big honor for me to be able to do. I just got accepted for another program. It's called Sixth Sense, in Chicago, for people who are blind and low vision to create art and they chose my one picture for the poster award and the other one for me to be able to send and sell and we're going to go to Chicago, my husband, and I, to celebrate this experience. (Applause.)

>>MASON: Patty Liang (Read the PowerPoint.)

(Applause.)

>>PATTY: Thank you.

Let's see. People don't know that in my family I have two other siblings that are also deaf, so that the three of us are quite lucky to have each other because we were able to have communication access.

Our parents took sign classes and they practiced sign with us, so I'm pretty fortunate and I want to recognize that. Also, what I like to do, some hobbies: I love to travel, I love to meet lots of new people and learn different sign languages from other countries. Every country does have their own. And food and culture, history. Also I am of course I'm really lucky to live here in Seattle so there's really a really beautiful city and nature balance here. I'm looking forward to this panel with these panelists who discuss accessibility issues with you all. (Applause.)

>>MASON: Lara R. Constable (Read PowerPoint) (Applause.)

>>LARA: Hi, everybody. It's great to see some familiar faces, so I really do appreciate those familiar faces. As the new kid on the block here with these amazing panelists, I'm better known right now as a professional chauffeur for my 10-year-old to school and this game and that game, but I'm also passionate about the arts. My first job out of college was Jenny Holzer's personal assistant and artist assistant.

She represented the United States in the Venice Biennale.

My trip to Venice was all expenses paid.

Not a bad thing.

Now as things change and we age gracefully, age in our own different ways, different challenges have been presented in my life, but I don't see them necessarily as challenges and so especially with my friends on the children's theater board, I'm hopefully going to try and show everybody that these tools that we may use to -- for movement and for living aren't necessarily barriers or restrictions. They just really can allow everybody to live and move in different ways. And let's see. Another little known fact.

I love the sun.

Hopefully spring will come to Seattle soon.

No more snow days.

(Applause.)

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you.

So, next question.

What does accessibility in the arts mean to you? What does it look like or feel like? So let's start with

Camille. Would you like to start?

>>CAMILLE: Well, for me, accessibility means being able to go to either a theater or go to an art museum and either with a theater have audio descriptive so I can know what's going on on stage. I love to go to theater. I don't love going with my husband where we whisper back and forth what's going on. And we have been asked to be quiet. So I think the whole thing for me would be being like sitting there like everybody else enjoying what they are seeing, I'm hearing it and it makes -- I can understand it. The museum: I love going to the museum. For me, again, I just got recently an iPhone and some of the displays there, some of the current or maybe different pieces have some audio description to it. To me, just being included in what everybody else is doing is what I would love. I like to be part of what everybody with sights can do.

>>LARA: Accessibility for me would be do everything that -- well, as an aside because I'm sitting here, you may not see, I have lost a lot of the weakness on my left side of my body, so I use a cane and sometimes an electric scooter. So in terms of what I would love for equal access is I don't want to have any barriers. I would

love to do the same thing as everybody else. Separate entrances in my mind bring back images and policies of the Jim Crow era, separate -- sometimes you have to go around the side, to the alley. Seattle's a little better than many cities. I grew up with New York City. Separate entrances are very common there for scooters and things, and so I would like to see those gone. I would love to outlaw revolving doors (laughter). Those are particularly lethal. And I have had some choice words for people over the years for those. And I would love to have the same amount of choice for seating options. I would love to be able to take a scooter all the way to the top of that chair -- the stadium seating as opposed to always being assumed that close is the best and easiest. I don't know when the last time everybody went to Cinerama. I recently went there for a movie and it's an aha moment.

It's going to be the favorite theater in town for movies. You can walk in and sit pretty much everywhere you would like, with room, and safely. Ultimately it's about fear for me. I don't want to fall. I don't want to hurt somebody else.

Hopefully if safe places are safer and more accessible, the fear element can be removed.

>>CHRISTIANA: Some of these questions that I prepared are a little theoretical, but bear with me.

I want to lay out the answer to this question around accessibility. So when I talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion and we talk about inclusivity, I always use the "Pimp My Ride" as a metaphor.

It's a show about exhibit-going and taking people with junker cars and fixing them up and souping them up.

I always say diversity is the outside, it's the paint job, it's the rims, the chrome, everything you see on the outside. It is when you have all of your photos and Web site photos with a whole bunch of black people in it, right? (Laughter.) And inclusion is when you have -- you try to get like a small sedan and expand it out so you can have 20 people in the hot tub. So with inclusion, you are just trying to get as many people in as much as possible, but those people don't necessarily have the will nor do they actually have access to the engine. In "Pimp My Ride" the engines and things like the transmissions were actually never -- were rarely fixed. They just souped them up so they couldn't drive them. So if you try to have as much inclusion as possible, that's great, but if they can't get access to actually drive the car or have access to have any input into where that car goes, then the inclusion actually doesn't matter. It's equity that matters. That I'm pretty sure is going to be the next question and I'll talk more about that.

>>ELIZABETH: Can you speak -- ChrisTiana, can you speak from your experience what it looks like for you personally when you go to some arts event?

>>CHRISTIANA: Yeah. I mean, I think that especially coming from disabilities that I have, there are certain inclusions people try to have, like lighting, perhaps. I think I am coming from things a little differently in that the diagnoses that I have are usually not what people think about with disability inclusion, which is a whole other issue that I think people need to remember. The ADA goes beyond sensory and physical disability. As for inclusion, to be completely honest, the reason why I shared in the way that I do is because very rarely do I see inclusive factors for folks with developmental, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities.

