

Speaker 1 ([00:00:00](#)):

Alie B. ([00:00:28](#)):

Hello inclusion believers and welcome to the access champions podcast. I'm Alie B. Gorrie Associate producer of the podcast and I'm here to facilitate this week's journey into the galaxies of access, diversity and inclusion. Today marks the first episode of our new series ACP rewind and this series we will catch up with a previous guest of the podcast to find out about their latest contributions to the world of access and inclusion. After a brief update, we'll highlight their work as we replay their original episode because who doesn't love a good throwback. Before we dive in to ACP rewind, I want to chat about how important it is for all of us to stay connected during this unprecedented time. Be sure to reach out to us and connect via social media. You can follow us @access champion on Instagram and Twitter and the access champions podcast on Facebook.

Alie B. ([00:01:24](#)):

Reach out to us via email at [accesschampion@gmail.com](mailto:accesschampion@gmail.com) and chat with us. We are always looking to expand our community. Also, if you're looking for more access champions, stories, content and exclusives, find us on Patreon for just \$1 a month. You can have access to all kinds of bonus content, access champions, swag, on-air shout outs, and so much more. You heard me folks, that's just a dollar a month on Patreon. That's all it takes. Thanks for considering joining the team of inclusion warriors. You can always find us at [www.patreon.com/accesschampions](http://www.patreon.com/accesschampions). We really appreciate your support. Now let's rewind. Today we're taking it way back to our very first podcast guest, Aliza Greenberg, project leader of supporting transitions with the museum arts and culture access consortium. Take it away, Aliza.

Aliza G. ([00:02:32](#)):

Hello, this is Aliza Greenberg with the supporting transitions project at the museum arts and culture access consortium or Mac. It's been two years since I first sat down with Phil to talk about the supporting transitions project on the very first episode of the access champions podcast. Since then we have a new name, a new employee, a new website and many new Mac which was the museum access consortium has rebranded to be the museum arts and culture access consortium or just Mac. Um, and we rebranded to include the cultural field more broadly, more than just museums. So we have been collaborating with more theaters and performing arts organizations. Mac also updated our website. Our new website is [www.macaccess.org](http://www.macaccess.org). Um, also since our last chat, sadly Alison Mahoney who was with me at the last recording has moved on from Mac to an incredible career in arts and accessibility and is currently studying in Ireland.

Aliza G. ([00:03:48](#)):

We miss her but she definitely supports us from afar. We have been joined by Katie Fanning, an incredible addition to our team. Katie serves as our project manager and the job coach for our internship program, which has grown exponentially since our last visit with the podcast under two contracts with the Kennedy center for the performing arts and their VSA program. We have been able to grow this part, this program to include a cohort of interns that we place in cultural sites throughout New York city. We partner with CUNY's accessibility office to hire the interns. CUNY is the city university of New York and the cohort of interns gathers for seminars throughout their experience where we walk, where we work on career development and job search skills as well as um, self advocacy and, um, future

goal development. And through Katie's very skilled work, we offer job coaching in addition to support they may receive from their school programs.

Aliza G. ([00:04:57](#)):

We have offered a total of 16 internships to date. When we spoke two years ago, we were beginning to tackle what we identified as a pipeline issue for employing individuals with developmental disabilities in the cultural sphere. While there were certainly many qualified individuals ready to work who were unemployed or underemployed, we also saw that many disabled young adults and students were not getting the same opportunities as their same age peers. We did not see many people from this population entering arts administration courses or educational training programs in the arts. Many students with disabilities are loaded up on requirement, on required courses and they don't have the access to these other entry points into the cultural field. So we teamed up with the city university of New York and created our own course on cultural careers and does that, that was designed specifically for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Aliza G. ([00:06:02](#)):

The course was an inclusive course that ran at Queens college this past, um, fall and it was taught by access champions own Philip Dallmann and the amazing Arielle Lever who was a cofounder of CoLab theater group among many other impressive jobs. Um, the course covered each department of a cultural organization brought in guest speakers, made visits to two local cultural sites, the New York hall of science and Queens theater and the students practiced informational interview skills both in class and at the Guggenheim museum. We'll be offering this course again in the spring of 2021. Finally, one of the major new initiatives we began since the last podcast visit. What is our day habilitation and service providers network, which is really looking at providing enriching cultural experiences for those who may not be searching for employment right now. This network brings together service providers who operate day habilitation programs and residential placements with our cultural organizations who facilitate in bringing the, bringing the service providers together with the cultural organizations to facilitate increased programming in collaboration together.

Aliza G. ([00:07:36](#)):

My hope for the future is that this work moves beyond New York city and across the country. We're lucky in New York city to have so many cultural organizations just down the street, wherever you are in the city, you can usually find a cultural organization. But outside the metropolitan areas, these days services and residential programs are starved for cultural programming. Um, so while we were, we're able to tackle those in the city that really are looking for increased programming. When we look across the country, um, there's, there's really a lot less opportunity. There isn't a Mac in every, um, suburban and rural community. So we really want to see this project, um, radiate out and help those areas as well. We recently put out a resource for cultural organizations, um, based on these meetings with tips and considerations for creating content to service those in group homes and those who are now at home without their structured activities due to the Corona virus.

Aliza G. ([00:08:49](#)):

Our tips can be found on our website [www.mackaccess.org](http://www.mackaccess.org). Um, and we've been collecting all the different resources from cultural organizations that have been created during this time of COVID 19 and have them on our site under, at home activities. But my hope is that these resources will also provide, um, a way for places across the country to access cultural activities, um, and for places that may not

already be working with this population to, to begin. So, um, we hope that these resources will provide what many places have been seeking all along culture opportunities for those that may not live close to cities or for those that may not be able to visit a cultural site in person. So even though they may be in New York city, they may not be able to get to our cultural institutions. So we hope that these resources will start to fill this need that is long overdue.

