



Episode 34- Job Searching, Interviewing, and Employment with a Disability

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Mindy Henderson: Welcome to the Quest Podcast, proudly presented by the Muscular Dystrophy Association as part of the Quest family of content. I'm your host, Mindy Henderson. Together, we are here to bring thoughtful conversation to the neuromuscular disease community and beyond about issues affecting those with neuromuscular disease and other disabilities and those who love them. We are here for you to educate and inform, to demystify, to inspire, and to entertain. We are here shining a light on all that makes you you. Whether you are one of us, love someone who is or are on another journey altogether, thanks for joining. Now, let's get started.

We have a very special guest today joining us in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Lori Becker joined Starkloff Disability Institute in 2013 as their director of development and communications. And with her influence, the institute has grown by leaps and bounds. Lori was named to the 2020 class of diverse business leaders by the St. Louis Business Journal, one of the 20 leaders selected from a pool of more than 90 nominees. She was featured in a September issue of The Business Journal where she was recognized for her efforts to promote

diversity and inclusion both in the workplace and in the community. The board of directors named Lori CEO of the institute in 2023. Like many Starkloff employees, Lori has a disability. She's legally blind due to a genetic disorder. Lori, thank you so much for joining me today. You have far more accomplishments than I was able to fit into the intro, but I'm so glad to have you.

Lori Becker: Thanks, Mindy. Thanks for having me.

Mindy Henderson: Absolutely. So I'm going to dive right in. There's so much to talk about on this topic. Do you want to start by telling us a little bit about the Starkloff Disability Institute and the services that you provide to individuals with disability interested in joining the workforce?

Lori Becker: Yes. The Starkloff Disability Institute this year is celebrating our 20th anniversary as a nonprofit organization.

Mindy Henderson: Wow.

Lori Becker: Yeah, it's really great. And our main focus, as many people know, is in the area of competitive mainstream employment. The level of unemployment among the disability community is more than twice as high as our non-disabled peers. So Starkloff works on both sides of the equation to help disabled people thrive. At an individual level, we work with job seekers to help provide them with the confidence and the skills that they need to enter and succeed in the competitive job market. And then we also work with companies and community leaders to help them understand how to create a more inclusive and accessible environment where disabled workers can thrive.

Mindy Henderson: Fantastic. I am such a fan of your organization and the work that you do, and of your founders, Max and Colleen Starkloff, who are pretty well known in the Disability Rights Movement. For anyone who's been living under a rock and doesn't know their story, can you tell us a little bit more about their story and background and how the Institute was founded?

Lori Becker: I love Max and Colleen's story, and I love to share it. Max Starfloff acquired a spinal cord injury at age 21. He was in a car accident and he had to go live in a nursing home because at that time, which was the early '60s, that society was not built for Max and his new body of his wheelchair. And at the time, that is historically what happened to most people who had disabilities and were wheelchair users. So he ended up living in that nursing home for 12 years. But while he was there, he met a physical therapist named Colleen Kelly. And Colleen always says that as soon as she saw Max, as soon as she laid eyes on him, it was love at first sight. She knew that he was the man that she was going to marry.

And so while Max was in the nursing home, in the 1960s, on television there was this backdrop of the civil rights movement that was occurring and Max saw other underrepresented groups, other minority groups fighting for their civil rights, and he wanted to do the same thing. He was able to connect with others across the country through writing letters to one another and preparing for their liberation. They really formed the Disability Rights Movement. Max was a pioneer and among that group that helped to pass the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. He was the founder of one of the first 10 federally funded centers for independent living in the country. Many people here in St. Louis know that organization as Paraquad. And so Max served as the executive director of Paraquad for 30 years.

Mindy Henderson: Wow.

Lori Becker: And so he and Colleen worked tirelessly to advance the independence of people with disabilities so they could live in integrated communities and have access to the same things that everybody else wants. So in 2003, the Starkloff Disability Institute was born out of... It was a culmination of their life's work. They wanted to help create the community that would be more inclusive and accessible. So that is how we were founded 20 years ago, and we're very proud of our legacy and our roots in the Disability Rights Movement.