When I'm a consultant, I see a lot of people who say: Let's make sure we have wheelchair ramps, which is important. Let's make sure we have braille on the elevator buttons, which is extremely important. How many times do you hear someone say: Let's check for ambient noise. Let's make sure we have soundproofed walls for folks who have internal stimuli. Let's make sure that there's not too much overhead fluorescent lighting. I can't give an example of a place that was fully inclusive, especially being an intersectional being and what it means for me to have developmental, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities and to live them as such out loud with the rest of the identities I hold, like my race and my gender.

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you.

>>PATTY: Okay. So, the Deaf community is a linguistic and cultural minority. So, that means all of the majority is hearing people and so they talk and they focus on one's ability to hear or speak, while the Deaf community doesn't have access to that information, so of course they use their eyes and they sign with each other. So, as for myself, for access going into a museum, I can see the things around. I'm a sighted person. I can read that.

I didn't know if you have a QR code on your phone you can get an audio description, getting the story about the artwork. I don't have access to that extra information.

Sometimes I do ask them if they have a transcript of that information, but then it's a lot of information to go through reading both the information about the artist themselves, the piece, and then the backstory.

And as far as access to films, yeah, so, films of course I like to be independent, and if I can watch some films as I go through an art exhibit.

And theater accessibility with that, there are lots of cool -- more and more shows, they are providing sign language interpreters there. They stand there on the stage so I can watch the plays as well as the interpreters. But again, it's not 100% access to that art because I want to see Deaf actors on the stage within the plays themselves. Not through a third person, through the interpreter. I would like to see Deaf actors their direct signed translation, their expression about a Deaf character, their stories, not a translation through a hearing interpreter. And also, often accessibility to me means I would actually like to see other people like me in that space, that I can interact with directly. Yeah, if there are some networking opportunities. As far as theater, there are some actors there. Maybe if I could also meet some admin or staff who know sign language in the theaters so I can have a more direct connection with them. Also, I really just don't want any language barriers, so --

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you. I would like to add a little bit about my own experience. For -- so Patty and I are both deaf, but Patty relies on ASL as her primary means of communication and I rely on lipreading and speaking, and so not -- the point I would like to make is not everybody has the same kind of needs, so, someone who is blind may have a different need than someone who is low vision, for example, and someone who signs has a different need than someone who doesn't sign, so it's really important to meet the person where they're at and get to know that person and not make assumptions. So for me, accessibility may not be the same thing that it is for Patty. For example, I rely on captioning. I don't sign, myself. So, signing, I wouldn't be able to understand. I also like hearing loops because I wear a cochlear implant and so I really

appreciate the hearing loops because it really helps me hear the voices much better, so I don't have to completely rely on captioning. And I wanted to point out also that we have several different accessibility methods that we're using in this room. We have the interpreting right here (pointing). We have the captioning here (pointing). We have accessible ramps to get into the space. We have a loop in the space. Thank you, Rob.

Is anybody using an assistive listening device?

Yes.

So, we have assistive listening devices here, if you did not know. So there are many different ways of making the space accessible. For me, though, I really like sitting near the front of the stage so I can lipread as well as seeing the captions, because if I'm too far away, then I have to look at the captions and I really like seeing the whole verbal and nonverbal expression of the actor, so it's important for me to be able to sit up close.

But often that's prohibitive in terms of cost.

So, when I was growing up, I would use scripts and I would use a pen flashlight to follow along and I would get a lot of comments from people around me, even the ushers, who would say: Please put that away, it's bothering the patrons. Which may or may not have been true. But because these people didn't have the understanding or awareness of what my needs were, it was often difficult. But now the captioning is here, I rarely have to use the script anymore.

Any other additions before we move on?

>>LARA: I would just say while it's important to understand there are very different needs amongst a lot of these communities, there are some that are usable for everybody. Like the ramp. The ramp is great for Camille and the dog and it's good for walkers and wheelchairs. It's good for moms in strollers. And so just when people start thinking about cost or complaining: "Oh, this would be expensive," at the end of the day, a lot of these things that are quote, unquote, ADA compliant or ADA necessary or potentially perceived as only for a narrow subset of patrons, I would argue that is not necessarily the case. These tools can be usable for -- by many more.

>>ELIZABETH: I would like to remind people. If you look at the screen, you can text questions any time or ask Louis for an index card if you have a question.

So raise your hand and he will come and give you a card.

All right, next question.

So, you could probably spend all day on this question, so I'm going to do my best to keep it concise as possible.

What does equity in the arts, relating to disability, race, sexual orientation, even class, mean to you? Particularly in the arts, equity in the arts. Let's start with Patty.

>>PATTY: Let's see. I'm just thinking this is quite a big topic.

I think right now, the word "intersectionality" is really hot right now because we're noticing a person and their layering within themselves and their cultural identities. It's not really just one thing, like: Oh, here's just one type of person. There's their path and their journey to consider and how they got to their current point. So, for myself, I'm an Asian Deaf woman. Okay? I am also an academic. And so my life experience is different than anyone else I have ever met. Nobody has my experience. So when I consider how to make something equitable, right, I think in equitable working space or some type of performance or event space, I think they should hire different levels of folks, not just artists, but also staff and admin and also funders as well, grant sponsors, et cetera. So it's not just a talent that they look at, right? They need to look at smaller companies, maybe nonprofits or other organizations, or even if it's just a small group that is a nonprofit, right, just allow them to grow their work, grow their brand, and to represent their different views that exist. So I guess that's it in a nutshell.

>>CHRISTIANA: So, there are two ways of looking at equity and for me equity is and I'm happy to go after what Patty has said because it's very much the same. Equity is not going to be equity until I see people who look like myself in an organization. And we talk a lot of -- there are two different ways to look at it. There is equity versus equality. Equality is when your organization matches the demographics of your surrounding community exactly.

