Seattle‑King County Cultural Accessibility Consortium, Betty Siegel workshop, Wednesday, October 16, 2019

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Lisa K. Hutchinson

Certified Realtime Captioner

>>GRACE: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Grace Chai. I'm here with the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture.

And we just wanted to welcome and thank you so much for showing up. Our office has been investing in these workshops because it is absolutely critical that we make the arts as accessible and inclusive as possible, especially at the intersection of race and disability.

Thank you so much to Elizabeth and to the Seattle‑King County Cultural Accessibility Consortium for putting this together and for Betty, for sharing her knowledge. And with that, I'll hand it over to Elizabeth.

(Applause.)

>>ELIZABETH: Welcome, everybody. (Cheers.) Awesome. So, who is here from museums?

Raise high. High. Very good.

Theaters?

Okay. Other cultural spaces?

How many of you know someone with a disability?

Very good.

Who is from corporations, governments, other nonprofits?

Great.

This is your first time here?

Excellent.

This is your third time here?

Oh, wow. I'm impressed with your dedication. That's awesome. Thank you so much for coming.

My name is Elizabeth Ralston and I am the founder of the Seattle‑King County Cultural Accessibility Consortium and I know that's a mouthful so I call us SKCAC, for lack of a better way to say it.

So, let's see. I want to thank our sponsors Town Hall for providing this wonderful space, the City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture for investing in this, as well as Seattle Theatre Group. All of you, thank you for making this possible.

I also want to introduce members of our steering committee. If you wouldn't mind waving your hand to let people know who you are. We have two people actually out checking people in. Ariel Bradler is out there.

Tory Contreras is in here.

Tim Gonzalez‑Wiler is out there.

Andrea Kovich I don't think is here.

Jason Plourde is outside directing people in. Hopefully you have a chance to meet him as well.

Thank you, everyone, for your dedication to this effort.

So, this past year has been an experiment. It's been an experiment to see what the demand is, what the learning curve is like for people who are interested in accessibility in our arts community, so, we have done three workshops. This is the third and final workshop in 2019. We started a Facebook page. We had a meet and greet. We have built up a network of almost 300 people in the arts community and beyond.

So we have done a lot of great work and now we have seen that the experiment is working. The demand is there. You're here. Look at this room. It's filled with people who are committed to doing the right thing when it comes to accessibility. So, as part of this experiment we've been able to do these workshops for free with the investment of people in the community, and so now what we need is an investment from you because in order to continue these workshops, we will need to find funding.

And with that I'm proud to say that we have just learned that we have fiscal sponsorship. Our application for fiscal sponsorship was approved by Shunpike. Yea. (Cheers) (Applause) So that means in the coming months we will be ‑‑ sooner, actually, we will be letting you know how you can invest in this effort, so stay tuned on that. So, our goals as you know are professional development and training, equipment loaner program, and having a Web site with resources and access information. And we would like to make this possible, so hopefully we will get some investment from all of you and other members in our community to make this possible so we can serve as the clearinghouse of information so that if you need some training, if you need help with any kind of issue, you can come to this clearinghouse and get your questions asked so that we are no longer working in a silo. We are all collaborating together and helping the arts become more accessible to people with disabilities.

So, I just have a couple of announcements. We have a save the date, so please put this on your calendar, November 7 from 3:30 to 5:30. The place is to be determined. We will be having a meet and greet where we will have a chance to network with other people in the community and learn from several people who attended the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability conference back in August. And we would love to be able to share the lessons learned at this meet and greet. So, more details to come.

And with that, I'm going to turn this over to Tory my steering committee member. Thank you. (Applause.)

>>TORY: I would like to start by giving a huge applause to Elizabeth who has been volunteering her time to put together all of these presentations. (Applause.) Thank you. So, there are some ways that you can get involved and those are listed up here. If you have any interest in getting involved, particularly the bottom bullet, we are in recruitment for our steering committee. And so if you are someone who is disabled, someone who is an advocate for people who have disabilities, we absolutely would love to consider having you on our steering committee. If you are interested, you can get an application from Elizabeth, so just email your reply to the invitation you received for this particular event.

We just want to remind you that this is a safe space, that we respect everyone's efforts to work on accessibility. This is a no‑judgment zone. And we understand that we are all at different levels of accomplishments in terms of accessibility, so we just want to respect each other and where each other is with accessibility.

We also please use the microphone when speaking. I know Betty's going to make this a little bit interactive, so you can ask questions throughout, so make sure you use a microphone which Ariel is going to be passing around.

And then I'll just tell you a little bit about how we heard about Betty and her presentation. Elizabeth and I went to the LEAD conference for the first time this year. It was in Denver.

It's put on by the Kennedy Center. It's in its 20th year. Betty is actually the founder of the LEAD conference and, of course, works at the Kennedy Center.

So Elizabeth and I were attending various workshops throughout the week and when we stumbled across Betty's session on how to create an access plan, we just came back really invigorated and took many of the things that we learned from her session to create our own access plans within our organizations, so we thought: What better way to bring kind of a gift back to our community other than to bring Betty here to give you a very similar session. So, I think you are going to be really enlightened by a lot of the practical things you can take back to your organization.

And without further ado, it is my pleasure to introduce to you Betty Siegel from the Kennedy Center. (Applause.)

>>BETTY: All right. So, we got a lot of ground to cover, so roll up your sleeves. Get ready to move. Get ready to think. I want to start, though, by talking to you before we even get into the planning thing, I think it's really important for us to remember who we talk about when we talk about people with disabilities, right?

This may be basic for some of you all, so I will go through it pretty quickly. First off, 56.7 million Americans. I know this number's wrong because there are 50 million Americans that live daily with mental illness. So how you are going to have 56.7 million Americans with disabilities and a subgroup of that be 50 million people with mental illness, I don't get, so I will say it's more like 100 million people with disabilities in the United States.

19% or 1 in 5 Americans has a disability.

Statistically, let's do this in this room.

One, two, three, four, you. One, two, three, four, you. One, two, three, four, you keep going.

The reason why I want you to think about it this way is disability ‑‑ because when we're talking about issues of diversity and access and inclusion, we are not talking about those people over there (pointing). People with disabilities are these people right here (pointing), in the room.

So, many of you raised your hands when Elizabeth asked whether you have family members with disabilities or if you know someone with a disability. The reality is statistically I know that either you or someone near you has a disability, and so when we talk about these concepts, I don't want you to think of it as some abstract person with a disability. I want you to visualize someone you know in your life when we talk about these issues.

Disability does cross all geographic, economic, social, gender, race, religion, age, categories. It's very nonjudgmental, disability. It will get you anywhere you are. I love that about it.

The interesting thing is that when we look at the population of people, you have 41% of older adults have disabilities. I think that number is a little low, but they are only counting 65 and older. As the population ages, the instance of disability increases. When we get into our 70s and 80s, it's more like 80% of those individuals have a disability.

Only 8% of children, so that's the K‑12 environment and younger, have disabilities. 16 million families have at least one child between the age of 5 and 16 with a disability.

It's interesting. Disability varies depending on which population you're in, so when we talk about disability with older adults, what are the five most common disabling conditions amongst older adults? Shout them out.

>> Hearing.

>>BETTY: Hearing.

>> Vision.

>>BETTY: Vision. Mobility. I heard a couple other ones in there.

>> Memory.

>>BETTY: Cognition.

What's that fifth one? Depression. Mental illness as we age.

But then when we talk about children, so now we're talking K‑12, what are the three most common disabling conditions amongst children, K‑12?

>> Developmental disabilities.

>> Learning.

>>BETTY: Learning. Learning. It's harder, isn't it? Okay. So if we imagine that there was a pie wedge up here of kids with disabilities and 14% of children K‑12 have a disability, 36% have unspecified learning disabilities. 26% have speech and language processing issues. And then the traditional disabilities that we think of, like blindness and deafness and wheelchair user, that's like 1/10 of the pie.

So think about this in terms of who your audiences are because depending on what age you are dealing with, the type of disabling condition will change, which means you have to change and be flexible along with that. There are things that come along with disability that are interesting, especially when talking about diversity and equity.

First of all, women, older adults, and racial and ethnic minorities, report a disproportionate amount of disabilities in the organization. It's 1 in 5 Americans. It's 1 in 4 women report having a disability. And 3 in 10 non‑Hispanic blacks have a disability. The proportion of disability hits different members of our community differently even. Disability prevalence also rises sharply with age, which we knew, but also with poverty. Think about the communities you're working in as well. Most people have mild disabling conditions. Most people are not blind or deaf like you traditionally think of. Most people have a hearing loss or a vision loss. So only 2.9% have what is termed "severe disability." 12.4 are moderately disabled, which means most of the people we're dealing with on a day‑to‑day basis have mild disabling conditions.

Having fun with the statistics? Want more? No.

So why should we bother to mess with this community? Yes?

>> Can you slow down the pace a bit, just a bit.

>>BETTY: Ah. Okay, I'll try. But remind me if I speed up again because fast talking is more my speed. Okay, but I'll try.

So, after you know who your population is, the next thing I want to challenge you to think about ‑‑ and seriously if you take nothing away from this presentation other than this little piece right here, I think you will have taken away a lot. The question for me is not only who do we talk about when we talk about people with disabilities, but why do we bother. And I mean: Why do we bother as cultural organizations?

So number 1, I approach this through the lens of civil and human rights. I am a lawyer. I am not your lawyer. Nothing I say today can be used as legal advice. (Laughter.) Got to make that disclaimer.

And so if we believe that disability rights are a subset or a part of civil and disability rights, we want to also believe that what we are trying to achieve for our communities is that they have autonomy versus dependence. That we are shooting for a civil and social model of accessibility versus an impairment or medical model of disability. I want to dive into that last one a little bit more because I think it's really important because this is the part I want you to for sure take away with you before we talk about planning.

There was a study that was done that said people without disabilities fear people with disabilities. They reject the Disability Rights Movement because they are so used to viewing disability through the lens of the medical or impairment model, they can't seem to move themselves into the lens of the social or civil rights model and people have a hard time understanding the differences between these models so I put them side by side. And basically it's not that one of these is right or wrong. So don't misunderstand me. Seriously, if I break my leg, I do want the doctor to fix it, okay?

