>> Ariel Simms: Hello everyone and welcome! My name is Ariel Simms. my pronouns are they/them or she/hers, and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of RespectAbility. I am a white person with shoulder-length wavy red hair, I am wearing dark-rimmed plastic glasses, a dark suit jacket over a white and black checkered shirt, and in the background behind me there are colorful cabinets as well as some bookshelves. RespectAbility is a diverse, disability-led nonprofit that works to create systemic change in how society views and values people with disabilities. We advance policies and practices that empower people with disabilities to have a better future. Our mission? To fight stigmas and advance opportunities so people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of community. Thank you for joining us for RespectAbility’s inaugural Awards Ceremony, in which we will honor the great work of two incredible disability advocates and leaders.

Before we get to that, I want to highlight and celebrate the great work of RespectAbility. Whether you’re new to the organization, or joining today as an old friend or supporter, we think you’ll be proud of our many accomplishments over the past year. Here at RespectAbility, we advance our mission through the amazing work of our programs and support teams. From advancing authentic representation in Hollywood, to driving inclusion in faith communities, to bipartisan advocacy on the Hill, we are working across sectors to ensure no individual with disability gets left behind. And perhaps even more importantly, we’re growing a diverse pipeline of leaders with disabilities who will be change-makers in sectors of vital importance to the disability community for years to come, including policy, philanthropy, faith, and entertainment. Over 200 people have been Apprentices in the National Leadership Program. We have given these Apprentices great writing and workplace skills, job coaching and support, and built lasting partnerships with them in disability advocacy. We could not do this invaluable work without excellent support from diligent funders and proactive board members who recognize the importance of the work that we are doing in the accessibility space. Continued support of our programming allows for RespectAbility to keep making a difference in all our program areas and building thought leadership around disability inclusion. We have been able to provide training to many other organizations through our Disability Training and Speakers Bureau, by allowing the expertise of those with lived experiences to provide exceptional support to workplaces that are newly navigating accessibility needs, as well as more seasoned institutions that needed to advance their education around disability services as they nurture their equity initiatives. The work we do here at RespectAbility would not be possible without the incredible talent and expertise of our Board, Advisors, staff, and partners, past and present. We’re so grateful for the generosity of supporters like you. Thank you.

Please enjoy this brief video we have prepared to showcase RespectAbility’s recent work and accomplishments, featuring some of the incredible talent on our staff and Board, as well as in our National Leadership Program and Entertainment Media Pipeline Programming. After watching, we hope you’ll take a few minutes to show your support for RespectAbility by donating online at www.respectability.org/donate. Your gift makes an incredible difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Thank you!

>> Ollie Cantos: Hi, I'm Ollie Cantos, Chairman of the RespectAbility Board. I am a Filipino-American blind man wearing a hat and business attire, and my pronouns are he, him, and his. Here at RespectAbility, we advance our work through four core programmatic areas: entertainment and news media, to increase diverse and authentic representation of persons with disabilities in media so that we are seen for what we can do instead of for what we cannot do; leadership, which enables diverse people with disabilities to participate fully in decision-making; policy, which promotes best practices in education, employment, entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and access; and faith inclusion, which ensures the inclusion of people with disabilities in faith-based communities. We are proud to introduce you to a variety of current participants and alumni of our pipeline programming in these areas.

>> Delbert Whetter: Hi, I'm Delbert Whetter, Vice Chair of the RespectAbility Board. My pronouns are he and him. My appearance - I'm wearing glasses, I have blonde, slightly gray hair, wearing a blue shirt with a dark-colored jacket. I am a deaf individual as well, who has been involved with RespectAbility for five years to promote inclusion, representation, and authentic portrayals of people with disabilities in the entertainment industry. In my day job, I'm a film producer of animated and live action narrative and documentary features.

Since producing the Hollywood Disability Inclusion Toolkit in 2018, RespectAbility has become a trusted resource within the entertainment industry. RespectAbility's Entertainment and News Media team has conducted trainings on the why and how to be more inclusive and accessible for entertainment executives throughout the industry. In addition, RespectAbility team members have consulted on more than 300 T.V. episodes and films, by partnering with studios and production companies from development, all the way through production, to promotion and publicity, and impact outreach campaigns. We also help create a pipeline of disabled writers, executives, and crew members to make a difference within the system. As such, we have been able to place writers, both above and below the line crew members, on dozens of productions. Our studio partners value our database of disabled writers and crew for hire. Our goal is to create equitable and accessible opportunities to increase the number of people with lived disability experience throughout the overall storytelling process. These initiatives increase diverse and authentic representation of disabled people on screen, leading to systemic change in how society views and values people with disabilities. Now, let's hear from current Apprentice Corey Evans about his time working in the Entertainment and News Media department.

