

March 9, 2015 Jewish Inclusion Public Research Webinar

The conference is now started. This conference is now being recorded.

Welcome to the RespectAbility webinar, Jewish Inclusion Public Research. Your speakers are Linda Burger, Executive Director of the Family Service in Houston and audio cast quality is subject to available bandwidth. If you have trouble with quality, please refer to your e-mail. Captions, seen by clicking on the gray circle in the presentation screen. If you dialed in, operator assistance is by hitting zero pound. You can use the download material in the confirmation reminder e-mail or at the lower right of the presentation screen. A question and answer session will follow the presentation. I'll turn the call over to Jennifer Mizrahi, President of RespectAbility.

Hello and welcome. Thank you for joining us. We have quite a range of wonderful people. Experts who have worked in the field for some time and new people who are just learning about it for the first time. This is a research project we did because we had had particular needs that we're trying to expand the movement of Jews with disabilities in Jewish life. We consistently found we're having difficulty getting traction among those not immediately impacted by disability issues. There was serious questions about how do we get people excited? How do we get them motivated and what is going to work for us. We were delighted to have the support of the Alexander Institute. I'm going to start by turning this over to Linda Burger who is a mentor of mine in this movement. In fact as I was transitioning into this field it was she and Joan Alexander that spoke at a funder's network conference who first got me excited about working professionally in this field. It seems particularly appropriate to have her with us today. Thanks for joining us and being such a key factor in this.

Thank you. I'm honored by what you just said. I'm delighted to be a part of the conversation. First, we have been doing this what seems like a very long time. Honestly, it is less than a decade and probably more like five serious years of -- of trying to get congregations and institutions involved in the inclusion of people with disabilities. I wanted to say at the outset that it was a great privilege to be invited to listen to the two focus groups that comprised today's conversations. I was happy with the participants that were very open and helped us learn a

lot about the work we have to do in the area of inclusion of people with disabilities. It was painful at times I have to admit. But it was mostly instructive. It will inform the way we work in Houston. It enforced to me that I believe we still has a job to do, so does the country, to strengthen families with disabilities and their loved ones. I learned a lot about Jewish text by the way. I don't know if Meagan will speak about this, but we found that Jewish text, Hebrew text did not resonate with the individuals in the focus groups. Of course when we're marketing anything here in Houston, we always think first of the values that inform what we do. And we took away a great learning about that, that -- we still care about what the text says, but we'll have to think more carefully about how we brand the work we're doing. I think that probably what I learned -- the biggest learning was that before we could really -- really be successful with inclusion, people with disabilities must be visible. It is more like a civil rights issue. Than it is simply asking individuals in the institutions to involve and include people. I think we're going to have to work hard with the families and persons with disabilities to want to be visible, number one, and begin to think about what it is they want to happen in the community and provide the support to them so they could be visible in all walks of Jewish life. So, I think at the end of the day, I learned about that partnership and I am viewing inclusion a little bit differently than I was before. I want to turn it over to Meagan who will tell you more about the details and then I may have a couple of things to say at the end.

Thank you so. Thank you for your partnership and the partnership we had in Houston. It was -- it was it -- incredibly important to the project in making sure that we got it done right. I'll start with a little background on what this research built upon. It wasn't the first time that RespectAbility or myself or Jennifer have looked to do public opinion research that is on disability inclusion. We've done focus groups now of Capitol Hill congressional staffers. We're looking at people with disabilities looking for work, in addition to parents and providers with disabilities who are looking for employment and this round started with qualitative work with people with no connection to disability in Maryland and then followed by another focus group of the same makeup of individuals in Houston. In addition, we've done polling, extensive polling on this topic, first with Jerusalem University, of young engaged Jews, nationwide of the disability community. Under an earlier company with a lot of those strategies, we did a large mapping project of attitudes for

Jewish camps, battleground states and nationwide survey and on this, a nationwide survey of American Jews. This is not our first step into this world from a research perspective. We had a lot to base this study on. And this focused specifically on attitudes within the Jewish community and then how could we possibly speak to those individuals in order to make them more excited about this issue. So I will start with just a -- a little glimpse into two of the other polls, first was Jerusalem University, 2,607 Jews, what you could see up against a battery of options, Jewish people with disabilities should be as inclusive with everyone else. Strong agreement. Very strong support among a younger generation, up against other statements about Jewish life that they didn't -- they felt strongly about, but not as strongly. People feel so strongly this should be happening. Why -- why aren't we seeing more of it? So we needed to go further.

