

Philip Dallmann: Hello, inclusion believers and welcome to the Access Champions Podcast. I'm your host, Phil Dallmann, for this week's journey into the galaxies of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. Uh, I am coming to you right now live, uh, well, I guess it's not live (laughs) if you're listening to this, uh, next week, but, uh, I am currently, uh, in the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, uh, at ARTREACH's Cultural Accessibility Conference.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, it's been a blast, uh, being able to scoot down here, um, listen to all these, uh, amazing presenters, chat with so many interesting people, um, and see the, the citywide buy-in, um, that I've heard so much about, uh, happening here in Philadelphia, uh, as it relates to accessibility and inclusion, um, just a, a large showing of, uh, cultural institutions and service providers, uh, here, and it's just super exciting. Um, there's a real, uh, interest and a, and a want to learn to, to grow, um, and to serve the community, uh, uh, here in Philly, uh, at the highest level possible. Uh, so that's just always just so great to see it and so great to, to hear the conversations that are happening.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and, uh, thank you, uh, I guess, first and foremost, thank you to ARTREACH for inviting me down. Um, you know, any chance I, uh ... I'm originally from just over the bridge, uh, in South Jersey and, uh, you know, anytime work can bring me through this area and, uh, can tie it in with a, with a chance to see my mom, uh, (laughs) it's always great.

Philip Dallmann: This week, we're, we're chatting with, uh ... our guest is ARTREACH's executive director, the, the host, uh, ARTREACH being the host of this conference, uh, and their executive director, John, is John Orr. Um, and John and I met a few years back at the Kennedy Center LEAD Conference, um, really hit it off, uh, just, you know, we, we know the same spots, we, we understand, uh, the city of Philadelphia, uh, very well and, and I think, uh, both, uh, passionate about access here and access abroad and, um, moving that field forward. Um, so, uh, it was great to, to have one of those conversations with John on the record (laughs). Uh, usually, uh, it's at the conference offhand, at the bar, wherever after, um, and, uh, so it's great to be able to share that with all of you guys, uh, this week.

Philip Dallmann: As always, I want to, uh, uh, if you don't already, uh, follow us on social media. Our Champion intern, Savannah Cooper, puts out incredible content every, every week. Um, we are on Twitter and Instagram at @AccessChampion and we are The Access Champion Podcast on Facebook. Really, if you type in Access Champion into almost anything, we're the only ones there, there is, uh, there are, there is, uh, (laughs) and, uh, uh, you can find us pretty easily that way. Um, but, uh, I do encourage you to follow us on social media. We share a lot of, uh, interesting things and by we, I mean, uh, Savannah and also, uh, sometimes our associate producer, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown. We're all about quality and not quantity, so we won't flood your feed, but we will share, uh, what we think is interesting, uh, articles and quotes and, and, and thought pieces, uh, as well as,

uh, content, uh, from each week's, uh, uh, episode. Um, so, uh, again, that's @AccessChampion across Twitter and Instagram and The Access Champion Podcast on Facebook.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, this week, we are once again sponsored by, uh, Able, the new series, um, that, uh, when this, when this drops, uh, will have already, uh, aired its first episode on Amazon Prime. Uh, Able is a new doc series, uh, that consists of interviews featuring actors, writers, comedians, and creatives with disabilities. Through, uh, through candid conversation, hosts Alie B. Gorrie and Kallen Blair meet with featured guests to discuss the importance and nonnegotiable nature of inclusion in the arts. For more, visit [ableseries.com](http://ableseries.com), that's A, uh, A-B-L-E-A-S-E-R-I-E-S.com and mark your calendars, uh, for September 12th, which this will air after, so go ahead and jump on Amazon Prime and type in Able and, and, uh, dive into watch.

Philip Dallmann: We are very grateful Able gave us, um, our Patreon, uh, supporters access to the first episode, uh, a little more than a week in advance, uh, of that airing, um, which was really exciting and, and, and we're going to continue to work with partners to create, um, access to exclusive content like that, um, whether it's our conversations, extended conversations with, uh, guests here or, uh, you know, we're growing our list of cultural partners, um, so, uh, if you want to access to those things, you could head on over to [Patreon.com/accesschampions](http://Patreon.com/accesschampions), uh, and sign up to support us for as little \$1 a month. At \$1, which is the, the baseline, uh, you get a sticker and you get access to all those things, so a real bang for your buck there. Uh, there are other levels above that with more swag, uh, on-air shout-outs, ad space. Um, you know, uh, we're redesigning our t-shirts, which is really exciting, um, and we'll have those out, uh, and, and available for our Patreon supporters really soon.

