

[Philip 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.

[Philip Dallmann](#): Uh, we got a great episode for you guys this week. Uh, we're gonna start rolling out some of the interviews we did in Chicago, and we, we're gonna launch off with Lucas Livingston, who's the Assistant Director of Accessibility and Lifelong Learning Programs over at the Art Institute of Chicago. It's really, uh, exciting to, to sit down with Lucas, who's one of the first people that reached out, uh, when I announced I was heading to Chicago. He took me on an amazing tour of the Art Institute, I had never been. Um, it's an absolutely stunning building, and, and facility, and their collections are, um, really incredible. Uh, and it, it was just a blast to chat with him, and, and, and see where, you know, his journey came from, how accessibility at the Art Institutes kind of evolved with him, and continues to evolve.

[Philip Dallmann](#): Um, and, and how he's using the community to help guide that. So, um, I think that's really, really great. Um, and I'm excited to share a lot of, of what, uh, we got in Chicago. Uh, it was a really great trip. I think I mentioned last week, even after I left there were people that, you know, schedules, you know, didn't, um, mesh up and we weren't able to chat, but that we're talking on the phone since we're back, so.

[Philip Dallmann](#): Uh, really excited to share a lot of those conversations. Um, hopefully next week we'll be rolling out, uh, an interview with our Associate Producer, uh, Ms. Kelsey Rose Brown. We had done an interview, uh, and I deleted it. (Laughs) I don't know how, uh, the, the mysteries of technology somehow, uh, it just disappeared. Um, but she has written a, a new children's book called "Come On Calm", um, and, uh, we've already chatted about it once, but we'll do it again. Uh, and I'm excited to share that with you guys, hopefully next week, um, if not the following.

[Philip Dallmann](#): As always, uh, if you don't already, go ahead and give us a follow on social media. Kelsey, the aforementioned, Ms. Kelsey Rose Brown, uh, puts out a ton of great content. I, I can't take credit for any of it. Um, she's constantly sharing great articles, fun memes, uh, and, uh, she does all of the amazing art work, um, for each episode. Uh, so, go ahead and give us a follow. We don't fill your feed, but we give you ... We're all about quality over quantity here.

[Philip Dallmann](#): So, we're at @AccessChampion on Instagram & Twitter, and The Access Champion Podcast on Facebook. Um, and then, you know, wherever you're listening to this, make sure you subscribe. If you have 30 seconds to a minute, go ahead and give us a little star rating, and if you have two minutes and want to leave us a nice little review, whether it's, again, on iTunes, Google Play, wherever, um, someone reached out and said they weren't sure how to review on Stitcher.



[Philip Dallmann:](#) I also couldn't figure that out so, if you're able to just give us a little rating on there, that's fine. We really appreciate it, and obviously it helps us, um, when we look for sponsorships, and things like that, that keep this podcast rolling. Um, as we wrap up our first season, our first year, um, this is, uh, what is this right now? It's episode 49, uh, which puts us three away from a full year's worth.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, as you can tell, I was, was a theater major (laughs) math does not come quickly. Uh, we appreciate any and all support you can give in that way. Um, and, uh, as mentioned last week, we really did have a blast doing the TDF series, with the organizational buy in. Um, and we do want to do that with other organizations, so, uh, if there's an organization that jumps to mind, when, when you were listening, uh, to the previous series, or now, um, that you think would be great to highlight, or, or, a good example of organizational buy in, in a lot of different aspects, um, reach out to us at accesschampion@gmail.com, let us know.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I have my own little list, but I, I'm really hoping to get more ideas and more recommendations 'cause I, I definitely don't know everyone out there that's doing great work. Um, and nothing excites me more than discovering a new organization that is, uh, making change and, and working towards an inclusive society. So, uh, go ahead and reach out to us. Again, that's accesschampion@gmail.com.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Alright, uh, and I think that's all our business this week. So, uh, let's get to it. Without further ado, Access Champion, Lucas Livingston.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Alright, and we are here in Chicago, uh, at the Chicago Art Institute, with Lucas Livingston, the Assistant Director for Accessibility and Lifelong Learning. Thanks for, uh, taking time to chat Lucas.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, thanks Phil. It's a real pleasure to, uh, to be on the podcast.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I, we just finished a, uh, really fun tour, uh, of the Art Institute. Um, I, it's my first time here. I'd only been to a few institutions here in the city, um, and, uh, oh, what a, what a great ... First of all, uh, I think I said to you during the tour, what beautiful building.

