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The conference is now started. This conference is now being recorded.

Good afternoon, and welcome to the RespectAbility webinar for September 7th, 2016. I am absolutely delighted to be here today to talk to you about tapping into hidden human capital, practical solutions for employers and people with disabilities. My name is Philip Pauli. I am the Policies and Practices Director for RespectAbility. I help outreach to governors and state leaders and I work with workforce topics and above all I am talking to employers about the value that people with disabilities bring to the workplace and how the bottom line can be benefitted by bringing on diverse talent. I am proud to share the stage with Debra Ruh. CEO of Ruh Global Communications.

Very delighted to be here today. First and foremost, I want to give a huge shout‑out to JP Morgan Chase. JPMorgan Chase has been a partner in our webinar series and allow us the flexibility to provide you free learning opportunities online with closed captioning to ensure accessibility for all. We are delighted with their support and look forward to continuing learning opportunities in the months ahead. To give you a background, Debra Ruh is the CEO of Ruh Global Communications and that is a firm that has accessibility of the CRPD and Debra is the proud mother of an adult child with down syndrome. I encourage you to follow her on social media. They offer great insight. Deb Ruh is a member of the --- expert panel and the cofounder of the #AXS chat. She helped found TecAccess in 2001. TecAccess was a U.S. based multimillion dollar firm focused on the accessibility of the internet and communications technology.

Over 80% of her team were technologists with disabilities. She is the author of two books and an influence on social media and today we're going to talk about her second book, Tapping Into Hidden Human Capital. I just finished reading it. I was blown away even as someone who has worked with disability employment for a while. It's funny, insightful and valuable. Debra, I turn the floor over to you. Take it away.

Thank you, Philip. I must say that's the best introduction I've ever gotten before so I'm glad it's recorded. When I get depressed, I'll listen to it. So well done, well done. To thank you Philip and Jennifer and the entire RespectAbility team for everything you're doing but also for allowing me to, you know, talk about this topic. Very, very important topic and near and dear to my heart. So thank you, everybody, for joining us on the webinar today as well. Okay. So I'm going to go ahead and begin. So, and I, as Phillip was kind enough to share who was attending the conference and I know that hopefully Paul A. from Cannon joined us because Cannon was one of the case studies in the book. Very excited when corporations join these. I will say some of the information that I'm going to be sharing with a lot of you on the call I think I'll be preaching to the choir.

But generally who I talk to is corporations and employers and so you'll understand why some of the data that I include in the PowerPoint presentation has been included even though a lot of you might know some of this data. I find that employers often don't know the data so it's very important to sort of set the stage of what we're talking about. I will say that when I wrote the book, I've been in the field as Philip said for many years. I was in the banking industry before I joined the field and my daughter really inspired me because I was kept being told she added no value to society and certainly not to the workforce and I was puzzled by that because I thought she was a very talented, funny, interesting young woman and I disagreed I thought she could add a lot of value.

That's one reason I jumped in and said this is ridiculous. She and her peers add a lot of value to the workforce and so I wrote the book from an employer's perspective and that I could tell there hasn't been a lot written from the employer's perspective. Let's take some of the mystery out of this. What do we need to do? If you're an employer, to really truly hire and retain talented people with disabilities in your workforce and I'll just make a note, this book I've edited so many times because they have affiliations with the United Nations and it got edited and a couple editors kept saying why do you say qualified candidates with disabilities or talented people with disabilities and the reason why ‑‑ they said that's redundant but I feel we do need that in the book. Often I think our community accidently says you should hire under the circumstances. Poor people with disabilities. You should hire us. Instead of saying we are a talented group of people and I know one of the listeners that we were speaking before this started was the screen reader user.

