**Future of IL: Diversity in CILs and Leadership**
Presented by Marisa Cantu
September 7, 2022

JENNY SICHEL:

Thanks. Nicely done all. That was awesome and I'm so excited to move to our next presented. I'm going to change my shared screen and I'm excited to introduce to you all, to Mercy Cantu is going to be presented on the future of IL, diversity (Indiscernible).

She's the community education advocate Center for Internet living.

MARISA CANTU:

Can you see me OK?

JENNY SICHEL:

hold on one second. I think we can. There you are you are good to go.

MARISA CANTU:

I really appreciate the opportunity, like Jenny said my name is Marisa Cantu. I am Hispanic woman, I'm 43 years old, with long curly hair, so I want to thank you for this opportunity. I do like to say that my disclaimers are that I am human, so I will say things that might not be perfect. I don't pretend to be professional in creating a diverse network. It's just the efforts and moving forward in this initiative that I think we all enjoy learning about, growing, so if I say anything that might offend, it is deftly my intention. So I would like to say that when having discussions about diversity and inclusion, and how this will shape out for the session.

I do want to share my intent for this presentation. It is to get us thinking outside of the box on how we tend to sell our organization and Centers for Independent Living, specifically, and bring ourselves out there in the community.

And how we intend to diversify our networking, experiences, and efforts in order to bring in a potential connection with community to become sponsors, or to participate in our organization in different levels.

So, I do think it's a little bit different and looking at us as an organization versus how it might work effectively for consumers.

I will tap into that and I will talk about how -- diversifying our network can affect consumer control and how it can affect how we relate to the community and a lot of different aspects that have to do with all the advocacy efforts that we do as Centers for Independent Living.

So, thank you so much. I am sorry for the long intro. (Laughs) And information I like to put out there.

Jenny, are you going to be moving along with the slides with me as I speak? OK. Perfect.

So, in a lot of the sessions I do, I am super interactive. I would really enjoy the interaction through our chat, and so one of the first experiences I like to talk about is imagining yourself going into a networking experience. A networking event.

And this is over â€“ moving over to mixing and mingling. Ask yourself: what kind of mingler are you? What kind of networking person are you?

Do you tend to come into the group with other people? Do you wait for other people to arrive? And you get to this network event and you want to stay in the group, or do you go alone? Do you eat all the food and the drinks? And you stick to yourself?

Or do you go and actually network and participate in different events.

When you are in inexperience or event where there is a networking opportunity, ask yourself, what kind of tendencies you have when you are in that setting.

And I did â€“ this is not for you to answer right now. I want you to imagine that when you are in that kind of setting, what kind of networking person are you.

So, a question that I do have... and I do want to put some people on the spot. And this is limited to 30 seconds.

I will go ahead and choose, if it's OK with you, you will be voluntold and you have 30 seconds to give yourself an opportunity to introduce yourself to me!

So, I introduced myself to you and I talked about what I do. Jenny read my biography. If you are at a networking event â€“ I like to know, in 30 seconds or less, who you are.

I call this an elevator pitch. A lot of times in an elevator, we do not have 30 seconds of time with someone. But how would you introduce yourself in 30 seconds or less?

I know I have 149 participants, so I will choose three people. If you are willing to be called on, go ahead and put your name in the chat. Say, "You can call on me." Let's see...

OK! Mira? Can you unmute her? After that, I will have Sherry.

SPEAKER:

So sorry, it's "Mira."

MARISA CANTU:

I have my three volunteers...

(Multiple speakers)

MARISA CANTU:

And I have Deb. In that order, we will unmute Mira. How would you introduce yourself?

SPEAKER:

My name is Mira and I'm working as a national disability Institute fellow and I am a person with a disability and neurodivergent.

My personal record is in healthcare, public policy, and (Indiscernible) and I'm a current physician assistant student, and I have a lot of interest outside of work and a lot of hobbies I have such as jigsaws, and making sports more inclusive. I would love to hear more about you.

MARISA CANTU:

I love it. Good job, I really appreciate that. I love you tapped not just interprofessional interest, but also your personal interest and what you could give back. That's a great 30 second pitch.

