

Philip Dallmann: Hello, inclusion believers, and welcome to the one year anniversary of 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, so excited to, uh, celebrate this one year anniversary, uh, with all of you, uh, our loyal listeners who, who have grown with us and, and, and stayed with us over the course of 52 episodes. Um, countless guests, uh, one fun Christmas poem, uh, a fun Q and A with, with me and Kelsey, just, just a blast; what a blast this year has been.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and I've gotten to chat with so many people, from, from the one and only Betty Siegel, at the Kennedy Center to, to, designers from Xbox to, uh, Hans from Be My Eyes, to Ali Stroker, to Farida Bedwei in Ghana. To, um, you know, the folks at TVF. Uh, to, to have gotten that full circle from, from my home there. Um, the, where, the place that I called home for, for over five years. Um, just so great.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and, uh, when I looked at that guest list, and just how many wonderful people were on it and, and, and the ones that we have recorded, uh, from our trip to Chicago and, um, other folks that we've been able to, to, uh, stockpile in and, and, and talk to and, and, um, just have such riveting conversations.

Philip Dallmann: Um, this episode, there was only one person that could be on this episode. There was only one. Um, and, uh, I had the thought back in January, I think, when, when I was talking to our executive producer, uh, Matt Kerstetter, about, you know, this one-year episode, as I put it in the calendar. And, uh, and that, and that person was Evan Hatfield.

Philip Dallmann: Um, Evan is, uh, he helped co-found the CCAC, um, the Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium. Um, and he served as the co-year for, or co-chair, (laughs) uh, for its first five years. Um, he just recently departed the Steppenwolf Theater Company, which is where he was when I met him. Um, he was there for 13 and a half years. While he was there, he created this just incredibly robust, uh, access program. Um, he was the direct- he was the house manager there. Uh, and I'll let him tell the story, but, uh, in the interview. But he, uh, also be- eventually became the director of audience services.

Philip Dallmann: When we recorded this episode, that was the first day of a, sort of sabbatical, and a focus on citywide access projects, which is just, I think really exciting for the Chicago community, specifically the cultural community, uh, that, uh, Evan Hatfield is, uh, around and, and thinking about... or has more brain space to think about things happening around the city, um, and, and not just obviously, at Steppenwolf.

Philip Dallmann: But Evan, um, one, is one of the first people I met outside of TDF, uh, when I dove into this world of accessibility and inclusion. Um, and he was so kind to

me, and so generous with his ideologies, his philosophies, his methodologies. Uh, that it set sort of an internal precedent for how, what my expectations were of people, and what my expectations were of myself in this field, when it came to sharing things and, and lifting each other up.

Philip Dallmann: I, I very, and I'll be candid, I very much looked up to him and continue to look up to him, um, as a role model for, uh, best practices of not only how to execute, uh, access or inclusion, um, but also as a human. Um, you know, I think he, he, he has a deep understanding of humanity. Uh, and when you meet those people that have that kind of understanding, um, you... it's, it's fascinating. You're drawn to them, and you'll kind of wanna follow their lead a little bit.

Philip Dallmann: Which led me to, um, testing out this podcast with him, um, our beta episode, as I, I referred to it. Um, Evan was generous with his time, and, uh, when I didn't know what the heck I was doing. Um, we chatted for three hours, um, on a really crappy line, digital call setup that, uh, I immediately scrapped and, and learned how to actually do a phone call on the podcast.

Philip Dallmann: But, uh, he guided me through and, uh, really questioned the questions I was asking and the structure, not to just be, not, not to say that I was doing it wrong, but to, in a lot of ways, make me defend it and make me think about why I was doing things, um, and, uh, what I really wanted the mission of this podcast to be and what I wanted to accomplish.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and without that, I, I don't think, one, I d- I don't think the podcast is what it is. Um, and two, I don't know if it was, it would've been sustainable. Um, because what came out of it was the, the want and need to lift people up and lift up their work, which is what I, I knew I wanted, but I needed to put some other things aside and, and, and learn that that was just, you know, focusing in on that could be incredibly productive and incredibly helpful, um, to the community at large.

Philip Dallmann: You know, with that being said, uh, or that all being considered, there really was nobody else to have, have on, um, for this one-year episode. I think catching him at such a, uh, incredibly, um, specific time and a reflective time in his career, um, and as he looks at the industry as a whole, um, I, I think, uh, you're really gonna enjoy the conversation we had. Uh, we flip it up a little bit at the end of the episode. Um, Evan kind of s- sprung it on me.

Philip Dallmann: Um, we ended up actually breaking up the conversation over two days because, uh, it was so good and, and there were time constraints. Um, but, uh, at the end of the episode he did, uh, flip the script and, uh, uh, ask me a few questions, um, that I think hopefully you guys will enjoy, um, as a reflection of, of not only where this podcast came from, but where, where it's headed, um, and, and what it, I think it's accomplished in the last year.

Philip Dallmann: So um, because it's a long conversation, I'm gonna keep this intro, which is already a little bit longer than I'd hoped, uh, short and sweet. So without further ado, on our one year anniversary, Access Champion, Evan Hatfield.

Philip Dallmann: Alright, and we are here with Evan Hatfield, uh, co-founder of Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium and man of the people, uh, and our, uh, technically our, uh, guest number zero, uh, a year ago, uh, from our beta episode. Uh, thanks for joining us a year later, Evan.

Evan Hatfield: Really happy to be here and, uh, correct all the mistakes we made-

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: ... in that beta episode.

Philip Dallmann: Hey, you know what? We were just sorting it out and, and honestly, uh, um, I think, I was just... Evan and I were just talking before, uh, we started recording, and I said, you know, I went back to listen to it, and, uh, you know, it, it was three hours long, um, 'cause I was like, "Oh, maybe I'll run this out," and I just, you know... whoo, we're not that three hour podcast. It's uh, no one's listening to us that long.

Philip Dallmann: Um, but I am grateful because, um, we really did find, uh, the structure and the overall sort of ideology of the podcast, um, that evening going through. Um, and, and the point that, um, I really stuck with was, um, you know, if you put a couple of, uh, I'll just even say nonprofit in the, in the broadest terms, folks in a room, uh, there's generally a quick move to, "Well, well, this really is hard and this is really terrible," or, uh, "We have to overcome this."

Philip Dallmann: And, um, uh, you asked me, you went, "What do you want the..." You know, we kind of headed down that road a little bit, and you asked me, "What do you want this podcast to be?" Um, and that's where we kind of came to the, looking at sort of a positive, reflective, um, vibe and, and ideology. Uh, which I think, um, is the reason that, uh, people are actually listening to this podcast. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: Well, in addition to having some really fantastic guests from all over the place, you're doing really amazing work. And, you know, to have you with a vision to give them that platform and voice, and statistically for a group that doesn't always get that voice, uh, I'd say that's a pretty good, uh, team effort right there.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, uh, you know, that, yeah, I think that's right, it's really a collective effort across the industry, um, which has been really great.

Philip Dallmann: Um, so, uh, I'm, we met, what, like five years ago? Six years ago? Maybe, maybe even longer. Um, when uh-

Evan Hatfield: That's correct.

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, the lead conference was in Chicago. Um, and-

Evan Hatfield: 2014.

Philip Dallmann: 2014, whoo! Correct. Uh, and uh, I was, uh, immediately, kind of, i- well one, uh, you, you were introduced to me uh, pre-conference as, um, sort of the rockstar of Chicago Access, um, uh from one Sarah Aziz. Um, and, uh, when I got there, I'll say, you didn't disappoint. Um, m-mostly, uh because I was so new to the field, uh, it was just so exciting to see, see you, d-doing such great work.

Philip Dallmann: Um, but I'd love to hear a little bit about, um, (laughs) and 'cause I remember this loosely from the beta episode. A little bit of like, how, how you ended up in Chicago working in the field of, uh, you know, audience services, accessibility, inclusion.

Evan Hatfield: Yeah, certainly. And I'm really grateful to Sarah Aziz for, for that assessment. Um, that context was, I think we were the first Steppenwolf, where I was, you know working f- at the time. Um, and where I've done the branch of my, of my, of my work, um, we were the first beta in Chicago to apply for TDF's, National Open Caption Initiatives-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... and get that going here. And so, you know, Sarah Aziz was, you know, working for TDF at the time. And so, I'm grateful to have been on her radar in that way.

Evan Hatfield: Um, just gotta be careful with our articles here. Like, I'm really proud of the work I was doing back then, but also, uh, there were a handful of people, you know, doing really amazing things back then.

Evan Hatfield: Our friends at Victory Gardens-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... uh, Jason Harrington, Chicago Shakespeare and, uh, Lynn Walsh, Chicago Children's Museum, and then, Shedd Aquarium, Christina Guenther, uh, who came from New York with the idea of starting CCAC. Um, yeah, so I'm happy to be known during that time, but that whole lead, uh, bringing, bringing it to Chicago, um, you know, that was a really amazing opportunity for, for a lot of different folks, to, to showcase what they were doing.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, it was a gr- [crosstalk 00:11:29] and as someone that was just attending, it was a really, really great, first experience with that conference.

Evan Hatfield: Like, we went to a bar afterwards.

Philip Dallmann: Yes we did. (laughing)

Evan Hatfield: Got a cab. Got everybody to go. Like in a stru- in a structured way. (laughing)

Philip Dallmann: I mean, if that's not the end goal of every conference, I don't know what is.

Evan Hatfield: And I... and my pops was just in town, so we did an architecture cruise, um, that takes us right by the Sheraton where that was hosted. More importantly, it took us by the Lizzie McNeill's, the Irish pub, (laughing) where we did our happy hour afterward.

Evan Hatfield: Um. Uh, no, what, what got me started in my work was, you know, house managing at Steppenwolf for a couple of years, and just observing, over the course of that time, that, one, uh, the company's mission, when it came to it's audience, was that it, it wanted people in the room. Uh, and it wanted them to be well-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... in order for them to receive the art. Uh, th-the other I observed was just, we weren't doing that for everybody. And, as a house manager, you observe multiple instances, what it looked like and what it felt like, when someone didn't feel included. And, they started taking very basic steps to figure out, what does accessibility mean? H- what does it mean to be an accessible institution?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, over the course of, doing the time and research, just started to learn really fundamental points. Like the, like how crucial it is to make sure that we're including the consumer that we're trying to serve, in a collaborative way. So that, w-we're not being presumptive about what folks really want and need.

