SANDY HO:

Welcome to the Disability & Philanthropy Disability Equity Series. My name is Sandy Ho and I use she/her pronouns. I'm a member of the disability community. I'm also the executive director of the Disability & Philanthropy Forum, and I'm Zooming into you today from the unceded territory of the Massachusetts Wampanoag and Pawtucket Peoples. I want to take a moment to thank our audience for tuning in today and also for our incredible panel of guest speakers who are going to be sharing their brilliance with us. Before we continue though, I want to state clearly that our work at the Disability & Philanthropy Forum continues. There was not ever going to be an election or state-based outcome where the liberation and freedom of disabled people would've been secure, and that is especially true of historically marginalized, disabled, trans, queer, Black, Two-Spirit, Indigenous and people of color. For all of us who arrive together in freedom, disability, justice, rights and inclusion cannot take a back seat.

As we take a collective breath in and out, I want to just name some accessibility pieces that will be helping our discussion today. As part of our commitment to accessibility, our panelists and I will each provide an audio description of ourselves. I'm an Asian American woman with short, dark, wavy hair. Today I'm wearing a dark blue sweater and my background behind me is blurred. My access needs are met with the support of captions.

Some other housekeeping items. There are two ways to access the captions today. You can either use the CC button that's at the bottom of your Zoom screen or the link to the external captions that are being grabbed in the chat. Today, it is a webinar, so only our moderators and panelists will be on camera. Our audience will be muted throughout the event and you will be receiving the recording.

We invite you to submit questions in the chat. We'll also use the chat to share links. The questions that you direct should be submitted through the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen, and we'll try to get to as many of those as possible. If the Q&A is not accessible to you, please feel free to send your questions to communications@disabilityphilanthropy.org.

To get us started in our conversation for today, we have a poll question to help set the context for our conversation. Please feel free to answer it now in the box that just popped up on our screen. If the poll is not accessible to you, please feel free to email communications@disabilityphilanthropy.org. The poll question is, compared to the national average, Native people are how much more likely to have a disability?

To moderate our panel, I'm truly delighted to introduce Carly Hare, who's a portfolio director and senior director of advancing equity at Colorado Health Foundation. Carly joined on the panel by two disabled Indigenous leaders, Jen Deerinwater and Héctor Manuel Ramírez. You can learn more about our panelists today from their bios that are being linked in the chat.

As I hand it over to Carly, the correct answer to the poll is choice D, compared to the national average, Native people overall are 50% more likely to have a disability, and that is according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. All right, that being said, Carly, take it away.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you so much, Sandy. Nawa, Tâtasa' Carly Hare. Tâtasa' <i kita u hoo <i]a hiks. Pawnee Yankton. Hello, my name is Carly Hare. My Pawnee name is <i kita u hoo <i]a hiks. I'm a citizen of the Pawnee Nation and I use she/her pronoun. I am a Native woman with chin-length hair, a black dress with woodlands, bright-colored designs on it in front, oh and some beautiful dangly dentalium earrings, in front of a screen that also has white screen and black lines and a flag of my nation, the Pawnee Nation, behind me.

We'd like to open us, as Sandy did as well, with land acknowledgement. I'm coming in from the traditional homelands of the Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples in the high plains of Colorado, just north of Denver. We are excited to be here with you and to share this time with you, and I'm excited to be part of this conversation.

It is a priority to think about how we serve our community and everyone in our community. And as the poll just showed us, we know Native people experience disability in higher rates, and so this conversation is very important and pressing, particularly this month, this Native American Heritage month. We hope you connect with our presenters and get a chance to learn more about where you may play a partnership role in this work.

Let's begin by introducing our speakers. I'm excited to be joined by Jen Deerinwater who will join us on the screen in just a second and Héctor Manuel Ramírez. Rather than hearing their bios, which are located in the information materials, we're going to have them introduce themselves. We're asking them to start with sharing their name, pronouns, visual descriptions and a sentence describing how they'd like the audience to know them. And Jen, we'll start with you.

JEN DEERINWATER:

Osiyo. This is Jen Deerinwater. I prefer to just be called Jen, but they/them pronouns is okay with me. My visual description, I am a white-coated Native, Two-Spirit woman. I say woman as a political category, not actually as my gender. I'm wearing glasses. I have brown hair that I am wearing down at shoulder-length. I have on a multicolor blue and a tan sweater. I've got on dark blue lipstick and I've got some photos on the walls behind me of different Native art. And one sentence about myself. Oh yes, I'm on the Piscataway homelands. Sentence about myself. I'm trying to come up with something that you can't just read about me online. I guess we'll just go with something silly and personal. I have three cats and I am wrapped around their little paws and one of them refused to leave the room I'm in. So you may see a little black and white tuxedo cat with a red collar at some point today.