Sherry, you are next.

SPEAKER:

I am Sherry and I work in a CIL in Minnesota and I've been in the healthcare field for 28 years and began working at a CIL recently and I'm very excited and have been doing outreach that have been really cool, and outside of work enjoy reading and connecting with people of different cultures.

My previous agency, I worked with a lot of college students who were (Indiscernible) and I learned a lot about their culture which was interesting to me.

I like spending time with people that I can motivate, and mentor to do things that they think they could not possibly do.

MARISA CANTU:

Awesome! Again, going back to that feedback of what you can offer at the end is excellent. Deb? You are next.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, my name is Deb and I am the role advocate/community health worker for Northern Nevada Centers for Independent Living.

As the role advocate, -- I cover all of Nevada... (Static)

MARISA CANTU:

Thank you so much. Around of applause for our three volunteers. When you are able to introduce yourself and let people know who you are and what organization you are working for, and the most important thing when you are introducing yourself in a networking setting is the exchange of what you have to offer the other person.

I always end my pitch with saying, "I work with an organization that loves to give back to the community. If you ever need me to volunteer for an event, please call me."

That just generalizes or services in a way that leaves it open for them to contact you and allow them to utilize in a way that might be useful for them.

I encourage you when you are out there networking and putting your organization out there to end with, "How can I help you or provide a service for you?" You never know how that time and interaction will pay off in the long run.

I will get to that in a moment. Going back to how we tend to work at networking events, there is a psychology on how we tend to go towards sameness.

So, in psychology, there is... it's called an Alfred â€“ what's his last name? I want to make sure I'm giving his name correctly. Alfred Adler is who I am referring to, psychology called social instinct.

It is the desire for contact and feeling of belonging in a social setting. So, we have an innate drive to incorporate and socialize with people that have the same interest, that have the same common good, and in general, who kind of look like this.

I don't know if you could imagine yourself in a networking setting, I tend to go to people that might be the same age as me, that might be the same color as me and that might dress the same.

And so, our natural tendencies â€“ which is the next slide. I do not use a lot of words on my slides. If you are taking notes, feel free to take notes.

Our natural tendencies is to go to sameness. If we are going to these network events and going to like people that are like us, people that look like us, it kind of defeats the purpose of us networking and diversifying our group or our organization, correct?

So, I encourage you to kind of get away from that concept of sameness. And challenge yourself to the next networking event, the next event that you are at, to go to people that you would not normally walk up to, and challenge yourself to socialize with people that look totally opposite of you. That do not dress like you. That are not the same age.

That is where we tend to learn and grow as people, because we are not just going to sameness and going to that social instinct of wanting to incorporate ourselves in a circle of people that look like us, talk like us, and are the same.

And I will say, before continuing that, as advocates for disability, we tend to already look outside of our circle. Because there is an ability to appreciate differences, right?

But I will challenge you even more to continue to look at yourself outside of what you are used to going to and challenge yourself to go outside of that box a little bit.

So, going onto the slide on there right now, you can go back because I will talk about networking and what the purpose of networking is.

When you are networking, you have to really have a goal of networking. I do not like to go to events to just fill up my calendar.

It's funny, because I do want to show you, for some of you that cannot see â€“ I will try to describe what my calendar might look like now. This was not planned.

My calendar is full of things right now. They're just like, busy. For those who were not able to see that, I think only my Mondays in September are open. But when I go to meetings, and I go to events, I go with a purpose in mind.

We get invited to a lot of events in my community, that as an organization you should be choosing and picking what is going to be the best time for your purpose and networking. And who is your audience?

Who are you trying to attract, you know, when you are out there doing outreach and growing your programs. What is a correct event for you?

Do not just make yourself busy. Do not just fill your schedule, as well as for your staff, you know, because like I said, we get invited to a lot of things.

But begin to be more intentional about who your audience is and for what programs you are trying to expand. Are you trying to expand volunteer opportunities? Are you looking to reach more sponsors?