Philip Dallmann: I think you were one of the first, uh, folks I had a conversation with about collaborating with, uh, audience members, um, in the creation of, of the access or the inclusion programs. Um, because I think in a lot of places, at the time... and not everywhere obviously, there were some places already doing that. Um, but, uh, a lot of places were sort of making internal decisions, uh, by themselves about, "Well, this is basically what they, so let's just do that." Um, as opposed to designing it for the community, with the community.

- Evan Hatfield: Right. Yeah, and I think that that's, that's a really simple thing to do. Um, and, and that's certainly the system that I inherited. which was, you know at the time, which was 2009-
- Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Evan Hatfield: ... geez, ten years ago. You know we, we were one of the big nonprofits in Chicago, along, you know, Goodman and Chicago Shakespeare.
- Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Evan Hatfield: And, you know, we were doing one ASL interpreted performance for every production. We were doing one audio described performance for every production. But then we weren't really putting any thought into it. It was just something that was on the production calendar. One day the interpreters would show up, not very many audience would.
- Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Evan Hatfield: We would do a show. Be kind of clunky.
- Philip Dallmann: (laughs)
- Evan Hatfield: And then, afterwards, go, "Well, no one showed up for it, so why should we continue to put more resources into building it, when there's clearly no demand?" And that introduced that concept of, that common mindset for institutions, uh, where, they don't put resources in to something, that they already have not put very many resources into.
- Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Evan Hatfield: And so, m- people don't show up, either because it wasn't marketed or the service wasn't very good. And then, we take that as a signal that there's no interest, and justification to not put further resources into it. And so, then it just becomes this cycle.
- Philip Dallmann: Right.
- Evan Hatfield: Um, the, the other concepts it introduced was this notion that, just by the provision of the service, like ASL or audio description, that every single person in the city who is deaf or has vision loss, is also instilled with this spidey sense?
- Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: Where they automatically know when a service is being provided somewhere in the city, and they'll just magically show up.

Philip Dallmann: I mean-

Evan Hatfield: And-

Philip Dallmann: ... that, that's my understanding o- of, uh, deaf culture, is, they just know, right? It's just, uh, they-

Evan Hatfield: Um.

Philip Dallmann: ... Wake up in the morning and they go, "ASL is happening." (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: Yeah, um, turns out, uh, (laughs) not so much.

Philip Dallmann: No. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: And, and so then that got us into the territory of learning, that for these communities, that are so accustomed to not being taken care of, and also in a number of instances, also accustomed to, being pandered to-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... by large institutions. Or, by being brought in once, only to have it be a really bad experience.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: 'Cause, the house staff didn't know where the interpreters were supposed to be, and they were taken to the section. And then, they had to self-identify and do all of the work of, trying to have just a very basic experience. Um, and so, just identifying that, um, people, people have lost a lot of trust, and people have been hurt.

Evan Hatfield: And, you know, so it's not just about the provision of excellent services, that effectively convey the art. But also, that basic signals of hospitality and safety, that signal, "We're doing this because we want to, not because we have to. We actually want you to be here." And, that's kind of informed our entire approach, ever since. And-

Philip Dallmann: And, and, and-

Evan Hatfield: ... great service.

Philip Dallmann: ... institutionally, a- as you're sort of, bringing that up, how wa- how was it received? What was that conversation like?

Evan Hatfield: There was not opposition.

Philip Dallmann: Okay. That's good, that's a good baseline. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: There was, there was support.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: But there was also willingness, um, I think, both a part of the company. And then, my part, as a, as a younger person, uh, for me to go rogue. And, you know, push a lot of things through myself. And, um, I think that, I think that moved things forward, in a lot of ways. And it was definitely, you know, wi- in collaboration with all of the other departments in the organization that needed to contribute. You know, production, and artistic, and fundraising, and education.

Evan Hatfield: But, it, it was still, you know, really solely driven by, by one individual. And, you know, has, you know, I- I just... I-last Sunday was my last day. So like, I'm, I'm less than a week out of, of this relationship.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, you know, having, having participated on, then, you know, looking back on my entire art, I, I question the sustainability of one person in an institution, being solely responsible for accessibility. And, you know, the, you know the clarity of, of experience now, um, says very clearly, this work is something that requires absolute commitment from the entire company, and, and smart distribution of, of workload-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... according to expertise.

Philip Dallmann: I, I very much agree with that philosophy.

Evan Hatfield: You gotta, gotta build that infrastructure.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Um, that's, that's what makes it sustainable.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, I very much, very much agree. I um, was reflecting, not too long ago, that, I thought, while, during my time at TDF, um, w-when we were, a-as a team, sort of, operating at its highest ability, um, was when, responsibilities were split between myself and um, Leah Diaz, now Leah Koerner. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... where she was so well versed in deaf culture and, um, the hearing loss community. And she was able to be, sort of specialize in that realm, and then myself in the world of cognitive and developmental disability. And th- you know, the responsibilities were split and, and, the focus, our focuses could be... um, I don't want to say narrow, bu- or concentrated. Concentrated.

Philip Dallmann: Um, so it felt like our time and effort uh, almost felt more productive. Um, a-and I'm sure it was, actually more productive. But, I- I think that also prevented a certain amount of burnout where, as either before at TDF or in other organizations, when it's like, very, uh, isolated on one human, to do all of it. Um, it, that, that had to be tough. And, and I'm sure you, well I know, you were working crazy hours there, as well.

Evan Hatfield: Well, in a, a [inaudible 00:22:09] nonprofit-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... you know, I don't anybody who doesn't, you know, work long hours. Um, but yeah, it just uh, you know, especially if you wanted... especially as, I think people's privies and positions expand-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... and, they become responsible for more. Um, you know how do, how do institutions, who want to be doing this works and who want to be evolving it... uh, and you know, I-I would not just, relegate this to accessibility, but, I think inclusion in general. For institutions that wanna be doing this work, how do they actually create the infrastructure, that allows that work to be meaningfully done? And sustainably done? And, I put that, I put that to everybody.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Um, and that's not, that's not to say, you know, organizations that I've been affiliated with, or, you know, that I've observed, you know, aren't doing that. Um, I just put that out as a general question, as, how do you actually create, create those systems.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Um.

Philip Dallmann: Well, um, eh-eh, veering off left a little bit. Um, not the last time I was out in Chicago, but the, the s- second to last time I was out there, um, I got to see one of your, your, sort of bigger projects that people wouldn't necessarily think of, um, (laughs) when they think of a director of audience services. Um, but, you know, I feel like every- a lot of, uh, humans, at some point, go, "We should, we should start a bar. We should, we should open a bar.

Evan Hatfield: (laughs)

Philip Dallmann: "Let's de- let's open a bar," and usually it's a few drinks deep, um, or I'm at Rudy's, uh, with a hotdog in one hand a beer in the another. Uh-

Evan Hatfield: Right, right.

Philip Dallmann: Which uh, plug for anybody New York City, go ahead and stop at Rudy's, 45th and 9th, uh, free hotdog with, with every drink, so, uh, don't miss out. Uh, but, you, essentially, opened a bar. (laughs) And, not only that, but an accessible one.

Evan Hatfield: Hey, I participated in a really great team, that opened a bar. And I think the, I think the parts that I would focus on there, um, are the excitement that I experienced for a major institution, to be focusing on non-artistic, audience experience.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: In a thoughtful, and intentional way. Where, creating a space that is usable by everyone, outside of the context of a play. This is here for the community, that's the arts community and the community at large.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, 'cause you guys were-

Evan Hatfield: That's-

Philip Dallmann: ... able to welcome folks in there, that weren't necessarily coming for the show, but it was an entry way into your, your organization. I mean your institution.

Evan Hatfield: Constantly one perspective point on it. Um, you know, if, we are creating a potential gateway-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... uh, to, to the art. But, I got jazzed because, I think we were just as excited about, people that, weren't going to come to a play, um, being in there.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, I think, I think the, I think some of the n- the nights that we thought the most successful, is when, Danielle, uh, our, our food and beverage director, who, you know, did almost all of the work in opening and sustaining that place, in a really amazing way. Oh, and she had also, you know, been on my front of house team for years before that, and so she was approaching it with both, like a, a theater operations and a food and beverage perspective. 'Cause we really wanted to make sure we were maintaining that vibe.

Philip Dallmann: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Rather than just renting it out to an outside vendor.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Um.

Philip Dallmann: That makes sense.

Evan Hatfield: I think, and that's really m- something that's successful, is when I'm looking around the bar, and, it was after the show, and we had some of the cast there, and some of the artists, and some audience. And then a bunch of people who, we had no idea who they were. Um, they were just in from the neighborhood having a nice time. And, that felt like, that felt like a cool thing to do.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, I mean-

Evan Hatfield: Um.

Philip Dallmann: ... that's a next level, uh, way of, being a part of your, your community. And creating community.

Evan Hatfield: Yeah. Well and, e-especially in, in a world where, people are experiencing more and more signals that they're not welcome in it.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: To be able to manage, even a small little space, and a small little hospitality program. To actively fight against that-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... and to, to create, to create a space where we could you know, let people know y- everyone's welcome here. Um, that felt like the right thing to be doing.

Evan Hatfield: What I really appreciated about the whole opening experience, was just being able to participate in a design process-

Philip Dallmann: Right.

Evan Hatfield: And, you know, especially one that was focused on, you know, just general audience experience, and not how do we get them into theater seats. Um, it's like little things, seemingly little things, that actually end up being, um, really significant.

Evan Hatfield: One of our first meetings with the architects, uh, they came out with the idea, "Alright, so, around the central bar, in the middle of this square room, we wanna build just like a four, or a five inch, uh, platform. Just to kind of delineate it from the rest of the space as people walk through."

Evan Hatfield: And, in that moment, it was just a, a very casual response as, "Awesome. How are our friends using mobility devices, going to get up to this area?" And they thought for a moment, and they realized that that wasn't an option, and so that idea was just immediately scrapped. And, it wasn't this great battle.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: It was just, a thirty second exchange, that made the biggest difference in the world.