Aliza G. ([00:10:01](#)):

And this leads me to a pretty urgent plea, um, which is to support agencies that operate group homes and other services in this time of COVID 19. These residences are underfunded and the virus is really putting everyone living and working here working in these, um, these facilities at risk. The staff are truly heroes and champions and not only do they need the most urgent of funding and supplies, but they also are seeking activities and resources as well. We await the day when we can meet in person at our museums and our theaters with our incredible community of cultural workers, service providers and all the individuals with disabilities with whom we collaborate. But until then, we hope to see you online and we hope that you'll connect with MAC and with us at supporting transitions so that we can forward this initiative together. And we're so grateful for the access champions podcast for having us on their first episode and for supporting our learning and professional development as we built this program and continue our work in the field. So thank you. Access champions.

Alie B. ([00:11:25](#)):

Thanks so much for the update Elisa. And now let's take that access champion podcast, rewind to episode one with the supporting transitions team

Speaker 1 ([00:11:53](#)):

[inaudible] [inaudible]

Philip D. ([00:11:54](#)):

Hello inclusion believers. And welcome to the access champions podcast. My name is Phillip Dallmann and I will be your host for this inaugural adventure and hopefully many, many, many more adventures. Uh, I have been in the field of accessibility and inclusion for about seven years now. And during that time I've had the privilege to see tremendous work being done around the world. The goal of this podcast is to highlight as much of that work as possible. The folks who, who work in this field, um, are an undersung community that serves another undersung community. But if you're like me, hearing about the work that's being done can be both inspiring and motivating to make my own community more inclusive and the local arts accessible. So I'm really excited to sit down with so many people that I look up to, uh, as accessibility and inclusion role models and you know, frankly say, thank you, you know, thank you for the work that you're doing.

Philip D. ([00:12:55](#)):

The work that you've done and you know, for continuing to, uh, as my friend Lew, um, up in Hartford would say for continuing to run through that brick wall. Um, just just thank you. Um, so our guests today are experts at running through that brick wall. Um, and they are Aliza Greenberg and Alison Mahoney. Um, they are from the museum access consortiums supporting transitions project tongue twister, uh, and that's here in New York city. Uh, I've had the pleasure of knowing both of them for a few years now. Um, I met Elisa through the museum access consortium, also known as Mac. Um, and then, uh, actually both she and her sister volunteered their time for, uh, some of TDF autism friendly performances when I

worked there. Um, I met Alison when she first moved here to New York, um, straight from Northwestern, uh, another access champion. Uh, Sarah Aziz. Uh, and I got to meet with her and hear about all about, uh, what would become blue laces theater company.

Philip D. ([00:14:05](#)):

If you haven't heard about blue laces and you love inclusive theater, I strongly encourage you to check them out. They're fantastic. Um, on this podcast, you know, we had a great conversation about their journeys and access and inclusion, um, where supporting transitions came from, where it's headed and all of that was accented by some fantastic New York city ambiance and elevator noises because of the room that I rented was not as soundproof as described. Uh, plan on having that fixed for future episodes. Uh, before we get to that interview though, I do want to direct you all to the access champions podcast, Twitter page at access champion. Super easy every week though, um, we're going to put some calls to action out there, discuss issues, movements, um, in the field. Um, and then we're going to highlight some of the discussion here on the podcast. And um, if the discussion, uh, riveting and active and all of that, um, we're going to invite some of you guys to come on and discuss the issues, um, at play. So, um, that is also one of the spots where we will post the link to the transcripts of each podcast because this podcast will be accessible. So again, uh, super simple at access champion. Give it a follow, join the discussion. Finally, uh, last order of business before we get to the interview. Um, after the interview, uh, we will, uh, tell you how to get further involved with the podcasts and other outlets for you to tell us topics that you're interested in hearing about. So, without further ado, access champions, Aliza Greenberg and Alison Mahoney.

Speaker 1 ([00:16:09](#)):

[inaudible]

Philip D. ([00:16:11](#)):

Hey guys, and welcome to the access champions podcast. He's so much for being here. Um, if you don't mind introducing yourselves and your titles within supporting transitions. Sure.

Aliza G. ([00:16:22](#)):

Thanks for having us. I'm Elisa Greenberg and I'm the project leader for supporting transitions with the museum access consortium.

Alison M. ([00:16:30](#)):

And I'm Alison Mahoney and I am the project manager for supporting transitions with museum access consortium.

Philip D. ([00:16:32](#)):

Fantastic. Not a, not a small title. Uh, so again, thank you guys for being here. Um, and you know, one of the things that I've found over the years, um, meeting people within this community within the accessibility and inclusion community, um, is that, uh, there's no one set journey that leads us to this field, right? It's all kind of unique and, um, and frankly I find it fascinating. Um, so I'd love to hear from you guys a little bit of what led you, um, to working in access and inclusion. Um, at least if you want to start.

Aliza G. ([00:17:12](#)):

Sure. Um, so, uh, my background is in arts education, uh, but actually not really cause I was a psychology major in college, so I always had an interest in, uh, disability and, um, and from an education standpoint mostly. And then I, and so I worked in arts education for a long time. Um, and then I sort of found that access and inclusion was a field and I could be a part of it. Um, and I was really interested in that because, um, I have a brother with autism who is 31, and he is, uh, kind of starved for surfaces at this point in his life. Um, having exited school, he is not really, um, privy to a lot of the experiences that he received during his schooling. Um, and so I was excited to be able to kind of blend the, um, you know, arts education and, uh, my experience with a disability when those two things together. Um, and I started working, um, actually at Lincoln center, I was working at them at trial, not for Guild. And I met Miranda Appelbaum who was the, is the accessibility, uh, manager at Lincoln center. And she was telling me about all the access programs and she told me about the museum access consortium and I came to a symposium that they did, um, that you feel we're speaking at,

Philip D. ([00:19:02](#)):

Oh, it's a Jewish heritage museum or downtown. Or the MoMa one. Oh, okay. That was awhile ago.