Equity is when your organization exceeds the demographics of your surrounding community exactly.

If you also want to look at it the other way, I'm also a nerd in the academic. It's good we're sitting next to each other.

The social theory of critical mass or the percentage of people you need a specific identity to change the culture of an organization is 26%.

So let's just work on like disabled black folks. Raise your hand if your organization has -- 26% of your organization has disabled black folks in it.

That's exactly what I'm talking about.

So --

>>PATTY: Yeah, no one just raised their hand.

>>CHRISTIANA: So, equity along the lines of how I come in as a patron is going to be impossible if there's not people who look like me at every step of the way. That is, helping your organization drive that change and that innovation forward. So, people who look like me or people who look like all of us really need to be in your ticketing office, they need to be who is curating your art or who is in your -- who is doing your casting. You need to have

people who look like us who are your stage directors, who are backstage, who is your inner staff, who is your executive leadership, who is your board of directors.

You need these people to be there because you can't -- you can not speak on behalf of us. One of the biggest phrases you hear in disability justice is: Nothing about us without us. So in order for this -- for me to even speak on how I can experience equity in your organization as a patron, I first want to ask you as a patron: What are you doing to represent equity in the organization?

>>LARA: I will in no way be as eloquent as ChrisTiana or Patty, so I will not even try.

The two things I would like to highlight is the notion of proximity. I think that if -- the most important thing in my mind is having somebody at the table to help make a decision or just make a design. It's hard to -- if you assume, you make an ass out of you and me, period (laughter). So if you are trying to make changes without knowing firsthand a patron or staff member with an issue, it is short-sighted and it may come back to haunt you.

You may have to do rework going forward.

The only other thing I would point out is the disabled population specifically in Washington state is growing by leaps and bounds every year. The latest figure I looked at right now, 13% of Washington state residents are disabled in some way and 40% of people over 65 are disabled.

So from the business standpoint, there's a lot of money being left on the table if you can not accommodate the broadest range of patrons.

>>CAMILLE: So, my comment will be about people who are unable to afford to go to events because I think that's really challenging. That just eliminates a big population. I think there's many organizations that actually have a free day, a free time for people to go to the museums or what have you.

It would be wonderful to create more of an open door situation for people, people with disabilities, but who can't afford to go to these events. Somehow charge less. Somehow be able to accommodate their needs. I mean, it's a really exciting feeling when you are somewhere and you are amongst people who possibly may never get to go to a museum and yet once a month they get the opportunity to go in and feel the experience everybody else does.

So, my goal would be to see more people have accessible entrances as far as getting into events, like theaters and museums, so that they don't -- they don't feel like they are isolated.

It's terrible to be left out of what activities there are because of price. A lot of these events are prohibitive, so it's hard for them to afford it.

>>ELIZABETH: Go ahead.

>>PATTY: Yeah, I would like to add something. You know, if you do have some events, you can try to advertise people. But then what happens if they don't come? Right? And it's because you're not reaching the right people with your advertising. You don't know who to reach out to, so all of your efforts are kind of wasted, right? So who are you actually including within your service? Some people don't have the opportunity to work even or experience even just applying for that specific opportunity because they might have a skill or the opportunity without the professional development for them, so we also need to have these workshops, some formal teaching. It's just not historically been accessible to

people with disabilities, so you have to consider that as well.

And also they might not feel welcome to any other type of event, just based on how they were treated before. So again, you really have to think about what's happening on the other side of the fence.

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you. I wanted to add that this discussion brings up, you know, the sentiment that when you talk about equity and equality, what is the difference between that.

I wanted to show you this slide that I found was very interesting. You can assume that everybody can get the right -- the same kind of access. They will be able to go in and enjoy the experience.

So, I'm going to describe this for Camille so she knows what's up there.

So, equality versus equity. So the first half of the image under equality, you have 3 people who are trying to see a game and there's a fence in front of them, and all three people have a block they can stand up on to peer over the fence.

And two people have a box that they can use to peer up over the fence, but the third person is in a wheelchair and has been given a box. But obviously that is an equal way of treating people. You give them all the same thing.

But does it work for everybody? No. Obviously it's not going to work for the wheelchair -- person in the wheelchair.

And the other half of the image is equity. So you have three people who have been given three different types of things to ensure that they can see the game. The first person is tall enough. They can see over the fence.

The second person is standing on two boxes, so it can see over the fence.

The third person, in the wheelchair, is using a ramp to get up to see over the fence.

So basically, you can give -- you can give people access, but you may have to adjust for the kind of access that that person needs. And that's what equity is all about.

And making assumptions, as someone said earlier, can be detrimental to the progress of a patron.

For example, oftentimes when I go to the theater I get people signing to me. And even I know I sound different when I open my mouth, but people start signing to me and it -- it befuddles me because I'm not signing to them, so why are they signing to me.

So it's a very interesting, physical question for me, so depending on my mood that day, I kindly explain that I don't sign. And sometimes I actually say, "Actually, I don't really understand what you are saying. I do know a few signs but they are swear words, that's all I know." (Laughter.) So, with that said, I think that this is an interesting conversation to be had among staff at organizations. Like ChrisTiana said, you know, what is your staff made up of? Who is representative of the community? Anything else you want to add?

>>CAMILLE: Can I add one thing?

>>ELIZABETH: Yes.

>>CAMILLE: I just noticed on one of the news -- one of the radio stations they were advertising that they were doing American Sign Language for one of the plays and I kind of thought about you, Elizabeth. You don't do signing. I don't do braille. Everybody assumes that there are certain -- if you have a disability, that you are all

in the same boat.