[Lucas L.:](#) (Laughs) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) And, uh, what a, a wonderful, diverse collection that you guys have.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, definitely. I mean, that's, that's, uh, that's really one the, what I see as being one of the tremendous assets to working here, is just the strength of the Art Institute's collection, and, uh, the whole world of art under one roof, uh, and, uh, yeah, so, its constant changing environment of different exhibitions



coming and going, uh, so a never ending learning opportunity for, for myself, yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Um, so, uh, as you know as a listener of the podcast (laughs)-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I always love to start with, uh, sort of the origin story that, the journey, uh, to the arts and to, uh, access. Uh, so if, if you could, take us on, take us on that journey.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, sure, absolutely, right. No, it, uh, I think I came at it rather indirectly.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) Um, I don't, dunno, don't wanna go too far back, but uh, well when I, I, I got into, um, museums, um, first thinking to pursue a path towards academia, but then as a disgruntled recovering academic, uh, thought, "Well, you know there are these places called museums. Maybe I'll go check that out."

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) (Laughs) Uh, so-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I love that term, "recovering academic."

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah. So, um, but then I, I had no concept of, uh, really of museum education, or, uh, museum learning, and so thought, "Well, everybody in a museum's a curator, so. I'll go check that out." Uh, but then, uh, after a while, I started actually interning in the Ancient Art Department, here at the Art Institute. That's my, uh, art historical background, is antiquities, the classical world, and Egypt. Um, so I was doing that for a while, which was fantastic, as an intern. And then I got a full time gig in the, uh, Asian art curatorial department, working on an exhibition of Himalayan art, which was amazing. I knew nothing about Himalayas, or, or, really all of the, uh, Eastern half of the world. Um, so this opened up that whole world to me, as again, this never ending learning environment.

[Lucas L.:](#) I got a little taste of, uh, doing some gallery teaching, during that Himalayan exhibition-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) And I thought, "Oh my gosh, this is fantastic. This is what I want to do." And, uh, "But wait, what there's people down the hall who, they do that, like, full time?"



[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) So, yeah, so then I, I tried to transition over and after a couple years, managed to move over to the education department. Mus ... Then what was called museam education, and now what we're, uh, the department of learning and public engagement. Uh, and, so I was in the unit and, to an extent, still within the unit called the Senior Programs. So, the older adult learning, the, uh, working with senior citizens, in a sense, uh-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) And that division within our department had been around for, uh, 20, well, mm, by then it was about 15 years then. Uh, and so, and had grown, uh, still prioritizing working with the older adult population. Um, but then increasingly, uh, accessibility, uh, became, uh, uh, um, a growing, uh, area of concentration. Um, and, um, then, uh, I gradually over time, uh my predecessor, Micky Silverstein, she retired from the position, and so I filled her shoes as the, now the assistant director, um, and, a couple years ago, or no, when was it? About three years ago, my, uh, position title changed. The Assistant Director part stayed the same, but I lobbied to, um, to get rid of the Senior Programs element-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) And change that to, uh, an Accessibility and Lifelong Learning, to just, uh, keep up with the changing landscape of language-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) Um, 25 years ago. Uh, senior was, uh, a, a, uh, term of endearment of sorts. Um, seniority, but, uh, in a sense now, people don't want to identify with that term, senior, or senior citizen. So, lifelong learning is, is kind of the new hip code word for older adult education. Uh, and so, and then also adding accessibility to that because, while originally the, um, the aspect of accessibility, uh, historically comes out of the, the need of well, with the older adult population we are dealing a lot with age related disabilities. With hearing loss, with vision loss-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) With limited mobility. Uh, I mean, a huge demographic of the people coming through the museum are, uh, older adults with variety of age related disabilities. And so, providing unique experiences for them, and ensuring that our broadly, our public programs are universally accessible to, um, to, well, to, to, to everyone. Um, and, but also as our museum vistorship ages, uh, ensuring that they don't age out-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) Of the museum experience, right? To ensure that our, our tours, and our lectures, and our art making activities, and our performances all remain accessible to someone who might, uh, being experiencing vision loss. Uh, might be, uh, experiencing a loss of, of hearing, and so, uh, so, then in that sense my position has changed a lot in recent years to emphasize the, uh, the accessibility side of things, uh, while still concentrating, uh, on, uh, the older adult population. Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, uh, that's fantastic. And, and, um, it just makes a lot of sense in, in theory. You know, it's, it's incredibly organic to want to retain your, your members. (laughs) You know?