Aliza G. ([00:19:12](#)):

I was just taken with everything and was excited about, uh, the field and then totally did a little swerve into the access and inclusion field.

Philip D. ([00:19:26](#)):

Fantastic. That's, uh, uh, this room is also not as quiet as was described on the outlet. There is an elevator ding, and that's going to be a fun accent to this podcast, uh, but all of the brilliant things, uh, that's fantastic. Again, what, uh, uh, you know, a unique and personal journey, um, to this field? Alison, how did you get here?

Alison M. ([00:19:52](#)):

Yeah, mine. Um, my entry into the access and inclusion field was also like pretty, uh, roundabout. Um, I started, uh, in undergrad, uh, studying theater for young audiences. Um, and that was my focus was theater for young audiences and drama education. Um, I was involved with a theater company in an, in undergrad, a student theater company who created theater for young audiences. And, uh, in my junior year, a group of us got together and said, well, what about, uh, you know, we, we keep saying theater for young audiences as theater for all audiences, but that's not really true in what we're doing and we're not serving all audiences. Um, so we worked with, um, a company in Chicago called red pipe who does theater for, um, young people on the autism spectrum. Um, and they were trained by oily card and the whole lineage is all there. But, um, we studied with them, um, and started doing that app, uh, in undergrad. And then, um, after undergrad we moved, uh, all of us moved to New York and started, um, my theater company, blue laces, um, which is still doing that work. Um, but then through that I kind of found my way into the work happening at Lincoln center for, uh, people on the autism spectrum. And, um, and then through that, found my way into, uh, accessibility, not just autism specific, but accessibility kind of at large. Um, also met Miranda Appelbaum now Hoffner um,

Philip D. ([00:21:25](#)):

yeah, Miranda is the link that connects everyone in access. I said to her the other day, I said, um, I ran into a colleague of hers and she was like, Oh, do you know Miranda? And I said, everybody knows

Miranda. And of course there's Miranda. She's like, Oh, not really. I said, no, no, everybody knows Miranda Appelbaum now.

Alison M. ([00:21:45](#)):

Yeah. Um, yeah. So I, I met her through the work happening at Lincoln center and she also introduced me to Mac. Um, and at the time, um, supporting transitions was just getting started. Uh, and I was looking to transition from making theater and working in restaurants to full time access work. Um, or theater work. And so it just so happened that they were looking for a project manager at that time. So it was all very serendipitous.

Philip D. ([00:22:13](#)):

Fantastic. So, Aliza, can you tell me what is supporting transitions?

Aliza G. ([00:22:19](#)):

So, supporting transitions is a project of the museum access consortium, specifically focused on creating opportunities for adults with autism and developmental disabilities in the cultural field. Um, those opportunities could be recreation in nature. Um, they could be, uh, internships, employment, volunteer opportunities, really using the cultural field, um, as a place where these individuals can be included and be a part of the fabric of our cultural life here in New York city. Um, and beyond. Um, we've been working with some organizations outside of New York city as well across the country. Um, and so it is a resource for cultural organizations. Um, it's a kind of catalyst. We've been working on some pilot internships with cultural organizations, so, um, we've been kind of looking at what the needs are and then trying to fill them.

Philip D. ([00:23:33](#)):

Fantastic. And where did this, uh, come from? What was the baseline that created, uh, this, this program and this, uh, mission?

Aliza G. ([00:23:41](#)):

Yeah. So the museum access consortium had been funded previously by the far fun, who I should say is our generous supporter of the supporting transitions project. Um, but we had a, a previous grant, um, cultural connections for children with autism, um, that was aimed at making more opportunities available for school age, um, individuals and, and at cultural organizations. And it was very successful. Um, we saw a lot of growth in opportunities, um, a lot of incredible engagement initiatives, uh, for the school age population. And then, you know, as we talk to individuals with, um, with autism and other developmental disabilities and as we talk to parents and service providers, the question really was what's next, what's after school? Um, and given that there is such a, what they call the services cliff, um, you know, it was such a loss in services, community structured activities, um, we really felt that it was necessary for us to expand the project and create supporting transitions.

Philip D. ([00:25:07](#)):

Very cool. Um, yeah, so you have this idea, you have a willing funder. Uh, where do you start? Where do you guys start?

Aliza G. ([00:25:18](#)):

We started, um, with a focus group, with individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. Um, we met at the Intrepid museum. I feel like I need to say their whole name, the trippin sea air and space museum. Um, and we talked to the individuals, what are their needs? What are they looking for, what are the barriers they face in getting more involved in culture, the cultural world. Um, and we listened to them and tried to create priorities that aligned with what we were hearing were the needs in the field. Um, we also talk to cultural organizations about what they needed. We put out a survey, um, to survey the cultural field about what they need, uh, to in terms of what are the knowledge gaps, what are, um, you know, training needs, uh, to really get this work going.

Philip D. (00:26:28):

What were, uh, from the community's perspective, what were some of the needs that you guys were hearing, uh, from, uh, both the individuals on the spectrum and parents and caregivers and things like that?

Aliza G. (00:26:40):

I mean, I think we hear continuously like, and over and over again,

Alison M. (00:26:44):

employment is the number one need. Um, I think people are definitely interested in those opportunities for recreation and volunteer opportunities. Um, but I think ultimately it comes down to always employment. Um, yeah, I would say that's, that's the number one thing that we hear.

