

Philip Dallmann: Hello Inclusion believers and welcome to the Access Champions Podcast. I'm your host Phil Dallmann for this week's journey into the galaxies of accessibility, diversion, and inclusion. Uh, we got another great episode for you this week uh, from our uh, time at the Kennedy Center LEAD Conference in Denver in our pop up studio. Uh, this week we have Brian Be uh, who is an artist and a self advocate out in Denver. Um, and I believe you do some teaching artist work uh, as well and recently joined the team over at University of Colorado. And, uh, just a really awesome guy, really passionate advocate uh, really interesting artist, um, on the show you'll, you'll hear the debut of a new poem uh, that he had written uh, I believe that week. And he, he was kind enough to share it with us live, um, and with our guest host.

Philip Dallmann: And our, our guest host was former Denver resident uh, Sarah Hom who is now the director of audience services for a Roundabout here in New York and, and a previous guest I believe episode 38 uh, here on the podcast. And Sarah and Brian knew each other from before uh, it just made a lot of sense since they were both in the room, why not, uh have Sarah lead the conversation and uh, change things up a little bit. Um, so I'm excited to , to share that conversation with you guys and continue sharing all of the great content that we got in Denver. Um, which again was just such a blast. Again as always, shout out to the Kennedy Center team um, for, for allowing us to have a presence there and um, you know, uh, taking care of myself and our associate producer Miss Kelsey Rose Brown so, so very well, uh, while we were there.

Philip Dallmann: Just couple short bits of business, uh, before we dive in uh, reminder if you don't already give us a follow on social media. We go a lot of great content. Our Champion intern, Savannah Cooper, is curating a lot of wonderful things on Twitter and Instagram, uh, where you can find us at Access Champion, um, and then on Facebook we are the Access Champion Podcast. As always I say, uh, we are about quality, uh, not quantity. So we won't flood your feed, um, but we will share interesting things and highlights from each episode um, and previous episodes as well.

Philip Dallmann: We are also on Patreon uh, which if you haven't listened to previous episodes where I've explained it, Patreon is a way for the consumers of art or educational things like, like this podcast, uh, to support us. So we are, we are on Patreon um, we are [Patreon.com/accesschampions](https://www.patreon.com/accesschampions), um, and you can support us for as little as one dollar a month. We have a couple different tiers, but one dollar is the, the entry, the entry level. Um, and for that you get access to all the additional content that were starting to put up there. Um, we're starting to do fun segments, um, a couple weeks ago the folks at the Constitution Center uh, [Christiana Bianco 00:03:00], quizzed me on uh, uh, the constitution which you'll have to uh, sign up with Patreon to find out how I did.

Philip Dallmann: Additional conversations like that, fun, uh, some deep dives, uh, we talked about the art of captioning with Matt Bivens, which was really exciting. And uh, I

think it's really interesting stuff and, and obviously you know we're looking to cover some of our costs as it, as it relates to accessibility with our, with our transcripts. Um, some of our time, uh, this is a labor of love, there is some labor involved. Um, and, and as we hope to travel to more things like the LEAD Conference.

Philip Dallmann: Um, in a few weeks I will be in Philadelphia on September 11th for Art Reach Accessibility Summit. Um, really, really excited to, to take all that in and chat with some of the folks there. Uh, I grew up just across the, just across the Betsy Ross, um so Philly is near and dear to my heart, uh, and fingers crossed, we'll hopefully finally get Roger [Deshing 00:03:57] on the show and, and the rest of the Art Reach crew and the folks over at Kimmel Center. I mean a lot of people in Philadelphia are killing the game, um, and doing a lot of great work, but those are they type of things that we, we hope to uh, subsidize a little bit uh, through Patreon so uh, check us out [Patreon.com/accesschampions](https://www.patreon.com/accesschampions). One dollar a month and you get uh, all that, all that great content and a sticker, I think it's a pretty great deal. And I think that's that, so without further ado, Access Champion, Brian Be.

Sarah Hom: Hi everybody, uh, we are coming to you from Denver, Colorado, my home town at the Kennedy Center's LEAD Conference. Uh, I am Sarah Hom, Roundabout Theater's director of audience services and your guest host for today. Uh, and here with me is Brian Be, uh, Brian, why don't you introduce yourself?