Philip Dallmann: Um, but, uh, you know, we are, we are a nonprofit, uh, and, uh, it is a labor of love, uh, of a lot of folks, but there is some labor involved, um, and there is some cost involved, especially when it comes to, to transcripts, um, and, uh, other ventures, which I'll mention in just a second, um, but, uh, an- any and all support is always, uh, greatly appreciated, and, again, uh, \$1 a month does, uh, go a long way for us.

Philip Dallmann: Speaking of those ventures, we are looking, uh, to create a little bit of an advisory committee, uh, separate from our board, which is also an advisory committee, but one, uh, specifically, uh, individuals or folks who, uh, use ASL. Um, we are in the process of piloting, uh, ASL videos of our podcast, uh, podcast episodes, um, so we, we, you know, we want to have not only the transcripts, but these videos in addition, um, so that we continue to grow how accessible we are, uh, and, uh, I'm a firm believer of not just, uh, deciding to do something and saying that's how we should do it and then doing it.

Philip Dallmann: Um, we obviously want to involve the community, uh, and those of you, um, uh, either who already, uh, listen and read, uh, the podcast, uh, and, uh, use ASL or, uh, maybe those of you who may know someone who would be interested in this podcast if it was ASL-interpreted, um, if you could go ahead and reach out to us at AccessChampion@gmail.com, uh, we're trying to pull together this committee so, um, we can, you know, pilot this and, and get it, uh, as, as close to, to perfect as possible, you know. Uh, we're always trying to, to serve the community at, at the highest level possible. So, um, again, uh, if you are an ASL user or, uh, who already engages with the podcast or if you know someone who, uh, uses ASL and, um, would be interested in the podcast, um, go ahead and reach out to us at AccessChampion@gmail.com.

Philip Dallmann: And I think that is that for our business this week. Uh, so without further ado, Access Champion John Orr.

Philip Dallmann: All right. And we are here, uh, at the ARTREACH Accessibility Conference, uh, in the City of Brotherly Love, and I am joined by ARTREACH's own executive director, John Orr. Thanks for, uh, finally taking the time to chat (laughs).

John Orr: Yeah, well, thanks for finally coming to Philadelphia.

Philip Dallmann: I mean, listen, uh, (laughing) my mom is very happy that I did this (laughs).

John Orr: Oh, you know, when you're right over the bridge, you know-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

John Orr: ... you got to stop by to say hello.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs). Um, I, uh, it wa-, we were talking earlier, I, uh, it's been a, like a, a really, uh, joy. I was, I was talking to Roger Ideishi, who, uh, depending on what order we run these in, uh, you may have heard of or (laughs) not, um, about, uh, you know, I, I was very unaware of, uh, besides Roger being based here, uh, art access in any which way in Philadelphia really at all. Uh, unless Roger shared an article about it, I really didn't know. Um, and having grown up, again, a- across the Betsy Ross, um, you know, it, it was very exciting to, a couple years ago, meet you, um, and the rest of what has really shown to be a, just a dope, uh, community here in Philly that's just trying to do the thing, uh.

John Orr: We're trying (laughing).

Philip Dallmann: But it's, it's, it's like very Philly in nature how it's happening too. It's like, yeah, we're going to just get it done and we're going to do it our way and we're going to do it for the people of Philly and (laughs)-

John Orr: So I think what I've been trying to tell people is that, yeah, as far as accessibility goes, we were late to the party-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... but we brought the dessert-

Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: ... and a little bit of extra beer, so (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, as, as always, a lit- ... you know, you walk in with that case of, case of Miller, it's fine.

John Orr: Right, yeah (laughing).

Philip Dallmann: Um, so I don't actually know, uh, anything about how you ended up here at ARTREACH. What, uh, what was that journey?