Aliza G. (00:27:02):

Yeah. I mean I think we are very sensitive to the fact that autism and developmental disabilities, it's a spectrum and everybody's different. Everybody's looking for different things. Um, some people are really, you know, ready for employment, others are not. So we're trying to really look at the whole set of needs, um, within the population. Um, but employment remains the most challenging to overcome, I think, you know, because cultural organizations are so facile at creating education programs and creating those recreational opportunities, they come more naturally to those, um, to that programming. But employment, internships, these types of opportunities are much more challenging to create and thus much more needed.

Philip D. (00:28:01):

And correct me if I'm wrong, if I remember from your presentation last week, uh, it's currently an 80% unemployment rate in the, in the autism community.

Alison M. (00:28:10):

Yeah. It's 80 to 90% are of young adults with autism are unemployed or underemployed. So I'm not entirely unemployed necessarily, but, um, the underemployment rate is really high too.

Philip D. (00:28:23):

I mean, that's a staggering statistic is if you needed to make the pitch of why this is important and that's base one right there. Um, and on the flip side, when you were surveying the cultural institutions, what were you guys hearing back from them?

Aliza G. (00:28:40):

I mean, honestly, our response rate was pretty low and I think we attribute that to people not even having anything to report in terms of their work with adults with autism and developmental disabilities. I mean, I think if you get a survey and you're asked to fill it out and say, what do you do to serve this population and you don't do anything, chances are low. You're going to fill out that survey. I might be a click delete situation. Yeah, just feel personal shame as you delete it. Yeah. I mean, I think what we, what we heard was, um, you know, people were seeking more education, more knowledge. Um,

Alison M. (00:29:22):

I think institutional buy in too, I think that's a huge one. Um, we keep hearing, you know, I as this individual working at this institution and passionate about inclusion and would love to create opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities, but I'm not at a position in my institution to job opportunities to create programming. Um, and so I think that that, that's been a big, I think part of what we've been thinking about is like how do we talk to people about getting institutional buy in for those types of programs and employment opportunities.

Aliza G. (00:29:58):

Yeah. I think one thing we were really conscious of as we were kind of putting the project together, it was just the need to get many different people at the table. Um, so we formed a working group, uh, where we have representatives from cultural organizations but different areas of cultural organizations, not just, um, education or you know, family programming or things like that, but hoping to get, you know, visitor services, individuals and um, people who are in employment positions. Um, the working group also consists of different service providers. Um, so job coaches, people who are working to provide employment for individuals, um, with autism. And, and then we also held a human resources, um, forum. So a forum on inclusive hiring, uh, where we invited people who work in human resources at different cultural organizations to come together and we talk to them about the project and kind of introduced this idea and people were really responsive. I think, again, institutional buy in remains a challenge. Just, um, people are in cold in the cultural world are stretched really thin. Um, so just trying to find ways to show everyone how this can be a regular part of the fabric of their work life, um, and that it's going to support them. You know, these are individuals who have skills to offer and those skills are gonna be an asset to the organization.

Philip D. (00:31:50):

Great. So you, you know, you have gathered all this data now and you held obviously the HR sort of symposium and you're reaching out when you're, when you're sitting down. What, what is the, what is besides the, you know, these people can be an asset. These folks can be an asset to your organization. What is the pitch? What is the, um, what, you know, what supports, uh, supporting transitions is a pun, very much intended. Uh, what, what is being offered to these cultural organizations through this program?

Aliza G. (00:32:24):

Yeah, I mean, I think the first thing I start with is asking the, in the organization, whoever I'm talking to, does your organization have a diversity and inclusion initiative? And most organizations now, which is incredible. And then I say, does your diversity and inclusion initiative include disability? Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. Um, so I, you know, helping the organization see that, you know, if you have a hiring initially a diversity hiring initiative that should include individuals with disability. Um, and I think

one, um, thing that has been really helpful in talking to cultural organizations has been the New York city cultural plan that the department of affairs has just department of cultural affairs has just put out. Um, and you know, they agree that diversity initiatives should include disability. So

Alison M. ([00:33:28](#)):

I just happened to fund many of these cultural institutions. What's challenging with that though is that, you know, again, in terms of reporting, um, there's so little data that the cultural plan actually wasn't able to gather data on what, um, on numbers of individuals with disabilities employed in cultural institutions in New York. So, you know, how do you increase the number from there? Like what's the incentive then to, to kind of increase your numbers if we don't even know what the baseline is? Um, so I think it makes it, I mean it's still a, it's still a challenge. I think it's great that it's nominally in the cultural plan, but, um, in terms of, you know, how are we measuring that and how are we making sure that we're successful? Um, I think that's still a big question Mark. So, yeah. Not to be a downer.

Philip D. ([00:34:16](#)):

No, no. I mean it's, uh, we have to be realistic about it, right. Um, and understand how people operate. Um, incentives are important. Um, they help, I think we're kidding ourselves if we say that they don't help. I mean, we were just talking about surveys the other day and I was saying how, uh, you know, if you don't have a little thing at the end for free, something where a chance to get something might not get that survey back. Uh, right.

Alison M. ([00:34:44](#)):

The other thing, I think that we've, that we bring up a lot, um, in talking to folks from HR and, um, from different institutions who are interested in potentially, especially in employment, um, is, you know, just sort of helping them navigate the, um, the services that exist for individuals with developmental disabilities that, you know, it's, it's possible that they may just receive a resume, um, in a, in a typical job search for, um, from a, an individual with autism or developmental disability. But it's also pretty likely that that person may be coming through, um, a job services organization, um, may need to, if they are hired, you know, come with a job coach for the first few weeks, if not months of their employment with that organization. So I think that's something that we try to communicate

Philip D. ([00:35:38](#)):

with, um, with HR representatives and different organizations who may not be as familiar with kind of what it looks like to be an adult with a developmental disability, looking for employment.