Brian Be: Hi, Sarah, good to see you again.

Sarah Hom: Good to seeing you again, too.

Brian Be: Welcome back to Denver for a little bit.

Sarah Hom: Thank you, glad to be here.

Brian Be: My name is Brian Be. Brian is spelled with an I, B-E. I am a performer, I'm a person with a disability, I'm a self advocate and I also have the privilege to combine arts and wellness to do a lot of community work.

Sarah Hom: Fantastic. So, uh, Brian and I, just full disclosure, do go way back. Uh, we have worked together quite a bit with Phamily Theater Company, that's Phamily with a P-H, here in Denver. Uh, and uh, Brian why don't you talk a little bit about your journey into Access and Advocacy.

Brian Be: My journey into Access and Advocacy. Um, in essence my life blew up when I lost all the things that were the most important to me. Um, typically people would think of like uh, home or a job or a marriage, I lost all that and more. And in that life blow up I also found out that I'm on the autism spectrum. It was interesting because I was rather used to losing things, um, living non-sustainably

and I was rather used to losing my sanity, so to speak, um, my grounding. But in this life blow up, that was one thing that I, I managed to keep because I now have this new understanding about myself and about these many dynamics related to the autism spectrum.

Brian Be: So, it was, was weird to like lose everything but like to some extent stay grounded while I was crying and gnashing my teeth and, ans auditioning and you know doing all the-trying to find time to find a place to live and all that.

Sarah Hom: Sure, isn't it so interesting that often times when you have so many things that are maybe unexplained in your life and actually for a lot of people receiving sort of diagnosis can almost be, I won't necessarily say a relief but life changing and that that can can really help you along your journey. And is that, is that kind of what you found?

Brian Be: Yeah, yeah. I mean that, that was literally when I was born last name Bernard. And I still use that but uh, I use the first two letters Be, um, it's like and invitation, it's a sense, Brian Be. Brian Be.

Sarah Hom: Brian Be. Be whoever you want to be.

Brian Be: And, and I have to remind myself most days I am an artist and I am autistic. It's who I am.

Sarah Hom: So let's talk about art and autism and how those two play together for you. How, how does that interplay between art and autism come out in what you do?

Brian Be: Uh, probably comes out in about everything that I do. The University of Colorado recently hired me as a self advocacy coordinator and they didn't set out to hire an artist, but I'm pretty sure that the fun things that I bring to advisory board meetings, the creative exercises that I bring to, um, interdisciplinary training among healthcare professionals, the way that I uh, invite any and evoke, um, other people to advocate for themselves, a lot of that comes from me being an artist and finding fun ways to, to- Hey guys, look, uh- I don't sit still for very long very well, so I'm gonna be wondering around, if I get behind you and you're uncomfortable, just shew me along. That's cool.

Sarah Hom: (laughs)

Brian Be: Yeah, and people laugh and then, but then it's funny 'cause now other people start saying the lights are a little too bright or yeah, can we open a window or yeah, let's stand up and stretch, too. And so I think people are hiring an artist even when they didn't intend to hire an artist. Does that make sense?

Sarah Hom: Yeah. Art, art should be everywhere, and I think maybe on some level we're, we're all artists and we should all be advocates for ourselves. We-

Brian Be: So I believe that and I foster that.

Sarah Hom: Yeah. Yeah.

Brian Be: But there's some people that are staunch, I'm not an artist. Okay, I'll accept that, too. (laughs)

Sarah Hom: (laughs) They, they don't want to accept that identity. I, I understand that.

Brian Be: Right, right.

Sarah Hom: It's okay, uh, they're- uh, you live within your comfort zones.

Brian Be: Yeah.

Sarah Hom: Right. (laughs)

Brian Be: Yeah.

Sarah Hom: Um, so do you, do you want to talk a little bit about the kinds of art that you like to do? And I know, I certainly know uh, that you've been an actor and a dancer and what else?

Brian Be: Uh, I've had the privilege to do a combination, rather than being a specialist film actor, or a specialist Latin dancer, I've had the combination and privilege to be um, a singer/songwriter, poet, uh, dancer, um, co- co-facilitator and like share spaces where all of those come together. Um, advocacy falls in there a lot of times. A lot of times my arts and disability or inclusion or empathy, diversity easily falls in the advocacy world. Can I give you an example?