So, in those cases, you want to really focus on what your purpose in networking is. And that way, it wastes your time in places that will not give you any return.

When I say that, I also want us as an organization to be able to offer something in return.

When you are thinking about your purpose in networking, what is your main goal? One thing that I do want to ask you right now is: how do you view networking?

I want to see some interaction in the chat. I want one word that describes networking to you. It does not have to be sentences, just go ahead and start chatting. When you think of networking, what is one word that comes to mind? When you think of networking.

Connections, connecting with others, opportunities, broaden horizons, collaboration, socializing, energizing, spontaneous, education, new ideas.

You so much for your purchase patient. And so, when you â€“ resources, that was also good. So networking is not just at an event, it doesn't just happen when you are going to a networking event. Networking happens when you are in a moment where you are taking advantage of an opportunity to sell your organization or come in return, yet something from the person that you are speaking to.

And it's a matter of connecting people to people, resources to people, and organizations to people that are going to enrich one another, right?

So, when you're speaking to someone, who was hopefully, like the challenges they can go up to someone who is not like you, what do you tend to be more attracted to, something that is monotone or something that is does bring that energy and that positivity and someone who is offering, you know, the services? I'm not talking about personality here or charisma or, all of that because we are all different, and who we are and how we express ourselves, but when you are speaking to someone and they talk about engagement, and they talk about possibilities and growth and diversifying, and wanting to reach a common goal of community and things like that, does that bring more attraction than just the concept of you want to get what you want out of something?

So, the idea is that you bring in these concepts of "Here's what I can do for you, what can you do for me" Instead of us just saying "what can you do for me". With the end in mind that we need to grow and diversify our organization and to collaborate in a lot of different things that we might need in the moment.

So, again, what is your purpose Westmark who is your audience? What are you trying to expand? Are you trying to expand programs? Are you trying to expand volunteer opportunities? Or are you trying to expand sponsorships? So make sure when you are networking, your networking with purpose and you're not just networking to fill your space and your time. And that you are also thinking about the opportunities they can both be given and received.

So on to the next one. The next slide says "Does diversity mean to you?" As of the same concept. Just one word that describes diversity, and you can purchase paid-- participate in the chat. And when it starts dying down I will just... you guys did excellent the last time but one word that describes diversity.

Inclusivity, everyone, difference, strengths, variety, again, differences. Love it. Tapestries. Anymore? Unity.

SPEAKER:

The couple in the Q&A as well.

MARISA CANTU:

Friendships, rainbow. OK, and so when we are talking about diversifying, why does it even matter? Someone else said mosaic. Thank you so much for your presentation. So when we are looking to versa five our organization, our services and programs, what is the purpose behind wanting to diversify. Why does diversity matter to the program, to your purpose, to what your turn to do?

Are you just trying to fill in the blanks, or you trying to join onto the bandwagon? Which are all good reasons, I'm not saying that any of those reasons are bad, but, if you are looking to diversify, do you have what it needs to equip yourselves, and your organization to follow-up. For example, I remember that, when the Census Bureau came to our town, and I don't know if you guys knew what when you work for the census, they literally just drop you into a town, they don't really give you contacts and they say "Figure it out, go reach the masses." So thankfully they were able to go to our organization and we sat down with them we were literally able to connect them to a lot of events, outdoor parks that had concert series, outdoor things, farmers markets, etc. So we can point them in the right direction but are they then equipped for the follow-up.

See what I mean by that is that if they want to reach diverse populations, and they do Spanish outreach and events, are you equipped for the follow-up? Is there someone who's going to be able to answer questions afterwards? And that's in any language. Not just a Latin event or Spanish-speaking event. If you're doing outreach at Spanish speaking events but if you do not have the equipped staff to do the follow-up, how are you addressing those gaps?

How are you addressing how you are going to Beale-- be able to follow-up in the future? So just think of those things as why diversity is important to you, what it means to you, and why it matters? And when you are out trying to diversify, if you have the ability to cope yourselves for the follow-up?