CARLY HARE:

Héctor, please feel free to introduce yourself as well.

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

Yes, this is Héctor. My camera is stalled off and I think that's perhaps a tech issue, but my name is Héctor Ramírez. Ya'ateh, buenos dias, everybody. I am a person with a disability. My pronouns are they/them. I have a variety of non-apparent disabilities, invisible disabilities, like

myself on the screen right now. I think as a person who is not apparently disabled is part of my identity. I am Chiricahua, Apache, and Mexican and my family and I currently live here in the unceded ancestral lands of the Tataviam Band of San Fernandeño Mission Indians. I am a person with a disability and I have been a disability rights advocate for most of my life.

I think that the sentence that would describe me is continuously growing. I'm getting older. Growing and getting older is different, and I'm glad to be doing both at the same time, but I'm growing and I'm not sure into what, but it's a journey that I share with my family to support each other. I am not unlike most of our family members. And as a Two-Spirit, disabled, queer person, I tend to grow and create shape for other people in my family who are like me or have little pieces of me, and I'm glad to be here for the time that I'll be. I think that's one of the things. I'm going to work on my camera right now. Thank you.

CARLY HARE:

Great, thank you so much. So we will begin with continuing that journey to learn more about this work and your work in this work and the opportunity to engage the folks on this webinar around how disability presents and where there are opportunities to partner within Native communities. We'll start with a question, and Jen, if I can start with you on how has your personal story shaped how you navigate the world?

JEN DEERINWATER:

Yeah. So I am a Cherokee Nation citizen. I am multiply disabled. My disabilities have been there since childhood and they're becoming more and more severe with age. Once upon a time I worked in music, I worked in politics, and now I'm in journalism and run a nonprofit. I think that one of the biggest things that probably influences all of the work that I've done in my life as well as just how I live my life in general is that I've spent most of my life being the only one of something in the room. The only Native, the only disabled person. For many years, I was one of the only openly queer people or one of the only bisexuals in the room. All of the educational professional programs that I had went through when I was younger, I was always supposed to have a mentor, but I never had one because what I was always told is there's no one like you to mentor you.

So many opportunities were just not given to me. Plus just the pain and the erasure and all of the different forms of bigotry that come with always being the only one in the room and being faced with either having to stay quiet and just swallow up abuse and let it eat me up inside or make noise and make people angry and possibly not always be welcome in the room. I did the first for a long time and that didn't work well, so now I'm doing the second. So yeah, I think that's the short answer that I can give you all.

CARLY HARE:

Jen, thank you so much and I love the thunder. I love the thunder you're bringing today and the thunder you're bringing into the world. Héctor, let's hear about you and your personal story.

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

Well, having been born Mexican, moving around. By the time I was 40, I think we had moved like 30 times around. I think realizing that home was still just my community, making community, being part of so many different communities really sometimes didn't feel at all like I belonged in any of them. But as a person with a disability, that was the one thing that I had in common with all of them. I think as I've gotten older, that for me has been the place where I really center my energy and where I make space for my family. I have done a lot of advocacy work throughout my life, nonprofits and research, policy. And it's interesting just to have a broader picture of what really causes disability, poverty of justice, poverty of access to resources, poverty of dignity, of humanity, and realizing that we're all trying to address those pinpoints from different areas, and it's difficult.

I think now as I'm getting older, I am focusing more on bringing all those other people to a more common space just to survive. I learned that through COVID, definitely through our disability community or Native community. We had similar survival strategies. We looked at what had worked before. We recognized that we had to look out for each other. It's been interesting to really join those two communities because the struggles are just so interconnected and that's really what I have been focusing.

I wear a lot of different hats sometimes, but in real life I have just long hair, like my long hair. I sometimes wear a hat if it's sunny, but it's weird how to survive, we have to wear so many different hats sometimes. And that just work around being ourselves and it's exhausting. And so I think just those are the things that I'm focusing on, how to move forward with the new challenges because they're always there. They've always been there, especially for our communities. And it's an interesting journey and I'm very glad to be sharing this space with all of you to do this.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you so much. You both spoke to this in that last question, but let's ground this for the audience, the importance of the conversation today. Why is it crucial to explore this intersection of disability and indigeneity? Héctor, can you start?

