>> Franklin Anderson: Alright, hello everyone and welcome. Thank you for joining us today. I am Franklin Anderson from RespectAbility's team, and I'm going to give -- a few announcements to get us started, and then I will turn it over to the real talent to kick us off. So with that being said, I'd like to begin by sharing some notes on accessibility during this webinar. You can click the CC button in the Zoom window to turn on captions. You can also pin the interpreter's video to ensure that they are visible throughout the presentation. To view the live transcript in a separate window, click on the link that we will momentarily put in the chat box. Please put any questions for our speakers in the Q&A box. And finally, I would like to know that this webinar is being recorded, and after our open captions are added, you will be able to find it available online at RespectAbility.org/ten. Next you want to make sure that you don't miss our final networking event on June 28th. We are hosting a virtual networking event for those interested in today's topic of changing attitudes surrounding disability, so please register for that online at RespectAbility.org. And finally, today's event is being held in celebration of RespectAbility's incredible decade of achievements in fighting for people with disabilities. All of our accomplishments and activities have been powered by generous support from the public, but there are so many things left to accomplish to fully eliminate harmful stigmas and create more opportunity for people with disabilities. We need your support to ensure success in the next decade. Please consider donating in honor of this milestone to help us make an even bigger impact in the decade to come. Visit -- excuse me -- visit our anniversary fund webpage to join the movement. And now, I would like to introduce our first speaker, Ben Bond. Ben Bond is the Faith Inclusion and Belonging Associate here at RespectAbility. He's ordained in the Disciple of Christ denomination, and holds a Master of Divinity from Yale University. Ben has lived experience with multiple disabilities, and has a background in non-profits and student organizing. So without further ado, Ben, I now turn the microphone over to you.

>> Ben Bond: Thank you so much Frank. It's always an honor to be introduced by you. Like Frank was saying, my name is Ben Bond. I use he/they pronouns. And a very brief visual description of myself: I'm a white, masculine presenting person with a brown beard, brown glasses, hair, and a button-up shirt. And I have the honor of introducing my conversation partners today, Bill Gaventa and Shelly Christensen. First I'll let you know about Bill. Bill is a RespectAbility board member, author, speaker, trainer, and consultant, primarily in the arena of faith and disability. He is the founder and Director Emeritus of the Summer Institute of Theology and Disability. He served as the president of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities the year 2016-17. He was the editor of the Journal of Religion, Disability, and Health for 14 years, and is the author of "Disability and Spirituality: Recovering Wholeness," published by Baylor University press in 2018. And our other speaker is Shelly Christensen, who is the Senior Director of Faith inclusion and Belonging here at RespectAbility. Shelly joined RespectAbility in April 2022. Before her arrival at RespectAbility, she directed a Jewish community inclusion program for 13 years, and was a consultant to multi-faith organizations. Shelley, who is neurodiverse, holds a Master's degree in developmental disabilities. She's the co-founder of Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month, that is now part of the Faith Inclusion and Belonging work, and is the author of "From Longing To Belonging: A Practical Guide to Including People with Disabilities." So my first question with these wonderful folks is about our work. One of the really wonderful things about RespectAbility -- it's the only national secular disability organization with a full-time department centered on faith inclusion and belonging. So my question is, why is this work important for a national secular disability nonprofit?

>> Bill Gaventa: Thanks Ben and thanks for the introduction. I just -- to say something about who I am and what I look like, and not any more facts. But I'm also bearded with glasses, and -- a button-down shirt. But my beard is whiter than Ben's. And -- I've got a background with some African curios on the wall, which reflect the fact that I grew up in Nigeria as a kid. I'm honored to be part of the RespectAbility Board. I've been a follower of RespectAbility ever since it began, now 10 years ago. That's pretty amazing. And I think that one of the things that's -- one of the reasons I was willing to become part of the board is because of this faith and belonging program, the inclusion and belonging program. If you think about it people with -- disabilities, their lives need to be as holistic as possible. And we need a national organization that reflects and works with multiple dimensions of their lives, and issues impacting people with disabilities and their families. I think it help -- it's helpful to have a national disability organization that advocates in so many ways to be able to advocate directly with religious networks and organizations around the country, and also to be a place where those groups can convene around a disability voice and presence, in order to work together in those -- in multiple ways. So the fact that you've got this national point also based -- although remotely and virtually, still in DC, that kind of presence gives it a place where -- gives us a place where I think -- there's real potential there for RespectAbility drawing together different voices and thinking about how we can work effectively for the sake of more holistic lives for people with disabilities and their families to address both spiritual needs, concerns, and their wishes to contribute and participate and belong in faith communities of their choice. And I could say more but don't get me started. I'm a Baptist preacher and that will -- that will go along. That will go -- go further. But yeah it's -- I think there's so many areas of overlap, and there are a lot of us who've been working for a long time to help build these dialogues and conversations between religious networks and more secular networks, and I think RespectAbility now has one of the potentially best platforms for them.

