

KAY BRILLIANT: My name is Kay Brilliant, and I am the director of the Education Policy and Practice Department, National Education Association here at the NEA. We operate in a group called the Center for Great Public Schools. And it is my pleasure to welcome you here today on behalf of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association (NEA) and our staff that work here in this building. This started as a really good idea as most things do: a little kernel that said “What if we...” and then fill in the blank, and look at what happened to that little idea. Take a look around. This has grown past a little idea, and we are very excited about having you here today.

I have known Lily Eskelsen probably longer than she would like for you to know. And I know things about Lily Eskelsen that she for sure doesn't want you to know, so I will do just this. Extraordinaire teacher, great representative of the practice and profession of teaching, understands that teaching is an active verb and fully understands that learning is an active verb, and holds her students of all varieties to a high standard of performance. I give you the Vice President of the National Education Association, Lily Eskelsen.

LILY ESKELSEN: Bienvenidos, es un gran honor estar aqui con ustedes. What an honor to have you here at the house of NEA – Mi casa is su casa! And Estella, tell your son, my Spanish teacher, that I am actually practicing my Spanish. That was for my homework. And, truly, you have no idea what a privilege it is to have you here and to be amongst you. You are, perhaps, the most remarkable group of people and passionate professionals ever assembled in this building. It should give you goose bumps to be sitting here.

I am a sixth-grade teacher from Utah. I am an excellent sixth-grade teacher from Utah. I am not standing here before you because I have studied Universal Design for Learning or because I am a researcher of Inclusive Practices. I am here because I am an excellent sixth grade teacher from Utah. And so, I observed within 15 minutes of standing in front of my first class in 1980, when I was twelve, of fourth graders that not all of them received my instruction in just exactly the same way. And, yes, I was shocked to find I would not be teaching little robots who would all just absorb and memorize their times tables. I had kids who, with a little drill and practice, would memorize their times table and others who simply could not learn in that way. They could learn: they just weren't going to learn in that way, so we would sing them or do an art project with our times tables or we would play a game. We played times table baseball. They were able to learn incredible things, but I was not properly trained in the coherent design that would capture the incredible diversity of learning styles and talents and intelligences of my gorgeous little students.

I kind of knew it was my job to deliver the content material to them and engage them and make sure that they were part of the discussions and that I would find ways the they could be successful, but I will admit to you – since none of you are my principal who would be evaluating me – that it was usually hit and miss. It was usually that I

would stumble upon something, and I had more than my share of misses. But every now and then I would get a hit.

I had Warren. Warren was one of my sixth graders who read probably on a second-grade level. He was in resource for reading and he would leave the room for reading classes. He was a really sweet kid. He was always willing to try, but I could tell how frustrated he would get when he was required to read something on grade level. We were studying the digestive system in health, and we had an amazingly boring health book. I was not feeling particularly creative. My plan was to round robin read the chapter out loud, and then we would review the end of the chapter questions and I would give them a test. Then I would move on to what I really wanted to teach, which was the food pyramid because that way you could eat your homework. You had to do the digestive system; it was just something you had to move through, so to speak, so that you could get to my apple and peanut butter recipe.

We were reading the chapter aloud when it got to Warren. He barely made it through his sentence that I asked him to read, and it occurred to me that he is not going to make it through the test. I could have read the test to him, but I thought that might embarrass him. I had a different idea. I asked him to stay in at recess and I said, "Warren, I really need your help. I need the best artist in class to do the review for the class on the digestive system. So if you will do this project – it is going to be a lot harder than doing the test – but then you won't have to take the test and will have to help me grade the test." I rolled out a sheet of butcher paper and put it on the ground. You know, the things you put up on the bulletin board – the paper you roll out. I said, "I want you to get your little brother and trace the outline of his body, kind of like a police thing, and here is the book. I want you to color it, paint it, and make it look great; label all the parts and then you have to give the lesson on the digestive system." I said, "I will call your mom to make sure that she goes and gets you some index cards, and we will work this out. You can practice on your mom." I asked if he was willing to do this. I will never forget how excited he was. He said, "Okay." It was just no big deal, you know?

I knew Warren's mom, too. I knew I could count on her because when you teach in the same school, you get the family members. You get the brothers and the sisters, and I knew she was really worried about Warren being successful. He came from a family of very, very talented, bright kids, and he was very talented and bright but not in ways that were always appreciated. When I told her what the plan was, she was just thrilled. She was so excited, and if you have an excited parent you are halfway there. You've got the magic Willy Wonka ticket.