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

Yes. I think first of all, recognizing that we're all here in this nation in Native land. It is an unsettled tragedy that disables us as people living here. It sets the stage for how everybody else is treated. As Native people, we have one of the highest rates of disability, and we are supposed to be the most resilient. We embody resilience because we have to, not because we are. It's part of our heritage, but it is a consequence of the environment and it's a similar type of issue with disabilities. Disabilities is that one intersectional identity that runs across all gender, social, education, cultural, even religious intersections, and even in academia and workplace. It impacts everything. When I think of policy issues, I can link anything to disability, any topic. Throw me any topic, I can link it to disability rights. The same can be done for Native rights. Bring me any issue whatsoever and we can link it to Native rights.

It is that shared commonality that holds those through needs as actually being more valid than anything else. They are so intertwined both as a cause and as a possible solution to healing that I think many of us have been really struggling to really articulate in a non-clinical model. Many of us have mental illnesses because we go crazy with grief and racism and trauma, and it is not something that is part of our biology necessarily, but it's cause of the environment. The realities of who we are for our two spirits and trans communities, who are now under so much stress, really sends a shimmer to how we cannot as a community still be who we are or try to reclaim who we are.

So it is a constant struggle, but it is one that we not only share with the data and the disability community, but we share with other groups, the most marginalized, the most neglected and scrutinized. We have those battles and I think in this past couple of weeks, we have all become more aware of that common bond than before. The fear, the grief, the concerns are there, but also the activation, the call to action, the reminding folks that for us, this is still something that continues and that has been giving people hope. That is giving people a reason to get up in the morning. For me, advocacy has been medicine and I think this is what we need for our community now more than ever, as always.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you, Héctor. Jen, what are your thoughts to share?

JEN DEERINWATER:

Well, first I agree with everything Héctor said. I was over here nodding my head yes emphatically. I think in my own research, particularly just like Héctor said, every issue is a Native issue, is a disabled issue and so forth. Thinking about my own research, looking at climate, environmental degradation and Indigenous people on a global level, what I found was it wasn't just those of us considered American Indian and Alaska Native here in the so-called U.S., but it's our relatives in so-called Australia, so-called Canada, Aotearoa, known as New Zealand. Every single place I could find data, Indigenous people had the highest rates per capita of disabilities. This isn't because we're somehow genetically more predisposed. It's because of colonialism. It's because of genocides that are still occurring to this day. That's why.

I can say for my own personal self, I recently learned that a spinal fusion I had almost seven years ago, despite me telling doctors repeatedly how much pain I was in, turns out it wasn't a successful surgery. So I've been in agonizing pain for years while doctors just keep telling me, "Oh, it's just mental illness." Well now I have to have two surgeries to fix that. It's also not a coincidence in my mind that while in the hospital for that original surgery, I was called a Redskin and a lot of other deplorable names. These are the outcomes of anti-Native racism and genocide and the way that they're still impacting us in the very real moments of today.

Since we are here to talk about philanthropy, I'll get into that as well now and say that the philanthropic industry is also responsible for this. Everything that foundations have, they have because of Native genocide as well as the minoritization and oppression of other groups of people like Black folks and women and so forth. But everything you have, you have because of

what you took from us and you continue to keep from us. There are more than enough resources to go around. No Native or disabled person, let alone a Native and disabled person or led organization should be out here struggling for funds.

I don't have the healthcare I need. I don't get a salary. I don't have full-time staff. I don't even have part-time staff for my nonprofit. We're out here doing amazing work and the funds are not coming our way. It's infuriating because not only is that us from being able to do the work on top of all of the institutional fears that organizations like Crushing Colonialism are suffering from right now, the overturn of affirmative action in the '23 Supreme Court session. Now, we've had both Democrats and Republicans trying to take away tax status for nonprofits that they deem terrorist organizations. Well, we are both an arts and a news outlet. We do accurate reporting. So if we report something and we report it truthfully and the government doesn't like it, they can come in now or they're trying to at least come in and say, we're just terrorists and take our nonprofit status.

There are so many things coming at us on a daily basis from our own personal lives to the professional and not having the funding and not having the resources that we have is harming our communities. Also, by purposefully impoverishing us by both the federal government and the philanthropy sector, it also means that our Tribal governments aren't funding these intersections either because they can't, or for whatever reason, i.e., their own ableism, they're not funding it. I can't look to my Tribe, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the largest federally recognized Tribe in this country. I can't look to them to help me. They don't help me with any of my disability needs. They do nothing. So I'm going a bit off into the weeds I feel like, but these are the intersections of why it's so important and what's happening when we're not being funded and how it's hurting us as individuals and as communities.

