>> Shelly Christensen: Welcome! I'm Shelly Christensen, the Senior Director of Faith Inclusion and Belonging at RespectAbility. My pronouns are the she series. I'm a white woman with dark curly shoulder length hair, and I'm wearing a royal blue top and dark blue glasses. This presentation has ASL interpretation. Live transcription is also provided. Just hit the CC button on Zoom to enable live transcription, or you can hit the link in the chat box to view as a separate window. We'll be meeting our guest Judy Heumann in just a moment. RespectAbility is a diverse, disability-led nonprofit, and in [2023], we're celebrating our 10th anniversary. Our mission is to fight stigmas and obstacles, and advance opportunities in all of life's domains, so people with disabilities can participate fully in all aspects of community life. Our work is based on four pillars: entertainment and news media, policy and workforce development, leadership, and faith inclusion and belonging. In faith inclusion and belonging, we elevate the voices of people with disabilities through our work with North American regional and local faith-based organizations. Our work encompasses the diversity of faith religions and spirituality. We're the home of Jewish Disability Awareness Acceptance and Inclusion Month, which starts tomorrow. And we're partners with Faith Inclusion Network, the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies, Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Religion and Spirituality Interest Network, the Institute on Theology and Disability, and others, in addition to working with disability and mental health organizations. I want to invite you to submit questions for Judy in the Q&A box on Zoom, and we'll also be monitoring questions on Facebook live. Now, it's my honor and privilege to introduce you to our esteemed guest Judy Heumann. Judy is a legendary international disability rights activist. She is the author of "Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist." Judy grew up in Brooklyn, New York. The daughter of German Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors, she grew up in a time without legal protections for disabled people. Through her activism, she was instrumental in the passing of Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the first large piece of federal legislation to legally protect the rights of disabled people in the United States. Judy has worked in high level positions with both the Clinton and Obama administrations, and she has extensive experience working with and leading non-profit organizations centered on disability rights. Judy has directed her efforts toward working with the Jewish community to address ableism since the 1980s. In the midst of conversations and work around social justice within the Jewish community, Judy is excited to ensure disability is a vital part of our justice work. Now I'm sure many of you have seen "Crip Camp," the film that tells about the emergence of disability rights and activism - the movement. Judy's prominence as a leader is captured in this award-winning film. Let's take a moment to watch the trailer for "Crip Camp."

[Text on Screen]: Watch the trailer for "Crip Camp" at the link in the description.

>> Shelly Christensen: Welcome Judy!

>> Judy Heumann: Nice to be here. I've seen that so many times, but every time I see it, I smile. [crosstalk]

>> Shelly Christensen: I get chills, and then I want to stand up at the end and go back -- harken back to the 60s and 70s and just go, "yes! Let's do it!" Oh my gosh. And -- you talk about -- you talk about that time -- the protest so so beautifully in your book. So that brings us to the first question I have for you Judy. Why did you decide to write "Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist?"

>> Judy Heumann: Well, because people approached me. I didn't reach out to anybody else for many years, because I've had -- the kind of work that I've done, I've done a lot of public speaking for decades, and I've always included personal stories, because the things I relate to and I think I like to hear -- or I know I like to hear other people's stories and learn about what people have done to resolve issues. And then people would come up to me and say, "you know, have you ever thought about writing a book?" In part, I think, because I really had the opportunity for decades also to travel, and so it's not only my experiences, but -- and my friends experiences in communities, but then as I was traveling, meeting other people, really regardless of the country, that we're experiencing similar barriers. The magnitude might be different, the socio-economic status of the country is different, but in the end, very significantly focusing on the dehumanization of disabled people. So anyway, I was reached out to by the company that said "would you be interested in writing a book, and then looking at that book becoming a movie?" And I was like, "I've never done this before. I'm not going to be able to write it by myself." So I have an agent, and they gave me a number of people's resumes to look at to see who I would be interested in working with to co-write the book. And Kristen Joiner is the person that I selected. And that was a great journey in working on this book.

>> Shelly Christensen: Wow, what was it like to tell your life story, Judy?