Philip Dallmann: That's, great. Those conversations are so rare, but that's so great.

Evan Hatfield: Oh, and so when you can get them. Hey-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Cherish them. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: ... [inaudible 00:29:37]. (laughs) But also, institutional leadership, needs to facilitate more opportunities, so people who are trying to do, do the work, don't feel grateful for doing the bare minimum, right? (laughs)

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Um-

Philip Dallmann: No, this is absolutely true. I uh, I experienced that, uh, last summer, uh, or, two, actually two summers ago now, um, uh, at the Sheen Center, here downtown in the village. Uh, just having conversations with them, uh, they were like, uh, I

forget what they were talk- a- uh, it was the pre-show announcement, and they were, um, trying to be, in- uh, completely inclusive, um, and for this run of the show.

Philip Dallmann: Um and then now, have since adopted it across the board. Uh but, I just suggested, uh, that they just add, uh, a bit in the pre-show that no one will be asked to leave, um, for, um, any noises or behaviors, um, within their control. Ah, uh, it was less clunky language than that. Uh-

Evan Hatfield: Sure.

Philip Dallmann: But uh, I was [crosstalk 00:30:40], and I just threw it out there and they were like, "Yeah, sure, that's great." And I, I just had never, gotten a, "Yeah, sure, that's great," uh, (laughs) before, and, I'll-

Evan Hatfield: Good.

Philip Dallmann: ... never forget it.

Evan Hatfield: Well, and look what impact that has.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: And how s- how sophisticated actually, is that small this little moment right there? Where, was this s- was this specifically for a relaxed performance?

Philip Dallmann: No.

Evan Hatfield: That you're proposing this?

Philip Dallmann: No. It was, uh, a- across the run of this show that was to have relaxed performances, but I, I had suggested, um, this was a show with, uh, Tectonic Theater Project on common sense. Um, that did look at sort of, um, the experience o- of autism, uh, in a variety of ways. But I, I said, you know, if you want to invite th- open your doors to the community, you should open your doors, not just at the relaxed performance, but at- across the run. And they-

Evan Hatfield: Amen.

Philip Dallmann: ... and they were, uh, yeah, they were incredibly receptive. And now, have adopted that, uh, institutionally, it's in their DNA now. Um, and that to me was just, uh, it-it I-I ran into their managing director last week and I, I said to him, I was like, "Y- that small conversation changed my perspective, and sort of standards, of how I work with organizations, um, and-and, uh, you know, for that I'm incredibly grateful." And it (laughs) sounds like, uh, getting that quick,

uh, "Okay, yeah, we can't do that," uh, was similar for, for you with this, uh, bar design.

Evan Hatfield: Well yeah, and, I think... well I mean, I wanna spend some time on that pre-show announcement, because-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... I think that's incredibly exciting. Uh, because, I'd, I observed, that, there is a looming tension, that already exists. Because there's a looming tension with how organizations manage expectation for the performance environment.

Philip Dallmann: Yes.

Evan Hatfield: And, what are the rules of engagement, inside the theater. And, very few institutions that I am familiar with explicitly state that for folks.

Philip Dallmann: Yep.

Evan Hatfield: So, everyone coming in, artists, audience, stage management, front of house staff, executive leadership, artistic leadership, everybody, no one's on the same page.

Philip Dallmann: No. And-

Evan Hatfield: A-And, in, in the absence of that management, then, that's where you see the tension arise.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: You can have a, a theater purist, who doesn't even want people breathing loudly in their seats, sitting next to someone who might coming from a cultural context, where it's appropriate to audibly respond to the action on the stage.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, to have those two things right next to each other, have those two experiences in context next to each other, I would say for that responsibility in the institution, to give everyone the courtesy of telling them upfront, "Here is our expectation."

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And you see those flares, when that doesn't occur. And the primary instance I observed with theaters being very clear, is around relaxed performance.

Philip Dallmann: Yes.

Evan Hatfield: Where, they're proclaiming for everybody coming in, "Hey, for this show, here's what we're down for. Here's the party we're throwing." And I'm really excited at the notation of starting to extrapolate that learning from relaxed performance, across every performance.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, you know, to hear this experience that you had in New York with this company, where that was the thing, that gives me a lot energy. Well done all.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, I um, he- a- w- as you're talking through that, that, that conversation about setting expectations of the audience, is a conversation I have been having, it feels like forever, um, in pushing, uh, specifically Broadway, um, towards relaxed performances. Um, getting a- sort of adding on to this model that currently exists, of the autism friendly performances here. Where it's the complete house buy-out, and it's, you know, this event.

Evan Hatfield: Yep.

Philip Dallmann: Uh-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... and, I, uh, was always, uh, you know, challenged on it, but I said, "It's not either/or, it's and." Um-

Evan Hatfield: Yep.

Philip Dallmann: ... and, uh, Roger-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... Roger Ideishi-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... said, uh, "Access is options," and, uh, that, that, became, a, a, like, a personal mantra, uh, for me. And, I remember these conversations and it was, "Well, uh, w- audiences aren't gonna know what relaxed is." And I was like, "Well, if we put it out there and educate them, they will." "Uh, What if somebody comes and they don't know, what it is?"

Philip Dallmann: Well, we set expectations out front. You know, an accessible, web accessible pop up, when you go to purchase the tickets. Or, a page before you purchase the tickets, explaining what this is. Um, and, you know, if they don't read it, they don't read it, and not everybody reads; they click through and, but, that's on them. But for the most, your ex- for most people, your, your, expectations are then set for the environment that you are potentially walking into.

Philip Dallmann: Now, a- and it's not saying that, "It will be this," because I've worked, you know, a billion autism friendly performances, and some were loud and vibrant, and some were dead silent. Um, and so, you know, again, you're a certain mix of folks of humans, and it's the same thing in a typical performance, certain mix of humans, and you're getting a different energy, a different environment.

Philip Dallmann: But, uh, that idea of setting expectations, being all you really need to do. Uh, and I know that it's, you know, it's not as easy as that. You know, there is an educational p- part of that, um, in educating your audience. But, if you adopt that as an organization, like the way that the Sheen did, uh, it becomes that much easier. Especially, when the mis- when your mission includes, equity and diversity and inclusion, which so many of these, organizations do, uh, it's in there. (laughing) Or a synonym of those words, um, which is so, you know, obviously, interesting.

Philip Dallmann: Um, but, uh, an ongoing discussion. And yeah, I, I do see progress, and incremental progress is progress-

Philip Dallmann: So as previously mentioned, uh, we had a couple c- time constraints on the, during the first interview, uh time slot. But, we were just having such a great conversation. Um, and it got kind of cut off abruptly s- the time commitments and things. Uh, so we picked it up the next morning. Um, and, and, dove on in. So, uh, here is that conversation, going forward.

Philip Dallmann: You know, what are, what are your thoughts, and ideology with, with the movement towards, sort of, completely inclusive programming?

Evan Hatfield: I think that it's exciting to see... what was the company you mentioned yesterday, The Sheen?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, the Sheen's-

Evan Hatfield: In New York?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Um, it's really exciting to see companies starting to, you know, adopt these concepts. I'm hopeful that we're going to see more college programs adopting accessibility, and including it in curriculum in a meaningful way.

Philip Dallmann: Well you said you just, um, I do- don't think we were recorded it, but we were talking, you said you were just at Eastern Michigan, right?

Evan Hatfield: Eastern Michigan University.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Yeah. And I got to observe, uh, performances made accessible by Elena SV Flys, you know, an associate professor up there.

Philip Dallmann: And, podcast guest.

Evan Hatfield: And, she was in- is very intentionally taking her, taking her students through, um, like an integrated, accessible design process-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... a- in conjunction with their productions. And, how exciting is that? That these students are getting all of this access to, [inaudible 00:39:18] contents, like touch tour, and captioning and sign language, while they're underclassmen. They're gonna get a [inaudible 00:39:23] for their entire careers with that.

Evan Hatfield: And, I think that's really exciting because, I think that's actually looking at changing the system.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Um, and incorporating accessibility into it, from the, the outset of a career. Um, as opposed to, you know, what we have historically seen, which is it getting, you know, talked on at the end. So...

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, and, and there's-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah, it's critical.

Philip Dallmann: ... less of a, less of a learning curve, I think, when you enter the industry with that knowledge, and it's already there, and, i-in the back of your brain, that this is just part of theater, or this is just part of culture. Um, that, these programs or these, um, options, uh, should exist. Um, I notice that a little bit with, um, uh, the Columbia students, who would intern at TDF. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... it was interesting, um, during my time there, obviously they would leave and go on to be, um, associate company managers, or company managers, general

managers, et cetera. And it was interested- interesting to see, that when they landed wherever they landed, whether it was a big theater company, small theater company, wherever, um, they immediately adopted, sort of, the idea that these things just should be. Um, which is-

Evan Hatfield: Yep.

Philip Dallmann: ... which is really great. So, um, shout-out to Elena, um, who was one of our summer, uh, lead podcast guests last year. Um, doing, doing great work in, in, teaching the children. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Seriously.

Philip Dallmann: ... yeah, that's where it starts.

Evan Hatfield: And along those lines, um, you know, you know, I'll talk about Chicago, where I'm based.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Uh, and in Chicago, you're really known for it's storefront theater scene.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, um, our, you know translates to fringe, uh, for, for other cities.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, you know, it's, it's got a, like a really long, rich history, of storefronts. Um, going back to, you know, well really Second City, uh, has been, one of the first storefront theaters.

Philip Dallmann: And we're talking ..., just for context for people that aren't familiar, um, with-

Evan Hatfield: Storefront?

Philip Dallmann: ... the industry, yeah, um, storefront, w- approximate like, size. Um, or like, if you could describe it a little bit.

Evan Hatfield: Sure. Uh, so storefront is coming from the notion, that these small companies are using repurposed, non-theatrical spaces to do their shows.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And so, you know, church basements, former laundromats, warehouses, the backs of bars, um-

Philip Dallmann: Cool.

