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JFK CENTER WEBINAR

CAREERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE ARTS

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>> LISA DAMICO: Hello, everyone, and welcome to Careers for People with Disabilities in the Arts. I'm Lisa Damico, your moderator and organizer. Today's webinar is part of a monthly series that comes out of the Office of VSA and Accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This series addresses topics related to arts, disability and education. If you would like to view live streamed captioning of this webinar, you can follow the link that you see on this slide, and in the chat box in the control panel on the right side of your screen. So before we get started, let's take a moment to make sure that everybody is ready and familiar with the go to webinar control panel that you see on the right side of your screen. If you need to leave early, you can exit out of the program by clicking on the X in the upper right-hand corner and you will want to make sure you select telephone or mic and speakers to correspond with how you're connected to the webinar. You have the ability to submit questions using the chat pane located near the bottom of the control panel. Your questions will come directly to me, and then when we have a break in the presentation, I'll relay them to our presenters. And I want to emphasize that following the presentation, I will send out a follow-up E-mail with a link to the recording of today's presentation, a copy of the PowerPoint and a copy of the transcript. This means you don't need to worry about frantically taking notes during the presentation, or missing something if you have to leave a little early.

And then I'd like to let you know about next month's webinar, Teaching Music to Students on the Autism Spectrum: Translating Research into Instructional Strategies. That will take place on Tuesday, June 4th, from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. eastern time and everyone who's registered for today's webinar will receive an E-mail invitation to register for next month's webinar as well. And so now I would like to turn it over to our presenters, who I am thrilled to have joining us. We have Kristina Davis-Smith, Warren Miller and Judy Champa. All right. Kristina, Warren and Judy. I'm going to switch it over to you.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Do you see me, Lisa?

>> LISA DAMICO: Not yet.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Okay. Well, sorry for the technical difficulties here.

>> LISA DAMICO: There we go.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: All right. Perfect! There we go! All right. My apologies. I'm Kristina Davis, and I want to thank you, Lisa, for inviting Judy and Warren and I to be a part of this conversation. It's something we all feel very passionate about, as I'm sure probably a lot of people who are joining us on the phone do as well. So thank you very much. There we go. So ArtsWORK Indiana is really the link that brings all three of us that are here today together. ArtsWORK is a

project that began with and was inspired by a statewide forum on arts for people with disabilities. And ArtsWORK progressed into a grassroots organization with an online presence, we'll tell you how we tried to reach out beyond the computer to provide employment for artists, workshops and grant opportunities. So that will be what I will be covering, and then the more interesting stuff, probably, will be coming from our artists, Warren Miller and Judy Champa directly thereafter. And then we'll -- Lisa has instructed us to leave plenty of time for questions.

Before we get started, we had a couple of survey questions we wanted to pose to you so we can learn a little bit about who's listening in on the phone.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. So I'm going to launch those questions. Our first question is who is in attendance today? Please direct all that apply. Artists interested in a career in the arts, artist with an established career in the arts. Arts administrator, educator, or other. So I'm going to give you all about 30 seconds to answer. And then I'll share your answers with our presenters.

All right. So I will close the poll. And it looks like we had 17% who said they are an artist interested in a career in the arts. 26% are an artist with an established career in the arts. 48% are arts administrators. 26% are educators, and 26% identify themselves as other.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Okay. Great.

>> LISA DAMICO: Would you like me to launch the second one?

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Sure.

>> LISA DAMICO: Okay. Take care of all of this at the beginning. So for our next poll, what is your biggest challenge professionally? Please select one. So your options are time management, expectation management, self and/or others, lack of opportunities, education/skills development needed, or need for guidance/network/mentorship. So once again I'll give you about 30 seconds to answer.