The next thing is are you trying to look like your community? Does your establishment like your community? That should be a goal for our organizations to look at the population but the ratios in our community, and have staff on board equipped for that follow-up and the ability to look like the community that you are serving.

And so, you guys all gave pretty great examples of what diversity means to you, diversity in general means a practice of including people, from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds, and different genders and abilities.

So when we are diversifying our own organizations in our programs, are we looking at the entire -- the intent of crating services and programs that look like your community, that will follow-up with your community and that will enlarge your products and services that you provide within your organization?

So I would help-- hope that as advocates and centers in any disability organizations, that we look to diversify and look to be inclusive we are looking to not just fill in the gaps and to fill in the spaces and when I say that, I tread lightly on that because I don't want to divert from anyone's intent because I think that any precipitation and growth is an effort, right?

I was trying to read in the chat why can't we see what is in the chat? I think participants... can any can you answer that?

JENNY SICHEL:

So we actually have a close to participants so it goes astray to the panelists. Just for, kind of,... I can't think of the word purposes.

MARISA CANTU:

I just wanted to read a little bit of what's going on in the chat when I was asking what diversity means to you I missed a couple. Is it educational opportunities to understanding, listening and learning, so thank you so much for that.

Alright I'm going to go on to the next slide, that says how are you selling your organization? Again, going back to that 32nd elevator pitch, what is it that you are trying to create within your networking?

Are you, again, going back to the purpose of looking for volunteers or sponsorships or enhancing programs.

So when we talk about what we have to offer, how are you selling organization. To me? When I talk about centers for independent living, I say that we focus on the ability, versus the disability and that our goal is to keep people as independent as possible, but writing resources-- by providing resources that might enhance their daily living.

And as an organization when I finish my pitch and see them executive director appreciates when we are volunteering and we are offering our time and our services, with different events, it always brings back a positive dissipation in the community-- participation in the community. Because it makes us able to say that we are a part of your community and as an organization, we are able to get back with staff time or volunteering.

And I'm going to say that three out of the five times that I have been to organizations and volunteered, they have also come to my events and my organizational workshops, or spread the word and been able to get back to the purpose of what I'm doing, and my community, or when we have events that we need 30 to 40, we've been able to yield back and get back in their time and participating in things that we are doing as well.

So it always yields back and the ability to give and take. And so, making sure that we put our organization out there is a someone that we have to offer is a something that is always very important to establish those relationships.

So what I enjoy doing and networking, and connecting people, is if I know someone who has a service that can be of assistance to a consumer, an event,... as it was always a concept of connecting people to people and resources to resources and when I say this I know I feel like I'm repeating a lot, but my network experiences have always been an opportunity to reach for more. So if you're reading for time in volunteer purposes, sometimes those things turn into sponsorship opportunities as well.

So when you are diversifying your network and your pool of things that you are per dissipating in, it really does open the door to a lot more sponsorship opportunities for different events, or different grants that you might be in need of or funding that you can need as well. So how your providing your services can really turn around benefits your organization.

If you could go to the next one, when we are talking about mind over matter, it was an intentional effort we have to make to create outreach that really expands and looks like our community.

When we are reaching out and having programs become more diversified and look like our community, it becomes a conscious decision to be intentional about how we are reaching out, who we are reaching out to, and what our purpose is.

So, it's not something that just happens, right? A lot of us might have a diverse staff, but if you are not going out to diverse populations, to do outreach, for the most part they are not just going to come to you.

And so, how are you being intentional about the spaces that you're overcoming and looking at those cultural differences, or outreach in different areas.

Who are we reaching out to? I think a lot of the times, as Centers for Independent Living or disability organizations, we are looking to those rural areas that are underserved. I hear a lot about underserved populations.

What does that mean? What are we doing to reach out to those underserved populations? Who do those underserved populations become?

Is it just a social distance? Is it a financial distance? Or is it a difference that becomes all of these underserved populations.

We have to be intentional when it comes to outreach and pouring into our community. And how we are reaching out.

And some of those community partners that can be involved in us being intentional have a lot to do with partnerships.

And so, are we looking at our chambers of commerce and connecting with all of the different business points that they might be able to connect us to?

