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HAAA-LA CHAPTER MEETING
HUNTINGTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
EAST ROOM; WINGATE BUILDING
NOVEMBER 18, 2017
10:00AM-12:00PM

(MEETING STARTED AT 10:10)

>> HEATHER: HEY, EVERYBODY. MEETING TIME?
MEETING? MEETING, MEETING TIME? COME ON, GANG.
I'M STANDING. I'M VERTICAL. CAN WE BELIEVE IT?

AM I STANDING WEIRDLY CLOSE TO YOU? I WANT TO BE BY THE
TABLE IN CASE I START TO FALL. OKAY.

WELCOME EVERYBODY. THIS IS A SMALL MEETING I GUESS THIS
NOVEMBER. EVERYONE IS REALLY, REALLY BUSY. BUT I REALLY
APPRECIATE ALL OF YOU GETTING YOURSELVES OUT OF BED ON A
SATURDAY MORNING TO BE HERE. I KNOW I'M STANDING. I'M VERTICAL.
I KNOW. WHOO.

(APPLAUSE)

LEARNING PROCESS.

IT JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU CAN BREAK YOUR LEG IN 27 PLACES
AND STILL STAND ON IT.

(CHUCKLES)

OKAY.

I WANT TO WELCOME YOU ALL AND THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE.
I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT I'M PROUD OF YOU FOR BEING HERE BECAUSE
YOU GOT UP ON A SATURDAY MORNING TO NOT ONLY DO SOMETHING FUN
FOR YOURSELF, BUT TO SUPPORT OTHERS AND TO ADVOCATE FOR PEOPLE
WHO AREN'T EVEN IN THIS ROOM. AND ALL OF US FEEL LIKE WE WANT TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE. AND THIS IS HOW WE DO IT. WE SHOW UP AND WE
HELP OTHERS. SO I'M VERY HAPPY TO SEE YOU ALL.

AND EVEN THOUGH IT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLIDAYS AND THE

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BEGINNING OF A VERY BUSY SEASON, WE DO HAVE A NEW PERSON TODAY.
I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE KIRSTEN.

WE WOULD LOOK FOR YOU TO SAY HELLO TO EVERYBODY AND TELL US YOUR HEARING LOSS STORY.

>> KIRSTEN: OH, LORD.

>> HEATHER: AND WE WOULD REALLY APPRECIATE IT. NO PRESSURE, NO PRESSURE.

>> KIRSTEN: MY NAME IS KIRSTEN. I LOST MY HEARING DUE TO DR. SCREW UP. I WAS BORN IN -- YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER, IN 1960, I WAS A PREEMIE, I WAS BORN TWO MONTHS EARLY. I WENT FROM 5-POUNDS TO 2-POUNDS WITHIN 24 HOURS. I ONLY HAD 10% CHANCE TO LIVE AT THE TIME. SO THEY PUT ME IN AN INCUBATOR FOR 11 DAYS WITH PURE OXYGEN. SO WE FIGURED IT OUT, THAT'S WHERE I LOST MY HEARING. BUT IF YOU LOOK AT THE STUDY STATISTICS, MOST BABIES BECAME BLIND, AND INSTEAD I BECAME HARD OF HEARING.

SO, IT TOOK FOUR YEARS TO GET THE PROPER DIAGNOSIS. THEN I DIDN'T LEARN HOW TO SPEAK UNTIL I WAS 8 OR 9. AND THEN I DISCOVERED SIGN LANGUAGE WHEN I WAS ABOUT 12. AND I KEPT TELLING MY PARENTS IF I DO SIGN LANGUAGE I WILL LOSE MY SPEECH. SO, THERE'S A WHOLE -- THAT BASICALLY JUST KIND OF GIVES YOU A QUICK HISTORY.

I'M ORIGINALLY FROM CHICAGO. HOW MANY OF YOU KNOW MARLEE MATLIN? OKAY. MARLEE AND I GREW UP TOGETHER. HER MOM AND MY MOM CREATED "CHILDREN WHO HEAR THROUGH THE DEAF" IN CHICAGO.

TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE BACKGROUND. SO I DO A LOT OF THEATER FOR THE DEAF. I JUST FINISHED WRITING A PLAY CALLED "FIRECRACKER" BASED ON MY LIFE. I TALK ABOUT I'M NOT DEAF ENOUGH IN THE DEAF WORLD AND NOT HEARING ENOUGH IN THE HEARING WORLD. AND BLAH, BLAH, BLAH. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

SO I FIGURE IT IS ONE WAY TO GET THE WORD OUT TO GET PEOPLE

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TO GET A HARD OF HEARING BEING IN THE MIDDLE SHARE THE STORY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO SAY. (APPLAUSE) . . .

I KIND OF NEVER HEARD OF YOU GUYS UNTIL SHE CALLED ME.

>> SHE'S DEAF AND NEVER HEARD OF HLA.

>> HEATHER: I KNOW. SEE. THAT'S WHAT WE ARE GOING TO BE DOING. WE HAVE GOING TO REALLY BE WORKING STARTING AFTER THE FIRST OF THE YEAR ON OUR VISIBILITY AND OUTREACH, AND ALSO ON OUR ADVOCACY.

AND ONE ANNOUNCEMENT I DID WANT TO MAKE ABOUT OUR ADVOCACY, WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT DOING A POSTCARD BOMBING OF THE FCC BECAUSE OF SOME OF THE CHANGES THEY ARE CONSIDERING TO CAPTION TELEPHONES. AND I'VE BEEN WAITING TO HEAR BACK FROM LISA HAMILTON, WHO IS AT NATIONAL, HLA NATIONAL. AND SHE IS SORT OF THE HEAD OF THE ADVOCACY PUSH FOR ANY KIND OF COMMUNICATIONS CHANGES FOR TELEPHONE SYSTEMS.