But when you are looking at the overall way in which a culture commits to and includes people with disabilities ‑‑ and people with disabilities, remember, are across every portion of our society. We want to try to move ourselves towards the right over there, and so instead of doing what the medical model does, which is say something is wrong with the individual, the disability resides in you ‑‑ and if I point at you, don't take it wrong. I have a tendency ‑‑ I do better if I zero in on people. The disability is in you. The thing that is wrong, the challenge that we can find, is you. We make the human being the problem when we look at them through this lens.

And so if the person's the problem, then what we are going to do is we will seek to change the individual to accommodate society. All right? Whereas in the civil rights or social model what we say is something is wrong with society. And in that role it's not the person that's the problem. The problem is all of us. It's everything. It's society has some problems if they can't seek to include people with disabilities. And so in the social or rights‑based model what we're trying to do is seeking to change society to accommodate the individual.

So let me give you a really hard and fast example of that, my friend Beth Ziebarth using a power chair.

We go to the theater a lot. She is also the access person at the Smithsonian. She oversees 18 museums and a zoo. Access for tigers. I don't know. It's so much fun to do stuff with her. It's always different.

But anyway, we go to the theater a lot. Across the street from the Kennedy Center is a coffee shop, and we have coffee, leave the coffee shop, and go across the street. And what's the first thing we see? The grand stairway. Now, architects love the grand stairway. And they always have to have them.

So Beth and I go over there and we're sitting there looking at the grand stairway and I look at her and she looks at me and I go bye‑bye and I jog up the stairs. And I go bye‑bye. And I go into the theater, right? Who is more disabled in that scenario? Her or me? Who is more disabled? Me? I got up the steps. I got into the theater. She is still sitting there on the curb.

>> If you have empathy disability. (Laughter.)

>>BETTY: I might have one, that's true. That's true. Just remember I'm stretching it a little bit for the purposes of making a point. Who has more of a disability?

>> She does.

>>BETTY: She does. She couldn't get up the steps.

Now let's change the scenario. We go for coffee. We go across the street. The grand stairway is there. And Beth, who is smart, has been to the Kennedy Center before. She looks to the left and there's a sidewalk that goes alongside the stairs. It puts you at the top of the steps. And I look at her, she looks at me, and she goes bye‑bye, and she is in a power chair and she guns it. Vroom. She is up at the top of the steps before I have gotten halfway, because do remember I look like this (pointing), and I have to take a break about halfway up the stairs and breathe a little bit. And she is gone.

Who is more disabled, her or me, in that scenario? Me. She got up just fine. I was the one that was struggling. Okay?

So that's kind of just a really tangible example of what this model is trying to make you think about. It's trying to make you dissociate the disability from being the problem and think more about what the environment is doing to people, because honestly, unless you are a doctor, you are not going to fix people with disabilities. And it's not our job as cultural organizations to fix people, but what we have a great deal of control over is the environment.

And so the World Health Organization has a definition of disability that looks like this. It says a person is more or less disabled based on their interactions with the physical environment. That's the step example, right? Because Beth was more disabled when it was just steps and no sidewalk. I was more disabled when it was steps and a sidewalk. Right? So the physical environment supported her in that second scenario.

The communication environment, you are getting a good example of how we can fix a communication environment in a large group like this. We have captioning going on. That's communication. Because I'm just using my words and my speech. We have American Sign Language going on. We can fix the environment of communication by adding different things like this or the assistive listening devices.

The information environment is the Internet, the Web, the digital world that we live in, okay? We have got to really worry about the information environment. I'm going to hit this just once because there was a recent Supreme Court decision, it was a nondecision that was very interesting because the disability community is really going after entities for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act based on the inaccessibility and the discrimination against them in Web sites. And so the Domino's Pizza got a court case that they lost and they asked the Ninth Circuit to appeal the Ninth Circuit's decision to the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court ‑‑ because what the Ninth Circuit said is: You are discriminating. We think there may be discrimination against people with disabilities because your Web site's not accessible. Go back to court. That's what the Ninth Circuit actually said. The Domino's wanted to appeal that decision. Went to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court said: No, we are not taking this case. We're sticking with the Ninth Circuit. Which means the case does have to go back to court to decide whether discrimination was occurring or not.

It's a big win for the disability community because what they are trying to do is get people to fix their information environment. Okay?

Social and policy environment: Those are things like having regulations and laws. Does anybody here know whether Seattle or the State of Washington has a disability rights law on the books? Does anybody know whether you have a human rights law on the books? This is the one time where you are allowed to take your phone out and Google. (Laughter.) You should know this stuff, because if you don't, maybe you want to think about that, because that's how we fix the social and policy environments. A lot of times in our society we fix it through the laws and the regulations that we pass and that we hold ourselves accountable to. And so the Americans with Disabilities Act was a way of fixing the policy environment through law and regulation.

All right. So, oh, I just love laws. They are so exciting. These are my five most favorite laws. (Laughter.) And each one of these adds something to the conversation around disability and inclusion and each one of them leaves something out. Usually I'll do this as an exercise, but I don't have time, so I'm just going to tell you, all right?

So, 1964 Civil Rights Act. Y'all know what that one is, right? Okay, good. Woo.

In 1964 when the Civil Rights Act was passed, it conferred rights on certain protected populations of people. African Americans. It conferred rights on you based on religion, based on your ethnicity, based on your country of origin. There is that whole list that you guys probably should have memorized, but you kind of ‑‑ it's become an integrated part of our lives that we kind of ignore it now.

But who was not included on that list? People with disabilities. So in 1964 we could discriminate against people with disabilities all we wanted to.

Now, in 1968, though, the federal government passed another law, called the Architectural Barriers Act, and unless you work for a federal entity or in a federal building or at a national park, this law doesn't apply to you. But it established the first set of standards for accessibility. It told me how wide the door had to be, how steep did a ramp have to be, how high should the toilet seat be.

We get that for the first time with this law. It carried over to the next law which was the 1973 Rehabilitation Act which in Section 504 said that if you receive federal financial assistance, you may not discriminate against people with disabilities.

So, how many of you receive federal financial assistance? It's like you are like: Well, I think so. I'm not sure.

Some of you are: Yeah, I think I do. Maybe. Yeah.

Okay, how many of you receive any type of fiscal support from your state arts commission? How many of you receive any type of fiscal support from your city or counties commission? Well, then you all receive federal financial assistance because the national endowment gives monies to the states. The states redistribute it to cities and counties.

And it gets distributed to you and, surprise, you have received federal financial assistance and now you are not allowed to discriminate against people with disabilities and that's been on the books since 1973.

Now, this has the most fascinating history. Have any of you watched "Drunk History"? Do you know that? It's so much fun, right? Oh, God. So go back and it's another time when you are allowed to Google. Go look for the Drunk History episode on Judy Heumann and the disability rights action around the 1973 disability act.

Judy Heumann is a real advocate for human rights and civil rights and disability rights specifically.

Ali Stroker, the young woman in the wheelchair that won an award for the performance in "Oklahoma" plays Judy in this episode. It's hysterically funny. What you don't know is in 1973 when they passed this law, the agencies that were supposed to enact the regulations refused to sign it, and it took until 1977 when the disability community did sit‑ins in Federal Buildings, in Berkeley, in Chicago, in DC. I would be surprised if they were not doing sit‑ins somewhere in Seattle. They had to sit in and demand their rights to have the law.

What was most fun is they sent police cars and people to arrest them, but they couldn't arrest them because why? The paddy wagons weren't accessible. (Laughter.) It was great. So anyways, look up the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. Look up Judy Heumann and "Drunk Histories." It's pretty funny. It's also sad it took them doing that to get the law enacted, because it was the first civil rights law for people with disabilities.

It's active today. Section 504 is important to remember. The reason I say that is because under the Americans with Disabilities Act, if somebody sues you, they get ‑‑ the only remedy they get is to get the thing fixed you did wrong. Whereas, under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, they can also get damages, so it will cost you more money. That's as close to legal advice as you get today.

The 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act doesn't apply to you unless you are in K‑12 education, like a public school, but what it did was it said that children with disabilities have a right to free and equitable education. They have a right to get an education equal to everybody else. And so what that meant was in 1975 you started to see kids with disabilities deinstitutionalized. They came out of that special education classroom, that was hidden in the basement, and came into your classrooms. Most of you were born at or after the passage of this law and you went to school with kids with disabilities. Like that was the norm for you.

And so this law starts normalizing disability in our society. And it starts giving kids with disabilities the same kinds of opportunities that anybody else would have had. So I included it even though it doesn't apply to cultural entities because I just think it was such an important social moment.

Then you have the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act which most of you are aware of you are under Title I for employment. Title II for state and local government. I'm talking really fast again. Title III if you are a place of public accommodation. And I really could do four hours just on these, but I won't, so ‑‑ and always check your state and local laws.

All right. You still with me? I know this law stuff, I just love it. My husband's like: You have to stop reading these court cases at night. Cut it out. Turn off the light.

There were new regulations that were passed in 2010. I'm not going to go over these, except I want to test your knowledge.

What's a service animal? Can you give me the two types of animals that are legitimate service animals under Title III?

>> Guide dogs.

>>BETTY: Dog and miniature horse. Yeah. You guys get an A+.

Now, in all the time I have done this work, I have never, ever seen a miniature horse actually working (laughter), and so I will make the same offer to you that I make to everybody at the Kennedy Center when I do training: If you see a miniature horse, not just any miniature horse, it has to be a service miniature horse with a person with a disability, working as a service animal, right, if you see that ‑‑ now, typically at the Kennedy Center they have to call me and then I have to come up and see it myself. But you guys are in Seattle, so you have to FaceTime me, and then you have to introduce me to the person and the horse and everything. And if you do, I'll treat you to dinner of your choice at the restaurant of your choice. (Laughter.) And no one has yet taken me up on that one.

