

Philip D.: Hello Inclusion Believers and welcome to our annual holiday episode of the Access Champions Podcast. I'm your host, Phil Dallmann for this week's journey into The Galaxies of Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion. We got a great episode for you guys this week. We have a point to ponder with Sofiya [Cheyenne 00:00:26]. And then we have our now annual poem, The Night Before Inclusion, which we're excited to share as well. We're going to dive right on in, so just quick reminders if you don't know already. And the new year is strong.

Philip D.: Make sure you follow us on social media at Access Champion on Instagram and Twitter and The Access Champion Podcast on Facebook, and go ahead and get that tax deductible donation for a dollar a month. It's the minimum entryway and we're so grateful for every penny on [patreon.com/accesschampion](https://patreon.com/accesschampion). You get access to exclusive content and a sticker just for a dollar. I think that's a pretty great deal. We have a bunch of new extended interviews that we're planning on rolling out in the new year. We're working on a book club, we're trying to create a really full experience for all of our patrons supporters, so stay on the lookout for that. And let's just get onto it without further ado, point to ponder by Sofiya Cheyenne.

Sofiya Cheyenne: Hi, this is Sofiya Cheyenne with A Point to Ponder. As the holiday season is upon us and we watch stories like Miracle on 34th Street, It's a Wonderful life or a Christmas Carol and I realize that those stories are specific to people that celebrate Christmas, but many of the holiday movies that we know, they circulate around the season of giving. Perhaps in this season of giving, whether you celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah or Three Kings' Day or any other holiday in this time, I hope you will still take this ride with me on this point I'd like to ponder.

Sofiya Cheyenne: I'd like to focus for a second on one story in particular, a Christmas Carol. Recently, The New York Times wrote an article about casting the character Tiny Tim authentically. The question was whether it was appropriate or not to cast Tiny Tim as an actor with a disability. This year's Broadway version has authentically cast two young boys with cerebral palsy, so bravo to them. However, as I reflected on that New York Times article, I went down a rabbit hole of all the different versions of a Christmas Carol. There are many versions of this story.

Sofiya Cheyenne: There are high school productions, college productions, community theater productions of a Christmas Carol where the character of Tiny Tim is often not played by a character with a disability. And sometimes in those versions, Tiny Tim has miraculously been cured of his disability by the spirit of Christmas.

Sofiya Cheyenne: There's other versions of this where Tiny Tim is played by an actor with a disability, but most often the character ends up being, as we call inspiration for Scrooge. Because of his inability to see the goodness in the world Tiny Tim's struggle and his disability helps Scrooge overcome his bitterness. As many of us

might be potential audience members for any of these shows within the holiday season, I'd like us all to consider and think about the narratives that we tell about disability.

Sofiya Cheyenne: Now I'd like to quickly reflect on the story of Santa Claus. As someone that has dwarfism, this time of the year can often be a time where I am only seen as an elf in Santa's workshop. If you go see Radio City Christmas show Spectacular, you will see a few dwarf actors on stage in Santa's workshop. They will have no lines, often come off as uneducated and do very limited in archaic movement. And while I do know that there are many little people, actors that play these roles with pride, I think it's important for us to acknowledge that people with dwarfism can and will be affected in their everyday real world life by these stories of Santa's workshop. So whether you're watching a Christmas Carol or the Christmas Spectacular Show or any other story that has a disabled narrative in it, I'd like you to ponder on how that storyline, how that narrative might affect the community at large.

Sofiya Cheyenne: This is Sofiya Cheyenne and that was my point to ponder. Happy holidays.

Philip D.: Thank you so much Sofiya. And a very timely point to ponder and something to think about as we navigate through the holidays. And now without further ado, the Night Before Inclusion.

Philip D.: It was the Night Before Inclusion when all through the world, not a creature was misgendered, non-binary boy or girl. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care in a historical landmark with ramps for wheelchairs. The children were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of sugarplums were audio described by Kat Germain in their heads. And Miss Kelsey Rose Brown in her kerchief and I in my cap worked on all techs with TDF's Ty Staggs and our executive producer Mat. When out on the lawn there are rose such a clatter, we sprang from the computer to see what was the matter. Away to the window we flew like a flash, tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. And what to our wandering eyes did appear, but an army of inclusion warriors smiling ear to ear. Jeremy McGovern's Miracle players, lively and quick tossing the ball with Aubrey Therrien and her players from Epic.

Philip D.: The was the National Disability Theater's Talleri McRae and a TDF contingent she called by name. There's Anne Trites and Ginger Bartkoski Meagher. Mike Naumann, Toyi Bailey and Daniel Renner. Colleen Mullen rounded out the group with a handful of fidgets with guest host and roundabouts, Sarah Hom lending some assistance. Pamphlets on Trans Allyship were handed out by Deja Cabrera, while Kristina Bianco recounted all of Phil's constitution quiz errors.

Philip D.: Let's talk about accessible design. I heard from a far, from who could only be Sawyer Kost and Cooper Hewitt's Ruth Starr. A performance broke out with Katie O'Neill and the Dazzling DASL, Aaron Kubey. Tyler Bellinger joined in

singing a beautiful melody. Captioning was provided by Matt Bivins. And Beth Prevor interpreting was also a given. Tabitha Allum crossed the pond to hand out captioning glasses, while art reaches John Orr who signed everyone up for ACCESS Philly passes.

Philip D.: A campfire was started by Venture Out's Perry Cohen though there was no fear of the cold by Chicago's Christina Gunther and Lucas Livingston. Pdraig Naughton traveled from Ireland miles and miles to chat about adorable Tom Hanks with two time guest Brittany Pyle. The team from Actionplay shared methods with Brian Be as he waved over fellow Denver pop-up studio guest, Nicole Cromartiei. Bayarts and Middlebury college were new to the party, but they were welcomed with open arms by Jill Rothstein from the New York Public Library. Jessica Ruhle donned her Duke Blue while the PNW's Elizabeth Ralston chatted with fellow Patreon exclusives in the Boston group. Hannah Weissman explain what is an app a name, Stephane Duret took off Lola's heels and used his imagination.

Philip D.: Jesse Swanson and Second City included everyone in Yes, And. Olivia Jones made an advisory group with Hong Kong's Rico Chan. Lynn Walsh made a seal out of snow while LA's Kiyomi Emi nearly froze. A Pittsburgh Cultural Trust hoodie from Sarah Aziz and a historical reenactment from Alex DeLare put her ease. The group began to pack up as the night grew long, the fire camp we put out by connected Culture's Meredith Wong. A few words of wisdom were shared as they moved on, Evan Hatfield reminded us that if you build it, tell them or they won't come.

Philip D.: Finding the common humanity can bridge so many gaps, said Sofiya Cheyenne as she pulled out a map. On it starred was the word inclusion, all arrows pointed to it and were labeled revolution. As he looked to the sky and stars up above Roger Ideishi remarked, "We can get there with empathy and love." As these Access Champions left with the map in a hurry, I reflected on how we're all on this journey. Inclusion unfortunately can't happen in one night, but with community support we can get up and fight. Another year of podcasts are officially in the book. I wonder what new wonders in lessons 2020 will cook.

Philip D.: I'm so grateful for our team here at Access Champions, including our intern, the one and only Savannah. Logo by Tommy and music by Austin and Eric. My appreciation overwhelms me, I can hardly bear it. Our promise is the same from year to year, so for just one more moment, lend me your ear. Whether we stumble, whether we fall, we promise to never stop running through that brick wall.

Philip D.: Happy holidays and new year from all of us here at Access Champions. We'll see you in 2020 and let's make it the most inclusive year yet.