On review day, he rolled out his magnificent digestive system chart. He took the pointer. He was very serious about going through the mouth and the salivary glands and the esophagus, and he had it all done. He had on his card, he said now here are the questions I have for you. His mom had made sure that they were 2 or 3 words on a card, and he would just remember the rest of the question so that he could ask them the questions. He did the review, and he stayed after school to help me grade the papers, which only took me three times longer than it would have if I had graded them all by

myself, and he got an A+. Why not? He earned an A+. He knew more about the digestive system than anyone in class. His mom came in a few days later to give me a big hug and, with tears in her eyes, said this is the first A he has ever gotten. That is a source of shame to me, that I had only found one way to have him show me how smart and how talented he was. I had 39 students that year thanks to our Utah State motto, "Stack 'em deep – Teach 'em cheap." But nothing should have stopped me. Nothing should have stopped me from finding a thousand ways for Warren and every other student I had that year to learn and to express what they had learned in ways that were appropriate for them. And nothing should have stopped me from designing something purposeful where they could learn from each other. That's where the revolution is. The other 38 kids, by the way, were totally accepting of Warren being their teacher. I just introduced him by saying I needed an excellent artist to help me with this, and you know how good Warren is, so he is going to do the review. And they didn't bat an eye. They took notes on what he had to say. They knew he didn't read well. He wasn't teaching them reading. They knew he was going to be key in them learning something for the test they were about to take. It was no big deal. And that's the big deal! That's the big deal.

I have tried very hard to be an inclusive teacher, but I will tell you in my career it usually was hit and miss. It was luck when I would see an opportunity and luck that I would come up with some strategy that worked and was appropriate. Luck is a lousy business plan. I want to be trained. I want there to be a deliberate design for success for every single one of my blessed students. That is why I am so in awe of the talent in this room. You are here because you understand the possibilities of what we could be in a public school and maybe because you fear as I do what we are becoming. We are heading in the wrong direction. We are dealing with more and more political solutions crafted, by the way, by Democrats and Republicans. What they have in common is they have never stepped into a real classroom and had to face actual human-type children. So they propose things that sound good to them on paper. It sounds efficient. There is a new industry now being built around off-the-shelf standardized testing and test preparation and test training and test strategies, and the only goal I have ever heard is that we become more efficient in labeling our children by a standardized test score. We are judging boys and girls by their test scores. We are judging the school by those test scores. We are judging the individual teacher by those single standardized test scores that were never designed to measure what these folks think they are measuring.

I have a friend who still lives in Utah, and I know that people think in Utah diversity means you found a Presbyterian. That is not exactly true. She teaches in a Title I school, 100% poverty. Most of her children are English-Language Learners, and they are ELL kids from Southeast Asia. My Spanish lessons wouldn't even help her. She emailed me in tears of rage: she did not know what to do with the anger. Her principal had just called a faculty meeting, and he had obviously been pressured by the district to get those test scores up by any means necessary. They were going to get off the "bad" list. The principal told them all that they would work like a team and focus on what he called the "bubble" kids. He actually said "the bubble kids." Those are the kids

that almost made the cut score the year before, just a few points away. The message was very clear – you ignore the high-scoring kids, they are going to make it; this is just going to be a flat year for them. You ignore the lowest-scoring kids; you might be able to make some progress, but it is never going to be enough to hit that cut score, so you don't waste time teaching all the children when your goal is to simply have the “bubble” kids hit a particular cut score. You want to impact their score from here to there, so you are going to teach to the middle. You are going to teach to the test, which is to me to say, you are going to stop teaching.

It breaks my heart to see the road we are traveling down. It scares me to death what that road will bring us. It moves us further and further and further away from seeing children as the precious individuals they are with gifts and skills and ways of seeing the world. It moves us away from the ways children learn. And, maybe more important, it moves us away from learning from them. They have important lessons to teach us. It is not a mistake, and don't take it for granted, that you are in this room. This is not just another conference. You are passionate about what you do or you would not be here. And, we will not sit quietly by and let well-meaning people create even more barriers to what it means to teach and what it means to learn. We intend to model our inclusive practices today; not all of us learn in the same way, so you will hear some amazing people. You will see some interactive media, but you will also talk amongst yourselves. You will share the ideas that you know, and you will receive the ideas that others have, and you will create something before you leave. You will create a plan of action that could impact classrooms across this great country of ours. You could impact training and materials and access and assessment. It could mean an impact on what it means for me to teach or what it means for my students to learn and what it means for us to be successful.

I have no idea what you are going to create, but I have absolutely no doubt that it will be full of the heart and the soul and the passion that you brought into this room today in search of answers and in search of friends and colleagues and professionals who share your vision of respecting and nurturing and learning from and being in awe of the potential of all of our children. I am in awe of you! Muchas gracias por venir. Thank you all for coming and thank you for the important work you will do today. Gracias.