There's a lot of value to employ someone who uses a screen reader. You can learn some of about the way you do business with your customers. How you interact with your customers offline and online by employing somebody who is a screen reader user. We still sometimes have to take the content and bring it down to a level that we all understand and that, you know, I just really wanted to focus on the reasons why people with disabilities really, truly do add value to the workforce. So on this first screen I talk about the number of people with disabilities and the numbers are on the rise for a lot of reasons. The technological advantages and we'll talk about that more in the presentation but the world is being changed because of the way technology is being brought into the world. There's still a lot of work to do but there's some very exciting things especially for people with disabilities with technological advances. At the same time, I'm going to jump down my slide, it also can cause more of a problem with the digital divide and if we don't have access to technology or we can't find employment because our screen readers or our assistive technology doesn't work with the assistive technology being used by employers then it's a failure for all of us. So globalization is changing things. Countries that are taking major steps to ensure the rights of people with disabilities and the rights of people with disabilities which unfortunately the United States has not ratified. There's only three countries that have not signed and ratified and unfortunately the United States is one of them. Maybe because of our amazing American with Disabilities Act but that Americans leave the United States every day and then you're no longer protected under the American with Disabilities Act. I think we should ratify the convention on the right of people with disabilities. This is also about corporate social responsibility. These companies see our corporate responsibility has become more and more important to American corporations as well as global corporations because a lot of Americans and a lot of our corporations lost a lot during the crisis. They want us to think they're doing the right thing by our clients and employees. So corporate social responsibility has become very important and one way that you can prove you care about corporate social responsibility is to make sure you're hiring a diverse workforce that includes individuals with disabilities. So a slide that I like to show, I do a lot of global presentations. So you'll see that if you can see, in this particular slide and if you can't you have an advantage because we tagged every one of these pictures so that this presentation would be accessible. So in your screen reader, users can go in and see who some of these people are on the slide. But I once again try to make the impression that people with disabilities are people. And if you think as an employer that you do not have individuals with disabilities working for your corporation or your organization today, there's a problem on a lot of levels but I promise you, you do have people with disabilities already working for you. But why they do not feel comfortable disclosing them is, of course they are invisible and you have a problem in your workforce so I like to put out this wonderful list of faces and names. Because what do they have in common? All of these individuals have disabilities. A lot of people don't realize that Agatha Christy had dysgraphia and someone had to dictate her work and write it for her. A lot of people don't realize that. What a loss if we didn't have the work of Agatha Christie because of her disability preventing her work. I don't want to go over all the names but we have the former Indonesian president was blind. We have Michael J. Fox. We have Beethoven and all these individuals. We have Sir Richard Branson who has dyslexia and really struggled during his education and now is one of the most wealthiest men in the world and a well‑known entrepreneur and philanthropist.

Taking some of these people and some of these people are actresses in India and very well beloved people from all over the world. It would be a shame for any one of these people to not have been fully included in the professions that they chose because they all in their own way have changed the world. So I like to do a place setting when I talk about people with disabilities because often employers think I'm talking about my daughter who was born with down syndrome or somebody in a wheelchair or blind when in actuality the world's organization says one in seven people have a disability in the United States. One in five people have identified with a disability according to our census bureau.

So the numbers are large and staggering. We know for sure there's no significant difference between the productivity of people with disabilities or just people without disabilities. Particularly if we provide people with the assistive technology or the accommodations that they need. I have a picture here of my former partner Bob English who is a person with a disability and Rosemary --- who is my chief officer. She cannot speak and there's not a lot Rose can't do. When she lies flat, Rose can only blink her eyes but I'd rather talk to you about what Rose can do. She is one of the most talented technologists that I ever met in my life. She's very funny. She's a really, really good writer, a brilliant web developer. There's just so much that she can do and she's actually leaving today to go on a trip with her girlfriend to Amsterdam. So, you know, Rose belongs in the world and she has a place to play in the world and she is contributing great things. So I'm really proud that she has been an employee of mine for many, many years and I consider her a partner. So I ‑‑ the book as Philip so eloquently said is called Tapping Into Hidden Human Capital. How leading corporations leverage multiple abilities in their workforce. I do not want to address this from a United States presence even though I'm very proud to be an American and live in Virginia. I want to look at it in a global perspective because many of the corporations I work with are multinational corporations and I will often see a corporation will be making efforts to employee people with disabilities in the United States or in Europe but they won't be doing it in Egypt or in Iman or other countries and even though we have a ton of work to do with employment in the United States we are in some cases ahead of other countries where people with disabilities have no rights. They have no right to go to school, to go into a restaurant.

So in a lot of ways we're ahead even though I think we have a tremendous amount of work to do with employment. So the book is available on Amazon and on some other channels. And it is about to be available on Kindle so that we can have an accessible version of it but for some reason they ‑‑ it's been a long time coming. So hopefully that will be out in the next couple of weeks. I keep sending notes to my sub publisher. I had my publisher and we used another one behind them I'm still only available in print copy but we're working on the accessible version.