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah. Right, I know. (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) As long as possible, as long as they can be paying dues, and, and-

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah. For sure, for sure.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) You know, helping keep the lights on.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, absolutely.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Um, so, you know, uh, uh, again, we just had really wonderful tour, but along that tour, um, you showed me quite a few, um, items that, um, um, contribute, or, or help facilitate that access. Uh, you know-

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Um, the first was, um, and in the very front of the mus-

[Lucas L.:](#) Um, the touch gallery.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah, the touch gallery, which-

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I thought was, um, really fantastic, and, and, and I didn't clock it until you mentioned it, um, but it's before the, the sort of the pay barrier, or what have you. Um-

[Lucas L.:](#) Exactly. Yeah, right. That's a ... Yeah, the pay barrier, it's definitely there's a pay wall to-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah. Yeah.

[Lucas L.:](#) This museum, and that's something we have to, we have to, uh, grapple with a lot in our public programming, and so, yeah. Having the Touch Gallery, uh, and actually the entire, uh, uh education center, the Ryan Learning Center, it's all, uh, outside of that, uh, that pay wall, so, anyone can come in and, uh, just off the street, and, and access the Touch Gallery, and uh, a number of other resources that we have in the Education Center, yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, and what's great, um, is that in, you know, the, the touch gallery being so close to the Education Center, one of the things that we talked about that I thought was really great, um, with sort of the placement of, of the Touch Gallery-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Being so ni ... next to, being right next to the education center is what a great segue for conversation about-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, for, for, for students and, and children-

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) To, to learn why someone would need the braille that exists there-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative)..

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Or the tactile function, and then again, there's this sort of the double, um, benefit of, yeah, also, who doesn't like to touch things?

[Lucas L.:](#) Exactly. (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) We all like to touch things. (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) I know, that's the way we, I mean we, that's how we learn from, from cradle to grave. We're, we are multi-sensory people, and so, uh, to, uh, to, uh, create an opportunity for, for everyone to explore the collection through touch, I think is a critical aspect to learning, yeah. Yeah, and some of the docents tell me they like to use the Touch Gallery after they're done with their school tours in the galleries, then on their way back to the Education Center, they'll pass through the Touch Gallery, and let the kids explore through touch, um, and yeah, and that serves as a teaching moment for them. That yeah, people who can't see do



like to visit a visual arts museum. Uh, and it is much more than just a visual experience, it's, uh, a multi-sensory and social experience as well-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Absolutely.

[Lucas L.:](#) Otherwise, couldn't you just look through a catalog or look at pictures online, right? (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah, no. It's going out with your friends or your family and-

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) And, and being able to participate-

[Lucas L.:](#) For sure.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) In culture. Um, couple of the other things that, uh, that I thought were really, really great, uh, you guys have, um, the, uh, sort of engraved, uh, plaques or, or, uh-

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah. Right. These, uh, plastic tablets-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah.

[Lucas L.:](#) Roughly eight by 10 inch-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah, tablets. That's-

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Tablets was the word I was looking for. (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, sure, sure, yeah. Like, eight by 10 inch plastic tablets. Maybe about, uh, uh, a quarter inch thick. And they are, uh, machine etched, uh, so in, in a relief, uh, to reproduce paintings in the collection. So a flat two dimensional paintings, reproducing those as a relief carvings, um, so to explore through touch. Um, five different works of art, uh, across the collection from, uh, Western world, from, uh, from Japan, from ancient Americas, uh, and, so, yeah. Trying, again, creating this, this tactile resource for people to explore through touch.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) And when that kind of veered over into, sort of, the three printing area of some of your, um, you showed me the, the, the-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).



[Philip Dallmann:](#) The, gl ...

[Lucas L.:](#) Mug.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mug.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I was gonna say it's like a mug-

[Lucas L.:](#) That's it.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Um, but there are applications there beyond, uh, uh, patrons with vision loss, but also, uh, with dementia.

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) Right, yeah. So, uh, one of the other, well one of the many programs that I manage here is called "Art in the Moment" and it's a, uh, uh, uh, therapeutic gallery conversation and art making experience for, uh, people living with dementia and their care partners. Uh, a lot of museums around the country are doing similar, um, different yet similar programing.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Nice.