So, there's these new regulations. Ticketing is great. I love ticketing. I can do four hours on that, but I won't bore you. Just be aware if you look at resources that are before 2010 as you are Googling around the Internet, it's likely that the information is wrong, because you want to get the most current regulations and law which is after 2010. So, interestingly, and this is not to scare you, but in 2018 there were 34% more federal lawsuits around disability than the year before. Most of those were Web site compliance issues. And so do that Web site thing. That information environment is really critical for you to look at.

Special note on that for fun: If you want to find out how to be accessible, go to W3C and look at their voluntary standards for accessibility because when the Department of Justice does get around to passing regulation, they will probably adopt these voluntary standards as the regulation for determining whether or not discrimination has occurred in your Web site.

There's also something fun called Web site accessibility tools and checkers. There's a great site that lists like 132 of them. Some are free. Some you pay for. You can run your Web site through these checkers to check generally for accessibility. But you really need somebody who knows what they're doing, because it can be kind of scary and suddenly you have 1,000 violations, because if you have a problem on the frame of a page and then that frame keeps continuing, the checker thinks you have a problem every single time, when it's really just one problem in the frame. So the numbers can be a little scary. Plus it's like gibberish unless you know coding and stuff like that.

So, why do we do this work? Because I think it's really important for you to understand what is motivating you to do accessibility work, and also because it will help you motivate others. Because how many of you are the executive directors? How many are the ultimate deciders in your organizations? One. Maybe two, in the back there. All right. So the rest of us aren't those kind of people so we need to know how to talk to them to motivate them to give us money and resources to do this stuff.

[So] in all the time I have been doing this, I understand that there are only five things that motivate cultural arts organizations to be accessible. And the fun thing is we're going to play a little game right now and you guys get to figure out what these five things are. Now, fair warning. These are five things that are all in my head. Okay? So first of all, you have to think like me. And secondly, I've not very technologically advanced and so you have to say them in the order that I think about them, so if I say to you something like "hold that thought," it just means you are probably out of order. So do hold the thought and I'll come back to you.

So, why do we do accessibility? Why?

>> Prevent lawsuits.

>> To prevent lawsuits. She nailed it. Good deal. Okay. It's always good to raise your hand first because the easy ones are at the top. All right? Good job. Okay. So number one, because it's a legal requirement. That's certainly something that we can use to motivate ourselves and other people. But it's a really low bar to do it just because it's a legal requirement.

What's number two? Yes?

>> To increase ticket sales.

>>BETTY: Nailed it again! Good business sense. Right? Because you can increase ticket sales when you welcome in a new population because you have made yourself accessible and inclusive to them. But also, my mom is 92. A little divergence here so you get time to think about this.

My mom is 92 years old. She is amazing. She lives with me. She is really swell. She invited me to go to water aerobics with her. I was thinking: I can keep up with a 92‑year‑old. I put my little bathing suit on and we go to water aerobics and jump in the water. And there are her girlfriends, 70, 80, 92 years old. And the teacher puts the music on and they start doing their thing. They are doing skis and jumping jacks and arm lifts and leg tucks and all this kind of stuff and I'm trying to keep up with them and I keep going under water.

I'm like drowning. They are doing this and I'm ‑‑ and I'm coming up and spitting water, and I am trying so hard to keep up with the 70‑, 80‑, 90‑year‑olds and I'm having a hard time. I keep doing it wrong and getting in the water and I'm spitting out of my nose. It's disgusting.

So what does my mom do? What all good moms do. She starts yelling at me. (Laughter.) Work your gluts.

And as I come up out of the water, spitting a beautiful fountain out of my mouth, I go: What's a glut?

All right? The point here is that my mom has age‑related hearing loss. So she defies the stereotype of what aging looks like, number one. But she does have age‑related hearing loss and if we lose her ticket sale ‑‑ and she goes to way more theater than I do.

If she stops buying a ticket because she can't hear or understand the content of a performance, exhibition, or event, then you don't just lose one ticket sale, because she does not go by herself. Not because she can't, but because she's really social. So she has a friend. So it's two ticket sales you lose. Or she brings one of my nieces and nephews. Three or four ticket sales you lose. Or she brings my husband and I. It makes good business sense to be accessible.

Lots of other reasons too. A lot of grantors and funders like to see you are reaching out and doing the right things for this population.

What's number three, four, and five? You thought I forgot. Number three is specific to nonprofits. What do you do that's different than a corporation? What do you have at the heart of your organization?

>> Mission.

>>BETTY: I heard it. Mission. You do it because it's part of your organizational mission. How many of you all have a mission statement that says: We welcome everybody in our community except for those people over there? Nobody does that, right?

Mission statements tend to be like: We want to serve the entire community. I'm serving all of the state of Washington. I want to serve all of Seattle. I want to serve everybody on my block. But it's never about excluding people really. So when I make an argument to my board, I remind them that being inclusive and welcoming is a part of our mission, that we have as our mission to provide these things to our communities. So, you can go back to that. That's a very powerful argument.

What's four and five? Why am I here? Why are you here? What motivates you? Because the very ‑‑ by virtue of you being in this room, I know that you are motivated by something really unique. You want to try again?

>> Empathy?

>>BETTY: Almost. Almost.

>> You think it's the right thing to do?

>>BETTY: You think it is the right thing to do. Right? There's something about you that says: You know, being welcoming and inclusive, being diverse and acknowledging everybody in our community is the right thing to do. And that motivates you and it motivates me for sure. What's the last things that motivates people to do this work? One in five, it could be you.

>> Your programming actually gets better?

>>BETTY: Your programming gets better is actually a part of the organizational mission and good business sense, because doing bad programming, bad for business, right? So that's a subset of that. Good try. Good try. What else?

>> You know somebody.

>>BETTY: You know somebody.

>> It's your passion.

>> It's your passion is the right thing to do, but you know somebody is closer, so I'm going to give you that one. You do it because you are selfish. Right? Because you statistically are likely to either have a disability yourself at some point in your life or you know somebody who does. And they are a member of your family, they are a member of your friends, they are a colleague. And so you do this work because you are selfish, because you love the arts. You love theater. You love museums. Don't you want to keep going for as long as you can? So, for no other reason, do it because you are selfish, because you will need the things that accessibility provides at some point in your life. So that's why we do things. And I do want you to think about it. This is ‑‑ this will help you frame your arguments better depending on who you are talking to when you need to get resources in order to do accessibility the right way.

So, how do we do it? Everybody breathe now. Oh, I forgot. If you need to use the restrooms, we're not going to take a formal break, so bio breaks, take care of your bio needs. I believe there are restrooms on each ‑‑ this is my best stewardess‑y. Restrooms to your left and right.

Feel free to get up and get waters over there I saw. Anything you need. Don't feel like you are trapped. If you need to stand up and jiggle around, please do. Take care of yourself.

So how do we do this work? Any questions so far? Any arguments? Any disagreements? My, this is like the nicest group ever. You know it gets better if you argue with me or ask me questions, so don't hold questions. If you have questions, throw them out there. If I don't want to answer them, I just won't. (Laughter.)

So, first off, accessibility is a value and an asset to your organization, so if you keep my mom coming to the theater, right, she buys more tickets and she does it over the scope of her life span, it contributes to diversity.

When we talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion, there's a movement that tends to exclude people with disabilities from that discussion. And I will stand up here and fight for the right for people with disabilities to be included in that discussion, because we know from the statistics I showed you before that disability hits some of those populations much harder than others and if we're not talking about people with disabilities in our diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations, then we are leaving people behind from the very communities we choose to serve. We're going to keep our audiences and visitors longer. We're going to build new and loyal audiences. And it does help the bottom line. There's a business reason for it.

So, these are some philosophical points. So organizations nurture inclusivity when they recognize the diversity of needs. And I talk mostly about disability, but honestly, you guys, this is a diversity, equity, and inclusion concept, right? We need to recognize the diversity and needs of all of our communities. We value them. We value them as existing or new audiences. And we don't just value them as people who come to our doors and buy tickets. We value them when they are on our staff, when they are volunteers, when they are our interns, when they are our artists, our performers. And so we want to focus on customer service and less on what the legal issues are, and that's coming from a lawyer, which is pretty big.

Focus on what can we do to be more inclusive and welcoming to people with disabilities. And we want to make sure we engage with communities, not for communities. And it's really amazing because most of y'all do work in diversity, equity, and inclusion. You would never do that work without members of those communities at the table with authentic representation and authentic voice, but we do that to people with disabilities all the time. We're in that medical model. Right? Where the medical community, a parent or a teacher makes decisions for people with disabilities, versus being in the social‑ or rights‑based model where people with disabilities have the right to participate in decision‑making that affects them. Then we want to weave it into the fabric of the organization. As long as it's something that's external to the work that you do, it's an after‑thought, it's not going to work. And the community's going to know that you don't really mean it. So, how do we do it? Access happens when it's a routine part of every activity.

So there are a couple of things you really have to think about before you go into planning. First of all, if you are going to do access, you have to allocate resources. And by that I mean time, staff, and dollars. I'm not going to lie to you. Some things are just not free. It costs money to do some of these things.

And then on the other hand, there are other things that cost nothing. Being nice costs nothing. And we did a study when we first offered sensory‑friendly performances at the Kennedy Center and we asked people: What did you like best? Was it the widgets and fidgets? Was it the social stories? Was it when lights were at half? The number one thing the parents told us made the environment and experience successful to them was the nice ushers. Like way on top of everything else. I mean, there was such a huge gap between "We really liked the nice ushers and everything else that we did." We were kind of like we don't need to do anything except have nice ushers and then we're sensory‑friendly. Not quite. But we really invested more in training our staff and we let go of fidgets and widgets because we knew from the study that that's where our resources needed to be allocated and where we could leverage them to the best advantage for the community.

You need to have policy and we will talk about that in the planning. Policy has to be established and you have to implement policy. Policy written on a piece of paper is worth the paper it is written on. Policy you implement makes a difference.

You have to have people that are empowered to give or take authority. And by that, I mean the people that the ‑‑ two people that raised their hand to say they were the ultimate deciders in their organization, you have the power to give authority to people, right? But sometimes we don't have great bosses and we don't have great senior management, so sometimes we have to take some power to ourselves. All right? And so depending where you are in the food chain, sometimes you are empowering people. Sometimes you are taking the power to yourself. And then every single one of us leads by example. And by that I mean I want you to think every day when you make a decision: What does this mean? And then run the litany through your head of: What does it mean to somebody who is deaf or hearing? What does it mean to somebody blind or low vision? What does it mean to people of color? Run that litany through your head because you'll make better decisions and you will be leading by example.

