

Phil Dallmann: Hello inclusion Believers. And welcome to, The Access Champions Podcast. I'm your host, Phil Dallmann, for this week's journey into the galaxies of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. We've got another great uh, episode for you this week. Jeremy McGovern uh, joins us from the West Coast. Uh, Jeremy founded the Miracle League uh, Los Angeles. Which is an organization and a program there that provides um, the opportunity to play baseball uh, for individuals of all abilities.

Phil Dallmann: In a really great partnership with uh, Cal Ripken foundation and, and the Los Angeles Dodgers. Um, so really excited to share that conversation. Uh, Jeremy is another guest brought to us by our Producer, Matt Kerstetter's connections to uh former Project Runway employees. Uh, which is really fun.

Phil Dallmann: Um, and it seems to be a trajectory, you know? Work on Project Runway and you know, create inclusion. Um, or advocate for accessibility, you know? Um, but really excited to share that conversation with you and yeah. Uh, I wanna say a quick thank you to everyone who reached out after this past week's episode with Sara [Hom 00:01:15]. Um, you know, we've gotten a little feedback here and there on different episodes. But, it was overwhelming this week. Um, just in, in messages uh, from folks letting us know how much they enjoy the conversation. Um, and how excited they were at what's going on over at Roundabout.

Phil Dallmann: So um, thank you for reaching out. And, and, again, thank you to Roundabout for all the good work that you're doing. And, Sarah Hom for, for leading that charge. As always, I wanna thank our transcript sponsor, uh, C2 Captioning who provide our transcripts via Rev.com. Again, I put this out a couple weeks ago, if you guys have any feedback on the transcripts, please reach out. Um, if there, if there are any issues with them, or if they could be better in, in any way; um, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Phil Dallmann: And in a similar vein, please make sure that you do subscribe, and that you, you know, follow us on social media. Our champion intern, Ms Kelsey Rose Brown uh, is putting out a lot of great content now. She's, she's revamped sort of our aesthetic on social media. And it's ... I think it's fantastic. I'm obviously incredibly biased but um, I think it's really great. And, a really great follow.

Phil Dallmann: Um, and a joyful follow which uh, I think is important. You know, we, when we go on social media now ... and not to like, completely diverge off. Um, you know, where we're headed here. Um, but uh, you know, when we scroll through, there can be a lot of ... um, you know, the news is the news, and it is what it is. And, we can't necessarily change that.

Phil Dallmann: Um, but there's a little bit of, "Womp, womp." And, we all have follows, friends that don't put the most uplifting things out there. Or, maybe um, prefer uh, things that are a little more tacky and things like that. Um, and uh, so you know,

I mean, I have a carefully cultivated feed of, of uh, puppies and babies. And uh, while that's not for everyone, it brings me great joy.

Phil Dallmann: But uh, I, I, I think one of the things I'm proud about is that um, what our social media feed shares leans towards uh, triumph, celebration, and joy. Because, I think that's where this movement is headed; this inclusion movement.

Phil Dallmann: Um again, we ... I always say, as long as we keep lifting each other up um, those of us who benefit from this movement. And, those of us who are working in this movement, if we keep lifting each other up, we're gonna get there. We're gonna get to true inclusion and true accessibility. So, um, all that to be said. Uh, uh, give us a follow. Uh, we're @Accesschampion and, The Access Champion Podcast.

Phil Dallmann: So, uh, and now without further adieu, Jeremy McGovern.

Phil Dallmann: All right, and we are here with Jeremy McGovern, founder of, The Miracle League, Los Angeles. Thanks for joining us, Jeremy.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, absolutely.

Phil Dallmann: You are uh, funny enough, I think our third? Third or fourth guest that has come directly through our producer uh, Matt Kerstetter. Um-

Jeremy McGovern: Oh really?

Phil Dallmann: Yeah. (laughs). Yeah, he ... you know, it's funny I'm the one that kind of works in this field of, uh, accessibility, diversity, inclusion. Um, but he's turns out to be incredibly well connected in that field (laughs). So-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, I worked with him on a couple of sho- ... I think Runway was the first one we did. And then the second season I went back, he didn't come back but we found ... when we went through storage to pull things out to use again; we found lots of like, drawings and little notes and stuff he had left for us to find.