Aliza G. ([00:35:50](#)):

Yeah. I think most organizations are thrilled when they find out that job coaching is an UN possibility and that that is something that could be available to them. I mean, having somebody come to your organization and help you train your staff who doesn't want that.

Speaker 7 ([00:36:12](#)):

Right. So I think

Aliza G. ([00:36:15](#)):

once we talk about what's available, people are really receptive to working with the service providers and working with the supports that are already in place, um, to make the opportunity the most successful.

Philip D. (00:36:29):

And were there any, uh, job coaching programs or job placement programs that you guys worked with through this program?

Aliza G. (00:36:36):

Yes. Um, several, actually we have many organizations on our working group. Um, so we've been in communication with Birch family services, job path, um, HRC, uh, and heart share human services, which is actually met the museum access consortium's current fiscal sponsor. So thank you HeartShare

Aliza G. (00:37:02):

um, they've just been wonderful in helping also to help educate us in what's available and what services are out there. Um, Oh, and also the JCC Manhattan, uh, has a job coaching program as well. Um, so we actually hired an intern for Mac, um, who was helping us with many of the administrative, um, duties of the project website updates. And it was great because we, I mean he added so much to our, um, project website is neither of our Nope area. So it was wonderful to have some with some website knowledge, [inaudible] design knowledge and could create really great visual resources. Um, and we worked with his job coach, um, from the JCC Manhattan and it was wonderful. It was great to have that support. It was great to, for like to more deeply understand what it's like to work with a job coach and how they can help and what support they can provide.

Philip D. (00:38:14):

And did that assist in your pitch now having that firsthand knowledge of a experience at firsthand? Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Cool. So, uh, you're, you hired your own person through the program, which is fantastic. Um, as you, as you are moving forward now this is, um, I don't know if we establish as a three year funded program, correct? Right. The far fund funds in three year cycles as I learned last week. Uh, and uh,

Aliza G. (00:38:44):

so

Philip D. (00:38:46):

your first year was mostly the data collection, right?

Aliza G. (00:38:49):

Yeah. Data collection, um, building our working group, building interest in the project and like sort of our, I dunno, task force or super team of individuals. We also have not, in addition to, to me and Allison, we have um, a subcommittee of the Mac steering committee who also works on the project. So, um, we have a really great team. And so building the team building, our working group, building relationships within the field was year one.

Philip D. (00:39:29):

And um, just so everybody knows are many of the members of the steering committee and the subcommittee members of other cultural institutions.

Aliza G. (00:39:36):

Yes. And service organizations, um, Mac, you know, is really amazing and that they aren't just representatives from the cultural field. Primarily it's representatives from the cultural field, but there's also people with disabilities, parents, um,

Alison M. (00:39:55):

autism researchers. Um, folks, someone works at autism speaks. So yeah, definitely a pretty wide range of perspectives on the steering committee at Mac. Just really helpful for us for this project. Yeah. Yeah.

Philip D. (00:40:10):

And so then phase two, in your two years when you guys started placing people correct or are attempting to,

Aliza G. (00:40:18):

um, we did a lot of professional development. Um, we had a workshop at the museum of Jewish heritage. We had, um, a, a lot of that's when we had our HR, um, inclusion forum.

Alison M. (00:40:36):

That's also when I came on in year two. And, um, one of my main focuses on this project has been case studies of um, organizations who are already doing work with this population to sort of highlight the work that they're doing. And first of all, just call out how incredible it is. And second of all, um, try to get really in depth so that other organizations who are interested in doing the work, um, can then look to MoMA, look to the transit museum, um, look to these other organizations who are already working with adults on the autism spectrum or with developmental disabilities and say, here's how they got institutional buy in, here's how they staff their programs, et cetera. Um, so that it kind of gets into that nitty gritty, um, and just makes it all really transparent so that, uh, anyone who's interested in starting a program, um, or an employment initiative or an internship program, um, is able to have that kind of background knowledge.

Aliza G. (00:41:31):

Yeah. I think what we found that we couldn't just jump right in and ask cultural organizations to have a person placed in their organization. The buy-in wasn't there, the knowledge wasn't there. And so we, uh, year two was really about building capacity in cultural organizations, building a knowledge base, building interest. So the case studies were in incredible resource and we also created some videos that are on our website, um, to help people see these programs in action. And help people hear, uh, the voices of the individuals who these programs are affecting.

Philip D. (00:42:15):

And what was the, the feedback as you guys started, um, being able to provide these materials, what were you hearing back from the organizations? Was it positive? Was it still a little bit weary or were you guys hearing?

Aliza G. (00:42:27):

I think overwhelmingly positive. I think people are still figuring out how it will work for their organization and what it looks like in their organization. Um, which makes total sense. Um, and we, so in our third year, which is where you have sort of an extended third year, but in the year we're in right now, um, we are, we did place two pilot interns in what we created, these pilot internships, um, where we, uh, are supporting the interns financially and, um, with, and we're supporting the cultural organizations with our mentorship, um, in creating these new opportunities. So we have an intern currently at the Jewish museum and we have an intern at the New York Botanic garden, [inaudible] garden. And, um, we are hoping to actually create four more internships. So we're looking currently for partners for those opportunities.

Philip D. (00:43:34):

So if you're listening to this and have been inspired only already, uh, you know, feel free to go ahead and join the team. Um, that's fantastic. Um, and so, um, I was very excited, uh, last week. I was so happy to be part of the symposium. Uh, was it two weeks ago? Last week? Last week. Wow. Time is flying by. Uh, uh, and it was a tremendous, uh, I was really honored and, and thank you again for inviting me to be there. Um, what was that like? Um, you know, having that event at, at MoMA. Um, and, you know, it was a great turnout. It was a great mix of folks, um, seemingly from all over. Um, talk me through a little bit of that event.