>> Shelly Christensen: Indeed, thank you Bill. I'm Shelly Christensen, and I am a white woman, and I have curly brown hair. I'm wearing purple glasses and red lipstick. I'm -- my eyes are kind of hidden behind my glasses. I'm wearing a red top and a black and white sweater, and behind me is the new backdrop for RespectAbility honoring our 10th anniversary. So -- I concur with everything Bill has said. So many of us -- have been working in this field, and to bring that intersectionality of faith -- diverse faiths and belief systems, religions, however -- one comes to that is really ultimately about elevating the voices of people with disabilities, elevating -- the voices of people who are often unheard in faith communities. And what we've really learned over the years is that many faith communities and organizations have the best of intentions, and that's great. But as one of the great Hasidic Masters, Yehudi HaKadosh, once said, intentions are not enough, for it is the actions which make the intentions so profound. And so our focus is really on the actions, and how we can be not only supportive of the learning in faith communities, also in collaboration with so many of our partners.

>> Ben Bond: Brilliantly said by both of you, thank you so much. Our other question that I'm curious to hear your thoughts on -- what are the key initiatives of our work at the Faith Inclusion and Belonging Department? I can pass it to Shelly, and then we could probably both speak on that.

>> Shelly Christensen: Yes absolutely. And Ben just joined our team in January, and such an asset to our work. And so some of the key initiatives are our collaborations, and the idea of already having networks established when I came in and when Bill joined the board really has has helped so much. RespectAbility does have that national presence, and so it's been great. We just completed a webinar series with the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Religion and Spirituality Interest Network. And the series was created to train, teach, and inform Direct Support Professionals and the agencies that support them on ensuring that this very overlooked and ultimately critically important part of one's life -- spirituality, if you will, faith community inclusion, belonging, community, and learning -- that that has the care of a support team to support a person to achieve that -- the life that they want, where they want, and how they want it. And so just a few of our other collaborations, the Institute on Theology and Disability, which is being hosted next week, and my dear friend Bill Gaventa is the Founder of the Institute. And -- we are doing a panel presentation representing multiple faiths talking about disability and practices, so that we find so much more commonality, so much more that we can share. And really -- this is the heart and soul of faith inclusion and belonging, of our department, is looking for ways that we can bring practices, bring all these marvelous people who are doing the work together, convening together. And so one of the things I'm really excited about is that now Jewish Disability Awareness Acceptance and Inclusion Month is part of RespectAbility's line, if you will, and we kicked it off last year with the great late Judy Heumann, of blessed memory, who talked about her Jewish faith and disability. And -- really unfortunately, Judy died March 4th. And so it's really -- it's kind of a bittersweet thing. So we're now starting to work with communities, Jewish communities all over the U.S. But what I'm really excited about is come this Fall, we're going to be launching an initiative to work with diverse faiths, teaching how to build a practice, build a movement, schedule -- a month, or a Sabbath, or a whole month focused on different aspects of including people with disabilities in order that people feel that beautiful sense of belonging. So that's just a little bit of what we're doing now.