>> Corey Evans: Hi, my name is Corey Evans. I'm an Apprentice with RespectAbility on the Entertainment and News Media team. I'm an African-American male wearing a pink button-down shirt. Some of the work that I did with the Entertainment and News Media team is that I had the opportunity to work on a PSA for Black History Month. I get the opportunity to provide script consultation for major — for major studios like Disney, Netflix, and Nickelodeon. And I also had the opportunity to work on the schedule for run of show for ReelAbilities Film Festival in New York. I'm most proud of, while working with RespectAbility, getting the opportunity to work with the Entertainment and News Media team to put on a Disability 101 training for companies that work in commercial production like the Farm League. Working as a paid intern, I had the opportunity to work and take training modules through Entertainment Partners, which is a payroll system used for all the major studios. I got the chance to learn the skills on how to become a production accountant assistant, and even take courses and modules and received certificate for being a production accounting assistant through the Entertainment Partners program. Working with Daruma was an excellent experience. It was the first time that I actually had the opportunity to work on a feature-length film. I usually work on commercials, so this was a amazing experience where I got the chance to learn about continuity. And I also got an opportunity to -- it was my first time shooting on a production -- on a virtual production soundstage.

>> Delbert Whetter: Based on our learnings in the field, in 2019, Senior Vice President of Communications and Entertainment & News Media Lauren Appelbaum and I founded the RespectAbility Entertainment Lab, to help develop and elevate the talent pipeline of professionals with disabilities working behind the scenes in television, streaming, and film, while introducing them to studio executives and other decision makers who advise lab fellows on various aspects of the industry. And their craft, in turn, enables studios and production companies to learn about the talents and benefits of hiring people with disabilities. That is a unique program that furthers our work in the entertainment industry, while pulling in the reason RespectAbility was founded: to create more opportunities for people with disabilities who desire to be employed. Let's hear from 2020 Lab alumnus Andrew Reid about his time as a Lab Fellow.

>> Andrew Reid: My name is Andrew Reid. I'm a 2020 RespectAbility Lab alumnus. My pronouns are he/him. I am a brown-skinned man with brown hair, with brown pants, and my shirt is multicolored, and I'm happy to be here. Being a Fellow in the RespectAbility Entertainment Lab was an amazing experience for me. It was in 2020 - peak-COVID, and it helped me to pursue my career at a time when everything had stalled in life, and it helped me to keep moving forward. The Lab has been instrumental in my career, most importantly because of the connections that I fostered, not just with the filmmakers in my cohort, but through the executives that I met within the studio industry. RespectAbility Summer Lab is really an opportunity to connect with Hollywood execs in very intimate -- Zoom meetings in my case, that I would not have had the opportunity had I not been in the Lab. Since being a part of the RespectAbility Summer Lab, I have had the opportunity to work with several other alumni, and not only worked with them in productions, but we have given each other the opportunity to give each other jobs that we would not have had, had we not been in the Summer Lab. So not only is it fostering a community of friends and colleagues, but it's also created a place for us to advance opportunities for our careers, and to continue to develop, and in my case, my career as a Director.

And I would love to introduce you to my colleague, Kiah Amara, to tell you more about her experiences with the RespectAbility Summer Lab.

>> Kiah Amara: The thing that I'm most excited about personally in work and projects I do with RespectAbility connects to my work as a disabled creative in production as well in really pushing the role of Production Accessibility Coordinator that RespectAbility has been so lovely and awesome to really get behind. I'm so excited to be working with RespectAbility on actually pushing that role in studios. I see RespectAbility's future as just one of the biggest change makers for the disability community.

>> Delbert Whetter: The Policy and Workforce team is well equipped with the industry knowledge to truly drive change with policy, and engage the public with the knowledge they need to advocate for their own best interests. The Staff members work hard to educate Federal and State leaders around the idea that there are more people with disabilities than ever before, and that policy makers can play a key role in making sure that disabled people are able to fully participate in society. They also inform the work of the leaders of tomorrow by engaging apprentices in the process of being civically informed. Just in 2022 alone, this team has been able to affect Federal equity policy, deliver public testimony to all 50 states regarding protections for workers with disabilities, meet with Governors and Gubernatorial candidates to inquire about their positions on policy that affect workers with disabilities, and so much more. The department has been busy affecting change and making a more equitable landscape for all. Let's hear from current Apprentice Roy Payan about his time working in the Policy and Civic Engagement department.

