>> Lauren Appelbaum: So, I want to welcome you to today's virtual event with the cast of Born For Business, a powerful new docu-series that spotlights the untold stories of four business owners with disabilities. Born For Business gives viewers an insider's look at what it takes to launch and run a thriving small business, and just as they are on the brink of success, they must navigate the complications that the COVID-19 pandemic presents. My name is Lauren Appelbaum and I am the VP of Entertainment and News Media at the disability non-profit RespectAbility. For those of you who cannot see me, I'm a white woman wearing a navy blue shirt and glasses with a banner behind me showing the RespectAbility logo in white and yellow. My pronouns are she and her. We have a live transcript going of this event. To turn it on, please click on the CC button in the lower right corner of the Zoom window and you'll be able to watch along. We also have a live transcript available in a separate window and that link has been put in the chat by my colleague Eric. We're also live on Facebook. For best -- accessibility, we do invite you to join us on Zoom, but you're welcome to watch us on either platform. We also have an ASL interpreter here today, and I welcome you to pin him if you would like. Disabled people who often face stigmas when looking for employment are creating our own opportunities and success across the world in fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people with disabilities are self-employed at a rate nearly twice that of non-disabled peers. As of the 2019 American community survey, approximately 700,000 workers with disabilities in the US were self-employed, enjoying the flexibility and opportunities that entrepreneurship provides. Studies show that approximately 70 percent of people with disabilities prefer to work. Thousands could become business owners if they can develop their skills and access capital. There are many free resources to help people with disabilities and others start their own businesses. Check out the chat to learn more, where we produced a toolkit for everyone. And I do see a question if the recording will be provided. Yes, this event is being recorded and will be available on RespectAbility's website, social media platforms, and elsewhere. Now I would like to introduce Tatiana Lee, who's the Senior Associate of Entertainment Media at RespectAbility. She also is a disabled business owner. She and I both had the pleasure of consulting on various aspects of the development process for the series. I'm going to hand it off to Tatiana.

>> Tatiana Lee: Thank you so much, Lauren. Welcome, as Lauren said I am Tatiana Lee. I will describe myself; I am a brown-skinned black woman, with kinky curly hair in a puff, wearing glasses, and a purple top with a black jacket with a black and yellow RespectAbility banner behind me. My pronouns are she and her. And I invite you to meet the cast of Born For Business: Qiana Allen, a fashionista with lupus, who creates clothing for women with curves. Collette Divitto, a baker with Down syndrome who owns a cookie brand on a mission to create change. Chris Treibes, a driven single dad with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, type three, making waves in the entertainment industry. And Lexi Zanghi, a millennial entrepreneur with anxiety who runs a fashion-forward brand. Before we get to the cast, let's hear from the executive producers, Jonathan Murray and Laura Korkoian. Jonathan, you continue to champion stories of people from underrepresented communities, and are successful at it. Many assume disabled folks cannot be business owners. Out of all the disability stories you could have told in this -- in this series, why was entrepreneurship so important?

>> Jonathan Murray: Good question. You know we had done Born this Way, which specifically looked at a group of young adults with Down syndrome, who were taking their final steps towards independence. And some of the things they were grappling with was employment and sometimes, you know, the rigidity of a certain employment situation didn't necessarily work for them. So in talking with some other people, we started to talk about entrepreneurship as a path towards financial stability for people with disabilities. And because you can call your own shots and you can figure out what works best for you. And we soon realized that this had been something that had been going on for a while; that you know, before even the government or other people were trying to help, the people with disabilities were figuring this out for themselves. And so we thought it was an exciting story, one that wasn't being told, and so we went for it.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, I love that. Yes, with that stat that Lauren said about how we are twice as likely as people with disabilities to run our own businesses, so the fact that you are shedding light on that, I think is just amazing. Laura, both you and Jonathan also worked on Born this Way, which really helped change public opinion on the capabilities of people with Down Syndrome. Do you think working with a cast with disabilities previously helped you in this production? Especially during a chaotic time such as the global pandemic?

