

## Episode 14 - People First - Reflection on Race and Disability with Jeffrey Johnston

Mike Hoenig:

Well, hey, everybody. It's Mike Hoenig from the Iowa UCEDD, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, bringing you another exciting episode of Disability Exchange. We're very excited to be here today. We are lifting the voices of people with disabilities and family members. Very shortly, we are going to introduce you to, I believe, our first out-of-state guest. But before we do that, I'd like to turn it over to our co-host, Caitlin Owens.

Caitlin Owens:

Hello. My name is Caitlin Owens, and I work with Mike at the Iowa UCEDD. And I'm so excited for today's guest.

Mike Hoenig:

Well, it's my pleasure to introduce Jeff Johnson, who's from Missouri. And we'll get into that in a little bit. I got to know Jeff working on a planning committee for our SOAR regional self-advocacy conference, and he played a big part in really keeping us moving at times when a lot of our discussions were stuck. And also, Jeff happens to know our UCEDD director, Derrick Willis, and Derrick speaks very highly of him. So we thought, "Well, he'd be a really great, awesome guy to have on the podcast." So Jeff, please introduce yourself. Tell us where you're from and where you were born.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Well, first of all, I want to thank you, Mike, for allowing me to be part of your guys' podcast. Again, my name is Jeff Johnson. And I am the president of People First of Missouri. And I live right here in Columbia, Missouri. And I was born in Stuttgart, Arkansas, which a lot of people probably never heard of Stuttgart, Arkansas. It was named after Stuttgart, Germany. Germany settled there years and years ago, back in the early 1800s, so that's how it became Stuttgart, Arkansas. And I also grew up in the boot heel, Sikeston, Missouri, where I graduated from back in 1990. I left Arkansas at an early age, around 1981, and lived there since 1992 and came to Columbia, Missouri back in 1992.

Mike Hoenig:

Excellent. We do have a third co-host. Her name is Judy Warth. And Judy's mom ... I think she said either lives or lived in Sikeston. And she-

Caitlin Owens:

That's where she was born, I think.

Mike Hoenig:

Yeah, or where was she was born, okay. And she reminded us that Sikeston is the home of the throwed rolls. So did you ever have a throwed roll, Jeff?

Caitlin Owens:

What is a throwed roll?

Jeffrey Johnson:

Well, it's really called Lambert's Cafe, where it's best known as home of the throwed roll, but they don't actually really throw rolls at you, they kind of toss it to you. And also what they do, they come around with a bunch of food. You don't just go up to the bar and get it, anything like that. They come around to you and put food on your plate. So that's how it became a home of the throwed roll. So it's not just only in Sikeston that it's located at. It's in Tennessee, I believe, Oklahoma, and Sikeston. I want to say Springfield has one, but I'm not for sure, but yeah, so I've been there, I think, about once or twice, but-

Caitlin Owens:

We promised Judy we'd ask.

Mike Hoenig:

We did.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Yeah, they got some really great food there. So if you ever get a chance to go down there or stop in somewhere off interstate 55 there, you can't miss it. There's some really great food there. So you all try it if you're ever down in that area.

Mike Hoenig:

All right.

Caitlin Owens:

Well, Jeff, could you tell us a little bit more about your work in the disability services world, your current position, but then looking at the bio you sent, you have a really, really long history in this world.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Yeah, sure. Where I really started in into the disability advocacy movement ... well, I used to be with an organization called Grassroots Organizing. And basically, it was an organization that were working with people that needed their help for low housing, income, Medicaid, all those type of issues that were going on. So I ended up being part of that organization from 2000 until 2005. And after that, back in ... well, I shouldn't say 2005, I should say 2002 is when I was involved with that. But back in 2003, that was a ... Well, UMKC, I ended up becoming an AmeriCorps investor.

And so what that was, it was to have somebody, a self-advocate, to work out of the regional office. And what that program was called, it was called MOCAN, and MOCAN stood for Missouri Advocacy Community, something like that. I can't quite remember the whole thing. But anyway, so what our job was was to go around throughout the state of Missouri was to be able to help other self-advocates to be able to go out and then train the trainer and things like that. Also, work alongside of the staff at the regional office and go and do trainings for the providers. So, that's how I became more part of being part of the self-advocacy movement.