Sarah Hom: Please do.

Brian Be: Please do. So this is not particularly rehearsed, but I wrote this I believe two days ago. Uh, this is called Roll.

Sarah Hom: And is that R-O-L-E or R-O-L-L?

Brian Be: That's the question, which way is [crosstalk 00:11:03]-

Sarah Hom: Interesting.

Brian Be: ..it spelled?



Sarah Hom: Okay.

Brian Be: Roll, too much, don't know. Can't tell. Roll, Roll, RooooooIIII, stop asking it's too much. Living this world, laden crutch. Help support me and further the numbing out. No grief. And this is where I, this is where I roll too much. Don't know, can't tell. Rooolll, Rooolll, Rooolll. Pharma and Kim talk, talk, talk. More journaling and DSM. Community. Walk, walk walk. Peer support and then no more appointments. More appointments. More steps. Just give me some nature. Love the recovery rooms. Souls that really mean it. Falling again by the wayside. Too much to attain. Still can't stop dreaming on it. To cry. To sustain. Dumb on the smart phone. Intensity has come to overrun cocaine time again and again left to be undone. One day I can climb barriers that I never could. Next day I'm back. Blanket in the floor, sunken in to should. This is where I- this is where I roll too much. Don't know. Can't tell. Roll, roll, rooooollll.

Brian Be: Thank you.

Sarah Hom: Thank you. That was powerful. Uh, I, I don't want to- I don't want to put my spin on your words, but that seems to really, as a person with a disability that seems to really speak to the disability experience and being stuck in the medical industrial complex as it were. (laughs)

Brian Be: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Thank you, I appreciate that, so you're the first person outside of me to get to experience that and of course, our lovely listeners, too.

Sarah Hom: Um, what, what was your inspiration, what's, what was your impetus for, for writing that?

Brian Be: I would love to identify that exactly, but I- most days are such a wash of information and things to process and sort and filter and to fail to sort and filter for me, I don't remember what a couple of day- Now I can tell you what I did a couple of day, oh that was probably, that was probably-

Sarah Hom: (laughs)

Brian Be: ... but, but I don't remember the exact- I did have a rough weekend.

Sarah Hom: Sure.

Brian Be: And navigating the system and dealing with who I am and meeting the- my own expectations and I'm meeting other deadlines, yeah. (laughs)

Sarah Hom: Yeah, understandable, for sure. For sure.

Brian Be: Yeah.

Sarah Hom: Well, is there, is there anything else that you want to talk about with your many hats that you wear in the world and your various roles within the community here?

Brian Be: I am new as the self advocacy coordinator at the University of Colorado JFK Partners. Um, I'm um, growing I that role and, and I appreciate an opportunity to network with a group called AUCD, Association for Universities on Centers for Disabilities, it's a national network, also part of UCEDD, U-C-E-D-D. Universities, Universities for Centers on Excellence and I believe the D-D is Developmental Disability.

Sarah Hom: That's a lot of letters. (laughs)

Brian Be: It's a lot of letters, um, I'm over the school of medicine in, in uh, children's hospital there's- That's one of the many uh, hats that I wear and it's one that I'm proud of but it's also new and so we're forming out how, how that's gonna be of service. But I got to share some things with pediatricians recently about staple to co-design and they really appreciated me facilitating that conversation. Um, anything else that I'd like to say, I mean I'm, I'm a dancer with SpokeN motion dance. Spoke and then letter N like Nancy, motion dance. And that's an integrated dance company, um, I'm a performer with- What, did you have a question?

Sarah Hom: Oh, no. I, I was uh, I couldn't remember if it was an integrated dance company or not. I was telling Phil about it earlier and uh, yeah.

Brian Be: Little card.

Sarah Hom: Uh, yes. Sorry to interrupt, you were saying you're a dancer with it.

Brian Be: Yeah, and I'm a dancer and um, you know that was uh, like Brian Be, accept and own that I'm an artist.