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, a lot of that has been built up through, uh, MoMA's great outreach efforts with their, uh, MoMA Alzheimer's project, and Meet Me At MoMA, uh, but then other museums have independently, uh, started sprouting, uh, programs like this, uh, around the country. Uh, but yeah, with, with the program here, uh, one component to it, we have like a dozen different thematic tours that we'll, uh, we'll do in the galleries, uh, and, and a art making activity led by a trained art therapist, who helps, um, facilitate that. Or doesn't help facilitate that, I mean she really primarily, uh, spear heads a lot of that.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) And, um, so one of these different tours, the thematic tours, involves 3D printed replicas of objects a, around the collection, so objects that are three dimensional objects, um, benefit from being produced through 3D printing, whereas a two dimensional object, like, uh, paintings, uh, in that sense, then we use the, the laser engraving to, uh, or machine etching, to create more of a relief carving, whereas 3D printing this additive process builds, uh, like, uh, an actual three dimensional model, or replica, in that sense.

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, but yeah, right. It, it, the benefit of having this, this tactile connection, while we are standing or sitting in the galleries, in front of the original work of art, uh, which is almost invariably encased behind glass, for, uh, people with dementia, there may be that disconnect where, uh, passively sitting and, and, and observing, uh, looking at something that, uh, some people are talking about, there may not be that same connection as soon as one puts a, a, a 3D replica or physical object in their hand, that is an analog to what they're looking at.

[Lucas L.:](#) There's almost that, that visceral, primal connection. It engages a different aspect of our, um, our, our brain, and a different way of thinking about the object, and so that brings people more into the moment and, and stimulates a greater sense of engagement and, and response, too. And it's very much about response. It's not just about the museum learning of what's this object all about, who made it, artist, title, date. It's, it's, "What do we think about this object? How do we think it functions?" Uh, so, it was also very important when, when selecting works of art to produce as 3D printed replicas, it was very important to me to, uh, chose works of art, uh, A, that we could reproduce, uh, at life size, uh-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) So, not to, uh, take a huge sculpture and shrink it down, or take a minute object, and, and, and blow it up, but to create that, that one to one connection with scale, and then also B, to select works of art that were originally produced with, um, an intention of being touched. An intention by the artist of, uh, that this is gonna be a useful object, like a drinking mug from ancient Greece, like, a, uh, a, a bronze bell from ancient China, like a whistle from, uh, 13th century Columbia.

[Lucas L.:](#) So, uh, objects that were meant to be handled, and thinking the idea being maybe, maybe the artists who create these works of art infuse their objects with, a, like a loving sense of, uh, um, of, of, tactile aesthetics. Uh, and, and, so maybe it, it's, it's meant to be held. Maybe there's, uh, a sensation we can gather, and thoughts we can gather, interpretations we can glean only through touch. Uh, this reminds me of something when we were spearheading this project, our curator of Japanese art, Dr. Janice Katz, she, um, she told me about these, these little Japanese figurines from, um, like, 3,000 years ago.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, the, that, uh, they're little humanoid figurines, and, um, they, they, uh, were produced in a sense, almost as, like, medicinal prescriptions, and the idea of being you will, uh, imbue some sort of medicinal value in the object and then break it, to release the, the, the medicine, uh, in, in, in a mystical magical kind of way. But-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Hm.



[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, she, she says that they, they just, um, they just feel right sitting in your hand. Uh, so like the palm cups these, um, items perfectly. And that's something that only through touch would you be able to glean that, that, uh, uh, aesthetic experience, right?

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah.

[Lucas L.:](#) Not, not by just looking at it through glass, so-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Of course, yeah.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I, uh, I should have used ... I wish I knew about that as a, as a kid growing up, I would have just used that, I would have told my sister when I broken my Barbies, "Listen. It was for a medicinal experience."

[Lucas L.:](#) I know. Exactly, yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) You know? (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) For sure, for sure. (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, that, that, that's fantastic. Um, and, uh, yeah. I mean, yeah, just really, really, really wonderful. Um, uh, was there anything else going on? I mean, you just ran off quite a few-

[Lucas L.:](#) (laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, I, I know everyone, uh, at the organization always wants to do, you know, to be doing more, but that, that was quite a-

[Lucas L.:](#) Sure.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) A bit of programming that you guys have going on.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah. No, absolutely. And, and it's, it's never like we can, uh, you know, sit back and say, "Okay, yeah. We, we, we've, we've fixed it."

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs) No.