And after that, after I got done with that project, I ended up doing another project with AmeriCorps VISTA called the Reentry. And that's where I went into the prisons, and then talking with other inmates that were coming out of prison, and to help them get resources and things like that. And when that ended, I ended up at the regional office as an advocacy specialist from 2008 until 2020. So I've been around with this advocacy thing, but to be very honest with you, is that I really didn't know much about being an advocate for those with intellectual disability, because back when I was growing up, I didn't know anything about a disability or mental illness or any of those type of things because growing up in a Black community, we really didn't see a lot of those type of issues. I mean, if they were there, I mean, we didn't really have knowledgeable of it because we always had the community and things like that.

But as I got older and older and things like that, I started seeing some things myself as being an advocate for those that couldn't advocate for themselves. And by me being a person with an intellectual disability and mental illness, I mean, it woke me up to realize and say to myself, "Okay, now I understand. Now I see. Now I'm in the same shoes as others were in." So now I know what it felt like when somebody telling you what you can and can't do, or you couldn't be this, or you couldn't be that. So it just been a blessing for me to just walk in somebody else's shoes, and also having mostly the same diagnosis as others and seeing what they were doing to be an advocate for themselves. So that made me get more and more involved in being an advocate.

Mike Hoenig:

So you mentioned UMKC. I assume that's University of Missouri, Kansas City. Right?

Jeffrey Johnson:

Yes.

Mike Hoenig:

So that was one of your early places. And I know that whenever we introduce our podcast, we say, Iowa UCEDD, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. And UMKC is the Missouri UCEDD, right?

Jeffrey Johnson:

Right, right.

Mike Hoenig:

Yeah. So we've partnered with them for a long time. I think it's really interesting, Jeff, that you really got into with AmeriCorps VISTA and getting some volunteer experience under your belt, helping advocates, but then you got into a field that was ... And we've been learning more and more about the intersection where we have so many people with disabilities that end up in the prison system because of many, many factors. So I find it really interesting that you were working in that area back in the day. I'm assuming that was really a growth experience for you.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Well, to be honest with you, Mike, it was. And I thank God every day that I got the chance to do that because if you look at it today, there's a lot of people that are incarcerated that either have some type of intellectual disability or some type of mental illness. And they just don't know where to turn to when they come out. And also as they in there, as well, they're probably not getting the right treatment as we would like for them to get, but as they coming out, they're going to need more resources and more people to be able to advocate for them because they not going to know what type of resources to get. I mean, I tell you, I learned a lot when I was doing that Reentry project, because I mean, we always do a simulation to try to figure out how would they survive when they come out, if they didn't have this certain amount of money or whatever?

And when we was doing the simulation to different organizations, what we would do, we would give them like \$5, \$10, \$15, probably \$20, \$25, just to see how it really felt coming out of prison when you trying to feed yourself, clothe yourself, transportation, whatever the case scenario might be. And we would ask them at the end of that, "How did that feel?" And then getting a lot of answers from folks. Now, they was like, "Well, it didn't feel good because I didn't have enough money to get from A to B because I needed to eat." Okay, well, that's the same way that most people feel in real life that don't have a lot of money, like some people does, so it's hard for those that can't make it.

Caitlin Owens:

And in addition, I'm sure as part of the simulation to the money, then people also encounter barriers like difficulty finding employment because of a criminal record, difficulty finding housing, difficulty getting

access to certain public benefits. And yeah, those types of, I think, experiences for service providers and community members are so important to just illuminate the incredible hurdles people have to go through. And yeah, just as a point of connection, I want to share I also was an AmeriCorps VISTA and have worked on Reentry projects too, not as a VISTA, but [crosstalk 00:11:47]-

Jeffrey Johnson:

And those kind of things ... and then this deal happened here in the state of Missouri. And I was glad that we put that on back in 2007. And that's when my third year came in as the AmeriCorps VISTA. So I did a three year for AmeriCorps VISTA. But I mean, it was a really great excitement to see. And it just made me get more and more and more involved in the advocacy movement. And just a couple of years ago ... well, I shouldn't say a couple years ago. But just about a year ago, I just got finished with a project. It was called Segregated School Pipeline to Prison. And that was another issue that I really loved doing, because it really affected a lot of individuals that had intellectual disability, especially those people of color, those that had intellectual disability, those that had mental illness.

I mean, kids were getting kicked out of school for just minor little stuff, no matter what it was. I mean, they were getting kicked out and getting sent to the juvenile system, from the juvenile system into the prison. So by me being part of People First of Boone County here in Columbia, that was something that I brought to my group to say, "Hey, look. We have to do something. This is something that I really want to do." And so this is where about a year later where the SARTAC, and what SARTAC stands for .... Self Advocacy Technology Assistance.