Mindy Henderson: As you should be. Absolutely amazing. So what led you personally then to work for Starkloff? Where did your passion for this kind of work come from, specifically employment for people with disabilities and that sort of thing?

Lori Becker: As you mentioned in the introduction, I am a person with a disability myself. I'm legally blind. I have a juvenile form of macular degeneration. So I started losing my vision when I was about nine or 10 years old. And because my disability is semi-visible, if you just saw me walking down the street, you would not know right away that I had low vision, I really didn't participate much in disability related activities throughout the first half of my life. I went to college. I really struggled there because of lack of accommodations. But I ended up having a career, a fulfilling career in public relations and community engagement and political campaign management. But I was ready to take my career in a new direction and I had no idea how I would talk about my own disability in a job interview.

And so I had a counselor at Rehab Services for the Blind, which is a great state agency here in Missouri. My counselor referred me to Starkloff Disability Institute and a Career Academy. And the way she pitched it to me was that "This is a program for professionals with disabilities to help them learn better job search techniques and network in the community."

So I came to Starkloff as a program participant in the Career Academy, and it was one of the most transformative experiences of my life-

Mindy Henderson: Oh, wow.

Lori Becker: ... because oftentimes before then, I would try to hide my disability until I absolutely needed to disclose it. And then I kind of fumbled with the disclosure and wasn't sure how to ask for an accommodation. I didn't even know what my rights were under the ADA. And so this Career Academy program gave me all of the tools that I needed to succeed and to be really, really competitive in the job market, talking about my disability from a point of pride instead of a point of pity. And so it really helped me tap into those really deep emotions about I knew inside I was a very skilled person because I had to learn how to navigate a world that wasn't built for me. And so I met with other people with disabilities across disabilities, and together we learned how to really tap into that power and be proud of who we are and leverage those strengths in the job acquisition process and in the workforce as well.

So it's a little bit of a long story, but that is how I came to Starkloff Disability Institute as a program participant. And then I was able to... As soon as my program was over, Colleen Starkloff and the other founder of our organization, David Newburger, who's also commissioned on the Disabled for the City of St. Louis, had lunch with me and asked me to join the team because they knew I had fundraising and public relations experience and I was a person with a disability.

Our organization is led by people with disabilities. I would say probably 80% of our staff has some sort of a significant disability. And so for the first time, I worked in an environment where I was fully accommodated and all of me was embraced, able to truly bring my whole self to work every single day. And that included the part of me that I had hid for a long time. So I've been with Starkloff for 10 years now and served as the COO for a number of years. And now with the retirement of Colleen Starkloff, I'm just honored to be named as CEO and to carry on Max and Colleen's legacy here.

Mindy Henderson: That's incredible. It's a great story, and honestly, an incredible success story for your career institute and the tools and the resources that you give people. They're certainly lucky to have you, I will say that. So you have a number of programs that work toward the mission of Starkloff. Can you tell me a little bit more about the Career Academy and the coaching services that you offer?

Lori Becker: Yes. I'd love to talk about the Career Academy as a program graduate myself. Since this program has been in existence for about a dozen years now, it has evolved to really meet the needs of today's job seekers. We are

more closely meeting people where they are on their career journey and on their disability journey as well. So the Career Academy is a disability-led class where you will meet other people with various types of disabilities. And although the challenges that some people face are different, there are a lot of challenges and barriers that we all face together. And so we learn how to navigate those barriers, how to be a really good job seeker, as well as how to be a really great employee and leader in your workforce. We do that through learning about networking and job interviewing and workplace conflict resolution, how to negotiate a better salary, and also how to request an accommodations and how to disclose your disability in the job interview process.