PATTI RALABATE: I have the distinct pleasure this morning of introducing our esteemed filmmaker, Dan Habib. Dan is the creator of the Including Samuel film, which we will see in a couple of minutes. He is the filmmaker in residence at the Institute on Disabilities at the University of New Hampshire. Dan and I met about a year ago, maybe, not quite, because I was using his film in classes that I teach at George Washington University, and he wanted to know how we might be able to expand my use of his film. This symposium developed as an idea because I see great impact from his film, and I will let him explain the background of the film. I think you will see that as well if you have never seen his film before. I'll not take any more time because Dan has lots to say. Dan Habib.

DAN HABIB: One of the things I love about the NEA is that you are both kind of working on a policy level but very much on a practical level: you are in the classrooms. For those of you I have met previous to this morning or this morning who have traveled, I have heard Washington, Michigan, Georgia, and supposedly someone is here from Alaska if they caught their flights. There you go! Excellent! You get a special hand farthest travel. Thank you. I just think that's incredible, and it's a testament I think to your commitment as Lily said to do the best you can in the classroom to include all kids.

What I want to do and what I am really excited to do this morning is show you the film and talk about it afterward. I think much of what I have to say in a way, in a universal design kind of way, is in the film. But, I do want to talk a little bit about how I think this connects to UDL and why I made the film in the first place. Yesterday morning, I go on a fair amount of trips these days – about twice, three times a month I fly somewhere and show the film, so my kids are getting used to that. My kids, whom you are going to meet in the film, are Isaiah is about 13 and Samuel is almost 10. So they get used to it, so Isaiah was leaving for school yesterday morning and I'm like, "Oh, bye Isaiah, I'm heading off for a trip tonight; I'll see you tomorrow." He's like, "Where are you going? What are you doing?" Usually they just care what kind of souvenir they're going to get. Is it going to be a Colorado Rockies hat, is it going to be a Michigan shirt, you know! My wife is trying to get me to not buy souvenirs every time I travel. Anyway, I said, "Well, I am going to Washington D.C, to the National Education Association for this conference on UDL. Universal Design on learning, and I realized that meant absolutely nothing to him. You know, UDL! What is that? Is that a video game? It's not very important unless it is. And I said, "Well, let me think of a way to describe this in the 2 minutes you have before your bus." We had to rebuild our house about 5 or 6 years ago. We actually built a new house because my son Samuel uses a wheelchair. We created a universally designed house. I said, "Isaiah, think of our house. Anybody can come visit us. Anybody can get to the bathroom. Anybody can get to the refrigerator. Anybody can watch TV. Anybody can play with you. Samuel's friends can come over everyday, which they do after school. We have other people who use wheelchairs who can wheel into our house, so we have a universally designed house." I said, "This conference is about making classrooms open to everybody and making it like our house. Anybody can visit. Anybody can enjoy being here. Anybody can play with us. Anybody can learn with us. That's what we are trying to do in schools." He said, "All right, bye dad; have a good trip." But I think he took something in.

But then I started thinking about what does this mean in their day-to-day life? Inasmuch as I have been committed to inclusion and working for inclusion since Samuel was born, but particularly in the last few years since I made this film, until we started planning this conference, I didn't really look at our life and our school and think about how are we doing UDL and what does it mean to us? I didn't have to go back very far to find a pretty good example. It was Monday night, and I was talking to Samuel's paraprofessional. She supports him during both school and also some extracurricular activities. Samuel participates in the school play. He did it last year and had a great time. So today, in a few hours, are the auditions for the school play. Everybody makes

it, but they want to see kind of your talents, your abilities, see what part you might fit. So, I needed to talk with his para and think how we are going to have Samuel audition when he has trouble speaking, he has trouble reading, and he has trouble communicating. But now, he's got an augmentative communication device, a DynaVox that he uses. That has been an incredible blessing to our lives. It is amazing. We can talk more about that.

I said to his para, "What about if I program the script that he is supposed to read into the DynaVox and then you and Samuel can work together to ad lib it and really make it his own." She said, "Great, let's do that." And then she said, "You know, sometimes people bring in props for the auditions." The audition has a lot to do with like a wand that can become a lot of different things. I said, "Why not bring in one of his foam swords that he can swing and then he can use that to ad lib?" She said, "Great, great, great; we'll do that." I spent probably an hour watching the Patriots game, I might add, programming in the DynaVox and hopefully in a few hours it is all going to work. He will be able to use, maybe, his voice a little bit because he does talk at times. He will be able to use the DynaVox, his body language, his eye gestures, his facial expressions and that is how he is going to participate in this audition. Then I started thinking, well why don't I talk to the theater directors who are very inclusive and really great about making his character in a just very natural way be an AAC user. You know, not make a big deal of it, just kind of like he goes out on the stage and he communicates with his machine instead of his voice. I think they are going to love that idea. If they don't, I will convince them it's a great idea!

