>> ALEX GLASS (Referencing slides: 1 through 4): Alright. It's 12:00, everyone, so welcome to our first webinar in our series devoted to accessibility. My name is Alex Glass, and I am the program and assistant executive director of ArtsBuild Ontario. Today we have presenters Thea Kurdi, who is the Vice President of DesignABLE Environments, and Sage Lovell, who is the founder of Deaf Spectrum. We are very pleased to have both of these speakers here today speaking with us. We will hand things over to them in just a minute, but we have to cover a few housekeeping items before we get started. First of all, you can

hear us but we can't hear you. Your microphones have been disabled for this webinar, but you can use your speakers or head phones to listen in. You can adjust the sound by clicking on the speaker icon at the top of the meeting. We will be offering closed captioning throughout the webinar today as well. The closed captioning will be happening at the bottom of the screen where participants can change the font type, size, and color. Can a participant confirm, using the chat box, that they can see the closed captioning box at the bottom of our meeting room? Great. Thank you so much. A couple more things. We will be recording this session, so we will be emailing out that link to that recording, along with a survey, following the webinar. We ask that you complete the survey so we can continue to improve our Learning Series for Creative Spaces.

Lastly, we will have roughly 10 to 15 minutes at the end of the webinar to answer questions. Please use the Chat box at the bottom right of your screen to type in your questions, and we will get to as many as possible. Please note that our Chat box function at the bottom right of your screen is not accessible using a screen reader. If you do have any questions for presenters, please email them to erin@artsbuildontario.ca. That's erin@artsbuildontario.ca. And we will ask them during the question-and-answer period and get to as many questions from everyone as we can in that time. In case you haven't heard of ArtsBuild Ontario,

we are a non-profit art service organization that provides programs and learning opportunities that help make Ontario's creative spaces more sustainable.

One of our programs is the Learning Series, which is a series of webinars, workshops, and resources that support our core programs. This is our first out of six webinars in the Learning Series that will focus on accessibility. These webinars will focus on accessibility and creative spaces based on the Design for Public Spaces Standard, as part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or otherwise the AODA. The webinar will explain how creative spaces need to meet accessible building standards and explore ways creative spaces can go beyond the standards, taking into account physical accessibility and experiential accessibility.

The webinars will be supported by toolkit for creative spaces around the topic of accessibility, which will be released in spring 2019.

ABO would also like to thank its accessibility advisory committee for informing the webinar topics, speakers, and upcoming toolkit for creative spaces in Ontario.

A note from myself. You will notice many of the topics in this webinar series will be discussing a different aspect of accessibility as it relates to creative spaces. Now, first off, many of us might be wondering what defines a creative space. For

the purposes of our programs and the network of arts organizations that we serve at ArtsBuild Ontario, our definition of creative spaces is a space that is actively serving creative industries. We are moving outside the concept of traditional purpose-built structures to allow for more possibilities when it comes to the creation of art space in our communities. For example, in addition to theaters, galleries, museums, and media studios, we are seeing more and more new takes on creative spaces, such as libraries, sacred spaces, and creative hubs, just to name a few.

As we move through the topic of accessibility in creative spaces within this webinar series, it is important to understand that your space is unique to your environment, community, and organization. A public or municipally owned and operated space is going to have different legislative requirements than a small nonprofit arts organization housed in a heritage space with under 20 staff. We should also acknowledge that each space has its own unique set of resources. So while not every creative space has a designated accessibility manager -- and if you do, that is 100% great -- we hope this webinar series will offer best practices to support your knowledge around the AODA, Design for Public Spaces Standard, and how creative spaces can feel empowered and go beyond the legislation to offer accessible and inclusive space for all.

Now I would like to introduce our guest presenters for today's webinar. First

up we have Thea Kurdi, who is the Vice President of DesignABLE Environments.

She is an accessibility specialist and dynamic speaker known for her enthusiasm

for speaking. She has presented workshops, keynote addresses, and lectures at

local and international events for design students, professionals, building owners,

and policy makers. From the human rights code to increased marketability, she

shares her passion for how accessibility is fundamental to successful architecture.

She is also an architectural technologist, and registered accessibility specialist.

Upcoming presentations of hers include the TedX Mississauga demystified,

are we creating accessible buildings and places in Mississauga, Ontario? It's

actually happening this Saturday and tickets are still available. And the interior

design show 2019 in Toronto. Topics will include designing for the future

accessibility in urban planning and accessibility and design panel discussion

following. And she will also be at the Abilities Expo in Toronto, speaking on living

in place and accessible housing.

Our second presenter is Sage Lovell. Founder of Deaf Spectrum. Sage is a

deaf, fem, queer non-binary artist. Before moving to Toronto, Sage lived in

Washington, DC to attend Gallaudet University, the only educational institution

set up to accommodate the needs of Deaf students in the world. The experience

transformed her life. There Sage studied both psychology and theater, realizing

that accessibility was more than 20-plus years behind in Canada, Sage return to

their roots and focused on advocacy. Sage has worked with various communities

in several capacities developing meaningful work that continues to evolve. With

Sage's many talents, they were able to incorporate their passions in media,

language, theater, and accessibility into works of art. These multitude of

experiences led Sage to become one of the cofounder of Deaf Spectrum, a

collective established to promote the accessible usage of American Sign

Language, ASL. Currently Sage is working on a project called Deaf Web, along

with deaf talent photographer Alice Lo, she documented 50 deaf folks across

Canada. Sage also works as a writer, actor, performance interpreter, and

community facilitator.