Evan Hatfield: ... you know, anywhere where they can, you know, hang a grid, and get some lights and some people in. And we're talking really intimate sizes here.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: You know, 40 to 80 seats.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, um, and you know, and proportionate budgets.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And there this, this, you know, storefront theaters in towns, who are doing maybe one or two productions a year. Total budget of like \$15, \$20 thousand, if that. Um, and so, but it's a long tradition in Chicago. And, it, it's served as this amazing incubator, or like a cactus league, or a farm club system for, for baseball.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Where, all of these people get to practice being, actors and writers and designers and administrators, at this small scale.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, you know, it's a, it's a very collaborative community, too. So there's lots of, you know, cross pollination, and, people looking for different theater companies, and actors working for one company in the spring and moving onto another one.

Evan Hatfield: And, this all serves as th- th- this incubator for artists and administrators, who kind of grow in the storefront scene. And then you know, get into bigger theater companies, where they have positions of leadership. You know, more context. You know, out of the 250 theaters, that the League of Chicago Theaters estimates are in Chicago, um, most of those small storefronts, um, close to 40 of them right now, are offering accessible services, like: captioning, audio description, touch tour, relaxed/sensory-friendly performance.

Philip Dallmann: And they're-

Evan Hatfield: Makes it very touchable.

Philip Dallmann: ... figuring out how to do those things on a, on a shoestring budget.

Evan Hatfield: And they're doing those things on a shoestring budget. And- [crosstalk 00:44:26]

Philip Dallmann: I always use the example, uh, from sh- one of the most impressive p-people, I, I, I, I've ever encountered, in like, making things happen, I believe she said, for like \$375. Um, it was Erica Foster at Lifeline, she just made it happen there with captioning, and then, um, with the TDF partnership, um, sensory-friendly/relaxed. Um, but, you know, I think they're a, they're a great example out there of just kinda, doing the thing.

Philip Dallmann: But they're a little bit bigger than what I think what you're talking about, storefront wise, right?

Evan Hatfield: No, but they are, they really are a perfect example of, of what can be done, um, with minimal resources. And, you're absolutely right, I mean, Erica has created a very sophisticated program there. Um, you know through, I think a lot of curiosity, and a lot of hard work and ingenuity. Um, but also like, really strong commitment to this mission of, you know one can a- actually be a- as inclusive as possible. So that, they actually are welcoming in as many people in the community.

Evan Hatfield: You know, there's this notion that we're cultivating the next generation of like, major theater leadership and artists. Because the Chicago theater environment right now helps so many companies, and so many of them small companies, who are committed to accessibility, that means that, all of these artists and administrators are starting to get into the larger companies.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And ensemble members, and (laughs) its managers, uh, in, in every department, I mean, they're bringing with them, this philosophy and base understanding of accessibility, that didn't exist at those higher levels for a long time. And so, I think that what I'm observing, there's, there's less and less fight-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... uh, at the highest levels, to make things accessible. And, I think-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah I would agree.

Evan Hatfield: ... in the next five, ten years, we're gonna see a complete shift in the environment, as technology becomes cheaper-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Evan Hatfield: ... and better.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, we see this base fluency around accessibility, uh, I think we're gonna get to some really, really cool places. So-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, I just, I think of-

Evan Hatfield: ... very hopeful about all of that.

Philip Dallmann: ... I think of the leap, even in the last couple of years, with, um, I mean I know there's a couple of systems like it. Um, but, with like, GalaPro, as an i- as an idea, um, cause I know there's, there's different opinions on the actual execution. But um, as an idea of any show, any time, any seat-

Evan Hatfield: Yep.

Philip Dallmann: ... um-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... at any price point, um, on your own device, or, the theater's device. I think, those check a lot of the boxes of, um, what I dream of as true inclusion. Um, or again, like I said, you know, obviously the execution may not bet there, a- all the way, but the fact that we've gone to that leap. Um, when, honestly, when it was announced, it wasn't even something I had thought to dream of.

Evan Hatfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: Um. But, uh, now... th- a-and again, isn't that a funny thing though, like, when, when these, either incremental, uh, changes happen, or big leaps like that, it op- it allows you to dream more, or differently, at times. It like, can shift how you think about inclusion, um, and like, what it could be. Um, and wh- how to even, f- go further in, in creating, uh, like a supportive and inclusive audience experience. I think that's fascinating too.

Philip Dallmann: Because you, sometimes we're, we get stuck dreaming within the parameters that we then are possible, and it takes somebody deciding something else is possible to really mo- you know, move the industry forward.

Evan Hatfield: Absolutely. And, I think with more and more companies committing to this work, then that allows, especially in the collaborative environment, that allows everyone to see what other folks are doing.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... And, pick up on best practices, and borrow ideas. And, uh-

Philip Dallmann: And build on them.

Evan Hatfield: ... you know it's the same exact... a-and build on them.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And so, in the same exact way, you know, I-I'll use Chicago again, um, you know, we have a really rich theater environment here. And, real- really, really incredible work, and a lot of bad work too. But, you know-

Philip Dallmann: That comes with the good.

Evan Hatfield: ... that will happen.

Philip Dallmann: How can you identify good if you don't have the bad? (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: Uh, right. But we've got so much risk. Theater work is going on in that, because there are some theaters who are challenging each other.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And holding each other up. And, you see that with design, and writing, and acting, and management. So cool to start seeing it with accessibility. And, like one of my favorite, uh, examples of that, you know, as one of the larger theaters in town, Steppenwolf's got to do a couple of things, first. And, you know, we've got to help other theaters, as they're trying to figure things out. And very specifically, Lifeline, again.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Erica Foster really wants to figure out how to make Lifeline more accessible. And So, we have a number of conversations over a period of time, in which, "Okay, well here are the concepts for captioning. And here's how you do a touch tour," and all of that. And, we got to help Lifeline.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: But then, Lifeline came out the gate and they started hitting relaxed/sensory-friendly performances in a really significant way, years ago. Long before Steppenwolf ever, ever started.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, I was-

Evan Hatfield: And so-

Philip Dallmann: ... there for their first one.

Evan Hatfield: ... right?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, it was-

Evan Hatfield: And-

Philip Dallmann: ... it was great.

Evan Hatfield: ... doing a magnificent job. And so then, fast forward, uh, a few years, and, Steppenwolf is finally gonna do a relaxed/sensory-friendly performance, and I'm back in that psychology of, "I'm nervous about this. I'm not quite sure what to do. Who do you talk to? How do you approach this?" I got to call up Erica, and say, "Hey, Erica, (laughs) uh, will you, will you teach us?" And-

Philip Dallmann: (laughs) I love that.

Evan Hatfield: ... a few years later, here's Erica and Lifeline, like, helping me relax. (laughing) She said, "It, uh, it's gonna be alright. Here's who you talk to. Um, here's how you do this." Uh, and you know, and then to have the relationship with TDF, um, you know, beginning with that incredible support. And then to be able to check in with all these other theaters, around, you know, the country, who are doing relaxed/sensory-friendly performance. I don't know, it was just a really, really lovely moment. Um-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: ... and so, and this again, makes me feel really, really hopeful.

Philip Dallmann: One of the things I love, for the most part, it seems with theaters, museums, uh, folks that work in this field of access and inclusion, uh, aren't particularly proprietary with how they're doing things. Or, how they've successfully done it. They're willing to share, and willing to help. Um, and I think that's really great.

Evan Hatfield: Yeah, I can't imagine that you'd be able to (laughing) call up anybody-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: ... you know, through the LEAD networks or, you know, any relationship that we have.

Philip Dallmann: I, I think of Betty Siegel all the time, 'cause it, it's just, you know, she's, in such a, um... and her, her staff will get mad at me again for giving her so much love. But she's an, you know, she's very accomplished and, and has, a, you know, quite a prestigious position. Uh, but, she responds to emails, real quick.

Evan Hatfield: Scari- Scarily, scarily quick.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. (laughs) It's like, "Are you bored?"

Philip Dallmann: Um, but, no, she uh, she, she's so quick. And, and obviously, but she's such a wealth of knowledge, and obviously, you know, she'll be the first to say it, it with different topics, you know that, "Oh I don't know about this," but she'll point you in the right direction. Like, so-and-so-

Evan Hatfield: Exactly, exactly.

Philip Dallmann: ... and she knows who's doing what. Um, but I, I use her as an example of someone that just, she could be incredibly proprietary with her information, and save it all for the Kennedy Center. Um, and, and no one would be, I think, surprised. But she has set a precedent that I think many people have adopted, um, and again, not everyone, but, many people, um, where they're just like, "Yeah, let me, let me help." (laughs) Like-

Evan Hatfield: Yep.

Philip Dallmann: ... "Let's, let's do this thing." Um, and I think-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... that was my favorite, uh, you know, it depends on what day you ask me, which w-was my favorite part of, of my job while I was at TDF. But I think the national programs were my, my favorite part, because I just got to travel the country and help. Um, and like, take knowledge that we had and, and just share it. Um, specifically in the-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... in the world of sensory-friendly/relaxed. It was my, you know, it was a blast. Um, going to like, you know, uh, middle of nowhere Missouri, to do their first sensory-friendly. And like, like that kind thing was just so much fun. I mean,

those things don't happen unless the leaders in our field, um, set that precedent. So, I think that's really great. And I think that is what, has continually, i-in my, from my perspective, continuously moved the field forward.

Evan Hatfield: Yeah, and, and I'm, I'm really grateful towards all the leaderships, that you know, we've had in our worlds.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Uh, you know, Betty, and Lisa Carling, and Hannah Goodwin, and you know, David Chu and Deb Lewis. You know, all these are folks, that, um, you know coming into, into this field, like the status quo was, "No, you use your knowledge and you help folks." So yeah, really, really proud to be a part of that and to, try to, help it continue.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, absolutely. Um, s-skewing a little bit back towards this idea of inclusion 24/7, 365. What do you... I, I, my, my gut instinct is that the biggest hurdle is the education of fellow audience members, and setting that standard. What do you see as the hurdles, in that realm?

Evan Hatfield: I mean, trying to get as far upstream possible. So, identify w-what the, what the challenges are. I'm really interested in systems. Like, what actual systemic challenges are, a-and what's, what's the company's infrastructure, does the company's mission infrastructure, actually support-

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

Evan Hatfield: ... inclusion? And so, I think audience education is really crucial.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And I think that's something that a lot of our positions, we spend a of time addressing. But, think the audience is actually, I think a decent way is downstream.