>> Bill Gaventa: Yeah, I would point out, Ben, that with the webinar series that RespectAbility helped collaborate with AAIDD, that it -- RespectAbility's joining probably doubled the size of those usual webinar series in terms of participants. So I think that's one -- piece of -- one small piece of evidence about the impact of RespectAbility and the potential of its work and other people collaborating then with RespectAbility in that, and doing things like that. Absolutely. And as Shelly mentioned with the panel, we've had the wonderful opportunity to convene folks who are faith leaders in many of the major world traditions -- at the Institute of Theology and Disability, who have lived experience with disability. And we're going to have a really incredible conversation about these -- we come from all these different backgrounds, but as Shelly's saying, and part of the work of our department is that we have a shared experience with disability and the benefits of being part of a faith community, and the challenges to access -- or barriers to access that we all share, both culturally, theologically, and of course physically. And to top -- on top of that, we also work with our National Leadership Program to foster our Fellows -- our Faith Inclusion and Belonging Fellows, who are generally folks who are new to the field who are really interested at this intersection. And we have the opportunity to introduce them to our wonderful colleagues, such as Bill Gaventa, Rabbi Lauren Tuchman, who is the first blind woman Rabbi in the world to our knowledge and her knowledge, and really get a chance to allow these new professionals to really explore these -- intersections more in depth and foster community and networks of support moving forward in their career. So, on that note, unless our speakers Bill and Shelly have more they'd like to add, I I think it would be excellent to pass it on to our Entertainment and News Media team.

>> Bill Gaventa: One small point. I think that one of the -- hidden benefits of helping bringing people together from different faith traditions to talk about disability also helps people build collaboration and understanding between differences of faith. So it's not only -- it's it's about helping to see I think and help -- and to build the kind of conversations that this country so needs at this point.

>> Shelly Christensen: Well said Bill, thank you.

>> Ben Bond: I agree -- one of the things that our department is really committed to is inter-religious literacy. And being able to approach that from the disability identity is a really excellent way to begin those conversations, and honor the fact that we are only experts in our own experience, and we have, even within the disability community, such a wide and diverse range of identities and experiences, and that we are a part of this mutual learning project together, and that cross-disability solidarity and cross-religious and spiritual tradition solidarity is really at the heart and core of our work.

>> Bill Gaventa: Amen.

>> Shelly Christensen: Amen. Amen.

>> Ben Bond: So with that, I'll give a couple extra minutes to our ENM team, so that if they want to speak longer on their work, very excited to have -- hear from them.

>> Lesley Hennen: Thanks Ben. Lawon, you want to go first?

>> Lawon Exum: [laughs] Thank you Ben so much for the introduction to the entertainment team. My name is Lawon Exum, I am the Entertainment and News Media Director for RespectAbility. I help manage and support the development of programs for disabled entertainment professionals, while I also oversee our consultancy on TV/film projects, and building relationships in the entertainment and news media industry. And I will pass it on to Lesley.

>> Lesley Hennen: Thanks Lawon. Hi everyone, I'm Lesley Hennen. My pronouns are she/her. A quick visual description -- I'm a white woman, I have brown hair, it's kind of in a half up bun situation today. And I'm wearing a black t-shirt. And my role here at RespectAbility is Senior Associate of Entertainment Pipeline Programming. And I was actually first connected with RespectAbility back in 2020. I was actually a Fellow in our Lab program, which I'm going to talk a lot about up next. But so yeah, for me as a writer, I think -- I was at that time really looking for a community, and -- kind of realizing as a disabled writer -- I really wanted to find that community of people that were writing about disability, but not, like, in a tokenizing way, type of thing. And -- when I discovered RespectAbility, it was really just -- it was a really great experience to get to go through the Lab and meet other disabled writers like myself, and just hear about all the work that -- this organization was doing, and as well as other studios and people in the industry. So now, having a very full circle moment of being able to work on Staff here at RespectAbility, specifically in our pipeline programming work to kind of help build that pipeline of up and coming talent. And -- so a lot of what we do is with our pipeline programs is we have our summer Lab program for individuals who work behind the camera. And that was really started in 2019 by our team's Senior Vice President Lauren Appelbaum, as well as -- one of our board members Delbert Whetter. And they -- really founded the program as sort of an answer to -- the question that we would hear a lot in our entertainment work of -- people would say, "oh I'd really -- I'd love to hire more disabled writers, I'd love to hire more disabled directors, but -- I can't find them, I don't know, I don't know where they are." And so -- the Lab was really started as a solution to that -- we now have almost -- 200 people that have gone through the program now working in all various positions behind the camera, from writing, directing, producing, everything in between. And it's been -- it's really great to now -- be able to work to make those connections and -- as we're all here to discuss today, like, changing that attitude about -- just really hiring disabled people in all areas of the -- the process, the creativity process, because that automatically ensures -- a more authentic representation and just -- builds that pipeline for us to -- continue creating the content. But yeah, I mean Lawon, this was your first Lab with us. [laughter]