Those are some of the main skills that are taught in the Career Academy. We have three different levels of programming now. One is foundation class where you're learning really basics if it's your first time entering the job market. And then we have a transitions program for individuals who have some work experience but are likely underemployed or facing barriers to retention and promotion. We help them navigate those situations. And then we have a career advancements program for professionals, once a month a lunch and learn and a fireside chat, that helps provide professional development for our graduates and really anyone in the community who has a disability and is at work and can join this every single month. We cover various topics like, for instance, networking or personal branding, leadership communication, just all of those skills that may not have been taught or that our community might have limited exposure to, that will really help them in their day-to-day work life and also help them get a promotion and become a leader in their workplace. We also do provide that one-on-one support that helps help you navigate whatever your goal is.

Mindy Henderson: Wonderful. And you all are located in St. Louis, but you and I had the chance to meet last week and chitchat a little bit. I've learned though that you actually work with people from all over the country. Is that right?

Lori Becker: That's correct. So anyone can join our programs from wherever they are. And this was by virtue of Covid pandemic. When everybody worked from home and everything went virtual, we discovered that remote virtual classes were incredibly desirable for our community because transportation is such a barrier. When our classes were in person, we did as much as we could to help people with fine transportation options, but it was always a challenge and it was expensive and kind of exhausting. So these virtual classes are fantastic. We are reaching people all over the country now. We've even had some international candidates that we work with as well.

Mindy Henderson: Oh, great.

Lori Becker: So it's truly exciting. Our board of directors has also expanded, and now we have board members that are coming to us from all over the country as well.

Mindy Henderson: Wow, that's so fantastic. I would love to dig in a little bit and ask you for some free advice for some of the people who may be listening. Like I said, it's National Disability Employment Awareness Month, which is a little bit of a mouthful, but there are probably people listening who are maybe in the middle of a job search themselves. I'd love to dig into a couple of specific areas that we bump into when we're looking for a job and we'd love for you to give us some advice. What are the biggest mistakes that you see people making in writing resumes?

Lori Becker: That's a great question. I love talking about this topic. I think that one of the biggest mistakes that we see is someone using the same resume for every job they apply to instead of tailoring it to meet the job that they are applying for. Another mistake that we see regularly is not including transferable skills that we know that you might have by being a person with a disability and living life where you're navigating barriers. There are so many skills that you acquire because of this that you can apply those. They're employability skills. You can apply those and talk about those on your resume as well as long as it is related to the job that you are applying for. So those are two big mistakes that we see in terms of the actual application process itself.

Mindy Henderson: Interesting. I've been in the workforce for more than 20 years. I'm going to not tell you exactly how many, but more than 20 years, and I have never thought to do that.

Lori Becker: Yes, it's really important. Especially now with modern technology, big employers are using, they call it applicant tracking systems. So when you submit your application and resume electronically, there are certain keywords that they're going to be looking for in your resume. And as long as if those keywords are there, you will likely advance and get a closer look as a job candidate. And if you do not include those words, then you're likely to not advance.

Mindy Henderson: Interesting. Very interesting. So then onto... I mean, we could spend a whole podcast on any one of these topics, but onto the next skill, I guess, what would you say about interviewing? What are some of the mistakes that you see people make fairly regularly that are kind of universal?

Lori Becker: I think most importantly is practice, practice, practice, because your nerves can really take over when you're in an interview setting. So find someone that you can practice with, write out your notes, take your notes with you. Also practice answering behavioral interview questions. There

are a lot of them online that you can look up. And then actually write out the answers to them.

We encourage everyone to use the STAR story method especially when answering the behavioral interview questions. STAR stands for situation, task, action and results. So think about these questions and how you can apply the STAR method to telling your story and how have you... "Have you dealt with a challenging employee or coworker? Tell us about a time when you faced a challenge in the workplace" or whatever the question might be. It usually starts with, "How do you..." Or "Tell me about a time when..." And so thinking about that and having kind of a bank of star stories to pull from is very, very helpful. It will help you really feel confident as you go into a job interview. Also, we talk about your elevator pitch, when someone says, "Well, tell me about yourself." Be ready to answer that question. And also that is when you're networking and meeting new people, how do you introduce yourself? What are those characteristics and qualities and aspirations that you have that you want to be able to convey quickly within 30 seconds?