All right. I'm going to close this poll. So 22% said time management. 17% said expectation management. 26% said lack of opportunities. Zero percent said education/skills development needed. And then our highest one, 35%, said need for guidance/network/mentorship.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Thank you, Lisa. Thank you, everyone, for filling those out. That helps, I know especially Judy and Warren in kind of thinking about what they're going to talk to you about today, and I've known that we have things that might appeal to our listeners on the phone. I am going to start with a little bit of information about ArtsWORK Indiana even though I am -- obviously I'm staff at the Indiana Arts Commission, I work with two other organizations, and a great number of artists with and without disabilities as per the grassroots organization called ArtsWORK Indiana. And ArtsWORK is a group of people, as

I mentioned, with and without disabilities who want to improve professional opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities. The three organizations, as you can see on the screen, that participate in ArtsWORK is the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, which is Indiana University Center for Excellence in Arts and Disability, our VSA, and we work with members of ArtsWORK Indiana to support others related to career development in the arts. So even though I'm here today representing the IAC, I'm really also presenting on behalf of the other two partners and our membership as well. So our efforts are a hard work and a partnership that helps provide organization with vision, time, resource and vision. I have to give a shout-out to my fellow organizations.

So ArtsWORK in action. ArtsWORK Indiana is a project, really, that began with and was inspired by a statewide forum on career in the arts for people with disabilities, and this is something that's supported by the national Endowment For the Arts, and in conjunction with the arts and disability structure. The first call for the statewide forum planted this seed for what was to become ArtsWORK Indiana. In response to the request for proposal for a statewide forum, the partners here in Indiana formed an advisory board of about 20 people, both with and without disabilities from all over the state. The advisory board worked for over a year on details in planning and submitted a proposal in 2003, which was granted, and the statewide forum uncovered really a lot of excitement and generated a lot of interest. We had over a hundred attendees, and I think that started the ball rolling on many things to come. After the forum, there was a post-forum survey of attendees and, that uncovered really the top three most pressing issues to artists with disabilities in Indiana, and these are probably things that a lot of our folks on the phone are struggling with as well. The first is lack of transportation or adequate public transportation. That's particularly an issue here in all of these. Lack of funds for career development, and need for networking opportunities to develop and maintain connections with other artists and potential employers. And obviously we heard that as part of the survey results. That's a pretty widespread issue. So these are the issues that really drove the post-forum conversations, and all the subsequent activities that ArtsWORK Indiana has done. These meetings after the forum really had a momentum of their own. They were driven by common issues and the need to network. They started out orderly and evolved to monthly. The project of the forum eventually grew into a an organization with a chairperson and continuing with the three founding partners providing structure on a broader basis, and the statewide forum follow-up grant opportunity also from the National Endowment For the Arts and the National Arts and Disabilities Center gave that group the focus needed to determine their next step, and that was the

ArtsWORK Indiana Web site. And you can see the link, the Web address at the bottom of the screen for that, and this is a screen shot of our home page featuring a photo gallery of Mark Smith. Pretty amazing painting as well. So ArtsWORK members identified a Web site as a mechanism that to some extent addressed all of those three main barriers to careers that were identified in the survey. The Web site was created to reach beyond the physical limitations of the meetings, to be more inclusive of artists outside of Indianapolis and around the state. We have since updated the Web site. Technology has changed. And we've been able to utilize the learnings from how people were using this site.

You know, over time, we realized that some of the limitations of the Web site, and with additional funding from our supportive benefactors from the NEA, we were fortunate to receive another statewide forum follow-up grant and we held a series of community meetings around the state to help artists connect and to learn more about the information and opportunities that the ArtsWORK Web site offers.

Creative connections is a series of six workshops around the state. We employ seven artists as presenters and partnered with 16 organizations including educational institutions, arts organizations, disability service providers and community centers, most of which were new to learning about ArtsWORK Indiana and they helped us to implement these activities. The artists gave candid presentation to see their peers about their experiences, their struggles, their opportunities, their suggestions, and was also a way to educate more people about the different aspects of the Web site, and ways that the Web site could be used as a tool for professional advancement. It just really wasn't being used as much as it could or should have been so we just really wanted to educate people on the various tools. Four important things came out of this creative connections project. The first is that we employed artists for their time and expertise as artists and we practice what we preach. This was very significant to everyone we worked with. It really gave them a certain feeling of professionalism, and that, you know, went a long way. We made lots of connections is new artists and we invigorated our relationship with many who had lapsed. We really grew the excitement about our work and about the organization.