The next thing I will point out is Foundation for Jewish Camps, I have to take a second before explaining the question on here to hold the Foundation for Jewish Camp up as a real model of walking the walk and talking the talk and taking all of the right steps to really be a leader in inclusion. They've made -- an intentional decision that inclusion is going to be part of their model and making -- and making Jewish camping more inclusive for people with disabilities a small part of the work they do. From our perspective, really to hold them up as leader, if people make a decision this is what is going happen, the tremendous change that could come from that decision. On this, what you see, we ask, even if none are right, which comes closest to serving children with special needs at your camp. You could see 56 percent. Over half of the respondents said, including campers with disability and special needs is meaningful component of our community. We value our staff and campers with and without disabilities. You also see 27 percent that are open and honest and say that we're interested but we're not properly staffed. And another 26 percent saying they're more comfortable in camps for kids with just disabilities. When you look at numbers, it lets you know, there's real room for improvement in moving in the right direction. We've seen FJC take huge strides in that area. We're looking for the same type of momentum. What did we do for these groups? We still had children at home that were under 15, the family, meaning the parents and children were engaged in Jewish life across a number of different areas and many of these parents even held leadership positions in the Jewish community. They also did not self-identify as having -- personally having a disability. Having a child or family member with a disability

or a close friend with disability. They self-identified as a group that was not impacted personally by disability issues. I'll speak about what we found later but that was what they said in this discussion. They were fielded by the focus group facility, so they did not do that in Houston or the RespectAbility organizing study. And they came to have this discussion. Within the focus group, like many others, we walked them through a guided conversation about these issues. Which involved worksheets on what were the barriers to inclusion. What potential terminology they were comfortable and what were the words and images that make them more motivated and engaged on this issue. What I have is a small compilation of the statements that came out of these groups. It highlights what we heard throughout. The first one, I don't want to write any more checks. There's a sense among the people that to get that a lot of inclusion work can be very expensive and that whatever coming out of this was another fund-raising campaign where there was going to be yet another ask for yet another check. There is -- there's a feeling this is expensive and that is what is coming back. Secondly, what you saw, in the second bullet, they don't think they're a problem in the Jewish community. There's no need. The focus on the first part of the statement and you'll see it later, if there isn't a visible problem, there isn't a problem. There was a real lack of understanding that there was a need. So either -- the perception was that either there weren't that many people that actually have a disability and need a change to be included because we don't see them or this is already taken care of, because otherwise we would hear about it. There isn't a perception of what we need.

What you see in the next bullet, a lot of them are specific and needs specific ways. They say it is a lot to handle. This concept, it is too complicated. We can't serve everyone. Those types of sentiments came up over and over again, the further we got into it. The next page, the top two, there was a sense that for these people they felt that -- that families of children with disabilities tried to hide the fact there was a disability in the family. Meaning the family was not inclusive. They protected the children from being embarrassed in public. I would say I pushed for this in one of the groups. They would not go to a place that the kids were potentially embarrassed because of the reaction of the community was wrong, what was wrong was the parent in this situation. So this came out in the conversation, highlighted one of the sentiments. Not the only one, but one. There's a sense that Jews should do this better. There are others. This are many fronts where other

areas where Jews have been incredibly successful and we're probably doing better than other religious -- other faiths. You see that in the next statement.

And lastly, I'll point out that they came back to the point that you have to be realistic about what the expectations are based on what is available. And a sentiment that you should have sympathy and empathy. So it isn't a conversation about inclusion and abilities, it is a conversation about need and help and sympathy and empathy. Which isn't the framing that -- that we think will be most helpful or most appropriate for this discussion, moving forward. This is an example of the depth of worksheet that we used. This is a list of statements of why inclusion of Jews with disabilities should be a top priority for the community. We won't go through all of these here, because we put the winners so to speak on the poll where you'll have more statistical significance used to get the inclusion. This is just an example of the worksheet we do in the group and have a discussion around it, why did they react the way they did to the religious, the religious argument that we're created in the image of God. Why did they not understand or why was it not impactful that fully 18.6 Americans have a disability. Why did that not resonate for them that there are so many people in the community who are impacted? That's how we have the conversation around the work sheets.