Phil Dallmann: (laughs).

Jeremy McGovern: On season two (laughs)-

Phil Dallmann: Oh, I love that. Uh-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, it was good.

Phil Dallmann: That's fantastic. Uh, and it sounds like the most Matt thing ever.

Jeremy McGovern: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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Phil Dallmann: I guess that's a great jumping off point. How, how does one get from working on Project Runway, to founding an organization like, The Miracle League.

Jeremy McGovern: Uh, well it actually is kind of related. On ... I did another show called, Lovetown, USA with Oprah Winfrey. Where, basically the premise of the show was, we went into this very small town in Georgia, and the whole town was kind of involved in the show. And, the premise was, "What happens to a town after 30 days of everybody in the town focusing on being positive and helping each other. And, making everything better, and reaching out to your neighbors, and like, doing good things intentionally for 30 days. How does that change the town."

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: And one of the days, we actually spent with, The Miracle League in Kingsland, which is where we were-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Uh, and it was just the most incredible day. We had the most ... the entire crew, it was just such an amazing experience, and such an amazing day. That, I took away from it that, I wanted to move here with the LA chapter when I got back. I figured I would just go and play with the kids or whatever.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: And when I got back to LA I looked and I couldn't find one, so I contacted the main office in Atlanta. And said, "I just [inaudible 00:06:23] LA branch, but I can't seem to find any information on it."

Jeremy McGovern: And they said, "Well we don't have one in LA. We've tried unsuccessfully three times to start one. But, getting things kicked off in cities like LA and New York is a much different project than getting something kicked off in Kingsland, Georgia." 'Cause, it's a really long thing and there's so many good causes in LA that it's like, it's hard to keep people's attention on something for as long as it takes to break ground, and build the field, and you know, get all this going. It was a four year process.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, and so they said, "Well we don't have one in LA." And I said, "Well, let's build one." Thinking they'd say, "Oh that's great, that's nice. Here's all the reasons why we can't." And they said, "Go for it."

Phil Dallmann: (laughs) great-

Jeremy McGovern: I was like, "Oh ..."

Phil Dallmann: They called your bluff (laughs).

Jeremy McGovern: "Oh okay. So now I have to do this."

Phil Dallmann: (laughs).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, so it was ... it was a long process. There was a lot of going back and forth with the city, and trying to find a space. 'Cause, as you can imagine, finding someone willing to donate enough space to build a baseball field on ... in Los Angeles is no small feat.

Phil Dallmann: No.

Jeremy McGovern: And is you know, at a premium and very expensive.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, so it was just me and then my Co-Director Andy came on. He reached out to Miracle League uh, in Atlanta, and they put him in touch with me. 'Cause, I had uh, kind of started the ball rolling.

Jeremy McGovern: So then he came on and it was the two of us working on it. And, then, The Dodgers got involved. And that's when things started moving. Um, the Los Angeles Dodgers turned out to have a little bit more pull in Los Angeles than just two guys sitting at their kitchen table.

Phil Dallmann: Nah-

Jeremy McGovern: [crosstalk 00:07:54]-

Phil Dallmann: No ... you mean, Magic Johnson has a little (laughs) ... A Magic Johnson led team uh, you know knows a thing-

Jeremy McGovern: That's the thing, it was, it was uh ... yeah. So, the Dodgers came on, The Dodgers Foundation-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: And what they normally do, is they build baseball fields in underserved communities. But, traditionally they're a standard baseball field. They heard about us, and they wanted to do their first univers- ... universally accepted field-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: So then we [inaudible 00:08:23] and we worked together with the city to find a place, um, build a field, and then weave in all of our programming on that field now. So, it was kind of like, us and the city, and the Cal Ripken Foundation, and LA parks department. Like, everybody working together and now we have this incredible field in Baldwin Hills.

Jeremy McGovern: Um, and we play two seasons a year with our kids. We finished the fall and we're already gearing up for our spring season. Um, and that's how ... I guess I kinda went through how I got involved into where we are now. But that's ... that's how it happened.