AND SHE'S WORKING VERY HARD. SHE'S ON LIKE SIX COMMITTEES. SHE'S JUST REALLY KILLING HERSELF.

THE INFORMATION THAT I GOT FROM HER IS ABOUT CAPTIONING. THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW THE CONCERN IS THEY WANT TO CHANGE THE RULES ON HOW CAPTIONING ON TELEPHONES IS DONE. AND RIGHT NOW, THERE HAS TO BE AN INTERMEDIARY (STUMBLING OVER WORD) -- HOW YOU SAY THAT WORD? THERE HAS TO BE A PERSON HELPING MAKE THE CAPTIONS MORE CORRECT. AND THEY WANT TO GO GET RID OF THAT AND ONLY USE VOICE RECOGNITION. SO, OBVIOUSLY PEOPLE LIKE US ARE CONCERNED BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT THE QUALITY OF THE CAPTIONING TO GO DOWN.

>> KIRSTEN: IT'S BETTER NOW BECAUSE MY DAD WAS THE ONE THAT BROUGHT CAPTIONING.

AGAIN, ADD ANOTHER HISTORY. MY MOM AND DAD WERE VERY MUCH INVOLVED WITH THE DEAF COMMUNITY, INVOLVED IN ADVOCACY

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AND MY DAD WAS A BROADCASTER. SO, MY DAD WAS THE ONE THAT BROUGHT CAPTIONING TO THE TELEVISION WITH CBS AND NBC. SO, I'M GLAD TO -- IT'S BEEN A LONG ROAD OF GETTING TO GET THE CAPTIONING. SO I'M INVOLVED WITH THAT. SO IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.

>> HEATHER: YEAH. (APPLAUSE) . . .

ALL RIGHT. SO ANYWAY; LET ME TELL YOU WHAT LISA SAID. SHE SAID THAT AFTER THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, THEY ARE RELEASING -- WHAT THEY DO, WHEN THEY ARE CHANGING THE RULES THEY HAVE TO RELEASE LIKE THIS BIG PAPER THAT OUTLINES ALL OF THE RULE CHANGES. AND SO THEY ARE SUPPOSEDLY RELEASING THAT JANUARY 8, I THINK. AND AT THAT POINT, HLAA IS GOING TO LIKE GO THROUGH THAT THING WITH THEIR LAWYERS, LIKE WITH THE FINE-TOOTHED COMB, AND THEN WE ARE GOING TO ORGANIZE OUR RESPONSE. AND I HAVE -- I WAS DIRECTLY TALKING TO HER ABOUT SORT OF THE RESOURCES AND THE PEOPLE THAT WE HAVE HERE. I'M ALSO WORKING WITH KATIE WRIGHT AT LONG BEACH TO HELP COORDINATE THEIR PEOPLE. SO IF WE NEED TO DO LIKE POSTCARD BOMBS, PHONE CALL, EMAILING, WHATEVER, WE DECIDE IS GOING TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH FOR THAT, WE WILL KNOW ABOUT THAT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

I WILL LET YOU KNOW.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO BE UP ON THAT, THEY HAVE -- APPARENTLY, I DIDN'T KNOW THIS, BUT HLAA NATIONAL HAS SOMETHING YOU CAN SIGN UP FOR CALLED E-NEWS. IT DOESN'T TELL YOU EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON. IT WON'T DRIVE YOU CRAZY. BUT IT BLASTS YOU THEN THERE ARE THINGS THAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY DO. LIKE ACTION ACTION ITEMS FOR YOU TO DO. I HAVEN'T SIGNED UP YET. I JUST HARD ABOUT IT.

IF YOU WANT TO GO ON THE WEBSITE AND SIGN UP FOR E-NEWS. PUT IN YOUR EMAIL OR PHONE AND YOU CAN GET MORE INFORMATION DIRECTLY FROM NATIONAL ABILITY THINGS LIKE THIS. BUT OF COURSE

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I'M GOING TO KEEP UP ON AND WE WILL KEEP POSTED ON THAT.

ABOUT.

WHAT ELSE?

OH I WANTED TO DO THE "WOW" AWARDS, WHOO HOO.

OKAY. WE ALL KNOW ABOUT "WOW" IS FOR OUTSTANDING PERSON WHO HAS DONE GREAT WORK FOR OUR CHAPTER. TODAY I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO THANK AND CELEBRATE GEORGIA. (APPLAUSE) . . .

YAY. BECAUSE SHE WORKS SO HARD ON OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANT GROUP. SHE'S THE HEAD OF THE GROUP TO HELP PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT COCHLEAR IMPLANTS AND WORKING TIRELESSLY, ALWAYS SHOWING UP FOR THESE THINGS LIKE HELPING WITH LEARNING ABOUT CAPTIONING SYSTEMS AND LOOPING, AND SHE'S ADVOCATING FOR THEATER. SERIOUSLY. I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE DOES IT.

SO WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOU, FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND HELPING OUR CHAPTER. DO THE "WOW" SALUTE.

(APPLAUSE)

"WOW" SALUTE FOR GEORGIA.

>> GEORGIA: DO I HAVE TO GIVE A SPEECH?

>> DANNY: SPEECH, SPEECH.

>> GEORGIA: I HAVE TO MAKE A SPEECH?

>> HEATHER: OH, YEAH. WHEN YOU WIN AN OSCAR, YOU HAVE TO --

>> GEORGIA: WELL, I'M REALLY SURPRISED AND THANK YOU SO MUCH. THIS IS IS LOVELY. ADVOCACY CONTINUES, YOU KNOW. WE HAVE TO KEEP TO SPEAKING UP AND YOU KNOW MAKING NOISE AND LETTING THE -- THEM KNOW THAT THE CAPTIONING IS NOT UP TO PAR, WHICH HAPPENED LAST WEEK. I WAS A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED WITH THE CAPTIONING. I NEED TO LET THEM KNOW THE PEOPLE THAT DO THE CAPTIONING --

-- I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT YOU.