So all right. So when I ‑‑ I've already talked little bit about this but once again I wrote it from the employer's perspective. I wanted to help employers understand and if you're a service provider and you work with employers, trying to get people with disabilities employed, I have a few slides at the end of it, of my presentation specifically for service providers in both rehabilitation experts that are working to get people employed. It's important to use language that is really understood and that corporations understand. We need to make sure we're speaking the same language. So I wanted to tell the stories of corporations. I didn't use big disability words.

I wanted to use human capital because to me the conversation has got to be now about, you know, talents that people with disabilities bring to the workforce. We know this for sure now. That discussion of should we employee people with disabilities? That's gone. This is more about, yes, of course you should are you crazy? Of course you should employee people with disabilities. Sorry, not to make a mental health thing. So it's about ‑‑ corporations are doing it because corporations are very competitive with each other so if like Chase Morgan ‑‑ sorry, Chase who is sponsoring the webinar today. We know that they're doing wonderful things to include people with disabilities and support organizations that are helping people with disabilities like RespectAbility. So their competitors notice when we brag about them in the market. So it's important to talk about what others are doing so others will follow through on it. It's important to understand that you already have employees with disabilities working for you. Let's get out the American with Disabilities Act and look at it. Accommodate them. Understand what your risks are. Make sure you create a strategic plan and a roadmap.

Just think about all the moving parts associated with fully including and accommodating and retaining individuals with disabilities and understanding that all of these efforts that you make are actually a benefit to the rest of your employees and your clients as well because acceptability is for everyone. So I wanted to talk about it from the employer's perspective but I wanted to help them understand that this accessibility is a big part of this. I was speaking in Chicago at a conference and somebody said, well, what's my first step? Just start hiring people with disabilities and that's a great step but the reality is if you are a corporation in the United States, there's a lot of ways that you can get in trouble and we know that the Americans with Disability lawsuits are up over these specific issues by 63% from a year ago. 63% and we expect those lawsuits are going to continue to rise. EEOC complaints. ADA complaints. Your website's not accessible to me. Your environment is not accessible. You're not accommodating me. There's all those lawsuits that are on the rise and we expect they will continue to rise and I will just say that often when I'm out of the country, people will say, you Americans. And I know they're about to take a dig at our country. And they'll say, your lawsuits. You're always suing each. And we legislated first with our American with Disabilities Act. We do a lot of litigation. I'm not saying that's the right we have to do it. But actually a lot of other countries are benefitting from the activities that are happening right here. It might be sometimes very uncomfortable but the reality is, a lot of other countries benefit from the way we do things here in the United States. So this is also about marketing. Because I want to support, as a family that has multiple members that have disabilities including both of my parents became disabled as they aged. I want to know that your company then includes us in your marketing so it's becoming more and more important and Tommy Hilfiger recently did a program with adaptive clothing. All those clothes sold out in seven days. The very best one they had. Those are the kind of stories when we talk about marketing and I'll talk more about marketing more as Philip mentioned I'm very active on social media. Maybe too active, but I love social media. So the goals of the book I've already talked a lot about it was making sure that employers understood about benefits of the hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. Understanding the talents we bring to the table. Understanding the global demand for the workforce. Understand the global carrot and sticks. Changing your organization to an inclusion culture. When you make the effort to employee people with disabilities in your workforce that will help you with other diversity segments as well as the regular, as well as all of the other regular efforts that you're making to employee anybody with or without disability. You're remembering that it's also about retention. Lot of people only about 20% of the population are born with a disability like my daughter. 80% of us acquire disabilities as we live our life so this is about retention. Joe, you know, became blind because he had a stroke or he had macular degeneration. He's worked with the company for twenty years. He has wonderful information that you don't want to lose. So you work with this employee to make sure that they can continue to contribute and they almost always want to continue to contribute. It's about universal design and accessibility for you -- of us. It's about recognized market opportunities. It's about technology and employability and of course it's a global success story when people with disabilities are more meaningfully included. So when I was writing the book and I have a picture, you know, I'm a typical mom. I'm going to find a way to put a picture of my daughter in here but this is the first book signing that I did at the enabling event. And the gentleman that we're signing it for has a severe disability that works in Qatar and works at the -- center. I had the pleasure to meet all these talented individuals with disabilities at work. When an employer thinks about this you can't think about it from the HR perspective. You have to understand that this involves the entire enterprise. The C‑Suite and the board of directors have a role to play to ensure that you're doing your corporate social responsibility and also to reduce the risk and make sure all your employees are accommodated and that you are considered a world class employer. And you're including everyone. So HR does have a very important role and diversity rolls up into HR sometimes and diversity's a part of this. IT plays a major role including don't forget your customer service. Your technical support. All of that has to be accessible. Your intranet, all the software systems you use, your website has to be accessible. Your mobile technology has to be accessible so there's a lot of moving parts. Don't put out marketing just for some of us. If you're going to be using models and marketing, please also include models that in this case have physical disabilities so we can see they have disabilities and that you actually considered us. Product development has a place to play in all of this. Is there a way to differentiate yourself against your competitors.