>>ELIZABETH: Exactly. I remember when I was in graduate school and a friend of mine was telling me he went home to tell his parents that he met this really cool woman who happened to be Deaf and the parents said: Does she know braille? (Laughter.)

I mean, that kind of thing.

So it's very interesting.

I think we have one question so far that's coming from the audience.

>>MASON: This is the first of three questions, but I'll just go ahead and ask the first one first.

This question asked: What is your favorite accessibility arts venue in the area and who is doing it well?

And I would like to add a piece to that too. What indicators in a venue -- this is coming from a venue's point of view -- are there that make you feel like at home? What things do we do well to allow access to the theater? Or any --

>>ELIZABETH: I was going to say that is a very similar question to one I was going to ask, that: What

does the idea of cultural experience look like for you? So along the same lines with that. You know, when you go into a venue and it's working well and it's going great, what does that look like? What does that feel like when it's the ideal cultural experience for you? Go ahead, Camille.

>>CAMILLE: Okay. I just want to thank Kelsey Donahue for being here from the Seattle Art Museum because what they have done for the Art Beyond Sight program has been really terrific and they have had lots of people come and observe what we do, and anybody's welcome, what they do there. The docents are describing art to blind and low vision people. They make accommodations if you can't -- if you take Access, they'll actually meet you outside the door to help you in or they wait at the front door for you so you are not afraid to get in, and they will walk you to the room.

We all meet together and then we all go as a group. And docents work with us as far as making sure we are -- have a sighted guide. And they know the language, like it's not "over here" or "over there." They describe it so we can actually -- they describe it so we can actually understand.

I want to thank Kelsey for what they have done at the Seattle Art Museum.

The downtown library, Cleo and CJ are here from the Equal Access Library Program. We started the book group there. They have accommodated our needs totally.

We all sit in a group. We all talk about the same book we have all listened to and they make sure we get to whatever -- get Access home or taxi home. And they walk us across the street and we have our lunch together as a group. There are two places I really found that have been really accommodating our needs. It's been a wonderful experience.

>>LARA: My favorite art venue has great parking and lots of bathrooms that are very close to the parking. (Laughter.) It may sound silly, but one of the key tenets in the ADA regulations do involve access to restrooms and so those are my two favorites. The other key thing for me personally to feel safe are handrails, so my favorite venues have handrails and information, to which I referred to earlier, the ability to allow me to choose where I want to sit and not just pegged into one particular place. Technically, again, the ADA regulations say that -- state

that all price points should be available and accessible as needed. And based on age of venues, it might not necessarily happen, but that would be great for me.

>>CHRISTIANA: I was sitting here trying to think of a specific venue and it's not necessarily that there are specific venues that have been accessible, but that there's been a specific programming or organizers or curators or folks who have made it more accessible, and you can kind of tell, based on who is overseeing an event within one space, because the lighting will be different. They may or may not use strobe lights. You know, there are little things like that you can tell that someone thought about folks with developmental, cognitive, and psychiatric disability. And what's interesting especially because we're at a 4Culture event, I think the -- one of the most accessible art installations I went to was earlier this month at the TK Artist Lofts in one of their artistic spaces and how they curated it was lighting, making sure there was not so much ambient noise, but they have essentially a stimming table. For folks like me waiting for a show to start, there was collage there and Play-Doh and things like that. There was either pillows to sit on the floor or chairs or

open space for wheelchairs. And as one of the people who wanted to perform, they made sure to check in with me not only whether or not I had all the tools I needed to perform, but whether or not I had the spoons to go at my place on the set list and was open to changing the set list in case I was becoming fatigued or overstimulated. So for me, that was extremely accessible and it was a great space. What I had originally prepared for this one question was just I think it's very important in arts when you're talking about accessibility to also think about this intersectionally. Like you will hear me say intersectionality a lot and culture humility.

Think about safety, not just real safety but perceived safety. And safety from all the way from whether or not someone feels safe to buy a ticket and even enter into your space, to like whether someone feels safe asking for help finding their seat, whether someone feels safe buying wine. Whether someone feels safe waiting for an Uber outside without getting approached or accosted.

Bathrooms, coat check, all these different places where you have to interact with people, really think about safety, both real and perceived, and find ways to address those issues if you find places for improvement.

>>PATTY: Okay. Thinking. I think for me I don't think I have yet found the right venue as far as accessibility goes, because not all provide sign language interpreters. So, that means I can't go to any event anywhere at any time like other people. I have to follow a schedule, like Elizabeth was saying. So I have to follow other people's -- you know, whatever they perceive is a good time for Deaf people to go, I have to follow that. It would be nice if I could just show up and have the interpreters ready or even captioning ready and I could just turn them on, sure, no problem, without any apologies or resistance from the venue itself. And also the price point. I think they can budget in access, you know, for interpreters, captioning, et cetera, and also installing ramps and handrails to make sure their spaces are accessible. If they do that in the beginning, they don't have to think about it later when it comes up. It's not going to be an aftermath type thing: "Oh, sorry. We'll be sure to do it next time" or "Oh, sorry. We don't have the budget." Of course that's frustrating. And I also then have to make sure I have the time to explain to upper

management or the person who is planning the event to say: Well, if you looked at the budget costs, et cetera. It's assuming they have to learn the vocabulary, the numbers, et cetera. They have to build this into their budget. That way you then know how to ask them and you can have that kind of dialogue with them. I think it would be nice to just not have to make that type of a decision every day, right, just kind of focus on the experience of the art and the culture that's happening.