So welcome to you both. I would like to now turn things over to Thea, who is

going to get us started with the first half of our webinar. So over to you, Thea.

>> THEA KURDI (Referencing Slide 5): Thank you very much, Alex. It's such

an honor and a pleasure to be part of this webinar series. And welcome to

everybody who is here as a part of the webinar.

My job today is to introduce you to how the Accessibility for Ontarians with

Disabilities Act relates to the built environment and give you a broader spectrum

understanding of what the entire legislation is meant to be accomplishing.

(Referencing Slide 6) So the agenda I wanted to cover today was to talk a

little bit about what exactly a disability is and how we think about it as very

important. Then I will review what the old approach used to be versus what our

new thinking is. Then I will cover why we should be thinking about accessibility.

And the fourth thing will be accessibility and the law. The fifth will be how change

is happening in Canada and in Ontario. The sixth will then cover resources related

to the AODA, and the seventh thing will be to give you access to resources beyond

the AODA. So hopefully all of that will be useful to you.

(Referencing Slide 7) So let's get right into this. What is a disability? I love

this picture. I made this picture because I really felt that so much of what we

discuss about accessibility really doesn't remember that people with disabilities

are not only the largest minority group that we have, but it's a minority group

that we can all join. It's a minority of everyone. The reality is that we all face a

lifetime of changing needs and abilities. So if we currently don't have a disability,

we are all an illness, accident, or aging away from developing one. So it's better

design to be thinking about this from that kind of perspective.

(Referencing Slide 8) Unfortunately, a lot of approaches in is the built

environment are still really only focusing on accommodating the needs for people

who are using wheelchairs, and perhaps that's unsurprising given that the

international symbol of accessibility is a person in a wheelchair. And perhaps

even a static image. You might have seen the more dynamic images that are

starting to happen with the forward movement.

(Referencing Slide 9) But if we thought about the totality of the possible

experiences and abilities people might have, we might have been forgetting about

blindness and low vision, about brain injuries, about people who are deaf,

deafened, or hard of hearing, like myself. We might forget about learning

disabilities, which is something I also have; attention deficit hyperactive disorders,

medical disabilities, physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, speech and

language disabilities. So when I start talking about how many people might

actually have disabilities, one of the things people often come back with is

"Where are they?"

Well, like myself, 70% of people with disabilities have what we consider to be invisible disabilities because we don't use something like a mobility device, like a wheelchair, or we don't use a white cane that is obvious just by looking at us. So sometimes it's even harder because people don't recognize we have a disability or maybe don't believe us.

(Referencing Slide 10) So the old thinking around accommodation or inclusion was to really focus on if we have any barriers that exist, we will try to accommodate people with disabilities once they are discovered. Or if you like to think about it a different way, we create the problems with the design of the buildings or the software or whatever -- we are focusing on buildings a little bit more today, but it really is everything -- and then someone with a disability might come along, and then we'll see if we can accommodate them or give them a shoe horn to try to get them to fit into something they were never really designed to fit into. So that was the old way of doing it, which was expensive, hard, difficult, and frustrating probably for everybody.

(Referencing Slide 11) So the new way of thinking is to move on to something, what we call universal design. And I am starting to see this term pop up in a lot of places. People say our goal is to make this universally designed.

What does that mean? Google will tell you if you do a search, but it really is about designing for everybody. In our company, we talk about designing for people from the ages of 5 to 95 and everything in between. It's about a range. But a good example of something that's not in the built environment that we can use as inspiration is Apple. So the company Apple introduced the iPhone, and the problem with their new phone was that it didn't have any buttons. So for people who were sighted, no problem, they didn't realize it was a barrier for many people, but particularly people who are blind. So Apple became made aware of this, took this back, and became a global leader in universal design by creating a screen reader that they included for free in all of their products. Now, that's a very different approach because in the past it would have been after market, and you would have had to pay for it. So they were really taking responsibility and created something amazing.

(Referencing Slide 12) So what I am going to do is quickly review with you three reasons for your designs to be accessible. The first is the business case, the second is the legal case, and the third is the social case.

(Referencing Slide 13) So we will start with the business case. How does this make sense from a money perspective? Well, the demand is growing for

universal design to be used, not only as an outcome for the goals of a company or an organization, but it also is because we are continuing -- the demand is continuing to grow because people with disabilities, as we said, are the minority of everybody. And because our population is aging. In fact, most people are surprised to learn that a thousand people a day are turning 65 in Canada, and at 56, we have about 40% of the population reporting disabilities.