Remember the numbers one in five people have a disability or according to the National Organization on Disabilities one in three families are impacted in the U.S.

One in three families have a family member, a sibling, a child, a parent, or a friend that have a disability. And so this is a wonderful market to tap into. You have to make sure the training is fully accessible. You should be considering all this when you're doing product development of your services and product. Are they accessible? You need to be training your customer service reps to make sure that they know how to accommodate customers with disabilities in the stores and electronically. And procurement has a very big part to play as well. I often tell these corporations, make sure that when you're procuring anything to do it ‑‑ built in barriers or ICT accessibility that you have a clause in there that says it will be fully accessible that way if your vendor provides you with a website that's not accessible you can go back and say I told you it had to be accessible. Procurement is one of the best things we can do in government contracting to help us move this forward and we're seeing a lot of corporations being real role models with this. IBM, Microsoft. When they put out their procurements for any type of technology, they always say it has to be successful. So if we push it in the procurement a lot of work will be done because I want to do business with, for example, the United States Government, because they're one of the largest purchasers in the world. So if they say, we'll do business with you but if we select you everything has to be accessible and of course operations.

There are a lot of parts to play in operations throughout the entire organization. How are you, you know, once again, how are the teams being put together. Future of work comes into this and I dig into this a lot more in the book. The book is a fast read. It's ‑‑ we did large print and it's a fast read. It's not a very big book. When I first wrote the book it was 15 chapters and it would make a loud thud if it hit the table and my publisher said, Debra, people are not going to take the time to read this much content and so we whittled it down until we just really got to the point. Which sometimes I am not as good about that. So I appreciated the kind comments Philip made earlier on about the book. So, all right, so myths about employment of people with disabilities and one of my clients is Georgia Tech's AMAC program. They kindly provided the picture to this and they've also done a free massive online course on ICT accessibility if you want to know more about that let us know and we'll get you a link to the course and it's free. It's a free six week course you can take. I believe most of you know this data. Myths. People with disabilities do not have talents and skills needed in the business. Some of the reports have amazing content in there. If you’re not tracking some of the work that RespectAbility is doing when it comes to marketing and they've been a big voice behind some of the shows like Born This Way which is my favorite show. A lot of the work that they're doing with the candidate to make sure that we can all vote and that the candidates care about making sure we're included. It's very impressive. And when you're talking to employers you want this good content to show that by the way, 11% of this year's college graduates had a disability and this is just the one of the ones that self‑identified. Myths of those people with disabilities leave jobs more frequently than those without disabilities. Absolutely not true. The turnover rate is less than 6% is it because not all employers do not understand the value of employing people with disabilities. Maybe but we know the myths are untrue. The people with disabilities have higher absentee rate. Not true. I, as Philip mentioned in my introduction. I ran TecAccess for many years. Multimillion dollar business. 80% of my team were people with all different kind of disabilities. I did not find that ‑‑ I had no problem getting insurance. The insurance was no more than the folks without disabilities. Which actually surprised me. We have the data to prove a lot of these myths are not true and I cover a lot more of this in the book as well. So market opportunities. I pulled up a few cool ads that I've been seeing. We saw a couple during the Superbowl and the contest ad up here. How beautiful. If you haven't seen the Comcast ad of the young girl born blind gives her vision of what Wizard of Oz, her favorite movie is. t's a beautiful commercial and touching and warm and people with disabilities say we don't want to be your inspirational porn. Corporations need to understand that we do want to be included. We need to be careful there's a balance there. I think the ads that I'm including on this slide, I have a picture of a Coca‑Cola can where it is in braille. I got to it ads. I have one with Amy Purdy who I just think is as amazing talented woman. Paralympic champion on dancing with the stars. It's a guilty pleasure Sarah and I have. And then AT&T. And AT&T has done amazing things.