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-- BUT THE PEOPLE WHO --

WONDERFUL --

-- MISS A LOT OF SONGS AND A LITTLE DISAPPOINTING. BUT BEING AN ADVOCATE IS FUN. SOMETIMES IT IS HARD WORK. BUT, YOU KNOW, WE HAVE TO SPEAK UP. SO, I -- AND I'M APPRECIATIVE TO THIS GROUP FOR ALLOWING ME TO BECOME THE ADVOCACY CHAIRMAN FOR ABOUT FOUR YEARS AND THAT REALLY IT WAS HELPFUL TO ME TOO AS A PERSON. GAVE ME MORE CONFIDENCE. AND SO, I YOU KNOW THANK YOU.
(APPLAUSE) . . .

>> HEATHER: THANK YOU SO MUCH, GEORGIA.

OKAY.

I'M GOING TO STAND HERE AGAIN.

ALL RIGHT. SO WE HAVE A COUPLE OF JUST BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

NEXT MONTH IS OUR FABULOUS HOLIDAY PARTY. AND GRACE HAS SO GRACIOUSLY -- (APPLAUSE) . . . OFFERED HER BEAUTIFUL CRAFTSMAN HOME IN PASADENA FOR OUR HOLIDAY PARTY. DECEMBER 9 AT --

WE WON'T PUT YOUR ADDRESS ON THE WEBSITE.

THAT WILL GO OUT ON THE YAHOO GROUP SO YOU'LL KNOW WHERE TO GO AND WHAT TO DO. WE DO NEED PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP SET UP AND CLEAN UP AFTER THE EVENT. SO, I -- WE'LL PUT OUT A MESSAGE FOR THAT. BUT PLEASE HELP OUT; BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW IF YOU GUYS CAME LAST YEAR, BUT IT IS A REALLY BIG CROWD AND IT IS A LOT OF FUN.

WE'VE GOT FABULOUS DANNY, WHO IS OUR MC FOR THE EVENING. AND I'M HOPING HE WILL DO THAT AGAIN.

>> DANNY: OF COURSE.

>> HEATHER: SO LET'S LOOK FORWARD TO THAT. I AM.
SO LET'S SEE.

>> DANNY: WHAT DATE?

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>> HEATHER: DECEMBER 9. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 AT GRACE'S HOUSE.

>> DANNY : I'LL HAVE TO CHECK WITH MY REINDEER.

>> HEATHER: LAST BIT OF BUSINESS IS WE LOST OUR WONDERFUL LISA ON OUR STEERING COMMITTEE, AND SHE TOOK KEN WITH HER. TWO PEOPLE WHO DO SO MUCH FOR THIS CHAPTER. AND I -- SO WE DO NEED SOMEONE TO STEP UP AND SAY THEY WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE. IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED IN FILLING LISA'S SHOES, WE WOULD REALLY APPRECIATE IT.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE IS WORK. BUT IT IS ALSO A LOT OF FUN. I THOROUGHLY ENJOY IT AND I LOVE TRYING TO SHEPHERD THIS GROUP AND TRYING TO BE STRATEGIC AND WHAT WE ARE DOING AND WHAT OUR MESSAGE IS. IF YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST OR IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE YOU'D LIKE TO NOMINATE (CHUCKLES) -- PLEASE, PLEASE COME AND TALK TO ME. -- THAT WOULD BE GREAT (WHISPERING TO KIRSTEN). NO PRESSURE.

PLEASE COME AND TALK TO ME.

OR EMAIL ME.

>> JENNA: I WAS JUST GOING TO SAY, THAT YOU CAN JUST, IT WOULD BE, SO YOU DON'T GET OVERWHELMED, IT WOULD JUST BE LIKE A COORDINATOR POSITION. SO DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE -- LIKE LISA DID EVERYTHING. (LAUGHTER). BUT WE JUST NEED AN EXTRA BODY BASICALLY TO HELP US MAKE SOME DECISIONS, AND, YOU KNOW, BOUNCE THINGS OFF. SO IT WOULDN'T BE A HIGH-PRESSURE THING. BUT WE JUST REALLY BECAUSE WE REALLY DID LOSE TWO PEOPLE FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES. SO IF SOMEBODY COULD JUST STEP IN TO HELP US OUT A LITTLE BIT, WE'D BE REALLY APPRECIATIVE. WE ARE DEFINITELY FEELING THAT VOID.

>> HEATHER: YEAH.

AND WE REALLY AS A COMMITTEE, WE REALLY HELP EACH OTHER

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OUT. I HAVE TO SAY I'M SO GRATEFUL TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE. BECAUSE IT WAS MY ACCIDENT AND HEALTH ISSUES, I REALLY JUST HAD TO BAIL ON SO MUCH. AND PEOPLE FILLED IN THE VOID WHEN I COULDN'T DO IT. AND THEN WHEN I'M AVAILABLE THEN I CAN HELP OUT MORE. SO PLEASE DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU DO SO MUCH WORK THAT YOU'D LIKE NOT BE ABLE TO GET TO WORK OR SOMETHING.

OKAY.

GREAT. AM I DONE WITH THAT? OH. TERI WANTS TO TALK ABOUT --

THERE YOU ARE.

SHE'S -- SHE'S FILMING FACEBOOK LIVE FOR US RIGHT NOW. AND BUT SHE DOES HAVE SOME LITTLE ANNOUNCEMENT SHE WANTED TO MAKE.

SO DID YOU WANT TO TURN THAT OFF AND -- YOU WANT SOMEONE TO?

>> TERI: HI. EVERYBODY. I'M TERI BRIER. THIS WAY? OKAY.

I WAS LIKE, (CHUCKLES) --

IN THE LOOP. NOT? FRONT OF THE SCREEN.