Evan Hatfield: And so, I look to see, you know, how is, how is the company actually structured? How is it resourced? Is it appropriately allocating resources to support inclusion work? How are they staffed? Uh, is their executive leadership committed, to inclusion? Is there a position, or are there positions, that are dedicated, to inclusion? Um, what's the size of the HR department? Uh-

Philip Dallmann: (laughs) That's-

Evan Hatfield: ... are they equipped to best take care of staff? What's the artistic commitment to it?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Is there a mission statement in their core values, that upholds this? Because if you have all of that stuff in place, that's when you can start talking about being, uh, as solely inclusive or as inclusive as possible. Um, and there's a bunch of other concepts that we y-you know, as a, as an institution and a greater society in a flawed system that, like, we can't, we can't touch those things.

Philip Dallmann: Right.

Evan Hatfield: But we can control our own environment.

Philip Dallmann: It's like an inclusion audit, on the organization to start.

Evan Hatfield: Yeah, um, and is their, is their organization willing to look inward?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, you know-

Philip Dallmann: That's tough. That's, that's a tough thing, I think, a lot of um, I, I, I, one of the things I've thought about recently was, uh, you know, interacting with different companies, I, it's like, you know, the ones that do s- you know, self-evaluate, and sometimes like self-report internally on issues, um, I, I'm constantly impressed, 'cause it's not an easy thing to do. Especially if things are going well.

Evan Hatfield: And then what's the definition of well?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. No that's what I mean.

Evan Hatfield: And then how does-

Philip Dallmann: If they're, if they're, if-

Evan Hatfield: ... how does your company measure success?

Philip Dallmann: Yes. Agreed.

Evan Hatfield: You know, and then getting, you know, getting specifically into accessibility. All right, so, the, the common challenge to so many companies, is placement of the caption displays.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Um, w-where do you put them, so that, it is a good experience for the audience who requires that service?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So you don't have that-

Evan Hatfield: And, that's-

Philip Dallmann: ... that, uh, tennis ball effect.

Evan Hatfield: ... tennis match, you know. You know, so they don't, they don't have to go back and forth and choose between, "Right, do I want to observe the action right now? Or, do I wanna make sure I'm not missing any crucial information from the, the text?" And, you know, good design, and a good experience, a-a-as I've been told by the audience and I've observed, has the display or the displays in a very central area, so they don't have to make that decision.

Evan Hatfield: But in order to have that element be good and meaningful, that requires a relationship with the production department and the artistic department, to integrate that display into the set. The common approach now is, for after the set design is done, after the set is built, after the show is blocked, everything is up... then we talk about, where can we put the displays.

Evan Hatfield: And, that sounds contrary to the rest of how we make theater. Like, everything else we've included into the design, and [inaudible 00:59:16].

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And so, how do we get caption displays, for instance, incorporated into a set designer's process? And, to include, the director and the artistic team, in that conversation. How-

Philip Dallmann: I feel like it has to be... I, I, I know one example of it happening, um, from go, and it had to really come from the top down, from, uh, artistic and executive leadership. And that was over the Public here, um, that meetings happened before things were, when designs were, I guess being submitted. Um, and I know they originally included TDF. And I, I don't know if Rich Denney now just takes the lead on that, um, over there as the Director of Audience Services.

Philip Dallmann: But, um, the captioning, the placement of the captioning board is, is part of the process before designs are approved. Which I think is really, really great. Um, but it, it's only because executive leadership said it's so. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Exactly.

Philip Dallmann: And, and [crosstalk 01:00:22] otherwise I don't think, I don't it, it... and again, I don't know that it's malicious, um-

Evan Hatfield: Well-

Philip Dallmann: I think it's just not thought of.

Evan Hatfield: It's not a priority. Yeah, it's not considered.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, it's not part of the DNA of the artistic process. And that's why I think, you know, calling it back, the- another reason why it's so great that you have things that's happening with, like Elena at Eastern Michigan, where it just becomes part of the artist DNA. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Yep.

Philip Dallmann: ... like I think of, you know even myself, I'm, I'm an "access professional", um, but, I didn't think about access until I got kinda immersed. Like, I had to seek it out, because of one specific experience. But it wasn't part of my education, as a playwright, um, it just wasn't, wasn't part of that, and n-not anything I considered.

Philip Dallmann: I went back a couple years ago, um, to, uh, the high school I grew up at, um, uh, because my old theater teacher r-reached out and said he wanted to do a sensory-friendly, um, 'cause they doing Cinderella. And, I went down and, and, I got to like, give a little masterclass to, um, these, you know 13 to 17 years olds in, in what inclusion meant. Um, and then, you know, they were exposed to an atypical audience at that age.

Philip Dallmann: And I hope, my hope is that they've carried that with them now as, I think they're all probably in college and, and heading out to the professional world. But like, even experiences at that young, I think are, are important, um, towards sort of, you know, cultural inclusion.

Evan Hatfield: And that's, you know it, it might seem slow but it is happening. I just look forward to it continuing to, to accelerate.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Uh, and then, and, and I really appreciate you making the point about it not being malicious.

Philip Dallmann: Yep.

Evan Hatfield: Um, no, it's not overtly malicious, and no, no one's making decisions are not considering it because they're bad people. Maybe a couple.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: I've run into a couple.

Philip Dallmann: Me too- (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: Um, you know, who are like twisting their mustache, and like rubbing their hands together gleefully.

Philip Dallmann: And they had a stick of Acme dynamite-

Evan Hatfield: But for the most part, they-

Philip Dallmann: ... behind them, you know, that's what it is. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: Right. (laughs) They're asking you move, to move to the left, to stand on top of the X.

Philip Dallmann: (laughing)

Evan Hatfield: And there's like the shadow of an anvil, like, "What's going on here?" Uh, but it, you- a-and I think you identified, it's not part of the DNA.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: And, so, should there be a shift occurring between education, and younger artists, and administrators, and fringe and storefront theater practitioners, who are doing some amazing work. Chimera Ensemble, here in town, they have a position of the access designer, who's at the table for all design conversations, the same as props, and scenery, and costumes, lights, sound. And so, they are advocating for this integration-

Philip Dallmann: That's dope.

Evan Hatfield: ... at the very start of the process. They're doing captioning for every performance.

Philip Dallmann: That's dope.

Evan Hatfield: And it's, you know, it's a DIY style. It is flat screen TV, using slide software called CaptionPoint.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: That allows the, you know, the company to, to do it on their own.

Philip Dallmann: So that, is that-

Evan Hatfield: They made that decision as-

Philip Dallmann: ... is that Matt, is that Matt Bivins' program?

Evan Hatfield: That's Matt, that's Matt Bivins-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: ... absolutely. Um, who, you know, so Matt's story, if you haven't talked to him, yet, please do. Because he's a-

Philip Dallmann: He's on the docket. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: ... fantastic perspective. Um, you know but, you know, Matt's story, uh, he's a theater artist here in town. Uh, he also works in, you know software and technology development. And, his wife Lindsay happens to be deaf. And, she wanted to be able to participate in Chicago's theater scene, as fully with Lindsay as he possibly could. And then, he realized he couldn't do that. And so, she set about figuring out, what goes into captioning, how does this work?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: What makes it artistic? What makes it effective?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And then, also, what are the barriers to it? And so he developed this software, that he's not proprietary about. Um, you know, he shared it as much as possible. Most of the small theaters in town right now, and increasingly some of the larger ones, are using CaptionPoint. It's really, really exciting, to, see that take place.

Philip Dallmann: Yep, I agree.

Evan Hatfield: Um, so we're shifting.

Philip Dallmann: Shifting a little bit to the, to the, the right now. Um, (laughs) uh, your, uh, before we started recording, you referred to it as your, your access, uh, rumspringa walkabout, uh, which you've just started. Um, and I know you're, you have a few

projects you've worked on or are, are currently working on, um, I'd love to hear a little bit about them.

Evan Hatfield: Uh, this is a project that's, um, it's just past tense, at this point.

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

Evan Hatfield: Um, and it's when I was still with Steppenwolf. I was really proud of it as an illustration of, a company making a decision. Even though our facility, uh, wa- is, is not as accessible as we would like it to be. Um, we committed resources and energy into a solution, that was not perfect, but it was equitable.

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

Evan Hatfield: Um, and I, and I really like that because, um, I think it speaks to the power that companies have. Um, even in, even in the presence of facilities that aren't up to par. Um, that, they can still, make good decisions. And so, basically, uh, production of A Doll's House Part Two. Robin Witt, the director in her design, she had this really clear vision, for having, audience seating on stage. Very cool concept, very cool execution.

Evan Hatfield: But the challenge was that, Steppenwolf's stage, which was built in 1990, just pre-passage of ADA-

Philip Dallmann: U-huh (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: ... Steppenwolf's stage, not wheelchair accessible.

Philip Dallmann: Huh.

Evan Hatfield: In order to access the stage without any stairs, that is going through freight elevator. And, you know, there's plans in the works to address this, and new theater space that's, you know, we're just breaking ground on, um, it has full accessible stage, and dressing rooms. It has, really, really lovely, uh accessible audience options.

Evan Hatfield: But the plan was, to invite the audience to get under the stage by walking down the steps of the main floor auditorium, and then up a series of steps to the stage. Question comes up, "Well, what about folks who can't do stairs? What about anyone using a mobility device?" One notion was, "Well, let's invite everyone onto the stage, via the stairs. But, if they can't do steps, then we'll just escort them through the freight elevator."

Evan Hatfield: While that does physically accomplish that goal, think in that moment if you're asking folks to pick a different path, in that moment, and when that path in a freight elevator?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Um, it's really long and circuitous, um, that becomes an extremely othering experience.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: And, creates a number of challenges and potential problems. And it's creating two different messages for the audience, it's creating two different tasks, it's needing to manage all of that. And so, Debbie was proposed, "Tell you what, let's do this onstage seating thing, but rather than splitting up the audience, let's just have everybody do it through the freight elevator, to get on stage."