This is a few examples. That are making efforts to include us and I could have done ‑‑ and I do a presentation on all of the brands that are actually including us now. Microsoft. I mentioned Tommy Hilfiger. There's just so many more. This is just a few examples. So helping these employers understand there are positive brand consequences by including us. I've mentioned this a little bit but also understanding the risk and the touch points and the reality is anytime when I'm talking to corporations anytime technology and human beings come together, that's a touch point, that could cause accessibility issues for your customers and this is not just for customers with disabilities. It's just for your customers that are older, this is for your customers that English might be their second language. This is, you know, this is all of us. This is your customers that multitask. And I have a slide I use in another presentation where it talks about, you know, all the sudden I'm in a situation where there's too much light hitting my computer and I can't see the screen. That's how it is sometimes for a person that is visually impaired or blind. I'm in a situation where someone is making a lot of noise. Maybe they're doing road work. I can't hear you as well or I'm in a busy call center. Understanding that all the work you do benefits all of us. Not just individuals with disabilities. So you have to consider your website your internet, your mobile apps, your HR processes, your systems most of these things I already talked about but all through your customer statements there's privacy statements you send out to us. Those have to be accessible too and we're actually starting to see lawsuits because privacy statements aren't accessible and proxies aren't. And mobile applications are starting now to get lawsuits all against them because mobile apps aren't accessible to all of us and I already mentioned the importance of procurement. So these are just a few examples of the touch points and I go into them more in depth in the book. I mentioned how technology is changing the world. The robotics, I have a picture up here of a man who was one of them that part of his face was transplanted. People have actually had some transplants, face transplants. Just amazing what medical technology is doing for us now. The wearables. The internet things the smart cities. The driverless cars. I was on ‑‑ I was driving down Virginia highway the other day and this woman was weaving. I don't know if it was a woman but it was a woman and she was weaving and as I got closer to get away from her she was changing her shirt going 65 miles per hour down the road and I thought you need a driverless car bad. Don't change your clothes going down the expressway. So ICT is changing the world.

Often when I talk to service providers though it's just so important that when you're talking to employers you use the right language. Avoid using fear‑based language like litigation lawsuits. Compliance and legislation. Do you have any barrier to employment? It's the right thing to do. Because all of those things actually can have negative connotations.

You know I'm not saying it's the right thing to do I'm telling you you're going to miss out if you are not including these talented employees with disabilities in your workforce. You're missing out in innovation and creativity. It's not the right thing to do but if you don't do it your competitors are going to do it. You also have to be careful with words like job carving our sharing supported employment, sheltered workshops. We know a lot of this but I think sometimes still when you're coming at this perspective from a service provider, there seems to be a disconnect about the language that we're using with employers. You need to go in there and say, are you looking to hire a talented employee? Boy, do I have a bunch of qualified resumes for you from individuals with disabilities. We have to make sure we're using the right language. And here's some examples of language and my daughter Sarah she's worked for Nordstrom's and has been an employee there for over ten years. She does a wonderful job, when they do her job reviews she gets really high marks. The customers love her. The team members love her. She adds a lot of value to Nordstrom. This is about solid internal investment. It supports your shareholders and the goals they have for being a corporate responsible organization. It helps support your employer of choice initiatives.

One against CSR. But also your employees should look like your client and your customer base. A great example of that is with Disney. Disney is really good about understanding that they have a diverse crowd that comes. And they want to make sure that, you know, that their employees and their clients look the same. I mentioned Canon before. Canon's the best practice in the book and I've been working with them for years but a story I tell in the book and I will tell it briefly here is that Canon has always been socially responsible about the environment and also about the client needs. And about 8‑10 years ago they decided that they were going to take the cameras that consumers were buying and send them back for repairs and before they were throwing them away in the landfill. They created a small team of about 20 individuals with disabilities, working with a service provider, and they taught them to dismantle these cameras and figure out what parts were really broken and that needed to be responsibly, you know, gotten rid of. Which ones could be refurbished. Which ones could be recycled, which ones could be actually it was still good it could be used another way. Well, the good news is this little unit saved them 19 million dollars the first year which is great. But an even more important story to this is that overall that plant of 7,000 people outside of Chicago the productivity across the board went up 36%. Now that caught their corporate attention. Remember the bottom line? Because they couldn't figure out why this one plant had such a productivity gain. The only thing that was different was the small group of individuals with disabilities that before working for Canon and lot of employees said I like to work at Canon and it makes me really proud that you understand the value that these individuals bring to our workforce.