The first number is the positive number, that's the number that is significant and positive, it moved them to thinking inclusion was important and there's a negative number that reflects the number of people who thought this was one of the worst reasons or weakest argument for inclusion. I do think that we did see that throughout the Jewish community the most common way of really pitching inclusion was through our religious Tenets, things like all people are created in the image of God. Moses with a speech impediment. The framing was how the community has been, it fell flat in both groups. It proved not to be close to the most effective argument.

We will see the same on the poll. The other thing I want to point out, there's a very large list of partners that had input into what are the potential arguments that we should be using. What are the words in their organizations? What do they think are the best things we should be saying? This is a compilation of many partner groups. They're ready to share their wisdom. So ideally we could get to the best answer for the whole community to share key findings from the focus group. One is in a real lack of knowledge, I already touched on

and awareness. If people are not seen, it is because there isn't a need or the need is already taken care of. That's one, I would say the first barrier, that we come up against, there's no language understanding or knowledge of the fact that there's even an issue, right? And Jennifer spoke about the religious messaging. It does appear to lack, and we see with the poll with a more religious audience, but opposite effect with many other Jews. If you think about the way in which a lot of Jews connect these days, it is a much more cultural connection than observance connection. The same holds true here. If a Jew isn't a Jew by connecting to you know, walking to synagogue on Sabbath morning and doing things traditionally and following those observances, then what will connect with them regarding disabilities is that they are not connected in that way, because they don't connect that way. That makes sense with the research we've seen about how Jews are Jewish today and the same holds here with messaging and with images. The limited knowledge that we reference in terms of awareness about this issue, focuses very much on programs and places. There -- there doesn't seem to be a larger understanding of inclusion. Of building an inclusive community, what that would mean for people with disabilities. It is - it's services -- it's services and programs is the way the knowledge is currently cataloged. When you ask someone about it, they'll talk about this that happens at this synagogue or that day school. It is isolated and segmented in terms of what is the program and is the place it happened, rather than larger understanding of inclusion.

In addition to the religious message that we have been on so long on this topic a lot of framing to donors has been one of need and health. Or at least that's the way it is perceived on the donor end. Right? There's a need to write a check for this, for people that are in need, for people that need your help. It is not based on a conversation of inclusion and the value of individuals. It feeds into that sympathy and empathy sentiment, I spoke about a moment ago. We have an ongoing issue that, however, that even though they don't know the scope, when they're confronted then with numbers on the scope of the problem, it doesn't seem credible. We know what the numbers are within the American community, we understand why within the Jewish community, because of links to paternal age and others that in all likelihood in the Jewish community, the incidence of disability would be even higher. It is not credible to them that one in five Jews have a disability. We go to expanding the knowledge of the scope. Because they don't buy what the scope actually is, when presented with it.

The definition we're using for disability is the U.S. Census disability definition. Something that would impact something in your life. I see people are saying, so mental health, or autism or physical disability, all would be included. The Census Bureau says 18.6 Americans have a disability. That's the definition I guess in we were using.

There's a tendency among this group to want to quote, unquote fix the problem. We should host a fund-raiser. Establish a school. Figure out how to fix the problem, rather than look at it in a more holistic manner that deals with real inclusion. And adding on to that, right, if you understand that is the tendency, then the idea that we could just write a check, and have an answer, write a check and fix the problem is a tendency that we see in these groups. There was not a real discussion of the abilities of people with disabilities, or the value of people with disabilities. They mentioned earlier, there's a concern about cost and a concern about the inability of everyone and what would that really mean if -- if we had to make everything equal for every single individual. And -- and a rejection, and a defensiveness that -- that the community is at fault for a lack of inclusion. Two messages were put in a way that put a fault on the larger community, there was a real push back against that. And so one of the things to think about when we talk about messaging for -- for more inclusion was what we're most powerful were uplifting, inspirational, power based, talking about the community we want. Making everyone, if you think about that, the central character of the act, right? We're now asking for a community that benefits everyone, rather than saying, you should do this because this segment of the population needs this. Or this segment of the population has been excluded. In a more setting them up scenario that puts people on the defensive. By making it instead about all of us, in a positive and uplifting and value based manner, people were far more receptive to this type of message.