Phil Dallmann: That's uh, that's fantastic. And that sounds like a lot of uh, wonderful things falling into place. And, and, great partners um, I, I-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah-

Phil Dallmann: ... Am familiar with the Cal Ripken Foundation as well. And they're a wonderful organization.

Jeremy McGovern: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Phil Dallmann: Um, and then um, you know it's always ... as you say, it's always good in LA to have, The Dodgers on your side. Uh-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, yeah (laughs). It was, it was a long time of us making very, very little progress. And then once, The Dodgers jumped in with us, things moved much, much faster.

Phil Dallmann: (laughs). I can only imagine. So, you said, you have two seasons a year. Can you give us sort of an idea of what your programming looks like, in a, in a given season?

Jeremy McGovern: Uh, yeah. We, we do ... I think we do two seasons a year, we do spring and fall. We don't do summer in Los Angeles just 'cause it's way too hot.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: And then the winter everybody kind of splits up. We end our fall season right before Thanksgiving.

Phil Dallmann: Okay.

Jeremy McGovern: And that's kind of when everybody splits up for the holidays, and goes on vacation, or visits with their family, so people aren't really around.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: And so we don't do that. But our seasons are eight weeks. Right now ... we're growing every season. Right now, we have two games, or two teams so we do one game every Saturday morning at our playground ... or, at our field in Baldwin Hills.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, on our teams we have kids from ... I think our youngest last season was four years old. And we have players up into their 30's.

Phil Dallmann: Oh great.

Jeremy McGovern: Um, and ... yeah, it's amazing. Everybody plays really well, everybody has fun. Uh ... it is ... uh, we have ... we got a huge LED scoreboard donated. So like, when the kids go up, there pictures go up on the scoreboard. And that's a lot of fun for them.

Phil Dallmann: That's awesome. That's fun for everyone. (laughs).

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, it is. So we're growing, our teams are getting bigger [inaudible 00:10:45] split off and make more teams-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Right now it's, it's, it's ... they're really big teams so we book a couple hours every Saturday morning. And ... but, obviously the idea is to get more teams. And take up the whole day, and eventually get more fields going.

Phil Dallmann: That's awesome. And so, for those who, who can't necessarily imagine. What is ... what does an inclusive, accessible game look like?

Jeremy McGovern: Um, well I mean, as far as the field goes, obviously our dugouts are bigger to allow for people in wheel chairs to be in the dugouts-

Phil Dallmann: Hm-

Jeremy McGovern: ... And stuff. The field itself is made out of, it's on AstroTurf ... um, I forgot the exact name of it. But, it really [inaudible 00:11:21] it's sort of like somewhere between an AstroTurf and a rubber-

Phil Dallmann: Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeremy McGovern: ... Playing surface so that kids in-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jeremy McGovern: ... Wheel chairs and walkers can get around with no problem. But other than that, it looks ... it's just like a regular baseball game. We have ... usually, we'll do three full innings.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, depending I mean, sometimes it gets really, really hot. You can see the kids starting to fade. So we'll call it a little early if we need to. But usually, it's three ga- ... or three innings. There's two teams, everybody gets to bat, everybody gets to run. And, uh, when the team that is uh ... at ... uh, obviously one team fields and one team bats. Um, all of our kids have a buddy-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: We try to make it consistent and give the same kids the same buddies throughout the season. Um, but the kids get to interact with each other. We have ... buddies will be kids from the community, um, volunteers, sometimes we'll have special guests like PepsiCo has come out and they'll bring buddies with them when they come out.

Jeremy McGovern: Um, we've had the Vikings which is the Santa Monica High School Baseball team, has come out and played. And that was ... that's a lot of fun for the kids when they play. Play with other baseball players.

Jeremy McGovern: Um, but yeah, every baseball player gets a buddy. And we go through a normal baseball game, just like any other baseball game.

Phil Dallmann: That's fantastic. So uh, you said you, you guys are starting to grow. And you talked a little bit about uh, what you'd like to see in the future. You know, more teams, more fields. Um, but, but, you know, it sounds like this has, this has taken off eh, uh, pretty quickly.