[Lucas L.:](#) We solved access. (Laughs) Uh, there, there, and there are always, right, additional audiences I feel are, are, "Okay, we're not, we're not providing programming for this demographic."



[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) And that, uh, but it's also, it's about creating a universally designed programs, or inclusive experiences, so our day in, day out regular public programing, our, our family festivals, our professional development opportunities for educators, our, uh, adult festivals, our, um, drawing classes. All of these experiences, our public tours, and lectures, and artist performances. It's about insuring that, that these programs that we're producing are, um, designed not, not with access tacked on-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) At the tail end, as, as, uh, as, uh, sometimes the case, but trying to rethink our programming from the get go, with, with inclusive design, and inclusive experience, and inclusive panache from, from the get go, from the ground up. Uh, so, so some of our programing, we are revisiting and rethinking. Uh, how can we, uh, restructure this experience to make it more inclusive?

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, not just for the visiting public, but also more inclusive of, uh, artists and performers with disabilities, to create greater equitable representation, uh, in, in the audience, as well as in among the artists. Yeah. So, so yeah. We're doing a lot of work in that area, too. And so in that, in that sense, while it gets very quickly outside of my immediate purview, I mean, I run a number of, um, programs for, uh, adults with disabilities, and for the older adults population.

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, but then I also, uh, increasingly am starting to advise across the board, across the department, for all audiences, and, and really and across the museam as well. Uh, but I mean, certainly not like, "Lucas is doing it all alone." (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs) And it never is-

[Lucas L.:](#) No, no.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) And it never ... And, uh, and I don't think any of our listeners would think so. (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah. No, absolutely. I mean, and that, and that's what's great in, in the past few years, we've established, uh, actually two accessibility committees within the Art Institute, there is-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That's amazing.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, there's one that's, uh, specific to my department, learning and public engagement, a working group we call it, which, uh, includes individuals from all of the different divisions of my department. So, uh, divisions like with Youth and Family Programming, School Programing, Adult Learning, uh, so, uh, including, uh, people across the board, and interpretation, which is an interesting division, because that touches all, all fields, all publics, all audiences. Uh, so, uh, that, that group concentrates on, uh, uh, researching and advising, um, inclusive and accessible strategies for, specially for our, our, uh, our programming and our department.

[Lucas L.:](#) But then the museum itself also has a, uh, accessibility committee, which comprises staff from all different departments around the museum. Uh, Human Resources, Protection Services, uh, Membership, uh, Curatorial, uh, and so, and, and that, that's fantastic, um, because, well, we, it's, it's kind of open, open meeting, whoever wants to attend can attend, and so sometimes we, we outgrow the space that we, (laughs) we've booked. Uh, but, it's very helpful, because then, it just promotes dialogue-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative)

[Lucas L.:](#) Across the museum. Um, and, so we all know what's going on, and we can all work together to just improve the visitor experience for, uh, for all visitors and, and staff, too. It's great to have Human Resources as part of that team, because, uh, we, we definitely have members of our own, uh, our own staff, who identify as individuals with disabilities, uh, so we want to ensure that, uh, you know, complying with the law (laughs)-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah. (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) And, uh, that we're just exceeding a lot too, you know?

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah. It's one thing to, to be like, "Okay, we're legal."-

[Lucas L.:](#) Right.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) But another thing to be a truly, uh, inclusive organization.

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, that's fantastic. Um, so, um, you know, I always like to let folks dream their dreams, uh, what would you like to see, uh, for the future of, of inclusion and access here at Institute?

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, we got a number of irons in the fire. Um, the, the Art Institute is a phenomenal space, but it, it, um, it can sometimes take a little while to

implement change. Um, which is, you know, it has its ups and downs. I mean, we, we have to be very intentional, and, uh, sincere about changes that we implement so they don't fall by the wayside, right? Uh, and it takes a lot of buy in across the board. Uh, but some, some wonderful things we're hoping to roll out in the future.

[Lucas L.:](#) We have social narratives that we've produced for, uh, for the Art Institute, for a general visit, for the school visit, and for different family festivals that we host. Uh, we just, we gotta get those up online. (Laughs) You know?

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah.

[Lucas L.:](#) If it does, if it's not online it just doesn't exist, right?

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah.