Are we reaching out to â€“ I think every community has a Martin Luther King Centre or a Martin Luther King Drive, especially in the bigger cities or cities that are connected by way of larger communities.

Are we looking at our LGBTQ organizations? Our refugee centers? Are we reaching out to churches? Are we reaching out to County Council's, like for us, we served three counties in Illinois. Every one of those counties has a social service network.

Even if there are rural spaces within those counties, those councils are able to dive into every little pocket of that county, which is something that I love about County Council's.

Are we looking at our state disability organizations? Regional chapters? Housing organizations? The spaces that create more opportunities for advocacy.

When we are being intentional about our outreach efforts, who is that we are reaching out to? So, these things that I've listed, community partners, they are very important in the work that we do.

Because these partnerships that we have in our communities really, for us, and our organization, in my experience they have kept us afloat. They have kept our events afloat, and have kept us equipped with volunteers.

They have continued to allow us to make those connections with sponsorships. We really have to be intentional about our outreach efforts and creating those diverse populations that we need to reach out to.

I will read in the chat it says, going to different businesses and doctors, and things like that, but remember outreach does not stop with organizations, especially in the rural areas.

If you see someone struggling in a Walmart, reach out a hand and strike up a conversation. Drop the name of your CIL. Thank you so much for that.

Those community partnerships are essentially what diversifying your network means. For example, when we are part of... like was said in the chat, it's not just about organizations and businesses that diversify you.

It is your neighbour, even in the town you are living in. I choose to live in a diversified neighbourhood. And I am intentional about the things I do in my neighbourhood.

I have two free yard sales a year or it helps me to do spring clean up, and fall clean-up, I put things out in the yard and free yard sales.

I have a summer clean-up event. And in my backyard, I have hotdogs and drinks, and my community caring conference always puts the word out at the event I'm doing, as a neighbourhood watch person.

But as a neighbour in my own community. As an individual, we have the ability to use word-of-mouth, to use our hands, and feet, and our ability to serve one another in these things when we are providing outreach.

So, thank you. It's not just about organizations and businesses. It's about who you are as an individual and how you are being intentional in creating a space where people are welcome.

Creating a space where you have the ability to follow up with diversifying your staff. And it's been really intentional about the people that you are serving, and the people that you want to serve.

And so, when I talk about my personal experiences, in my own personal life, of providing those free yard sales and things like that. I do that because I know the needs of my community.

I know that down the street, there is refugee families that just moved in that might need clothing, that might need toys for their children.

In the same way that I practice that in my own neighbourhood and community, we really need to learn the needs of our community. We need to be able to learn how our community is working and how it's not working. And where things are falling in between the gaps.

And how do you find those things out? You find those things out by putting yourself out there, and putting your organization out there.

In the summer, there are so many different cultural events and outdoor activities. And music festivals, and... dance festivals, Greek festivals, and so, we do our best in our organization to have informational tables at those events.

We have an empowerment network which is a small business, farmers market that takes place every weekend where there is great weather.

So, us putting ourselves out there in places that are going to bring about diverse populations already put that in a place where we are able to provide those services. And put our word and our organization out there.

Creating those community partnerships is really important on the work we are doing, as Centers for Independent Living. And as disability organizations, and in general.

We are able to build those bridges from independent living to all of the things we are doing in our community, by being intentional in what we are participating in, not just being busy and doing busy work, but being intentional in the resources we have to offer.

One thing I did want to shed a little bit of light on is my personal experience in being intentional about the people we reach out to.

As an advocate who has worked in the Spanish community, there are some barriers that are a little bit of a challenge.

Because depending on nationalities and cultural differences, is not always easy to get into a community.

So, for example, my experience in the Spanish-speaking community is that they want to establish a relationship with you.

So, when I first started working with Centers for Independent Living 20 years ago, it was a good match. My father was a pastor in the community, in the Spanish-speaking community.

So, my affiliation with my dad and our church was already established in the Spanish-speaking community. When I started working at the Center for Independent Living, it was someone who was known to them and who they were comfortable with and had a relationship with in the community.