And that really matters. People feel welcome when they are treated with respect and dignity ‑‑ I will not spend time on these because they seem obvious ‑‑ when they have the ability to get in, get around, and get to. And when they can meaningfully participate. Just providing someone the opportunity to be physically in the room does not mean that you have created inclusive and meaningful experience. And so this last one's really what's important.

All right. Everybody okay? Woo. We will do exercises so it's not just me up here talking. Any questions?

Okay. We're moving on to planning. Are you ready? This is the so boring part of the presentation. All right. Accessibility planning really covers five things. All right? One, it covers the physical building. So you can't be accessible if you are not looking at that built environment. All right?

It covers the programming that you do. So is your programming accessible? That's where you get a lot of the meaningful and the intentional engagement, is in your programming. Also think about what kind of programming you are doing. Let's face it. If you never represent people with disabilities in your programming, should they come? They never see themselves reflected in your work. Okay? Communication.

So when I worked at Arena Stage, it was right after the Rehab Act had passed and they had done the sit‑ins and got 504 authorized and the regulations came out and at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., a regional theater company, we put in a wheelchair lift and fixed the bathrooms and cut out some seating and started doing audio description and put in assistive listening devices and we were so excited with ourselves! And nobody came. We were like: Where are the disabled people? We did all this work. We put in all this money.

Nobody came because we forgot to tell them. Right? Traditionally and historically this is a population that has not had access. Remember grand stairways? Start noticing how many steps there are to places. All right? We didn't tell them that we had fixed this stuff. We didn't tell them we had changed. We didn't communicate to them that whereas before, they were not welcome, they couldn't even get in, now they could and we would welcome their participation. We wanted their participation. And so we failed in communication because this part we tend to forget about. We tend to be really good on the physical stuff because it's kind of black and white, it's either 32 inches or it's not.

Programming, well, we kind of have a general idea we should do sign language and do audio description. We have a general idea. But we don't tell people well enough. And then finally administratively, that's your policies and your procedures. Have you taken the time to actually integrate this into your strategic planning?

And then finally, employment. If you aren't hiring people with disabilities, then you are really not walking the walk and talking the talk. And if you were not thinking about your programming in terms of being reflective of this community, not walking the walk or talking the talk. So you really have to think much outside of the law in order to create inclusive programs.

So these are the five areas that your planning is going to touch on. Accessibility planning identifies assets. By that I mean the good things you do. Like everybody comes to me: Oh, I'm not accessible. I'm like: Well, do you train your staff? They are like: Well, yeah.

Do you train them to be nice?

Well, yeah.

I said: Well, that's an asset. Staff training. Nice staff. Box office smiles at people. Docents welcome people.

That's an asset. Really, it is. Right?

A deficit might be: Well, you know, there's some steps into the building and we have steps. But we have a ramp at the back of the building. Well, that's an asset, but it's also kind of a deficit because we're sending people a secondary way, right? They don't get to come in the same way as everybody else. So it's an asset that you have the ramp but it's a deficit that it's in the back.

And then once you have identified what you do that's really, really good, that makes things accessible and have identified what you don't do so well that makes things less accessible, you need to prioritize. You need to go through that list, because let me tell you, it will be a long list. And you can not do it all at once. And the law doesn't require you to do it all at once. It says you have to work towards being accessible. You have to work towards not discriminating against people. So you're prioritizing things and then you are going to move it to action. You are going to identify: What are we going to do today? Who is going to do it? How much money does it take? When will it get done? All right.

So you want to take into consideration the organization's unique situation and circumstances because if you are a small organization with a, I don't know, $100,000 budget or less and you are in a building that somebody's donated to you, the third floor to use and they have no elevator, you got kind of a big deficit over there. All your stuff is on the third floor and there's no elevator, so a wheelchair user can't get there. So what actions? What's the time frame? Who is going to be responsible for addressing that particular issue? And what are the ways that you can address that?

So just really quickly, how would you do that? How do you make yourself accessible when your venue, your event space, is on the third floor of a building with no elevator? What can you do? "Internet," I heard somebody say? You can use ‑‑ you can Web cast things and that certainly is a possibility.

"Look for a different space." Absolutely.

You can say: When this lease is up, we will look for a space that is accessible and we won't accept one that is not.

Yeah?

>> Move to the first floor.

>>BETTY: Move to the first floor. Ask the landlord: Can we move to the first floor? It would be easier for us and better for our programming.

Absolutely.

Other ideas? Virtual reality. But then virtual reality things can be nonaccessible too, so you have to watch out for some solutions make it worse than better. But, yeah there are always actions you can take. They may not be the perfect ones and I didn't hear anybody say install a new elevator, because likely that expense is going to be more than an organization with $100,000 can afford. So that would be off the table.

So there's a cycle for planning. And what we're going to do right now is we're going to work on organizational commitment, and I'm going to ask you to do this at your tables because I have been talking at you now for almost an hour. And I want to give you a break so you can talk amongst yourselves, because I will tell you something. If your organization is not willing to commit to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion, then you might as well just take your head and hit it up against that post. Or find a brick wall and just hit your head against it. Because it will be so frustrating if your organization doesn't commit. All right?

So one of the things that we think is really important in accessibility is to get that organizational commitment up‑front and to write it down. So, oops, that went backwards. So we want to make a commitment. We want to adopt an accessibility statement. We want to designate an accessibility coordinator. We want to devote resources to accessibility, staff, time, and dollars.

But what else? First of all, talk amongst yourselves at your table. Take 3 to 4 minutes. You can use the paper and pens if you want. I want you to think about: What would your organization's accessibility statement be? What would you say is philosophically at the core of your organization's commitment to accessibility? How would you express that so you could put it on your Web page for the community to see? Okay? That's the assignment. How are you going to express your organizational commitment in a way that I can ‑‑ you can put it on your Web site for the community to see? You have three minutes. Go! At your tables. Then we'll have some little report‑backs.

Three minutes. Introduce yourselves if you don't know one another. That's an extra minute.

(Table discussions.)

>>BETTY: Who has an entire sentence? Or did you just get really involved with talking to one another, sort of?

This is where we probably do want to run the microphone. Who has the microphone?

>> I'm back here.

>>BETTY: Do we have a brave table that would like to volunteer to read us or talk us through what you were thinking about while you were working on your statement? Oh, we have got this table right here. Oh, and he raised his hand and volunteered her. I love that.

Okay, so, watch, there's a microphone behind you. Go ahead and talk into the microphone. I won't make every table do this. We'll just get some good examples.

>> I'm Anna Claire. I'm with the 5th Avenue Theatre. We have an accessibility statement that is both on our Web site, it is in our program, and it is sent out to every ticket holder two days before they attend a performance in our Know Before You Go email. And it is: We are committed to making our theater as accessible as possible for all of our guests. And it follows with: A variety of different performances that are ‑‑

>>BETTY: But the statement is that first sentence.

>> Yeah, that is just that first statement: We are committed to making our theater as accessible as possible for all of our guests.

>>BETTY: Great. Short. Sweet. Concise.

>> Your ushers rock.

>>BETTY: Speak in the microphone. Their ushers rock. And just because you said that, now your table's volunteered to be next. I'm going to do what he did. Who will speak on behalf of the table here? What did you discuss while you were coming up with something?

>> We had a couple of choice quotes for y'all.

>>BETTY: Is this like pick from option A, B, or C?

>> It's a hodgepodge, you know. Nothing about us without us. And not at the table, then you are on the menu. Those were quotes that came up in discussion.

>>BETTY: Okay.

>> Just so you know, Langston Hughes has a dedicated statement. It says: Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute is dedicated to providing access to patrons with disabilities, to make your visit enjoyable. We comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

>>BETTY: Okay. Very interesting. So they had this lovely welcoming thing and then they noted that they do comply with federal disability rights laws. Interesting. I like the introduction‑y part there. "Nothing about us without us" is a statement from the Disability Rights Movement and it goes right along with that rights‑based social model which basically says people have a right to participate in the decisions that are being made that are going to affect their everyday life. So nothing about us without us being part of that discussion, without having our voices at the table. So that's great.

Who else wants to give it a try? Oh, go ahead.

>> Hi. I'm David Valentine with Pacific Science Center. We also have a statement on our Web site currently, but we did an inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility statement. Some of the parts that pertain to accessibility would be: We commit to our guests, community, and colleagues that we will ensure that our facilities, programs, experiences, and the benefits they provide are accessible to people of all backgrounds and financial, social, physical, and intellectual abilities. There are a lot of other things on it. It's a pretty long document.

>>BETTY: What's the one, the elevator take‑away?

>> The very first line: Boom. Science is for everyone. We believe that curiosity and critical thinking are essential to equity and justice for all.

>>BETTY: Great. That should be at the very top. Good.

All right. Who else wants to give it a try? Anyone else come up with some other concept or some other approach, some other thought or some other idea? I haven't been over here. Did I make you nervous? Anyone else? One more try? Hands over here. Give them a chance.

Raise your hands again so our microphone runner can see you. There's one, good.

>> Some of the things that we talked about as feeling important was to move our commitment beyond just our patrons to kind of hit on the five areas that you talked about, making sure our commitment publicly was to all the areas, programming, as one of them, but also including communication, physical building, administration, and employment. And moving beyond just the patrons.

>>BETTY: Great. Okay. This gentleman over here had his hand up.

>> For us, in and of itself, it's on our accessibility page and things, but it does not call out any specific population or demographic. It just simply says: We aim to create the best visitor experience for all of our guests.

>>BETTY: Okay. See, you can see just in this room how diverse this challenge is and what kinds of approaches different people take. And I always believe in stealing from the best (laughter), all right. Actually, my team says I'm not allowed to say "stealing" anymore. I'm supposed to say "borrowing with attribution." (Laughter.) Fine. Okay.