Sarah Hom: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Brian Be: Um, there was a time when somebody would have said, "Are you a dancer?" And I'm like, this is the answer I hear from a lot of other people, "Um, well, I-" like instead of just, yes, or no. "Well, I-" and I get that, that, that a lot of this modern hectic world is just inhumane you know and it beats us down on our self confidence and our self esteem and stuff and, and you know we want to compare ourselves to whatever big mass media thing name we know or something you know, but- Look man, do you dance, do you move? Okay, then say I'm a dancer, you know, or just be- We don't have to add all these layers about well have you been paid or have you been trained or are you credentialed?



Sarah Hom: Am I a professional, who did I train, you know?

Brian Be: Yeah.

Sarah Hom: Who am I with? And yeah.

Brian Be: Yeah, you know. I just uh, one of the things I got to do with the university, I did an interdisciplinary training there uh, called, LEND, Leadership and Education Neurodevelopmental uh, Disabilities. And as a LEND fellow I got to develop these workshops they're called Hi.

Sarah Hom: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brian Be: Uh, because I feel like, like pretty much everything in life starts with high, that's, that's the jumping point, right? But it also stands for Having Interdependence.

Sarah Hom: Okay.

Brian Be: Interdependence I the disability world, the word independence gets, uh, I think way over advertised.

Sarah Hom: Sure.

Brian Be: Um, where as even people that don't have a disability are very interdependent, you need a team of people. You need to be able to ask for help and delegate and say no.[crosstalk 00:18:21]

Sarah Hom: Right.

Brian Be: You know you were talking earlier about self care-

Sarah Hom: Yeah.

Brian Be: ... and the work life balance and stuff and I just feel like we're, we're missing the boat if we're not uh, helping people with disabilities also be interdependent and accept that. Anyways, so I got these workshops, I just got- I just delivered one yesterday morning um, and I'm excited about keeping those going and finding more people that want to do uh, uh, empathy training, sensitivity training, diversity inclusion, um, and also just get out of their whatever their usual box is. And using these movement, uh, acting and improvisation skills and games to, to, to not just perform on stage, but to like well, well, what are you dealing with in your family or your organization and hopefully some of these skills will give you some new ways to be inter dependent.

Sarah Hom: Right.



Brian Be: For an audio description I'm interlacing my fingers-

Sarah Hom: (laughs)

Brian Be: ... for inter dependent.

Sarah Hom: That's uh, that's so interesting actually. One of the conversations I was in here at LEAD was all about the use of language and how, how we automatically have this tendency to look at language as a binary like the rest of the world. That, um- And there was a lot of talk about independence and interdependence and whether or not dependence was really being depend- dependent on somebody, was that really a negative thing and that at some point in time regardless of who we are, regardless of what our ability is, we need someone else's help. Uh, you know, no, no one person- no man is an island as the phrase goes. That-

Brian Be: Do you hear that song playing in you head?

Sarah Hom: Yeah, I do. Yeah. (laughs)

Brian Be: [singing] I am a rock, I am an island.

Sarah Hom: And that we, we really can't stand alone and that our great strength is in being able to, to weave ourselves together and to be able to be strong together.

Brian Be: Yeah, yeah.

Sarah Hom: Sounds like that's what you try to put into your practice.

Brian Be: I do. I do. I mean they're all valuable. Independence is valuable. Depending on others, that's important and interdependence as well.

Sarah Hom: Absolutely, yeah. I, I would agree with that. Uh, so we always like to end our uh, or I say we, that Phil always likes to end these podcasts with uh who do you like, who else is doing some great work out in the community? Who do you want to lift up, who you want to give a shout out to? Um, who's doing Access well?

Brian Be: Well, I mean, I- this it's been awesome to be at the Kennedy Center LEAD Conference this last couple days. Uh, this is my first time.

Sarah Hom: Oh, fanta- welcome.

Brian Be: Yeah.

Sarah Hom: It's fun, isn't it?



Brian Be: Yeah, it's fun and ver- so many amazing things happening. So many great organizations, Roundabout Theater, you know, over in New York.

Sarah Hom: Oh, thank you. (laughs)

Brian Be: Um, and what's the blue laces? Do you remember the full name of that group?

Sarah Hom: Uh-

Male: Blue Laces Theater Company.