Phil Dallmann: I mean, while it was a process getting it started, it sounds like you're, you're growing at a good pace. Um, what, what would you like to see in the next you know, few years for this organization and for inclusion in the area?

Jeremy McGovern: Well, I think our immediate goal in the next few years if we get enough players ... because right now we're playing really a non competitive game.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, everybody hits, everybody runs, everybody scores. But what we wanna do, our first split off would be, to have it competitively. 'Cause we do have a pretty significant number of our kids are at a level where they could play in a fully competitive league.

Phil Dallmann: Hm.

Jeremy McGovern: We don't have to do it specifically yet. Um, but yeah the first thing I would like to do is get a competitive league going. So then we would have our, our, our for fun league and our competitive league. Um, and then build from there.

Jeremy McGovern: And then also we have ... and then Los Angeles is obviously such a huge community. And-

Phil Dallmann: Yeah-

Jeremy McGovern: There's, there's a really, really community of special needs families in Los Angeles. And obviously a lot of it is getting the word out.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: But we are located in Baldwin Hills. That's our one field right now. And getting in Los Angeles can be a challenge, famously. Um, so I do I would like to have the opportunity to put more fields in Los Angeles so that we can serve more families. Just because, you know, depending on where you live, it might not be practical to make it to Baldwin Hills on a Saturday morning. So if there's you know, multiple fields that you can take advantage of, it just makes it that much easier to serve that many more families. And, give that many more kids the opportunity to play.

Phil Dallmann: Yeah, absolutely. Uh, you know, I always, I always say uh, the easier you can make it for these families to ... who have hit however many road bumps before they get out the door, the more likely you are to be able to provide the access or inclusion that you're hoping to provide.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah.

Phil Dallmann: Yeah, so I think you're ... I mean, you don't need me to say it but I think your instincts are dead on. (laughs), uh, creating you know, uh, sub sects in different parts of LA. And LA is famously like you know, broken up in different areas. And, and, um, is the traffic as bad as everyone says?

Jeremy McGovern: Uh, I mean not on a Saturday morning, thankfully-

Phil Dallmann: Okay (laughs).

Jeremy McGovern: It ... I feel like the traffic is ... when I first moved here, it drove me crazy.

Phil Dallmann: Okay.

Jeremy McGovern: But I feel like after you've been here for a while, you kind of learn ... it's like it's own beast. You learn how it works, you kind of learn to avoid it. Like, at this point, I've been here almost 20 years. And I very, very rarely sit in traffic. 'Cause, I kind of ... you just kind of learn how to get around it, you learn how to avoid it, you learn not ... when not to go at what point during the day. [inaudible 00:15:25] like learning the subways in New York or anything else. It's part of living in LA, after you've been here a while, you learn to navigate it and it becomes not so much of an issue.

Jeremy McGovern: Or, [inaudible 00:15:35] traffic like really at this point, it doesn't bother me anymore-

Phil Dallmann: Right-

Jeremy McGovern: As long as I'm not running late, I'm very happy to sit in my car, and have music, and chill out. It's like a very zen, quiet time to just be by yourself-

Phil Dallmann: See, I, I always think that that's how I'll react if or when I ever make the move from New York to LA. But, but I am worried you know, I did, I grew up in New Jersey, not, not ... just like Matt, and there is some ingrained road rage. Um-

Jeremy McGovern: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Phil Dallmann: ... And so, I'm a little bit worried about a, a ... and I went to school in DC, and the traffic there was, was horrendous. Uh, so I'm always like, "I don't ... LA, sunshine sounds great. Um, more sunshine, uh you know, less subway, a car with air conditioning sounds great-"

Jeremy McGovern: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Phil Dallmann: "... Uh, but I don't know. (laughs)."

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah. I mean, and I, like I ... I worked in New York with Matt. So I spent the summers there and like, for a while it was great. I was like, "Oh, I can walk everywhere. I know I can take the subway, it's so much easier and faster." But then after like three or four months of that I was like, "Okay, I'm ready to be back in my air conditioned car where I can listen to music-

Phil Dallmann: (laughs)-

Jeremy McGovern: "... And I [inaudible 00:16:42] with anybody else." You know? It doesn't smell like pee and nobody's running into me, and it's just like I can ... I'm stuck and I'm moving really slow, but I'm moving really slow in my own space.