>> Laura Korkoian: Absolutely, and there's certainly, I'll answer both parts to that; because you know, having limited exposure before in my storytelling to people with disabilities, certainly Born this Way was a wonderful introduction. We were so blessed that the families and the cast embraced us and were willing to teach us about things we didn't know and understand, and also just embrace this process of just telling their stories. So, coming into this with Born For Business, I felt it was so much easier to be able to work with the cast to be able to ask sometimes those difficult questions that you're embarrassed to ask because you're not sure if you're going to insult someone. I knew nothing -- I know a little bit about anxiety, but not enough to be able to then ask Lexi the question, you know, sometimes people don't think anxiety is real. Or to be able to talk to Qiana about her medical condition and be able to ask her, can I ask you this embarrassing question or difficult question, rather than hide and just not ask it at all. So, just the comfort in asking difficult questions and being okay with am I gonna insult this person? I don't think I am but -- rather than not ask the question. So, that you know we will be able to tell their full story accurately. And just to share a story that I hope Chris won't mind. You know, we really went into production and made sure that we had full accessibility when we go to locations. And on our very first shoot date, and I will own this, you know, we went in and we're like are the bathrooms accessible and is everything going to work? And I looked and I was like, yeah, the door will slide and I think, well, you know, the bathroom will be accessible; never thinking about the fact that it was too small. So, those things that again -- then to be able to have the conversation with Chris and to apologize, but also at the same time makes me continue now as I approach storytelling and just even in the world to make sure that accessibility is something that is now part of my definition of when I work with people making sure that -- I'm babbling, but what I'm trying to say for a minute is that we think about these issues that we hadn't had to think about before in production. So, I think that the production team was much better this time and we were more well equipped to make sure that we were thinking about everything that you have to consider when working with a diverse cast.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, I love that. And, I love hearing you say that because these are some things that, you know, if a producer hasn't worked with folks with disabilities that they're not thinking about that. So for you to openly admit that and say that takes so much, so thank you for your honesty and just for acknowledging that and taking the time to figure it out and working with Chris to, you know, make it happen. I think it's so important. And a lot of the work that we do we always tell, you know, just ask the questions and it's all about trial and error so thank you for adding that. So, now we are going to go to our awesome cast members and I am going to start with Qiana. Qiana, well first of all, I love all of your passion for entrepreneurship. But, Qiana your passion for entrepreneurship and creating general wealth for your family is so critical which I really enjoyed watching as a fellow black woman. Why was it essential that you instill entrepreneurship ideas in your sons? I thought that was really really important. So, tell me a little bit about that.

>> Qiana Allen: So, I think it's definitely was extremely important for me to instill that into them because they've watched me build my brand to what it is now, and most importantly because I had to leave my corporate job due to my situation with having lupus, I wanted to make sure that I had a way to sustain my livelihood. With that in mind and then even dealing with this COVID thing I wanted to make sure that my kids knew that if anything happens, if you have your own business you can kind of, you know, learn to pivot to make sure that you're still able to make money and, you know, and not have to worry about whether or not you're gonna get fired because you're sick today and you can't come in tomorrow or whatever the case may be. And, not only just that, it's I think that in the African-American community, we aren't taught entrepreneurship. We're always taught go to school, go to work, come back home, and do the same thing over. I wanted to teach my kids that they can do whatever they wanted to do; whether or not they wanted to go to college. If they wanted to become an entrepreneur, they still could have options. So, that's why it was mostly important for me to show them the way and so they can see how hard I work too.

>> Tatiana Lee: I love that and you're doing such a great job with them. It was something that I really enjoyed seeing, you as a single mother and, you know, navigating that and, you know, really distilling great values in them, which I think is really really great to see on TV. Thank you. And so my next follow-up question is for you as well. You opened up your second business with your sons in the middle of the pandemic and then had a flare-up. Anyone with chronic illness knows that can just put you out. What advice do you have for go-getters who also need to take time to rest and take care of their bodies?

>> Qiana Allen: My advice would be to delegate. If you have a support system if you have a team, delegate duties that you can't do right then and there. For me, if I have to sit down I'd never completely just turn everything off. Especially now with social media, I can still run my social media pages from bed or whatever the situation is. It's just about making sure that you have a great support system and a team who could actually take over some of the duties that you would have to do on a day to day if something were to happen.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, I love that and we're going to talk a little bit more about support systems later because as we saw on this show for all of you and just anyone that having a support system is always great. So, we're going to get back to more of that later. Thank you so much.

>> Qiana Allen: You're welcome.

>> Tatiana Lee: Next, we're going to go to Lexi. Lexi, you opened a physical store during the pandemic. In the series, we watched you deal with someone not wanting to lease to you due to your age. What do you say to people who doubt your capabilities due to your age, disability, or any other kind of assumptions that people make?