I DON'T KNOW IF SOME OF YOU DON'T KNOW ME. I WAS INVOLVED WITH THE SANTA MONICA CHAPTER FOR A WHILE UNTIL WE HAD TO CLOSE IT DOWN. SO I'VE BEEN COMING TO THESE MEETINGS FOR A FEW MONTHS NOW. IT IS A GREAT GROUP. AND I WAS AT THE CONVENTION. ANYWAY, I JUST WANT TO SHARE REALLY QUICKLY. I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH SERENE INNOVATIONS, THE COMPANY THAT MAKES THE TV SOUNDBOX AND AMPLIFIED TELEPHONES AND OTHER ASSISTIVE DEVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS, SINCE MAY.

AND WE ARE -- REDOING OUR WEBSITE RIGHT NOW AND SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN. AND I HAD THE IDEA THAT INSTEAD OF USING ALL OF THE "STOCK" PHOTOS THAT WE USUALLY DO -- THESE GLAMOROUS PEOPLE WHO DON'T LOOK LIKE THEY NEED OUR PRODUCT -- TO GIVE OUR

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COMMUNITY A CHANCE TO TELL THEIR STORIES AND TO BE LIKE OUR REAL-LIFE MODELS.

SO THIS IS? NO WAY -- NOT AN ENDORSEMENT BY HLAA. I'M ONLY SHARING THIS. THIS IS WHY WE ALL HANG OUT, ALL OF US WHO HAVE TROUBLE HEARING.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, AND WE ARE LOOKING FOR ALL AGES, YOU KNOW, WHY IS THIS -- STATIC-Y? AM I? THE -- WE ARE LOOKING FOR ALL AGES AND JUST AS LONG AS YOU ARE ENTHUSIASTIC AND YOU WANT TO STEP UP AND TELL YOUR STORY. OBVIOUSLY WE COULDN'T USE EVERYONE. BUT IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BEING CONSIDERED, BE ONE OF OUR SERENE INNOVATIONS MODELS, THEN PLEASE COME TALK TO ME AT THE BREAK OR AFTER THE MEETING.

>> HEATHER: OKAY.

I MEAN BECAUSE SOME OF YOU ARE SERIOUS EYE CANDY. SO -- (CHUCKLES) -- YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE. WENDI. ANYWAY.

(CHUCKLES)

SO THAT MIGHT BE A FUN ACTIVITY.

ALL RIGHT.

SO TODAY WE ARE GOING TO BE TALKING ABOUT THE HOLIDAYS. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A RAP SESSION HERE WHERE WE ARE GOING TO SHARE OUR STORIES ABOUT COPING AND ABOUT HOW DIFFICULT IT CAN BE. AND I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT IN MY PERSONAL SITUATION, WE HAVE A LOT OF -- WE HAVE A HUGE THANKSGIVING MY FAMILY. AND A LOT OF PEOPLE COME LIKE COUSINS AND BOYFRIENDS AND GIVE -- BOYFRIENDS AND GIRLFRIENDS OF COUSINS. SO A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT REALLY DON'T KNOW ME. AND I THINK FOR ME IN ORDER TO FUNCTION ON THANKSGIVING, I THINK ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS DESCRIBE TO DO IS IDENTIFY. IDENTIFY, JUST TELL EVERYBODY WHAT MY SITUATION IS.

YOU KNOW. AND IT IS GETS TIRING AND YOU DON'T WANT TO --

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THEN THEY ASK YOU STUPID QUESTIONS. YOU KNOW, LIKE, "OH, HOW DID THAT HAPPEN TO YOU?" LIKE "DID YOU GET HIT ON THE HEAD WITH A ROCK?"

YOU KNOW. NO. SO THEN YOU HAVE TO GO INTO YOUR WHOLE STORY, WHICH REALLY DRIVES YOU CRAZY. AND I UNDERSTAND. BUT I THINK JUST IDENTIFY IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME.

AND THEN I ACTUALLY ADDED SOMETHING TWO YEARS AGO BECAUSE I STARTED REALIZING THAT THERE ARE FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE REALLY TERRIBLE HEARING PROBLEMS. WHO ARE DOING NOTHING ABOUT IT. AND SO, THEN I DECIDED WHAT I NEED TO DO IS NOT ONLY IDENTIFY, BUT I ALSO NEED TO BE BRAVE AND NEED TO BE BRAVE TO GO TO PEOPLE AND SAY, YOU KNOW WHAT? I THINK YOU ARE HAVING A HEARING PROBLEM? AND I THINK THAT YOU NEED TO -- HERE' MY AUDIOLOGISTS NUMBER OR HERE -- AND LIKE YOU KNOW, YOU FEEL NERVOUS ABOUT DOING THAT, LIKE RIGHT? GOING TO PEOPLE AND SAYING YOU HAVE A DISABILITY. BUT, YOU KNOW, I DID IT THREE TIMES.

ONE OF MY VERY GOOD FRIENDS, SHE CAME TO THANKSGIVING AND HER HUSBAND WAS THERE. HE IS THIS AMAZING ARCHITECT. HE IS IN HIS 60S BUT LOOKS LIKE 40. RUNNING ALL THE TIME. VERY YOUTHFUL LOOKING. BUT I COULD JUST TELL HE WAS FAKING IT THROUGH THE WHOLE DAY. YOU KNOW HOW YOU CAN WATCH IT. YOU ARE SAYING THEY ARE FAKING IT.

SO I TOOK HIM ASIDE AND I TALKED TO HIM. AND HE LIKE REALLY DENIED IT AND WHATEVER. BUT THEN THREE DAYS LATER HIS WIFE CALLED ME AND SAID, "THANK GOD YOU SAID THAT TO HIM. HE'S BEEN DRIVING ME CRAZY." AND SO, YOU KNOW, I THINK THERE'S SORT OF ANOTHER ELEMENT IN TERMS OF THE IDENTIFY. THERE'S ANOTHER STEP TO SORT OF -- I KNOW POLITELY AND NICELY REACH OUT TO PEOPLE WHO YOU KNOW NEED HELP.