Barriers in your built spaces or in any of the policies you have reduce the number of people who can come to your facilities. For example, if you have a restaurant that has two steps at the front door, think about the market you are losing not only for people who use mobility devices but also the friends they might be having dinner with or people using strollers. If it's hard for people to get in, they might not come. Or how we have used audio announcements at transit stops, initially because people who are blind couldn't see where they were, but how it also helps people to try to look through a crowd and they can't see the street or if there's snow and the bad weather or if it's dark outside.

(Referencing Slide 13) So accommodation from a business perspective is a smart idea. In fact, it is very smart. The Canadian Conference Board of Canada in 2018 published a report we are seeing here on the screen that was reported by

Global News showing that the Canadian gross domestic product stands to gain

$17 billion by 2030 by improving disability access. Ontario's population in 2018

was about 14.2 million dollars. The Canadian survey on disability, also from 2018,

shows that 22% of Canadians now report having at least one disability. So if we

took that 22% and applied it to our Ontario population that means about 3.1

million people in Ontario benefit from accommodation.

(Referencing Slide 15) So if we now move on to our second point, how does

the AODA apply with the law? So AODA, as Alex mentioned, stands for the

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The goal of the legislation is to

make Ontario accessible by 2025. That's six years for now. It's important for our

planning so that we know that. It's based on the idea of providing equity, dignity,

and respect for everyone.

There are five areas of requirements defined underneath the AODA, and

they are all organized into something called the integrated accessibility standard.

In that standard, we find there are requirements for customer service,

information and communication, employment, transportation, and finally, the

design of public spaces, which has the built environment pieces in it, although, of

course, there are implications for built environment in the other sections as well.

(Referencing Slide 16) So if we understand the law, we understand that you

have accommodation requirements for customer service training, and that means

training your staff. There's lots of good free resources out there. There's

requirements for information and communication, so if you have a website or if

you are producing printed material, you would be providing under the legislation

if someone were to ask you for an alternative format, you might be providing

something with larger print or braille or a Word version of a PowerPoint

presentation, for example, including alt text for your images.

And then for the employment part of the standard, you are making your

hiring practices accessible, so that both the application and the interview process.

Now, of course, you probably have to think about, then, your staff spaces being

accessible, but that's not covered by the legislation.

(Referencing Slide 17) Under the AODA, the part that deals mostly with the

built environment is, as I mentioned, the design of public spaces. Now, the design

of public spaces isn't the only thing that we look to in Ontario law. The other

piece of legislation that we look to is the Ontario Building Code, also known as the

OBC. And within the OBC, we have a section specifically dedicated to

accessibility, although there are other parts that relate to it, but the part in the

OBC related to accessibility is Part 3.8. So now you know and you are knowledgeable about what those things are.

(Referencing Slide 18) So the last part of this analysis is thinking about the social case. Well, the social case makes a lot of sense. Right? One, it's the right thing to do. Two, barriers that hurt people with disabilities or limit people with disabilities might hurt or limit anyone. And obviously, dignity and respect are integral to making sure that everybody can participate and enjoy.

(Referencing Slide 19) So I just wanted to show you -- and one of the resources we are going to give you is the Illustrated Guide to the Design of Public Spaces, which I was one of the lead authors for, although it was a huge project and many people contributed. What we have on the screen is the Table of Contents, which looks at the exterior path of travel, the recreational trails, beach access routes -- many of these things you are not going to need -- outdoor public eating areas, outdoor play spaces, accessible parking, and then obtaining services. And then there's a piece also about maintenance.

(Referencing Slide 20) So of all of that, most buildings are focusing on the exterior path of travel. How do you get to your front door? Do you have any outdoor eating areas as a part of your facilities? And if you do, the AODA requires

public consultation. Do you have any outdoor play spaces for all of those kids that

might be coming if they need to burn off a little steam? And this also requires

some public consultation. That might sound intimidating. It's really not that hard.

If you have accessible parking, there are different types of parking that you

have to provide; a Type A, which is van size, and Type B, which is car size.

Although any car can actually park in a Type A size spot.

And then the things related inside the building are related to the obtaining

services, and there are only three of them that the AODA talks about. One of

them is the any service counter that you may have. Two, if you have fixed

queuing guides, what are the queuing requirements? And number three, if you

have any waiting areas are fixed seating, how do you make that accessible?

(Referencing Slide 21) If we look very quickly, then, at the Ontario Building

Code, which is the other piece of the built environment, there are limited

accessibility requirements in that document, as I mentioned, in Section 3.8. So

the question often is can we build a building that's fully -- complies with the OBC

and the AODA and not have it be fully inclusive? Well, you may have seen that

some people have said this. People often ask me why. And my answer is that it's

because most of our legislation really is still focusing, as I mentioned earlier, on

people with mobility devices, like wheelchairs, and we are not solving the design

issues for the full range of abilities people have. So it does give an opportunity for

more creativity.

(Referencing Slide 22) And there's a hierarchy to our laws that many people

are unaware of. The Ontario Human Rights Code actually prevails over the OBC

and the AODA. It's the higher law. So one of the difficulties can be that meeting

the technical requirements for a new building or a renovation that meet the OBC

and the AODA does not necessarily mean you are meeting all the I believe

obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code, this as reported by the Ontario

Human Rights Tribunal, has caused some confusion for some business owners or

people who are running facilities or events on the understanding of what the duty

to accommodate actually looks like. So what we are focusing on here is that the

technical requirements from our legislation are a little bit different, perhaps, than

what the Ontario Human Rights Code is doing trying to protect discrimination

overall. Again, creativity is our friend here.