>> Lawon Exum: Yeah it was, and I apologize -- let me give you a visual. I'm a black male with curly hair, black hair. I have a gray blazer on with a mint green shirt with a tie with blue stars on. Yes, this is my first time actually working with the Lab, because I recently had just got hired as the Entertainment and News Media Director. And I must say, I always tell people, I love my job. And let me tell you the reason why I love my job is my team. I call my team, which a lot of people probably don't know, the dream team. Because I feel like our team -- we make dreams come true. Because I know being an individual and working in the entertainment industry for many years that it's hard to get into it, and being able to be -- the company and the individuals that help people be able to work in the entertainment industry, despite their disabilities, and being able to help them fulfill a dream of theirs, it warms my heart. It really does. It makes -- it makes coming to work not work for me, because I'm so passionate about giving people a chance to work in an industry where I've worked in so many years, knowing that it was hard to get into. And being able to share my experiences and be able to give them tips that I wish somebody would have been able to give me. But having this job and having the appointment of being over my dream team -- it just -- it just brings me joy to be able to keep working and doing the job that we do at RespectAbility.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, I'll also add -- something we talk about a lot in the Lab is -- kind of what you were mentioning, Lawon, how it's such a hard industry to get into no matter what, and then on top of -- so many entry-level jobs to the industry are just very inaccessible. And so I think -- a big part of what we do is, one -- learning how to advocate for ourselves as disabled creatives, and, like, learning -- that's one of the main takeaways that I remember getting from the Lab during my time as a Fellow is just having the experience to talk about some things that feel stigmatized of, like -- asking for certain accommodations, like, what is even possible to ask for. And you know, I think that's a big part of the program that we -- run is -- just a space for people to kind of talk through these things that sometimes feels you're not supposed to talk about in the industry all the time. But I think it's been -- for me it's been very rewarding to kind of -- one, work with other disabled creatives and learn how to advocate for ourselves and each other, and just ensuring -- more accessible sets, and then also being able to work with people who are in those hiring positions -- teaching them more about accessibility and things that they can do proactively to -- make people want to work -- like feel more -- I know we talk a lot about accessibility and how sometimes -- if it's not explicitly stated, like, in an application or on an invitation somewhere, it's -- we sometimes as disabled people will assume, like, oh, it just hasn't been thought of. So I think that is one of the main takeaways that we will share with people who are in hiring positions of, like -- just having a contact for us to go to for accessibility requests, and just -- making it a point of -- letting everyone know that it is being thought about, and I think just making it more normalized across the board will -- it ultimately just helps everyone get into the -- get into the rooms that we haven't historically been able able to get into. And I think for me it's been very rewarding -- with so many Lab alumni now just, like, watching everyone continue to grow, and everybody's -- making new films, and hiring each other, and getting jobs and just -- we're growing this big network. And especially at a time right now -- the entertainment industry is -- [chuckles] it's an interesting time to work in entertainment right now, and -- especially with -- the writers strike going on this year, we did a lot of pivoting of our Lab program to be very focused on independent, and just meeting with other writers and -- we worked very closely with the WGA to make sure that everything we did was -- in support of the strike, and so that was something I was very proud of as well was just being able to have this space for other writers to -- work through this -- pivotal time in the industry.

>> Lawon Exum: And I have to add to it, for my recent Lab participants -- I feel like that we accomplished everything that we set out to because, due to the fact that what's going on in the entertainment industry right now, and they were able to build a community and be able to see what's going on right now in the industry. And that was a huge thing that they took away. They were saying, like, they were so glad that we were able to pivot from not being able to have to change what we wanted -- the information that we wanted to give them during the Lab. And they also gave us just, like, applause of just giving them a community. And that's -- that is one thing I love too, that we're giving them a space and a community where they'll be able to interact with each other and network, and be able to succeed in this industry, because I can honestly say. I truly believe that the Lab people that we had this year, all of them are going to be successful, and that you will be hearing a lot about them. If you disagree [unintelligible] I mean, we really had a great group, and like, again, I might be biased because it's my first Lab, but I have to say, they all warmed my heart, and I was just so glad to be able to give them the information and everything I could to navigate their careers in the entertainment industry.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah no, I agree. I agree with all of that. But yeah, I think again going back to, like, this idea of changing attitudes, there's sort of -- I think the work that we do is sort of twofold of -- there's the changing the attitudes of the people who are in hiring positions, who maybe are not as familiar with -- hiring disabled people or what -- how to make that process as easy for everyone as possible, and then there's also the -- as disabled people who are applying to things -- or navigating this -- especially the entertainment industry right now, I think it is -- it's very nice to be able to be in this community with like-minded people who are working through similar things as we're all -- [chuckles] navigating how to -- do our projects. And to me, it's just very exciting to know we're building this big community of people who are lifting each other up right now, and -- it can sometimes feel a little isolating to be -- working at this time, but it's -- yeah, it's been really great to kind of develop as you said just, like, a close-knit kind of group that we can kind of lean on each other. But that kind of leads into our next point about -- mental health is a big, big part of what we do as well, and kind of making sure -- under the umbrella of mental health. But Lawon, I know -- you wanted to mention --