I know some of you in this room have seen the film before, and I appreciate your watching it again. This is a slightly edited version because it is going to be nationally on PBS this fall, which I am really excited about, so you will catch that. But I think you may also look at it if you have seen it already with a different eye, like I actually have been recently. Where is UDL taking place in all the scenes in this film? I honestly never looked at it that way until recently, and I have seen the film like 300 times. I guess what I want to do is just make a couple of quick comments about why I made this film and then we are going to watch the film.

I have a career in journalism: my background is in photojournalism. So for 20 years I was telling other people's stories. I would go into people's lives and really try to get at these complex social issues and try and make it—create a documentary in a way that would give people a common language or give people a way to think about an issue in maybe a more complex way. I never intended to point the camera on my own family. That was never part of the plan. It wasn't until about 4 or 5 years ago when three things happened all kind of at the same time that led to this film. The first thing was very intentional. I work at the Institute on Disability at UNH with my colleague Cheryl Jorgensen whom you are going to meet later; she is here. That institute is all about making sure people with disabilities have all the opportunities as people without disabilities in school and community, etc. They offer a Leadership Series, which you may know as the Partners in Policy Making; around the country it's called that. We called it the Leadership Series. My wife did it first and she took this Leadership Series,

which is like a boot camp in disability advocacy for your kids or for yourself if you are a self-advocate, around education, legal issues, healthcare, public policy, all the things you need to know – you better know – if you are going to be a great advocate for your child or for yourself. You have to learn these things, and they are complicated. She took it, and she said, “Dan, you have got to take this same class.” It’s like a year long, eight weekends, 1 weekend a month. She said we had to be on the same page because we both know there is a lot of stress involved when you are a parent of a child with disability, and it can really break a marriage, so we have got to be on the same page. I did it, and that really got me thinking about inclusion and about why this was going to be the key to Samuel’s life and happiness and success. So, you are going to learn about that a lot more in the film, and we will talk about that today I am sure.

The second thing was much more actually unpredictable and really difficult, which was, Samuel was getting strep throat again and again and again. Every winter he would go through 2 or 3 bouts, and he would get into the hospital every time. I met a man earlier who is like, he is called like a visiting teacher or something, and he goes when kids are sick for extended periods he goes and teaches them in a hospital, at home. And that is what was happening with Samuel. He was missing weeks or even months of school because of this. So Betsy and I said we have got to do something and deal with this. Samuel had a tonsillectomy and, unfortunately he developed a really severe pneumonia coming out of that and suddenly he is in intensive care. So we go from—and you know, those of you who are parents of kids with disabilities, I’m sure you have been through similar things. You go through what is kind of a typical day and suddenly you are in major crisis; your child is fighting for his life. So, coming out of that, actually during that time we were just dealing with the present, trying not to freak out too much, but Samuel’s neurologist actually came up to me and said, “Why not document this?” and I was like, “What?” He said, “Why not take your background as a photojournalist and show what it’s like to be a parent of a child with a chronic health condition?” That was completely out of left field, but I actually started taking pictures that day, that morning and throughout the rest of the week. It was kind of good, kind of cathartic to just have something to do other than worry, something that felt remotely productive. I didn’t know where it was going to go. I didn’t know what was going to become of it, but you will see some of those pictures in the film. And right around that time, I started thinking that maybe there is a documentary here, but my whole background was in still photography.

The last thing I will tell you about that happened is that I had a photo exhibit, again, right around that same time at a high school. It was kind of a retrospective exhibit of my still photography. We did show a multimedia piece I had done called Teen Sexuality in a Culture of Confusion. It was a documentary I did in the mid 90s about how teenagers make decisions around sexuality. It was produced kind of as a multimedia, but it was all still pictures and the interviews with the kids. Afterward, these high school students said, without seeing video, without seeing people move, interact, talk, we can’t really connect with them. That was kind of my “aha” moment thinking, “Okay, the world is moving faster than I am.” I have got to do something that reaches these kids. One thing I knew about this project and one thing that I am continuing to be very passionate

about is that this has to reach young people. This movement, whatever we want to call it, this effort has to reach young people. If it doesn't there won't be true, lasting change. I truly believe it. When you look at civil rights movements for African-American, women, gays, whatever, it has always been when the young people just take it for granted that this is the way it is now. We don't have separate classrooms for African-Americans. We don't have separate schools. Gay people are allowed to marry in some states. This is just the reality that is happening. That's when there is lasting change, when that just becomes the norm. So I want this to reach young people. All of those things came together in this film we are going to show you now, and I guess what I hope you see in it is a film that is a very personal story and it is a very passionate story but also brings the journalist's eye to it and shows what you all are doing every day in the classroom, I hope; you know, working hard for inclusion. It is not simple all the time. It is not clean all the time. It is complicated, but it is worth doing. I'm looking forward to sharing the film with you and talking about it afterward. Thanks.