(Referencing Slide 23) So if we looked at this also in context of both the

Canadian charter of rights and freedoms that was changed over 30 years ago and

applies to all government organizations which apply or deliver government

services and guarantees equality without discrimination for people with disabilities; right? People with disabilities in Canada are equal citizens. The Ontario Human Rights Code applies to all government and all private businesses, including not-for-profits. Both are meant to guarantee equality for people with disabilities. It means we have duty to not create barriers, and we have the duty to remove existing barriers where they exist up to the point of undue hardship. Undue hardship basically means making it accessible would bankrupt you. It's a high level, but the good news is 80% of accessibility is easy to do. It just takes some planning.

(Referencing Slide 24) As I mentioned earlier, the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal has primacy. I wanted to provide this slide so that everything I said, if you didn't catch it in the captioning, you would have it here as well. And we want to just make sure that business owners and people who are running facilities are very clear what the responsibilities are.

(Referencing Slide 25) So what's happening in Ontario is representative of what's happening in Canada, and it's all great. We now have for the first time in the history the Minister of Persons with Disabilities, who at the federal level is Carla Qualtrough, who is working on the Accessible Canada Act, known as Bill C81.

It could be coming soon, maybe as soon as this spring. It's right now with the

Senate. And in Ontario, this is great, we have a minister of Seniors and

Accessibility, Raymond Cho, who is heading up a lot of really great work, and we

are excited to see where this is going to go.

(Referencing Slide 26) So we've provided resources for you here. These links

will be made available to you here as well as in the toolkit. And this first page

relates to the resources for the AODA specifically. So what do you need to do if

you are customer service, if you are maybe a little rusty on that? What do you

need to do for information and communication, and where can you get help for

that? What are your requirements under AODA employment? And finally, the big

piece about the built environment, we are providing a link to an illustrated guide

which was developed by and with the Accessibility Director of Ontario.

(Referencing Slide 27) And finally we have provided additional resources. So

if you wanted to get a link to what does the building code say about accessibility,

there is a website for that. If you wanted to be up-to-date on what our Canadian

Standards Association is doing about accessibility and the national Building Code

is looking to the CSA standard, we are going to provide information about that.

Unfortunately, it's not free. But there's also great free resources from the CNIB

and a document called Clearing our Path, and the City of Mississauga, like many municipalities -- so look to your own municipalities -- but the City of Mississauga has a free facility accessibility design standards, which are also known as FADS, which are based on universal design principles. And the great thing about this one -- although many of them are amazing and very consistent with each other -- is that this was designed using also the OBC and the AODA, so it doesn't conflict in any way. It's a good, solid resource.

(Referencing Slide 28) And if you are not familiar with #AXSChat or access chat, on Twitter or social media, I wanted to give you this wonderful thought to conclude with: Dignity is inextricably linked with respect and acceptance. When we respect the people we deal with and accept them as equals, dignity is a natural outcome. #AXSChat is an amazing resource if you are not familiar with issues for people with disabilities, and I hope you enjoy it. Thank you.

>> ALEX GLASS: Thank you so much, Thea. That was great and informative. Now I am going to turn things over to Sage Lovell, so I ask for one moment as we just turn on our webcam and get everyone set up.

>> SAGE LOVELL (Referencing Slide 29): Hello, everyone. My name is Sage Lovell. The voice that you are hearing is actually my interpreter because I am a

Deaf individual. I am using American Sign Language to communicate. I don't

speak. I use a visual language, sign language, so I have an interpreter here. I

founded Deaf Spectrum as a way to advocate for accessibility for deaf Ontarians

and those across Canada as well. I am very excited to be here today.

(Referencing Slide 30) To begin with, I want to talk about deafness, what

deafness is. It encompasses a variety of levels of hearing loss. Some people are

born deaf, some lose their hearing over time. Sometimes when they are older,

sometimes it happens very young. Sometimes you may see the word Deaf in

literature as a capital D or a small d, and there is a difference between the two.

The capital D refers to people who are culturally Deaf. These individuals use sign

language, so they don't speak to themselves generally, and they are a part of the

Deaf community, and they are very proud to be part of the Deaf community.

Small d is from a more medical perspective. It's speaking to the idea that

someone has lost their hearing, they may be using a cochlear implant. It may

speak to speech language pathology and therapy. So that one will include

another group of people. So when you put the two together, you can see we are

talking about a very large and unique community that includes individuals of

varying needs. Sorry, I am signing a little fast today, so sometimes the interpreter may take a moment to catch up.

(Referencing Slide 31) Sign language is a language in its own right. It has grammar, it has a specific syntax, specific structure, so as the interpreter is working, the interpreter is actually working between two languages, just like a spoken interpreter would.