Aliza G. (00:44:21):

Yeah. Well, thank you so much for being a part of the event and leading an amazing workshop. Okay.

Philip D. (00:44:27):

Just gonna make me blush.

Aliza G. (00:44:29):

Um, I think it was incredible. It was incredible. See kind of our work over the years come to that point where we had, um, so many people from different areas of the disability field, people from different areas of the cultural field coming together to really discuss how we can move forward. I think that was really exciting to kind of get everyone in the same space talking about this. And, um, and we had a ton of people from organizations who had never spoken to before, which was really exciting. So it's very promising that the ideas will spread and we'll get more people opportunities, which is really what we're all about.

Philip D. (00:45:19):

Absolutely. [inaudible] speaking from an attendees perspective, um, one of the things I loved was sitting in the brainstorm session, um, with, uh, the service providers and some of the cultural institutions and the service providers, uh, being able to be pretty candid and, um, what they needed to, to get programming, uh, to get their individuals that they serve, uh, to, um, the cultural institutions and the culture institutions being, you know, saying coming back with like, okay, and then would this work and that work. And it was a really beautiful, um, I mean, I don't know if there's a fancier word for brainstorm, but brainstorm, uh, and I felt like, you know, I walked out with a better perspective of even just time constraints on, uh, different service programs. Like they have programs and things like that that, you know, um, want to come and want to work with, uh, these cultural institutions. But you know, they gotta be backed by like three. Uh, so

Alison M. ([00:46:16](#)):

it's exciting to hear you say that because I think so often like organizations want to serve the population and they want to be doing the work and then they just start doing the work and it's amazing and sometimes it's really successful. Um, but sometimes they, they hit that hiccup like a couple months in where they're like, Oh, wait, we didn't talk to Dahab organizations. We didn't talk to service providers. And actually what we're doing is maybe not the best possible thing that we could be doing. It doesn't work as well as we thought it was gonna work. Um, so having, I think that was one of the things that I was most excited about and unfortunately I missed it that day. But, um, I was really excited about those conversations happening, um, between cultural organizations and service providers.

Philip D. ([00:46:57](#)):

And I, I don't feel like it's a jump to say. I think one of the great things about supporting transitions as a whole is that when we started this conversation, the first thing you said is you started with the community. So you, you gathered all, and not just one section of this community, but everybody, um, to start building out and finding out what's needed. Um, and, and that, that kind of idea, it trickled out into this symposium where, you know, we were able to just sit down and talk about that. Um, the other thing that I loved about it was, uh, you know, it all comes down to money, right at the end of the day. Um, and to have a panel there, um, and I, and I'm not going to remember everybody that was on it. So I mean, you can, I'll leave it to you to plug everybody that was there. Uh, but a great panel that discussed funding these kinds of programs, um, because that can be overwhelming in its own right. It's where do you start to look to help fund programs that support these kinds of things?

Aliza G. ([00:47:52](#)):

Yeah, I think, I mean we had, um, Shirley Taylor who is the executive director of the far fund and Joan Rothman who's on the board of, um, the Taft foundation and, um, Meredith Beck who is the vice president for development at heart share human services who is really a master fundraiser. And I think having her on the panel was really exciting because there are many very skilled fundraisers in the cultural world. I mean, obviously cultural organizations are raising great amounts of money, um, to support the cultural happenings that their organizations, but they don't always know where to look when it comes to programs for people with disabilities. So Meredith is really skilled at those types of funding opportunities and finding those opportunities and kind of ushering, um, those applications to real funding. So, um, it was great to have that perspective on the panel. And then we also had any least who is, um, working with diversity inclusion with the department of cultural affairs. So really provided that city perspective on, um, on these issues.

Philip D. ([00:49:17](#)):

Yeah, I, I said I was amazed from beginning, middle and throughout. I just thought it was a fantastic experience. And I will take a moment to, if you aren't already, I'm on the mailing list for the museum access consortium. Um, can you give me that website, Elisa?

Aliza G. ([00:49:33](#)):

Yes. You can go to a museum access consortium.org.

Philip D. ([00:49:36](#)):

It's a fantastic, there's constantly professional development opportunities. There's constantly, um, updated materials. Uh, it's a tremendous resource for anyone who works in this field or is interested in

learning a little bit more about, um, how they can make their organization accessible and inclusive. That's all free. All of our materials are free. Isn't that the best price? Free 99. Uh, yeah. Um, so we, we touched on this a little bit in your goals for the, um, placing a few more folks in internships or jobs in over the course of the next year. Um, what, what is next? What is, you know, beyond, you know, now that the symposiums happened and, and you have, uh, a couple of folks successfully placed the coding. A mutual friend of ours, um, who loves his job. Uh, he couldn't stop talking about it. Uh, uh, what, what is next? Yeah,

Aliza G. ([00:50:27](#)):

I mean, really supporting the organizations as much as we can in creating these opportunities and sustaining the opportunities. I think, um, you know, we have these pilot internships, they're wonderful. How do we make them sustainable after the pilot period has ended? Um, how can we help the organizations find a way to make this a permanent piece of their, um, of their work? And so the pilot internships are, um, gonna continue, um, and, and then more mentorship, more professional development to help make sure that these opportunities last. Um, and we also have been talking a lot about ways to connect with the higher ed, um, community. So how do we create that pipeline? How do we build more of a pipeline for individuals to enter the field? You know, a lot of individuals with developmental disabilities aren't in, um, the arts administration programs or the, um, theater programs or museum education programs. You know, the programs that generally lead to arts administration, jobs and jobs in the cultural field. These programs aren't populated with many individuals with diff, with disabilities. And so how do we work in the higher education realm to maybe bring more individuals into those programs or to meet the individuals where they are and create training for these individuals to enter into careers in the arts and cultural field. So that's also, um,

Philip D. ([00:52:20](#)):

just a tiny, small task. That's fantastic. Oh, and I know Allison, you and I were talking a little bit earlier, um, for these, I got here, um, where this summer could we hear both of you speak on this kind of topic?