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SO THAT'S JUST MY PIECE OF ADVICE OR SOMETHING THAT I'M TRYING TO WORK THROUGH MYSELF, ACTUALLY. BUT I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR SOME OF YOU IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO MAKE THE HOLIDAYS MORE ENJOYABLE. DOES ANYONE HAVE ANYTHING THEY WANT TO SAY? I'M STUCK HERE.

>> MITZI: WELL I DON'T KNOW ABOUT MORE ENJOYABLE, BUT WHEN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT TELLING SOMEONE THAT THEY SEEM TO HAVE A HEARING PROBLEM, WHEN I DO THAT, I ALSO PUT A SCARE IN THEM. I TELL THEM THE PART ABOUT THE LONGER YOU WAIT, THE LESS CORRECTION YOU ARE GOING TO GET BECAUSE THE NERVES TO THE BRAIN, WHERE YOU REALLY HEAR, ATROPHY. AND THE LONGER YOU WAIT TO GET HEARING AIDS, THE LESS YOU ARE GOING TO RECOVER IN HEARING.

BUT YOU HAVE TO PUT SOME FEAR IN THEM OR THEY ARE NOT GOING TO MOVE. (LAUGHTER)

>> MICHAEL: LAST YEAR WAS MY BEST THANKSGIVING. I STARTED -- OKAY. LAST YEAR WAS MY BEST THANKSGIVING. I WAS -- I WENT TO VISIT MY DAUGHTER AND THEN FROM THERE WE WENT TO NEW YORK WHERE --

>> WHOO HOO --

>> MICHAEL: -- WHERE HER STEPSISTER LIVED AND WE ARE INVITED THERE FOR THANKSGIVING. SO THEY GAVE ME MY OWN PRIVATE ROOM WAY UPSTAIRS IN THE ATTIC. AND EVERYONE WAS TOLD ME TO BE DOWNSTAIRS AT A CERTAIN TIME.

BUT I WAS TOO DEPRESSED ABOUT GOING DOWN THERE. I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE SAYING AND THEY -- PA-PA-PA-PA -- AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.

BUT EVENTUALLY, I WENT DOWNSTAIRS AND KAREN INVITED HER BEST FRIEND THERE, WHO HAPPENS TO BE DEAF WITH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT, WHO SIGNS PERFECTLY. AND I SAT THERE AND SHE SIGNED

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EVERYTHING WHAT EVERYONE WAS SAYING. I UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY WHAT WAS GOING ON. (APPLAUSE) . . .

AND THEN -- YEAH; IT WAS GREAT. AND THEN AFTERWARDS -- SHE WAS SO SWEET; HER NAME WAS MICHELLE. WE HAD A BEAUTIFUL CONVERSATION. AND I TALKED TO HER HUSBAND WHO DIDN'T KNOW ANY SIGN. AND I EXPLAINED TO HIM HOW IT WILL IMPROVE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIFE IF HE LEARNED IT. IT WAS A REALLY NICE THANKSGIVING. I WAS VERY HAPPY TO ENJOY THAT.

NOW, THIS THANKSGIVING, BECAUSE OF MITZI, I GOT THIS (HOLDING UP THE DEVICE) . . . YES, YOU DID, MITZI.

NO. BUT MITZI, I GOT A PROBLEM, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE IT. SO I BROUGHT IT WITH ME. I DON'T WANT TO PLAY GAMES WITH IT. I FIGURED MAYBE YOU CAN SHOW ME HOW TO WORK IT. GREAT. I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO PLAY GAMES WITH IT. THANK YOU. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> WENDI: THANK YOU.

SO, WELL, FIRST OF ALL -- AM I TOO MUCH STATIC? STAND UP? I CAN'T STAND UP TODAY. I'LL NOT FEELING TOO GOOD.

BUT I DIDN'T -- TALKING ABOUT STANDING UP, I WANTED TO CONGRATULATE HEATHER.

I'VE NOT SEEN YOU STAND UP SINCE YOUR ACCIDENT. I'M ECSTATIC ABOUT THAT. (APPLAUSE) . . . YAY. YEAH. EXCELLENT.

AS IT RELATES TO THANKSGIVING GATHERING, AS IT RELATES TO ME BECAUSE I DO THE SAME THING EACH YEAR WITH THE SAME PEOPLE, THAT FAMILIARITY HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL. I KNOW WHO -- HOW THEY TALK AND YOU KNOW I KIND OF KNOW WHO THEY ARE. AND SO, IF IT IS SIMILAR, THEN YOU CAN KIND OF RECALL THE THINGS THAT YOU MAY HAVE, THAT ONE LITTLE THING THAT YOU CONNECTED WITH LAST YEAR. YOU CAN -- WE HAVE A TENDENCY TO BE BETTER LISTENERS. AND WE REMEMBER THE ONE OR TWO THINGS THAT WE HEARD. I HEARD SOMETHING, YES! SO WE REMEMBER THAT.

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SO USE THOSE THINGS TO MAKE AT LEAST CONNECT SO THEY'LL BELIEVE OR KNOW THAT YOU ARE WITH THEM. YOU KNOW, THAT YOU CARE AND THAT KIND OF THING.

WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS EACH YEAR. ONE OF THE THINGS WE ALWAYS DECIDE IS KIND OF, RELAX. LOWER THE EXPECTATION A LITTLE BIT SO THAT YOU DON'T HAVE THIS BIG LET DOWN. JUST, YOU KNOW, KIND OF RELAX DO THE BEST YOU CAN. HEAR WHAT YOU CAN. TALK TO, SHAKE HANDS, EAT. JUST KIND OF DO THE BEST WE CAN. SO, THAT'S MY -- WHAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DO THIS YEAR. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> ALICIA: I THINK EVERYONE ACROSS THE BOARD SUFFERS AS WENDI MENTIONED FROM EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE, AS OPPOSED TO WHAT IT IS.