INCLUDING SAMUEL

Isaiah: [singing] My Bonnie flies over the ocean...

Samuel: Ocean

Isaiah: Harold flies over the sea, Harold flies over the ocean, Oh look at what Harold can see!

Samuel: I can see. Wow! Take.. a bow.

Isaiah: Okay! Thank you!

Dan: My name is Dan Habib. My wifey Betsy and I have two boys: Isaiah and Samuel. When I became a photojournalist twenty years ago, I did a story on one of the first elementary schools in New Hampshire to try inclusion, or "mainstreaming," as it was called at the time. At Beaver Meadow Elementary, kids with disabilities began to join the same classrooms as kids without disabilities. Now my son goes to Beaver Meadow. He has a disability. And I think about inclusion every day.

Betsy: When Samuel was a baby and we first started realizing he might have a disability, I remember being really afraid. Because all the things you imagine for your child were things I was afraid about. How could he run around on the playground, and play kickball when he couldn't run? How could he yak on the phone with his teenage friends when he has trouble talking? How could he get a full education and go to college when he can't hold a pencil? I just couldn't imagine beyond that and I was very afraid for him and for us.

Isaiah: I am Isaiah. Samuel's brother. He was born when I was about three years old. We love to watch, like, the Patriots games together.

Isaiah: [kissing Samuel, turns to camera] You didn't get that, did you? You didn't get that.

Isaiah: [in video, tackling Samuel] Tedy Bruschi goes down! [voiceover] We love to play tackle.

Samuel: [in video, playing with Isaiah] I got you!

Isaiah: No, actually, I got you.

Isaiah: There's like, there's sunlight streaming from his smile.

Classmate 1: Samuel likes spaceships.

Classmate 2: His favorite color is yellow.

Classmate 3: Does he like sunflowers? I like sunflowers.

Dan: Those are Samuel's classmates. His friends. He's going to grow up with these kids, and they'll know him as Samuel, not the kid in the wheelchair.

Barbara O'Brien, Samuel's Teacher: Inclusion is the best way for every child to learn. Not just the child who comes in with a speech issue, or the child who uses a wheelchair. Every single child has a multiple way of learning and we need to discover those ways.

Dan: I made this film to honestly share our story as we try to figure out how to include Samuel in our school, our community, our family, in every aspect of our lives. But Samuel is young, and including him may become more and more challenging. So I also made this film to learn from the experiences of others. Like Alana Malfy, Nathaniel Orellana, Emily Huff, and Keith Jones, who can look back on the choices they made, and their parents made, and how that affected their lives.

Keith Jones

Keith Jones: You cannot, you cannot box people up in a room, 20 by 20, eight hours a day, and then ship them off into the world, and expect them to have social interaction skills. It's not gonna happen.

Dan: Keith told me what it was like to grow up in the 1970s, when almost all kids with disabilities were completely segregated from the typical kids.

Keith: I asserted myself. I don't care about paste and Popsicle sticks. I want math. You know, can I get some math? Something! I was different in the fact that a family that knew what it was and how it was to be in education. They knew what they wanted for their child. Because they also expected a lot of me. It's not all on the school, it's a two-sided equation.

Dan: Is inclusion easier for young kids like Samuel? What makes it work well, and what makes it fail?

Alana Malfy

Alana Malfy: I'm nice, and funny. But people don't know that, you know?

Carol Ward (Horticulture teacher, Pembroke Academy Public High School): We feel that they thought that inclusion was a good idea, so yes, let's do inclusion.

Alana Malfy: (speaking to teacher) Fine!

Carol Ward: I did not have any formal or informal training...

Alana Malfy: (in clip, shouting) Why can't I go on the computer!

Carol Ward: to have these students in my class. How am I going to reach the valedictorian and reach Alana at the same time? I don't know how to do that! I'm not even sure I reached the middle of the road this year. I have cried many times about this year. I don't know what to do. I don't want another year like this year.

Dan: Around the time Samuel started elementary school, I wondered "What does a school that is a model for inclusion look like?" I met Marlene Orellana, a mother who was on the same search for her child.

Nathaniel Orellana

Marlene Orellana: He was withdrawn, very repetitive in all of his movements, very very minimal speech. I didn't know anything about autism, and neither did my husband. I mean, it was like going on a rollercoaster that never ended.

Dan: Nathaniel and his family visited the Haggerty School, a public elementary school in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Marlene: As soon as I walked in through the door with my husband, we said, "This is it. It feels like home."