Aliza G. ([00:52:37](#)):

Yeah. And were you just pointing out that I was [inaudible]

Philip D. ([00:52:39](#)):

no, no. I mean, listen, you just pointed that out.

Alison M. ([00:52:45](#)):

Yeah. We were talking about the, I'm the lead conference, the Kennedy center's leadership exchange in arts and disability.

Philip D. ([00:52:52](#)):

Nailed it. Nailed it.

Alison M. ([00:52:55](#)):

Yeah. So we will be, I'm at lead in August, um, in Atlanta. Um, it'll be very hot. Uh, and we will be in Atlanta. Um, we will be presenting, um, with several organizations. Um, so supporting transitions. We'll be presenting, um, Lincoln center. We'll be presenting, uh, their access ambassador program. Um, blue

laces and CoLab theater group are going to be presenting their partnership called camp BLUElab. Um, action play. We'll be presenting an audition workshop that they're piloting and then Berkeley college of music will be presenting, um, about their, their brand new. Um, so brand new that I can't even remember the name of the center.

Aliza G. (00:53:39):

They are autism Institute, I believe. I, I also have to look up the name of the center. I'm bad at as we've heard over the podcast. Specific names are challenging, but um, Rhoda Bernard is doing incredible work at the Berkeley conservatory and they have not only a new teacher training program to train music teachers to teach individuals, um, with autism, but they also have a huge host of programming, um, for individuals with autism, um, to train in music education and, and to be musicians.

Alison M. (00:54:16):

Yeah. So we'll be talking about, um, different types of job trainings. So, um, front of house job training, education based job training, um, artists based job training. So that audition workshop, um, and then kind of supporting transitions project as a whole. Um, but yeah, the idea being that, you know, we're, we're thinking about lots of different types of jobs and the training looks different even though we're working with the same population. So, um, what are those different examples? Um, and highlighting those programs.

Aliza G. (00:54:45):

The panel of the year, if you're at lead, you should come to it. [inaudible]

Philip D. (00:54:51):

and if you aren't already planning on coming to lead, I think, uh, all three of us are in agreement that, uh, go ahead and Google the Kennedy center lead conference. Uh, it is a tremendous, tremendous resource. Every year I call it access nerd camp. Um, it's, uh, the most supportive environment, uh, to, to learn, um, and collaborate to I think, um, and meet some really genuinely, um, wonderful humans. Uh, I don't know a better way to put it then. They are all just absolutely wonderful humans. Um, so, uh, that makes a nice little transition, um, part of, uh, this podcast. Um, well, the basis of this podcast is to, uh, spread the love, um, in, in this field. Um, so I wanted to ask you guys, who are your access heroes or inclusion, uh, access champions or inclusion warriors as I came up with today? [inaudible]

Aliza G. (00:55:45):

very nice.

Speaker 7 (00:55:47):

Well, Miranda Hoffner. I mean we have, I mean, she's mine too. I'm like [inaudible]

Aliza G. (00:55:54):

I mean she is truly who got me into this field and I think she's doing incredible work and is just so knowledgeable and um, visionary and like her thinking around access and inclusion. So definitely Miranda Hoffner. Can I say Alison Mahoney? I would say Aliza Greenberg.

Speaker 7 (00:56:21):

No. Uh,

Philip D. (00:56:24):

no, that, that's great. I mean, I, again, I, Miranda is one of the first people I met as well, um, in the field and uh, just, uh, again, brilliant is, is a great adjective, but, um, collaborative as well. Um, you know, really always looks for that collaboration and learns and willing to share knowledge. Um, and, and I think that's so important. Spreads the wealth and make sure that the people that we're there to serve are being served to the best capacity. I think I would double down there. Um, is there anyone that you'd like to give some love to? Who would you consider on the, on the come up new to the field that's doing tremendous work.

Alison M. (00:57:04):

I am there. They're not new to the field as an organization. Um, but I would, I would shout out action plays, audition workshop, which is a pilot program. Um, action play has been around for a while. Um, but I'm so excited about the work that they're doing with this audition workshop too. Um, you know, we talk a lot about like employment in cultural institutions on an administrative level, but I think that question comes up a lot. Like, well, what about the artists? Um, and I think action play is really addressing that question. Um, and, and equipping their actors, um, with the tools to, to walk into an audition room, uh, with a casting director and be really successful. And I think that that's, um, you know, it makes me so frustrated to see people with disabilities played by able bodied neurotypical people in the media, um, on stage. And so I'm, I'm just excited to see how action plays. Audition workshop is gonna work to change that and I think it will.

Aliza G. (00:58:01):

Yeah, they led a, um, an audition workshop at our day two of our symposium, which, um, was for adults with developmental disabilities and it was at the metropolitan museum of art on the Saturday, on Saturday and they led an incredible audition workshop. Um, so definitely I second that and I think also, um, CoLab theater group also not new, but the leadership initiative is new and um, I mean CoLab does incredible work. They're a theater company that promotes theater without boundaries or limits part of their name.

Philip D. (00:58:39):

Got it. Becky Leifman's gonna she's gonna love you.

Aliza G. (00:58:43):

Um, and creating opportunities without boundaries or limits,

Alison M. (00:58:47):

limits and boundaries.