Mindy Henderson: Oh, interesting. Yeah, and it can be hard to know, I think, how much information they want initially when they ask you that question, "Tell me about yourself."

Lori Becker: Yes, it is. [inaudible 00:21:01]-

Mindy Henderson: Is there a way to sort of decipher what's relevant at the very beginning of the interview and what they maybe will get to later?

Lori Becker: Yes. I mean, when they say, "Tell me about yourself," you really want to focus on your professional history and any type... And if you do not have a professional history, which we understand that a lot of people in the disability community have big gaps in their work history or have been prevented from entering the workforce altogether, so if you don't have those professional stories from the workplace to pull from, think about other aspects of your life, whether it's a volunteer opportunity or community group. How do you characterize yourself? And then what are your goals? What do you want to be? How do you want to apply that to their company and how can you be a success there? So keep it pretty short and definitely stick to the professional nature of it when they ask you that question.

Mindy Henderson: Okay. Okay. That is good to know because I think we all tend to maybe draw on some personal bits about ourselves and things, but maybe not the time to let them know that you're a Spurs fan, for example, or...

Lori Becker: Sure. And a little bit of that flavoring is great, but just think of it as that. There's the meat and potatoes of what you need to say, and then that might just be the gravy that goes on top of it.

Mindy Henderson: Yeah, nice. Okay. And the other thing that I think I would throw in as well, feel free to let me know if you agree with me, but I feel like this also kind of relates back to what you were saying initially about the STAR model and that sort of thing, but I have found as someone who has interviewed a lot of people over the years that one of the things that I've seen is that when I ask someone to tell me about a particular area of expertise or experience, people, I think a lot of times, will make the mistake of going very general and not give specific examples. Do you see that as well?

Lori Becker: Yes. I mean, the more specific you can be in that situation, the better. It really helps reveal about your character and the way you handle particular situations. Being specific on that is very, very important. And that's again, why that STAR method, the situation, what situation can you talk about? And be very specific on that. That's very, very helpful.

Mindy Henderson: Perfect. Perfect. So this is a big one that I'm about to ask you about, and I think it's something that a lot of people in the disability community struggle with. What advice do you have about when, if, and how to disclose your disability?

Lori Becker: Right. There's a big difference on your approach based on whether or not you have a visible disability or a non-visible disability.

Mindy Henderson: Sure.

Lori Becker: So 70% or a little over 70% of disabilities are non-visible. However, when we're talking about the neuromuscular disease community, we tend to see more disabilities that are visible. And so I think you really need to... It's not something you're going to hide, so it's important to have a method in place on how you're going to talk about being a person with a disability, being a wheelchair user. In this materials that you submit prior to an interview, I want to also say one of the big mistakes that people make is to not tailoring their resume and then just very rapid fire clicking apply on Indeed, right? That is never going to work. It really isn't.

So you can click apply on Indeed, however, you really need to go to that company's website, submit your resume, a cover letter, and complete the actual application on their website. In the course of that, because you're going to submit a cover letter and a resume, if there is something that is relevant to the job you're going to do, you can mention it. For instance, if you use, and this could also be a STAR story, if you use a personal care attendance and you manage their schedules, their payments, recruitment

and training, those are very, very relevant and great skills that you want to take into your job interview. So I think that it can be incorporated briefly into a cover letter if it is something that is going to apply to the job that you're applying for. Also, making sure when you do get a call for an interview, if you need accommodations, make sure that you ask for it in advance, and that will help you be more comfortable and more prepared. And so-

Mindy Henderson: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but you're talking about accommodations at the interview at that point rather than what you might need on the job, right?