>> Roy Payan: My name is Roy Payan. I'm a hispanic male, not as handsome as other guys but I'll do. I'm visually impaired - I have very low vision. I'm wearing a black suit over a black polo shirt - a button-down black polo shirt. My pronouns are he, him, and el. To work with the Policy and engagement - and Civic Engagement team meant that I had an opportunity to - interact with government officials, national disability organizations, and a slew of very talented cohorts and Staff that - that inspired us and - encouraged us to - continue with - our work on behalf of people with disability - or persons with disabilities. I learned a lot from them because - I'd never been surrounded by this many people - with such - so much talent that I was inspired and - encouraged to - continue my advocacy work on behalf of persons with disabilities. One of the the greatest - policy pieces that - I was able to work on was networking with - workforce development boards and - and staff to get them to understand the number of persons with disabilities within their districts - their areas of influence, to begin to change policies to get more persons with disabilities into the job force and into - workforces, but also to encourage our elected officials to take - a closer look at the educational institutions and how they apply accommodations - for students with disabilities, or whether they're applying those accommodations or not. In my externship with the Fox Family Foundation, I've learned how to begin to create, develop, and organize a complete event from - inception to - completion, and we're learning to analyze different softwares that will implement within this event, as well as - to give recommendations to software developers as to how accessible or unaccessible - their softwares and applications truly are. Another great thing about it is that we're actually putting to use the tools and the skills that we learned with RespectAbility - to contact our - to contact government officials as well as national disability organizations to participate in the event, and to encourage them to - join us and to become partners with us in this event.

>> Delbert Whetter: The Faith Inclusion and Belonging department is focused on making sure that faith-based spaces are inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities. In that work, the program has been able to welcome Apprentices who are exploring their own faith communities and how to make sure those communities are welcoming to everyone. RespectAbility has expanded its focus from inclusion in Jewish spaces to embrace all communities of faith, and build interfaith allyship for people with disabilities. Everyone should be able to practice and live their faith. Our Faith Inclusion and Belonging department is opening doors for all disabled people to access and find community in their faith spaces. Let's hear from current apprentice Riccardo Ricciardi about his time working in the Faith Inclusion and Belonging department.

>> Riccardo Ricciardi: Hello, my name is Riccardo Ricciardi. I'm a Faith Inclusion and Development at RespectAbility. He/his/him. I have dark hair and a mixed of ethnicities, anything from Spanish to Andean native, to Scottish, French, Corsican, etc, etc, from every possible corner of the globe. Working with the faith inclusion team has added a multi-faceted perspective. First of all as a Jew, it's something you learn - is something very important, a concept known as "tikkun olam," which is known as repairing the world, but it's something that is a very abstract concept, because repairing the world, how do you repair the world? And when I got to RespectAbility, it became very practical, a hands-on approach, how to make things possible. I learned how to research, and how to become active in the community, as far as communicating and understanding the needs, and communicating with the team, and how to become efficient, and understand - bring the best part of yourself. And it was possible by way of being part of RespectAbility and the Faith Inclusion team. My Faith Inclusion - Apprenticeship was successful because my - contributions were taken seriously and I was able to learn about what was going on in the world from a Jewish point of view, and how it interacted with the rest of the world. Things that, you know, growing up, you assume that it is - you learn from one point of view and you always learn what's going on from the media - you hear from the close relationships, but you don't really know the truth. And with RespectAbility, I learned so much, anything from drug addiction, from my own personal discovery, in my own - bringing my own persona as a descendant of converted Jews, which is a different experience unto itself. So all of those things come - bringing things of my parts of myself made everything so successful. And how RespectAbility took that and made it into something bigger than me. I'm looking forward to most in my externship to offer my skills. I'm offering my best part of myself, to offer everything I've learned to learn what - what it means to be a professional, to share my passion, my dedication, something that I care about on a very professional - not only that - a personal level. As a Jew, as someone who really cares about - what tikkun olam is, not just - not only as a Jew, but as a person who lives in the world, who really cares about the well-being of the world, now more than ever, to make them understand and to have - forever have that - the people I'll be with to have faith in me, trust me, and vice versa.