>>ELIZABETH: I want to add, the piece about the budget is so important, I think. If all of this was sort of subsumed by the budget, you know, if you just plan for accessibility within your budget, that is a no-brainer, but I think that funders are slowly starting to come around to the idea that it would be good to pay for these things, pay for accessibility, so I think we still have some work to do when it comes to educating donors and patrons of the arts about that sort of thing.

Also, I want to make the point that accessibility doesn't just begin once you walk in the door. It happens before that. So, take for example someone who is blind and living by themselves or someone who is low income, how are they going to get from point A to point B? How are they going to get from their home to the theater? There has to be a way of helping them get transport, for example, so thinking about accessibility outside the door is also important.

>>CHRISTIANA: I would also just -- really quick.

I also want to add too, and this is the consultant in me coming out, right? So, I would say that if you -- I would argue, I would empathetically directly argue with you that if you have concerns around whether or not you have budget item for accessibility, that is saying a lot about the culture of your organization. It is showing a lot about how your organization views people with disabilities and to the extent that they are prioritized in your strategic or business plan. And not in a good way. It would be something that as a consultant I would want to come in and perhaps see to what extent that is pervasive and work on culture humility models so people can see accessibility as an intrinsic part of your organization and the arts and not something that has to be accommodated on the back end. And that's sort of an unconscious implicit bias, not intentional, not saying that you are waking up every day saying: Oooh, how can I keep the disabled people out of my space today, but that it's something that's happening. And I would just argue if you are sitting here fretting: Oh, my goodness but do we have the money to make this more accessible? I would say -- I would ask yourself to find the core why of that concern.

>>ELIZABETH: I think this is a workshop in and of itself. This is a very important topic and I think one that is burning on most people's minds, so, I'm going to switch tactics, twist a little bit.

Next question I think is an important one kind of related to all this.

Language and how we refer to ourselves is important. Some people aren't sure what to say or how to refer to disabilities. How do you refer to yourself when it comes to your disability? What do people get wrong about your disability?

Let's start with Lara this time.

>>LARA: This is actually a little bit of a hard one for me because I'm still, even though this has been going on for 10 years for me personally, I still don't necessarily know what -- I don't usually like labels. I

tend to be very self-deprecating because I want people to feel at ease. I carry a weapon. I carry a stick. I'm in a machine sometimes that people aren't familiar with and I don't -- and in the scooter I had a young child, so it was important to me to make sure everybody felt comfortable. And I'm also very tall and so it was important to me to make people feel at ease. So I personally am not the best person to talk to about this right now, but I do understand, again, these tools that make movement in our lives easier for us may be perceived differently to others.

>>CAMILLE: My turn, okay. A lot of people come up to me and say: Are you training this dog for some blind person? And I will say: I am the person that's blind.

(Laughter.)

They say: No, you are not, you don't look blind.

I go: What does blind look like?

I think it's interesting because I don't mind saying I'm blind. I have no problem with that.

I used to say I was visually challenged. And I still am visually challenged, but now I'm actually with less sight, so I am blind. And, you know, then people get really uncomfortable.

Or I'll go to a store and I'll ask a question and then I'll say: Are you -- are you standing in front of me? And they'll look at me and go: Yes! And I'll say: Okay, because I can't see you.

I try really hard not to make it hard on people, though. I kind of really think it's important for people to know, so when they think I'm blind and find out I'm blind -- when they find out I'm blind, I tell them what my needs are. I have no problem telling people what they can do to help me so that I am working in the space I'm in. So I have no problem with that. And I think Egan's a dead giveaway.

Although every time I go to a restaurant with my husband or family, they go: Is that a working dog?

I go: Yes. This is a real one.

>>ELIZABETH: Do people tend to talk louder to you when they find out you are blind?

>>CAMILLE: Totally. They talk to my husband.

They ask my husband: Would she like a braille menu?

I'll say: No, I don't, thank you.

They give me a menu. I say: I don't need it, but

I'm a good eater.

I try really hard to help people out.

People who know me when I go to a restaurant or somewhere in my neighborhood, they are great. They say: The water's right in front of you. They'll make comments to help me.

Most people don't get it until they notice that I don't -- that I'm -- I eat pretty good. I have learned how to eat with a knife and fork and nothing -- still have things coming off my plate, but I think I do pretty well, being a blind person. I'm getting it. (Laughter.)

>>PATTY: Oh. Sorry, I thought you were going to go, ChrisTiana.

Okay, I do think it's important to study different disability terms. That's important just to have in the back of your head and not label other people. Let them label themselves. So, for example, there are some times like when I go to the airport, okay, and so I go and I check in, and they say: Oh, you're a Deaf person. And without my knowledge they put -- they say that I'm disabled on my ticket. And then there's going to be another person on the other side and then they have a wheelchair and they try to get me -- it's like, hey, there's -- there are some Deaf people with other disabilities that do use wheelchairs, but again, they never asked me if I want it or not. They can check in and see if I want a wheelchair or not and then I can answer: No. I can walk myself.

Something else, another situation going into a store, again, let me identify myself with a certain term of vocabulary and take out that attitude or a certain stereotype that you might carry because every person that comes up to me, they -- I'm a person that signs. When I start signing with them, they say: I'm so sorry. There's so much pity. They feel helpless because they don't know sign and can't communicate with me.

It's important to throw that out.

We can text, write back and forth, et cetera, instead.

I want them to see me as an equal.

>>ELIZABETH: Yeah, I think it's United Airlines is the one that does the wheelchairs. Right?

>>PATTY: Yes.

>>ELIZABETH: United Airlines. This happens to a lot of my friends when they go flying, friends who are

Deaf. And United Airlines, they come out, and they are walking out with a wheelchair.