We were also able to introduce ArtsWORK and our missions to many different types of organizations that partnered with us from arts organizations who didn't know about us to service organizations, community and learning centers, and that helps the chain of information get out to people who might be interested in what we do.

And finally, we captured valuable feedback from constituents about their needs and where they were in their careers. We found, you know, of course some of the same barriers as we did

from the forum, you know, money, transportation, resources, and we learned that much of our constituents identified themselves as emerging artists, which has been Ben official and helped guide our activities as well, and we learned that money was a core need to obtain valuable training and build expertise, as well as to buy supplies and learn skills. So this led to how would all this feedback impact ArtsWORK and what would our next project be? We kept coming back to financial support. Wouldn't it be great if we had money to give to artists with disabilities to develop their artistic careers?

The arts commission has a grant for individual artists called the Individual Artist Program Grant, and it is a grant that supports career development projects for artists, but it's also very competitive program, and it tends to support, even though it's through a public channel process, very established artists. We were thinking, man, it would be great if we could just carve out a piece of that and make it competitive for our emerging artists. So The National Accessibility Leadership Award from the national endowment for the arts and the national Assembly of State Art Agencies gave us opportunities to explore this possibility, and even better, gave us the opportunity to see the project through. The award was through the Arts Commission, but the project included staff support from our partners at VSA and the IIDT throughout the planning and implementation.

So the way we did this was that the artist access category would add into the Arts Commission's individual artist project program to ensure competitiveness for artists with disabilities, especially those who were emerging, and along with that came a money category, which is unlike the rest of the IEP program operates. Where it doesn't matter what discipline you're in, you're competing for the same pot of money.

This was not a discipline-based category, the access category, but a selected category for artists who identified themselves for this purpose as artists with disabilities. The public adjudication panel was made up of peers and panelists that had expertise in several different disciplines. Very importantly, this was not a disability grant. That was not needed, nor was it desired. We did work with Indiana WORKS, which was part of the Social Security Administration to strongly encourage applicants to contact them prior to applications to make sure that a grant award would not affect their benefit. And unfortunately this was learned through an experience one of our ArtsWORK members had gone through and almost lost a very prestigious award because of that so we wanted to utilize that unfortunate learning experience in to helping other people not have to go through that.

So we were able to make -- award 14 grants of about \$2,000 each, and we were able to use 93% of the grant award funds to go directly to the artist. And we were able to do that because we

built off something that the arts commission already had a structure in place for.

So this again gave us the opportunity to learn, again, more about our constituents. We had a lot, most, almost all of them, are first-time grant writers. I was one who oversaw this program at the time, and there was -- I gave lots of technical assistance. We offered grant drafts to use and gave significant amount of feedback. And I'm proud to say most applicants really made a marked improvement from the drafts that I read to the final product so that was exciting. More than one artist also said the process helped demystify the grant process and helped them beyond just this grant, which is important.

A couple of artists also wanted to further work on their grand-writing skills after the deadline, so that was a huge compliment to us, because that meant that they were comfortable enough with the process and the experience that they felt comfortable to do that. So that was a positive thing.

And multiple artists communicated that during the panel's feedback from their -- [Inaudible] -- that really the money became secondary, so there is that need and that desire for network, for feedback, for feeding the artistic soul, that some of these folks just weren't getting in and were able to tap in to.

We do -- the arts commission continues to offer the access category in our IAC program, however, with no spectacular dedicated funding, we don't have a dedicated pool of funds, but we do have the assurance that at least one applicant from the category will be funded, and there is that previous work that we've done that has laid the groundwork for more people applying to that program.

All of our organizations have our own official programs. I won't spend much time going into so I can leave it to the artists here today, but these programs bring skill development and support the artists with disabilities. These are just a few examples. Obviously VSA and the Institute's work are done on a community level and really provide hands-on assistance and education and skill development and career coaching. The mentorship program of the IIDC came out of some other work that the ArtsWORK group was doing, and we've seen a strong, strong need to some sort of guidance and mentorship, so that's where that was borne out of and the IAC programming focusses really more on providing opportunities and funding for artistic and business skills development through grants and workshops. We also strategically work to raise awareness for need and opportunities in the field, regarding artists with individuals with disabilities as well as the importance of embracing the full spectrum of our community.