>> Lexi Zanghi: I think as far as like age goes, it's such a silly thing to me because it doesn't matter how old you are. It's about -- I think that how people are like life and experiences are what makes you, you, and a good entrepreneur. So, it doesn't matter the age you are. If I've been through it and I know what I'm doing, then you should just trust me. But, I mean we wouldn't know because they just ghosted me. I mean thank god they did, because it was right before COVID. So, I would have been stuck with a storefront, just had signed a lease and then COVID happened. So, I mean it was a blessing but I definitely think that age has nothing to do with it. I think experience is overall what shapes you.

>> Tatiana Lee: I love that. I love that. I think that is great and then people don't realize that when you do have a disability and you have other things that you're dealing with, it does give you more life experience than people think, and it's like, I've been around the block probably more than you because I've dealt with more things even though I'm younger than you. [Laughs]

>> Lexi Zanghi: Yeah, I mean I definitely think people who've been through some of the hardest things are some of the most aware people that there are, because they know how dark life can be and they know how unforgiving it can be. So, you kind of have to teach yourself, you know, how to jump back on track.

>> Tatiana Lee: I love that, thank you. Collette, you have a great support system from your mom. Speaking of support systems, people may assume your mom runs everything for you. However, as we saw from the show that is far from the truth. Your mom has given you the skills necessary to run your own business and give you the opportunity to take ownership of that. Do you think it is important for your mom to raise you to do more and to want more for yourself?

>> Collette Divitto: My answer is yes. I'm actually so glad that my mom -- she was kind of hard on me and wanted the best for me. She taught me to -- oh god, I have so many answers for that. My answer is yes, I'm so -- glad my mom was kind of hard on me and wanted the best for me. She taught me to work hard and -- [unintelligible] having my own company... also I pay all of my own bills on time.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, thank you so much. I too was born with my disability and my mom was very very hard on me too. And you know, as a kid I was like, why is she so tough on me?

>> Collette Divitto: I know, exactly, I don't get that at all!

>> Tatiana Lee: [Laughs] And I would have moments where I would be so upset and cry. But then as an adult, I appreciate how hard she was on me and I was like, I get it now! I get the reason why she was so hard on me! So you know, as adults have an appreciation for that that we didn't when we were younger.

>> Collette Divitto: [unintelligible]

>> Tatiana Lee: [Laughs] Thank you. So, I have another question for you. What are some of the challenges you've had as a business owner as a result of someone's thoughts about you?

>> Collette Divitto: So what is your question?

>> Tatiana Lee: I said what are some challenges you've had as a business owner as a result of, like, you know, doing business with people and what they thought about you?

>> Collette Divitto: What can I say, oh god. Okay, so with my own company I have had people not believing that I am actually running my own company and [unintelligible] [Unintelligible] share a lot of pictures and videos on social media.

>> Tatiana Lee: Thank you. Yes. I mean watching this show, if anybody has any doubts that you run the show, we definitely saw that you run your own show. So, anybody has any doubts you like go watch me on Born for Business. You can see I am a boss woman and I run this. My mom doesn't. [laughter] Next Chris. Chris you are like the coolest dad and you seem to have a great balance of being a fun dad but also a dad that doesn't take any mess, which I loved. What has this journey taught you and what advice do you have for all the single dads out there starting their own business?

>> Chris Triebes: Well, which part of my journey? Are you talk about my being a single dad or being an entrepreneur or all of it or I mean --

>> Tatiana Lee: Balancing it both.

>>Chris Treibes: Well, so, I mean you know being a single dad was, you know, a humongous life change for me. But, also being disabled is something that I've always dealt with and those two things interacting is kind of what actually caused my entrepreneurship, I feel like. The need flexibility at the end of the day. You know, having Shea all the time and then also having the physical complications and then everything that comes along with it. So, I think what it taught me is to be innovative and adaptable. You know, neither of these jobs are hard or -- I'm sorry neither of these jobs is easy, per se, but you know you have to work very hard to navigate them along with the challenges that I'm dealing with. So, just dealing with that, you know, those things and learning how to be flexible, learning how to adapt, you know, learning how to create something around what I have now. And rather than make the world work for me, you know, like I can adapt my circumstances and what I'm doing in life to, you know, more gracefully get through life and get through these challenges, you know?

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, that is awesome. Thank you so much. And, then I have another question for you, which -- I posed this question to Collette. But, what are some misconceptions and/or obstacles you've had as a business owner as a result of some of the assumptions people have about you?