Speaking to language, for many, many years, sign language was not recognized as a language. It was judged, it was seen to be less powerful than English and something that wasn't really something to be noticed or respected. American Sign Language includes five parameters: Handshape, movement, location -- location could be in front of your chest, it could be on your face, it could be in the space in front of you where your hands are -- palm orientation is talking to where your palm is facing, whether it's out or down, to the left, to the right; and facial expression. Facial expression is incredibly important in sign language, and it speaks to the intonation of the sign language, kind of similar to how your voice speaks to intonation and shares emotion and goes up and down if you are angry or what have you. We have that on our face instead of in our voice.

(Referencing Slide 32) This Next slide is speaking to two terms. Maybe you are familiar with them, perhaps you are not. The first one is audism. Audism is a systemic oppression that benefits those who can hear by oppressing those individuals who do not hear.

The second word that we are seeing used more and more is phonocentricism. Again, it's a systemic oppression in which spoken language is considered better, more superior than other types of communication.

(Referencing Slide 33) Next term I have on here is hearing privilege, which is speaking to those people who are not deaf, who can hear, and who don't ever experience audism. So the odd time you may have someone respond to a deaf person in a situation and say you are oppressing other people by saying that, but this is suggesting that as hearing privilege plays a part, those people who can hear don't experience this oppression by virtue of the fact that they can hear and they are the majority.

An example of what this might look like. A person who is not deaf has their choice to go to a theater show, to go to a movie, and relax and enjoy any movie they want, any time, they buy a ticket and go. A deaf individual has to think about

whether interpreters will be there, will there be captioning, and their options are

very, very limited.

Deaf gain is the opposite. It's speaking to benefits that we experience as

deaf individuals. So for example, there is a large Deaf community. It's very

diverse. It's very dynamic. And we can be a part of that. We can be a part of a

community that is all around the world, gives us a chance to meet deaf people

from varying countries, and also we have the chance to travel and meet others.

Often what happens is you run into deaf people in other countries and you never

have to pay for accommodations. Although we sign in different languages, we are

deaf and we have that in common and we are open and people are welcome to

have us stay with them when we travel.

(Referencing Slide 34) Deafness is an invisible disability, which was spoken to

before. If you think about it, how do you identify someone who is deaf? If I am

not signing and I don't wear hearing aids -- which I don't -- and I am out walking

down the street, it's not obvious that I am deaf. So sometimes what may happen

is someone behind me tries to tell me something, they try to let me know

something is happening or they try and ask me a question and they think I am

ignoring them because they can't tell that I am deaf just from looking at me. Until

they see suddenly that I use sign language or they see someone who has a

hearing aid or someone who has a cochlear implant that then makes that

disability visible.

Some deaf people don't use sign language. Some deaf people may be able to

speak quite well, so they may pass, actually, as someone who can hear, but they

still require accommodations.

(Referencing Slide 35) An important point to note is many people who are

deaf don't identify as disabled. They don't say that they are a disabled person. So

often we see a bit of a division between the Deaf community and the disability

community. So there are partnerships there that definitely could be developed.

And at the same time, Deaf people do benefit from disability benefits, for

example, ODSP and certain things. So there are connections back and forth

between the two.

Also, we see support for deaf artists through a variety of disability grants and

programs. They are still limited, though, so again, partnerships with disability

communities, organizations are important and need to be nurtured.

Some folks who identify as culturally Deaf do also fit under the umbrella of

disability just by the fact that they may have other disabilities. They may have

mental illness, they may be dealing with other physical disabilities in addition to being a deaf person. So in that case, we are thinking about larger groups of accommodations that are required for individuals because they have more than one identity, they have more than one disability.

And again, I can't speak for all, can't say all deaf people are the same. Some deaf people will identify as someone with a disability. But generally speaking, when you are in the Deaf community, the majority of individuals will say that they are not disabled; they are Deaf.

(Referencing Slide 36) Representation for deaf artists in our community is very important. As a deaf individual growing up, you don't see people represented who are like you in the arts, in mainstream media. It's very lacking. Often what you do see is people who can hear who take on the roles of deaf people in media. But deaf people have the right to be inspired and to have role models just like anyone else, so that is why representation is incredibly important. We have stories that need to be shared, and we need those opportunities to share them. It's really important that the Deaf community is used as a resource when people are speaking about deaf people, they are writing about them, or they are referring to them in some way. That is a resource to go to those people

and get their perspectives. If you are writing something about deaf people, take it to a deaf individual and get them to look it over and make sure that it's appropriate. Otherwise there's harm that can be caused, oppression that happens, sometimes without the intention.

(Referencing Slide 37) Often those folks who are culturally Deaf use interpretation services. This can be for a meeting, for a webinar, for a lecture, for a group discussion. Anyplace where you have people who are not deaf and people who do not sign and at least one individual who does sign is when interpretation is used. Sometimes you may see reference to a Deaf Interpreter, which we call a DI. Deaf Interpreters can be used for performance pieces. They will work through a whole script and translate it into American Sign Language, and these days we really advocate for offering the opportunity to Deaf Interpreters to interpret a performance, whether that be in theaters, on stage. It's their native language, so when you think about language, those who grew up speaking a certain language as a native language user are the most fluent, and that is the case in the Deaf community, deaf individuals who grew up signing are fluent signers, unlike interpreters and hearing folks.