John Orr: Yeah. So, uh, it was a, it was a pretty long one. So, um, uh, before ARTREACH, I, I honestly had no experience in accessibility.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: It's not what my focus was on professionally, and I think, uh, when I first came in, people were probably a little skeptical, um-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... as I kind of went through the learning curve. So my professional background was always in visitor services at big museums-

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

John Orr: ... the Franklin Institute, the Academy of Natural Sciences. Um, and when I was there, I remember I was at the Academy of Natural Sciences and, uh, there was this moment where all these people were sort of funneling in and, um, I was like, "Who are those people?" And someone said, "Oh, that's your board of directors." And I said, you know, I was like 22 at the time, I said, "Oh, what's a, what's a board of directors?" And someone said, um, "Oh, they're the people who set the direction and the vision for the museum."

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: "They're the ones who determine what gets done." And at the time, I was the museum services manager and I thought, wh-, like what do you they know about running a museum? I run the museum every day.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: No one's talking to me. Um, and for whatever reason, that, that got stuck in my craw a little bit and I, I kind of never let it go.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: And I made this decision, when we make all of our best decisions, at the age of 26-

Philip Dallmann: Correct.

John Orr: ... that I was (laughing), that I was going to quit my job in visitor services 'cause I didn't like the track that I was on career-wise-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... and that I was just going to go be an executive director-

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

John Orr: ... um, and I was going to run things differently. I was going to listen to the people, a very, a very Philadelphia story.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: Um, what I found out immediately was that I, I didn't have a degree-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... and I had no clue what an executive director actually did. Um, so after about seven months unemployed, I was kind of like, all right, I got to, I got to do something. Ended up at the, uh, Masonic Library and Museum of Pennsylvania that's housed in the Masonic Temple on North Broad Street-

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

John Orr: ... um, was the executive assistant to the director there.

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

John Orr: And I used that opportunity on the front lines of an executive office to kind of pick up some, some ideas. Uh, transitioned to a small community arts organization called the Fleisher Art Memorial-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... where I worked with an amazing director named Matt Braun, uh, who just sent me an email today 'cause of my, 'cause of my birthday.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: And, uh, and, um, I just learned so much from him from an, from a community engagement perspective-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... and from the work that we were doing to engage immigrant communities in our own neighborhood, by listening to the immigrant communities and, and allowing them to dictate some of our programming.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: Um, from there, I left and became the director of the president's office at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. And, um, while I was at Fleisher, I found out about ARTREACH. They were another little arts organization sort of plugging along and I kind of targeted them, I said, "That's my organi-, like that's the kind of organization that I want to be involved with."

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: Um, and the, the executive director job came up and I was like, oh, I'm not ready for it and I let it go by. I thought five, six years down the road, when it opens up again, I'll, I'll apply then. Um, lo and behold, about two and a half years later, it reopened-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... and I threw my name into the hat and, for whatever reason, um, the, the board chose me and we've kind of been off and running ever since (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: That's, that, that's, what a, what a, what a great, uh, journey of, uh, one, 26-year-old decision-

John Orr: Right (laughing). Pivot points, right?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, we all-

John Orr: We call them pivot points, but-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah (laughs).

John Orr: ... you know, questionable decisions (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: It all ends up in the correct place.

John Orr: Right, yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, but I, I do love that the, the, the pivot was to really gain the knowledge necessary to walk into a place like ARTREACH, um, and understand things like how to actually listen to the community-

John Orr: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... and provide them what they need, not what just some people in the office decide that they need-

John Orr: Right.

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, which is far too often the case.

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Um, so, um, what was, uh, ARTREACH's, ARTREACH in its form then when you walked in the door?

John Orr: Yeah. So when I came to ARTREACH, uh, it was in our 2015 program year.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: We had closed out our 2014 program year serving about 13,000 people a year, which was a, a really good number. It was a, a respectable number for the organization size. Um, the, the trouble that I found pretty quickly was that we were running about 13 different programs, um, and we only had a staff of six at the time.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: And, you know, they were your typical grant funding sort of dilemma. You get funding to start something, you get no funding to support it, and it kind of just slowly dies, right-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