>> Judy Heumann: Well, it took a number of years. And of course, Kristen did -- never lived in DC, which is where I live. She, in the beginning, lived in California, was traveling to DC for a job that she had at that point. But then she left that job, she went back to San Francisco, and then her husband got a job in New Zealand, where he was from. So I worked with her between San Francisco and DC, then San Francisco, then New Zealand. So it was a challenge in and of itself, and, you know, then life moves forward, in both her family life and mine. Ultimately we started talking about the whole process in the fall of 2016, right after Hillary Clinton lost the election, which also meant that I was out of a job, because I worked in the Obama Administration, I would have worked in hers. And so everything was kind of, like, up in the air. So I was -- how was it to write or to be involved in thinking about and writing my story? I mean, I think it was very learning experience, and really made me have to dig more deeply into how I wanted this story to be told. And it also meant that -- Kristen really knew very little about disability, and was a feminist, and had been -- had done writing in the area of women's issues, but never on disability. So it was a lot of different challenges and opportunities. You know, you can see that she -- we really melded together on being able to bring my voice forward, and you know, it was a process of talking her, drafting, my reviewing, my changing, back and forth. And for me, I think one of the important parts about this was really learning how I could -- and I had to, when working with her, be completely honest. I didn't like this, this is the way I wanted it, came back and it was still not exactly as I wanted it, and go back and forth. And then also learning about people's writing styles, more than just their words, but what spaces do they need to be able to get into to do the thought process of creating how I wanted my voice to be reflected. So it was a great learning experience.

>> Shelly Christensen: It was a great partnership, Judy -- from the outside looking in, my husband and I listened to the book over the summer when we were on a road trip and Ali -- Ali Stroker is incredible. She -- I could just see you -- I could -- I heard your voice. And every time -- every time we stopped for a rest stop or lunch or something, we'd come back to the car, and we'd go, "okay, let's get Judy back on!"

>> Judy Heumann: So Ali Stroker is, for those of you who don't know and haven't listened to the audio, I asked her if she would be willing to read both the adult version "Being Heumann," and then "Rolling Warrior," which is the young adult version. And she played me in Drunk History, and I had never met her. So Drunk History aired on a Tuesday, and she at that point lived in New Jersey, and I was in New York. And we met in New York. For those of you who know anything about New York, there's a really famous restaurant called Juniors and they have famous cheesecake. So she and I met there, and we've become fast friends. The book now is being turned into a movie, Apple has the rights, and she's gonna play me. So one of the reasons why I asked her if she would like to read the book is because -- it both enabled her, in reading the book, to know more about me, but also allowed the audience to meet her, who I really appreciate in so many ways, so that when the film comes out -- yeah, it's gonna be great.

>> Shelly Christensen: And that's coming out not -- next year, or the year --

>> Judy Heumann: I don't know. It's being written now, so I would say probably not between the end of this year and next year.

>> Shelly Christensen: Can't wait, and you'll find it on Apple+, just a plug.

>> Judy Heumann: And it'll be in the theaters too.

>> Shelly Christensen: Oh my gosh, well --

>> Judy Heumann: I believe for a short time.

>> Shelly Christensen: Well we'll keep our eye on that too so we can let everyone know --

>> Judy Heumann: Me too! [laughs]

>> Shelly Christensen: [laughs] Judy, I want to go back to the beginning of "Being Heumann" and the prologue. You introduce your parents who were orphaned by the Holocaust and arrived in the U.S. when they were teenagers. Their life experiences, no doubt, shaped them as parents, but how did those experiences determine their -- advocacy and activism, and how did they set the path for you?