With that, I am going to hand it over to Warren now. Warren and Judy are both artists that I've had the pleasure of getting to know through ArtsWORK, and I met both of them at a time when

they were really transitioning from one artistic career to another, and they have a wealth of experience and great perspectives and I am happy that they are willing to share it with you today. So here's Warren.

>> WARREN MILLER: Thank you, Kristina. I just want to let you know that I am a graphic designer. I've been 30 years as a graphic designer, and I have just started, about four or five years ago, as a pop artist, and been interacting with the deaf community, and my deaf experience, you see those four panels on there are four paintings that I have done that related to my deaf experience.

First, I was born, first of all, my birth was -- my parents said that I was hearing until I was five years old. According to my oldest brother, he noticed that I may have meningitis when I was five and that's how I became deaf.

And most of my life, I went to the mainstream, and I went to oral schools where I learned how to talk, and, you know, learned to lipread and communicate with other people. And I was not allowed to use sign language in the classroom. And if I was using sign language in the classroom, I was being punished for using the sign language in the classroom.

As I got older, I went to middle school and high school. Sign language was allowed in classroom. Most of all, my mainstream, in classes, I pretty much survived through the whole school year without any interpreters or note takers or tutors. I would rely on my friends, and I'd stay after school to talk to the teachers, asking questions on homework and things, and so forth. And during my -- during all those years, I started to learn to draw, and I was really inspired by my father and my grandfather's artwork, and that really influenced me to -- encouraged me to draw, and I continued to draw and improve, and after my father died, I continued to become more serious about art. And by the time I got older, graduated from high school, I went to college to study in graphic design at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. And I studied in graphic design for four years, and after I completed all my study in graphic design, I had left the college and went to my first job. I had a lot of difficulty through my career of getting an interpreter or communicating with other people, because they don't realize I need to communicate with one-on-one and read lips, and I've been in graphic design for Indianapolis Museum of Art, University of Nevada in Reno, Marion University, and the last job I got laid off from is an international company. I had worked there as an arts director.

And then I continued to do some freelance at home, but I am trying to become a full-time pop artist. When I was laid off in 2009, I had struggled to find another job as a graphic designer or art director, and I had difficulties of getting an interview because of my -- it could be either my deafness, my qualifications, I'm overqualified, and my age.

So I decided to go into a -- try to become a full-time artist. It was very, very struggling out there being a deaf person because it's hard for me to network with all the other hearing artists in my local community.

What I've learned is for all these years, I tried to interact with a lot of fellow artists locally, local, like Indianapolis area, and also participating ArtsWORK Indiana and tried to meet with other people and see if I can be able to show my artwork in the gallery or, you know, try to get contact who have more of what they called a group show and things like that.

And also, I'm focusing on getting local and national exposure around -- here in Indianapolis and also statewide. And it's very, very difficult to get -- I've grown into it. I also do myself a Web creation. I've created my own Web site, what you see below called warrenmillerart.com, and I tried to maintain my Web site monthly, update, and also, I create a Facebook page based on Warren Miller Art to keep them posted of all my history, my painting and issues and trips and travels, and all the festivals I go to.

In fact, I go to a lot of conferences, and so my artwork -- show my artwork and I go to the Indiana School for the Deaf and show some presentations and so on.

And also on twitter, I keep a twitter profile and keep them posted of what's going on, and I try to keep it more of a daily basis.

And also, I go to a lot of what they call deaf art festivals. And recently, I just went to the art festival here local, and I'm trying to get -- once again, I'm trying to get exposure through the deaf community of who I am, what I do and how I present. And the more exposure I get, the word gets spread across other states as well, and I get more E-mail from other states as well, inviting me to go to their art festival.