Phil Dallmann: (laughs). That's, that's 100% fair. Any, any of my friends who come to visit, inevitably in the first day or so that they're here they're like, "What is that

smell?" I just go, "It's pee. It's always pee. Whenever you ask that, 'What's that smell?' It's pee." Uh-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, the subways ... I don't understand. I mean, I guess you get used to it but I, I don't ... like, when I was there and I would ride the subway around, it's so hot down there in the summer. I don't understand how people get to work and still like, look nice. I don't understand how you show up to work and you're not like, pit stained and wrinkled clothes, and like ... it's so hot down there (laughs).

Phil Dallmann: Oh, I had taken to just wearing shorts and a T-shirt, and carrying my suit in. It was-

Jeremy McGovern: Oh, that makes sense-

Phil Dallmann: Yeah, it was-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, I figured people would change at work or something. 'Cause, I would just be a sweaty mess after-

Phil Dallmann: Yeah, totally-

Jeremy McGovern: 10 minutes on the subway.

Phil Dallmann: God forbid you have an early meeting-

Jeremy McGovern: Right-

Phil Dallmann: And don't ... barely have time to change. It's uh, no it's, it's horrendous and um, it makes us all tougher I'd like to think. Um (laughs)-

Jeremy McGovern: I do love New York. I would, I would live in New York in a heart beat. I love it there so much.

Phil Dallmann: Oh it's, it's getting better. And I, I will say ... and this ... we've definitely got a little off topic here but the uh, the subway has increased and I ... in the world of accessibility, um, I have been pleased to see ... you know, we're never happy when stations are closed for renovation but so many of them have been closed right now for either, upgrading or installing elevators.

Jeremy McGovern: Hm, good.

Phil Dallmann: So that's been a really good movement. And I believe the new head of the MTA here came to us via originally from London, and then via Toronto, and those are two very accessible-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah-

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Phil Dallmann: ... Subway systems. So uh-

Jeremy McGovern: My husband is English so he lived in London when we met. So I spent a lot of time there. And, that's another amazing city.

Phil Dallmann: Oh my God, I was there last, last winter and I couldn't believe how clean everything was. And, how uh, clearly they would state at each stop, the accessibility. Like-

Jeremy McGovern: [crosstalk 00:18:47]-

Phil Dallmann: ... there are elevators here, there's escalators here. You know, if you go one more stop, there's an elevator. Um, just like unreal, unreal.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, and LA does have a subway system. Like, people don't seem to think that we do-

Phil Dallmann: Okay.

Jeremy McGovern: We do have a subway system. And our subways are amazing. They are immaculate, they are spotlessly clean. Each subway station has a theme like, movies or whatever. And they're all done by artists. And they're all really nice because nobody uses them.

Phil Dallmann: (laughs).

Jeremy McGovern: They're basically empty. Because, understanding they're going to a lot of new places. But right now, when they started the subway system here-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jeremy McGovern: It seems to go only to places you would want to go as a tourist. Like, it goes to-

Phil Dallmann: Oh okay-

Jeremy McGovern: ... Hollywood and Universal Studios, and downtown by the museum area. And, places like that, that if you live here, you don't really go to those places.

Phil Dallmann: Right.

Jeremy McGovern: If you're a tourist, it's amazing.

Phil Dallmann: It's like Times Square, I avoid Times Square like the plague.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, it's not super practical for people who actually live here.

Phil Dallmann: Gotcha.

Jeremy McGovern: But they're expanding it. Now there's lines to go to the beach, and they're going to the airport, and out to Pasadena.

Phil Dallmann: Oh okay-

Jeremy McGovern: So, it's getting much more practical. But for a while, it's like, "We have an amazing subway system, they're beautiful, they're spotless, and they're empty." (Laughs).