But, you know, there is no one right way to state this commitment. It comes out of your own organizational culture and it comes out of who you are as an institution. And but you need to have it. I really strongly recommend that if you don't have this already, that you go home and you make one. And one sentence is really that elevator speech. That one sentence, pow, is the best thing at the top and then all the rest is just decoration, which is fine, and you can do that.

But making that initial commitment is good and then getting the institution to buy into it, right? So you need to not just say the words. You have to do the words. And that's the second really big challenge. So you are going to make that commitment. You are going to adopt that statement. And then who on your staff right now, just think for a moment, is your ADA 504 coordinator? (Laughter.) Do you have one? Oh, my God. Him?

>> Literally last week.

>>BETTY: Last week! So, one of the things that Tory said at lunch today was: I didn't know we were supposed to have one of those until I heard about it.

The 1973 Rehabilitation Act, there are regulations that go along to support that. I have to do my legal dance.

You know how laws in the United States work, right? Congress and the Senate, they pass the law. They say things like "Don't discriminate against people with disabilities" and then they hand it off to an agency. Ba‑boom. And they say to the agency: "Now make the regulations. Tell us what it means to not discriminate. Tell us how we go about not discriminating." Those are the regulations. And in the ADA there's also this subset to the regulations. Boom. Pass it off to the U.S. Access Board. And they have developed the design standards which are the things that tell me the doors are 32 inches wide. The toilet seat is 15 or 17 inches from the floor. Okay?

So in the regulations for Section 504 it says: You must have somebody on staff with the title of 504 coordinator. Remember I told you you all receive federal financial assistance, so you are all under Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, which means everybody in this room goes home today, and tomorrow morning you designate somebody as your 504 coordinator because it's really embarrassing to get sued for something as simple as that. Okay?

Now, unfortunately the law says you have to have a 504 coordinator. But it doesn't say they have to do anything. So, be sure you designate someone. And when you have that person, then give them the authority, empower them to actually do something. All right? They should be the person who at your institution is the go‑to when there are funny questions that come up, or you are just not sure, or somebody has asked you a question, somebody asked you to find a sign language interpreter. You want a go‑to person. It really does help. Then you will devote some time and energy and resources to doing this work. So that's the first step in the accessibility cycle of planning.

So these are some sample accessibility statements and, of course, I like my own best because it's getting to what you guys were getting at, something that's simple, very short, I can put this on my Web site. It says: The Kennedy Center welcomes patrons and visitors with disabilities.

I do think we need to update it two ways. One is that we should talk about artists and employees.

And two, it is not enough to welcome people. I think we have to do more than that. Do you know? Welcome means when you come to the door, I say "Welcome to the Kennedy Center." And I want to find a better word that is more about being proactive, getting to people before they are at my door and I haven't quite figured out what that word is. So, any suggestions are greatly appreciated.

>> Invite.

>>BETTY: Invite. The Kennedy Center invites you.

>> Includes.

>>BETTY: Includes you.

>> Proactively welcoming.

>>BETTY: Proactively welcomes you. Those are too many words. I want one word, but good try. We are getting there. Think about it.

>> You can go with honors.

>>BETTY: The Kennedy Center honors patrons and visitors with disabilities.

>> Celebrates.

>>BETTY: Celebrates. All of these are great words and I'm going to go home and I'm going to steal‑borrow them and say I learned them in Seattle, because I don't know any of y'all's names, so I can't give attribution.

These are different examples of accessibility statements. I think the statements tend to be the first sentence and the rest is about procedure, like how do we go about doing those things.

So community engagement is the next issue. All right? Who do we want to engage with? What do we want them to do? So when we invite people with disabilities to the table, because we want to hear their voices, we actually want to give them something to do that's meaningful and intentional versus, just come to a meeting and we'll give you cookies and coffee and listen to what you have to say, but after you walk out the door we ignore it all. What is it you want from them? How will you go about doing it? Will you have an advisory group? A task force? Is it one people? Is it many people? How do you go about engaging the community in a meaningful way as you are going through the process of being accessible? Yes, ma'am?

>> Pay them for their expertise.

>>BETTY: That's an interesting concept. Pay them for their expertise.

If you are asking them to give you their time and knowledge and share that with you, perhaps we should value that with some real dollars behind it. Some people will do that. Some people won't. But it is something certainly to consider when you are looking at how you are going to engage with them.

Yes?

>> You could also gift them a subscription so they can give you feedback as they are experiencing the theater.

>>BETTY: Right. You could say not only do we want you to advise us, but we are putting an obligation on you to know who we are before you advise us, so we are going to gift you this subscription so that you can come to our venue, have experiences with us, so when you sit at the table, you are talking from a real‑life experience, a lived experience. That's great. And it is in some ways it's a form of payment because that has value.

Did you have your hand up? No.

Other thoughts on this issue? I will just give you one cautionary note. One person with a disability is one person with a disability. And so for this to really be community‑involvement, you have to go to the effort of finding more people than just one person to represent an entire community. And you do have to acknowledge that you are asking them and I would have this conversation with them, to represent their community. Because that's really uncomfortable. Like: "Hi, I want you to, Elizabeth, please represent every Deaf person whoever was." That's kind of a heavy burden and a heavy lift on her. But I think when you find the right person who is willing to do that with you and engage with you or who will say to you, well, I can't do it by myself, I really think we should invite these other three people, then you start to get your advisory group together in a meaningful way. And because disability isn't one size fits all, so a hard‑of‑hearing person might have different needs and issues than a Deaf person with a capital D who has grown up using ASL. Their needs are going to be different. And if you just listen to one voice, it can overpower and outweigh the other voice, so you have to watch out for that.

Assessment and evaluation: So this is ‑‑ remember I said what you are going to start with is you will do an assessment of your assets and your debits and you will do a survey. It doesn't have to be so formal as like checklists and all that kind of stuff, but you are going to sit down and think about and probably write down: What have you got that you do well? What do you think needs some work? You are going to review your policies and your procedures. Don't forget about that. You are going to ‑‑

Malware wants to do something on my computer. No. Okay.

And then you are going to prioritize things. This is just a repeat of that other page that I showed you. And you are going to think about what the effect is on the purpose of the organization, where the effort is going to be, what the cost is going to be.

So, for funsies, though, a lot of people like a checklist and a lot of people say: Just tell me what I need to do. I say: There is no checklist for accessibility, because it's contingent on the unique circumstances of your organization, but these are some really good tools and checklists that are out there that will help you address different elements of accessibility. So this Readily Achievable Barrier Removal checklist is more about the physical built environment.

For cultural organizations, I actually like this one from the New Jersey Theatre Alliance because it does get into the issues of: Who is on your board? Who is being represented in your programming? Are you doing ‑‑ are you marketing or doing publicity around your efforts? So all of these are good.

FYI, I will give this PowerPoint to Elizabeth and to the consortium so they can share it with you.

Warning: If you get material that's pre‑2008, 2010, it's old. The legal issues will probably be out of date, so do watch out.

Now, how do you ‑‑ as you conduct your surveys, I want you to think about certain things: What areas are currently accessible? What needs improvement? What actions will be taken? This is really important because I'm saying it three times, three different ways. That means you should pay attention. What order or what priority are you going to do things in? Do estimate the cost, because that will make a difference. Which department, who is going to be responsible? Where is that 504 coordinator? They should be right in there.

And then a timeline for the actions because the truth of the matter is this is the essence of your plan. When your state arts commission or city arts commission or council tells us "Please tell us your accessibility plan," this is actually what they are looking for (pointing), because the law doesn't say we have to make it all perfect right now immediately today, but it does say we have to plan for how we're going to address issues of discrimination and this is that plan.

Policies and practices! Yea. I love this stuff. This is so important because this is where you really should start before you go any further, is just say ‑‑ so your first policy is that organizational commitment. We welcome people with disabilities. We engage with our community. All of the things that y'all said. That's a policy. All right?

So really quickly, let's do what's the difference between a policy, procedure, and a practice, and because the law says that you must modify or adapt your policies, procedures, and practices in order not to discriminate against people with disabilities. So, policies are that big picture. Procedures are the planned actions by which you are going to accomplish that big picture. Practices are what actually happen.

So I'll give you an example. You are a little museum. You are a house museum. Is anybody a house museum? Like George Washington slept here in this house and now it's a museum. And George Washington slept all over the East Coast. I have never figured it out. But there are all these houses, George Washington slept there.

So we have this little house. And, of course, houses back then were always built with little stairs, and the front door is not accessible, so this little house museum, they figured out they could bring people in through the back door. That's their accessible entrance. And so their policy is that they do welcome people with disabilities to this lovely historic site. Please use the back entrance. Okay? Not my favorite, but it'll do, right? It's better than saying: Too bad, you are out of luck. All right? So, that's their policy.

Their procedures are every day when the volunteers come in, before the volunteers arrive, the janitor shows up. He unlocks the front door, unlocks the back door. He sweeps everything up. He cleans things. He puts a sign out that says "Wheelchair entrance that way." (Pointing.) That's the procedure. So he unlocks the door, front. He unlocks the door, back. Puts out the sign. Cleans things up.

Now, there's the day that the janitor is sick and he doesn't come in and the volunteer gets the key from him. Drives to his house, picks up the key, says "I'm so sorry. Here's some chicken soup. Hope you feel better soon."

Drives to the house. And she unlocks the front door and she goes in. And that is the day the person who uses a wheelchair will show up. And so what do they do? They come and the first thing they see are steps. They look around. They can't get in. They don't see anything directing them anywhere, but they see the sidewalk and they are curious people and people with disabilities are natural problem solvers. What's around the corner here? They go: "Oh, look. It's a door." And they (makes sound). It's locked.

So where has this organization failed? Has it failed in its policies? Its policies are pretty good. They are going to welcome people to the best of their ability, right. And the procedures? Unlock the front door. Unlock the back door. Put out the sign. Clean things up. Pretty solid checklist. Where did they fail? In practice. And this is where most people do fail when they address accessibility issues, is their policies are good, their procedures are usually even pretty good, but it's in the day‑to‑day routine way in which they carry it all out that they make mistakes.

So if you were that house, what would you do to your procedures to try to mitigate or prevent that failure and practice from happening?

>> The checklist for other staff members.