Lori Becker: Yes, yes, absolutely.

Mindy Henderson: Okay.

Lori Becker: So for instance, if you are going on site to a physical location, you want to make sure to ask where the wheelchair accessible entrance is and help them understand that it won't be a surprise to them when you show up and you're using a wheelchair or a walker or something of that nature. If you wish, you can ask for the interview questions in advance to help you prepare. That is something that you can do.

Mindy Henderson: Oh, interesting.

Lori Becker: So any type of accommodation that you might need, feel free to ask for that in the job interview so that you can perform your absolute best. And let them know that you want to be prepared and you want to have a successful interview so that's why you want to make these requests at that time.

Mindy Henderson: Great. I love that. Now, I'm going to pivot just a little bit and ask you about some other programs that you offer, which I think are really, really cool. You offer some youth programs. Can you tell us a little bit about Access U and the Dream Big Career Camp that you offer?

Lori Becker: Oh, I love these programs. They are newer to the organization having been implemented in about the past five years, five or six years. Access U was created specifically for college students because only 28% of college graduates with a disability go on to get a job that's-

Mindy Henderson: Really?

Lori Becker: Yes.

Mindy Henderson: Yikes.

Lori Becker: Some families and individuals think that a college degree will automatically equate to finding a good job, but it definitely doesn't, especially for our community.

Mindy Henderson: Wow.

Lori Becker: So Access U works one-on-one with disabled college students to help them focus on finding that career, finding work experience, finding an internship while you're still in college. And we also help them navigate barriers that they experience while they're enrolled in classes. Again, requesting accommodations, knowing how to do that, knowing what your rights are, dealing with faculty or administrators that are less than accommodating, how to go about doing that, how to engage other students that are on your campus as well to help organize, create a disabled students group and find your peers and learn how to peer network and be support for one another, how to access your disabled resources office and career office.

So those are very, very unique services to college students. And it doesn't have to be a four year, it could be a two-year college, it could be a post-secondary certificate program. All of those same lessons apply across the board. And so we're really happy to be able to provide this service to them. We also help to train faculty and staff at a lot of universities so that they can learn how to be more accommodating and inclusive of their students with disabilities.

Mindy Henderson: That's great. I love that.

Lori Becker: Oh, and I'm sorry. I wanted to add briefly, but the Dream Big program is for middle and high school students to help them explore and get exposure to lots of growth industry careers, especially in areas of STEM, skilled manufacturing, things of that nature. One of the issues historically for the disability community has been low expectations, limited opportunities, and Dream Big shatters those notions and it lifts kids up and shows them that they can do whatever job they want to do when they are older. We introduce them to a wide variety of industries and careers and companies and company leaders who welcome them and tell them that they want them to apply and they want them to be a part of their workforce. And this makes such a difference. Kids don't get those messages all the time. And so, it's really important to start young and to help them know that they have a bright and independent future ahead of them.

In the course of both Access U and Dream Big, we also have our own disability pride curriculum that we teach self-advocacy skills, disability history, disability rights, and culture so that they know that they're part of a community and that they have a rich history of activists that came before

them to help level the playing field and ensure the rights that we have today.

Mindy Henderson: Absolutely. Just like Max and Colleen Starkloff did.

Lori Becker: Exactly. Exactly.

Mindy Henderson: Yeah. Love it. Love it. And you gave me the perfect transition because I want to talk about parents for just a second, because when you're a parent of a child with a disability, I think that people are so well-intentioned and parents want the best for their kids. Sometimes the focus on making sure that their child doesn't get hurt or disappointed or things like that get in the way of encouraging them to see the possibilities and think outside the box rather than focusing on their limitations and things like that. What advice do you have for parents of children with disabilities that may be listening about the importance of empowering and continuing to encourage their kids to see the possibilities for their own futures and to dream big?