John Orr: ... until the point, you know, that you're doing more work than it's worth. Um, we were in the middle of a, a financial downturn for the organization, where we were producing successive def- deficits.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: And so as I came in, in my first four months, it was sort of, all right, let's evaluate everything, right? If we're going to have an impact in the city, which is what I wanted to do when I came in, we were going to start engaging the disability community in a much different way. We wanted to know what programming they wanted-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... and then we were going to leverage our position within Philadelphia to deliver on those promises. And so we, we really, um, went through a, a robust strategic planning, uh, process, where we adopted core values like art is a human right, uh, that we believe wholeheartedly and nothing [inaudible 00:15:13] without us and that people with disabilities would drive the planning, execution, and evaluation of all of our programs. We said that, uh, we believe in the social model of disability. So at ARTREACH, one of our core beliefs is that disability is a product of design rather than diagnosis and that good design creates a much more accessible world, all we have to do is literally go and change the world. So that's what ARTREACH is doing.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: Um, and then the final one is that, uh, you know, engagement with the arts is, is critical to personal fulfillment, growth, and human learning.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: Right? And so those are the core values that we coalesced around. And what we ended up doing is we looked at all the programs we were doing and we said, "All right, 13,000 people, 13 programs, six staff." It wasn't really an issue that the programs were bad-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... right? It wasn't a program problem that we had. What we had was a math problem, right? We had six people trying to run 13 programs. And so I can say now, in hindsight, that after my first six months at ARTREACH, um, I was not liked by anybody. Um-



Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: ... 80% of my inherited staff was gone, um, and we had trimmed from 13 programs to four. And my thought at the time was we're going to do less, but we're going to impact more people and create a bigger movement in the city.

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

John Orr: Uh, we're just going to leverage the position that we have. So we closed out that, that ... so, I mean, that's what we did. We, we went ahead and, you know, trimmed down our programming, listened to the community, and delivered what they wanted. Um, and in the end of the 2015 program year, we had engaged 47,000 people in our programs, so there was this huge jump of almost, what is that, 240%, whatever the, whatever the number is. Um, and I was like, okay, so we're on to something. We've got, you know, our ticketing program that we were founded on, that's butts in seats, people get to view the arts. Uh, we developed an encore program that was all immersive programming that moved people from observers to active participants in creative work. And, uh, we started creating, um, just these incredible sort of really interactive programs that were designed specifically through existing programs that were already there, right? We were just coming in, we weren't inventing anything, new, we were just taking what was already offered in Philadelphia and helping organizations adapt it just a little bit through design to make it more accessible.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: Um, we launched the, the ACCESS Philly program, back then, it was ACCESS Admission, now it's called ACCESS Philly, and, uh, that was to create independence for people with disabilities. Anyone on state assistance for, uh, medical assistance or for food benefits had this card, it's called an ACCESS card in Pennsylvania.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: Um, they can now take that to a bunch of museums and get in for \$2 a person. They could bring three people with them. So it was reducing the cost barrier. And then we said, "What do we do now? Right? We've got 180 human service agencies. We've got 200 arts organizations that we're working with. What are we doing with that collective brain power?"

Philip Dallmann: Right.

John Orr: And we developed this program called CAFE, the Cultural Accessibility Forum and Exchange-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... um, and what we do is we bring the disability community together. We bring the cultural community together and we bring the, um, human service sector together all in one space and we talk about cultural accessibility and how to advance it further for the entire city. And, um, we've been running basically with those four core programs ever since, and I can say that, while that first year of growth from 13,000 people to 47,000 people was, was really fun, uh, we just closed out our 2019 program year and 211,000 people went through our programs in an accessible way.

Philip Dallmann: Wow.

John Orr: Um, and so that's a, that's a different place, right?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: So for ARTREACH as an organization, um, we really went from this we hide behind the scenes, we don't really get recognition from anybody, we know that we're doing good work, and people are, you know, people are benefiting from it-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... to really being a thought leader here today, where we're hosting, you know, our Cultural Accessibility Conference for the first time, um, and engaging, you know, more than 10% of the entire city population through our programming every year.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. That, that, that touchpoint is unreal-

John Orr: (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: ... and that growth is unreal, but it makes a lot of sense. I mean, it's kind of the, uh, uh, true and tried principle, uh, you can do al-, you can do a lot kind of well or you can do a few very well and, and see how you reach those people and, and, um, navigating that kind of staff turnover is wild. Uh, I empathize-

John Orr: (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, as someone who walked into a organization and did promptly lose a few staff members, it's-

John Orr: It wasn't fun (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: No, it's not good. It's not, it doesn't feel good, uh, even if you know that it's like eventually great, but, uh-

John Orr: But at the same time, um, having that much turnover when we did-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... was like ripping the Band-Aid off, right? So all of a sudden, we were, we were damaged, our programs were cut, our staff was down, um, but it provided an amazing opportunity to restructure both programmatically and from a staff point of view. Um, and one of the things that gets lost in this whole story of, of programmatic growth-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... is that we went from an organization that ran at a deficit every year for I think it was four, four or five years straight, um, along with that programmatic growth came financial and fiscal growth, so we've been on a three-year surplus run now, uh, financially.