>>BETTY: You would have a checklist available for other staff members, so when the visitor came in and ‑‑ the checklist says: If you are opening the museum, have you done the following things? Check, check, check, check. Which would have included unlock the back door. What else could you do?

>> Orientation to new staff.

>>BETTY: An orientation for new staff where you go over what those procedures are when you happen to be the person who has to open the building up. Absolutely.

Any other? Back here.

>> You could make the back door the main entrance.

>>BETTY: You could make the back door the main entrance. Wow. A+. So, he is doing what a lot of people do do, rather than treat people with disabilities as second‑class citizens, everybody goes through the front door, but they have to go through the back door. Flip the entrance. Make the back door be the front entrance. It's the way everybody goes in. And that would of course make it easier because when the volunteer comes in and unlocks the "front door," it doesn't really matter if they forgot to unlock the one on the porch.

So, yeah, all of these are great ideas. That's how you have to think about when you are looking at your policies, practices, and procedures. People mush those things together. They mush policy and procedure together. Policy is that big vision. Procedure are the steps you are going to take to implement the big vision. So there are seven steps to crafting a good policy and procedures.

Identifying the issues would be one.

2: Do your homework. Draft your policies. Vet your policies. How many of you have ever done a policy and then your theater manager or ushers go: Well, that won't work. (Laughter.) I have made that mistake once. Vet it. Have everybody in the building read it. Make sure everybody is signing it off and when the janitor says that doesn't make any sense, that's not how it works, or the ushers say: We have tried that and if you do X, Y, Z, it will improve your procedures, rewrite it. Incorporate the feedback. Distribute and train your staff. These are the things you were mentioning.

And then establish review process, because what happens when you do move the front entrance from the front to the back? Rewrite those procedures.

Any questions so far? Oh, my gosh, I have a half hour.

Staff training! How many of you do staff training for your organization? A lot of you. How many of you do accessibility training for your organization? A smaller number of you, but still some.

So, what I'm going to ask you to do right now, again, another 3 to 4 minutes at your table, is I want you to outline, and those of you ‑‑ who raised their hand and said they do accessibility training? Do we have more than one person at a table? Is there a table that doesn't have anybody that does training of accessibility? I was going to ask would you move to one of these tables over here? Yeah, you. And then there was another table that had two people at it. Could you move to this table back here? I think you guys didn't have anybody, right? Do you have someone? They don't. Move over there. Spread it out a little bit.

Share the wealth, because what you are going to do is you are going to start to put together an outline for what a good accessibility training should include. All right? So you are not doing the actual training. But you are going to talk amongst yourselves about what, if I'm going to do accessibility training, should my accessibility training include? So it's a list. All right? Go!

>>BETTY: All right.

Did you have some good ideas on paper? Where's our microphone runner? There she is in the back.

Okay. Good conversations going on around here. It's okay if you never wrote anything down, as long as you're having the conversation, because every training's going to be different. All of you are going to approach it differently. I do think we can probably learn from each other.

What are some of the elements, some of the things that we think and agree need to be in a training? So do we have anybody at this table up here will offer a couple of bullet points? Don't offer your whole list, just like a couple, because then everybody else will have nothing to do. (Laughter.)

>> We felt it's important to actually experience in the training what these things actually are. I was mentioning how we ‑‑ I went to an exhibit at the Smithsonian for disabled artists, and the hotel that we stayed in had a storm lobby. You wheeled into the lobby, the door closed behind you, and then the door in front of you opened in. Whoops. So once you were inside this lobby, you couldn't get out of it as a person in the wheelchair, and this was the hotel that was sponsoring where everybody was staying. So, that's ‑‑

>>BETTY: I'm making a note to tell them.

>> I would never have known that until I experienced it. When I went to the movie theater once, I decided to wear the hearing impaired set and ignore and block people out. And I found out the batteries weren't changed and it was in mono. It sounded mono. You would never know that experience until you actually physically did it. And that would create empathy in your staff and the knowledge and the difference between a loop hearing aid as opposed to the headset hearing aid and what are those things. Training and physically experiencing those things is really important.

>>BETTY: What I like about what you said is you didn't say try to do disability simulation. You didn't say: Go and pretend to be a wheelchair user. Go and pretend to be blind. People used to do that a lot and people always think it's really cool, but when you pretend to be something, like put all your stuff in a wheelchair and go explore the museum in a wheelchair, the experience is usually extremely negative and it reinforced negative stereotypes about being a person with a disability because you don't have the lived experience of a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, so of course it's hard for you to open the door, because you have not learned the techniques for opening doors from a wheelchair, and but what I really liked was experience the things that you are offering to them as an accommodation, so try these things out. Try the assistive listening. Go watch a sign‑interpreted performance. Walk through the exhibit see if you have videos on every ‑‑ captioning on every video. Look for those things. Try them out. I agree that's a good element. Make people go and experience things. Tactile. Hands‑on. All right, this table back here.

>> My name is Noah. I supervise a staff of ushers at Meany Center, University of Washington.

I think a key component of our training is constant coaching, which is not always a resource available to all organizations, but in line correction is so key for us at Meany Center and for organizations that rely on volunteers having bravery around tough conversations with your volunteers, but also being willing to disinvite them from participating in certain processes if they are not qualified or if they are providing more barriers to people with disabilities. So that's been a conversation I have had at other theaters.

>>BETTY: Very interesting element. So, in‑line coaching, meaning get out there. Don't just do it in a classroom. Have it going on constantly, where you are constantly moderating, coaching, talking to, modeling, I'm assuming is a part of that as well. Excellent.

Who else has some ideas that they wrote down? This side of the room has been very quiet so let's come to this front table. Yes!

>> I think that some of the things that would feel helpful at my organization are sort of talking through like what perhaps expected access needs would be and then how to meet those expected access needs. And also talking through like what the limitations that we have and like what needs we're not going to be able to meet. Right? Because my work involves usually going to a bunch of different venues, so already that's a total crapshoot of like what the physical environment is going to be, or like what expertise the trainer has, or like who can do sign language interpretation. Any of that stuff is really variable, so still mapping out what all of that is for every individual event. So like a process flow. And like "We know how to meet this need. We're not going to be able to meet this need." That kind of thing.

>>BETTY: The only thing I want to caution is when you go right to "We are not going to be able to meet this need," everybody I know who gets sued under the ADA made one fatal error.

>> No creativity.

>>BETTY: Okay. Two fatal errors. They said no. When someone asked them for something, they said: "No, we can't do that. No." Then they get in a lawsuit. Instead I would like to replace that "We can't do it" or the "No" to "We are going to look into that. Let me look into that. Would you like to help me look into that?" So people who keep the dialogue open without having any automatic "no's" are in the zone and less likely to get that complaint filed against them. And it's the automatic "no" that gets you into trouble every single time. I like the process that you outlined. I think that's excellent. I just want to caution you on that middle thing.

>> Totally.

>>BETTY: We have somebody at the same table and another one over here. Two or three at ‑‑ this table is full of ideas right now.

>> I'm Shia. I run the Live Music Project, a community calendar for classical music and we have other programs like a ticket distribution program. Our services are mostly digital through our Web site and our underlying sort of point is to understand the access to the arts begins with access to information about the arts, so this whole conversation is really in my head right now about what are the barriers digitally to the information we're providing. So one thing we can do is we have a volunteer software developer team. Someone in the team who has the most experience with the W3C recommendations or is willing to go learn about those can bring those back to the team and teach the rest of us about that and then those folks can even bring that back to their workplaces.

>>BETTY: Great. Pass it on.

>> Hi. My name is Claire Fleming and I work with Cares of Washington.

We help people who have disabilities find jobs. And we talked a little bit as a table about having partnerships with other organizations and how important it is to maintain those relationships because it can always help to delegate tasks and it can always help to ask for help when you need it.

>>BETTY: So have people with disabilities part of the training process and do that through good partnerships is good overall.

Do you want to say what you said to me? Want to bring that up?

>> Hi. Going back a little bit to the part about making a statement or welcoming everybody, if you are going to welcome everybody, it would include people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. So what I asked was what ‑‑ if you could have ‑‑ if you had experience with that at the Kennedy Center, how you approached that, or if any other organizations here are dealing with patrons who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and what is your experience working with them.

>>BETTY: And how could you train? How does that become an element of a good training? Because I think there is a tie‑in to that. And it goes back to something I'm going to now be much more conscious about when I talk about different populations, is I do tend to leave that population out. I don't talk about them specifically because I tend to lean towards deaf and blind and physically disabled, and then we do have to talk about cognition or people who are neurodiverse. People sometimes say neurodiverse, neurotypical. What's neurotypical? Are you neurotypical? I don't know. So, we do need to think about what the differences are, especially when we're dealing with that kid population, because remember, that's the over 50% of the population. So I think that's a good point to make and we shouldn't leave it out of training for sure. So we want to try to broaden the training to include all potential members of the audience.

What else? Who has some other things that they think hasn't been mentioned yet that you would include in a training? Yeah? Over here.

>> I'm Corey from the Seattle opera.

This ties into what you were saying: Verbiage.

>>BETTY: Language.

>> People‑first language and making sure that we are using current up‑to‑date language and not things that are offensive and way out of date.

>>BETTY: Right. So, part of a training would be to talk to your staff about how to talk about disability. And so what we've been doing for 20, 30, 40 years now is using what we call people‑first language, which means we say "a person who has a hearing loss." "A person who is blind." "A person with Down syndrome." Okay? So that's people‑first language.

But okay, I'm going to get you in a minute.

There is a shift going on. So I have been around long enough, I lived through the "handicapped." We know that's wrong. Then there was "impairment." No. That lives in that medical model. We're trying to move towards the social civil model. We don't want to use "impairment." There's the "challenged" language. There's the "differently abled" language. And just kept going on and on and on.

But mostly what the disability community generally agrees on is people‑first language, but there is a movement going on right now that I have been aware of for a very long time to move towards identity‑first language. Now I don't know why this shift is happening, but I suspect that I see it more in younger people than older people in the disability community. And so I think that the disability community is borrowing a bit from other communities that are also disenfranchised and they are starting to say: "Hey, look I am not a person that is blind. I'm a blind person. Blind is who I am. You can't dissociate me. You can't take me unless you take all of me and this is who I am." So there is a shift in language right now.