Moving on to the polling results. We did see concern about increasing inclusion of Jews with disabilities. When you look at the intensity of that concern, though, extreme concern being 18.5 percent, it is not very high. They're somewhat concerned about it, but you also see, like I said in terms of the lack of awareness and understanding, 14 percent that really doesn't know and another 26 percent that isn't concerned. When you add up not very concerned and the not at all concerned. And so there's clearly room for improvement, and there isn't a whole lot of intensity on the concern level that we do have. Looking at the barriers to fully including more Jews with disabilities in the

community, the first -- they were given two choices, so they could answer their first choice and we also asked them what would be your second choice? There are two columns here that you could see on the first choice here and the second choice down the second column. 31 percent said there's a religion and stigma against people with disabilities and their value to the community. That's nearly a third on the first choice that are mentioning that. What I should say, it couples with the research of what we did from the focus group, it seems while there's recognition of the prejudice and stigma but it is not mine. I'm not prejudice is the sense we came away with from the focus groups. It is there. It is not a personal indictment and shouldn't be read in that way. But followed by that in the first choice, there aren't many people. Again we see a lack of understanding of the scope of the issue and that including people would be complicated and we don't have the expertise. I should have mentioned before that other community needs are more pressing. Why this isn't a top priority? With this you go into their second choice and they get to add, that's where you see, this is a resource issue, right, other issues are more pressing. And then secondly, it is complicated, and we don't have the ability to serve everyone in the community. Those are the two choices that become the second choice runner-up if you will.

It is important to understand what people perceive to be the barriers to it work or to become -- to overcome those. And why Jews with disabilities should be a more important priority for the Jewish community. These were the two overwhelming winners in what we gave them as an answer. This goes to what I said a moment ago, value based messaging being the ones most powerful. The first is we're a stronger community when we live up to our values, when we're diverse and moral and respect one another. We want our parents and grandparents with disabilities to be able to fully participate. The second is Jewish people with disabilities and families have the same hopes and dreams as anyone else, even if they face different challenges. Their presence and participation is welcome and meaningful to all of us. You see those two reflect that same idea of how they are framed. Here down at 12.5 percent is what we would say is the religious message that -- that everyone is created equal, and in the image of God. It references Moses and Jacob and Isaac and that was less than half as powerful as the other ones we just spoke about. The other thing I should mention. This is 6.9 percent. We spend time and effort to retain Jews to be active in Jewish life. There are many Jews with disabilities that want to be involved and are having a challenging time. It again put

people on defensive, and the idea that the future of Jewish engagement will be saved in this way didn't go with the focus groups that we saw. So, the idea that you know the Pugh report and coming at that from a negative angle of we're losing people because we're excluding families with disabilities, was framed in a negative way that was not impactful to the audience that we're trying to reach. These are the two strongest messages and -- and we would encourage you to look at them not as -- not just as sentences but as concepts that you can build your own conversation, you are your own marketing materials. You are your own invitations around.

For a moment, Meagan, if you don't mind, sorry for jumping in, I think it is important to know that message is a resource for a Jewish organization. It is just as important as money as an asset. When you communicate with your headlines and speeches and blogs, and whatever it is, what you see very clearly in the data is the universal in the community we're stronger, three times better than the two messages we're using the message and the demographic message. Just like everyone else, is three times more successful as message than the messages we have been using. I would like to flag that it says that has the same hopes and dreams from everyone else. That's something we got from the gay rights movement in terms of marriage equality. It used to be the gay community talked about gay marriage. They discovered that sounded like a special need or set aside or special thing. Then they changed it to marriage equality, wanting the same rights as everyone else. The poll numbers went up significantly. This is important to understand. Because public opinion about Jewish things is related to how people are processing information in the community. Right now we live in a community with partisan bickering and we see Isis executing people because people have different views than they have. People overall are looking for unifying, welcoming, accepting communities. I would not be surprised if you were to go out and try and sell -- how would you sell interfaith families would be included or LGBT communities should be included. Indeed, we should look to hook our wagon to their interests also. I know at Jewish camp for example they're working with Russian immigrants, this all links together with single parent families. People are looking for big tent, respectful, diverse experiences. Next slide.