Philip Dallmann: That's fantastic.

John Orr: So it's we became, you know, more innovative, engaged more people, and financially healthy at the same time.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, and a lot of those things go hand in hand.

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, absolutely. And the ... I can speak to it because I've interacted with them all day today and also a lot in Denver, but the staff that you have now are outstanding.

John Orr: They're second to none.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, just outstanding humans and-

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... and clearly, uh, running the show today (laughing). John just shows up and looks pretty (laughing).

John Orr: I do. That's all I got to do.

Philip Dallmann: Um, so, uh, you touched on it a little bit, um, of, of where ARTREACH is right now, but what are, what are the, is the current status of programming and where you guys are? Obviously, today's a big day-

John Orr: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... um, with the, the Cultural Accessibility, uh, Conference, um, but wh- what else (laughs)?

John Orr: What's next?

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

John Orr: Um, no, we actually ... there's, the meeting that's happening in that room right now is really exciting for a lot of reasons, right, pulling the community together, uh, getting people to talk about accessibility, uh, in kind of innovative and progressive ways, uh, relying on this idea that the standards in the ADA are not necessarily the target we should be shooting for.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: If we shoot for standards, then we will be standard.

Philip Dallmann: Right.

John Orr: That's not innovative. Um, so it's really exciting to get, to get that group in the, in the room. Honestly, what I'm more excited about is, is the meeting that happens in that room tomorrow. Um, and maybe this is preemptive, maybe it's not, maybe I'll go back and be like, "Phil, we got to post-edit this."

Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: Um, but, uh, tomorrow evening, uh, the ARTREACH board of directors will meet in that same room, um, and they will vote one way or another, uh, on a topic that could exponentially expand the amount of people that we could reach-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... and they believe in the idea so much that the vote, they're, that they're putting forward is to use not, you know, a funder's money, not, you know, an individual's money, but to use ARTREACH board reserves to fund the expansion of our ACCESS Philly program so that anyone with a disability in the entire country can come to Philadelphia and experience the arts in an accessible way.

Philip Dallmann: Wow.

John Orr: And it's, it's, it's, it'll be huge for the region, right? There will be so many more people engaging with the arts if we can pull it off. Um, it's a little terrifying because, if the vote goes the way I want it to go tomorrow, and I, I think it will,

uh, it means that we launch, we go to market with this product in January. Um, so I don't-

Philip Dallmann: So, so, so not like, not easing into it.

John Orr: ... well, if they're writing new job descriptions (laughing). Um, but it's a huge moment for us, and so that's one piece from the programmatic standpoint. The, the impact we can have on Philadelphia and really cement this idea that Philadelphia is really becoming one of the most accessible cities for the arts in the country.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: Um, beyond that, uh, some of the other things that we keep talking about are, are, you know, what does access to the arts actually mean? Like where does that stop? We, we decided that it didn't stop with butts in seats, that people should be able to, uh, engage in the arts in an immersive way.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: We decided that it didn't stop with programmatic design or, or one-off accessibility, that we're going to adapt existing programs so that they're always accessible to people with disabilities. Um, but now we're thinking why, why should we only be looking at Title III of the ADA, why are we not looking at Title I-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... and what can we start to do to prepare the arts sector in Philadelphia as a viable place for people with disabilities to gain employment and have not only, you know, higher representation across the workforce in the arts, but to have more seats at more tables so that organizations advance their own accessibility at a more rapid pace. And so access-

Philip Dallmann: It's much more organic if the people are inside the walls.

John Orr: Exactly.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: And so access to the arts, um, in my mind, starts to encompass all of that. It's, it's participation, it's audience building, it's, um, really immersive engagement, and then there's this piece that has not been addressed very widely, I think in, in the, in the country more or less, but how are we making it a viable place that

welcomes people with disabilities from an employment perspective? And, you know-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. I think, I think that conversation's starting to pop up, uh, a little bit more. I know Ashley Grady down at the Smithsonian-

John Orr: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... has been nav-, uh, piloting some of that and, um, uh, the supporting transitions program, um, under the Museum, Arts, and Culture Consortium (laughing), uh, in New York, uh-

John Orr: Yep.