And in fact, a couple weeks ago, I got an E-mail from Russia that they wanted me to go to the art festival in Russia. I had to -- I told them, I said thank you for the offer, but I had to decline because of the expense and the cost of the flight and shipping and so on, but I'll keep that in mind the next future festival I will attend to.

And the last part that's very important is to paint. Create, paint, create, paint. Paint, paint, as much as you can and get more exposure.

What I've learned, the lesson I've learned is when you go to a lot of places or do things, do research. Do a lot of research. Do the research about, for example, like do research about the arts festival where you're going to go to. Make sure that, you know, if you're going to get some exposure there, or maybe you can ask some other artists who attend there and find out how well they sell their works. And/or, you know, if you want to do some painting and you wanted to do some kind of a little

exposure in that region, you want to do some research about that region, what kind of paint you want to sell.

Plan ahead. And the same way as doing research, just plan ahead what you're going to do. For example, if you're going to the art festival, just plan ahead and make sure you have everything established before you go there.

And also, very important is to know your limitations. And, you know, there is something that people ask you, you get overwhelmed. You have to know your limitations. And a lot of people, a lot of artists I know that are afraid to say no because they like to do more work, and there is something that you have to learn to say no, and I can't do this, or I can do it in your time frame. Once again, establish your own schedule. And you are the artist. We are the artists. We have to establish our own schedule and our own time to paint and travel, you know, and do research, and those are limitations that you can be capable to do. Be prepared. And I know that sounds like a boy scout motto, but I rely on "Be prepared" for all the consequences and know about, you know, doing your research, plan ahead and establish a schedule, and everything must be done, that's very important to be prepared.

And finally, protect your rights. I know some of the artists out there, you know, they put a water mark on their painting when they put it on the Web site, or your signature on the Web, you know, all that, and that's very important to keep your -- you know, protect your painting, protect your images, and, you know, you have to protect your own right because these are your works.

And for example, like, I had eight of my images on ABC Family, "Switched at Birth," on that show, and they sent me an E-mail asking me to buy my images. I have to protect my rights by, you know, discuss with them how are you going to handle this? How are you going to, you know, use those images on the show? I want to make sure that they're not passing out those images, you know, elsewhere, and I'm going to, you know, lose that right. So those are all the important things that you have to protect yourself from it.

And I want to thank all of you for listening, and I'm going to hand it over to Judy, and she's an artist and a business owner, and she's done a wonderful, wonderful jewelry and things like that.

>> JUDY CHAMPA: Thank you, Warren. And thank you, Lisa, for inviting the 3 of us to be in your webinar.

The subject of where we come from and how we've gotten to where we are today I think is real, real important and for all of you artists out there who are thinking about turning what you love into a financially sound business, my message is it can be done. It definitely won't be easy, and there will be bumps along the way, but it can be done. I was born an artist. Is what my mother and my grandmother Nonnie used to tell me.

The first time I remember ever being -- pursuing art was the first time they let me go some place by myself, and I went to a ceramics shop, and I was just amazed at what you could do with this lump of clay and what you could make out of it. And both of these people, especially my Nonnie, told me not to close my mind to any of the different arts until I tried them. Give them a chance, and then decide whether or not I liked them. So through my life, I've been putzing with a lot of different arts.

After I finished high school, I started the Kansas City Art Institute, and I became pregnant with my son Adam. He weighed 15 pounds at birth and had a lack of oxygen for over three minutes. Because of this, he had a lot of special needs. So I have been dealing with people with disabilities, and being an activist for people with disabilities almost all my adult life. But that not-so-tiny baby helped me get on the path that I've come to today, because I took him to a portrait studios to get his picture taken, you know, all new moms want their baby pictures taken, and I think it was around Easter. It was super busy, and there were 8,000 kids in the studio, I think, and some of them were fussing and some of them were playing and you could tell the parents were about to pull their hair out, so I sat down on the floor, being as young as I am, you know, I didn't know any better, just sat down and played with them, and I kept them busy, and I probably played with them for an hour, hour and a half before it was our turn.