The other thing, just to recognize again, these -- they use the word we. It is about all of us. And I think that's very important when you look at that as well. What are the words that make you most positive? The most positive includes

welcoming, respect and inclusion. Including more Jews with disabilities in our community. We looked at our answers and the answers we got from the focus group and those on the list, this is pared down from what it originally was. This is the same concept we are translating across all of these different questions. We also asked on this poll, whether or not the person answering had a disability, had a family member or close friend had a disability, they were allowed to answer, more than one. And so when you see 51 percent, none of the above. What that means is roughly half of the community jived with other polling research that we've seen on the scope of disability, this is specifically of Jews, half of Jews are in some way impacted by disability. What was interesting in the groups was that like I said, people self-identified as not having a family member with a disability or close friend with a disability, but the more we got in the conversation, different things come up. My kid needed this service at school or had this. My father who is elderly is using a wheelchair. It is interesting that while the term wasn't a term they identified with, that somebody had the disability, a lot of people are connected with a disability and haven't registered it in a way that this impacts their lives as well. This gives you a sense of the numbers, and you know, with 30 percent saying they have a family member with a disability. The pictures were very interesting. Those that worked were -- were inclusive. Right? Do you see people in these pictures who are actively being included and part of the community. The respondents liked the one of the right, the two young men who were happy, if you're to be friends. If you're on at some type of Athletic event, we thank the teams for letting us use this that came from the marathon. They were excited and friends. It wasn't inherently Jewish. This one on the left, we think this is from some movement and their movement in Israel, and this came from them. This was the most powerful on the poll. I'll give the caveat that while religious observations are not the best bet, it seems that this one, how widespread the bar mitzvah are in our community might fit within a cultural frame, rather than lighting candles and making blessings and those types of things that are considered traditional observance. It is a religious picture and it flies against what we said before. It might fit within the cultural Judaism that we reference. This was the winner from the poll of the best images.

What didn't work in the images is when there were people with disabilities that were alone, when it seemed staged or observances. There was a girl that they shot she was beautiful and happy and wonderful, but didn't give positive sense about

inclusion for those reasons. When you think about the images that go along with the messaging that you'll use to promote inclusion of Jews with disabilities, those are guidelines to stick with, they be truly included and happy and part of a community that is not focused on Jewish observance. I'll go back again to leave up here, what we with said the winning messages. This is something that can and should be used widely. It is not just a sentence. This is an idea. This is a frame and if you know these are quote, unquote your winning hands, you want to use them over and over again. The work we're doing can be more effective when we use the right images and messages and words to go along with all of our best intention and best resources. Included at the end of the -- of the file that you have that you have downloaded there are -- there are a few other slides. One in a new brochure that we put together building a welcoming community together that is based off of these new messages that we found on the poll that you could download by clicking on the click here button. At the top of the screen and then this is also followed by -- by our -- our information about how you could see more on Jewish inclusion from RespectAbility. There's a new Facebook page and twitter on the work that RespectAbility is doing just focused on inclusion. Then beyond that, if you're interested, there's an appendix we used. And I'll have you pause there and ask for any questions.

Meagan. It is Linda. I wanted to say a couple of things. First, it is amazing the work you have done. And in what -- I said in the beginning, it was painful to observe the focus groups and I have to say it was painful again to listen to this. It is painful because I think all of us on the call, either as advocates or as individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities are thinking what do we have to do? This is a battle that is a 24/7 battle for many people. It was really painful to listen to a second time. I think what I'm amazed by is what I will call the resilience of advocates because it takes that resilience to get kind of shot down by the painful thinking of people and then to be able to get up again and go about your daily battles. A couple of times we've talked about issues as it relates to the civil rights movement and I just keep thinking about it in particular since this is the 25th anniversary of the ADA legislation and recently we met with advocates who literally 25 years ago, went in their wheelchairs got out of them and got themselves up the steps at the Capitol. I think when it comes to inclusion in our Jewish communities, we have to think like that. Almost like warriors who are ready for battle. Sometimes they're quietly played out

in offices and in public places, and sometimes we have to all come together and really make statements. And I think that -- that is again, what I walked away with is -- we need to pick where we want to make the statements, so that what seems invisible becomes visible.