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) If the internet doesn't have it, did it happen? (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) I know. (Laughs) Uh, so, also I think there's some, some great strides we are making and can continue to make in the realm of technology, as so much of the museum experience moves online and also in our back pockets, on our smart phones. Uh, and, and so to, uh, to incorporate in different aspects. And not, and not only ensuring that our, uh, digital presence is accessible, but also how can we leverage these technologies to, to exceed and excel the, the inclusive experience, so, uh, it, a lot of this is just dreaming.

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, but who knows? You start with a dream, and then it can become reality. Um, so a little while ago, um, maybe it was about a year ago, or more, uh, maybe almost two years now, we debuted a, uh, a verbal description audio tour-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) So we, we've had audio tours for the museum for a long time, uh, but now, uh, rolling out an audio tour of, uh, 14 stops to compliment our, uh, popular highlights audio tour, or the, the essentials. And, so 14 highlights from across the collection, this verbal description audio tour, um, describes what the works of art looks like. Alright, so, about, um, two to four minutes, um, of audio recording.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) And also, when one downloads the app, it includes not just the audio recording, but also the transcript of, of that.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Oh, great.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah. (Laughs) Right, no, so that, that's wonderful. It's something I often like to point out to people and, uh, yeah. So, I think, definitely, in the realm of, uh, of, uh, the digital experience, there's some, some great potential for, for growth down the road, to, um, uh, to, to move forward, and, and take the museum forward, in terms of, uh, yeah, accessibility and inclusion.

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, right. Thinking. (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Well, well, that, that, I mean that, that is, that is really, really great. Um, and I'll, I'll, you know, I'll, I'll get you out of here on this, um, we, uh, um, obviously very excited to be here in Chicago, um, are there any folks here or, it doesn't necessarily mean the Chicago base, that you, uh-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Also think are doing, uh, really great work?

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, no, I mean, absolutely.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) I mean, you sent me a lengthy list before I got here.

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, so, yeah ... (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) So, well, and, and Phil, now technically you're in Chicago, here. So, um, but I'm not gonna butter you up, uh, by including you.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) But, no, absolutely. Uh, no, and, and, uh, I think there, there are, there are many people I can list who are doing great, great work here. Uh, but also I think, I, I wanna, um, I wanna, um, maybe, uh, put on people's radar, uh, well LEAD coming up this summer, uh, in Denver. There, uh, a couple, a couple places that, uh, maybe to put on the radar, uh, and a couple people, uh, maybe wanna shout out to, uh, at, um, uh, Danielle Schulz at the Denver Art Museum. I think she's doing some great work there, uh, and so, um, so you can, people can look out for her at LEAD.

[Lucas L.:](#) And also a transplant. Recent transplant from the High Museum in Atlanta, is Nichole Cromartie, and she's now the, uh, Director of Education at the Clyfford Still Museum, right next to the Denver Art Museum. Uh, and, uh, so Nichole was heading up a lot of the access programming they were doing at the High. Uh, and so now I'm excited to see what she's gonna do at the Clyfford Still, uh, Museum, uh, in Denver, so, there's a couple people to look out for.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Can't wait to, to chat with them, uh, this summer in Denver.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Uh, so, uh, both you guys know, now you have to come by the pop-up studio at LEAD, not that you've been given love on the podcast already.

[Lucas L.:](#) (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Well, thank you again, Lucas, for taking time, and thank you, uh, for the fantastic tour, and thank you for all the work that you're doing here. Uh, you are truly an access champion.

[Lucas L.:](#) Alright, thank you so much, Phil. My pleasure.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) And as is sometimes the case, we kept on talking. Uh, Lucas was such great interview and we, uh, were going on and then he realized we hadn't even talked about this other thing, so, uh, continuing with access champion, Lucas Livingston.

[Lucas L.:](#) So, another, uh, strong aspect of the work I'm presently doing, uh, with the older adult population especially, but I think it, it touches everyone, is, uh, addressing the, the epidemic of loneliness and isolation that people are feeling across the country. Uh, and, uh, especially, uh, well with the aging population, as one's, as one's social network changes as one's spouse passes away, and, and friends, uh, disappear, there's increase isolation, which leads to, um, a feeling of loneliness and social isolation, and so, and it's described as, uh, as the, um, uh, uh, uh, the ...

[Lucas L.:](#) This, well, epidemic of the 21st century, a silent killer, uh, the Foundation for Art and Healing likes to, well, they don't like to, but the Foundation for Art and Healing will, uh, promote that, uh, uh, that loneliness is, uh, as damaging to one's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Uh, and so, because-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Wow.