So, they trusted and had built a relationship with me already.

In a lot of cultures and a lot of different backgrounds, ethnicities and backgrounds, it is important that you are sensitive to their cultural needs of each community.

So, you cannot just come in and say, "I will do some office hours at this office down here in a Spanish-speaking community." It takes trust, and it takes establishing relationships to be able to be more effective in communities where there might be some differences within those outreach efforts.

And another thing, not just with outreach efforts and establishing those differences, you might do in home visits a little bit differently, as well. You might have to take off your shoes in some homes, or learn when it's offensive or not offensive if you are offered something to drink, or something to eat, and you decline, in some cultures it might be offensive to not share a meal or eat, or drink something with someone.

So, I've had some experiences, even in my own culture, where I forget some of the things that I should know.

For example, I will say, I will not say all across Mexico â€“ but in some Mexican culture, when you complement someone on something, it is a natural tendency in our culture, and our culture to automatically give you something that you have complement it.

So, obviously, if it's not of a lot of value, I will not say, "I like your Rolex watch!" And that watch is given to me or anything.

I was doing a home visit and I complemented a floral decoration complement a formal declaration on the table. The mother said I could have it. I could not say, "No, I cannot accept it. Or it is too kind of you." She made me take this home with me.

Those are things you learn and being in a different space and what you are used to. All of these ways of doing outreach and how we are growing our organization, and how we are staffing our organization, all of these differences.

It's a beautiful thing to have differences within an organization and you will not get it right all the time. You are not going to have it down perfect, you will mess up.

Even in my own culture, I've made those mistakes. But it's OK! It's a part of when I asked you guys what diversity means to you, some of you said it means growth. It means learning, it means everyone, it means differences and varieties, and strengths. And inclusivity and combining, and things like that.

It's OK to have all of those things come together and to not have it all perfect, and perfected, and right.

But it's a beautiful thing when you are putting yourself out there and being intentional, and you are able to follow up those services that you are providing, even if you do not get it all right every single time.

I do want to look at the question and answer right now, it says, Susan says, it's also important when doing diversity training with staff we also address our own unconscious biases, as we all have these.

These can be a barrier to diversifying our agency. Thank you so much for that! And hello, a special hello â€“ I do know her!

Thank you for addressing that. I do remember going into a diversity training one time and coming in with my own frustrations.

Because a lot of the times, as a person of color, I tend to be a little close minded sometimes. One time I went to a diversity training and one of the best things that I've heard is, "Do not judge people on their ignorance. Take it as an educational moment."

I will say that one more time because it really hit home for me. "Do not judge people on their ignorance. Take it as an educational moment."

So the true definition of ignorance is really the lack of knowledge, right? And so, if we take an opportunity to educate someone, instead of being frustrated and angry at their response, it gives us an opportunity to be more open, to show kindness and to show grace when someone really does need to be educated.

And it allows us to be better human beings, at the same time, because we are offering that grace, in the moment, where someone really did not know.

So instead of answering to an offense with anger, you might answer to an offense with education instead.

An anonymous attendee said outreach, Marissa, you hit it on the nail when you said even when you are on Walmart and struck up a conversation with someone with a disability, have done this so many times. I appreciate the response but someone else in the chat was the one that made that response. I was just reading her chat. That was Kami. So thank you for that.

I am done with what I had to present and I did want to leave a couple minutes at the end for some question-and-answer.

This is my first time presenting to a large group of people without the ability to see everyone's faces and interact, and so, I feel like I really just been talking to the screen, and I hope that it has been helpful in that you've been able to pick up something from the different things that I have talked about, but I do want to open it up, in both the question and answers, or the chat, how are we working this Jenny?

JENNY SICHEL:

Yeah you have a couple people that have already mentioned things in the Q&A section I'm going to keep an eye on the chat as well.

ROSETTE ROYALE:

Emma so Q and A, thank you Susan, Susan and I used to work together and we have known each other over 20 years as well. So it's good to see where you are as well Susan.