Lori Becker: Absolutely. I mean, it really starts with the parents raising expectations and also themselves knowing and believing that their children can have a fulfilling and independent life as an adult. This is possible. It does take a lot more work to understand the resources that are out there and navigate barriers, but parents need to understand that their children can do this. So raising the expectation, asking your kids, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" That just doesn't happen enough.

I would also say get their kids involved in extracurricular activities. It's a lot of work, and a lot of families might not have the resources to do it, but to whatever extent possible, get your kids involved with volunteer groups or adaptive sports, anything that will help develop their social skills. I think it's important also to have some integrated activities, participating on the school newspaper. But then also in St. Louis, we have the Disabled Athlete Sports Association, and there are other groups similar to this all over the country where adaptive sports really bring kids together, teaches them all of the same things that non-disabled kids learn when they're playing sports are getting together in the community, which is really important that teamwork, communication, goal setting, so many of those employability skills can be taught while participating in these extracurricular activities. So get them involved as much as possible in things outside of the classroom as well.

Mindy Henderson: That's fantastic. And if you are a parent of a child that wants to go to college that sees university or even community colleges or whatever in their future, those are all things that are going to bode well for them and look good on college applications, and things like that help them to be more competitive.

Lori Becker: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, take your students to go tour colleges of all types and get them that type of exposure early on.

Mindy Henderson: Love it. Love it. So the last couple of questions that I want to ask you, it's kind of the two sides of the coin. In the spirit of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, what do you think, first of all, is the biggest challenge that still exists for people with disabilities today in securing employment and how can they mitigate those challenges?

Lori Becker: So we believe that it truly is misconceptions, fear and discomfort on the part of recruiters and hiring managers that really keep most people with disabilities from getting careers and advancing in the competitive job market. These individuals rarely see people with disabilities in their workforce, especially in areas of high responsibility or leadership. So we do our best here at Starkloff to expose the individuals, who are making those employment and hiring decisions, examples of people with disabilities on the job so that they can envision it. Sometimes if you can't see it, you can't be it. And so with them having very limited exposure, then that just kind of reinforces the fact that, "Oh, people with disabilities can't do these jobs otherwise they'd already be here." No, that's not the case, you know?

Mindy Henderson: Yeah.

Lori Becker: So that is a huge, huge barrier. People can mitigate that by some of the things we talked about earlier, leveraging the strengths that they've acquired as a disabled person in the course of their job interview as well as thinking about those transferable skills that they can apply in that job.

And we kind of frame the barriers to inclusion in three different ways, what I just talked about, where that psychological barriers, those preconceived notions, but then there's also policy barriers, things like Social Security disability income or things like Medicaid where there is a gap, excuse me, an income cap that prevents people from making more than a certain amount of money every year, otherwise they lose very important benefits that they're getting. So that's a barrier. And then there's still physical barriers. Even in the year 2023, we see public transportation not being adequate, sidewalks and entrances to buildings also not accessible. So there's even those physical barriers that kind of are unique to the disability community, but they are real. Some people think that "Oh, it's 2023, the ADA is 33 years old. All of that is fixed." And that is absolutely not the case.

Mindy Henderson: No, unfortunately. And the other thing that I would also throw out there maybe is you make such good points and all of those things are still so prevalent. And the other thing that I think that we can all be doing if you're comfortable, is advocating for change in those areas. There's

legislation that's being discussed in each of the areas that you mentioned where we can reach out to our senators and our representatives and voice our concerns about the problems in government that still exist and that are still deterrent to people to go to work.

Lori Becker: Absolutely. And the more that you advocate for yourself, the more empowered you become. So take that action into your own hands. Don't think somebody else is going to do it. Your voice matters, but your lived experience matters, so share it and voice your concerns. Yeah, yeah, definitely advocacy at that public policy level is critically important. Some disabled individuals don't have the capacity or the tools or the resources to do that self-advocacy. So if you can, do it.