Well, my son's portrait session was over, and at the end of the portrait session, the photographer, who I found out was also the manager of the studio, offered me a job right then and there. She said because of the way that I've handled the kids, she knew that I'd be able to do the job she wanted me to do, and I said, but I've never been a photographer before. I don't know anything about the cameras. I don't know anything about the -- she said don't worry about that. We'll take care of that. You just play with the kids. You'll learn.

It was amazing. All of a sudden, I was doing something that I loved to do. This woman had taken a chance on me, and actually it was an apprenticeship because I knew nothing about it. I got to do something artistic, and I got to play with kids, which I loved, and I got paid to do these things, these fun things, and I got my son's portraits for free. How could I resist this job? It became more than I had ever hoped for. I had been told as a child that I'd never account for anything, and here all of a sudden I was giving this family something more than a piece of paper. I was giving them a memory. I was giving them an heirloom, and that word has become important a little bit later in my professional life.

Well, I quickly advanced from photographer, one of the top photographers in the region, to an assistant manager, and then to the manager of a studio. I worked for all the major

children's photography companies in the nation. I've won all kinds of awards, from professional photographers in Texas, professional photographers in Indiana, company awards, state fair awards. I've won trips. But the main thing was I was doing something that I loved. The awards were nice, but if I had never won an award, it wouldn't have mattered. I was still having a wonderful time.

After a whole lot of years of working for other people, I made the plunge and opened my own business called Judy's Heirloom Classics. Remember that word, "Heirloom"? Because that's what I wanted to create. I wanted to be a classic heirloom that they could pass down from generation to generation.

Well, everything doesn't always go like you plan. And I was in a parking lot in a mall and I was a hit-and-run victim. They didn't find me for about 20 minutes. And when I woke up, I couldn't walk and I couldn't talk and I couldn't feed myself because I had pretty bad brain injuries, along with my other physical injuries that had happened.

I had to learn to do everything again. I had to learn to feed myself, to walk, to talk, and I think sometimes my husband thinks I'm an overachiever in the talking part. And my capacity for memory was really diminished, and I have to battle with that every day.

Once I got back to a certain point, I tried to continue working as a children's photographer, but found I really couldn't do it physically anymore. I couldn't do what I had really loved and wanted to do, work with kids. I mean, what other business can you be in that you can write off toys as a business expense? I mean, it was a great job! I loved every part of it.

But my body was telling me something that I didn't want to hear. And then I was diagnosed with MS and all of a sudden the doctors realized that a lot of the things that they had been blaming on the accident were probably MS rearing its ugly head.

It took a while for me to admit it to myself, I can no longer do what I loved to do, what I had loved to have done for 20 years. That's hard. You know, it was a major turning point in my life, going from, I can do anything for myself to the I might need to ask for help self. Not something I felt real comfortable with. I didn't like asking for help.

When I admitted my limitations with my profession, all of a sudden I was open to a few other things, and I found beading and making jewelry as an alternative. I was at a church conference and found out that the Episcopal church had a rosary, but it wasn't anything like the Catholic rosary, and nobody in Indianapolis was actually offering nice, handmade rosaries for the Episcopal community, so I thought, I can do that. And I made a few of them, and the ladies of the church went crazy. And then all of a sudden they started bringing me things and saying, can you fix this, or, I'm getting ready to go to a special occasion. Can you make me something special for my

dresses. Well, it just kind of snowballed. It morphed into something that was more than just a hobby, something that I was playing with.

One day when I was out collecting beads -- my husband says I'm a bead hoarder -- I went to one of my favorite stores and found out that it was getting ready to close. I went home and I just happened to mention it to my husband. He said, isn't that that store that you really like? And I said, yeah. And he said, oh. And off he went. He went and sat down at his computer for a while. He came back a little bit later and says, isn't that the one that you said had really a lot of potential? And I said, yeah. He said, oh. And he went back to his computer. A little bit later, he came back and he said, Judie, I've been thinking about it, and why don't we take our life retirement savings and try to buy that store, and if I hadn't been sitting in a chair, I would have fallen down because all he knew about beads was that they were round and they were all over the house. I said, Ed, I never wanted to start that kind of a business. I'm not a business person. I like doing the arts, but I don't want the business part of it. I don't like that part of it.