>> Chris Treibes: Yeah, there's a few things there. You know, being an employer and having respect and faith from your employees is one thing. You know, you need everyone to look at you as a leader and someone they can follow. Someone to not just follow but, hey can I count on this guy so I can make a paycheck and pay my rent this month, you know? Like, that's an important factor that -- you need to have good people to help you, you can't do everything yourself and you can't attract good people if you can't make an impression that says "hey, you can believe in me. I can get this done. You can count on me." You know, so I think that's been a challenge. I also think the interactions with fellow business associates. In my case, you know booking agents or venues or whoever, just the general misconceptions, like maybe not taking it quite as seriously as they should. But then there's also another side to that where you're disabled, you do these things, and they're like "wow, look at that guy." You know, "nothing stops him." I hear that a lot and so it's almost like a good thing at the end of it. But you know, you're forced to prove people wrong on a regular basis I think, which is kind of obnoxious and not really for everybody. [Chuckles] You know?

>> Tatiana Lee: Feel you on that, I feel you on that, yeah. It's like, I'm doing what I got to do and you can be inspired by it or encouraged by it all you want but at the end of the day, I still got to do what I got to do. [laughter]

>> Chris Treibes: Right.

>> Tatiana Lee: So, this question is for Chris and Qiana. We saw you both meet and talk about collaborations in the show and we love to see it. Can you share how the collaboration came to be, and are there any other future collaborations in the works?

>> Chris Treibes: Sure, I guess the way it came up was we saw we had major COVID issues, my business needed to majorly adapt, and she also coincidentally was opening her business. So I think we just kind of talked and like, hey, check out my business, we're doing an opening. I checked it out. It was really cool. And then we got to talking about how she's trying to place her fashion show and didn't have an event space for it, also challenging during COVID, all the rules -- it's just, it was tricky. And we realized that we could work together in another capacity. So, I think that's kind of how it came together, you know?

>> Qiana Allen: Yeah, that's exactly how it came together because the venue that I had already booked, they had tremendous COVID restrictions and we wouldn't have made any money with all the money that I was putting out. So, you know, having Chris, having this space already -- for the show, and we thought it would be the best thing to do in it, which it really really was. And we did have another collaboration since the show. Chris allowed me to film our cake collection which is our lingerie cake -- lingerie collection for the boutique and we turned his event space to a strip club, ironically. [Laughter] And it was, like, so dope guys. We had a whole bunch of girls. We put stripper poles on the stage. So I'm definitely going to work with Chris on other stuff. I love his space, I love his energy, I love his entrepreneurial spirit. And we just connected. And I think we see eye to eye on a lot of business things. So, it was a great connection and I thank you guys for introducing me to him actually.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, I love that. I love to hear collaborations and stuff and you guys seem to have a similar -- hustler type style so I was like, I love the collaboration. I am so here for it. [laughter] Collette, the next question is for you. You not only are a business owner with a disability, but you also employ other folks with disabilities. What advice do you have for people who may hire someone with a disability?

>> Collette Divitto: People with disabilities are grateful and they are very -- take their work very seriously. More companies should hire people with a disability.

>> Tatiana Lee: Awesome, thank you. Yes, there's even stats out there that companies that hire and retain people with disabilities actually have a 30 percent higher profit margin. So, you are on the right track and everyone else just needs to catch up. So, thank you, for just all the work that you are doing in creating opportunities, all of you. Next is for Qiana and Lexi. You both have non-visible disabilities. Why is important that Born For Business tell stories like yours and do you think this will help others with less visible disabilities identity with the community?

>> Qiana Allen: I think it was great for them to show our circumstances because it just shows you the spectrum of people with disabilities. It doesn't have to be always physical or something that you can clearly see. It could also be a mental disability or, you know, a cognitive disability. And a lot of people don't understand that that's still considered a disability. So, for me, I feel like showing my story would help women or men who have lupus or something similar to it, that you can chase your dream. You can still do everything that, you know, you were set out to do regardless of your circumstances. And that's for anybody, whether you have a disability or not, it's very very important to follow your vision and be true to who you are and so that you can live the life that you want to live, you know? So, that's the way I feel about it for me. I don't know about you, Lexi.