Evan Hatfield: And, we created this program, and staffed up, and again, our privilege in that moment was, we could afford the \$7000 for three additional staff members, for 55 performances.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Um, but, that's what we did. And, it ended up being, I think a much, greater experience for everybody, because, they got to go through the freight elevator at Steppenwolf.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: And there was this kind of exclusive backstage peak.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: And, you know, they, the, the, the, the team painted the elevator, so it was fresh and clean. And, uh, you know we figured out our jokes to crack, as we were going down in the freight elevator.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: But they're in this lovely moment, where the freight elevator hits stage level. And um, you know the person operating the elevator opened up the double doors, in like, like this cool, like, Willy Wonka way. And, and backstage was just really beautifully lit, and the music coming from that, and the theater was like, really light classic.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, there's fly house in front of you in the curtain. Everybody got to experience it that way. And, we had guests who couldn't do stairs as part of that. And we never told them, "That's why we're doing this."

Philip Dallmann: Right.

Evan Hatfield: Um, everybody got to have a cool experience. And so, that gave me hope for the future.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Where, we start to consider things, and the decisions we make, uh a little bit differently. And so we don't, we're not gonna rely on the same excuses as much, I hope, um, for why we can't do things.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. Yeah that was, what a, what a great, creative, solution. Um, that, honestly, probably five years ago, wouldn't have been on the table.

Evan Hatfield: Yeah. So, I'm super proud of that. Other things are coming up. Um, you know, Chicago Cultural Acces- Accessibility Consortium, CCAC, um, doing some, uh, some cool workshops, um, over the next few months. Um, one, uh, doing an intro to cultural accessibility workshop, um, at the Court Theater, which is part of the university of Chicago-

Philip Dallmann: Oh, cool.

Evan Hatfield: ... in Hyde Park. Which is, uh, on Chicago's South Side.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, if, you know, folks aren't familiar with Chicago, um-

Philip Dallmann: Is that Cubs town or a White Sox town?

Evan Hatfield: Um, South Side, that's where the White Sox are. You know, a lot the, a lot of the region, that CCAC is supporting right now is North Side.

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

Evan Hatfield: So there's some really amazing art and culture in South Side neighborhoods.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And so, uh, just trying to better serve the city, um, [inaudible 01:11:29], in a way that hopefully makes it more geographically accessible for folks.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: And, um, and then build up relationships and, and help provide better support in that way. So, really excited about that.

Evan Hatfield: And then, um, just still in the process of signing contract, the Theater on the Lake, uh, being part of the program, um, called Nights Out in the Park. Which is part of Chicago's park district.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: So, it's a city program. Um, but their managing director, Angelique Grandone, is really committed, along with her team, to really stepping up the inclusion and accessibility efforts at Theater on the Lake.

Philip Dallmann: Cool.

Evan Hatfield: And so, they're going a free ticket model, uh, for the entire, uh, summer season, coming up.

Philip Dallmann: U-huh (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And, uh, we're going to, remount, uh, a, a workshop we did last year called Access Lives.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: Which is, a very short play, you know, 10, 15 minutes, and very easily produced. Um, but presented with the core accessible elements in place. ASL interpretation, captioning, audio descriptions, relaxed/sensory-friendly. And the whole structure is about a 10 minute play, 15 minutes later with the services. Well done, according to best practice.

Evan Hatfield: Um, but then we spend an extra hour and half, um, breaking each of those services down, uh, to the basic elements. And explain, "Here's why placement for ASL interpreters is important. Here's how we had that conversation with the artistic team. Here's how the caption displays are why they are, where they are. Um, here's why formatting, and text style and color is important."

Evan Hatfield: The workshop we did last spring of 2018, and had a really, really strong impact, on the folks who attended. And so, looking forward to doing it again, in like a larger scale. And hopefully, taking care of more of the city in that way. So-

Philip Dallmann: That's really great. Specifically I remember when you guys did it, it was, um, a, a little while back. Um, I, like, crowdsourced feedback because I wanted to hear how it went. Um, and, uh, it just, overwhelming positive. I think I was talking to uh, Christena Guenther, um, last week, um, and uh, you know, I mentioned then, she was just, you know, she said it was one of the best things CCAC's ever done. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: So, I, uh, I, I-

Evan Hatfield: Was-

Philip Dallmann: ... wha- and what an, an incredible, um, practical resource, right? Like, uh, for those who like, don't necessarily get access off the page, or a certain accessible service off the page-

Evan Hatfield: Exactly.

Philip Dallmann: ... when you describe, it. To act-

Evan Hatfield: Exactly.

Philip Dallmann: ... to experience in sort of a low stakes, um, concentrated version. Um, and to be able to discuss it and, and get a greater understanding, that's, that's huge. Um, and, replicable, which is my, I think my favorite part about it is that, that could go, a-an, you know, any, um, service organization or community organization that, wants to bring in folks that know best practices for different access services, could take a 10 minute play and do this. Um,

Evan Hatfield: Absolutely, absolutely.

Philip Dallmann: And, I think that's so great. Um, anyway. (laughs) Uh, I won't love on it-

Evan Hatfield: No, that-

Philip Dallmann: too much harder. I really do, it's one of my favorite things, you know, that I've heard of happening around the country. Um, and, uh, I think I've talked about it probably three or four times on the podcast. Um, just, I think it's, it's just so, in some ways like, yeah, that, yeah, that makes the, it like makes the most sense. But it's also, uh, creative and intentional, and again, replicable, and those are all of my favorite things.

Evan Hatfield: A-and, I think the point, yeah the points that you, you hold up there are that, um, it is doable in any region, any city, um, you know. This is isn't complicated,

there's human parts, but it's not complicated. The idea that anyone can do it, and that idea that, it does take it off the page.

Evan Hatfield: You know, we, we do so many lectures and workshops and conversations and emails where we describe what a service is. But, for a lot of people, they still don't like, conceptualize it. And then they spend a lot, a lot of time, lot of energy, trying to figure it out on their own.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And so to just like, show people.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Um, and like the, and I gotta give you know, massive, massive shout and credit to, um, you know, the, the person who can do that. Uh, Alex [Marnie 01:16:20], um, also known as [Chauncy 01:16:22]. Um, but he was part of CCAC for a couple of years, until he and his family moved back to Boulder, Colorado.

Evan Hatfield: And um, he's like a really serious advocate, incredible performer. That, y-you know, this was, this was his idea, baby, and, and we worked together to pull that off. And so, anybody in the Colorado region, uh, you have a major resource, you know, in Boulder right now, I don't know if you can, uh, uh, share my contact info, I don't wanna presume to share Chauncy's. But if um, if, if I-

Philip Dallmann: Uh, if you, if, if you are interested in getting in contact with Chauncy, uh, you can reach out to the podcast at accesschampion@gmail.com, and we'll uh, we'll facilitate that, uh, that's not a problem. [crosstalk 01:17:08] Uh, 'cause there, I mean there's just, uh, you know Colorado as a whole, uh, has a, you know a real nice contingent, you know, with also, uh, Carol Krueger being out there as well. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Denver center, yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Denver Center, a-and the theater company Phamaly out there as well. Um, I'm very excited for, the lead conference this year out there, just to get, uh, more first hand exposure to, to-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... the great work that's happening out there.

Evan Hatfield: Yeah, really excited for that.

Philip Dallmann: All right, we're gonna take a, a short break right now, to hear from one of our sponsors.

Philip Dallmann: For our one year episode, this episode is brought to you by Kaiser's Room. Uh, of which, full disclosure, I am the Executive Director. Uh, Kaiser's Room is a New York City nonprofit service organization, that provides and inclusive and welcoming environment for people of all abilities to explore their creativity through the arts, um, with a focus on imagination and connection.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, this company was founded by Stephane Duret, formerly of Kinky Boots, uh, with the idea that, the opportunity for imagination is for all, and through imagination we can find a connection.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, for more information about Kaiser's Room, to learn about our classes, our, uh, upcoming shows and, uh, to donate, if you fell like supporting this cause, you can visit www.kaisersroom.org.

Philip Dallmann: Alright and we're back. Um, we're actually going to, uh, flip the script a little bit here, for our one year episode. Uh, and Evan is going to take over as the interviewer, uh, with uh, with some questions f- marking our, our one year anniversary of the Access Champions Podcast.

Evan Hatfield: And just to clarify upfront, this was Evan's idea-

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: ... that he pitched to Phil. (laughs)

Philip Dallmann: Yes.

Evan Hatfield: So, he did not come to Evan and say, "Hey man, will you interview me?"

Philip Dallmann: (laughs) Not this was pitched, this morning, as the call started.

Evan Hatfield: You know on the occasion of your first anniversary, first just wanted to, I think on behalf of a lot folks, extend massive congratulations on conceiving the podcast, and on seeing it through in such a cool way for an entire year. And having brought so many voices in, to share with the world. Uh, it was a really cool vision, and you know, we're all really happy to see where it is right now. So, thank you, and huge congratulations.

Philip Dallmann: Awe, thanks man.

Evan Hatfield: Um-

Philip Dallmann: Appreciate that.

Evan Hatfield: ... on, so on this occasion I thought, uh, you know, I'm really curious to know and learn what your experience has been like with the podcast. Uh, what you've learned? Uh, where you see it going? And then, just kind of give you, invite you to, to talk about this really unique perspective that you have, of having been a person that's talked with so many people from around the country at this point, about accessibility. So, you mind answering a couple questions?

Philip Dallmann: Sure, (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: Um, so just start off slow. Uh, what gave you the idea, to start up the podcast?

Philip Dallmann: I guess it was little, uh, twofold. Um, a-as mentioned on the earlier part of this episode, I, one of the things I loved during my time at TDF was the national programs. And I'll lump in national and, and regional conferences with that.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and the reason I loved them, beyond being able to help people or getting help from people, was the conversations I got to have with people I didn't know, um, in places I didn't know, and, about programs I didn't know. Um, they were just s-so, exciting, and they incited new ideas, in, in me, and, I felt like I, was learning how to serve more people, better, through those conversations. Or, I was just getting the opportunity to say thank you to people that, that weren't hearing thank nearly as much as I think, I think they should.