Thank you, Linda, we're going to start taking questions. We have a couple of them that are here online that people typed in. Have you or anyone else done a study asking if Jewish institutions that are inclusive do better than those that are not? There's a lot of information that inclusive ones are better. As far as systematic study, I'm unaware of one. There was a request to do an inclusion study with seven synagogues and they engaged evaluators from the outside who will take a look at this. We have seen from -- I don't know if you saw the -- the Eva Stein op-ed about the collateral good occurred with inclusion. There's a lot of groups that feel better. Certainly as foundation for camp, particularly when I take a look at the New Jersey situation where there are a thousand kids in a camp that did not include kids with disabilities. Then they had a separate segregated camp with kids with disabilities. They had operated separately for many years. Then this past summer they integrated and the 100 kids with disabilities, then moved into the camp with the -- into the camp without the disabilities. It went better for both, also for the kids without disabilities. It was more successful for everyone. I think it is ahead of the other movements and we'll start to see that. But change doesn't happen overnight. People have to decide they want to do inclusion, then they need to -- to have the right resources, they need to build the trust with the parents, for example, they need to have an open trust with the people they're working with. We put out the brochure at the end of this that you can click on and download, there's tips. It is not like you snap your fingers and it happens. It is not that you have a child go into a Jewish congregational school or day school or camp and they get a big brother and that's their only relationship, no their camp counselor helps them make peer relationships with their typically developing teen. It is good for the teen and the person with the disability. These are profound changes that don't happen overnight. So, I am looking forward to seeing the study that will be done through -- through this U. J. A. Federation of New York project that we just started to undergo. Charles Auerbach will be leading it. It is going to be two years before we complete the project and the evaluation is completely done. Operator, you want to announce how people can answer questions verbally?

Participants who have dialed in for audio can indicate that they'd like to ask the question or speak by pressing 7 pound. Seven followed by the pound sign.

Following that, I'll answer. Sarah asked about how disability was defined for the people in the focus group. I'll answer that in the meantime. We did not. We purposefully did not define disability for the people that were in the focus groups. It was actually interesting to -- to watch them really struggle with that concept of what does disability actually mean to them. What does it look like to them? Who does it impact? I think it is interesting and it goes back to the same concept, I think, of how do we fix the problem. Right? And that was one of the reasons that it was so hard for them to say, well, we could do inclusion this way. It depends. It depends on the person. Is it a person in a wheelchair who has no -- cognitive disability, someone that needs an aide. There was this struggle because of their need to fix the problem. And so we purposefully did not define it for them. But that was -- I think, an interesting finding in of itself.

Let me read out loud this question. Have you looked at possibly reframing to include aging population. Often people think of inclusion in terms of children. I'm seeing many elders dropping from site, if we included, they would resonate more. Linda or Meagan, do you want to take that?

I'll let Linda go first. I think there might be different views on this. Linda, then Jennifer.

In the very beginning, we defined a disability as everything that didn't have to do with the natural process of aging and of course, we're beginning to learn and to understand that it happens all the way through life. So I think it is -- it should also focus on individuals who are older and who you are seeing drop out. As a matter of fact, one of the synagogues of Houston, the very first inclusion project they did focused in on people with -- with dementia and memory care -- and memory loss challenges. And you know, I was thinking that should be the first project, you but it was and they were right, they're very successful with 60 people participating monthly, in that program. And being included in the congregational life, because of it. So, absolutely.

We think there's a real value in adding that on in making sure people understand how broadly this goes and the age -- when you find somebody, the focus is group is saying, now my elderly

father has this or me elderly mother is hard of hearing. There -- we think is a real potential value in broadening this it so people understand it really is impacting their own lives and do you want your -- you know, your child's grandparent to be able to get up on the beam at that bar Mitzvah or to get in the sanctuary to see the consecration, there seems to be a real value for opening that up and coupling that with this messaging.

Demographically the way disability breaks out is that disability-- physical disability, is extremely uncommon in children. Very few children are wheelchair users. Very few children are blind or deaf. Those are acquired disabilities over time. What is more common for children is social skills, is autism, or cognitive disabilities, are learning differences, learning disabilities, is dyslexia, ADHD, et cetera, et cetera. Those are disabilities that frequently you could not see. So somebody may see a child behaving in what they consider to be unexpected way. They may say that child is misbehaving, instead of saying, that child is experiencing sensory overload because of the loud singing, is there a way that we could allow that family to enable the child to participate even though they're getting louder for example. There are different kinds of disabilities that happen along the life-span. I will say it is cheaper to deal frequently with the kind of disabilities that don't require rebuilding a building to be ADA standards, but there's a reason to do it for everyone. Something people found compelling, when there's a bar Mitzvah, that the grandfather that is the wheelchair user, should be able to be on the beam. They saw value in both things.

Some people who are waiting to speak.