>> Delbert Whetter: Our numerous Apprenticeship and Lab Fellows have had the ability to engage in this programming through sponsorship by enthusiastic and supportive funders, who recognize the importance of improving accessibility in all sectors. Our Development team has been instrumental in finding support for our leadership activities, which allows real exploration of a field of interest. This step is essential in growing the next leaders of disability inclusion in all areas of leadership. The Development team also works hard to assure a workplace pipeline for our program participants, as well as other disabled people entering or re-entering the workforce. From the externships that our funders sponsor, to the partnerships that inform board rooms and HR policies, our Development team is engaged in work that is critically important today, and crucial to the future of accessible employment. We want to take a moment to thank our funders, who are the difference makers for our programs and the advancement of our work. The Development team keeps the public and our funders informed of program activities and needs through our organizational and program specific newsletters, and fortify funder relationships through regular meetings and reports. Let's hear from current Apprentice Riccardo Ricciardi again. He also worked in the Development and Nonprofit Management department.

>> Riccardo Ricciardi: Working with the nonprofit team as an Apprentice - I was able to learn about what I am capable of: skills that I did not know I had, things that I did not know are possible to contribute, things that I took for granted, and things that are valuable. I was able to understand how the nonprofit world works, and to - acknowledge from a very minute point of view and how I can take that and make it a bigger and expand into the world from a starting point. RespectAbility was a start -- it was a launching pad.

>> Ariel Simms: What a powerful portrayal of just some of the work that we’ve been doing here at RespectAbility. Thank you to our Apprentices, Fellows, staff, Board, and partners for making this video, and our mission, a success! If you’d like to support our work, please take a few moments now to visit www.respectability.org/donate. Your tax-deductible donation can help a disabled individual enter the workforce, participate in a faith community of their choosing, share their own story, or even fight for their rights. I would like to introduce a performance by Harold Foxx, a noted writer, producer, comedian, and actor who happens to be Deaf. Best known for his stand-up comedy, he has performed at iconic venues such as the Laugh Factory and Flappers Comedy Club, as well as in major cities across the nation. Harold is also a member of RespectAbility’s entertainment media consultant team, and an alumnus of our 2021 Entertainment Lab. Currently, Harold is training with The Groundlings, an improvisation and sketch comedy theatre & school based in Los Angeles, California. Harold is proud to be serving as Associate Producer on Orange Kite Productions’ feature documentary, BEING MICHELLE. This film is about a Deaf woman with autism who survived incarceration and abuse, and now uses her artwork to depict the trauma she survived and heal her past. And with that, Harold, please take it away!

>> Harold Foxx: Hey everybody, what's good? Harold Foxx here. That's Foxx with two Xs, no more, no less. I am a Black man who is Deaf that uses American Sign Language. You see me here on the screen with a dark navy blue v-neck t-shirt and dreads with highlights on the bottom. Beautiful right? Now, as you can imagine, I work a lot with both deaf and hearing audiences. And I stand in front of them and, of course, use American Sign Language just like you see me right now, and I’ll have a voice interpreter for the hearing audience members. Inevitably, the deaf audience members always laugh first. And like clockwork, one and a half seconds later, the hearing audience catches up. It’s a normal thing that takes place, really. But it is kind of funny to watch all the hearing people a little bit lost as to what’s going on. When the interpreter catches up, though, they catch up though too. And they start laughing. You know, the reverse actually happens when I go to shows and I see hearing people laughing all around me, and it takes the sign language interpreter just a few seconds up on stage to catch me up on the punchline. You know, 24 hours ago, I was in Utah. Utah, of all places. Now, really really good news for everyone, no need to be worried, no need to be alarmed, on leaving Utah, I’m still Black. I got to work at a camp with kids. It was a lot of fun but a lot of my work was telling kids to drink the milk, finish the vegetables, and stop eating so many chicken wings. That was my week in Utah. You know, it's really a beautiful state. If you've ever seen the scenery, the mountains, it’s just gorgeous. And the people are really friendly. Now, mind you, there may have been one other Black person other than me in the whole state. But regardless, it's a beautiful place with friendly people. I actually had a friend text me and ask me if I wanted to go skiing, and I thought, who in the world is trying to ski in 100 degree weather in the middle of July. Well, like I said, I just got back from Utah, and I mean I just got back. And I'm exhausted, but you know, you gotta go to work. Just like all of us have to go to work. I mean, who doesn't have to go to work with these gas prices? They're coming down, but definitely not quick enough. Hoo, that's a lot.