Joe Petner (Principal): We really accept people for who they are and what they are. Whether it's one's racial background, racial ethnic background, one's socioeconomic background, one's family constellation, one's abilities. Seeing diversity in its fullest sense as an important quality.

Nathaniel: We're having about two more minutes left.

Teacher: I can't limit him. I can't do that. Everybody else in life is going to limit him. I can't do it.

Dan: Can all children be included? Are there times when a separate school really is the best place for a student? I got to know Emily Huff as I looked for answers to those questions.

Emily Huff

Emily Huff: I am in a doctor's office, and they are talking like they know every single thing about schizophrenia that is to be known. They don't! I'm like, "You don't understand anything. When you have seven people living in your head, then we can talk." I had this internal world of fighting and friendship, all this excitement, all the things I didn't have in this world. And I continued to live in that world more and more and be in the real world with my family less and less. The more they picked on me, the more walls I put up, the more I alienated myself, the more I said to myself, "I don't want to be part of their world." It was a lot of pain, a lot of crying, a lot of uncertainty about who I was.

Anne Huff, Emily's Mother: So it was very clear, a doctor had warned a year ago, that placement in a public school was putting her at great risk.

Emily: I just want people to see the friendly, clever, smart – whatever I am – person, and not judge. People are different. Life isn't perfect. I just wish that one day I didn't have to hide who I am.

Betsy: Now that I'm so close to a person with a disability, I can't believe that I was so blind to what people with disabilities in our community, in our country, in the world, deal with every day. There was this huge civil rights issue, this huge amount of prejudice going on, and I never noticed it before.

Joe Petner (Haggerty School Principal): I see the work of inclusion as probably the last frontier of desegregation. If you read the brief from Brown vs. Board of Ed, the Board of Education argued that if we let blacks be integrated, that the next thing you know is that we'll be letting people with disabilities be integrated.

Dan: Samuel has changed the way I look at everyone around me. He has taught me not to pre-judge anyone by how they talk or whether they can talk or how they move or see or hear. He has taught me patience. He has taught me not to make assumptions.

Dan: [to Isaiah] Have you learned anything from him?

Isaiah: Yeah, I guess.

Dan: What?

Isaiah: Um, I learned it's possible to sit down and play T-ball and still hit it really far at the same time.

Dan: Samuel brought the disability rights movement into our home. And every day it brings new questions. As Samuel grows up, what can we do to make sure that people see that his cerebral palsy is just one part of who he is? Can we continue to fully include him as he goes to middle and high school? What about the times when inclusion has to take a back seat as Samuel misses weeks of school to get through another health crisis? I don't know the answers to those questions right now. But I know that Samuel loves life. He loves to laugh and he loves the Red Sox. He wants to keep up with his brother and be a part of everything we do. He will teach a lot of people, which is good. Because the world has a lot to learn.

DAN HABIB: I just want to say a couple of quick things, and then I really want you to all come to the microphones in about 10 minutes I think, and would really like to hear your thoughts, questions, comments, anything, especially about the way this film may relate to what we are here to talk about today.

You know, as I watched this film, as I said earlier, I have watched this film recently more with this eye toward UDL. I look at the technology and I look at the augmentive communication devices and the Smart Boards and some much more low-tech things, but the thing I always come back to is that it is really not about technology; it is really about attitude, and that doesn't cost anything. It's about the belief that Samuel's teachers have that he is capable, that he is smart, and that – as Lily said – they are basically failing him if they can't find ways to reach him and let him learn. We have been blessed with amazing, amazing teachers like Mrs. O'Brien. I love how she says in the film, "We need to discover those ways." We need to discover those ways that Samuel will learn. So far we have been lucky. That has been the guiding principle for his teachers; he is only in fourth grade. I believe that UDL will become even more critical for him as he gets older and as the curriculum gets more complicated, more advanced. Of course, it will help Samuel, but it will help all kids in the room to be able to learn that information through multiple channels and multiple teaching styles.

The last thing I want to say is just a quick update which, again, in the spirit of UDL, we have done a couple of things with the DVD; it is going to be re-released in October along with the PBS broadcast. We have it audio described thanks to a grant from the federal government, so that is wonderful for UDL. It has also been translated into 17 languages through volunteers. I had 17 different bilingual or trilingual people step up and offer, once I asked them, offer to translate the film. So the new DVD will also have that plus some extras and great interviews with Keith and Doug Bickel and others.

What we would like to do now is really encourage you – because I am not going to leave unless we get some questions and it's going to be awkward just to have silence for 10 minutes – to have people come up to the mikes, or if you have trouble getting to the mikes we will get a mike to you and ask questions or comments or any thoughts you want to share about the film.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Myrna Mandlawitz with the Learning Disabilities Association and the School Social Work Association. I wonder if you could talk a bit about what kind of professional development on an ongoing basis is available. I think—you live in New Hampshire, and don't take this the wrong way. It is a little state although it is very dense, I realize, but I am sure there are people here who represent very large school districts and may not have the camaraderie or the philosophy that a smaller school district might have. So, is there an ongoing professional development program and does it include beyond the teachers, the therapists and other people that work with Samuel?