I have to keep saying it, everything the foundations have, they have because of what they took from us and they continue to keep from us. And along the way, through the way that they are doing some funding of Native community, they're actually creating problems within our communities because they're only giving the money to one or two organizations and then expecting all the rest of us to fight it out to get that money re-granted to us. It's also put a lot of really bad actors into place where a lot of harm is really done within our communities because only a few people have all the resources. So I'm going to stop there.

CARLY HARE:

Jen, I think having spent two decades now in philanthropy, you have both named it very clearly that both Indigenous and Native populations and communities have through lines into every single programmatic area that is funded in philanthropy and so does disability has a through line into every single area. However, we are often on each side, just in the interstitial spaces of those Venn diagrams. We're just outside of them. We're rarely ever captured in the crossover. So we'd love to hear from you talk about the double exclusion that disabled Indigenous organizations are facing.

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

This is Héctor. Can I answer? Yeah. Advocacy comes in many ways. Research comes in many ways. And the work that nonprofits do sometimes because of the funding streams is very narrow, very restrictive, very ineffective. Oftentimes that lack of diversity in funding for advocacy or other types of nonprofit support that philanthropy can do is very limited compared to what happens in other sectors of their portfolios. We oftentimes only provided the opportunity to do things in a very clinical matter under various strict parameters, utilizing data that is inaccessible or inaccurate. As we look right now, for example, on our electoral results, we know that having accurate data sources to really provide messages of our community that are truthful and accurate and valid are important. Unfortunately, some of those data sets are continuously farmed to send a very skewed message to the general public.

But there are sometimes opportunity where we have been able to get work to try to fight that data invisibility that helps to contribute to the disparities of funding for our communities have given us a little bit of glimpse to advancing that work. But that has only been able to happen because of some of the work from some of our philanthropic partners that have oftentimes taken a risk or really, really having become committed to support our communities. That group of funders, it's very small, incredibly small at times because they don't recognize the significant impact and well-being that our work will have. Not just to environmental issues and women's issues, but health issues.

For example, we at the Inter-Tribal Disability Council got an opportunity to do a research project in an Indigenous manner, in a Native manner. It was a very interesting experience coming from California where I work with larger budgets and incredible opportunities for research to see how we had to again embody resilience even in this work that we did. It is very challenging because it taxes sometimes our hardworking people that come to the table because we have to do everything while trying to survive, while trying to keep our communities. Like Jen says, we are hold and held at a different standard than the other recipients. And so it really has continued to put us on a different path that cannot continue. It's not sustainable for them because the work that they're doing is just, it is not having that impact, but yet we see that our communities are really thriving with what we're doing.

And so having to have that diversity is just going to be necessary moving forward and realizing that at times we really just have to look out for each other. That in the disability community and the Native community is one of the things that we hope we can inspire in the philanthropic community, realizing that we are actually that connecting element. Instead of being outside of the Venn diagram, we're actually that interwoven element that connects everything together. I think realizing that commonality is just so vital right now.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you, Héctor. Jen, anything else you would add in relationship to that double exclusion challenge?

JEN DEERINWATER:

I feel like... I don't even know what to say. There's so much. My mind is spinning.

CARLY HARE:

Well, I have a pivot if it'll help you.

JEN DEERINWATER:

Yes, go ahead. Let's pivot.

CARLY HARE:

You named some ongoing challenges and problematic tendencies that philanthropy has, but what would you suggest as we think about the other side of that conversation, how can philanthropy engage in ethical, sustainable grant making with disabled Indigenous communities?

JEN DEERINWATER:

Oh, so many ways, so many ways. First of all, make your grant applications easier and disability accessible. I'm so frustrated with the lack of disability access and just ease. Some of these grant applications are absurdly long and the things they ask are absurd. There was one grant that Crushing Colonialism had looked at, and it wasn't a particularly large grant even. It wasn't even a six figure grant, but they wanted us to have an audit. We've not needed an audit. An audit is $10,000 and upwards. We don't have money for an audit. We need to start giving, when I say we, I mean philanthropy, operational funds. Native community can't fund our organizations. I'm just going to keep using the nonprofit I run as an example, but Crushing Colonialism, I didn't start with any seed money. There was none of one of those magical, so-called angel investors people talk about. We didn't start with a dime. We got here because I did this work unpaid for years and years and years.

And now even though I am being paid a little, it's still very low. It's because of a lot of Native people sacrificing themselves that got us here, but we still don't have operational funds. It's part of the reason I don't have staff. I can't give health insurance. I can't give people paid time off. I can't do any of those things. So giving operational funds is huge. Stop requiring things from us. I feel like as Native community and especially disability Native community, we're being held to this standard that's way high up, while we have purposely been kept way down here. How am I supposed to get you an audit when Native community can't fund an audit and you don't want to pay for an audit? How am I supposed to do programming if I don't have staff because you don't want to pay for staff? These things are absurd and they keep minoritizing marginalized communities, particularly ones that are very small like Native communities and just don't have large populations, let alone wealth. They keep us down.