>> Lexi Zanghi: I am just frustrated with people saying anxiety isn't real. l mean half of the world probably has anxiety and they don't even realize it, because how do you figure out what's going on in your head? I mean you're constantly talking to yourself in your head, right? I mean you tell that to a doctor, they think that's something completely different. But, I think that it's like, how do you explain it when it's you? It's you and you're talking to yourself and how you're feeling and it's affecting your body. No, you can't see it at all but you'll see it when it develops and gets to the point of I'm throwing up every day, or I physically cannot leave my house, like, I get in a car and I'm crying and I'm shaking, like, it stinks that that is what it takes for most people to be like, oh wait -- that's real. So, like, she wasn't lying this whole time. Just because it's in here doesn't mean it doesn't exist. I mean there's a million diseases or whatever in your head that -- everyone else believes, but when it comes to anxiety, there is such a stigma around it, because of the amount of people who are like oh I'm anxious, I got a test, or I'm anxious, I got a job interview. Like. that's, yeah, anxiety, but real anxiety is -- I mean like I feel it now, you know, like it's shaky, your stomach, like you -- I just tell everyone butterflies in your stomach constantly, and just, you got a little devil in there just trying to tell you like, oh you're overthinking, and like, you're always just going to take an amazing moment in your life and you're going to make it horrible because one little thing went wrong or, you know? You're just -- if you have anxiety you're never going to be happy because you're just always listening to the negative voice inside your head. The last thing you need is to listen to some jerk who has no idea what they're talking about when they say anxiety is not real. So, I mean it's just frustrating to me.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yeah, it is.

>> Qiana Allen: Can I say something about that? I feel that with your anxiety issue, I think that you're gonna help a lot of people who don't even recognize that they have anxiety. You know what I mean? You're gonna show people that it could be an issue and to go get it checked out. So, I think that it's very very important for your story to be told the way that it did, it was, so that people can recognize what anxiety truly is and to know that it can be an actual issue that you deal with day to day.

>> Lexi Zanghi: Yeah, I appreciate that so much. I mean I want to say thank you to just everyone who made the show happen because since then I've been super vocal online about, like, you know admitting to wanting to, yeah, kill myself a few years ago, like suicide. And, I've just been so open, and I don't have followers. It's not about that. I've got people who reached out to me and they were like, I thought you were the pretty popular girl in high school, I would have never assumed that you were struggling. And, I'm like, well now I'm happy I'm telling my story. I'm starting a podcast about it. Like, I'm just like, because of the show my anxiety is less there when I talk about my anxiety, does that make sense? Like, yeah, I just want to help people. I mean especially with something people don't believe in. Like it's just, let me shove it in your face.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yeah, no, anxiety is one of the most common disabilities and people are just so, you know, not aware. People saying oh you were the pretty popular one. Oh, you could be pretty and popular and still have anxiety or have a disability, or any of those things. It's like you can't -- you can have both, and not be one or the other. So, I really think this is really gonna change people's perceptions and, like you said, show the truth of what anxiety is, and that it is, you know, a disability and maybe people will be very very open to acknowledging that more, and you know be more conscious. I think that's so important. Thank you. So, next, my question is for Laura and Jonathan. This show is a hit thus far and I've really enjoyed watching it and I could relate to so much of it. Anything you can share about a potential season two of Born For Business or anything else in the pipeline?

>> Jonathan Murray: You know, we don't control that. We're really happy that it's out there. And it's funny with these streamers like Paramount+ and Netflix, they don't give you a lot of information. So, it's -- we know that from the response that we're seeing and from interactions we're having that the show is having an impact. But, you know, beyond that I can't tell you. So, for now, I would just say enjoy it, we'll see what happens. Meanwhile, I hope you'll give our cast a chance to update us on how their businesses are going, since I'm sure most people burned through the episodes and are like what's going on now?

>> Tatiana Lee: [Laughs] Exactly, that's how I was. I binge-watched the whole weekend and then I was like all right, I'm ready for more. So. I was really looking forward to this. And I was talking about this before we started the webinar, I was like I hope everyone has like an uptick in sales since the show started. So I don't know if anybody, you know, has anything to report. Any upticks or anybody buying more cookies Collette or [laughs] anything you guys have to add?

>> Lexi Zanghi: Collette is definitely. I know that everyone that, like, friends and family that watch the show, they're all like I'm placing an order with Collette right now for cookies.

>> Collette Divitto: Yeah. [Inaudible] Qiana and Chris, they actually -- I already did send cookies sell them [inaudible] this cookie is so amazing [inaudible] makes her dad so happy. [inaudible] they love them so much [inaudible]

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, that's so awesome. Well, I hope you all continue to have sales and increase and grow what you're doing because you guys are all just amazing. So, I invite the audience members to put questions in the Q&A box. We are at the point where we are going to start asking questions and we have a few already there. But before we get to questions from our audience and open it up, I want to ask you all: the pandemic was a huge part of the show and we touched on it a little bit. But a lot of businesses did not survive this pandemic thus far, and we are still going. Tell us how your company was able to survive through this, and any, you know, advice tips or tricks or anything that you may have for other business owners as they navigate business during the pandemic. And any one of you can, you know, add any thoughts you have to this.