DAN HABIB: You're saying on a national level or within the school?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Within the school district. What kind of professional development is going on?

DAN HABIB: I would say our school is kind of average in that way; our school district. I think that teachers have to really advocate for themselves when they want that training. I think that Samuel does not go to a model inclusion school or model UDL school honestly. I think it is a good solid school, but there are kids – I think sometimes there are a disproportionate number of kids with disabilities in certain teacher's classrooms who believe that they can do this and want to do it. And then there are certain teachers who resist it, and I think that is probably happening all over the Country. I think that the district as a whole does try and work, and we have shown this film, I have shown this film for every single teacher, para, administrator, and the school board, and most of the students in the Concord School District. I have personally presented it and they welcome that. We got grants from the Rotary to do that. So I think that they are committed to professional development. I haven't yet, honestly, seen a school district and hopefully someone will speak up today that has done this in like a truly comprehensive way that would be held up as a model. I am sure they exist: I just haven't heard about them. On a national level, I just want to mention that we are trying to address this need nationally at the institute. We actually have a federal grant to start a national center for physical education for children with autism and related disabilities, and we are just kind of getting that rolled out today. Cheryl Jorgensen is going to talk more about that we hope will address some of the national needs of all those issues.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, Dan, I'm Lisa Thomas, American Federation of Teachers, and I am not a plant. I am also a mother of a child with a disability. What do you see as the role of higher ed institutes in preparing teachers to support student with disabilities in general educational settings, and how do we use the pre-service programs to move UDL in the public schools.

DAN HABIB: Well, thank you, Lisa. This is really, again, on a personal level. I am not someone with a Ph.D. in education and I don't study the policies as closely as some of you. But, on a personal level, and anecdotally from what I have heard around the country, I hope there is a time when we just teach education to our young teachers. That it is not about special education and regular education. I think there is far too much separation in our colleges and universities. I think dual certification, co-teaching - those are great concepts. But, I think that – I hope – that is an interim step toward the point where we just teach universally designed instruction, and that's education; that's how they are trained. But honestly, I am somewhat dismayed by what I hear when I go around the country at how much separation still exists in the majority of college instruction between special and regular education.

MAXINE MOSLEY: Good morning, I'm Maxine Mosley, Manchester, New Hampshire.

DAN HABIB: All right. My neighbor, almost.

MAXINE MOSLEY: Since New Hampshire has their statewide assessment, how does your son participate in statewide assessment, and how do you feel about how he may be categorized?

DAN HABIB: Good question. He did the alternative assessment last year, and I actually liked it. I like the portfolio approach. I think it really demonstrated what he knew through his visual output, his art, his descriptions, his writing, his language. It really captured, I think, his education a lot more effectively or his knowledge than standardized testing. This year we're trying, kind of on a trial basis; you may know that you are allowed to do kind of a trial basis where the test scores don't count, but you go through the process with modifications doing some of that. The categorization...my wife actually was furious about that, and I am trying to remember exactly what the wording is; maybe you remember. But there is –

MAXINE MOSLEY “substantially below proficient” –

DAN HABIB: Right! There was some really awful language in that. I think that there is just some real catch 22's within how you enable your kids to be testing that force you to label them in ways you don't feel are accurate. We don't like that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good morning. I just want to say that I am so very thrilled that you made this film. I think that a lot of people are going to benefit from seeing it, so I hope that it is shown over and over and over again. My name is Gwendolyn Evans-Orange, and I am a visiting instructor in the District of Columbia Public Schools. I am going to ask you a question that a parent asked me the other day. What happens when the paraprofessional is absent from school?

DAN HABIB: We have - thank you for that question. We have several paraprofessionals in Samuel's school that have worked with him. He has one primary paraprofessional whom we love. This year he is actually splitting the day, which we were a little nervous about but it has worked out well I think because both of the paraprofessionals are excellent. I think it is very important for us that there are multiple people that can support Samuel. I think it fosters his independence as well because he can advocate for himself more effectively if he is with people that don't know him too well. In other words, he needs to advocate for himself if he is with someone who doesn't know him as well as his para. I think the school has set up a pretty good system where they have people that can float and can move around.