They keep us in this place of oppression where we can't dig our way out. So these are some examples of what I would like to see. I also really want to see philanthropy actually making long-lasting relationships with Native community. They need to start knowing who we are and they need to start funding real Native people. Unfortunately, over the years, I've seen through fellowships and grants and stuff, pretendians, which means people who are not Native saying they're Native, getting funding. That's really problematic. Who is on the backside making

decisions about who gets grants, who gets fellowships? Who's judging on those things? Do you have actual Native people here who are culturally a part of our Tribes or enrolled in our Tribes? The answer is generally no, they don't. They don't know anything about us.

They also, I find in some cases there's been some expectations that all of the work we do and everything we do must be online and fully accessible for the entire world. Well, that's not always appropriate for Native people. I feel like there's just a cultural competency that I don't see there around working with Native and disabled people, let alone those of us that are both. And Héctor has touched on this, but also we need to start thinking of disability funding as Native funding and Native funding as disability funding and so on. We are funding all of this, because last time I checked, we are all of those things.

And so just because you have money put aside, "Oh, this is specifically for disability community." Well, Crushing Colonialism doesn't serve specifically disability community, but we're ran by almost entirely disabled Native people and we go out of our ways to make sure that we stay rooted in disability justice. Not just access, but justice. So I think that these are just some of the problems I've seen and some of the things that could be done to make change and make this situation better for all of us.

CARLY HARE:

Great. I think that's a very valid point that I'm sure our co-sponsor, Native Americans in Philanthropy and Disability & Philanthropy Forum would agree the representation in the field is minimal for Indigenous folks and for people with disabilities, looking across both staffing positions and especially in board level positions and where we have the opportunity to thread direction and vision.

Speaking of our co-host, Native Americans in Philanthropy who I have a previous relationship to and with and continue to through today, they remind us that investing in Native peoples is always a solid investment. How does funding for the disabled and Indigenous communities impact everyone? Héctor, we'd love to hear your insight on that.

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

It pays so much. It's so much. It's unbelievably rich and it's unrecognized because I think people have always benefited from it, always enjoyed it. The air, the water, the land that they step in, first of all is part of that. But then it's also the opportunity that the work that we bring does to philanthropy work.

Philanthropy, as we know, is created out of wealth that comes with blood at times in it. And oftentimes philanthropy has the ability to be that balancing act or corrective element to it by giving back to communities with an intentionable and committed approach that is not tokenized or in the disability, we have disability tokenism. We have a lot of disability forum, disability inspirational. And in the Native community, we have those representation problems as well. But really committing to those people and communities that are doing the work. We know that investing in those particular efforts not only makes the work that they do more legitimate and valid, and it shows that there is a commitment from that body to try to restore and balance the

work that they're doing and the impact that it's having on the people that are affected by their work. It is a way of healing.

And by healing the communities, it has first of all, a financial factor to it. And we know for example, that a lot of our practices not only help to alleviate a lot of suffering for communities by recognizing those as people, but for example, I'll use an example with the award that we got from the Borealis Foundation to do this particular project, and we did it in the middle of COVID. We weren't sure if we were going to finish. All of us, I think had COVID during the course and we were all people with disabilities and volunteering. We did this report to follow up something that had been funded almost 24 years ago, and it got put in the shelves at the federal government and we wanted to re-highlight what was happening and now in COVID. And we highlighted first of all, a significant importance, trauma that was currently happening to our trans community as it was starting to come across the nation.

So we were able to really highlight that trend from the beginning as well as women's issues. But we also offered some really tangible solutions that came from our communities. We re-emphasized and showed the effectiveness of traditional healers in our communities and in the argumentations that our communities here in California and Arizona and New Mexico have been having at the federal level to expand not only funding but services, we were able to use this work from the disability community where we cited that importance of using traditional healers because we had a traditional healer in our group as well. We were able to really for the first time, get the federal government to be able to accept traditional healers as a reimbursable practice for our community. It's something that helps to advance not only medicine because we know it worked, it has been working. That's a need to be evidence-based. It is historically based.