They send a text of themselves sitting in the wheelchair (laughter).

I wanted to point out here are some words and -- oh, go ahead.

>>CHRISTIANA: So, I think what I want to preface this with is you're hearing me talk a lot about cognitive, developmental, and psychiatric disabilities and I actually have co-occurring disabilities, so I have chronic disabilities that affect my -- the way that I move about in the world, my body. I have physical disabilities that you can't really see. Today's a good day. I don't have my cane.

But what has affected my life the most were those three, those developmental, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities. What I think is important in saying that is that it's contextual. So, contextual in this idea that I was still trying to grapple when I was thinking about this question. So I might say: I'm autistic. I'm an autistic person. But I'm not going to say I'm schizoaffective. I don't know why. I might say I live with schizoaffective disorder. I don't call myself DID, you know, which is -- why am I forgetting? It's dissociative identity disorder. I'm not going to say I'm a dissociative. I just say I live with dissociative identity disorder.

I was asking my husband at a peer conference for people with disabilities. I asked: Do you consider yourself epileptic or that you live with epilepsy?

He said it depends on the day. And we had this conversation around like perhaps the change is based on our relationship with it. And so in like a 10-second synopsis, there are two different models of disability, the medical and social. The medical model says that the person is disabled and the world accommodates them.

The social model of disability says disability is something that happens to the person and society's inaccessible to them.

And I think it's in that relationship of the social model that I make that choice day-to-day so I don't know if it's psychosocial for me. I don't know if it's sociopolitical.

I don't know if it's because I feel like, especially as a black femme-presenting person, people would hold I'm autistic or I have a learning disability more than they would hold that I'm schizoaffective or that I have dissociative identity disorder, but I do think it's important to ask and be in a -- what I call cultural consent conversation, which means you can ask them the question but you also have to allow them to consent to have a conversation about their cultural identity with you. If they choose not to, you have to respect that. I think that would be the best thing. But the biggest thing people get wrong about me is, Number 1, yes, black autistic people exist.

Number 2, I can be schizoaffective disorder. I will not hurt you. *Sybil* is wrong, so is *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. None of it is true. Not really.

So I would just say also check your bias. Check how much your bias is based in sensationalized movies. We have not done a very good job of not showing stereotypes, especially of cognitive, developmental, and especially psychiatric disability, but don't assume, but please do check your bias.

And I guess finally, just know that body language is about 90% of your communication. So it's not about saying the right things. I can tell when people shirk away. I can tell if I'm dysregulating or if I slip up and have a response to external stimuli to how people act.

I'll end with this: There are a lot of other things that are happening in this world with folks like myself and there's a lot of people who see me talk and they say: Wow, but you must be one of the "good" ones.

Also, don't assume people's backgrounds.

I spent over 7 years of my life in involuntary psychiatric treatment.

3 of those being in an asylum.

5 of those being in a social program that conditioned me into being able to do this.

So just because of that, I just want to let you know. I say that also because don't assume background.

Just because you hear that, don't assume that someone is one of the "good" ones or they are so high functioning or they are well-performing.

I think that's the biggest thing people get wrong about all people with psychiatric disabilities.

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you.

I think that there are many disabilities that are invisible. For example, my disability you would never know that I was deaf until I opened my mouth. And I can't tell you how many times people steer the conversation to my deafness and I don't necessarily want to talk about it all the time. So like ChrisTiana was saying, it just depends on the day, depends on how I'm feeling, if I feel like sharing, but I don't -- I personally don't identify as someone who has a disability first. I am a professional woman. I'm a mother. I am a public health professional. I'm a writer. I compete in triathlons.

There is so much more to me than just my deafness. So, again, it's important to meet the person where they are at.

So, take a look at this screen here and just get some ideas of how you might think about referring to someone.

And this is not an exhaustive list. Everyone has their own way of calling themselves certain terms. So this is not meant to be the all and be -- and end all.

I want to switch to Daniela. She has a question from the audience.

DANIELA: Okay, this question says: Having representation in a space is incredibly important to increasing equity in an organization. But organizations can't hire diverse populations if not everyone feels they have access to even apply. In your experience, what are some factors or strategies you have encountered that made you feel actually welcome to apply for a job or experience?

>>CHRISTIANA: Everyone's looking at me.

(Laughter.)

>>PATTY: I'm still thinking.

>>CHRISTIANA: Okay, so, I would say there are two things going on in this situation. Number one, there are a lot of coded language that I could speak for myself and the folks that I have worked with, especially in Disabilities Commission and my constituents.

There's a lot of coded language that made people go away.

For example, I don't know if you know of a lot of people across the spectrum of like cognitive, developmental, neurological, psychiatric.

A lot of us can't get driver's licenses because there's a certain part of our disabilities that prevents us from getting driver's licenses.

If you have as a requirement that somebody has to have a driver's license and you read the job duties and you don't actually need one, but it's for whatever reason you have, then that's going to be the number one red flag.

We also have to remember that a lot of folks come from a sort of imposter syndrome, so they are already -- you know, a lot of folks who come from social oppression already feel they are at a lack, and so I would say that having specific programs and initiatives that reach out to them, to people that you need, is important. I know that a lot of you are 501(c)(3)'s and can't do political advocacy, but Washington state, for example, does have a state law against affirmative action as being discussed in the state legislature right now. I mean, if you feel you would need something like that, find a way in your free time or through a partnership with a non-501(c)(3) to do that. But, I mean, I think at the end of the day, it also might come down to what is the narrative of your organization. What is your organizational narrative putting out to the community? What is the social impact of what you have -- not just what you are doing, but what you have done. Because if you are also not looking at it not just how do we be competent in helping bring folks into the organization, but also what is it about us that we can change or innovate or transform so that we can not just attract people like flies to honey, but that it is a space that people would like to come to, I think those would be your best options for bringing those sort of people in: Hire a consultant like myself. (Laughter.)