You see it in the autism community where they say "I'm autistic."

The only thing I personally have an "ah" reaction to is cutesy language. So I'm one of these people who is like: "'Differently abled.' Really?" I feel like I want to respect and honor this community and I don't do that by turning them into children and treating them like anything other than the age they are. Now if they are children, okay, they are children. But when they are adults, I struggle with that personally. So I'm going to live with the people‑first language and the identity‑first language as probably being safest.

You had your hand up. I want to give you a chance to make your point.

Where's the microphone? You are not allowed to sit down.

>> So, a really great way I have been able to learn about disability justice culture is to follow several disability justice activists on whatever social media. And from ‑‑ my understanding is similar to yours where people are moving away from people‑first language because it sounds like you're saying that like someone just carries their disability like in a purse or something, versus saying someone is a disabled person also references the social model of disability where you're saying this person is disabled by the environment or by policies or by et cetera.

So but I think also like since the disability community is so large, that it's also a good practice to ask people how they want to be identified and described.

>>BETTY: That's a good practice too. So language ‑‑ I was like waiting for verbiage and language to come up because it always does and it's such a sticky, sticky thing. So to be honest, I'll tell you how we address it at the Kennedy Center. I talked to them about people‑first language and identity language and I said these things are out there. Be aware of them. When people come to the doors of the Kennedy Center or your cultural venue, they are not a person with a disability. They are a patron, a visitor, a guest. Most of the time my front line staff don't even need to use disability language in any way, shape, or form because we want to teach them to focus on not "What's your physical attribute," but "What do you need from me." So when we talk to our patrons, we say "What do you need?" Because knowing that somebody's blind doesn't help me in knowing what they are going to need to have meaningful participation in whatever I'm doing. But what helps me is saying, as you said, ask them: "What do you need to fully participate here? What is it that I can do to support you?" So, sometimes the language just kind of vanishes, and it's not to take that away from them, but it's to focus on what their experience is going to be in the environment, and what I need to know is what do they need from me or what can I do to support them.

But language is a very, very important issue. Especially if you are doing fundraising and you are doing writing, you are doing those accessibility statements. Understanding where the community is and how people like to be referred to and respecting and honoring that I think is really what counts the most. Disagree? Okay. Because this is a sticky wicket and I have been on those blogs and, I mean, people are like throwing down and there's big arguments and huge fights, but you just have to be aware that it is a sticky issue and that maybe in some ways it's best to kind of back off and rethink how we're really focusing on environment. What do I need to do to you to fix this environment? And everybody's going to be different. Okay.

Next thing here. Communication! Yea! How many of you are marketing people? Everybody look ‑‑ no, don't put your hands down. Everybody look at them. And in the next consortium meeting you will focus on marketing and they will be the leaders because you need to figure out how you are going to connect to an audience that you have not traditionally connected to in the past and how are you going to do that in a way that they don't feel like you are just making a token gesture, that you are authentic. That you don't really mean it. How are you going to get the word out to them? I said easy to say: Oh, use social media. But what does that mean when you are connecting with the disability community? Does the disability community use social media? Who is the disability community anyways? Is there a disability community? Wait. There isn't. We just use that as a convenient homogenous way of lumping people together. Because there's a Deaf community. Wait. There is not a Deaf community because there's the capital D ASL‑using Deaf community and there's the little "d" hard of hearing/deaf community.

So we use community generically. And there isn't one.

So you need the smarts of the marketing people to think through how you will message it out, what story you are going to tell in order to get people to come to you. I will tell you the one thing that stood me in good stead was going to the community. We tend to be lazy. I don't want to just welcome you. I want to go out and invite you to come. People trust people, not organizations.

I'll give you a good example of that, a quick story. So it was the NSO, National Symphony Orchestra was performing in the house and I got this phone call. Betty get to the concert hall immediately. Service dog crisis. I go running up to the concert hall and I get to the end of the concert hall. The music director is coming screaming: Get that dog out of here.

What dog where? Third floor.

I go running up the steps and open the door and there is a woman who is blind, sitting on the aisle. She has her service dog with her. She is upset and the dog is making all kinds of noise and moving around. I tap her on the shoulder and say: Sorry, could I ask you to step outside for just a second. She is crying. I said: I'll give you my arm. My name is Betty. Can I ask you to step outside for just a second.

I get her out of the theater and behind her, the guy in front of her comes screaming out: That dog. And my assistant had made it there behind me.

She gets the guy.

I get the woman blind with the dog.

I said: My name is Betty Siegel. I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do to help you because your service animal seems to be upset and not really quite behaving. There's a lot of noise going on.

It came out she had been moved by the ushers and she was not near her friends and she was disoriented and the dog really wasn't behaving. And I said: Look, again, my name is Betty. Let me see if I can get you connected with your friends.

She stopped me. "Betty. Betty Siegel, didn't you come and talk to the American Council for the Blind group about two months ago?"

I said: Yes, that was me.

She said: Oh. And you could just feel all the panic going out of her body. Because we had met. You know? And she knew who I was, so there was a confidence in me to help resolve this situation.

Now meanwhile, what my assistant was getting was the guy who was screaming at her, because in the concert hall on the third floor the seats are ‑‑ you have a row of seats and you step down three seats to the next row of seats, which means the person sitting in front of you, their neck is at the level of your feet, and her dog had been doing the entire time was licking the neck of the guy sitting in front of her and he was really upset. I was not quite sure what to do about him. Anyways, just a small story. All right.

So, marketing and storytelling, really important. Going to community and inviting them to come I think is really critical. And unfortunately, it also is time‑consuming and you have to make an effort. It's not a passive way of reaching out. I do recommend that you try that. I think as a consortium, as a community, you can really do that effectively.

Then evaluate and update. Whatever you have decided to do, your policies, procedures, processes, your practices, always review, reanalyze, rethink, because things change. Things do not stay the same. So, just in case you prefer steps over cycles, these are other ways of approaching this. I like the cycle concept better in planning for accessibility.

And finally, and I'm going to be right on time, because you have been a good audience, I'm going to talk to you about *Star Trek*.

>> Woo.

>>BETTY: So you guys all recognize this, right? Even those of you that were born after it was on, right? This is the original *Star Trek* crew.

>> We have his chair here in Seattle.

>>BETTY: Do you? Okay. So you guys know this. It looks familiar to you.

Remember, I want to ask you when *Star Trek* was on the air, and it is like '67, '69, what else was going on when *Star Trek* was first airing that was significant?

>> Civil Rights Movement.

>>BETTY: Civil Rights Movement. What else?

>> Space race.

>>BETTY: Space race. What happened with the space race.

>> We won.

>>BETTY: We won. We landed on the moon. We landed on the moon. When *Star Trek* was on air, we were landing people on the moon, we were having our Civil Rights Movement, which is why this actually looks a little more diverse than many television shows of its day.

But here's the interesting thing. So there was this guy and he wrote a letter, because this was back before the Internet, so they actually wrote a letter, you know, paper, pencil, you put it in an envelope, lick it (makes sound), mail it off.

There was a guy who wrote to the producer of *Star Trek* and said: Dear sirs, I'm an inventor and I have worked all of my life ‑‑ I have an engineering degree and I have worked all my life to try to develop doors that open without anybody touching them. Because you know in every *Star Trek* episode this is what happens. Every episode.

Kirk and Spock and everybody is on the bridge and then the alarm goes off. (Makes sound) or whatever noise that thing made. Then Scotty ‑‑ and I will ask forgiveness of everybody of Scottish descent because I do a terrible Scottish accent, but I am going to try one right now.

Scotty says: Captain, Captain ‑‑ this is every episode ‑‑ the warp core is about to explode.

What does Scotty and ‑‑ what does Spock and Kirk do? Jump up, run to the back of the bridge, run, run, run, and the doors go (makes sound), (makes sound). They never touch ‑‑ it's not like: "After you, Captain." "After you, Spock." "No, let me get the door. Oh, it's stuck."

No. They just run back there and (makes sound).

So this guy is writing to the producer saying: How did you do that? I have been trying to invent these doors forever.

And the producers are reading the letter and they write back: Well, dear sir, we have these two guys named Fred and Joe and they are back there going (makes sound) (makes sound). It's television.

But what happens when you go to the grocery store? (Makes sound). Do you touch anything? Do you activate anything? No. The doors just open and close. Automatic self‑actuating doors are just so common, we don't even think about them anymore. But in 1969 it was such a radical concept. And the point here goes back to this. Whoops. I always do that backwards.

Which is that what wasn't possible yesterday may be possible today. And if you don't go back and you don't keep reevaluating and reassessing your work, then you are not going to improve and you are not going to reach your full potential as a community asset, as an accessibility asset. So be like *Star Trek* and realize that what you couldn't do yesterday, except with two guys, you might be able to do a million different ways today.

And I think I have got like 3 minutes and then it's 4:00. And so I want to say thank you to you for your patience in listening. I think this cycle, if you think about it, here's the thing that's wonderful about cycles, is you don't have to do them in that order. You can jump around. You can put more resources into one or the other depending on where you are as an organization. But I think that if you start there, then you are going to ultimately deliver a better experience for people with disabilities in your community.

And I actually really think that this consortium that you guys are forming here is such an important, valuable resource, because it's where you guys can come together and go: What do you do? What do you do? I want to try that. I want to try this. That worked for you? That's great. Maybe I should try it. Maybe we can have a collaborative marketing effort where instead of me advertising my signed performances, and you advertise yours, why don't we advertise as a consortium and pool our resources?

You are doing things in Seattle that are unique and wonderful to see. I really appreciate being a part of it.

I have got two minutes. Do you guys have any questions? I will answer questions about anything. Yeah?

>> Who is your favorite *Star Trek* character?

>>BETTY: I fluctuated. I was in love with Kirk. Then I was in love with Spock. Then I was in love with Kirk. I never really decided which one was my favorite. I was a second‑generation, really, groupie more than anything else. I really wanted to be a Klingon, but, you know. Because they eat weird food. Good question, though.