>> Judy Heumann: You know, our grandparents were all killed in concentration camps, so I have no way of really knowing what they were like, and my mother was 12, went to Chicago. My father was 14. My mother was an only child, her father was an only child, and her mother had a sister who had one or two children, which they were all killed too. So our relatives on my father's side, his three brothers got out, so I know that part of the family. My mother, on the other hand's, cousins are second, third, whatever. And so -- you know, you learn about them and the importance of family and -- but I would say that my parents were not advocates as we talk about in the disability community at that point when they were just married. They didn't really know anything about disability. My father was in the Marines, so he knew people who had become disabled. And of course, there was Franklin Roosevelt and my mother adored him and his wife. So all of this kind of stuff around -- but I learned later on in life that my parents had been encouraged to put me in an institution, and they obviously didn't do that. But I think that's when they just began -- after they made the decision that they wanted my life to be the way they expected it would have been had I not had a disability. And so the challenges or discrimination that continued to occur, they didn't know exactly how to deal with it. But as the years went by, you know, you can see that my mom learned that if she didn't speak up and out things weren't going to happen, and they didn't necessarily happen right away. And she also learned that there were other parents, when I finally got to go to school, that had similar goals and aspirations for their children. And so, you know, they were learning by doing. And we, as their kids, were learning by watching. And it was not a course where you have lesson one, two, three, and four, and got tested at the end -- end of every lesson to see what you had learned. It was rather reflecting for me more as I got older what had happened, the influence my mother had, not just in the area of disability, but -- you know, thinking about how we as disabled people were also learning about what was going on in the 50s and 60s and 70s beyond the disability community, because those of you who are older or know something about history, the 50s and 60s really were a time where there was much going on. So the civil rights movement was moving forward, the demonstrations -- Martin Luther King and the leadership and the local work that was going on. And for me also as a Jew, it was very important to see that there were Jewish leaders that were involved in the civil rights movement. Now, our movement at that point was very small, and so disabled people are not a part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. And had that been different, than the course of life for disabled people would have been very different. Instead, it took us until 1990 to really have a reasonable equivalent to the Civil Rights Act. And we didn't benefit in the beginning from being able to be enmeshed in these other movements, to really learn about the role of lawyers, the role of litigation, the -- role of collaboration, civil disobedience -- all those things were -- we were kind of looking at it from afar. And, yeah.

>> Shelly Christensen: Wow, and -- that leads to the -- protests, sit-ins about Section 504. Do you want to tell us about that?

>> Judy Heumann: Well they were even before. So, you know, in Crip Camp you see that there were demonstrations in New York around 504 in 1972, because Section 504 is a provision in a law, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but it was passed by Congress in 1972, but Nixon vetoed it twice. And so what was going on at that period of time in New York is there was a group called Disabled in Action, and I was the president of the organization at that time. And we were working with other disability groups protesting. So in the film that you just saw, there's a little bit of footage of the demonstrations on Madison Avenue, and then, not in the film, are other activities, including a walk out of the president's committee, a walkout -- Nixon was president, and a walk out when his daughter was speaking at the president's committee, and a march from a hotel in DC to the Capitol. And so there was a lot of very important work going on, a growing coalition not only amongst organizations run by disabled people, but it was an important period when groups like United Cerebral Palsy and others were beginning to work more with disability groups, as well as looking internally at what they needed to be doing to have disabled people in jobs, and not just non-disabled people who were speaking on behalf of disabled individuals.

>> Shelly Christensen: So what -- why did the protests occur? What was -- what was the goal for the protests?

>> Judy Heumann: Of the demonstrations in New York?

>> Shelly Christensen: Yep.

>> Judy Heumann: Was to get the law signed, because he had vetoed it, and as I said, he vetoed it twice. So it was to get the law signed inclusive of title V and title V in the Rehab Act has Section 504, but it also has a number of other very important provisions, like section 501, and section 503, and section -- for those of you who are knowledgeable about disability legislation in the U.S. -- those provisions of law will mean something, and for those of you who don't know what it is but you're interested, go look at title V of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended of 1973. But Title V really had a series of provisions that made it illegal, in the case of 504, to discriminate if you were an entity that got money from the federal government. 501 was requiring the federal government itself to look at what it was doing, and to look at what it needed to do to ensure that disabled people within the government were going to be given equal opportunity. Section 503, again, because they [indistinct] the Civil Rights Act related to contractors, so contractors with the federal government and the obligations that they would have to hiring disabled people. Now, I would say 503 is a perfect example of how long it took for anything to meaningfully happen. And here we are in 2023, and yes, there is progress that's been made, but nowhere near what the progress should have been.

>> Shelly Christensen: And that's -- ever present --

>> Judy Heumann: And it ever requires --

>> Shelly Christensen: Yeah.

>> Judy Heumann: The importance of a strong disability rights community which is -- cross-disability, cross-age, and is also working with other entities like the civil rights community, the religious community -- I think when you were talking about RespectAbility and the work that you do in the area of religion, it doesn't just focus on the Jewish community but it focuses on working with other religious communities. And as we know for many people, some people, religious community is very important and is an example of if we get it right in the religious community, if disabled people feel that the barriers are being removed, and that we're being treated equitably, then it's a great roadmap -- an example for how the rest of society can move forward.

>> Shelly Christensen: Exactly. And during the 504 sit-in in San Francisco, you were at the federal office building in San Francisco, and the government pretty much locked you in, locked everybody in. It's detailed in Crip Camp and beautifully written about in your book. It was just compelling and it -- what really struck me in such -- a positive way was how people came together, how the Black Panthers brought food, how community came together to support each other. That must have been something. I -- go ahead.