And so we have been really adding as well to the conversation about how people with disabilities are themselves a health disparity population. And we highlighted that within the disability community and the impact. The number that you highlighted earlier about the statistics of people with disabilities comes from the federal government. And I have to say, it is very low to what it actually is. And we know that having to have those conversations of saying, "Oh, thank you for that number." But you know what? Talking to our community, we know it's not right. And this is a similar conversation to the voting election results right now. So we're able to offer clarity to the information that these communities are doing. And so it's a very, very battle. So I think philanthropy organizations have a lot to benefit from the work that we do.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you so much. And I would just name that there are two, there's a deeper report referenced in the chat around the information that Héctor was showing on the more practical and real data that's there. And also in the field of philanthropy, thinking about what representation looks like. CHANGE Philanthropy host of the DAPP Survey, and the 2022 report is listed here. 2024 report should be coming out within the next few months, so you'll be able to take a look at that as well. And I think Héctor, you named it as well. And Jen, you named versions of this too. We are our own solutions often and foundations and philanthropy can follow us in the work.

In building power and funding ecosystems and thinking about systems change, there are a number of Native efforts that are already underway. Today, the Native Voices Rising grantee list got posted, and that is one, an effort of an Indigenous led, Indigenous participatory grant making process that really is about moving money to systems change and advocacy and civic engagement in different ways.

So those are a few examples in which people can participate and engage. And we would love to hear as we're closing out on our time before we get to the Q&A, what is your call to action for philanthropy? Jen, can I start with you and then Héctor, we'll come back to you.

JEN DEERINWATER:

Sure. I feel like I've said it a bit already, but my call to philanthropy is to actually start building real, genuine relationships with us. Don't just come to us when you want us. Don't just come to us the month of November or for Indigenous Peoples' Day. We're here year-round. We don't go away. We don't close up shop. We're always here. Start funding us. Start funding our disabled Native leaders.

It's really hit me this week. I've had a few people recently, youth in queer and Native spaces and stuff, call me an elder. I'm only 45. That feels weird. But also the reality is that a lot of us don't get to stick around and make it to 80, 90 years old. This is on philanthropy to some extent. You can fund us so that we can actually grow to be 80, 90-year-old elders. Elders shouldn't be someone in their 40s. Make this work truly accessible for us. Start meeting us where we are at, giving us the resources that we need so that we can come in and do this work because we're all already doing it. We just need the resources to grow it and sustain it and do it well and not harm ourselves in the process.

I also want to say, I think sometimes because I... I always balance trying to say what I think needs to be said and not being a complete jerk about it, but I want to say, because I feel like sometimes this gets lost in the message is that when I say these things, it's not because I'm trying to be a crab in the bucket or because I'm just being mean. It's because I see where our communities and our people can do better. When I say things about my own Tribe, it's not from a place of hate. Sure, there are some pain and some anger there, but it's coming out of love for my people and knowing my people can do better. It's the same with disability community. We can all do better. There's more than enough resources out there. Start giving them to us and let us keep on with this work and let us keep growing. I'm tired of crumbs. I deserve a life, just like we all do, that's based in justice and joy, and a few measly crumbs here and there isn't going to bring that.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you, Jen. Héctor?

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

Yeah, thank you. I think to really continue on that commitment of support, and that means to have actual authentic, connected representation in their staff, in their board members, in their

planning, in their evaluations, in their projects. It's to have that equitable approach to their intentions to really be intentional about not only supporting Native projects, but Native nonprofit organizations and Native philanthropy also. It also exists, Native philanthropy exists. It's not something that has to be created, it's already here. So definitely partnering with those Native philanthropic organizations that are doing the work. And I'm thinking definitely our host. And also for example of the IllumiNative.

In California, we have a lot of philanthropic work happening in Native country, which happens to be where everybody lives. And so definitely having that commitment, offer grants not only that are accessible to the disability community, but reduce those barriers of access, lower those requirements, have discretionary grants like here's this amount, what do you want to do with it? There you go. Like that. Just like that. When people go outside and they walk and they breathe the air and they drink the water and they feel the grant, they don't ask us for permission, they don't ask us for nothing. Have that respect for us. Give us back those resources that have allowed you to thrive so that communities can continue to thrive along with you in this journey.

It is a long journey. It is a long game. And you know what? Our communities embodied resilience. We have been here for a long, long time. There's a lot you could learn from this. There's a lot we could all learn from this. And I think that's the benefit. That's the recommendation that I have for philanthropy. And that's actually my elevator speech, by the way.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you. I think there's a couple through lines between both Jen's call to action and Héctor's call to action around how philanthropy itself can learn from Indigenous communities, from collective Tribal communities and connections in ways that philanthropy really needs to be steeped in reciprocity. And we think about philanthropy in a very one-sided, one-directional way often. And our communities and our organizations and our orientation and our humanity from an Indigenous perspective is connected in multi-directional ways. We are bringing the things.