So I did that project for a year. And I put a group together; when I say group, I put a committee together, which I did have a host, which Boone County Family Resource, one of the organizations here in Columbia that helps individuals that have intellectual disabilities, they're like resources for ... It used to be called Boone County Group Home, but they changed the name because they do more than just help people with disabilities into group homes or anything like that. So they changed their name to Boone County Family Resource because they do give out a lot of resources.

So anyway, make the story short on this end is that they worked alongside of me with that project. And everybody seems to love this project. I mean, I had family focus groups. I had lawyers that worked alongside of me with it. I mean, we're still in the process of still doing it, but with this COVID that is going on, I mean, it is hard to try to do a lot of things. But I mean, we still working on it, but we just waiting to see what happens.

So this is what really made me really get more down deep into being an advocate, because some people may not feel comfortable advocating for themselves because they don't know all the right answers to all the resources that are out there. Because I mean, I have a lot of people that contact me throughout Arkansas, which my nephew calls me on a lot of things on certain legal issues. People here in Columbia, I still have people that will contact me on certain issues that they might have with housing, whatever the case scenario might be. I mean, I see a passion for it because without advocacy, I just don't think the world would be to what it is today because we got some really strong people out here that really, really believes in advocacy.

Mike Hoenig:

Speaking of advocacy, you mentioned bringing the awareness program and the pipeline program, rather, that making people aware of how people with disabilities, minority groups, are oftentimes treated unjustly, there's discrimination and that sort of thing, and that you brought it to People First. And I'm guessing some of our ... Because we're based in Iowa. And Iowa does not have a statewide People First organization, let alone county groups. So could you tell us a little bit about the People First organization, both at the state, and then at your local level, what kinds of things you do, and who are the members?

Jeffrey Johnson:

Well, People First state of Missouri, again, I'm the president. And basically, we also have the local chapters as well. So you got your state, then you got your local. So your local groups, they got their own bylaws and all that as well, but they still have to follow some of the guidelines of the state level. And Mike, you know some of our steering committee members that's part of People First and all that.

Mike Hoenig:

Absolutely. Yep.

Jeffrey Johnson:

And some of the things that we are working on here in the state of Missouri, we do have legislator day that we normally go in March and talk about our legislators about different issues. And we also work alongside with the DD council here in the state of Missouri. Basically we work alongside all types of different organizations. I'm going to just throw it out there like that.

Mike Hoenig:

You bet.

Jeffrey Johnson:

And what the small People First group does, I mean, they do almost the same as the state, work alongside other groups, agencies, and things like that. But we also advocate for other folks as well, if they want us to. But I'm going to give you a little background on People First of Boone County, what we do, because we do a lot. We also is working with a gentleman right now, Mike, that has some issues with his neighbor and the police department here in Columbus, to where that was some ... Well, we believe there was some racial issues that were going on. The police being called up on him for no reason at all,

because he's married to a Caucasian woman and got mixed kids. And it was just a mess. But People First is involved in that, helping him, even though he doesn't have a disability.

But the thing is is that we all sometimes hear from the self-advocacy groups that we want inclusive. And one of the things that I always bring to the table, well, if we want inclusive, then that means we got to work with everybody. We just can't work just for people with intellectual disabilities, because we keep hearing the same thing: "We want inclusive." So what we've done as People First of Boone County ... But I did ask the gentlemen, and I know we wasn't supposed to ask, but I asked him was it okay if I ask him, did he have some type of disability or some kind, because our organization is based up on people with disability and for people with disability. So he said, "No, I don't."

And I said, "Well, I tell you, but our group, we opened it up to where we want to help where we can for people that can't or my not have those resources." But anyway, we ended up working with him as we speak right now, writing a letter up on his behalf to the city manager, chief of police, city councilperson to try to figure out what happened, how can we make sure that something like this will never happen again? Because he was thrown to the ground in front of his kids and all that.

And so those are the type of things that People First organization should be working on, is working with the community, not just legislative things, because sometimes I look at ... They always say we not spoke to get so much into political and all that. But I'm beginning to start seeing a lot of that, is the self-advocate is getting more political than we are working to help those in the community where it's mostly really needed. I'm not saying we shouldn't talk with our legislators about things. But I just think sometimes as self-advocates, we seem to sometimes to forget about the community, what's going on in those communities. And that's one of the things that People First of Boone County has mostly been working on, is trying to work with the community to get more people involved in the advocacy movement. So People First does a lot of things. Go ahead.