>> Judy Heumann: No, I was just gonna say, it was -- at that point I had moved from Brooklyn to Berkeley, and I think what was very important about what was going on in Berkeley was working with a very broad group, not just disability rights groups, but the religious community, labor unions, legislators, on and on, the women's movements, the great Panthers, because our objective with the 504 demonstrations, like with much of the work that we were doing and still is, because it's not only valuable for the disability community to fight for our rights, but it's also valuable that the broader society also understands that disability is a normal part of life, and unlike race or religion or gender, people should be expecting that they or a family member or a friend may acquire a visible or invisible disability. And so looking at how we need to be recreating and restructuring our societies, may, at the moment, seem as though it doesn't impact you, but in the future may well be impacting you. And now I don't mean you, Shelly, specifically, but the broader you -- [crosstalk] -- but you think about it, but I'm talking about for people who don't think about it, and not only don't think about it, but don't want to be reminded of the fact that disability is something that people need to be prepared for. And I don't mean that in a negative way, but, you know, have more knowledge about how disability can impact someone's life, and learning about what we need to be supporting as people living in our communities, in areas like construction, or policies on transportation, or medical services, home and community-based services, education, transportation, on and on.

>> Shelly Christensen: And Faith Community engagement, which kind of leads us to just some reflection. This is the 14th year of Jewish Disability Awareness Acceptance and Inclusion Month, and it's been influential in raising awareness, but it's what happens the other 11 months that matter the most. What advice would you give to disabled people who want to engage and participate and belong to a spiritual or religious community of -- that they choose?

>> Judy Heumann: Well I would say that it's not all up to us. I would say that's the -- whatever religious community needs to recognize that, you know, there's sixty -- whatever million disabled people in the U.S., and we represent a sizable population. And, you know, we are intergenerational. And when you think about the religious community, and when it is not taking into consideration who the population is, it also means that you don't get congregants, you lose congregants. And at this point in time I think it's really important that religious communities are looking -- because they are looking at what do they need to do to modernize, what do they need to do to make people feel that whatever your religion and practice is, it can be an important spiritual part of people's lives. I would say, you know, my experience is I go to a synagogue in DC called Adas Israel, and we've been working on the issue of inclusivity, oh, at least since 2011 or 12. And it's been gradual, and I would say we're making good progress, but people would acknowledge we're not yet where we are -- need to be, rather. And I think we -- we've been very fortunate -- now we, I'm talking more broadly, there are a reasonable number of rabbis with disabilities who are becoming ordained, and I think that is very important, because, you know, I am not at all -- I would never even remotely think to be a religious scholar or even heavily religious knowledgeable, but I have participated in synagogues for -- ever since I was a child. Being able as an adult to independently go or to choose when I want to go to synagogue also means -- you know, how do I get there, what happens when I'm there, is it accessible, is it welcoming? And I think what -- I'm not just speaking about our synagogue, because many synagogues are really -- have been moving beyond just dealing with the issue of access. Now, access to me is very important, but it goes beyond physical access. It relates to access to people who are deaf and hard of hearing, where people are blind or low vision, and for people with intellectual disabilities, or people who have autism, mental health disabilities, whatever it may be, and there's so many, I'm not gonna even remotely get into trying to name them. But what is important is when we come through that door -- well, will we come through that door, and if we are willing to come through that door, what are we greeted by? And I think for -- you know, you've got different groups. You've got people who are becoming older and don't want to consider themselves to have a disability, which, you know, these are all choices that we make. But if the synagogue is -- if they, you know, typically were readers, if they typically participated, is the sanctuary accessible so they can do that? I think -- the more synagogues that I see that are seriously addressing this issue means that they're also bringing disabled people from the congregation, but also beyond, because some people may not be coming because they don't feel like they're really being approached, and when they get there, they don't necessarily feel like they're being welcomed the same way as other people. So have a knowledgeable group of people working with you in the -- synagogue. I think having discussions on disability are really important. There's a rabbi who is a member of our congregation and also has, like, taught a course, and is the head of the task force who's blind, and they have played a very important role in multiple ways. You know, when you can get disabled rabbis to be able to talk to other rabbis, it's very different. You don't have to be a rabbi. If I was more knowledgeable I could do that, but I know that for certain discussions I want to go beyond just my -- regular discussion with people that -- you want to really be able to drill down on the Torah and other aspects and really be able to -- why is this written this way, and how do we deal with it, and how are people being -- how are we analyzing it? So -- but I think, you know, we're seeing -- I'm proud of the changes that we are seeing. But you and I were talking yesterday -- I kind of don't know whether this February is more low-key, are fewer synagogues doing work in this area than did previously? It feels to me like it's a little less than over the last 10 years.