Okay. Go ahead.

Alisa? Please add your comment.

Hi, this is Alisa, from the Jewish Federation in Sacramento, California. We have had a committee on inclusion and disabilities for a few years, four years, and really our biggest issue, I mean, I appreciate the speakers and everything that was discussed, our biggest issue however is engagement, we're a very small Jewish community to begin with, and even lesser so of engaged Jews. The same families show up. We've done educational presentation, it was more successful because we opened it up to the non-Jewish community as well. I am wondering if the speakers or somebody else on the call could advise, you know, again with regard to smaller communities to

even find families that are impacted by disability. And just even to -- to say that we're here as a resource, as a service, we want to work with you, we want to work on behalf of you. So I would sure appreciate any guidance in that area.

Sure. Sure. First of all, we have on our website, if you go to our website, which is the RespectAbility USA.org, there's inclusion. You'll see resources. You could always e-mail me and we could speak off line. But I'll tell you that Twitter and Facebook can be very important as is your website. Most synagogue websites do not have any pictures of people with disabilities on the website and they don't have an inclusion policy on your website. One thing I would suggest for example, is that you take this text that works successfully, so you take the text, I'm going to go back to the winning messages. And you take these two bullet points online 21 and you can turn them into a statement about diversity in your congregation, maybe you already have an equal opportunity statement that your congregation goes to based on age, gender, or whatever and you have an inclusion policy for your congregation and I suggest that you actually put it on your website and when we have these pictures that work, we have the right to now share these pictures. You could literally take these pictures and put them on your website or other pictures that might work for you for your congregation, so that your website can look like inclusion. So you could have -- you know, inclusion and the word disability. When you go to your website, it is important when you go to the search feature, if you put in the word disability, something pops up. If nothing pops up, it tells a family member, well this place is probably not for me. There's a number of other tips on that brochure that you could click on how to connect with families. You could go to the disability organizations. I'm trying to find where it was that we had the link right here. This click to the brochure here. Online. You literally will go to our website. And you will find access to the brochure right there. But I want to actually go back and say, that you can follow people on Facebook, and you can -- and you could follow people on Twitter and then they'll start to follow you and that can be a very good way to do it or to engage with your public schools. And speaking of public schools, I got a great comment from Beth that I would like to read out loud and thanks again to the Ruderman Family Foundation for support of our work.

Regarding benefits of inclusion, this example is in the secular community, but I believe it is relevant. We have data from the Boston public schools that kids without IEPs, the individual

education programs do better. The kids without IEP's do better academically in the schools where there's inclusion than they do in classrooms with -- without kids with disabilities. So the findings are significant. It is believed that because inclusion strategies help kids needing accommodation who had not previously been identified. Actually I read the studies she's referring to, very compelling data from the Boston public school system, that kids without disabilities do far better in classes where there are kids with disabilities. It means that the teachers have broken down lesson plans, there's more individual attention given, based on learning by ability, and that -- frankly sometimes that somebody without a disability, sees the kid next to them with a disability is able to handle the work even though they may be blind or wheelchair user or may have different social skills than they do, if that kid is able to make it, surely I better buckle down and make it too. You do see that the -- the test scores go up, of the kids without the disabilities, when there are kids with disabilities in their classrooms. Which a lot of people thought was different, than what they expected because they thought that if you put kids with disabilities in the public school classroom, that it would -- it would cause a distraction and be a time suck for the teacher's attention and that the kids without the disabilities would suffer as a result. So it was a very important finding. And I thank you Beth, very much for bringing that forward. Operator, other calls?

I think that's it for our calls.

Thank you all. Thank you all very much for participating. If anyone has any follow-up questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. Again, the photos you saw that tested well, you could use those. The messages that tested well. Again was this three times better than the messages that are being used overall. We encourage you to just copy-and-paste and use them. This brochure that you printed, feel free to take that and put that in your news letters or bulletins. Anything in our house is here for you to use.

I -- I'll add, I'll add for the images, for those that came from the --, the correct way to give photo credit is the in pdf brochure. If you're going to give credit, the best way is listed in that brochure, so you could use that.

Right. We have a lot more resources as I mentioned on the web side. I want to thank everybody for joining us. Thanks to all

of you who joined us. I hope you all are incredibly successful in your work. This concludes our call.

This concludes today's respectability webinar. Thank you for attending.