>> Lawon Exum: Yeah. I feel like now that -- I mean it's so much happening in all industries and especially in the entertainment industry. We're gonna move forward and do stuff as far as put together panels discussing and having conversations about mental health, because I feel, especially being in the entertainment industry, you need that type of discussion so people can know where to go and get help. And we want -- I want to be -- we want to be the starting conversation and be able to spread the word that -- we're also here to help navigate through that as well.

>> Lesley Hennen: Yeah, that's great. Well I think -- I think we have a couple minutes left, but unless there's anything else you wanted to add, Lawon, I think we can throw it over to the development team, I believe, is going next?

>> Lawon Exum: Yes, we can just throw it to the development team.

>> Franklin Anderson: Great, thank you Lesley and thank you Lawon. And to start out this portion of the webinar, I wanted to start with a few words on philanthropy. An important part of RespectAbility's first 10 years has been our partnership with philanthropy. Foundations and philanthropists play a really important role in bringing change to our society, and we have long supported them on their journeys to bring -- people with disabilities into the fold. So we act as a partner of philanthropy -- by providing training, resources, data and surveys, thought leadership, and we build up a talent pipeline for the field. And I want to pause there on the the talent pipeline and highlight that, by which I mean our National Leadership Program. And the National Leadership Program actually has a track specifically for training young leaders with disabilities for careers in non-profit -- non-profits and philanthropy. We've had Fellows graduate from the program and go on to work at foundations, small and large, all across the country. And they've contributed to success at each of them. But now I want to pause and introduce Molly McConville, who will join me for this conversation about our partnership with philanthropy. Molly is the Senior Development and Individual Giving Associate here at RespectAbility, and is actually the perfect person to join me for this discussion. Molly is a former Fellow herself, and now works with the nonprofit management Fellows every day here at RespectAbility. So I welcome Molly to this discussion where we will have a series of questions for each other on philanthropy and disability, so welcome Molly.

>> Molly McConville: Thank you. I will also -- I'll just give a brief physical description. I am a young white woman, wearing my brown hair in a low bun, and a black shirt with little blue flowers on it. And my pronouns are she/her/hers.

>> Franklin Anderson: Great, great, thank you. To get us started, Molly, I believe you have a question.

>> Molly McConville: Yep, I have a couple questions for you Frank. My first one is why should philanthropists think about disability in their funding?

>> Franklin Anderson: Yeah great question. Firstly, I think the thing that I always want to make clear is that you don't necessarily have to start funding new programs or funding different organizations to have an impact on accessibility. Some philanthropists we hear are afraid that they will have to launch a whole new fund or increase their giving, do something different in terms of what they're funding, but that's not necessarily the case. With a little time and effort, you can actually make your existing work accessible for everyone, and beneficial for people with disabilities. And by bringing that disability lens to your funding, you'll actually be -- likely be more successful in reaching everyone in the communities you're already attempting to serve. I think an example of this is, let's say if -- a foundation or philanthropist who's focus on eliminating homelessness. And -- initially they may think, "my cause is homelessness, not disability, that's not really what I do." But there are thousands of unhoused people with disabilities across the country. So if your programs or your resources are inaccessible, you may be leaving behind many community members that you had actually intended to be serving. And next I would say, as a philanthropist, you have a lot of power to influence your grantees. Ask them if they are -- holding their events in an accessible event space. Ask if they're putting captions on their videos -- and they may not have thought about these things before, but when the funders start asking these questions, they're definitely going to start considering that and really bringing that to the forefront. So I think there are a lot of positive ways that -- philanthropy can make an impact on disability inclusion, without having to really change all that much other than working to become accessible and helping their grantees become accessible.