Philip Dallmann: ... has also been trying to crack that nut-

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... as well. Um-

John Orr: I mean, I think this is what ARTREACH tries to do, right?

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: I tell people all the time we're in the business of putting ourselves out of business-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: .... um, because all we want is an accessible city and, once it's accessible, you won't need us anymore, but we-

Philip Dallmann: I had somebody ask me that question the other day. They were like, "So you basically are trying to put yourself out of business?" And I was like, "Yeah, yeah."

John Orr: Yeah, that's the point (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: That's the whole idea (laughs).

John Orr: Um, but, but until that happens, if I'm the director here, we're always going to leverage the position that we hold and, right now, the position that we hold is that we have captivated 221 arts organizations in our region and I will influence them to be more accessible or to get, um, you know, more progressive in their accessibility, uh, view than they are already. Um, and if that means I have to be

a squeaky wheel at every single arts meeting, that's fine. Um, does that mean I have to be a squeaky at, at every advocacy, uh, meeting for people with disabilities? Yeah, that's fine. Um, we'll always stay true to our, to our mission and to our values. We always want that conversation and that advancement to be driven by, uh, the disability community in Philadelphia.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: And I think when I, when I was appointed by the mayor to, um, for the Mayor's Commission for People with Disabilities in the city, um, that really opened my eyes up to, oh, my god, okay, so what could we do, from an arts perspective, to address things like education, employment, housing, transportation? What are the ways that the arts fuel into every single aspect of that, um, and what am I doing, as a director of ARTREACH, with the attention of the arts community and the attention of the human service community, to drive progressive ideas forward?

Philip Dallmann: I'm, I'm all about it (laughs).

John Orr: Yeah. I haven't, I haven't answered that question fully yet-

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

John Orr: ... but, but I feel like, with the help of the disability community in Philadelphia, we'll get there.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. And, and I think, uh, letting that community guide you in, through that, that journey is what's ... one, it's going to make it happen quicker-

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, and, frankly, it'll make it more effective, so-

John Orr: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, check, check.

John Orr: Right (laughing).

Philip Dallmann: Uh, I'll get you out of here on this. Uh, we don't get asked, uh, in this field often to do this, uh, sometimes executive directors would do, but, uh, but the, the few, uh-

John Orr: I am terrified (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: ... yeah, uh, to, uh, to dream our dreams. Uh, a lot of times, we have to be looking at budget restraints. Obviously, you have a wonderful board, it sounds like, uh, that are putting forth, uh, votes on, on really incredible programming. Um, also my board at Kaiser's Room is also very wonderful-

John Orr: (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, and at, and at the Access Champion Podcast, that board is also wonderful. Um, but, uh, you know, looking towards the future, looking towards the future of ARTREACH, but also Philly, um, at large, what do you, what do you hope for as it relates to, to access and inclusion?

John Orr: I mean, so my, my overall goal, um, I can't really say we should just raze the city and start over-

Philip Dallmann: (laughs).

John Orr: ... um, at least not til the Eagles win another Super Bowl. Um, (laughs) they might do it themselves.

Philip Dallmann: I mean, uh, the si-, on, yeah, on, on a side note, I am so proud of the city of Philadelphia for not burning it to the ground after the Eagles won. I told my wife, who, who is a Brit, not, uh, uh, I mean, she understands soccer hooligans, but, uh, I, I just told her, I was like, "When Philly wins," 'cause I, I said win, you know, I'm watching it-

John Orr: Oh, of course. Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... and Nick Foles was the, you know, Philly Special happened, and I went, "That's game."

John Orr: Poor Nick Foles and his shoulder. We all, we're all sad [crosstalk 00:29:20].

Philip Dallmann: Prayers up, prayers up for Nick.

John Orr: (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: Uh, but, uh, I said to her, I was like, "There's a good chance there's no Philadelphia tomorrow. Like-"

John Orr: (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: "... uh, the Liberty Bell may be in the Delaware. Somebody may have tried to use it as a flotation device, uh."



John Orr: I will say this, in defense of all Philadelphia fans, the 2008 World Series celebration was way rowdier than the Eagles celebration (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: So maybe they, they got it out of their system. That's what happened (laughing). Uh, yeah.