Now, to introduce our first award, the Justin Chappell Memorial Award, is Ben Spangenberg, who happens to lead RespectAbility’s National Leadership Program and was Justin’s husband.

>> Ben Spangenberg: Hi everyone and thank you for joining us today! My name is Ben Spangenberg and I’m the Director of the National Leadership Program. In my role, I get to welcome the next generation of change makers and see them develop into their own. The Annual Justin Chappell Memorial Award is in honor of Justin W. Chappell, who devoted his life to human and disability rights and passed away September 9 2021. Justin was a terrific public speaker and a wonderful friend to everyone who met him. He was an alumnus of RespectAbility’s National Leadership Program and was heavily involved in RespectAbility’s work for many years, including traveling to Iowa and New Hampshire to educate presidential candidates on disability issues. Justin wrote 19 pieces for The RespectAbility Report from the campaign trail. After graduating with a Bachelors of Arts from Catholic University in 2001,  Justin worked as a consultant for several nonprofit organizations and worked on numerous political causes. He was a White House intern during the Clinton administration, a legislative correspondent for Sen. Tom Harkin, and a long-time board member of the Montgomery County Renters Alliance. In addition, he attended the Democratic National Convention twice as a delegate and ran as a candidate for several local positions. He advised people in the disability and LGBTQ communities to know they are loved and appreciated for their unique dreams, talents, and skills, that young people with disabilities need to engage in the political process. He believed that government needs to be educated on disability issues, and government works better when it engages people with disabilities in politics and policy. Justin and I got engaged in 2011, but we did not get married until marriage equality became the law in all 50 states. Together, we traveled throughout the country, visiting more than forty states. In his honor, the Annual Justin Chappell Memorial Award recognizes a former or current Apprentice of the National Leadership Program who demonstrates a strong commitment to the advancement of the disability community in policy, entertainment, or philanthropy.

And, I am honored to present Roy Payan as the winner of the 2022 Annual Justin Chappell Memorial Award.  Roy is a great example of what we look for in our Apprentices. Along with being an apprentice and a graduate student, he still found time to fight for disability rights for college students. Just this past year, he took on the Los Angeles Community College District school board and has been fighting to protect the rights of people with disabilities in LA community colleges. He has served in the U.S. military and continues to demonstrate great leadership in his community and amongst his peers. He motivates his peers to not only continue to fight to protect the rights of people with disabilities, but to just be good to others, as many of his peers attest to his wonderful character, and he genuinely cares for others and goes out of his way to help others around him. Congratulations, Roy!

>> Roy Payan: Hi everyone. Thanks for this great honor, and thank you to the awards committee and to the Board for nominating me for this, and for all my Apprentices who also nominated me for this award. I never had the opportunity to meet Justin, but I know he made a lasting impression on the disability community. He made so many contributions. He truly embodied what it means to be a RespectAbility Apprentice, and set an example for the rest of us to follow. I'm honored that the Apprentices at RespectAbility feel that I am a model Apprentice. It is flattering, and I’m humbled to be considered a role model for my peers. Although this is not a role I sought out, it is something that I hold dear to my heart, and something that I will continue to work on. The RespectAbility Apprenticeship was an amazing experience, and it taught me so much about the political system, but it also introduced me to a vast network of professionals that I will continue to work with for the remainder of my career. But most of all, it introduced me to other Apprentices, who I once called my colleagues, but now I'm grateful to call my friends. This past year has not been an easy one. But luckily, we were able to accomplish some success against the Los Angeles Community school district for refusing to provide the accommodations for students with disabilities. This goes to show that although we've come a long way in improving disability rights, there is so much more to be done. I look forward to tackling the challenges that stand in the way of persons with disabilities. It is great to know that I won't go at this fight alone, and that with a great network, we’ll continue our fight for rights for persons with disabilities. Thank you, RespectAbility.

>> Harold Foxx: Thank you, Ben, for that warm introduction and thank you, Roy, for your participation in our Apprenticeship program and for everything you do. Congratulations again! Now I present Ollie Cantos, RespectAbility’s Chairman of the Board, to announce the Steve Bartlett Award.