And when Americans, and this happens all over the world, when we're proud we're more productive. So that's really good for the bottom line. So telling stories like that helps convince these corporations that you really do want to do a better job of including people with disabilities, retaining people with disabilities, and accommodating the people with disabilities that probably are already working for you. So and there are a lot of other stories like that in the book. This is about seamless integration, making sure that people with disabilities are seamlessly included in your workforce, in your operations, in your marketing. The accessibility of your products in that, you know, that you're doing it for a lot of different reasons. It's good for your bottom line. It makes good financial sense. It's good to have a diverse innovative, creative productive workforce. So its seamless and good for everyone. And I always try to remind employers that societies function better when everyone is given the opportunity to contribute and participate. Often people with disabilities are, you know, were the butt of all of the jokes. We've seen that recently with some of the political things but the worst thing you can say about the candidate is that she looks like she has down syndrome like my daughter and I had something to say about that on social media. We're tired of being the brunt of the jokes. People with disabilities absolutely add value to society in the workforce and I'm hoping that this little book just will help prove that.

This is one of my favorite slides and it was super fun making it accessible but it's accessible all the way through. These are just some examples of corporations all over the world that are including people with disabilities and the workforce, they're making effort. None of them are perfect because we don't know what perfect means but all of these employers have actually hired people with disabilities. They have programs to make sure their work is accessible. They're including this in different ways. So, just a few of them. I'm going to give Chase a callout because they're supporting this webinar and RespectAbility and we appreciate that. Bank of America, Accenture, Microsoft, TD Bank. Woolworths. Do you all remember Woolworths. They're still in Australia. They have a campaign with individuals with intellectual disabilities. Ernst & Young who is going to be on a webinar, I believe the next webinar. Or one of the upcoming webinars and Philip will tell you about them, have done amazing work. Barclays Bank. Amazon. None of these corporations are perfect but they're all trying and I personally think as an individual, as a family member of a, you know, my family is impacted by disabilities, I look for the corporations that support my community.

When we were talking about who are you voting for? I'm going to vote for the candidate that's going to take care of people with disabilities and I usually don't pick one candidate over another but I have actually picked a candidate this time but you can see it on my tweets at Debra Ruh but I'm voting based on the candidate that's going to do the right thing by my family. That's the way I vote. I vote on the issues. Don't vote party line. I vote on the issues and the candidate. I think this is a powerful slide and I can really add so many more logos to this slide but this is a good start to show you progress is being made. I want to be conscience of the time to get -- time. AXS chat. We are so stoked about the success we're having. We're talking about disability inclusion and we're the second top chat in the world. In the whole world. It's incredible. We do it every Tuesday at 3 p.m. eastern standard time. We are a global chat, so we make sure we want the UK and the Middle East, Latin America, all of North America, we want everybody to be able to be on here and in the near future, Jennifer, the CEO of RespectAbility is going to be featured on AXS Chat and a few chats ago we had a board member and Hillary Clinton came and joined the tweet and tweeted multiple times which showed us that they care about people with disabilities so I was very grateful for that. But on that particular one chat, there were 7 million people that were tweeting or ‑‑ it fell into their need so it's a pretty powerful chat. I have a picture of Carolyn who lives in the United States and is terminally ill and in the hospital a lot. And she's the founder of #hospitalglam where she takes the time to take pictures of different hospital settings and procedure settings just to remind the medical personnel she's an individual. She matters. She's not a patient. She's an individual and we had a beautiful tweet chat with her and we have had leaders from all over the world and individuals with disabilities and ambassadors and we've been doing it since November 2013. Every single Tuesday. So it's a very powerful thing. And we have had actors with disabilities on there and if you have any ideas of guests we're booked all the way into I think January now but we're always looking for new guests.