Philip Dallmann: When I left TDF, um, without a job while planning a wedding, um, because I have a wonderful fiancée, I was kind of wondering a little bit. I, you know, I had some consulting gigs come up and, and, um, different projects that were great, but, I was missing something. Um, and luckily, uh, I have a very good friend, uh, my oldest friend, we've been friends since the second day of kindergarten, Matt. Who is, who is the executive producer on this podcast.

Philip Dallmann: Who remembers, uh, things I say when I've had a few drinks. And he was like, "Yeah, one time you mentioned, like wanting to do a podcast." And I was like, "Yeah, but, like, I don't know anything about that. He was like, "Do you know how many people have podcasts, that don't know what they're doing?" And I was like, "oh, I don't really know." I wasn't really consuming podcasts at that time either, except for like one wrestling podcast.

Philip Dallmann: And uh, he was like, "Yeah, let's just give it a shot, and, and see what happens." And, honestly, I, I, pulled out the credit card, and I had another friend that worked in audio, um, engineering, and I asked him what equipment to buy. Um, he told me, I, I bought it. And, we kinda we- went off running.

Philip Dallmann: And, and then I, I th- I think my next call/text was to you. Um, because I, I wasn't sure... I, I kind of wrote out a structure, but I wasn't sure. And I'd listened to a

few podcasts, but they didn't, their voices didn't seem to match mine. So I couldn't like copy, which is the best thing I think, um, that could of happened.

Philip Dallmann: And then honestly, after we did the beta episode, where I was just even figuring out to do a phone call, um, and this, I think I mentioned earlier, the episode was three hours long. And, and you pushed me on a variety of, of, um, topics and, and sort of, ideologies for the podcast there. Think I took another week and half, two weeks, to sit with it. I wrote like, a mini style guide for how I wanted it to go, and a mission for the podcast, of what I really wanted to accomplish. And then, then we kind of took off.

Evan Hatfield: And how many episodes are under your belt, at this point?

Philip Dallmann: This will be episode 52. Uh, which is, or I should say, is only possible because of the team that I have. Um, obviously having a best friend, uh, like Matt, who can turn around an episode so quickly. Um, and, and clean it up when I do dumb stuff f- like bang the table or, um, wear swishy clothing, um, is, is really great.

Philip Dallmann: And then, I had a weird thought, um, last year, I was like, "Somebody probably wants to intern on this podcast, maybe." Um, and uh, sure enough, uh, Katie Keddell, over at, at the time, at Imagination Stage reached out, and she said, "I have a, an apprent- apprentice that would be great. Um, and that turned out to be Miss Kelsey Rose Brown, who's now our Associate Producer, and handles all of our social media, uh, a lot of our press request, um, and um, all the ar- artistic renderings for each episode. Which, a-amaze me each and every week.

Philip Dallmann: So, really without, without those two, we wouldn't be able to pump it out, every week, I'm very grateful.

Evan Hatfield: What's listener, listenership doing? How are you measuring success?

Philip Dallmann: Uh well, success number one was, even with the first episode, it was clearly not just my mom listening. And we've grown from the very first episode, um, getting, uh, I think it was 1200 listens, off the bat. Um, and now our episodes between 8,000 to 10,000 listens worldwide. I think we're in 12 different countries and 46 states, we have listeners.

Evan Hatfield: Congratulations.

Philip Dallmann: It's-

Evan Hatfield: That's a very-

Philip Dallmann: ... it's stupid. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: ... very huge reach.

Philip Dallmann: It's unreal, and, but what's been fun to see, is the growth in different regions as we've had different guests. And I think the, like the most shining example is, we now have, um, after Fareda Bedwei on, who is an advocate, a software engineer, um, and, and a individual with, uh, cerebral palsy, who created the first comic book hero with cerebral palsy, in Ghana. Um, and we had her on, and after having her on, um, all of a sudden, we had about 800 listeners from Ghana, every week.

Evan Hatfield: Wow.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, which is, it's... so like, and the fact that, for the most part, folks aren't one-offs, that they're coming back for different conversations, that are maybe outside of what their initial interest was, is, is heartening, I think.

Evan Hatfield: How else do you measure success?

Philip Dallmann: You know I um, when I meet people and have a, a conversation and they say that they've learned something from the podcast. We're like weirdly in the learning category, or not weirdly. But, it was, I didn't, think about category we would be in when we launched. I was, Arts and Culture, but like, really we're in a lot of ways, an educational podcast.

Philip Dallmann: I have, I've had the privilege to, to travel a little bit, and, and, specifically most recently, actually when I was in Chicago, um, it was really great to be at the CCAC Social. And there were people that I didn't know. And um, you know, it's a s- a large community in the realm of access and inclusion. And I didn't think there were that many people I didn't know.

Philip Dallmann: But there were, there were quite a few that came up to me and, and said that they had been listening. And that they had learned, you know, such and such from this episode. And, they had gotten in contact with this person. I know, um, Brittany Pyle, who was one, I think she was like, episode nine, um, you know, had quite a few people reach out to her. Um, because, you know of the knowledge that she dropped on her episode, about kind of unique access when it comes to th- the festival style. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Chicago Humanities Festival-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: ... up here.

Philip Dallmann: It's, I mean the work that she does is amazing. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... and-

Evan Hatfield: Super fierce.

Philip Dallmann: ... and as, you know, we talked about it earlier, she's not proprietary of that information at all. She shared it willingly on that episode and, and it was so great to hear that other people, wanted to, not only learned from it, but wanted to learn more from her.

Philip Dallmann: So that, that, that's definitely one way. For me, I, I, when I start seeing conversations evolve, and I have seen them evolve over the course of a year, um, is interesting. Um, whether, you know, the shift, what is inclusion? Um, and actually, you know it was funny, you were, it was during the beta episode that you said about, thinking about inclusion a-as a whole, and not just on the realm of disability.

Philip Dallmann: And um, that just like, brought in my mind, because I was like, "Oh yeah, I should be talking to people that are doing inclusion, in, uh, gender equity, or, um, LGBTQ issues, or racial inclusion, socioeconomic." As that, that shift happened and hearing people that I know have been focused in the world of disability, acknowledge those other versions of inclusion as well, um, I think has been, that's been really dope as well.

Evan Hatfield: Sure. And then, I think that's such... when you keep talking about reasons for hope, that that's one of them right there.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Evan Hatfield: Is that there's so many people doing the same work, and having the same conversation, but just with different communities.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: But I think that core concept is so true, which is, how do we make it possible to help everyone, like the fullest definition of everyone, come in and participate in our world? And, it's, it's not actually it's disability, or any sort of identity, it's universal.

Evan Hatfield: And just to know that we have that many solo travelers, who are doing this work.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evan Hatfield: And I think people are starting to make this connection more and more. And like, with the help of, you know, things like you're doing, um, with Access Champions, like, let's just be hopeful, right?

Philip Dallmann: Yep, no, I agree. (laughs) I agree.

Evan Hatfield: Let me ask you about, um, the title? 'Cause, one of the first conversation that we had, uh, about it was, um, I expressed a little discomfort about the idea of Access Champions. Because, it attaches heroics to a body of work, where I don't think heroics belong. I think we had a really good conversation about that. And it's really cool a year later, you know, that you're going strong. Um, but just wondering, you know, what you thoughts on that, and how the title is?

Philip Dallmann: So, I- a few different, I have few different points. One, I, I think there's also the other version of the word, where you are championing the, the, the work that includes other people. Um, but, um, obviously, my, it was, started as a, kind of a running joke. While I was at TDF, I found out that at- ATG, um, they had people i- on staff, um, called Access Champions, uh, in England. And I was, you know, I joked with, uh, my bosses there that, you know, that's the title change I wanted. And I would wear a wrestling belt, uh, championship belt to work every day.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and, uh, so it was, you know, it was in good fun. Um, but going back to, kind of one of the reasons that I wanted to start the podcast, was because, well, you are correct. Heroics, you know, these things should be, and they are, and they are a service. And we are service providers, and we are serving the community.

Philip Dallmann: Um, I am strong believer in, in thank you. Um, I was raised that way. I know how much it means to me, when I'm not seeking out a thank you, and I receive it. Um, and I make a point of thanking other people. Um, even when, uh, it's not necessarily expected, o-of me. So a large part of this podcast is to say thank you, to people that are pushing the work forward. That are putting in endless hours to, to make this happen, um, in that realm of nonprofit and, and or in advocacy or, or wherever. And, um, I, I personally hold, hold those folks, in, in high regard.

Philip Dallmann: So, in a lot of ways, I wanted to, to give them that title of Access Champion, and, and for championing the work. But also, they're all heavyweights in my uh, in my mind. Um, heavyweight champions who, who, you know, while they may get knocked down, they get back up, a- and keep on fighting. In that way, I, I feel like the title is well deserved for, for the folks that we chat with.

Evan Hatfield: What's uh, what stands out as "The Interview" that you uh, are the most proud of? And I understand that we're in a world of equity here. And, you know, all of the grandchildren are very attractive.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: But, um-

Philip Dallmann: Um-

Evan Hatfield: what's the, what's been a moment?

Philip Dallmann: ... I'll say, um, sitting down with Betty Siegel was, was huge. That was really huge and really huge and really enlightening, um, as always. Uh, obviously I had a personal relationship with her before, but I feel like I got to just learn so much about her-her... you know, one of the things with the structure of things, is learning everyone's sort of unique journey to the work. And-

Evan Hatfield: Excellent.

Philip Dallmann: ... that influences, you can find how that influences the style in which they work, and where the passion comes from. And so, to learn that about Betty was really fascinating because they were things that I didn't know. Um, and I had been, you know, referring to her as, you know, four horsewomen of access, with Lisa Carling And Beth Prevor and Ruth Feldman. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... but that was a really, really interesting one. Um, interesting for a different reason, was, Annalisa Dias, who is doing decolonization work in culture, culture arts in D.C. And, that was interesting because I knew nothing about decolonization. Um, she was referred to me by a friend of a friend, said, "She's doing super dope work." And I was like, "Great."

Philip Dallmann: And I'll be candid, I was like, "All right. Cool, cool, cool. I'll just figure out what decolonization is that day, before we hop on the phone. And, uh, it requires much more than a day to, dive into and digest. It was an interesting conversation, and it honestly opened up my mind in a different way. About my, about my privilege, I talk about my privilege a lot on this show, um, or acknowledge it at least.