>> Qiana Allen: I guess I'll go first. The pandemic for me, it just taught me how to again, pivot even more. I've been through other challenges in entrepreneurship where I had to figure it out, and this was just the same. It was totally completely different for everybody. But, I feel as a true entrepreneur, you have to learn how to make shifts and adjustments to make your business go and make it survive. And for me, opening up during the pandemic was scary as hell but we made do. You know, we figured it out and it's been going great ever since. Even since then I have opened -- I've started another business [laughter] and it's called Pretty Smoke, which is a cannabis accessory line for females who smoke. And we just opened a warehouse two months ago. So from January -- which is when we started -- to now, we've grown so much that we grew out of -- we didn't have enough space in the boutique to keep the inventory, so we had to get a warehouse. And things are, like, going great with that business as well. So, I feel like when, you know, when you come into challenges in entrepreneurship, for me, sometimes it gasses me up and the pandemic was one of those things that gave me that push to say it's not going to hold you down, been through other stuff, and you're going to get through this, so that's the way that I feel about it.

>> Lexi Zanghi: Yeah, I think I agree with Qiana. I think that -- well with me too it was just -- I was just so happy. Obviously, I dodged the bullet like a week before I signed my lease, COVID happened, and because of that rental person ghosting me, I was -- I dodged a bullet. But I still chose to open because of what Qiana kind of just said -- well, I was just so used to being at home and being miserable that I was like nothing is worse than this. I am going to go after my dream and nothing, not a pandemic, because it's not going to stop me. And yeah, I mean, I think that it's just going along with it. I mean, I had a lot of luck too. My store for the first year because of COVID, the street that I'm on, they shut down and put like a giant Christmas tree for Christmas. So, like I got really lucky with that. It brought so much traffic because no one can go to the city and see, you know, that big tree. But, so like I got lucky with that. Like, COVID actually in a way helped with that part. But, yeah I mean, it's just, you just gotta push through and you just gotta take it day by day and think about what can I do this day, whether that means selling my clothes on Poshmark, just to make that extra side money, or being there later and earlier. You just got to make it happen. [Crosstalk]

>> Chris Treibes: Sorry, I'll chip in real quick. So my business was probably the hardest hit, at least on the show. I mean my the industry is one of the most, period, and so I lost some things that we saw during COVID. The Citadel, where I won that appeal and won the liquor license; that business had to close. The breaks had to close. But at the same time, I did some other things. I pivoted and I took the biggest show of my life about a week and a half ago. So, I mean yeah, there's pros and cons, but in my case, it's just -- you can't get caught up with what you're losing that demoralizing feeling is probably my biggest challenge actually. Not actually losing the stuff, it's like all the hours and the work and honestly, the accomplishments that went along with getting those things done and then just wipe it out. It's just gone. And not to learn to not focus on that and learn -- like a kind of saying I use is just onward and upward, like, don't worry about what happened, that's already over. There's nothing you're gonna do about it. You can sit here and cry about it. But, you know, where are you going tomorrow? That's kind of the attitude I've tried to have, which has been really difficult by the way. But you know, that's just how I've approached it being someone really hard hit by COVID.

>> Qiana Allen: And, Chris, Dwayne told me about your new event that you have and we're coming. That's so dope, congratulations too.

>> Chris Treibes: Oh, thank you.

>> Collette Divitto: We became even busier with my cookie company being online. But we also offered donations of cookies to first responders which made us even busier.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, I love that. And, now you can -- when people say they can't employ people with disabilities during the pandemic, you can say I did it. We made it work, we made it happen. So, that's just amazing, and I'm so happy that you all are continuing to thrive in such a tumultuous time just in our country and our society. So congrats to all of you. We have a few questions from the audience, I want to make sure we get to them. So one person says, Tracy, she said what would you tell someone with a disability who wants to start a business but doesn't have a specific idea? Anyone have anything that they wanna -- advice they would like to give Tracy?

>> Lexi Zanghi: Yeah, I would definitely say figure out what you're passionate about. What do you enjoy doing? What makes you genuinely happy? Because then you'll never work a day in your life. So, definitely, like, figure it out. Have fun with it. Do a bunch of different hobbies, a bunch of different things that you can do, and whatever one you can't stop thinking about or you just want to go and do again, go for it. [Crosstalk]

>> Qiana Allen: No, she took the words out of my mouth, I'm sorry. [crosstalk]

>> Lexi Zanghi: Yeah I mean, if you love it then --

>> Collette Divitto: I love [inaudible].