Years ago, we tried to start a hashtag, which I'm going to draw back into the chat that hashtag, we are the original philanthropists. Indigenous people in the way we care for community and the way that our traditional values, systems are practiced, even contemporary places are about the care and connection of our people and the care of connection of ourselves. So just asking philanthropy to call into that and recognize that in different ways would be wonderful.

We want to hear from some of the questions that have come up from our audience and from our attendees today. And really just thinking about...One I call in is what examples of non-philanthropic models of support exist in Indigenous spaces that might be used to improve or replace philanthropic models of support? So mutual aid pops to my mind right away and traditional community exchanges. But Héctor, Jen, what would you share on that?

JEN DEERINWATER:

This is Jen. So yeah, obviously mutual aid, but then I also think of things like the blanket dance or yeah, it's the blanket... Sorry about that. My video went off. We're at Native events or

powwows or community gatherings. People go around with a blanket and everyone throws money in. That's one example. I also, while we're here talking about philanthropy and nonprofits and stuff, I do want to mention too, because this came to mind earlier as we were talking about the investment in Native community. There's also been a surge of Native businesses and Native funding. There's Skoden Ventures, and I believe Raven Capital that are both out here trying to get funding to Native businesses. So I think that there's a lot of ways that we can look at Indigenous community in that way.

I want to think about something that my people in particular have. I might be mispronouncing this. I'm still in the very early stages of trying to learn my language, but it's something called Gadugi. It's the principle of Gadugi. It's not I, it's we. What I'm doing, it's about my ancestors. It's about the people here now. It's about the generations to come. I think that that is really important. I guess if we want to talk about it in a colonial way, you can say it's a form of philanthropy, I guess, and that it's not just about this one individual, it's about the collective betterment of the Tribe, of the people and not just in the now. It's that thinking about going forward, everything I'm doing right now has impacts on so many generations to come. So those are just some examples and things that have been popping to mind as we've been talking throughout this, well, afternoon for me.

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

This is Héctor just. Well, I mean, everything about philanthropy really has in many ways originated from our communities. I mean showing up for community most importantly in whatever way possible is what we do. When we can, showing up for family, being there, it's definitely. But I think more than anything, it's being a good relative to one another and recognizing that when we try to interact with each other, inter-Tribal, intergenerational, inter-disability, being a good relative to each other is one of the things that we model in everything that we do. And that's a priceless thing. It's sometimes better than any pill that I have ever taken when I was feeling bad.

It's sometimes hard to have hard conversations or to go into difficult spaces, but oftentimes for us, that is not the case. I am always amazed and really humble to just see the diversity of Tribal Nations across these lands and the way in which the model philanthropy and generosity in so many unique different ways, so many distinct different matters and opportunities for not only all of us to learn, but for philanthropy to learn. They have so much more to learn. So I don't want to say, I don't want to give anything away. Reach out to Tribal Nations, reach out to Tribal organizations and listen and hear and watch what they do and see how much of that you are not already doing by a different name, but how much you can still do by the name of what we already do.

CARLY HARE:

Thank you, Héctor. That's beautiful. I would continue that challenge of reaching out and continue to reach out. There's been a lot of trauma that has been impacted and that philanthropy has a role in Native communities and Tribal communities and Native organizations. It is not necessarily what you expect, but there is some collective healing that when you reach

out to Native and Tribal communities that keep showing up. We've been harmed and we've been hurt.

To one of Jen's earlier point, we're often allowed a very small sub-segment of the funding that's available and it becomes very competitive. And in some communities, we decide that for ourselves, we decide who's going to apply for what, so that the funder doesn't make that decision about us in ways. And that is survival mechanisms that we have developed. So thinking about how philanthropy can be better at being in relationship and partnership with us. And that's showing up even if you get a mad mug from us for a while. Keep showing up.

Another question that came up for us, and we have probably time for maybe one, maybe two more questions. And this is great because you both mentioned this in your conversation. What gaps in research methodology and or philosophy exist in disability studies from an Indigenous perspective? Where are we getting it wrong? Where are we falling into those traps?

JEN DEERINWATER:

This is Jen. I think I would start by saying Native people aren't in those spaces. We're not the ones doing the research. We're not the ones designing the research in many cases. I don't want to say we're not ever, but in many cases we're not welcome in these disability spaces in the ways that we should be back in sort of the earlier days than COVID because COVID is not over. We are still very much in this and many of us are still living in fear of it. But in the earlier days when the CDC director made some comment about how it was, I believe her words were encouraging that it was only people with co-occurring health issues that were getting sick and dying. The disability community, rightfully so, got very angry. Some folks arranged a call with the CDC, but was there a single Native on the call? No, we weren't invited. We weren't welcome. When the disability community had calls with Elizabeth Warren years ago when she was running for president, were we welcome on those calls? No.