Anyone else have anything specific? Elizabeth, do I turn this over ‑‑ we have one back here.

>> Does the Kennedy Center or any organization you work with employ, in terms of front line staff, front of house stuff, ushers especially, is that ‑‑ how do you model folks with disabilities in your staff when it comes to accessibility?

>>BETTY: You hire them first.

>> Right, absolutely.

>>BETTY: We actually do a program ‑‑ we do internships and there's nothing I love better than hiring an intern into employment. And so we do have in our internship program interns with developmental disabilities, interns with college degrees. So we make our internship, because it's an avenue to employment, accessible to all. And so we really try to message that. And we do hire people out of that internship and I have right now three people, one, two, three, that I'm aware of that we have hired out of the internship that all have developmental disabilities, primarily intellectual disabilities, and then I have got a person who is deaf. And I could count them, but you have to model it by doing it.

And you have to be open to the idea that you can hire people and that they will be very, very successful. I have a kid right now who is nonverbal and we just get ‑‑ he has a communication device, and so we sat down with him and talk to him about what were the sentences that he was going to need to employ the most, and we put them into his communication device, so when somebody asks him questions, dink. And at the same time that we're giving him this opportunity, which is great because he earned it and he is much liked by his supervisor because he shows up on time (laughter), you know, we're also modeling for the community what inclusion really looks like. I think you have to start there. It's a good question.

Yes, sir.

>> Do you have any people on your board with disabilities?

>>BETTY: That's really interesting. I happen to know the answer is yes, but do any of them admit to it or identify as being people with disabilities? I would say no. But I know we have them. But since they don't choose to identify as a person with a disability or that's not a part of who they see themselves as, they aren't bringing up the issues I would like them to bring up around inclusion and equity. So I would like to see if we could be a little bit more intentional on that.

But our challenge is that the Kennedy Center's board of directors is appointed by the president of the United States. It's always been appointed by every president of the United States. So that was not a slam against this administration, but we're kind of subject who gets appointed to us, where most of you get to pick who your board members are. I would recommend including people with disabilities on that.

Other questions? Yes, then over there. Microphone. Microphone very good.

>> I hope my question's not too controversial.

>>BETTY: I like controversy.

>> There are more dogs in Seattle than people, and as facilities, we have to accommodate people with service animals and ‑‑ but there's also comfort animals and then there's also people who just buy vests for their animals.

Where can we find resources on how to work with folks who bring their service animals and animals so that we can, you know, sort of answer the questions or direct them to ‑‑ it's difficult.

>>BETTY: It is a challenge. It is one that people love and we could spend five hours. People love the service animal question. I'm like: Whoa. Okay. Here's the deal. The federal law, ADA, has a definition of service animal, which was dog and miniature horse, and it actually has in the regulations ‑‑ they didn't know they were doing it at the time, but they actually created a script and the script says: We don't allow pets. Pause. This is the hard part to train your staff. Pause.

You are giving them an opportunity to come back to say "I have a disability" or "This is my service animal" or whatever.

You are allowed to ask them: "Is your service animal required because of a disability?" Not "What is the disability" but "because of the disability." So you can ask them that question. So that'll get some people ‑‑ catch them by surprise. They won't be able to answer, it's not a service animal.

The third question you are allowed to ask people is "What is your dog or miniature horse trained to do for you?" They have to tell you what it's trained to do.

That's the difference between a service animal and an emotional support animal or therapy, pet, or whatever, that it is trained to do something.

So Fluffy is a purse pooch who I hold and pet and it makes me feel better is not a service dog. But if Fluffy is trained to lick me on the nose when he senses I'm about to have a seizure, he is a service animal, because he is trained to sense that I'm about to have a seizure and to lick me on the nose. That's the work. Right? And so you have that script and it's embedded in the regs.

There is a good resource on the www.ADA.gov and then the Kennedy Center has that service animal policy posted. We train our staff to do that script.

This gentleman and then this one and then I'm going a little over time, so if you need to ‑‑ five more minutes. If you need to exit, please do.

>> How long has your role been a part of the organization and what caused your organization to make that a vital role?

>>BETTY: Right. The first ADA 504 ‑‑ the first 504 coordinator ‑‑

That gentleman over there who is the baby ADA coordinator was asking how long my role has been at the Kennedy Center.

The Kennedy Center hired its first accessibility person in 1990, right as the law was being passed. I suspect that was the motivator. I have had the job since 1999, so for quite some time.

>> Question. We have a regular volunteer meet‑up. It happens in a home, a person's private home which is very not easy to access if you have any mobility issues. As we try to build our volunteer community, we want to reach out to people in a way that we had a form that they can say "I want to participate in this activity." We want to somehow know at that point how we can support them if they have any mobility issues and possibly change where we host this. But how do we do that without asking them to give us information they shouldn't be having to give us?

>>BETTY: Well, first of all, I would ‑‑ you might want to actually ask whether that's the right venue to do it, because can you fix the environment? But secondly, it's all right to put on any kind of a registration form or when you are working with schools to ask: Please let us know if you or a member of your party require any accommodation due to a disability. Call us at or email us at. Give them a way to contact or talk specifically to this person. You can open the door and invite that information. People ‑‑ it's voluntary. They don't have to tell you. But most people will because they don't want to come and have a crappy experience. They don't want to be left on the sidewalk when there are three steps to the front door. So if you open the door and give them the opportunity to tell you, I think that's a good thing.

Any other question? This gentleman back here and this lady over here.

>> Can we start over here?

>>BETTY: Yeah. She's like: You going to make me run and run? Yeah, go ahead.

>> Echo speaking, Deaf‑Friendly.

You have mentioned you have worked at Kennedy Center since 1999 and I was wondering if you have experienced any lawsuits or complaints related to accessibility since that time.

>>BETTY: So, there's ‑‑ on the ADA.gov Web site there is a settlement agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Washington National Opera which is a part of the Kennedy Center, the Washington National Opera. Now what that means is somebody complained or filed a complaint with the Department of Justice against the Washington National Opera and it was about ticketing. It was about the price of ticketing. And then they didn't go into lawsuit. They went into a settlement. And when you do that settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, they post it online. So that was probably around 2000 or 2001. Now, at that point the Washington National Opera was not a part of the Kennedy Center, so it wasn't really a suit against the Kennedy Center, but it was a suit against an entity that did become part of the Kennedy Center.

We have not had any other actual complaints filed with the U.S. Department of Justice since then. We have had some issues come up and we try to address them as they arise. But no actual suits or complaints.

Over here. The microphone make it to you?

>> So, I was really excited to hear that in 2016 y'all at the Kennedy Center created a hip‑hop council.

>>BETTY: Oh, yeah.

>> And I was just wondering if you could explain as a member of the leadership there, did that come from this access initiative? Like, is that an organization saying like: Oh, we're having such success with opening our inclusion, that we want to invite this art form more?

>>BETTY: Um. I wish that were the case. The Kennedy Center's commitment to accessibility really predated 1990. When the Kennedy Center was established, which it was by an act of Congress, Congress specifically said one of the missions of the Kennedy Center was to serve people with disabilities, older adults. And so it's been a part of the core mission articulated since the inception, but they really didn't own up to it until 1990, and they really didn't commit to it until a few years after I got there, because it took me a few years to coax them along. But I think they have taken great pride in it now. They realize that it's something that amplifies their work and it is something they can take pride in.

The hip‑hop council I think really came with the change in our leadership to really look at the Kennedy Center and say: When we are supposed to ‑‑ because another thing Congress authorized us to do is represent the best of art, and then we realized at some point that the art we were representing were the traditional art forms of ballet, opera, symphony, and so I think it just took us a long time to get to the point where we said: There are other art forms out there, aren't there? And I think they did kind of ‑‑ I hope they looked at how they approach accessibility and they said nothing about us without us and they invited the community in to advise them on other art forms they were just not familiar with. It's a very new initiative for us. I would like to say it connects back, but I think suddenly one day they woke up and went: "Oh, shit. Something's wrong." They started to do it and I'm very proud of them for taking that first step to look at art very broadly.

>> It's exciting.

>>BETTY: It really is. If you know any hip‑hop artists with disabilities, one of the programs I run does bring artists with disabilities to the Kennedy Center and we present them at the Kennedy Center, and I would love to expand my range of artists to include all of these different folks, but I need to find really good artists with disabilities out there so I can amplify their voices at the Kennedy Center. So if you know people, please contact me.

Finally ‑‑ I'm going to get off the stage ‑‑ please come to LEAD, the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability. It's my only promotional moment. It's our conference. We meet in Raleigh, North Carolina next year and maybe in the future we'll meet in Seattle, I don't know. But about 600 people who care passionately and deeply about the issues around access, equity, diversity and inclusion come together and have amazing conversations and amazing sharing of information and resources. Please join us.

If you want you can come to Ireland in May where our colleagues in Ireland are also having a conference. And if you are in education, I have to push this, we have a second conference, our arts education conference which focuses on ensuring that any student K‑12 does not get cut out of the arts process. So we're working with students and teachers with disabilities. Please join us.

And thank you. And Elizabeth is hovering. (Applause.)

>>ELIZABETH: Thank you, everybody, for coming. I just have a few wrap‑up things. Please take a moment to fill out the survey. Your feedback is incredibly important as we develop more workshops. It will be e‑mailed to you as well. And you will all be getting a copy of the PowerPoint. So don't feel like you have to take copious notes. We will email this to you.

Please join our Facebook page and the Facebook address is on the sheet outside when you signed in. So please just take a look for us on Facebook, Seattle‑King County Cultural Accessibility Consortium and you will find all kinds of information there.

If you have not signed in, please sign in so I can add you to our distribution list and you will be getting more announcements as well.

And don't forget that we have a meet and greet coming up on November 7.

And just to remind you that the mission of this consortium is to ensure that the arts are accessible to people with disabilities. We are talking about all kinds of disabilities, the range of ‑‑ full range of disabilities. So, please keep that in mind. If you have any questions or need assistance on anything relating to that, please contact me and I will help you with that. Thank you so much for coming and we will see you soon.

(Applause.)

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Lisa K. Hutchinson

Certified Realtime Captioner