>> Ollie Cantos: Hello, and thanks again for being here today. My name is Ollie Cantos, and I am the Chairman of the Board of Directors here at RespectAbility. Steve served in my role right before me, and he has been one of RespectAbility’s biggest champions since our founding. Even beyond the privilege of knowing Steve professionally, I am also lucky to call him a personal friend and mentor, so it is my pleasure to announce this award. The Steve Bartlett Award is named in honor of a man who continues to maximize each day, dedicated to making a real and lasting difference in people’s lives. In addition to having served as our immediate past Chairman, Steve is the former Mayor of Dallas and a former Member of Congress. Steve was the principal author of 18 major pieces of legislation, including many initiatives on advancing independence for people with disabilities. In addition to being a principal Republican author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, other legislative achievements include enhancements to Medicaid eligibility, modifications to Section 1619 for Medicare eligibility, expansion of supported employment, growth of assistive technology options, and improvements to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, to foster greater mainstreaming so that kids with disabilities may further learn in the least restrictive environment. Steve also led in putting together a comprehensive 1984 report promoting full independence of people with disabilities. Steve’s noteworthy work continues today, and the disability community is all the better for it. When not working, Steve spends as much time as possible with his 8 grandchildren and other members of his family. As busy and rigorous as his schedule is, he loves stopping to take the time to enjoy quiet moments, such as going on walks in the countryside or finding the beauty in the local Texas towns near where he resides. The Steve Bartlett Award recognizes local, state, and national leaders who advocate for policies that help to advance opportunities for people with disabilities in different aspects of community life, including economic growth, educational excellence and achievement, sustainability, workforce and employment, and equity.

I am honored to present Nicole LeBlanc as the inaugural recipient of the Steve Bartlett Award. Nicole is a seasoned disability policy advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and has years of experience as an advocate in state legislatures and at the Federal Government level. She is a passionate advocate on behalf of people with disabilities and their families, and has worked in many positions with state and national disability organizations to affect policy change through education and political advocacy. Nicole is currently employed by the Human Services Research Institute as a PAL Group Coordinator. As a woman successfully living with autism, Nicole brings lived experience to her position. She is also working as the Self Advocate Advisor for the TASH Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center, funded by the Administration on Disabilities within the Administration for Community Living under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Nicole’s stalwart activism reflects a keen understanding of how disability policy intersects with real-world implementation of practical ideas, grounded in the highest expectations and the fortitude in knowing that anything is possible. Congratulations, Nicole!

>> Nicole LeBlanc: Good afternoon everyone, on this hot and steamy day. It is truly an honor to be here to receive the Steve Bartlett Award from RespectAbility and the entire disability community at large. I want to personally thank a super ally of mine, Diane McComb and Alixe Bonardi, and everyone else who wrote letters of support for my award nomination. While we have made good progress in eliminating employment barriers for people with disabilities, we still have a long ways to go in creating a world free of barriers for people with developmental and other disabilities. One major barrier we must eliminate sooner rather than later is the SSDI SGA cash cliff, where going over SGA by even one dollar causes people with disabilities to lose all their SSDI benefits. On top of that, we must end all earnings and asset limits in all state and federal public benefit programs. Benefit cliffs like this are the biggest roadblock to competitive integrated employment and joining the middle class for many Americans with disabilities like me. The time is now for Congress and all elected officials to step up and remove these barriers. This is especially important as we deal with the fallout of the never ending COVID-19 pandemic that has been a mass disabling event. It is important that all long haulers have easier access to income support without any barriers or hoops to jump through. In an ideal world, I believe we should be allowed to just keep our benefits until we make enough to be truly self-supporting at the very least, or just consider it universal basic income. In closing, it has been great being part of the RespectAbility community as a Fellow alumni in the big push to end stigma and barriers to community living for people with disabilities. It has been great attending events put on by the RespectAbility team. We need more nonprofits led and run by people with disabilities now more than ever. Lead on. Check out my artwork for sale at artpal.com/nleblanc677.

>> Harold Foxx: Thank you, Ollie for that fantastic introduction and thanks Nicole and congratulations again!  Thank you all for your participation in today’s Awards Ceremony. We are very lucky to have such incredible individuals that are constantly working toward improving the lives and opportunities of people with disabilities. We appreciate all the work that you do, and it does not go unnoticed. A special thank you to our audience today for joining our celebration. We would love to continue our awards every year and continue to honor individuals who are doing great work. With your help, we definitely can continue to do so. Please donate to our awards at RespectAbility.org/donate to help us do this again next year. Once again, thank you for your time and participation and we look forward to seeing you next year!