John Orr: Uh, but no, I think, I think what I would love to see is that, um, you know, accessibility, I don't even want to say accessibility becomes the norm rather than, than the exception-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... um, what I'd like to see is organizations, you know, in the future, think about how the arts are presented overall. And you and I have had this conversation before about, you know, the, the theater has been presented the way the theater has been presented for however long the theater's been around and, you know, maybe it's time as a, as a, as a world to acknowledge that sitting on your hands with your mouth shut in a dark theater isn't exactly the way that everybody wants to enjoy the theater now.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: Um, I want people to take that a step beyond. I want people to say that, uh, you know, inclusive arts doesn't mean that you sort of retrofit people with disabilities into, you know, things like ballet or, or, you know, hip hop or, or whatever, but rather accept the idea that all of these different art forms and dance structures and musical forms, they've been designed over hundreds of years without the input of people with disabilities and, if we opened it up from the start, dance today and music today and, and art today could be just dramatically different-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: ... if it came from an inclusive place, and that goes across all sorts of civil rights, um, [crosstalk 00:31:18].

Philip Dallmann: Oh, yeah, I was just about to say like, uh, I even, I was just talking to somebody today about, uh, the inclusion of, uh, of trans artists-

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... um, and what that looks like, uh, as we're just starting to get an influx of that and, and seeing the, the incredible work that is starting to come out and just imagining what, what could have been, but, you know, obviously looking forward to what, hopefully, will be-

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: ... um, in that realm.

John Orr: I mean, traditional forms of art are, are amazing and they became strongholds because they were amazing. They were also exclusive.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Orr: And I think that, for me, as long as the arts can continue to evolve, and I love the arts because, you know, we're, we're open to risks, but letting creativity overtake the norm, um, and push the art forms forward in ways that maybe people are uncomfortable with or that they don't expect is what I'd love to start to see, um, and I'd love it to be from an inclusive place, uh, and an accessible place as well.

Philip Dallmann: I support that 100%, uh, and I, I believe you and, uh, ARTREACH are going to, are going to lead, uh, at the very least, the city of Philadelphia there-

John Orr: (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: ... uh, and hopefully everyone else follows suit.

John Orr: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, thank you, uh, so much for, uh, again, I know it's a busy day today, so, uh, (laughing) popping out, steal you away while your staff does all the hard work.

John Orr: No, that's okay (laughing).

Philip Dallmann: Uh, uh, uh, but thank you for all the work that you do. Thank you. Uh, thanks to ARTREACH as a whole for all the work that you do as well, um, and thanks for being an Access Champion.

John Orr: Yeah, thanks for having us.

Philip Dallmann: Thanks again, uh, to John, uh, for taking the time in the middle of all of, uh, the, the goings-on at this conference, uh, to chat and thank you to his staff for, uh, all the work that they do, um, all just really like A-plus humans. Um, uh, I find myself often, uh, in this field, just meeting really wonderful humans, but I'll say this Philly contingent, uh, of folks, uh, ARTREACH and, and, and it's, uh, extended beyond ARTREACH and those that interact with ARTREACH, um, just really wonderful people. Uh, so, uh, thank you to all of them, uh, for, uh, manning, manning the ship while, while John was up here with me and, uh, also,

thank you so much for, for inviting me down and, and welcome me, welcoming me, uh, so warmly, uh, just really, really wonderful.

Philip Dallmann: Um, as always, thank you to our executive producer, Matt Kerstetter, for making us sound great each and every single week. Uh, thank you to our associate producer, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown. Um, if you didn't, guys don't already know, um, those images that we see on Facebook and Instagram and Twitter, um, the line drawings are all done by Kelsey and, and, uh, that, that branding and that, that amazingness, uh, is all because of her, um, and I'm incredibly appreciative for that. Uh, thank you to our Champion intern, uh, Savannah Cooper, uh, who continues to kill the game across social media, uh, all while, uh, diving into her first year of undergrad, uh, uh, uh, at school, so, um, and taking on a full course load in the world of musical theater and dance classes and all those things, so, uh, you know, she finds time to, to help us out, uh, and that's, that's really wonderful and amazing.

Philip Dallmann: Um, thank you to Tommy Karr, uh, who designed our fantastic logo as well as the images, uh, that are starting to be released, which was the Inclusion Warrior, uh, image we put out, uh, and we have a Diversity Defender one that'll, we'll, we'll put out in, uh, maybe this week. Well, I'm saying it on air, we're going to do it this week. Uh, (laughs) and, uh, uh, as always, thank you to Eric Walton for that dope theme song. It just never gets old.

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