I think one of the things, again, to get at that point, we need to give Samuel independence. We need to give him all the tools for independence, and I think that's again where the augmentative communication device is so key. One thing I have told a lot of parents – we in some ways, I think, started this too late. It is fine; things are going great, but I wish I had done this a few years earlier. So those of you who work with kids

and families that don't communicate verbally...where the children don't communicate verbally...you know, 4, 5, 3, 2... I have heard of studies being done at Penn State and other places where they are starting when the kids are less than a year old with augmented communication. I think that is a great trend. I think in our society, I don't know if some of you saw the *New York Times* article yesterday about how the insurance industry has set up a system where they will reimburse for a \$10,000 DynaVox but they won't reimburse for an Iphone that does the job just as effectively. I think that our society needs to move toward making technology just more seamlessly available to kids and adults.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, I'm Pam Leconte from George Washington University. I have seen parts of this before and have had the honor to know Emily and her mom. My concern is, are you going to be disseminating this to schools in high-poverty areas where they won't have some of the technology that Sam and the others have had. My other is, how do we get this out into the general education and general public communities, because I would venture to guess, I'd like to just know how many general educators are here today. Because we have tried very hard to inform general educators of UDL, and they are very resistant or uninformed so we can't get to them.

DAN HABIB: I would be interested in what comes out today about how we define UDL and what are the qualities of it. My getting this on T.V. has been kind of my biggest effort to make it available to people. Because since it is going to be on PBS it is going to be all over the Country; people can watch it as it will be accessible. I hope that people - I have been to Louisiana, I have been to Alabama, and I have been to places in the Northeast that are quite low income. No one has said, "Oh, this feels completely unattainable to us." I hope that you don't watch this film and say, "Oh, without the technology none of this is possible." I don't think that is the message. I think the message is this is really much more of a heart and soul, heart and minds issue than it is a technology issue. I think that it has resonated in some of the lower-income communities. It was very important to me to make film that looked like America. I could have shot this whole thing in New Hampshire, and believe me, it would not have been as ethnically diverse. For my next film, which is going to focus on the inclusion of kids with emotional and behavioral disabilities using school-wide approaches like PBIS it is just as important for me to make it feel like America and feel like it's diverse so that everyone feels like they are represented in the film. I hope that answers your question to an extent.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, my name is Mike Nichols, Assistive Technology Coordinator with Loudoun County Public Schools in Virginia and, of course, seeing the technology components – the tech speak and the joy sticks and the DynaVox that you mentioned, I am just curious as to the level of training and support that has been provided to the classroom teacher and whether or not it was outside agencies or internal training structures in order to educate the teachers and the students about the integration and the awareness of these tools.

DAN HABIB: Good question, and this may be the last one; maybe one more question. I will tell you on a very personal kind of anecdotal level, the school district has one consultant for AAC who is fabulous. She comes to the district two days, I think, every month or two. She just works with every single team that is using AAC. She is very available by email. She is just a great SLP. She is just terrific. She is on top of the technology. She has come in and done – and one of the things we do as parent advocates is we make sure everybody is in the room. We say we want to have a meeting, and we want everybody on his team to be there so we can all hear this together. So we will have 10 people at a table all learning this together; his classroom teacher, his paraprofessional, his OT, his PT, which is as we all know is really hard to get everyone together. But parents are the ones that can usually make it happen if we advocate for it. I think having everyone in the room, and then we kind of break off pieces of it. You know, his paraprofessional has become very proficient at programming his DynaVox; his OT has really worked on using his hands for the joysticks and everything and figuring out the positioning. The PT has worked on his wheelchair positioning and how tight the harness should be and things like that. It is all about communication. It's all about communication, and we as parents try hard to kind of be, as much as we can, the hubs of that communication. But, if the parents aren't able or willing to do that, the school needs to do that. The school needs to continue that communication. So I think we probably have time for one last question. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you for the film and thank you for the leadership you're giving. In terms of your last technology is attitude, and the attitude is so important in terms of all educators and boards of education and the like. Do you perceive that there is any real emphasis on changing the attitude or working with attitude in terms of other students in general, families in general, communities in general which seems to me to set the context for a lot of this.

DAN HABIB: That's a great question and a good one to end the discussion on. I am seeing change. I mean, I think just the fact that we are all here today is a pretty good indication of some change. I think that when you have true cultural change – to me this is really about cultural change... it's the way that we see disability in our society, as not necessarily as a deficit but as just a difference, just a natural part of our diversity just like ethnic diversity, socioeconomic diversity. That is to me the most important thing. When you have long-lasting change – if you look back at the civil rights movements, it is not through one film or one curriculum change or one law – it is usually through the media, it is through law, it's through grassroots activism, it's through all these things happening together, and I am seeing that with the disability movement. I am seeing it happening in education and public policy, and I truly believe at some point we are going to look back at these segregated classrooms that we have for kids with disabilities and see them like we do now for racial segregation. I truly believe that and I hope that is the case. So, thank you.