Alison M. (00:58:50):

Cause then it spells CoLab.

Aliza G. (00:58:51):

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Um,

Aliza G. ([00:58:55](#)):

and yeah, so I think they're doing incredible. They've always been doing incredible work and they are new. They're new leadership initiative, which is training their participants to take on leadership roles in teaching and within their organization is very exciting, especially from a supporting transitions perspective. Um, yeah, so I think [inaudible]

Alison M. ([00:59:19](#)):

Aliza and I both get to do teaching work from time to time with CoLab. Um, and I think one of my favorite parts of that work is when one of the leadership initiative actors comes into the room and like gets to lead a warm up. And I'm like,

Philip D. ([00:59:31](#)):

well, you did that better than I did. So, um,

Alison M. ([00:59:34](#)):

it's, it's great. It's really exciting to see those, uh, those actors rise up and, and, uh, take leadership roles in the room. So yeah, for sure. I would echo that as well.

Aliza G. ([00:59:43](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I've had the opportunity, I'm just thinking like across the country, it's exciting to, through supporting transitions to learn of other groups that are, um, doing incredible work across the country. And we connected through our lead presentation last year, actually, um, with as MOA, which is a museum in the El Segundo neighborhood of Los Angeles. And Holly Crawford is leading an incredible, um, internship initiative. At the museum where they partner with Michael's learning center, which is an, um, a kind of a school but spans adulthood as well. Um, for individuals with autism. And they have the interns there every week and they run gallery tours and they're being trained to work in, in the gallery, which is pretty incredible. And they're actually creating a toolkit, um, about how to create this type of initiative in your, in, in an unmute [inaudible] so I would shout out ESMOA and the great work they're doing as well.

Alison M. ([01:01:00](#)):

Yeah, that toolkit is actually on their website now. They're rolling out different modules, but I think the first few are on the website and they're really, um, really useful. So yeah, I think it's like as esmoa.org

Philip D. ([01:01:12](#)):

something. But if you, Google is esmoa Yeah. Can you spell that?

Aliza G. ([01:01:17](#)):

E. S M. O a. So it's El Segundo museum of art.

Philip D. ([01:01:22](#)):

That's fantastic. So I would have put a Z in there. Uh, that's fantastic. And the, uh, I can concur on all of those folks. I think they're all doing tremendous work. Um, and I'm really happy we can give them a little bit of love here. Um, any, any plugs, where can people, first and foremost, where can people learn more about supporting transitions

Aliza G. ([01:01:42](#)):

on the museum access consortium website? Um, we do have a page for supporting transitions. It currently lives in the resources section, so you go to resources and scroll down, you'll find supporting transitions, cultural connections for individuals with autism. And um, you can find all the case studies that, um, Alison has created all the videos that we created, um, and resources on employment and a directory of partners that you can, um, so you can connect with different service providers, um, and our contact information so that you can get in touch with us and, uh, we can support you in whatever way is necessary.

Philip D. ([01:02:30](#)):

Fantastic. And any other, uh, resources or, uh, websites or things like that that you guys would like to plug now is the time.

Alison M. ([01:02:42](#)):

Sure. I mean I don't, I tend to avoid social media personally as much as I can, but, um, you can find a blue laces theater company, um, at blue laces, TC, which stands for theater company.com, um, or, uh, at blue laces, TC on all, on all of our social media channels and I frequently post on those. So, uh, that's how you can find me sort of on social media.

Aliza G. ([01:03:09](#)):

I am, I have a website, [www.alizagreenberg.com](http://www.alizagreenberg.com) and I also am on social media and I'm often plugging a lot of the or the projects that I'm working on on there. So Twitter at Aliza G and you'll see a lot of the projects and also the theater that I see,

Philip D. ([01:03:29](#)):

which is fantastic. You are often at the theater. I do follow both blue laces and Aliza, uh, on all, I think all social media platforms, uh, and uh, I can verify that it's always tremendous stuff going on. So, um, finally I, uh, I just, I just want to say thank you guys. Uh, not just for being here, but I want to thank you guys for the work that you have done with this program. Uh, the work you continue to do with this program and in your other efforts in the world of accessibility and inclusion. Um, I think you're both tremendous. Uh, assets. Uh, was Betty Siegel says accessibility assets, right? Uh, I think you are truly the embodiment of what I consider access champions. Um, you, you have no off button it seems, uh, and uh, and uh, you inspire me. You do. I um, I try harder because of people like you. Um, you both and um, so I just want to say from myself and from the rest of the access community. Um, thank you for your work.

Aliza G. ([01:04:29](#)):

Well, thank you so much, Phil, for having us and helping us spread the word about supporting transitions and the work that we're doing and for the work you're doing. Thank you. Thanks Phil.

Alie B. ([01:04:44](#)):

It is always so good to hear from our friends at Mac and to hear a little update from Elisa. Thank you all so much for tuning in today. And as always, if you want more information, more inside knowledge, more access champion content, follow us on Patreon for as little as a dollar a month, you can have access to so much bonus content and more. That is [www.patreon.com/accesschampions](http://www.patreon.com/accesschampions). As always, I just want to thank our executive producer Matt for all of his work that he puts in and just his tireless efforts to

making this podcast truly remarkable. Huge. Shout out to Phil for being the brains in this whole operation and for his tireless work in the field of access and inclusion. Mad props to Phil. Thanks to Jay, our incredible intern and for all his work across our social media. Thanks to Justin Campbell for the artwork, Tommy Karr for our logos, Eric and Austin for our rad music. We'll be back again soon to have some more access champion podcast or rewind episode. So stay tuned for updates and more. And as always, inclusion believers. Never stop running through that brick wall.

Speaker 1 ([01:06:22](#)):

[inaudible].