JUST WITH LIFE IN GENERAL.

AND I THINK THE MORE WE ACCEPT WHAT IS AND ACTUALLY EMBRACE IT, I THINK WE ARE GOING TO BE MUCH BETTER OFF. HAVING SAID THAT, ESPECIALLY IF I'M IN A HUGE CROWD LIKE THE HOLIDAY PARTY, I NEED TO TAKE BREAKS. I CAN GO IN THERE AND BE FRIENDLY AND ME TRYING TO CATCH EVERYTHING. BUT THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN IT BECOMES REALLY EXHAUSTING AND YOU ARE FIGHTING YOUR OWN WEARINESS AND IT IS PERFECTLY FINE TO JUST STEP BACK, GO INTO ANOTHER ROOM, CATCH YOUR BREATH. IF YOU ARE IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S HOUSE, CHECK OUT THEIR BOOKS OR WHATEVER, AND NOT PRESSURE YOURSELF TO BE THE BELLE OF THE BALL EVERY SINGLE SECOND.

BECAUSE FOR US, WE ARE DOING LIKE THREE TIMES THE WORK OF A HEARING PERSON. SO IT IS JUST TOO MUCH. AND IF YOU DO THAT, I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT THE PARTS WHERE YOU ARE WITH PEOPLE, YOU ENJOY THEM A LOT MORE.

THE LAST THING I WANTED TO SAY IS HEARING PEOPLE LIKE BLOW OFF WHAT THEY HEAR ALL THE TIME. AND THEY DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THEY MISS STUFF. THEY JUMP IN . THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT --

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>> DANNY: HEY, WAIT A MINUTE.

>> ALICIA: FOR US, WHEN WE MISS SOMETHING WE GET VERY UPSET AND MAD AT OURSELVES AND WE ARE REALLY HARD ON OURSELVES. AND THEY GO THROUGH LIFE LIKE TOTALLY CLUELESS HALF THE TIME AND THEY DON'T REALLY LOOK ON IT AS THIS HORRIFYING LOSS. BECAUSE I'VE OBSERVED HEARING PEOPLE AND SEEN THEM JUST SPACE OUT.

SO ANYWAY, JUST GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK AND BE GRATEFUL FOR YOURSELF AND BE KIND TO YOURSELF. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> GEORGIA: THANK YOU, ALICIA. FOR MYSELF, I HAPPEN TO HAVE A VERY SMALL FAMILY. SO HOLIDAYS ARE NOT LIKE OVERWHELMING. THERE'S LIKE MAYBE SOMETIMES TEN PEOPLE. THIS THANKSGIVING IS ONLY GOING TO BE FIVE PEOPLE. AND EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT I HAVE A HEARING LOSS. AND IT IS WHAT IT IS. AND I DON'T THINK THAT WE CAN REALLY ACT LIKE A HEARING PERSON WHEN WE HEAR EVERY WORD AND WE HANG ON EVERY WORD. JUST TALK TO THE PERSON SIT NEXT TO YOU. ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE WITH FAMILY, THEY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A HEARING LOSS. SO -- IF YOU DON'T PICK UP ON WHAT THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT IT IS NOT A BIG DEAL. JUST HAPPY TO BE WITH YOU. YOU KNOW. THEY ARE JUST -- JUST BEING WITH FAMILY AND ENJOYING THE FOOD.

SO, THE MANY YEARS I HAVE COME DEPRESSED. GO TO A PARTY AND COME HOME DEPRESSED BECAUSE I WASN'T ABLE TO BE OUTGOING AND FRIENDLY IN TALKING TO PEOPLE. IT IS HARD WORK TO TRY TO BE A HEARING PERSON. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE.

SO, IT IS WHAT IT IS. JUST GO HAVE A GOOD TIME. ENJOY BEING WITH YOUR FAMILY. ENJOY THE FOOD. THAT'S MY TAKE ON IT.

>> FLORENCE: IN ADDITION TO WHAT'S BEEN SAID, I'VE DEVELOPED A STRATEGY I CAN COMMUNICATE ONE-TO-ONE OR ONE-TO-A-COUPLE-OF-PEOPLE. BUT WHEN EVERYBODY IS AT THE DINNER TABLE OR EVERYBODY IS WAITING FOR DINNER AND TOGETHER, THEN

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THAT'S WHERE COMMUNICATION IS REALLY HARD.

I TEND TO BE HOSTING THANKSGIVING MOST OF THE TIME. AND I'M ALSO THE COOK IN THE FAMILY. AND WHEN I GO TO WISCONSIN WITH MY HUSBAND'S FAMILY, THERE'S ALWAYS A MINIMUM OF 20-SOME ODD PEOPLE. AND AGAIN, I'M DOING A LOT OF THE COOKING, WHICH WORKS GREAT BECAUSE THE KITCHEN IS SMALL. SO THAT WAY PEOPLE COME IN AND YOU JUST ONE OR TWO PEOPLE AT A TIME.

AND IF THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT TO TALK TO, SOMEBODY'S NEW BOYFRIEND I WANT TO MEET, I SAY COME IN THE KITCHEN AND HELP ME. AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES WHERE YOU CAN BE IN A SMALL SPACE. OFTEN ANOTHER THING I DO IS AFTER DINNER I DON'T DO THE CLEAN-UP. SO I JUST COOK. I DO THE FUN PART.