Caitlin Owens:

Oh, I was just going to say, I like that approach because if you're not doing both, then people who are on the ground who need assistance now ... it takes a while for legislation to trickle down and affect every ... And also, working with people on the ground, you learn about needs and are better able to communicate with your legislators. And so it's cool to hear that your organization is engaged in both.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Yeah. And to piggyback a little bit off of that, that's something that we're doing through our organization. And I can't speak for other groups, but I do think People First is a really, really great organization for self-advocates to start things in the right direction. But we shouldn't just have to wait till we get to a steering committee and talk about those issues. We should be talking about these issues and then taking them to the steering committee and say, "Hey, this is what's happening in our local chapter, or this is what we're doing in our local chapters. We're working in the community. And these are some of the issues that we've been talking with folks about. And this is what they've been saying. So we would like to know what is it that People First of Missouri can do?"

And I'll give you another thing that I'm planning on bringing up with People First on the state of Missouri is that we don't talk about systematic racism. We don't talk about systematic discrimination or anything like that. And I think that's another big issue that I think the self-advocates organizations need to be started talking about because it is an issue. And I say this every day and I think some people are probably saying to themselves, "Well, why should we talk about it?" Well, we need to talk about it, because if we don't talk about it, then what good does it do for people that has an intellectual disability or mental illness? Because if it's happening to African-Americans or Latinos, then guess what? It is happening to those that have an intellectual disability and mental illness. We see this all the time and then we'll sit there and say, "Well, I don't think we need to talk about it." I think this is the time to talk about these issues because it's getting to the point to where people are just saying, "I give up." I don't want to be part of this. If people are not going to say or do anything, if they just going to set back and allow it to happen, then why be part of that?

Caitlin Owens:

Absolutely. And just the increased vulnerability of the impacts of systemic racism and having an intellectual disability or a mental illness, and it is important.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Exactly. Yeah.

Mike Hoenig:

Yeah. And we've actually started having quite a few of those discussions within our UCEDD here, just for your benefit, Jeff, and then for our audience. I think this is something that the disability community is really starting to wake up to. And I was just thinking the other day, I've been in advocacy for a long time, and I'm white. And so for a long time, we were really focusing on just issues of transportation, housing, education, technology, employment, all the ones that we know about. But I would continue to get these comments about the self-advocacy and independent living movement is largely white.

I had a couple of friends when I was involved with the Illinois Coalition of Citizens With Disabilities. And this is a long time ago now. It was probably 30 years ago. So I'm sure it's changed a lot now. But I do just remember, even though there were a few African-American people, maybe a few Latinos, not many, the vast majority were white. And so I think one of the things that Derrick Willis, our director, has brought to the table is really making those connections. Because if we have a whole bunch of white people ... certainly we can be allies, but we also need people in the movement that ... When you talk about systematic racism, Jeff, I'm sure that, I mean, you have firsthand experience. And it gets back to that, nothing about us without us mentality that we've heard in the advocacy movement for a long time.

Jeffrey Johnson:

And Michael, just to be honest with you, I just did a thing for the Department of Mental Health here. It was called Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, myself and another former of colleague of mine. And that was one of the things that the department wanted to do. And as we done that, I got to thinking about all the stuff that happened over the past two years with the George Floyd and all the other stuff that was happening throughout the country. And I was just sitting there thinking, and I'm saying to myself "If they want this, it shouldn't have took this long. We should have been doing this years ago because we're all in this together." I don't look at this as just a Black and white thing. I mean, I see this all over.

And that's why I always go back to history. Growing up as a child in the state of Arkansas down in the South down there, I know what it felt like growing up in the South. But when I was growing up, we didn't hear all the things that we hearing today. I'm not saying that it wasn't there. We just didn't hear a lot of those facts like we hearing now. But when you was mentioning about boards and stuff like that, I still have an issue with that to this day. It's happening right here in Columbia to where that we might have like one or two Blacks on a board or something like that. And one of the things that I see with that, Mike, I'll be very honest with you ... And Derrick will tell you that I don't sugarcoat anything, I call it what it what it is. When you start seeing that, then it brings up a red flag.

And the red flag that I see is that I call it the good old boys thing: "We want to keep things the way it is." Well, we're here in 2021, so why are we still going backwards when we should be going forward? Because I always tell people that when they start talking about racism and stuff like that, I say, "Well, when a person is born, they not born racist or anything. They been taught that, they been educated on that." Until we can sit down at the table and talk about these things and try to figure out, how did we get here ... But you know what most people will say? "Oh, well, no, I don't want to talk about that."