(Referencing Slide 38) So to include the Deaf community, there are a variety of things you can do. Provide resources in sign language, in American Sign Language, as well as LSQ, which is sign language in Quebec. Consulting with deaf experts or hiring deaf individuals to take leadership roles in projects that include them or their community. If you don't know anything about Deaf culture but you are writing something or doing something to refer to the Deaf community, using the community as a resource and asking people from the community to speak to your work. Also using inclusive language, so things such as saying hearing impaired is -- can be an insulting comment toward Deaf people because it suggests that they are broken.

Inclusivity and diversity is always a good thing, but we want to avoid tokenism and bringing in a deaf person so we can say we have one.

Clear communication and transparency is incredibly important. So within the Deaf community, amongst each other and also between communities. Also speak directly to point you are trying to make when you are speaking with a Deaf person. Get to the point rather than beat around the bush. Often Deaf people do get straight to the point. If you are not sure, ask questions and clarify just to be sure you are on the same page with the individual you are working with.

(Referencing Slide 39) Creative spaces are changing. We see collaborative creative spaces between deaf individuals and non-deaf individuals. They are happening. Accessibility and accommodations are being provided. Creative spaces that are led by deaf people are also amazing opportunities. Typically in these spaces we see communication happening via sign language, and we see literature being created, such as poetry. This type of space really prevents cultural appropriation. We have seen people who are not deaf take advantage of beauty of sign language to create their own art, and it's an art that doesn't come back to improve the Deaf community in any way or contribute to the Deaf community. We also see that online. Lately we have seen a lot of music videos where individuals are signing music, and often when we Deaf people look at them, we can tell they haven't used an American Sign Language coach or consulted with anyone deaf just based on the quality of the video and the language that was seen.

Also in a space that's led by deaf people, it reduces concentration fatigue. When you have deaf people in a space together, language flows incredibly smoothly, it's direct back and forth, and conversations happen in a very dynamic way. When you have to bring in interpreters and other people who are not deaf, the communication can be stilted, and it takes longer just because not everyone

in the room is fluent. So by having fluent signers all together in a room, that concentration fatigue doesn't happen quite as quickly.

(Referencing Slide 40) If you are looking to make a space accessible to deaf individuals, there are some things that you need to this I about -- lighting. Make sure that individuals can see each other. If the room is too dark, that can be a problem. So we need bright lighting. The size of the room can be important as well. Because we are signing, we need space to be able to move our arms and be physical in our space, and often, individuals need to see at least minimum from waist up on a person as they are signing.

The layout of the room. If it's a large room where you have an audience facing all the same way toward one person, it's not always ideal. What's more ideal is having people sitting in a circle so everyone can see everyone else because being a visual language, you need to see each person as they are signing.

In terms of alerts, if there was an emergency, if there was a fire alarm, you need to be aware of how those are being shown as well. In my case, I actually did experience in my lifetime a house fire, and we didn't have a visual alarm. I was a deaf individual in that house. I did survive that house fire, but from that point

onward, it was really driven home to me how important those visual alarms are,

so I advocate for those.

If you are using interpreters, ensure that you are hiring qualified

interpreters, interpreters who are members of CASLI, the national organization

representing sign language interpreters in Canada. The membership is very

important. Often there are interpreters who aren't members, and some of them

can be quite qualified, but we are finding more problems these days because

CASLI requires that interpreters follow a certain code of ethics and they recognize

those code of ethics, and they are approaching their assignments appropriately

and in a qualified, professional manner. So you want to hire qualified interpreters

for the work that you are looking to have interpreted.

Qualified interpreters will show up wearing black, for example, because high

contrast is what is needed to allow for people to see them clearly. I think it's also

important just to reiterate that the people who make up our Deaf community, or

deaf and hard-of-hearing community, are individual, and needs and

accommodations are as varied as the individuals we are speaking about. Some

people may prefer to have live captioning versus a sign language interpreter. It

really depends on their preference. So the best thing to do is to ask them what is the best way to accommodate them and not assume.

(Referencing Slide 41) Thank you so much for having me here. At this point, I think we are moving on to the question period, so I will hand it back over to Alex.

>> ALEX GLASS: That's fine, Sage, you can stay where you are. Unfortunately, I just realized that our video camera has not been working as we have anticipated, so here we are now. So sorry about that. That's okay. I am on my colleague's computer, so I can see it now. It is working now.

We have entered into the question-and-answer period, everyone. If you do have a question you would like to ask Thea or Sage at this time, I encourage you to type it into the Chat box. We do have about 15 minutes, actually, so I encourage you guys to ask any questions you may have about your creative space, or if you are creative looking to know what you could ask for in a space that you are using, this is a great time to type in any questions you have. Alternatively, you can also email your questions in if you are not able to use the Chat box. We can email questions in to erin@artsbuildontario.ca, and she will be happy to get back to you and answer those throughout the webinar.

Now, it looks like we do have a few typing in questions at the moment, so I will wait for those to come through, and then we can get started.