>> Molly McConville: That was really helpful, thank you. My next question is what is a common misconception that philanthropy may have about the feasibility of accessibility?

>> Franklin Anderson: Yeah, another good question, and I think a misconception, again, that I like to highlight is that accessibility is expensive, or that you have to be a Fortune 500 company to hire people with disabilities. And that really isn't the case. Often there are cheap or free steps you can take to become more accessible for anyone, including your employees. So -- for example, you can put captions on your videos for free, at no cost. An easy way to do that is through using YouTube, and as you upload your videos, you can just enable automated captioning. You may need to spell check the captions, but there's no cost to adding these captions to your videos, and that will help you become so much more accessible, number one, for folks who utilize captions to interact with content. But it's also a positive in that, you know, nowadays folks are most likely to engage with content on their phone. They're going to be scrolling, they may be on the bus or somewhere else in public where they don't want to hear the audio, but your captions will benefit them too, so it's really a win-win solution there. And next, I would also say -- we hear sometimes that employers are afraid that hiring people with disabilities can be too expensive, especially when it comes to providing accommodations. But it really turns out that providing accommodations are usually cheap. Studies have shown on average it costs about between 300 and 500 dollars in total to provide an accommodation for an employee. And I want to make clear that that's 300 to 500 dollars in total, not a cost per week or per month. That's the total cost to provide that accommodation. And we know from research that disabled employees are actually statistically more likely to stay on at an organization once they've been hired. So there is less turnover among these disabled employees where, if you just provide the accommodations and let them show what they can do, they actually are more loyal and more likely to stay on with your team, which also saves money in the long run.

>> Molly McConville: On that topic, if a foundation or an organization has employees with disabilities or is looking to hire some employees with disabilities, where should they start on their path to becoming more accessible in their philanthropy?

>> Franklin Anderson: Yeah, my first recommendation would of course be to check out RespectAbility's inclusive philanthropy toolkit. This toolkit is available for free on our website at RespectAbility.org. You can go to the resources tab and scroll down, and you will find the inclusive philanthropy section. And that will have everything you need to get started. The toolkit has links for everything from learning how to make your website more accessible, to becoming more inclusive in your hiring program -- hiring process, and everything in between. So that's a very valuable resource, the inclusive philanthropy toolkit. And then another thing I would encourage folks to check out would be our webinar-based training courses for professionals in philanthropy and nonprofits. So these are webinars where experts will give you guidance on everything you need to know about how to make your foundation, your philanthropy, your non-profit more accessible for everyone. And again, best of all, this is a free resource. This is a free training course available through RespectAbility's website. So if you're interested in getting this free course, check out the inclusive philanthropy toolkit again, which will have links to this webinar series. I think it's really a tremendous amount of value. This is a free training course with eight different sessions, so I'd recommend folks check that out.

>> Molly McConville: Great, thank you. Do you have any questions for me?

>> Franklin Anderson: I do, I do. And since we had mentioned the National Leadership Program, I think it's a natural spot to turn the tables and -- ask you a couple questions, Molly, as you've had the experience of both going through the program and working with Fellows now as well. So can you tell me a little bit more about the National Leadership Program, and specifically the nonprofit management Fellowship. And what -- do Fellows gain in their time during the program?

>> Molly McConville: Yeah, so -- the Fellows work closely with the Staff, and I think that that's something that's really helpful. You get to see what the day-to-day looks like, what kind of projects everyone's working on, and collaborate with the full-time Staff. [audio cuts out] -- they might be attending. But then also have the opportunity to lead some projects on your own. So some of those include research, database management, proposal and grant writing, maybe even some public speaking and presentation skills. And then you also get to work with the advisors of the National Leadership Program to fine-tune your resume, your cover letter, and look for opportunities after RespectAbility -- after your six months with RespectAbility ends.

>> Franklin Anderson: Great, great. So in what ways does the program prepare Fellows to become effective professionals in philanthropy, and if there are any foundation staff or other social change employers listening, why should they consider hiring a graduate of the Fellowship?