He said, Judy, I didn't say you, I said we. He says, I'm a really good business person, but I'm not an artist. And you're a really good artist but you're not a business person. So we had to find -- I had to find my weaknesses and strengths and recognize them and actually hold them up and cherish them. Because here I had a partner who was willing to do what I couldn't do. I thought it was amazing. As we started researching everything, we had to do a business plan because we wanted to get a loan. We went to the business ownership initiative here in Indianapolis, and got their advice, and we went to the accountants and we went to the attorneys and talked about all of this, but we did a lot of research. And we went back and offered this lady what we thought that the store was worth.

Well, that didn't work out so well, but in the long run, we ended up getting the store. It wasn't on our time. It took a lot longer than what we thought because we thought the day she closed, we could open this store back up the next day. Didn't work like that. There's always little bugs, and you have to go through the bugs in your own time.

Well, we're still here. Three years later, we've still got our business. We've been happily married for 28 years almost. We're fully engaged in the business and in the community because that's important, along with running a business, you've got to give back. And giving back to the community always comes to give to you. I think for everything I'd give away as far as time and knowledge, I think I get it back threefold every time. I think I'm just blessed. I'm always looking for ways to teach children how to do this art because there's not enough art in schools anymore. And I think that's almost criminal.

What art had done for me as a child has given me an escape from some pretty bad things that have happened in my childhood. It gave me a fantasy. I could always draw. I could always get away.

Well, if the children don't have this type of an escape, and I mean, there's a lot worse things happening today than there ever was back in my childhood, they need this art.

Some of the key things to my success was the apprenticeship. Somebody gave me a chance, and I never thought of photography as a potential career. I'm artistic, but I never even thought of that. And it was a natural talent. The opportunity for learning something on the job was realistic because I was a young mother. There wasn't a dad around. I had to be able to support my child at the same time. It was important for me not to limit myself. Just because I like one form of art didn't mean that I shouldn't try something else. You never know when that next thing that you try might be one of the things that fills your heart's desires. That's so important. I learned to problem-solve. I saw a need with the rosary. I found a way to create them. I found a market for them, and I ran with it. You've got to find out where the demands are.

My support network, oh, geez, that is one of the most important things that I could ever have. Obviously my husband was very supportive of my journey. I mean, he's the one that suggested we buy the store. I found support with ArtsWORK meetings. If I hadn't had these support systems, I would have felt very alone. My fears would have begun to multiply. That little, you can't possibly do this monster might have won.

ArtsWORK, the governor's Council For People With Disabilities, the Indiana beads society, they all helped me to know I wasn't alone in my struggles. They gave me much needed networking opportunity. The support I had for my biggest support system, my family, both my dear husband, who is not only my partner in life, but also in my business, and I'm lucky enough to have him as my best friend. And remember Adam, my son? Well, he's right there supporting what I do, too. He lives with us still. Both my husband and Adam have told me that because I always supported them in the things that they did, it was only natural that they support me in this. They helped me see what I needed to see. The things that I've learned. I found the things that I was good at.

I also knew when I was getting in over my head. Like Warren said, you've got to know when to say no. You've got to stop. If you're tired, don't push it because you can't push art anyway. Everybody knows that. If you try to push it, it messes it up.

It's okay to ask for help. That's a big one for me. The physical limitations are hard to recognize sometimes -- or not hard to recognize, but hard to admit to. It's okay to admit to

them. Hey, everybody has physical limitations. We just don't always see what they are.

Things will get done another day. Maybe not on my schedule. Art, like me, doesn't run on a particular schedule. It just has to be when it wants to be. It can't be forced.

Love what you do. There are other forms of creativity and creative people adapt.

I miss children's photography but have found something else fulfilling that doesn't wreck my body and my health. Keep planning towards the future. Don't become stagnant. Be willing to try a different approach than the way that you have always done it. Honesty can't be successful without it. You've got to be honest with others, and it will come back to you again.

And remember, only God is perfect. Expectations of yourself are high. You have to let some things go and learn to make the most of what you have and leave the idea of perfection or how something should be, to a power much greater than mine.