>> Tatiana Lee: We're all in agreement. Yeah go ahead.

>> Chris Treibes: I would say to add to that, you know entrepreneurship is -- in general, a lot more work than just a regular job. So, you better really like what you're doing, you know, because it's not gonna be fun if you hate it. And a lot of people get into things for money and the wrong reasons. It's just with this kind of thing, it's crucial -- you need to love it because you will have challenges, whether it be something like COVID or something else. [crosstalk]

>> Collette Divitto: And also [inaudible].

>> Qiana Allen: And, I also think that you have to realize or recognize whether or not if you're a hands-on person. If you are a hands-on person, then, you can start your own business. If you want to be an entrepreneur but not so hands-on, may be doing something like drop shipping or something that you don't have to be involved in day-to-day would be a good way to start, to see if that's something that you want to do until you can actually figure it out for yourself.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, that's all really really great advice. Thank you. We have another question. Someone says they are legally blind and people often underestimate me, or doubt my abilities. How do you know -- oh and give unsolicited advice. How do you know when to take the advice that comes your way or when to ignore it?

>> Chris Treibes: I would recommend being always open minded. It's always valuable to have someone else's perspective. But, always know that you're the one dealing with the thing you're dealing with, and you likely know best. And, you know, maybe consider people's opinions and perspectives, for sure, because it is easy to get closed in your own little world, especially with challenges, but you know, everything with a grain of salt, right?

>> Collette Divitto: [inaudible]

>> Qiana Allen: I say ignore it. I mean if it's not good advice, ignore it. If it's not pushing you towards what you want to do, ignore it, because it's for you and not for anyone else, whether it be family or friends. Because in entrepreneurship people are always going to think that you're kind of crazy for doing some of the stuff that you do, and they'll give you -- like, say oh no, you shouldn't do it, just like with us, they told us not to open up during the pandemic, and it worked for us. So, if I would have taken into account what people said or thought, then I would not be as successful as I am in entrepreneurship. So, if it's not conducive to what you know you have inside of you, ignore it completely.

>> Collette Divitto: [inaudible]

>> Tatiana Lee: Cool, did anybody else have anything to add?

>> Lexi Zanghi: I can add, as far as advice from other people too, and having a disability, it's like do they really know your disability? Because you can't understand someone or help somebody if you haven't been through it. I really believe in that. You have to experience it for yourself. Also my whole family is -- they're all entrepreneurs, and let me tell you I should not have took some of their advice. Okay? [Laughter] Just -- you gotta just do your own thing.

>> Qiana Allen: Yes.

>> Collette Divitto: [inaudible]

>> Qiana Allen: And one of the key things that the person said was people often underestimate them. So, for me, the question kind of answered itself. If you know that they're underestimating you, prove them wrong and do it anyway.

>> Lexi Zanghi: Let that fire you up.

>> Tatiana Lee: Yes, yes, I love that. I love that.

>> Collette Divitto: [inaudible]

>> Tatiana Lee: Awesome. We have another question from the audience. This is from Laura. Laura says she is a woman with chronic mental and physical disabilities and she loved the vulnerability of the show. Why do you think this series is important for people of all abilities to watch? Anybody can chime in. [crosstalk]

>> Lexi Zanghi: Sorry. I tell everybody, all my customers when they come in, I'm like, you have to watch this show. And I'm like, it's not because I'm on it or because I want to promote my business. It's what people need to hear. You need to see what we all experience to understand better. And I feel like -- you know it's stinks that some of the other like reality TV where, you know, there's fake fights and there's this and that -- like, this show can change lives. This show is meaningful and can help people, whether they have a disability or they want to run a business. So, I don't I just think that this show is so important and for people to see our stories and relate to them. You never know, I mean yeah, I'm just really proud to be a part of it.

>> Tatiana Lee: I would love to hear from Laura or Jonathan, as the producers of this. What are your answers for this about people of all abilities watching this show?

>> Jonathan Murray: Go ahead, Laura.