>> Shelly Christensen: It does feel that way and yet -- and I think part of that, really, is -- we talked about fatigue, inclusion fatigue, and how important it is to -- reframe the -- just to reframe what -- any faith community needs to do, how they need to think about it, and that really is in terms of belonging. And -- if -- if somebody walks in, or comes in, however they come in to a -- let's say a service, and they're ignored, they're treated as if they're invisible, they're told, "well, sit over in that section, that's for you people." "Oh yes, we have a program for you people." That defeats everything about what faith communities strive to be: a place of warmth, a place of welcome, a place of support, a place where people -- all people are heard, so that they can participate in any and all activities, and to have those supports available, so you know, there's still so much work to do to really pull this -- pull these obstacles, these attitudes, and these beliefs away. And you know, so I just think, you know, this is an opportunity with JDAIM, but there's so much more that we need to do, and you've said that so so so long, so many times.

>> Judy Heumann: I mean, I think people really need to, and it needs to be led by disabled people, and it's not to say that others are not included, but there needs to really be a way of making people feel comfortable if they're willing to have an honest discussion.

>> Shelly Christensen: Yeah.

>> Judy Heumann: And it's very difficult. I mean, for me really, when I was growing up, obviously my father would drive us to synagogue, because we didn't live near the synagogue we went to. The synagogue itself was completely inaccessible, it was, you know, the property was bought by German Jews, and accessibility was really obviously nothing they were thinking about. So you know, I was carried up one or two flights of stairs to get to the area of worship until they moved it downstairs. But what I think we've -- we're seeing is -- as people are bringing the voices of disabled people in and allowing discussions to happen, I mean, Lynn Landsberg -- the late Lynn Landsberg, may her memory be for a blessing -- who headed up the Religious Action Committee's work in disability, was a disabled Rabbi. And she was amazing. And she was amazing because she came from two worlds. You know, she acquired her disability after she was a rabbi, so she was able to really see these issues from both vantage points, and she was so well respected. And I think she was a convener, but she also was -- I mean, I'll call her a provocateur, but that's too strong. She wasn't afraid -- she wasn't afraid of saying and speaking her mind. She didn't do it for the sake of it, she did it for, you know, a real purpose. So she'd probably love being called a provocateur.

>> Shelly Christensen: She would. She was one of my best friends, and everyday -- she is still very much a part of the work I do and how I approach it. It's kind of, what would Lynn do? And then she'd say -- she'd probably say to me, "well let's go thrift shopping and we'll talk about it," [laughs] which is one of our things. Judy, we've got some questions in our Q&A box, and I -- I know that we want you to read a passage from Being Heumann, so we'll save five minutes at the end. But let's take a few moments. I'm going to introduce Reverend Ben Bond. Ben is part of the Faith Inclusion and Belonging team at RespectAbility. Hi Ben! And Ben, if you could just ask some of the -- share with us some of the questions that are in that Q&A box, that would be great.

>> Ben Bond: Yeah, absolute pleasure to meet everybody. As Shelly said, I'm the Faith Inclusion and Belonging Associate here at RespectAbility. I am a white male presenting genderqueer person, with glasses brown hair and a beard, wearing a black shirt. Apologies for going faster for our ASL interpreters. Yes, so we have a lot of wonderful questions. One of the questions that I'll start off with from Katie Grosh is -- the question is "in your book, you write about religious and spiritual practices during the 504 sit-in, like lighting Shabbat candles and occupying the federal building. I would love to hear more about the story of how that came to be, and why these religious and spiritual practices were important to protesters. How can spiritual practices help our activism?"