Brian Be: Blue Laces Theater Company. Uh, and then the one that uh, I just met her and she was co-facilitating, Rebecca, Sara- Not Sara.

Sarah Hom: Sarah [McGullis 00:21:45]?

Brian Be: Yes, it is Sarah.

Sarah Hom: Oh yes.

Brian Be: Yeah, what's, what's the group that she's with?

Male: Action Play.

Sarah Hom: She, is- she is with Action- Sarah McG- oh,

Male: Say hi and jump in again.

Sarah Hom: Let me try this again, yeah. Uh, sorry. Sarah [MarGullis 00:21:58] with Action Play theater.

Brian Be: Yeah, yeah. I mean there's um, there's a group that I'm really enjoying called Poetry for Personal Power and they're talking about find your personal power and recovery. Recovery being like substance addiction recovery.

Sarah Hom: Yeah, okay.

Brian Be: Or other addiction recovery that's not substance you know, like gambling, even food, gaming.

Sarah Hom: Yeah.

Brian Be: There's so many online you know, and there's lots of recovery that's not substance but it's like domestic violence recovery.



Sarah Hom: Sure.

Brian Be: Uh, divorce recovery. I mean I mentioned earlier that today's modern world we all need some more prescription strength nature.

Sarah Hom: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

Brian Be: You know what I mean? And some interdependence, so uh, this group Poetry for Personal Power, I'm, I'm privileged to uh, help them grow. Uh, we're doing some story circles here uh, locally here in Colorado and, and I'm, and I'm pleased that they're growing. Uh, I think of Dr Deborah Wilcox and uh, my team that includes Andre and Yolanda, and, and, and the agency partners that we've got. I could go on.

Sarah Hom: (laughs)

Brian Be: You ask me who else is doing great stuff, there's a few of [inaudible 00:23:11].

Sarah Hom: It sounds like there's a lot of people doing a lot of great stuff, which we, we do tend to see here at, at the LEAD Conference. Uh, so in- Let's, let's close this out at a high note. What uh, what's your, what's our hope for the future of Access? If you had to dream big, what would that dream be?

Brian Be: I dream for Access, accessibility uh, you know we've- in this area today talked a fair amount about disability-

Sarah Hom: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brian Be: ...or people that experience life in those other ways, um, as far as their healthcare goes, as far as their, uh, behavioral health, physical health goes. Accessibility is a lot bigger than um, those that have different healthcare needs, uh, those with different healthcare diagnosis or condition. Accessibility is financial accessibility. Accessibility is cultural uh, accessibility uh, and my dream for where accessibility can go is that uh- How about this let's do our best in our organizations and as individuals to know, to be exposed to and to know some things. How high does the ramp need to be, how do you say good morning in Portuguese, or whatever else? Let's, let's do what we can to know. But the fact is, we can't know everything.

Sarah Hom: Sure.

Brian Be: Let's cultivate that space where it's okay to not know and together, let's go find out.

Sarah Hom: That sounds fantastic. What a great world that would be. Well, uh, again this is the Access Champion's Podcast and this is Sarah Hom from Roundabout Theater Company and-

Brian Be: Brian Be.

Sarah Hom: Uh, coming to you from Denver, Colorado. Thanks for joining us.

Brian Be: Yeah, thanks so much.

Philip Dallmann: Thanks again to Brian for taking the time to chat and, and for sharing uh, that poem. Uh, which was really wonderful. Um, thank you to Sarah Hom for, for diving in and being only our second guest host um, I think only other person that's hosted before was Kelsey. Um, and, and we will get to some interviews that Kelsey did uh, in the pop up studio, so we'll have a few more that aren't, are not me for those who may be tired of hearing my voice. And uh, yeah, so thank, thank you for diving in and thank you for doing such a wonderful job. Um, as always thank you to our executive producer, Matt Kertsetter for making us sound great each and every week. Uh, thank you to the aforementioned uh, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown for all the work that she's done and all the work she did with us uh, out in Denver, um, making these interviews happen.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, thank you to our Champion intern, Savannah Cooper, you can see her work all across uh, social media. Thank you to Tommy Karr uh, for that fantastic logo and thank you to Eric Walton for that dope theme song, it never gets old. Uh, we will be back again next week and remember Inclusion believers, never stop running through that brick wall.