I also have a radio program called human performance at work that I talk about these subjects as well and I'm a blogger for Huffington Post. So very important that our voices be heard on all these different mediums. So what's around the corner? We have people with disabilities that are gaining recognition as a very important market and I think it's only going to be strengthened if you're not on social media I encourage you to get on social media. Our voices need to be heard on social media. We need to talk, we need to support each other. I know that RespectAbility holds a chat I think it's every week now after or right before born this way is on. And join things like that. The more we're on there the more our voices will be heard. Recognize corporations like Canon that are doing the right thing. We need to make sure that accessible technology is available to everyone that needs it and that these individuals get it as soon as they get in school so they can be as productive and the best person they can be. And also it's important to understand as we talked about in the presentation that we'll add more value the more we're included and the more the technology continues to be enhanced and the more we make sure that things are accessible and the more employers talk about the talented individuals. So I'm excited about the possibilities and what's around the corner.

So here is my contact information and I know that I wanted to leave some time for questions and Philip's going to help me with that but join me on social media. I'm on ‑‑ pretty much every single channel. Twitter, Instagram, I'm sort of a social media crazy person. I just love social media. But here is all of my contact information. My website and I really believe that we all add value by being included and I use the word crazy. I guess I shouldn't but I myself suffer, I have to manage depression. I have depression a lot and I try to manage that and I have been diagnosed with ADHD so I'm a person with invisible disabilities but they certainly never stood in my way but made me a more powerful person. I had to learn to manage it just like ‑‑ and this is part of being a human being. We all have, you know, abilities and disabilities. It's just part of being an individual. So, I'm going to turn it over to Philip and thank you for sharing my Huffington Post blog. I seriously encourage listeners to check out the Huffington Post blog. We have a twitter chat before born this way starting at 9 p.m. Tuesday nights. #bornthisway and you can watch the show on A&E networks at 10 p.m. Tuesday nights.

It's a great show as she mentions and features a cast of young people, their loves and their lives and they also happen to be people with down syndrome. We have two avenues for our audience to request questions. If you're joining us online you can go to the chatbox. Type out your question. I'll read it out so we can share and have a conversation together. If you're on the phone, Virginia will you explain how people can ask question on the phone.

You can press 7# on their telephone keypad to indicate they'd like their line unmuted. That's 7# on the telephone keypad.

I want to ask you, Debra, suppose an employer gets it and decides they want to hire people with disabilities where can they go to get resources to have an accommodation process. What resources do you recommend to understand how to hire diverse talent with disabilities?

Well, I think there's some really good places to go and I see you had shared in the message window some of the USB work. I was a board member for many years with them and their WWW.USBLM.ORG and you also have asked Jan which is a treasure. If you have any questions about accommodations or how, you have a situation where you are not exactly sure how to accommodate a person that is coming for an interview. It's a wonderful resource. RespectAbility, I know that we're all in this webinar but you have a ton of good content out there. I'm from Virginia and they did a bunch of reports on what was happening with Virginia and employment and the shortage and all the different laws that were changing. I found it so valuable and I shared a lot of that good content with employers and they did it for every single state it's really powerful information and what I find, I come from corporate America, I worked for big banks before I became an entrepreneur but we were live and breathe numbers so to have statistics by these states as well as national statistics. I'm not just talking out the side of my mouth. We know this information is here. Just the sheer numbers and the sheer opportunities. So I thank RespectAbility and that's one reason why I'm an advisor because I really believe in the work that they're doing and I like that they have fellows with disabilities and interns with disabilities so they're really walking the walk which is really important to me.

And staff members with disabilities.

And staff members, right. It's such a great best practice. They're not just saying oh, do this. They're doing it and they're proving that talent is there and so I really believe in supporting organizations like that. You have the International Labour Organization if you look at this globally. You have, you know there's just so many good organizations in the United States now. The National Organization on Disabilities is another place. AARP. The association of ‑‑ what is it? The Association of Retired Persons has some really good content out there. Especially when it comes to individuals acquiring disabilities as we age. So that sometimes people are, like, oh, yeah, I'm not sure if we're going to hire, you know, somebody with down syndrome. It's like, okay, if you think that's all this topic's about you're totally missing the point because it's not just about a person with an intellectual disability. This is about people. So you really have to think about this. So that's a few and I can think of a whole bunch more. The ADA centers that are in every single state. You have ADA centers you have the IAAP, the accessibility professionals organizations. GTITT. There's so many good ones.

Definitely. Virginia, do we have any questions on the phone?

Not at this time.

Chatbox question.