AND SO, I SAY WHO'S WANTS TO GO FOR A WALK? AND THEN THESE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO TALK TO ME THAT HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO BECAUSE THIS IS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO SAY, WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME. AND SO EVEN IF IT IS JUST AROUND THE BLOCK FOR 15 MINUTES OR SO, YOU GET TO FEEL YOU VISIT WITH PEOPLE AND GET TO RELAX WITH THEM. AND ALL KINDS OF, I THINK, STRATEGIES WHEN YOU GO OVER TO OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES TOO. I ALWAYS TRY TO THINK OF WAYS WHERE I CAN GET WITH A COUPLE OF PEOPLE AT A TIME. THAT SEEMS TO HELP. BUT THE POINT THAT WAS MADE ABOUT THE EXHAUSTING, AND I THINK THAT'S PART OF -- I FINALLY REALIZED WHAT WAS GOING ON WHEN I WAS OUT ONE NIGHT WITH A FRIEND FROM FRANCE, WHO ENGLISH IS HER SECOND LANGUAGE. AND AFTER A LITTLE WHILE, SHE SAID, "YOU KNOW IT IS VERY, VERY EXHAUSTING TO SPEAK IN ENGLISH ALL THE TIME." AND I SAID, "THAT'S LIKE WITH A HEARING LOSS, RIGHT?"

IT IS THE SAME TYPE OF THING. YOUR MIND IS HEARING AND TRANSLATING THINGS IN A DIFFERENT WAY. AND SO, THAT HELPS ME TO KIND OF PUT THE HEARING LOSS IN A DIFFERENT KIND OF CONTEXT WHEN I'M TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE.

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(APPLAUSE) . . .

>> TERI: YOU KNOW, BUILDING ON WHAT PEOPLE HAVE SAID ABOUT HOW EXHAUSTING IT IS, AND TO BE AROUND OTHERS, I THINK FOR ME IT IS ABOUT BEING DISCERNING ABOUT WHICH INVITATIONS I CHOOSE. BECAUSE I'M LOOKING AT MY CALENDAR NOW AND THERE'S LIKE THREE PARTIES I'VE BEEN INVITED TO ON THE SECONDS AND A BUNCH OF THINGS GONE ON AND THE WEEKEND WE ARE HAVING OURS. UNFORTUNATELY, I'M GOING TO BE OUT OF TOWN THAT WEEKEND, SO I WON'T BE THERE.

BUT IT IS LIKE IT ALWAYS SOUNDS GOOD. OH THESE FRIENDS ARE HAVING A PARTY I WANT TO GO AND SEE THEM AND HANG OUT AND HEAT THE FOOD. THEN WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, IT IS LIKE, OH, BUT THERE'S GOING TO BE 50 PEOPLE THERE IN THIS SMALL ROOM AND ALL OF THE REVERB GOING ON. YOU KNOW, 30 DIFFERENT CONVERSATIONS GOING ON IN THE BACKGROUND. AND SO SOMETIMES I JUST GO, I THINK I'D RATHER JUST STAY HOME WATCH A MOVIE ON NETFLIX. OR -- YEAH. YOU ARE NOT DONE YET? OR JUST MAKE SURE THAT I ACCEPT THE INVITATIONS OF SOMETHING THAT'S GOING POSITIVE, BE SMALLER, IS MORE INTIMATE THAT SOME OF YOU HAVE TALKED ABOUT WHERE I CAN BE WITH PEOPLE WHO KNOW ME AND I DON'T HAVE TO WORK SO HARD.

(APPLAUSE)

>> TIM: MORNING EVERYONE.

WHEN I WENT TO THE CONVENTION BACK IN JUNE, THEY HAD A LOT OF SESSIONS ABOUT HEARING LOSS AND THE EFFECT ON THE BRAIN, HOW EXHAUSTIVE IT IS IN TERMS OF THE EFFORT IT TAKES TO HEAR, AND BASICALLY EVERYTHING YOU HAVE SAID.

I KNOW WE TALK ABOUT THE HOLIDAYS, BUT THIS IS REALLY FOR ALL SITUATIONS, WHETHER HOLIDAYS OR BIG FAMILY GATHERINGS.

MY CHALLENGE IS, LIKE GEORGIA, WE HAVE A SMALL FAMILY. BUT LIKE FOR THANKSGIVING, HALF OF THE PEOPLE I'M GOING TO BE WITH

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DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH. THEY ARE SPANISH ONLY. SO I'VE GOT TO BE ABLE TO NOT ONLY TELL THAT OKAY THEY ARE SPEAKING SPANISH SO DO THE BEST I CAN. BUT THEN WHEN THEY START SPEAKING ENGLISH, I'VE GOT TO GET MY BRAINED TURNED ON NOW CATCH THAT AS WELL.

THAT'S VERY EXHAUSTIVE. SO I MAKE A POINT AND THEY TALKED ABOUT IT AT THE CONVENTION, GET YOUR REST. BE MINDFUL. BE AWARE OF HOW YOU ARE FEELING. ALL OF YOU ONLY HAVE SO MUCH RESERVES. SO SOME DAYS YOU HAVE A LOT OF RESERVES AND SOME DAYS YOU DON'T. IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING IT, YOU HAVE TO TAKE MORE BREAKS. YOU HAVE TO STEP AWAY. YOU HAVE TO FIND A SMALLER ROOM. ONE ON ONE CONVERSATION. BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK YOU CAN GET OUT OF THIS MEETING.

SO, IT REALLY TALKED ABOUT HOW IT IS MORE INTENSIVE IN TERMS OF THE IMPACT ON ALL OF THE EFFORT WE GO THROUGH TO HEAR THAN WE REALIZE. SO I'M SURE THE NEXT CONVENTION THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE EVEN MORE STUDIES ABOUT THIS. IT MADE ME REALIZE, GET YOUR REST. EAT WELL. REMEMBER ALCOHOL CAN MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO COMMUNICATE. SO, BE COGNITIVE OF THAT. AND REALLY JUST BE AWARE OF JUST HOW YOU ARE FEELING AND BE REALISTIC AND SO FORTH.

AND FOR ME, I'LL -- MAYBE I BETTER START LEARNING SPANISH. I DON'T KNOW. (CHUCKLES).