So the first question we have coming in is from Melissa. She is asking: Are there examples of creative spaces that you know of that are great examples of everything that has been discussed here today? So Sage, I'll get you the answer to this question first, and then Thea, you can follow, and then we'll get to the other questions.

>> SAGE LOVELL: If we are speak to go Toronto, the Deaf Culture Center is a great space, white walls, very large. The setup of the whole room is able to be moved around, so a variety of -- you can set it up in a variety of ways. I think the thing about that space I really like is how flexible it is, so it can be adjusted for anyone in the space, and they move around quite a bit, so it's not a static space. It's important, I think, to have a space that is flexible because you never know who is going to come into it. But the Deaf Culture Center is in the Distillery District here in Toronto, and like I say, it has white walls, it's very bright. There's lots of light. All the colors are very neutral. And all the doors are glass as well, so you can see through. You can actually even have a conversation -- one thing I like about it is you can have a conversation with someone inside through sign

language, and I don't actually have to go in to have the conversation. I can just

look in the door and say something in passing.

>> ALEX GLASS: Thank you, Sage. Thea, do you have any thoughts?

>> THEA KURDI: Yes. It's a really important question about heritage

structures. We've seen a significant change in particularly the last couple of years

where the conversation around heritage and accessibility has made a shift. In the

past, heritage really ruled the roost, and we would try to fit accessibility in as

much as possible, but often accessibility was compromised to protect the

heritage. What we have seen in the last couple of years, particularly, I think, with

the rulings around the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, we start with the question:

How are we using this space? If we are using the space as a museum piece, then

the piece that we are looking at remains untouched to the greatest extent

possible, and people are really coming to look at it they are being kept out of the

space, so we make everything around the space accessible and everything else

has limited accessibility because they are not going to have people going into it.

The change has been that where we are seeing heritage spaces that are in

active use, then the answer to the question is this space is being used for people,

which means that it should be available and usable by all people, and to not do so

could be interpreted as a form of discrimination. So now when we are working on

heritage projects, we are working on making sure the accessibility is great and as

inclusive as possible, and what we are doing is we are respecting the heritage to

the greatest extent possible. How do we preserve what's valuable without

compromising people's ability to access?

>> ALEX GLASS: Thanks, Thea. The next question I have was emailed in to us

from Maria, and she is asking what do you think of Deaf, Mad, and Disability arts

community to describe this community? She also elaborates in the Chat box here

it's a term we are told is acceptable. What do you think of it? So Sage, we'll start

with you. I think this is a question for Sage.

>> SAGE LOVELL: Yeah, I would say all those words are acceptable. I've used

Deaf, Mad, and Disability community. We actually have strong community here

of Deaf, Mad, and Disabled individuals in Toronto. We are very supportive of

each other and advocate quite a bit. One example of that would be Tangled Arts

and Disability as an organization. They are here in Toronto and prioritize Deaf,

Mad, and Disabled artists. They work with disabled individuals, making sure any

shows are accessible. The nice thing with Tangled too is often they provide at

events interpreted and translated materials. Often anything that they put online

we see it translated into American sign language, so they are actually doing a lot for that community. I would say those terms are very acceptable.

Next week actually, there is a conference called Cripping the Arts, and that's an event that a lot of people are going to that include Deaf, Mad, and Disabled people. There's going to be a panel discussion, also going to be some performances. I think it's going to be quite fantastic. But those terms are used for that event, and I think in Toronto they are quite acceptable.

There was a second question there. Should we move on to that?

>> ALEX GLASS: Yeah, so we wanted to make sure we got into all of our email questions and our Chat box questions equally, so I wanted to address one that was emailed.

The next question we have is Samantha Morel. Oh, sorry. So Samantha writes: I would love to know what to do in regards to removing existing barriers in heritage structures. So Sage, start first, then Thea, we will go to you.

>> SAGE LOVELL: I do believe it's important to keep our heritage structures but I think, again, as mentioned before, it's really looking at the approach and really picking up on how the space is going to be used. I think Thea probably has

more information around that question and could probably provide a more detailed response.

>> ALEX GLASS: Thanks, Sage. Thea, would you like to respond?

>> THEA KURDI: Yeah, I think I accidentally answered this the last question. (Laughter). Yeah. I think heritage and accessibility in the built environment is an opportunity for some real creativity. How do we balance things? How do we preserve things? How do you, for example, put in a ramp into a building that has, you know, eight stairs at the front entrance and still convey a sense of inclusion, respect, and equality? These are real challenges at buildings I am working on now and we have worked on in the past have tried to address. It's not always easy. Creating new accessible structures is really not very expensive at all. If you start early enough in the process -- and this is an important point for building owners and building users or people who are renting -- accessibility cannot be started soon enough. If you are planning for your accessible spaces, making sure that you have the space requirements which Sage was talking about from additional accessibility standards to try to meet your Human Rights Code beyond code requirements. That's something you can do long before you've hired an architect.

The other thing -- and I am going to be talking about there in my TED talk -- is often people go into something trying to design or create or renovate, and they put in additional accessibility standards which they didn't include when they were budgeting, and they didn't include when they were space planning. And the architects and contractors we are working with are left between a rock and a hard place or when they are bidding for the project it's in a competitive bid environment, if they do more than code minimum, they are scared they are going to lose the job because the job's not awarded on accessibility.