Yeah, Phillip, there's a comment here that Grant made that said I set up a North Carolina digital divide work space and PODIO and my organization design and Grant said he'd be happy to share it. I don't know if Grant can give us a link to that or provide a link to you, Philip, but I think a lot of stuff that's being done and we need to share with each other. Because it doesn't take one of us. If there's only one person at the top talking about this we're all going to lose. We need hundreds and millions of people talking about this which is why I think social media is so important. I didn't know if you had seen that, Philip, so I wanted to make sure we pointed that out.

No, I didn't and I put my e‑mail address in the chat earlier. I seriously encourage people to follow up with any questions they don't ask now. So I am curious, Debra you mentioned disclosing your own issues with ADHD and depression. Do you have advice for those with disabilities but are not open about it. The fear of stigma is a very powerful one and we're working to overcome it but what advice do you have for those with employees or those trying to get in the workforce about disclosure or accommodations. How can people be their best self‑advocates.

My whole life I have struggled with depression and I sometimes think most people must have some depression. Only because that's my reality. But I did not talk about it for a really long time. And I always knew that I was super high strung and that it's actually been good for my career but I have a problem calming down and that's sometimes not good for my depression. And it finally occurred to me that I should actually be talking about it because for a long time I didn't talk about it because I felt like it wasn't fair to people, like Rosemary, my partner who has a more severe disability than I do. Maybe I take something away from her and then I realized, that's not true. Because we are individuals. And we all have challenges. I think that's part of being alive. And so the more we talk about it and say, wow, well, if Debra can disclose that of who she is maybe I can do that and the reality is sometimes people will be prejudice against us and you might not get the job and the thing is do you really want to work for a company that brings that to the table? I know that's easier said than done.

The segment on my podcast this week I talk to a very talented man who had a visible disability. He had a degree, a good communicator, did advocacy and could not get a job and I think it was because he was in a scooter. I really do and I'm sorry to say that. I know there's lot of people that aren't disabled that can't find jobs but I still think there's a lot that's happening but I think that we each have to have a responsibility of owning who we are and talking about it in whatever way makes the most sense to us. To continue to dispel these ridiculous myths that are going on about people with disabilities not adding value to the workforce and society in general it's great question, Philip.

Virginia, do we have any phone questions? I guess not.

Philip, there's one more that was mentioned on being really interested in learning more about corporate social responsibility and the tools. And to better embrace the employer in the local community. I'm happy to share content like that. I really like that corporate social responsibility is getting a lot of attention by the C‑Suite which is interesting because I thought they weren't paying attention to us. They really are. I'm happy to share information. We'll look at any questions that came up and I'll share it with Philip and then Philip can share it with the people that signed up but if you have other questions, you want to send to me or to Philip, Philip provided his e‑mail address. We are here to help you guys. We really want you to be successful for this. We really want you to use us as a resource. Sorry to interrupt, Phil.

Definitely, my e‑mail is PhilipP@RespectAbilityUSA.ORG. First and foremost I want to express my deep thanks to Debra for doing this webinar for us today. She is a cutting edge leader and a wonderful mother and an inspiration to us all. Thank you so much for joining us as we said, we are available for questions via e‑mail, via phone. And I want to kind of pivot a little bit and kind of talk about what's coming up next for RespectAbility's webinar series. We have done a lot over the summer talking about state VR programs and employer partnerships. However, we're kind of pivoting a little bit and kind of ranging the topics a little more broadly coming up. In a few weeks' time we're doing a webinar about Montgomery County Maryland. We have a webinar by Trish. And we're looking at this as a model of how local leadership can really be hugely impactful on jobs for people with disabilities. Did you know in Montgomery county they have over a 50% employment rate for people with disabilities and they're doing it through a lot of partnerships, a lot of collaborative work and we're going to talk about that on October 5th and we're also going to talk about microfinance and microlending as a different kind of model for supporting people with disabilities.

I’m pleased to be joined on Tuesday October 18th by Jill Crosser. She's going to talk about what they're doing to support the financial security of Iowans with disabilities through microlending and entrepreneurship. We got more topics on the pipeline but coming up in November I'm really excited about Tuesday October 22nd when we're going to be joined by Lori Golden who is going to talk about what Ernst & Young is doing around combatting the stigma of mental illness and addiction.

So we got some very diverse topics coming up. Some really great speakers. Lastly I want to extend again my deep thanks to JP Morgan Chase for all the support they provide to us. They allow us to give you these free webinars. Lastly, here is our contact information. We're happy to follow up with any resources or comments and let us know how we can help you and that's it for today's webinar. Thank you for joining us.

Thank you.