>> Judy Heumann: I mean, the spiritual practices were not important to all the people in the building, but to some of us it was, and so it was around Easter, Passover, that you know, we were there. And when we went to Washington with a group of about 20 people, one of the people who was involved in San Francisco was a Reverend, and so he also came. And you know, we felt that including the religious community brought our work to a different level. I mean, it was something that was potentially enabling people to see that disability cuts across all communities, and for those people who are religious, practice religion, having their religious leaders be able, on a regular basis, to be thoughtful and inclusive of disabled people, just like we want them to be thoughtful and inclusive of people from the LGBTQI community, the BIPOC community, on and on, and whether or not you're part of the same religious community, to be able to be respectful of the -- values of people outside of one's religious community. I think -- when I worked at the State Department, I would do my best to always try to meet with some religious leaders, because their speaking from the pulpit, the bema, could be very positively or negatively influential.

>> Ben Bond: Thank you Judy. Our next question is from Noah Strauss. They write, "we are in the middle of a mass disabling event. This is an opportunity to recenter the world around disability and chronic illness. How do we reframe the narrative so our government sees that, and what role do faith communities play in addressing the mass disabling event of the COVID-19 pandemic?"

>> Judy Heumann: Well, that's a great question. I think it's very important that people with hidden disabilities -- in this case we're probably talking about Long COVID -- also begin to feel empowered, that they have a right to be able to talk about what it is they need to be able to live their lives as they wish. And I mean, obviously some of the issues going on right now with mask wearing, and people's resistance to it, and not listening and understanding how some people are in dangerous situations if other people aren't being sensitive to what needs to happen. Those are all things that I think continue to require education. And the more we speak up and out as disabled people with visible and invisible disabilities, the more slowly people will be understanding what the issues are that we're trying to address. And again, I think the religious communities, you know, and how they set up houses of worship. So we no longer require masks at our services, but many people do wear masks and nobody says anything about people wearing masks. So I would say that a good number of people -- because we have a number of older people at the synagogue -- are wearing masks. And yeah, I think it's really elevating this discussion so people have a much greater understanding of the situations that we're facing and looking at ways of helping people move forward with this. I also want to say that I feel it's very important that we not look at disabled people as only wanting to work virtually. I think it's a very important issue that we need to be looking at people individually, and what people believe they need for themselves, and adapting and supporting people who need different situations to be able to both work in and live in, but that we really should not be giving the message that if you have a disability, working at home is what you want. Some people need it and want it, and other people want other settings. And I also think we need to be looking at the whole issue around accommodations, and how frequently, when you're at an office, you may be getting accommodations, you may not get those accommodations at home, which I'm not saying is the reason why you should have to come back into an office, because I do believe that accommodations in your home are things that also should be being provided by the employer. So we need more discussion, we need more thoughtfulness about what needs to happen, and we need to ensure that people who are, for example, immunocompromised are not being put out of the workforce, but in fact are able to stay in the workforce, and as things happen, be able to exercise choices that most appropriately fit their needs.

>> Ben Bond: Absolutely, thank you so much Judy. It's a really important question that has been on my heart too. We have another question from Tom Olin, who -- we recorded a conversation with him last year. Tom writes, "what is more important than working to get those in our communities that are incarcerated" -- I think he meant to say in incarcerated institutions "back into the community, with service and resources, to have those that are marginalized be able to share faith with the community. What is the path for religion in this process?"

>> Judy Heumann: I know that one of the rabbis at our synagogue when he left our synagogue started an organization working -- Rabbi Feinberg -- working in the prison system in this area. And I think many religious communities are doing work with both people who are incarcerated and returning citizens. So -- this is -- first of all, hi Tom. First of all -- or second of all, many of our synagogues are doing work in the area of social action or social justice. And we need -- and it's another area that Adas is moving in -- moving towards. Disability is a part of all the areas that people are working in, whether it's homelessness, or returning citizens, or refugees, or whatever the area of discussion might be, disabled people are a part of those groups. And we need to ensure that we are not only working on the immediate situation, but in the area of incarceration, we have a lot -- both 504, ADA, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act -- and there are many children who are not being appropriately served who have disabilities who wind up incarcerated. And if you look at the percentage of disabled people in juvenile and adult facilities, we're looking at 50 to 80 percent. So I think we not only need to be working on those people who are currently in systems like the prison system, but we also need to be looking at how we influence state -- at the federal, state, and local policy dollars -- how do we influence keeping people out of getting in trouble? How do we ensure that there are appropriate programs for children and their families, so that there are opportunities for learning, for working? And I think it is very clear in some communities where discrimination by the police is something that is immensely troubling, and it has to be addressed, and I think the religious community needs to play a very -- a meaningful, important role in the injustices that are happening. I mean, it's just something that, for me, is sickening, and yeah, yeah.