Mindy Henderson: Absolutely. Shameless plug for the MDA advocacy team, but we do have a grassroots advocacy program that anyone is welcome to join. There's information on the MDA website and they will be your best friends in terms of helping you navigate that kind of policy advocacy if it's something that you want to do. So then I think my last question is just the opposite of the thing that we just discussed. There is progress that's been made. And I'm curious from your standpoint, what do you think are the biggest wins that have been made recently in terms of progress around employment for people with disabilities? And then what can we all do to ensure that progress continues to be made?

Lori Becker: This is a little bit ago, but in 2014, the federal government, the Department of Labor, finally put into action a rule. It's called Section 503 of the Rehab Act of 1973, but it requires federal contractors in any organization receiving federal funding to hire affirmatively 7% of their workforce, people with disabilities, at all job levels. So we have seen momentum on the part of beginning with federal contractors, but now pretty much a lot of other companies are seeing that as their goal as well. And then after George Floyd, there was a huge emphasis on DEIA efforts in companies. And so since 2020, we have been part of the coalition of individuals who are trying to advance that work and get more integration, more inclusion and equity in the workforce. And we do see more and more companies that are moving in that direction, putting resources into DEIA efforts. They don't always include people with disabilities at the onset, but if we see a company that is recruiting other rent underrepresented groups, then we will talk with them about, "Hey, don't forget us, the disability community back here."

So we have seen tremendous progress in that area. And then more short term, I would say that during the pandemic, so many people learned to work from home. Remote work was an accommodation that the disability community had been requesting for years. And then suddenly when everybody needed to do it, they figured out how. So that accommodation and that ability to work remotely has really opened up a significant

amount of work to people with disabilities. So that's a big step forward. We're really excited about that.

And then I would say one other thing that I continue to see is more authentic casting and media. This is a little bit away from the employment factor, but I do want to say that when people see accurate representations of disabled people in the media, it's eye-opening to them. So we need more and more representation just across the board. Currently, only 8% of people onscreen have a disability that is evident or that is just discussed in the show. And then only 6% of people behind the cameras are people with disabilities. So we really need to increase that work because it's a culture changer when people are exposed to different lifestyles. So we want to see more and more of that authentic casting and representation in media.

Mindy Henderson: I'm so glad you said that because I actually don't think it's a big departure from what we're talking about, because to your point, I think one of the reasons why we haven't seen more progress is because of fear and discomfort and all of that. And the only way that that is going to get better, that it's going to go away is if there are more people with disabilities in our line of sight every single day. That's how people are going to get used to the different lifestyles, different sizes, shapes, and forms of all people, is to make sure that there's fair and equal representation.

Lori Becker: Absolutely.

Mindy Henderson: Yeah. Lori, it is such a joy to talk to you. You all are doing such incredible work at Starkloff, and I am proud to know you. I'm so glad that we got to have this conversation, and I hope we get to do it again sometime.

Lori Becker: Mindy, thank you so much for the opportunity to talk with your entire audience who are really excited. If anyone wants to find out, get some more information, please go to starkloffworks.org and send us your information and we'll be in touch with you. We can be a huge help to so many people, and you'll be able to find your community here.

Mindy Henderson: Perfect. I know that we're going to have links to your organization in the show notes.

Lori Becker: Great.

Mindy Henderson: So just in case anyone listening doesn't have a pen, you can come back and download the show notes and get the information that you need. Thank you so much, Lori.

Lori Becker: Thanks, Mindy.

Mindy Henderson: Thank you for listening. For more information about the guests you heard from today, go check them out at mda.org/podcast. And to learn more

about the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the services we provide, how you can get involved, and to subscribe to Quest Magazine or to Quest Newsletter, please go to mda.org/quest. If you enjoyed this episode, we'd be grateful if you'd leave a review. Go ahead and hit that subscribe button so we can keep bringing you great content and maybe share it with a friend or two. Thanks everyone. Until next time, go be the light we all need in this world.