The resources I give you, I mentioned earlier in the presentation, those will be made available to you later. The things Sage was talking about are so much more we have to do for particularly the Deaf community and for people who are hard of hearing, like myself, getting the lighting levels right at a service counter so that you can lipread, as I often do, or thinking about a presentation space that has a space for the ASL interpreter or for an additional CART screen, in addition to the PowerPoint presentation screen, are not something that we are often included in design requirements, so just getting that on people's radar really early means that it's included really early and included in the budget, included in the space so that we are not left trying to figure out, oh, now how do we do it?

So I hope that helps. It is tricky with heritage, no question.

>> ALEX GLASS: Thanks, Thea. We get a lot of questions around accessibility and heritage in ArtsBuild.

We do have one more question, then we are going to have to wrap up. The next question was from Deirdre, and they were looking for advice for media arts presenters specifically when not everything, such as films or videos, is not closed captioning -- I mean, sorry, she means not everything is closed captioned. Sage, do you want to start first, then we'll go to Thea?

Do you have advice for media arts presenters specifically when not everything, such as film or videos, is not closed captioned? So when -- the question is if there's an art form, it's not closed captioned, what can you do to provide an accommodation for that art form?

>> SAGE LOVELL: I would prefer to have closed captioning myself. I know we are seeing it more and more. There's a lot of technology easier to make it captioned. Some of it is automated and may require a little bit of editing. But if captioning is not provided, a transcript can be provided, for example, and by having the transcript as a follow-up piece, it also emphasizes the need for captioning in the moment.

One other concern, too, is that not all deaf individuals have high literacy rates, so you may need to bring someone in who can translate what was said into American Sign Language for them. And I think -- oh, I also want to mention at this point that American Sign Language isn't universal. There's more than 200 sign languages around the world, and many people are under the misconception that it's the same. So in terms of sign language, if you are going to bring someone in to interpret a piece, whether it's after the fact or during, you also want to be aware of what language that Deaf person uses. Typically here it's ASL, but there are people who use different sign languages.

Oh, and the other thing I should mention about that while I am thinking about it is American Sign Language is not British sign language, so if someone is coming here from England, they may speak English, but they don't sign the same signed languages we do here in Canada, so that's something important to know.

>> ALEX GLASS: Thank you, Sage. And Thea, do you have anything you would like to add?

>> THEA KURDI: No, unfortunately, I think Sage is more of the expert in this area.

>> ALEX GLASS: Great. Thank you. So I think that's all the time we have now for questions. I know there were some in the Chat box that we didn't get to, so our apologies. We will reach out to those who did ask questions one to one with responses.

(Referencing Slide 42) Now, just to close this off, I'd like to let everyone know that the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility is available for you as a resource, and if you have any further questions, we will be emailing these slides out to you as well, so you will have all of this information at the end.

(Referencing Slide 43) Second, upcoming accessibility webinars. So as I mentioned earlier, this is the first of six webinars that we are offering around the topic of accessibility and creative spaces. Our next one is coming up on Tuesday, February 12. It's called Design for Public Spaces 101: Where Do Creative Spaces Start?. And we've got presenters Jay Pitter and Yvonne Felix.

The next one is March 12, 2019, Design for Public Spaces Advanced: How Can Creative Spaces Go Beyond the Standard?. This one features Lorene Caseize from the Human Space and Quadrangle and Dave Hollands from The ROM.

The following webinar is on March 26, which will be Best Practices for Architects, Designers, and Creative Spaces on Accessibility. Presenters include

Amy Potier from Gensler and Corey tempson from Corey Timpson design Inc. and

formerly from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

(Referencing Slide 44) Our fourth webinar will be Safety, Fire Codes, and

Accessibility for Creative Spaces on Tuesday, April 23, and that will feature

presenters Martin Day and Marnie Peters. Our final webinar will be on May 14,

will be on Invisible Disabilities and Creative Spaces, featuring presenters Alex

Bulmer, who is an accessibility consultant, actor, writer, and Director; and Andrew

Gurza, who is a disability awareness consultant. You can learn more about each of

these webinars and register on our Learning Series webpage on our website.

(Referencing Slide 45) We would also like to extend a gigantic thank you to

our really great Accessibility Advisory Committee. Everybody on this committee

has been very key in informing the webinar topics, speakers, and our upcoming

toolkit that will be released spring 2019. Our committee includes Kim Fullerton,

Luke Anderson, Yvonne Felix, Amy Ross, Terry Barna, Shirley Madill, Andrew

Gurza, Sean Lee, Christine Karcza, Kevin Puddister, Aislinn Thomas, and Jessica

Vellenga, who was with us at the beginning but has moved on.

(Referencing Slide 46) Finally, we'd like to thank the Government of Ontario

for supporting this project. And just remember that we are sending out a survey.

We'd love for everybody to complete that on your experience today and the

content, and we hope that you will be joining us for future webinars around

accessibility and creative spaces. Thank you, everyone, for joining us.

(End of session, 12:01 p.m. CT.)

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