So thank you for this training and your advice and opening to our conversation.... Richards is a great presentation, I knew you would be a strong presenter from the time you and I presented on the housing panel. Thank you Richard. I appreciate that.

Are there any questions in regards to and experiences that I have had in my community or topics that you guys have struggled with? That you might need some advice on when it comes to outreach and networking?

Shannon says we should invite this people to networking potlucks. Anonymous says individuals without a specific disability can think he or she knows what the individual with a disability needs. It is not always the case. I would love to send you an email about this. Yes. When we are-- we really need to open ourselves to not assuming anything. You can't go into any kind of setting, assuming anything, because it makes for a difficult situation, and it really makes us kind of look that sometimes, as well, so (Unknown name) will there be another training with this? That will be up to the Institute and all be happy to continue on different topics on not just networking and diversify network but I can go on and on about his parents-- personal expenses well.

This is been very helpless extreme personable. Thank you very much. Thank you Sherry for your comment.

JENNY SICHEL:

I can answer one of the questions about

whether or not the be more presentations like this. I deftly think that there will be in the future. For this institute we have, tomorrow we have two two-hour sessions tomorrow, and then those will be about developing leadership within your NCIL and then on Friday we have worship beyond NCIL so that is in the morning. So that is just for this week.

MARISA CANTU:

(Unknown name) said setting up a table is not enough. So you have to be prepared for the follow-up. You can't just go out and provide the outreach......

Or speak any other language that are out there. Great job Marissa. Thank you Shannon. Brenda, thank you this was great and very informative. Thank you.

I really appreciate all of this.

JENNY SICHEL:

I just wanted to mention that I put Marisa Cantu's information in the chat. We also had one question in the chat.

MARISA CANTU:

I'm from a small farming area, how can I get our community to open up to diversity? I think, Regina, just one of my suggestions, and small rural towns, I would suggest like a coffee hour, a coffee chat up high day or anything that is something that your town is known for, gather around that concept, gather around a day where, in oh, if yoga is a big deal in your community, or if fitness or coffee, or listening to music, or the spoken word. Gather around something that is common in your farming town, and Camino, provide that kind of setting or space for people to gather, and see what happens, those are great opportunities for you to dive into what is important to your town, and to bring people around the topic that you just never know, what kind of people will show up. If that makes any sense, does that make sense Regina? Perfect.

Anonymous: can you comment on the tension between interest of partners like the consumers advocating for ADA compliance in the chamber defends noncompliance. It's one partnership more important than the other, for the Center for Independent living?

That is a really great question. This is something that I've actually dealt with in the past, especially for small businesses. And all that we do in those instances is create the source for facts. An information right? So instead of getting emotions involved, were taking sides, we tend to just stay on the side of providing facts providing information that is needed on both sides.

And also making sure that we stay open provide resources on our behalf. Here in the Midwest, Great Lakes ADA is a great resource that we continue to use for resources and getting the people that they need, that need more technical assistance, and so we tend to stay on the side of providing information that is factual. In continuing to provide our resources, and stay open, versus taking sides because at the end of the day, the law is what usually is going to win.

Is so we try not to participate in the tension, but rather just provide information and facts that are needed. I hope that answers your question.

Kay: small-town and rural areas are really unique area, you really have to understand the community before coming up with ideas. Find other social workers-- social circles, most are not the same network but when I find the time. It's around.

That is exactly right Kay. That is what I love about small towns is finding the niche is and finding where they go for their resources and finding those relationships because, at the end of the day, relationships and how you establish yourself in a community, is really what becomes your character and fewer, versus where you work.

And so, I'm getting to know that town and what is needed is really key.

I don't see any more questions.

JENNY SICHEL:

I don't either. Thank you so much for the presentation and just to remind everyone at 11 AM Eastern time, log in with the code that you received on the mail. Thank you for coming.

MARISA CANTU:

Thank you for hanging in there guys. I hope that it was interesting and that you guys were able to get the most out of it. So thank you for hanging in there. I hope you guys have a great dinner and a great rest of your day.

JENNY SICHEL:

Thanks all. Bye.