>>ELIZABETH: Any other comments?

>>LARA: I would just like to acknowledge that having worked at nonprofits in the past, I know exactly just how much free time you have every day (laughter) and get bored and need something else for your lists of to-do list. It's not -- it's really a tricky thing and hopefully at some point there will be a little bit of time to make the effort to go out and try to find a new candidate pool, because it's easy. If a résumé lands on your desk and they are qualified, task-item done. And so I appreciate the time limitations and the small budgets, but to ChrisTiana's point, if it's important to the organization, you'll find a way. And it shows. It shows in the programming. It shows in the number of people that will come and find out about your events, and I think in the end of the day the

institution will be a stronger institution.

Camille?

>>CAMILLE: I have been thinking about this. Well, I would say if you do hire somebody that would be in your organization, be sure to understand their needs, because I've been on boards before where everybody got all the paperwork information and that's something that I can't read. So when I was low vision, it would be in fine print and I would have to ask for it in large print. So I would say if you do hire somebody or whatever their needs are, accommodate them so that they feel like they are welcome and they can also go out in the public and invite other people with special needs.

>>PATTY: This actually kind of related to this last topic that we had. So, again, if you don't consider people with disabilities as your educators. We are not your teachers. Okay? When you are wanting to hire someone else, do your own homework. Don't assume that -- you can hire a consultant, other people, as well and discuss with them and see what are the right phraseology, the appropriate definitions you include with the organization with. So, right, you want people to come to your

organization, but why? Do you want to actually better your organization? Or do you just want their money? Do you want to satisfy the buzzword of diversity? You really have to consider your intention behind it at first. So, don't just hire someone and then put all of the work on their shoulders because they happen to be a member of that community. It's not fair to that person.

They just want to do their job. They don't want to focus on their race, gender, et cetera, including disability status, anything like that.

Again, it depends on the organization.

My organization is called Deaf Spotlight and it is a Deaf-centered organization that focuses on sign language, its culture, and we are thinking about making accessible events, and so we're talking about the venues. It's important to have these discussions way ahead of time to make sure we also secure deaf-blind interpreters for other members of our community without them requesting it necessarily. We have the interpreters in ready in case the need comes up.

If the blind-deaf person shows up, we have the access for them. We want to make sure we have covered all of our bases. And, of course, like right in the middle of writing that thick of the planning process, we have to consider that first and then it will come with our programming.

>>ELIZABETH: You have another question?

>>MASON: First of all, excellent presentation.

What advice would you give to arts educators working with children and teens? What do you wish would have been different when you were young and first discovered the arts?

>>CAMILLE: Okay. Well for me as a young person going to activities, of course I would love to have audio description then. This is so new. It's happening more and more. I would like that to be limited to just one play, if it's a play, or I would like to have more accessibility as a child, although I had not -- nobody accommodated me when I was in school, so I think that for me, I think now there is much more awareness. It's getting a lot better.

I would like to just see it continuing so that nobody feels left out. I really feel that for your -- as a young person going through visual problems, even my peers did not get what I was dealing with.

I really felt that it's a -- don't -- feel so different.

I would like to see more doors open for people with all kinds of disabilities and I would love to see when you go into a theater there would be somebody in a wheelchair or someone that signs and closed-captioned. All of that, audio description. I would like to see it all.

>>LARA: The more the arts are accessible to everybody, I think that will help us all grow up and expand our minds. My son in particular, for example, has never known anything different. I'm his mom. I'm not a disabled person. I'm not a this. I'm not a that. We have lived together in the same house and so if these venues provide access to everybody, then, again, it's the proximity comment I think that will help these kids recognize that we are all the same. We are all on equal -- what's that -- equality versus equity. That it truly is an equitable society, and that each institution can achieve that one step at a time.

>>CHRISTIANA: This is a hard question because I keep trying to think about how to phrase it, but just for context, I grew up in the mid-'90s and early '00s.

That's post racial-society myth, pre Obama era. So, what's difficult about answering the question is that it really was an intersectional issue for me.

Not only was I disabled and I was a black child which -- especially autistic, but with a single young mom with state insurance that didn't cover ABA board certified board specialists to get me the help that I needed, who was going through all of these different sort of things and she was also poor. So, there was a lot of those sort of arts things that I only experienced if it was like part of a field trip with school. And even then, what I would say I really wish I had as a kid was representation and not just representation of people who had disabilities, but people like me who had disabilities who were in a positive light, because it was already hard enough as a black girl to find representation of me that wasn't either -- what did they say -- like police, poverty, or pills. Like those are really the three themes of people who look like me in all arts. Maybe I might see something with a nice -- without some of that, like *Dreamgirls*, but still there's poverty and pills in that too. You know, so, there's *Porgy and Bess*, but then there's all of that going on.

There's a lot of this sort of stuff.

So, I would love to see like a black, schizoaffective woman doing the dang thing, going out, living their life without ending up like with some sort of like breakdown or some sort of traumatic dramatic thing, and that might mean bringing in more screenwriters or librettists, artists that look like me, come from my lens, but that would be the most thing, is representation.

>>PATTY: I think it's important to have more role models, right, that actually look like us, folks with disabilities and the intersection that comes with that. And I notice that there might not be enough representation out there in media and the movies because nobody gives these people these opportunities to be role models, so I think it's nice we have school, museums, we can all partner together and perhaps hire people who are artists with disabilities and can teach others art and be there in that role while also having disabilities. So it can also be like dancing for classes for folks who use wheelchairs, right? Something like that. Right? You know, instead of saying that people can't dance because -- because they use canes, or walkers, or wheelchairs, we can just create these

spaces and have these role models for these kids.