So these are some areas where we are not being included. And where I do see some inclusion, there is some inclusion happening, particularly in disability justice spaces. A huge shout-out to my disability justice fam, they're amazing. But there's still only a couple of us that get called into these spaces, which is why I keep saying build relationships. I'm always honored to be invited and to be in these spaces, but I don't want to be the only one being heard. There's definitely plenty of disabled Native folks out here. Start building those relationships. It might take some time to do that. We have so much trauma. We're not going to necessarily trust you right out the gate. So like you had kind of said, Carly, we may mean mug you for a while, but if you keep showing up and you're doing it in a good way, eventually we'll know you're really here for us.

Yeah, so I think that's kind of where I look at disability stuff and we're just always excluded. We're excluded from data. And when data's collected, it's always inaccurate. They don't even know who Native people are. Not to get lost in the weeds, but all this Native polling data around who voted for what party, which presidential candidate was so inaccurate. They didn't actually pull any real Native people. So these are just kind of examples that I see over and over again. And I also, I had a thought earlier while Héctor was talking, thinking about ways in which we do philanthropy in Native communities. Standing Rock and the NoDAPL movement came to mind.

We had some relatives literally hitchhiking to get their way to that reservation because our relatives up there put the call-out and said, "Please come stand with us." We had relatives come all the way from Aotearoa and come into Oaxaca. We had relatives from, the Sámi relatives from the Nordic areas come, our Tribal government support it. I know my Tribe sent firewood. These are ways of reciprocity and I guess you could also call philanthropy that we're just doing. We're not requiring a grant application. We're just doing it because really when our people say we need help, we're supposed to show up and we do show up. So I'm going to stop and kick it over to Héctor because I know we're running out of time.

HÉCTOR MANUEL RAMÍREZ:

No, this is Héctor. Yeah, definitely agree with what everything's been said about this topic. I do a lot of research and academia is such an ivory tower. It is a very hostile, very dangerous, very toxic work. And oftentimes the work that gets cited the more is from some of the most hostile places to try to enter. But that doesn't mean we're not doing the research and we're not doing the work. We have great, smart, brilliant, Native Indigenous, disabled people that are doing work in Indigenous disability research. It doesn't get the attention that a lot of this other work does because we are looked up upon as being niche type of topic rather than more representative. And oftentimes it's intentionable, but oftentimes I think it happens out of ignorance and fear in those spaces. But I think showing up.

When we are doing our work, come to us for the work. Don't call us in because you need a subject matter experts so you can cite us in the footnotes and say that you have been inclusive or had a consultant. Really be supportive. Show up for our work, just like we had to show up for yours at your conferences. And that's one of the things that we oftentimes don't have as Indigenous disabled people. We don't have opportunities to meet as just disabled community. As Native people. We have that relationship. We have lots of cousins sometimes, lots of aunties and the disability community. We are related to each other not by that. And I say we are related sometimes just by diagnosis or by whatever that says. And that's how we are related. And I think there has to be that type of similar relationship in the Crip research work, which I love and I'm a big supporter of everybody, but it really does have to sometimes contend with itself with this particular issue of inclusivity as it moves forward.

That's just something that happens with a lot of critical theory type of spaces. They end up sometimes putting our communities as just niche subjects, as afterthought, and it isn't. And that's a mistake that happens a lot.

And as a result, methods are obviously wrong. Results are unrepresented, and the information is just not both accurate and healthy. It sends the wrong message to people. And that's something that really both academia and researchers need to tackle as well, just as we are trying to do it in the philanthropy space. We are still very underrepresented in a lot of our STEM fields. We have great work happening in Native community to increase that visibility, which I think is fantastic. But I think we also need to support intersectionality in those spaces. Make sure that people with disabilities, women, trans, elders, are going into those spaces that are becoming more safer for us to go into. But that's the work that I think philanthropy can also support. We have a lot of work to do. Show up for us like we do for you.

OLIVIA WILLIAMS:

Thank you so much, Héctor and Jen, Carly for moderating and everyone for joining us today. Since we are at time, we will wrap now. But the feedback survey for this webinar is in the chat and everyone will receive both a recording of this webinar and links to all of the amazing resources that Jen and Héctor shared during this webinar. Thank you so much and have a great rest of your day.