Well, wait a minute. And one of the things that I would tell folks, "But you don't want to talk about it, but you'll issue it out, but we don't feel comfortable talking about it?" I don't get that. But my thing is, I'm a person that I like to be at the table and discussing these because I always ask people, "What did I do? What did I do to you? I didn't do anything. My ancestors didn't really do anything." But that's where that history have to come in and say ... I have to do that with my own kind, is that don't just sit there and say that the white man just started snatching up Blacks. No, Blacks started selling Blacks. And after they start doing that, then that's when they went over and started kidnapping.

So you got to go with that history. That's like what I do is go with that history. And it goes back to the self-advocate thing. We have to set down with the advocacy groups and say, "This is the time we have to start talking about these things, because it's just not happening to Blacks, whites. It's happening to those with intellectual disabilities as well." I've seen kids with autism be arrested. I've seen how they used to treat people with disabilities back in the institutions and all that. So I mean, that's some scary stuff. But if we continue to step back and say that we don't feel comfortable talking about it, you does the organization or the movement no good.

Caitlin Owens:

One thing I hear you saying is really, I mean, it boils down to the importance of people being willing to have uncomfortable and difficult conversation. And it makes me think of something you said really early

on in our conversation about growing up and feeling like nobody really talked about intellectual disability or mental illness or anything like that, which left the impression that it just didn't really exist in the community, and so how those things are so related. When we don't talk about things, it's easy for some people to just be like, "Well, it just doesn't exist." But when you start talking about it, initially, it feels pretty uncomfortable to be like, "Oh, my gosh. Oh, wow. Oh, this was there all along." And then I think leaning into those ... just because something is hard to talk about doesn't mean we shouldn't talk about it, and-

Jeffrey Johnson:

Yeah. Well, you see what's happening right now when this African-American young lady was a professor, I forgot where she was at when she was doing the study. And she found out a lot of things. And she come up with teaching systematic ... not systematic, but she was wondering ... it was about the race theory. And so she got a job down in the South and they brung her on. And now you seeing that's what the school doesn't want them to do is teach about the history of how African-American was treated in those days or anything like that. What they're calling it is to where they started trying to whitewash it. And I'm saying to myself, "Okay, why not talk about it in the school?" Because I mean, I was thinking years ago when I was in the school, George Washington chopped down a cherry tree. That was my belief. And come to find out, he never chopped down a cherry tree.

Caitlin Owens:

I know.

Jeffrey Johnson:

So that was something that stayed my mind. And that's the same way that you see what's happening with those with intellectual disability, they being ... I don't want to use the word brainwashed, but that's basically what you are seeing now is that they believe all these theories because ... I'll be honest with you. I do a lot of research on things and I'll be like, "Well, wait a minute. That didn't happen." But if I go back and dig down deep into it, then I'm like, "Okay, now it's all making sense." So it actually happened, but nobody told the story the way it should have been.

Caitlin Owens:

Right.

Jeffrey Johnson:

So things like that. And that's what I see with the self-advocacy movement. We need to be more open-minded how we present things and all that, because if not, people are going to continue to feed us some

stuff. And we'll go right along with it if we don't really do the research on it. I mean, that's just like in everyday life.

Mike Hoenig:

I think we have to realize and help self-advocates understand the experiences that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities went through in many ways. Maybe they weren't based on hate, but in terms of the oppression and the segregation, there's a lot more in common with the African-American experience than people want to realize or acknowledge. And I think we have to get to that point. I mean, having conversations like this, even. And I think we're all pretty much on the same page, but I mean, having at state conferences and so forth and regional conferences, I think that we really ... or even in small groups, we have to come together so that we're all united and we can move forward as a united front.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Well, Mike, I'm glad you said that, because that was one of the things that I stressed with the conference that we put on here in the state of Missouri, the Real Voices, Real Choices. That was something that I talked about doing, is bringing somebody in to talk about these type of issues that we see. And like you said, we have to bring everybody together and talk about these issues. I mean, and it's not about getting people to go against one another or anything like that. It's just the idea that we all have to live together. We all work together. I don't want to work at a place where I don't feel wanted or disliked just because of the color of my skin. And that's the same way with those with intellectual disabilities. I don't want them going into a workplace where they have to feel that they're being looked down on just because they have a mental illness or some type of disability or anything like that, because people with disabilities, mental illness and all that, they're fighting for the same rights as African-Americans and everybody else. We all fighting the same battle.

Caitlin Owens:

That's right.