Phil Dallmann: That sounds a bit like Seattle's system too. I was just out there over the summer. And they're expanding it with you know, all the Amazon campuses and Microsoft Campuses out there-

Jeremy McGovern: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Phil Dallmann: But, they were like, you know it's getting there. But, it goes mostly places locals don't go.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, exactly.

Phil Dallmann: So ... Oh, anyway (laughs), as we dive off into transportation.

Jeremy McGovern: Yes.

Phil Dallmann: Um, (laughs)-

Jeremy McGovern: I feel like people from big cities always end up talking about that kind of stuff.

Phil Dallmann: Oh my ... like clockwork. Like clockwork.

Jeremy McGovern: It's like that bond that we all have.

Phil Dallmann: We don't-

Jeremy McGovern: How do we get where we're going?

Phil Dallmann: Yeah. We don't talk about the weather. Uh, everybody else uses that for small talk. We talk about subways (laughs).

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, well I live in LA, we don't have weather. It's the same everyday-

Phil Dallmann: Yeah, fair enough.

Jeremy McGovern: It's nice, it's sunny, great. Nothing to talk about.
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Phil Dallmann: (laughs). Um, scooting back to, to the Miracle League. Um, uh, what has, what has outreach in the community been like? And I, and I ask that because I know in my experience here in, in New York, and Jersey, and Connecticut, um, it's really been interesting um, gaining the community's trust.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, I think that's a big thing. I think in city's in LA ... and I know we've talked a lot to The Miracle League in San Diego-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jeremy McGovern: 'Cause they're ... it's very different there but it's sort of the closest in the area that they can help us, and give us advice and stuff. And they, they, they had the same thing. Like, when they built there first field it was a very slow build. And now they've got multiple fields and they're doing great. They've got huge donors that come back every year and stuff.

Jeremy McGovern: But, I think that's, I think that's one of the problems. And to my knowledge, there's still not a Miracle League in New York? Maybe that's changed. But when we started there wasn't in New York City, like I said-

Phil Dallmann: When I, When I Googled, it was not here. Uh-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, because they've said they've had a really ... a problem, for the same reasons like, "Where are you gonna find land in New York City-"

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jeremy McGovern: [crosstalk 00:21:56] to build a field on. The land is so expensive there.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: But also, part of the problem is, in big city's like LA and New York, there are so many good causes-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: And something like a Miracle League is a very slow build, that it's hard to keep people focused on something for as long as it takes to get a Miracle League going.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, once we got going it's great. We're still at the point like, we have some of ... like, getting the name out. 'Cause the special needs community in LA is very big.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: And it's very close knit. So like, getting your name out in the community is a challenge. And that's one that we're still working on. But we have ... a lot of our parents ... I have parents who've become board members on Miracle League who are special needs teachers, and are obviously very, very involved and active in the community. And, they have been an incredible help to us. Like, knowing who we should talk to-

Phil Dallmann: Oh those are the biggest advocates-

Jeremy McGovern: [crosstalk 00:22:55] helpful-

Phil Dallmann: ... you can get, is parents.

Jeremy McGovern: Absolutely.

Phil Dallmann: 'Cause parents trust other parents.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, and they're the best people to and talk ... you know, somebody who has special needs children who are in Miracle League and benefiting from the organization, are way better to speak about it, than I am.

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Like, I started it and I love it, but I, I don't have children of my own that are benefiting from it. And, I don't live in the community, and I don't know all of the struggles and things that are first hand that parents can actually talk about.

Phil Dallmann: Yeah.

Jeremy McGovern: And so I think that's been one of our biggest helps, is having parents who are so involved and so willing to help. And, talk about us and get the word out there, and share information on Miracle League, and their networks, and things like that.

Jeremy McGovern: That's probably been more vital in getting our name out there and helping us grow than anything else we've done. Like, just little grassroots stuff with parents-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Jeremy McGovern: ... in the community, has been so important.

Phil Dallmann: Yep, they're the, they're the biggest advocates for any type of organization like this. I feel like once you get that core group of parents who are willing to run through a wall for your organization, that's when you see that growth.

Phil Dallmann: So, I, I, I, I'll wrap up and get you out of here on this. Um, I had mentioned in the sort of pre interview segment. Um, I'd like to give an opportunity to sort of spread the love. People loving on people. Are there any people or organizations that you think are also doing great work? Either in LA or anywhere else? Um, that you'd love to shine a light on?