>> Ben Bond: Thank you so much Judy, that'll be our last question. I can pass it on to Shelley to lead us into our closing.

>> Shelly Christensen: Thanks Ben. There are a number of questions still remaining, we're going to save those questions and hopefully address them in a future webinar, or find some way to address them in our -- in our newsletter, Faith Inclusion and Belonging Newsletter that comes out twice a month on Fridays. I also want to mention, as we're talking about policy and advocacy and the role that faith communities can play, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, along with Jewish Federations of North America and the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies, will be convening Jewish Disability Advocacy Day, lovingly known as JDAD, on February 15th. And Ben, maybe you could Google that and put that in the chat. It's only an hour long, and it promises to raise up the issues that are affecting this Congress -- well, some of the issues around disability, and invite you to take -- that hour --

>> Judy Heumann: Including not cutting Medicare?

>> Shelly Christensen: Yeah, that.

>> Judy Heumann: Not cutting social security?

>> Shelly Christensen: Yeah.

>> Judy Heumann: Ensuring that people pay their taxes -- yeah.

>> Shelly Christensen: Exactly. Thanks Eric for putting that in the chat. Before we close I want to thank our interpreters -- our sign language interpreters, our captioner. I also want to thank Eric Ascher who is running tech and is our -- guru, all things tech, and of course Ben Bond. And I want to thank you, Judy, for being with us today and spending this time with us. And we could go on and on and on and listen to the stories that you have. I would say read Judy's book. However you get to it, read Judy's book. Watch Crip Camp, available on Netflix, and in closing, Judy, I was especially moved by the last chapter of your book, called "Our Story," and I want to invite you to read the section we talked about yesterday.

>> Judy Heumann: So it's chapter 12: our story. Sometimes Hollywood tries to tell our story. You've seen the movie. A woman acquires a disability and wants to die, and then convinces a loved one to kill her. Million Dollar Baby. A man acquires disability, wants to die, but then falls in love with his personal attendant to quote unquote "save" her from a lifetime with a disabled man. He kills himself. Me Before You. A man acquires a disability and turns villainous in the face of the agony. Star Wars - Darth Vader. Disability is seen as a burden, a tragedy, but what if it wasn't? What if someone's story began with the words "I never wished I didn't have a disability." Even today it is difficult for me to remember how I felt the night before my mother took me to register for kindergarten. How carefully I picked my dress and laid it out for my first day at school. How painful it was to feel rejected. In my own mind, there were no barriers to what I could have learned or what I could achieve. All the barriers came from outside of me. Has having a disability made me different than I would have been? Of course, I don't know the answer to that question. Would you be different if you'd been born Buddhist or Muslim or grown up in Dakar instead of London? How do you know? What I do know is that I've had to learn to push through my insecurities. I've learned I'm stronger in a group. I know having my disability has given me opportunities I wouldn't have had if I hadn't had polio. If I'd simply been a girl growing up in Brooklyn, I wouldn't have been exposed to the same things. I know it pushed me to study harder, work harder, and achieve harder, to travel. I know it pushed me to fight, to change how others saw us -- our human potential. Would I have met Ed and Frida, Joni and Mary Lou, Pat and Kitty, Cece and Kala, Adolf, Nunes, and Diane? Would I have been open to Jorge? He's my husband. My life would have been totally different, and the same. How can anyone know what their life would have been? I can only know that it was meant to be what it is. I am who I was meant to be. If you were to acquire a disability tomorrow, it will be a change, but I can tell you this: it wouldn't have to be a tragedy. We are all human. Why do we see disability differently from any other aspect of being human? When I look back now, I see that one of the greatest aspects of the 504 sit-in was the way it united us. We weren't focused on how we were different. We were focused on our common goal, our collective purpose. We look beyond how each person spoke and moved, how we thought and how we looked. We respected the humanity in each other. We stood for inclusiveness and community, for our love of equity and justice, and we won.

>> Shelly Christensen: Thank you Judy. Thank you for everything that you do and for spending time with us today, and I want to thank everyone for joining us today.

>> Judy Heumann: And I want to thank everybody for what you all do, and we all have to do it together. So I think leaving here, I love leaving these discussions and thinking about what I need to do more of, so I hope you can think of one or two things that are new, or strengthening what you have been doing. Shabbat Shalom for those of you who are Jewish or whatever. Thank you all.

>> Shelly Christensen: All the best, thanks everyone. Bye now!