Mike Hoenig:

Absolutely. Well, I've got tons of questions, but actually I have one more that's a little bit more on a lighter note before we wrap up. I'd like to hear about your experience playing softball, Jeff.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Oh, well, man, I tell you, my dad was a softball player back in Arkansas. Bless his soul, now he's deceased. And I have to just tell you about this one here. I'll never forget it, back down in Cape Girardeau, we had a tournament down there. And we played against a team that went to national. And these guys, they were pretty good. And I played with Special Olympics. They have where it's called a

unified team. We was a unified team. When I say unified, that means you got coaches playing, you got those with disabilities and those without disabilities.

And so anyway, we had a few people that ... I don't like to use the word unfunctional or anything like that. But most guys, they didn't have a lot of the skills like some of us did. But they did really well because I was kind of like their coach in the end field because I played short stop. But anyway, we ended up playing this one team from down in Cape Girardeau. I mean, they had us down to about ... it was like 11 to 2, something like that. Then they went on up to about like ... scored a couple of more. So all of a sudden, our team, we got the bats rolling and all that.

So it was like, I'm going to say, probably 15, 13. So when we got back up there to bat, it was over then. It was over. And we beat those guys by one point. And the reason why we beat them by one point is because ... And I told the team that, "Hey, do y'all want to win?" I say, "I'm going to be honest with you. I can care less about winning or losing because I didn't come here just to be a show off. We came here to play because that's what Columbia do. When Columbia come to town and play, everybody's eyes is on Columbia."

So they said, "Well, we'll follow your lead."

I said, "Well we win, we win, we lose, we lose. So we just going to go out here and we going to have some fun." And so we ended up going out there having some fun, and plus we made ... I tell you, I made some really good plays, Mike. I made some really good plays. I mean, I'll never forget to where the ball was just about over my head, but I caught it and I flipped. And everybody was like, "Wow, we never seen nothing like that." So I ended up getting interviewed about that. And I told them, "Well, my dad he was short stop, which I was short stop as well. And he made some terrific plays. So I played just like him." But we won the game.

Mike Hoenig:

Sounds like Ozzie Smith.

Jeffrey Johnson:

There you go. There you go. So, that's where the baseball came in. And because my dad was a softball player and he's also a big Cardinal fan. I'm a Cardinal fan too, but it was all good. So that's how I really got into playing softball because [crosstalk 00:37:46]-

Mike Hoenig

Oh, that's a great story. I love to hear it.

Caitlin Owens:

[crosstalk 00:37:48] That is great. Well, Jeff, we tend to wrap up our episodes by asking our guest to tell us a little bit about what they really hope their legacy will be, what do they hope people will remember them by, or what do you really hope your impact will be?

Jeffrey Johnson:

Well, I'm going to be very honest with you. I mean, I'm one of those type of people that I want people to remember me by just being a great advocate for them, somebody that they know that they can trust, that they know they can go to and count on of helping them, whatever the case scenario might be. But I don't promise anything. And that's what I want people to know me by is that I'm honest. I do what I can to help you. And if I can't help you, I will do my best to find the right people that you can go talk to or the right resources that I can give you. I don't want people to look at me as, "He thinks he knows it all," which I don't. I just want people to look at me as a person, as being funny keep you laughing, just being around folks. That's what I want people to look at me as.

Mike Hoenig:

Well, and I can tell you're doing it. And you've had so many opportunities and you're taking advantage of those. And I hope we can bring you back on because I've got a whole bunch more questions. So hope sometimes time we can figure out a way to bring you back on our podcast, because like I said, you sent us a great bio. And we do try to keep these to a half hour to a little longer. So for now, I'm not going to say we're done talking. We're finished for today.

So I just really want to thank you, Jeff. I know you're a busy guy. And I really want to thank you for taking time out of your day, and also for helping us with our SOAR conference that I talked about earlier. And just want to encourage you to keep doing all your great work. And I also want to thank our audience for tuning in. And we've got several more podcasts lined up, so I hope you'll continue to follow us. And I hope you'll spread the word to all your friends and colleagues.

Jeffrey Johnson:

Will do, Mike. And again, I want to thank you guys for allowing me to be part of this podcast. Thank you.

Caitlin Owens:

Yeah. Thank you, Jeff. It was an honor to talk to you.

Jeffrey Johnson:

You, as well. Thanks.

Caitlin Owens:

Thank you for joining us today on Disability Exchange. Disability Exchange is produced by the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, which is housed at the Center for Disabilities and Development at the University of Iowa. Special thanks to Kyle Delveau for the music contribution.