>> Laura Korkoian: I mean, I just -- I have to just really give a shout out to the entire cast for their willingness to be vulnerable from day one. They didn't do this show to be famous. None of them went into this looking to increase their businesses. They all said they did it because they wanted to make a difference. They wanted to share their story and hope that it would -- not only just educate, but also inspire everyone of all abilities to go into entrepreneurship. You know? And even for Chris, you know if it's okay to share too, you know, we talked often. He was a little not sure about it for a minute, and I hope in the end he's proud. But like, for the entire team that produced this show, we love being with people who are willing to be vulnerable. They let us in with the pandemic and very easily Chris at times, because his business was hit so hard, could have said I'm done. Like, I don't need you to show some of these struggles. But he stuck with it because he knew, in the end, there was going to be an inspiring outcome. So, people of all abilities, I mean, if we can just be vulnerable and take chances, I think the risk, in the end, is worth the big reward.

>> Tatiana Lee: Thank you. So, we have one last question. This is from Aaron. He said who would you say -- and I want to hear from each of you, our cast members -- who would you say is the biggest influence in your everyday life to keep you motivated to do what you do?

>> Collette Divitto: My answer is my mom and my sister too.

>> Chris Treibes: My answer is my daughter. I would do anything for my daughter.

>> Tatiana Lee: Lexi?

>> Lexi Zanghi: I would say my mom for taking her time and educating herself on anxiety, completely changed my life, and my fiance for being a beautiful distraction. With anxiety, distractions will get you out of your head. I highly recommend it. Even if it's getting coffee, go and do it because you need to get out of your brain for a second. So, yeah, my fiance is definitely my beautiful distraction, because he's not just a distraction it's a beautiful one. It got me out of a dark place.

>> Qiana Allen: And for me, obviously, it's my kids. Mainly my kids, but it's also for my mom too. My mother worked every single day of her life. She worked very very hard to provide a great life for me. But she also hustled on the side, so I got a little bit of the entrepreneurial spirit from her. And for me, I want to teach my kids that anything is possible. You can do everything that you want to do, that you put your heart out to do. But, for my mom, I want to live this entrepreneurial life for her because she didn't get a chance to do it, you know, for herself. Those are my whys.

>> Tatiana Lee: Thank you, awesome. So, we are at the end, but before we go, I always like to do -- let everybody have a moment to do a shameless plug. So, we are going to go around and anything you want to promote: your business, any current events coming up, where to follow you, where to find you, share it all. So, we'll start with Lexi.

>> Lexi Zanghi: Jeez, okay, right now I have so much. Okay. [crosstalk] [laughter] Well, I literally picked out this morning, I started my own anxiety graphic line, says beautiful distractions back says don't let your anxiety win, so I continue that, like you saw on the show, I did stop romanticizing mental illness. Follow me on TikTok, lifewithlexie98, where I share anxiety tips and tricks, and I'm very open about my anxiety. As well as my podcast coming out soon, 1-800 unstable bitch. [laughter]

>> Tatiana Lee: Next Collette, if you want to shout out where they can find Collette's cookies or anything else you want to promote really quick.

>> Collette Divitto: [inaudible]

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, thank you. Next, Qiana, anything you want to plug?

>> Qiana Allen: So of course you can find us, Cultures Closet, on Instagram, under Curve Culture. We're also on TikTok under Culture's Closet. Munchiez is on Instagram under Munchiez\_store. We're also on TikTok under Munchiez\_store. And my new baby which is Pretty Smoke is on Instagram under Prettysmokeinc and we're also on TikTok as well. And our website links are on those social media platforms as well.

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice. And last but not least, Chris?

>> Chris Triebes: Yeah, you know, you can follow me online at thecongregationpresents. That's my handle on all social media. I put all my events there. Right now, you know, my business is still being devastated currently but I still have the WC social club at thewcsocialclub.com. And The Emerson Theater in Indianapolis at theemersontheater.com. So, those projects are still strong. So I would check those out for my events.

>> Collette Divitto: [Inaudible]

>> Tatiana Lee: Nice, yes everyone go grab Collette's Cookies!

>> Chris Treibes: I did have her oatmeal reason cookies and I can verify they're like probably the best oatmeal raisin I've ever had, no kidding. [crosstalk]

>> Qiana Allen: I ordered some and went out of town and came back to three cookies, so. [laughter] [Crosstalk]

>> Tatiana Lee: Well thank you all so much! This was such a great conversation. I really appreciate having you all here, taking the time to chat with me, and talking about your businesses and about the show. Please everyone watching: make sure you watch it on Peacock. It's available free, so tune in, it's great, I enjoyed it. I binged it in like two days. So if you haven't seen it, watch it. It's awesome. Check out all of our amazing entrepreneurs, and thank you all, especially Laura and Jonathan for creating such an amazing project. And we look forward to seeing what's coming next. And thank you for tuning in everyone!