So I think it's important again early exposure, positive role models. I think it's going to be much more acceptable that way instead of putting folks in corners and isolate them. And I think it's important the more exposure we have, the more we see them, thinking: Oh, right, I do remember I saw the dancer in the wheelchair. That's cool. We should have them come and teach again or I would like to collaborate with them later. Maybe they can come to the project I'm working on.

Folks with disabilities, they could be our future leaders as well in the arts communities.

>>ELIZABETH: I think about this question a lot because I'm a mom of two deaf children, but my kids have cochlear implants, and when I was growing up, cochlear implants were not common. I grew up with hearing aids and have very much less access to sound than my kids have, so I was lucky, though, I had a mother and a father who advocated for me and so I'm fortunate in that way. And I think advocacy is a really important thing to consider. 1 in 5 Americans has a disability, so anything you can do to advocate for a friend or a family member or a -- anyone you

know who has a disability can go a long way, so I spent a lot of my time advocating for my kids, for their education, for their success in life, and they hear way better than me.

They can overhear. They can talk about me (laughter) behind my back (laughter). That's nothing to do with their deafness. It just has to do with being teenagers. But my daughter is an accomplished pianist and she is profoundly deaf, wears two cochlear implants and competed internationally. So I feel that nothing can stop them. And I think that I was fortunate to have parents who believed that nothing could stop me, that I can do whatever I wanted. So I think that's very important as a child to have that message be sent to you.

So, we're starting to run out of time and I think that -- oh.

We don't have any more questions?

>>MASON: I have one.

>>ELIZABETH: You have one more.

>>MASON: This is for ChrisTiana: About the intersection of disability and justice and equity and inclusion of, or of people with mental concerns or living

with disease. For example, what about folks with bipolar disorder or living with other chronic conditions, like Crohn's or recently diagnosed cancer diagnosis?

How do these worlds fit in your vision of disability and arts justice?

>>CHRISTIANA: I hope that the arts vision would also include these folks in your arts vision as well. I think that one of the biggest things, not just as a consultant, but as a disability justice advocate, is there is a whole world of disability that's happening at all times and whether it's something that you are like us and you sit on panels and you talk about it or it's something that you only deal with when it's time to take your medicine or it's time to see your doctor, you get home and start to take care of yourself after a long day, I think that's important. What I think to that question, what I can answer and whoever it is, I would love to get coffee with you because I could talk your ear off about it, obviously, but I think what's important about it is not only to include it but to find I think -- we might differ. People might differ, but I do agree with part of culture humility and working towards self-evaluation is proximity.

So doing it in a tactful way of finding ways to be in community with folks who have these -- who live with these different sort of experiences, so that you are not just getting one person to talk about it, because there is a whole nother world that is hardly ever talked about. And I know you are cutting me off but (laughter) I'll say this one last thing.

When I was at Seattle University -- -- Seattle Opera and they asked me to be the social impact consultant, one of the first questions they asked me was: What does Aida mean to the black community?

I can tell you what I think it means to the black community and I can tell you what on the Internet says, but you have to ask the black community to figure out what Aida means to the black community, which is when we start having our black inclusion forum.

That's the same thing to this question. I could tell you what it feels like for me. I think that it should all be included, but if you don't know, you better ask somebody, and that might mean affinity groups or focus groups or your own self-education and awareness around them.

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you so much.

So we have about 20 minutes left and I just want to make sure that I give you enough time to have some food. We have some food out there.

You should eat it all before you leave.

Have a chance to network with people.

Find somebody you don't know very well.

Find out what they are doing around accessibility in their organization.

Exchange contact information.

I want to give you a few resources that will be helpful.

The Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability conference is this summer in August, in Denver.

It's the closest it has ever been to Seattle.

I highly encourage you, if you're working on accessibility in your organization, to let this be part of your professional development and have your organization send you to this conference, because I would love to see people report back on what this conference has to offer.

There are people from all over the U.S. who are working on accessibility and lots of great information there.

If you go to the LEAD Web site you will find resources. There are tip sheets, books, videos, and webinars.

And the National Endowment for the Arts has an accessibility page, so take a look at that.

Again, I'm going to send this PowerPoint out, so no need to write everything down.

I want to say a huge thank you to the volunteers who helped pull this off. And you know who you are. There are too many to name, but thank you so much for your help for helping me with this.

And I want to give you a few minutes to -- the biggest thank you goes to my panelists of course (Applause) for your time and your energy (Applause) and sharing some personal information about yourself that I think is really, really helpful to all of us.

And you have an opportunity to tell us, give us feedback, so if you go to this survey right now, you can fill it out. It's 10 questions. Very easy to fill out.

It's also going to be e-mailed to you, so any feedback would be really appreciated. It's particularly for kinds of workshops you would like to see in the future. We can have a workshop entirely devoted to equity and intersectionality and disability which I think is a very common theme today.

Make sure you sign in with your email address, because I know there were some walk-ins. Don't have everyone's email address.

I also want to leave you with a contact -- our contact information.

We'll leave this up here on the screen and want to be very sensitive to your time because you are all busy people, and so without further ado, I'm going to close this and thank you all for coming and we will be here for a few minutes to chat afterwards.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

NOTE TO READER: This text is being provided in a rough draft format. Realtime captioning is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a verbatim record of the proceedings.

Lisa K. Hutchinson

Certified Realtime Captioner