Philip Dallmann: And then, uh, the one that probably took the longest, um, but it was well worth the wait, was, with the Xbox designers, um, for the adaptive controller. Um, that was really cool. As a, as a, a lover of Madden, uh, it was so cool to hear how they designed this controller, uh, so thoughtfully with the community. Uh, which is wh- not what I expected from a big conglomerate, like Microsoft. Um, but for it to be so, it felt so, um, small business approach, um from a giant corporation. Um, it was really... that one was really cool too.

Evan Hatfield: Is there, uh, a moment that represents a, a significant point of learning that, you would like to do again? Or is there a major mistake that you made that, uh, you learned from?

Philip Dallmann: Oh, um, well yeah, one that was the, the lack of, uh, that one interview going in with sort of a lack of, uh, thorough research for some something I knew I didn't know. Um, that definitely one. Um, there's been some language corrections, um, throughout, uh, that I always try to make sure I acknowledge on the next episode. Um, if I've either hear it back, or somebody points it out to me.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, I mean I think a lot of the stuff has been detail work that I've, I, uh, had to up my game on. Um, whether it was making sure that my website funnels this, uh, podcast out in the world is actually accessible. Um, shout out Christina Trivigno, um, who, who helped guide me through that. Um, we were I think, four episodes deep when we realized that it wasn't actually completely functional for a screen reader. Um-

Evan Hatfield: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, reviewing my transcripts, again, it took a couple of episodes before I didn't just trust that rev.com had gotten it 100% correct. Yeah. I, I think those are the thing- the, the main things was really the details.

Evan Hatfield: Um, my, my final two questions are, who's on your wishlist to speak with in the future? And, where's Access Champion going?

Philip Dallmann: Those are great questions. Um, wishlist-wise, um, I would be remiss if I didn't c- uh, mention the number one on Miss Kelsey Rose Brown's wishlist, which is, which is Mr Lin-Manuel Miranda. Uh, for the work of, uh, representation that he's done. Um, we are maybe on the wait list. I don't know. We've sent like four press requests. It's fine.

Philip Dallmann: It's a wishlist, but we're, we're close to realizing it, which is, um, the folks over at the National Disability Theater, um, uh, I, I think are going to be great guests. Um, we had one of their, um... actually we've, I think we've had a couple of their, their, um, honorary members, but including Ali stoker. Um, and she was great.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and then I'd, I'd really, um, and I'll, and I'll put this to the audience because we've, we've done some research here and, and send out some press requests, but we've struggled to get folks on, um, to, uh, speak about both the sort of non-binary, uh, movement, um, and inclusion in that realm, and also trans-inclusion. Um, it's been, uh, a little bit of struggled area that we, we really haven't been able to get folks on. Um, and I feel that we're underrepresenting that movement and that community right now.

Philip Dallmann: Um, so that's something that like, kind of, uh, is stewing with me. So I, eh, not, not necessarily just one person in there, but, um, I mean, obviously I would love to have Ellen on, um, for the work that she's done. Yeah. I think in that realm, that's, that's definitely one of them.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and then the future of the podcast, I, I want us to be more accessible. Um, and I know that means becoming, um, a video format so that we can be ASL interpreted. Um, which means we need to be able to shoot the interviews, um, or at least some of them. So that, that is something that I'm, I'm currently sort of figuring out the logistics of, um, and, and what kind of equipment we would need.

Philip Dallmann: I'd like to see, again, the conversations expand. Um, I'd like to find communities that I haven't thought of, um, or that aren't on my radar, um, and represent them well. And share their stories and their work, that, or work that's happening within those communities. I'd like to be even more mobile. Um, you know, we took our, we took two trips last year, one to Atlanta, um, for the conference, the LEAD Conference.

Philip Dallmann: And then, uh, to Chicago in February, which was a choice, to go to Chicago in February. I'd like to do more of that, sit downs in cities. Um, preferably where I don't get the flu in the middle of it. Um, but you know, we'll go to Denver again the summer, um, for the LEAD Conference. Um, but I'd love to, again, even things like I, you know, Philly is a short drive away.

Philip Dallmann: Um, I'd love to set up ca- camp there in the future and like, sit down with, you know, Alana Raffle and, and John Orr, over at Art Reach. And, and of course, the one and only Roger Ideishi, which is... you know, if I have a dream guests, honestly, it's a sin that Roger had- didn't make it on this show in the first year; given how much I talk about him on this show. Um, that's, you know, it feels like a huge miss.

Philip Dallmann: But yeah, I, I think those are the things is, is uh, you know, continuing to span a wider reach. Um, and, and j- both in like audience but also, um, topics and, and uh, the kind of work becoming more and more accessible. And, and looking at evolving how we are, uh, accessible to people. I keep putting it out there, and I'd love more and more feedback from our listeners, um, in how they're consuming the podcast. And, what we could do better to make it a better experience for them. That's the long-winded answer to those two questions. (laughs)

Evan Hatfield: To bring us on home, when you talk about feedback and I think I see it as throughline for everything that you, you discuss. Uh, bringing more people in, and extending the conversation a- as far as possible. Is there anything that folks who are listening can do to participate, or help support, uh, Access Champions in any way?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. Well we will be launching, um, in the next few months, we'll be launching a Patreon, um, to help sort of subsidize some of the costs of the transcripts, and um, any type of marketing and things like that. Um, if you have something you want to plug, we have super affordable sponsorship opportunities. And then,

you know, when you, if you follow us on social media that that helps us with sponsors.

Philip Dallmann: Um, we can show the listenership, but they, they also want the, the reach for clickable links. Um, and uh, so when you're able to follow, and again, I think I mentioned it on the last couple episodes, is that we're about quality not quantity when it comes to social media. Um, Kelsey is very particular about what she shares, and um, or retweets or you know, throws on, on Instagram and such. Uh, we promise not to flood your feed.

Philip Dallmann: Um, but yeah, when you, when you give us those follows and those likes, they, they do really help us. Um, as well as the like star rating and reviews. Um, they really help when again, we're pitching to sponsors and things of that nature. The biggest thing to me is when, uh, we receive an email or a comment or a, a DM, um suggesting either a topic or a person to talk to. Um, that's my favorite, because then our content is truly audience driven.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and that doesn't happen nearly as frequently as I would like. Uh, so, um, again for our listeners out there, if there are things that you want to talk about or, or hear about, or somebody you'd love to hear on the podcast, um, just shoot us a message, um, on social media. We're @AccessChampion. Um, or uh, via email AccessChampion@gmail.com. Um, and uh, like I said, I, I get back pretty quickly and um, uh, like I said, I'm always down to, to talk about something new or talk to somebody new.

Evan Hatfield: Sure. I'm really, really grateful to you for sharing, and opening up. Uh, especially at the last second. I know I personally really appreciate, uh, all of your perspective and candor. And I think on behalf of a lot of folks, I just want to say again, congratulations on a, a one year anniversary. And thank you, for getting so many people, uh, a platform to have this conversation that might not be able to, to have it at, at this large of a scale. So again, just thanks and congratulations.

Philip Dallmann: Thanks man. And, and uh, thank you. You're the one that are the first people, um, not at TDF, uh, when I started out to sort of, um, offer me guidance. And, and off- offer to be a sounding board, uh, in a lot of ways. And, uh, I don't know if I would have gotten to this point without you, an- and people like you. Like, like, you know, like, uh, Roger and such, um, that were tremendous resources for me. And besides you having done the beta episode, uh, I couldn't think of anybody else that I wanted on for the, for the one year anniversary.

Evan Hatfield: I appreciate it. And you know, East Coast, West Coast, all in the same gang.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

- Evan Hatfield: Really happy to be here, with, uh, so many really amazing people doing good work. So thanks to everyone.
- Philip Dallmann: Uh-huh (affirmative). All right, well, uh, thank you again, for your time over the course of two days. Um, and uh, as always, thank you for being an Access Champion.
- Philip Dallmann: Thank you again to Evan for, uh, taking the time to chat. Uh, thank you, uh, to all of you for taking the time to listen over this past year. Um, 52 episodes of strong and, um, that's unreal. It's absolutely unreal. Um, but yeah, uh, and as I said, uh, in the interview, I, I couldn't think of anybody else, um, that I wanted more, uh, for this one year episode than Evan Hatfield. So, thank you again, Evan.
- Philip Dallmann: We will be launching season two of the podcast next week. Uh, continuing some of our, our folks from Chicago next week. Uh, we'll a- it'll actually be, uh, Evan's counterpoint of Evan's co-founders and counterparts at CCAC, uh, Christina Gunther. So, really excited to share that, that conversation. Uh, she's another one that I've looked up to for a long time. Um, and I think is doing incredible work. Um, and, and I think one of the, uh, most correct people to launch the second season of Access Champions.
- Philip Dallmann: As always, and in- incredibly sincerely, um, this podcast doesn't happen without Matt Kerstetter, our executive producer. Uh, it wouldn't have e-even launched without him. Um, he, he is so in the DNA of this podcast and, and ingrained in, in what we do. Um, and has guided me so much, uh, when it comes to the equipment and best practices, when it comes to podcasts and audio recording. Um, just so grateful for everything that he does.
- Philip Dallmann: Um, and thank you to Miss Kelsey Rose Brown, former Champion intern, now associate producer. Um, eh, as I said in the interview with Evan, I, I would never have considered that anybody would want to join this little, little band of merry misfits, um, that are trying to spread the word of access, and inclusion and diversity. And, uh, the fact that, that you came on board and, and, and have been so committed and, and work so hard, um, just incredibly appreciative.
- Philip Dallmann: And, uh, finally, as always, thank you to Eric Walton. Um, we knew we needed a theme song. Uh, he and I hadn't really been in touch for a few years and, um, I knew he was doing some composing. And reaching out and, and you coming up with that great theme song. Um, again, just very, very grateful.
- Philip Dallmann: Uh, we will be back again next week for the new season, our second year. Whoo! Second year. Uh, and, uh, we can't wait. And remember inclusion believers, never stop running through that brick wall.