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, I mean outside of you know, The Dodgers Foundation, and people have already talked about it. We've met other smaller groups. There's a group called, Coach Art-

Phil Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeremy McGovern: Um, that has come out to our games and helped us. And they do a ... not a similar thing, but they also work with special needs children. And, they bring art to these kids. Instead of bringing them out to play baseball, they bring them and they do art classes. And, instruction and you know, helping them create things and work together. And that's an incredible organization that we work with.

Jeremy McGovern: Just anything that helps these kids like, come out of their shell a little bit. Which, we've seen, has been one of the biggest and most rewarding things that we've seen is, some of the kids who came to us that were very much in a shell, and didn't interact, and kind of in their own world, and didn't really play or anything. Now, are so excited to get up to bat. And dancing on first base, and running the bases on their own, and so excited.

Jeremy McGovern: They just come out of their shell so much just from playing.

Phil Dallmann: Well, that's fantastic. I wanna say thank you, Jeremy. Not only for taking the time out to speak with us, but for you know, um, seeing something uh, wanting it to be in your community. And, even though it wasn't there yet, taking it on um, and making it a part of your community, I think that's fantastic.

Phil Dallmann: There are so many times that many of us look at something like, "Oh, I wish that was here." And that's the end of the thought.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah.

Phil Dallmann: Um, it's, it's done there. And, I think it's when people like you look at it and go, "I wish we had that ... Okay, how can I make that happen? Or, how can I help facilitate that happening?" Um, and then to have it you know, grow and become such a great thing, and such a great partnership with, The Dodgers, and Cal Ripken, and others. Um, I, I think that's absolutely fantastic. So thank you.

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, and I mean to be honest and tell the truth, we've gotten ... I feel like me and my board of directors have gotten just as much out of this whole process. And, going to play every Saturday, we get as much out of it as the kids do. Like,

every Saturday ... you know, it's Saturday morning, it's 7:00 AM, your alarm goes off and you're just like, "Ugh, it's 7:00 AM on a Saturday." But by the time you get to the field and the kids start showing up, it's the best part of the weekend. And I, I really do ... every single volunteer, and every single person who is a part of it, has said to me constantly and continuously, how much they get from it too. It's not just the kids getting stuff from it.

Jeremy McGovern: I mean obviously the kids get stuff from it too but everybody who's involved, walks away just feeling really good, and having gotten so much out of it, and taking so much for our lives too. It's like, we get just as much as we give.

Phil Dallmann: Fantastic. That's great. Well, thank you Jeremy-

Jeremy McGovern: Yeah, absolutely-

Phil Dallmann: And you are truly an Access Champion.

Jeremy McGovern: (laughs), thank you sir.

Phil Dallmann: Thanks again to Jeremy for taking the time to chat with us. Um, and thank you for all the work that you're doing out in LA. I'm really excited to watch uh, you guys expand and, and I think uh, maybe, maybe this spring ... uh, I probably shouldn't say this spring 'cause I'm getting married this spring. Probably shouldn't add anything else to the docket. But, maybe this spring, who knows, we'll see if my fiancée's actually listening to this podcast.

Phil Dallmann: Uh, maybe this spring I'll jump out there to LA and maybe the podcast will call a game live, you know that could be fun. And if not this spring, maybe this fall. So, thank you Jeremy um, and uh, uh, keep on keeping on there. We're really excited to watch that program grow.

Phil Dallmann: As always, thank you to our Producer, Matt Kerstetter for making us sound each and every week, uh, in fact this ... and, and paying attention to details, he caught a couple of errors on the original intro/outro uh, and, and, so this is actually my second take on this. Really appreciate that. Um, for constantly um, making sure I don't sound like an idiot.

Phil Dallmann: Um, and of course thank you to our champion intern, Ms Kelsey Rose Brown for everything that she does. And, Eric Walton our composer for that wonderful theme song. Uh, we'll be back again next week. And, remember inclusion believers, Never Stop Running Through That Brick Wall.