[Lucas L.:](#) It leads, yeah, it leads to, um, physical, and, uh, psychological, uh, um, decline. And, um, so it leads to chronic disease, and heart disease, and premature death.

And so there have been increasing studies in recent years about how the arts, engagements in the arts, in visual arts, performing arts, arts and culture, can, uh, help mitigate the, the damage that loneliness and isolation brings on.

[Lucas L.:](#) So, uh, so, that, that's why we're, I'm doing a lot of work with art therapists and to try to create these creative expressive therapy opportunities, in the museum and outside of the museum, and so, one big push is, "How do we bring arts and culture to people who, who don't have the, uh, the ability to come downtown and visit a big art museum, or don't even have the ability to get out of their door to access their local community center."

[Lucas L.:](#) Uh, so, uh, we, we, uh, have a great team of volunteers that I work with, who, uh, go all around the greater Chicago land area, providing enriching art conversations in retirement communities, and in, uh, uh, libraries, and other public spaces. Uh, so bringing the art out to those people, but even, even for those people who don't have, uh, a social network and, and access to, uh, a community space.

[Lucas L.:](#) There's some people who may be home bound, or aging in place, the only person they see all week are perhaps to Meals on Wheels delivery person and so, working with some partners, um, well connected out of San Francisco, and now there're life ways in Chicago, simply to provide telephone based presentations.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Oh, interesting.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, so, art conversations over the phones. And they'll get uh, uh, a hard copy course packet in the mail. It's excruciatingly low tech, but it works, you know? Sometimes it doesn't have to be super fancy, but-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Yeah.

[Lucas L.:](#) Almost everybody can use the phone, and, um, a lot of the callers are, um, might have low vision and so the volunteers, uh, that I, uh, that I uh, I train, they provide verbal descriptions over the phone, of what the works of art look like, or if it happens that somebody didn't get the course packet in time-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) It's beneficial to have that as well.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Oh, the mail service. (Laughs)

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah, right? No, so, um, so it's, it's a, um, a great low tech solution to try to, uh, mitigate the isolation that one feels, uh, and it's, again it's not about the art

historical learning, but it's just creating a, a platform for socialization, a platform for, uh, for validation that, uh, yes, what I say, what I think, what I feel still matters.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Lucas L.:](#) Even if I've been marginalized by society, and we still, we try to give, we try to give people, uh, an experience where, where, um, yeah, where, where they have voice, and can, can engage, uh, and help stave off the, the, uh, diseases associated with, uh, loneliness, the epidemic of loneliness. So-

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That's fantastic.

[Lucas L.:](#) (Laughs)

[Philip Dallmann:](#) (Laughs) No, and, and it's, it's, uh, incredibly important, I think, uh, you know, uh, I immediately, uh, jumped to, to, uh, uh, my dad's mom, who I would've thought would've, you know, after her sister passed away, after her husband passed away, um, would have loved programing like that. Um, even-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Not necessarily, uh, I don't know that she loved ary-

[Lucas L.:](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[Philip Dallmann:](#) But just the experience, and the connection with someone-

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Even over the phone.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) Is, uh, it's uplifting-

[Lucas L.:](#) Right.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) And, and, um, it definitely fires off different stimulant in the brain.

[Lucas L.:](#) Yeah.

[Philip Dallmann:](#) That's for sure.

[Lucas L.:](#) For sure.



[Philip Dallmann](#): So that's, that's really wonderful.

[Lucas L.](#): Yeah, great.

[Philip Dallmann](#): Thanks again to Lucas for the amazing tour, and taking the time to chat, and for, uh, Lucas was actually, uh, one of the folks who recommended a ton of other people, who I didn't know, um, to chat with, so, I really appreciate that. Um, and, uh, a thank you to the CCAC, um, out there, 'cause I just had the best time at the social, and the meetup, and again, continuing to learn about all the different things that you're doing, um, and, and constantly impressed, so, um, thank you to everyone in Chicago, uh, who I ran in to or spoke to later, or what have you, um, it really was a wonderful trip.

[Philip Dallmann](#): Um, as always, thank you to our Executive Producer, Matt Cursetter, for making us sound great each and every single week. Uh, our Associate Producer, Ms. Kelsey Rose Brown, who does all things social media and much, much more. Uh, and our composer, uh, Eric Walton for that dope theme song. It never gets old.

[Philip Dallmann](#): Uh, we'll be back again next week, and remember inclusion believers, never stop running through that brick wall.