>> Molly McConville: A lot of Fellows come in to specifically the nonprofit management Fellowship either looking to work in a foundation, in a nonprofit, or potentially starting a nonprofit of their own. So I think we try to fine-tune their experience to where their career goals lie, and what they're hoping to do after the Fellowship. So receiving training relevant to their field, providing them with the big names of the players in philanthropy, what foundations they need to be looking out for, who they should be connecting with, networking with, etcetera. And then another thing that I personally found to be one of the most helpful things about my time as a Fellow at RespectAbility is that once you graduate from the Fellowship, your time with RespectAbility doesn't end. When I was applying for jobs, I used my letters of recommendation from the Staff at RespectAbility. I reached out to some Fellow alumni for advice on job applications. I was connected to some other people and nonprofits through some connections I made through RespectAbility. So the most helpful thing -- or one of the most helpful things that I found personally was just the network that RespectAbility gives you. And your second question, why should foundations consider hiring graduates -- I think that many of the Fellows who come to us are already qualified and already ready to be working within philanthropy and within foundations. But then after the six weeks -- or six months working with us, we really fine-tune their skills and prepare them for the career force, or furthering their education, or whatever they're hoping to do afterwards. And so well they might -- they might have been overlooked in the past, they're surely qualified now and are -- ready and eager to display their skills.

>> Franklin Anderson: Great, thank you.

>> Molly McConville: And I actually I have one final question for you Frank. I think we have a couple minutes left, but on that topic, can you share any examples of successes from Fellows going on to work with philanthropy?

>> Franklin Anderson: Yeah absolutely, and this is always something I'm so happy to talk about. It's one of the most rewarding parts of my job is seeing the success of former Fellows go on and -- and see everything that they achieve out there in the workforce on their own. But we've had Fellows take on roles with major national foundations, small family foundations, regional foundations. And outside of -- that element of philanthropy, we've also had folks go work at philanthropy serving organizations, and -- plenty of non-profits in all sorts of different roles. So -- one example would be -- recently we had a Fellow hired at Kresge Foundation, and she took on a role within a project involving disability. Essentially she helped research the disability community's needs in the different cities that Kresge serves, and what the foundation could do to better serve them. And so that's an example with a -- really a major national foundation. And then on the flip side -- I've mentioned we've had folks go on to smaller foundations too, and one example there would be the New York Women's Foundation, which is a really great foundation but smaller than Kresge in both their -- geographic scope and endowment and everything. So while being a different funder -- there was still a lot of impact to be made, and so this alumnus -- this alumni, excuse me, worked directly alongside program officers, and was able to make a large impact on how the foundation was serving the disability community within their grantmaking, and I think a good example of how -- you don't necessarily need to launch a disability fund to actually make a difference in the communities you're serving by helping more people with disabilities access your program. So [coughs] -- excuse me, that's a couple good examples there. But -- it's not just the foundations that folks go on to -- work at. There have been Fellows who have been hired to work at nonprofits, in government roles -- in jobs at for-profit companies too, so we've really been able to help folks take that first step in launching their career in all aspects of the social sector, which includes philanthropy, but it's not just philanthropy.

>> Molly McConville: Great thank you, and I totally agree with you. That's one of the best parts of getting to watch the Fellows graduate, and go on to do the things that they set out to accomplish.

>> Franklin Anderson: Absolutely, it's bittersweet when we have to say goodbye, but they've got a lot of -- a lot of work and impact to do ahead of themselves, and their careers, so definitely a rewarding part of the job. All right, in keeping an eye on the clock here, I think that will wrap up this section. So thank you Molly for joining me, and we will conclude by sharing a couple of reminders for other information and upcoming events. So as I mentioned earlier, we have one event left in our anniversary series. That is the virtual networking session for the changing attitudes aspect of what RespectAbility does. And if you'd like to either catch up on past events that we've done and watch the recordings, or sign up for this virtual networking event, check out RespectAbility.org/ten. And finally again, another reminder that this is our 10th anniversary, and all of our -- work, everything you've heard today has been empowered by the public, by people like you. So if we want to continue to succeed over the next 10 years, we need support from the public to make it happen. Please consider going to RespectAbility.org/donate/anniversary-fund, or just the front page of RespectAbility.org, and make a contribution to support people with disabilities, and fight stigmas and advance opportunities for them. So I think that will conclude us for the day. Thank you everyone for joining us. It was some great conversations. Thank you to all of the panelists, and I will conclude there. So thank you everyone, have a great day!