Remember what I said in the beginning. It won't be easy. There will be bumps along the way, but it can be done.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Thanks, Judy. Lisa, I think we're done, and we would love to answer some questions if there are any out there for us.

>> LISA DAMICO: Wonderful. Well, I will give the participants a minute or two to type in their questions in the chat pane. I'll share those with you.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Okay. You can contact any of us after the Webinar. If you think of something later, we're all open to that, so I've listed our contact information on the last slide as well.

>> LISA DAMICO: So Kristina, I have one question. I'm not sure if you're going to have an answer to this, and if you don't, that's just fine, and I can use my network to try to find the answer for our participant. But we have someone who is working at a children's hospital and are trying to find resources and other sources to get adaptive equipment to provide for them so that they can fully participate in the arts and develop lifelong coping skills and a love for art.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Oh, that's a good one. Do we know what state they're in?

>> LISA DAMICO: I'm not sure. This comes from Elizabeth. If you want to share which state you're in, that might be helpful. Maybe while we're waiting, I have a few other questions. Oh, Elizabeth is from Arkansas.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Okay. Well, what I've done in the past is we get offers of questions, valid questions like that, and I usually, you know, contacting the state arts agency is a good place to start. If I don't have the answer as a state arts agency person, I will find it. I will come up with some options. I will network with my peers and if for some reason

they can't help you, give me a call and I will find a way to send you some sort of information on that.

>> JUDY CHAMPA: Ask artists also. Artists can a lot of times help with something like that, you know, they have supplies that they aren't using, things like that, that might -- you know, just ask your artists. Put a call out.

>> LISA DAMICO: Wonderful. Thank you. So I have a question that's from Denise. Do you know of any artists with developmental disabilities who have successfully found a career in art?

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Judy's pointing to herself. You know, I'm thinking about we have different programs like VSA. Indiana has a really fantastic open artisan program where they have, you know, they sell -- they create and sell their pottery, their ceramic art ware, and there's a number of other, you know, instances of that.

We have a couple of photographers in the State of Indiana that have really excelled, and one of which has their own gallery. So it's -- you know, I don't think it's a story we necessarily hear every day, but I think what we've seen is that generally, people with developmental disabilities, it's more common for them to be successful if they're participating as part of a larger group, so to speak, or part of a more formal program than individually, but we've seen it both ways.

>> LISA DAMICO: Wonderful. And actually, I have a few comments from participants. Saying thank you all, great presentation. This is just a comment that the two speakers' stories, live stories, were very motivating. Thank you.

>> JUDY CHAMPA: Thank you.

>> LISA DAMICO: Waiting to see if we have any other questions that come in.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: I wish we could talk to everybody on the phone.

[Laughter]

>> JUDY CHAMPA: We are all very passionate about this. I want to hear from other people.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Well, I think as everyone has your contact information, that would be a good way if our participants think of some questions following the Webinar that they'd like to ask you all, they know how to get in touch with you.

And I'm going to get back to my screen.

>> KRISTINA DAVIS-SMITH: Thanks again, Lisa, for inviting Judy and Warren and I.

>> LISA DAMICO: Oh, definitely. Thank you all. Thank you all so much for doing this presentation and sharing your stories and your knowledge and your passion for all of this.

>> JUDY CHAMPA: It was our pleasure.

>> LISA DAMICO: Okay. So I'm going to maximize my screen and thank you all for joining us today. I'm going to ask if you'll

spend just a minute or two more after you exit out of the Webinar. There will be a short eight-question survey that will pop up that helps me as I'm designing future Webinars and to respond to your comments and suggestions. So if you'll take a moment to answer that, I would appreciate it.

As I said before, I'll send out a copy of the PowerPoint, as well as the transcript, and if you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me as well. Lisa Damico at [LVDamico@Kennedy-center.org](mailto:LVDamico@Kennedy-center.org), or at 202-416-8868. So thank you all once again and I hope you will join us next month.

Good-bye.

>> JUDY CHAMPA: Bye!

(Webinar concluded)