ANYWAY. THAT WAS IT. SO -- I'M SURE IT WILL BE MORE COMING STUDIES AND SO FORTH. IT IS GOOD TO SEE THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF PROFESSIONALS OUT THERE THAT ARE STUDYING THE IMPACT OF THE BRAIN WITH HEARING LOSS. SO I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO LEARNING MORE ABOUT THAT. THAT'S IT.

>> TERI: ON THE OTHER HAND, WITH ENOUGH ALCOHOL YOU DON'T CARE IF YOU CAN'T HEAR.

(LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE)

>> HEATHER: I ACTUALLY HAVE A QUESTION.

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ALL RIGHT. I ACTUALLY HAVE A QUESTION.

FLORENCE WAS TALKING ABOUT HOW SHE COOKS AND SHE LIKES THAT BECAUSE THEN IT MAKES IT SMALLER AND MORE ONE-ON-ONE. ACTUALLY, THAT COOKING THING IS MY NEMESIS. WHEN I AM FOCUSING AND TRYING TO GET SOMETHING DONE, AND I'M LOOKING AT WHAT I'M DOING, I -- THEN -- OKAY. MY FAMILY EVERYONE GETS IN THE KITCHEN. EVERYONE IS DRINKING WINE AND WE ALL CRAM INTO THE KITCHEN AND EVERYBODY IS HELPING. AND IT IS LIKE THIS TOTAL DISASTER AREA. WHICH IS FUN AND EVERYONE IS LAUGHING AND TALKING. AND I'M LIKE TRYING TO COOK. AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT ANYONE ELSE IS SAYING. SO I REALLY HATE IT WHEN I HAVE TO COOK BECAUSE I CAN'T LIKE BE UP AND I CAN'T BE FOLLOWING THE CONVERSATION.

SO THIS YEAR, USUALLY WE DO THE THANKSGIVING AT SISTER-IN-LAW'S HOUSE. WE ARE DOING IT AT MY HOUSE. WHICH A LOT OF IT IS GOING TO ME. I'M LOOKING FORWARD IT. I'M NERVOUS. TWO ISSUES. HOW AM I GOING TO FEEL PART OF IT WHILE I'M COOKING?

AND THE SECOND THING, THEY JUST SORT OF FEEL LIKE THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW ME, ESPECIALLY LIKE WHEN I'M NOT PAYING -- WHEN I'M PAYING ATTENTION TO SOMETHING ELSE AND I'M NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO THEM, I THINK THEY FEEL LIKE I'M NERVOUS OR ANGRY OR STRESSED, LIKE THEY ARE READING IT "SHE DOESN'T WANT TO TALK TO US." RIGHT? BUT WHAT I'M REALLY DOING IS "GETTING THE FRICKIN' TURKEY MADE AND I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE TALKING --" BUT THEY ARE READING IT AS, DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING?

SO ONE TIME I DID A FRONT --

NEVER PUT THAT ON YOU, IT WAS TOO HARD ON YOU. I WAS HAVING FUN. BUT THEY WERE READING IT AS I WAS BEING STRESSED OUT. SO ANYONE HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT THAT? HELP? HELP.

>> KIRSTEN: I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO OPEN MY BIG MOUTH TO ENCOURAGE YOU SET THE RULES BEFORE YOU START COOKING. BECAUSE

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YOU NEED TO SET THEM UP, AND SAY, "HEY, WHEN I'M FOCUSING. I'M NOT IGNORING YOU. I'M NOT MAD. I'M NOT ANGRY." AND THAT'S WHAT I DO. BECAUSE WHEN I --

I'M A SINGLE MOM. SO I HAVE MY SON AND ALL OF HIS FRIENDS. THEY ALL COME OVER AND HANG OUT. WE HAVE A FRIENDSHIP THANKSGIVING. SO WHEN THEY ALL COME, I SET THE RULES. IF I'M COOKING AND I HAVE THIS FROWL LOOK ON MY FACE, AND I'M HEARING LAUGHING, AND I'LL ASK THEM, "REPEAT WHAT YOU SAID."

"NEVER MIND." MY BIGGEST PET PEEVE. "NEVER MIND."

SO, I WILL STAMP MY FEET AND GO, "SERIOUSLY?!" SO I WILL REMIND EVERYBODY -- (CHUCKLES), I DON'T LIKE THAT WORD. AND IF I'M ASKING THERE'S A REASON WHY I'M ASKING. SO SET UP THE RULES BEFORE YOU START COOKING AND LET EVERYBODY KNOW, "HEY, I REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHAT EVERYBODY IS SAYING. BUT WHEN I'M DOING THIS PART, TELL ME WHAT'S HAPPENING WHEN I'M DONE," SO THEY CAN RELAY TO YOU WHAT'S DOING ON SO YOU DON'T FEEL LEFT OUT OR PEOPLE THINK YOU ARE IGNORING THEM. THAT'S NOT COOL.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE? IN A RESTAURANT, OR IF YOU ARE IN THE KITCHEN HANGING OUT, OR IF YOU ARE IN THIS KIND OF --

I HAVE TO SAY, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I FEEL LIKE I FIT IN FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME IN 57 YEARS. (APPLAUSE) . . .

I GOT REALLY TEARY-EYED LISTENING TO EVERYBODY TO KNOW THAT I'M NOT ALONE. I'VE BEEN HANGING OUT IN CALIFORNIA, ISN'T THERE ANYBODY LIKE ME?

SO, THANK YOU. I -- MORE PEOPLE NOW AT THIS ORGANIZATION, I HAD NO IDEA.

TO ENCOURAGE -- HERE'S THE THING I'VE LEARNED: I LEARNED TO SPEAK UP. I LEARNED TO USE EVERY WAY I CAN -- I SIGN, I TALK, I SCREAM, I JUMP. I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO JUMP ON THE COUNTER TO GET EVERYBODY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MY ISSUES ARE. I'VE ALSO BEEN

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KNOWN TO TAKE MY HEARING AIDS OUT. BECAUSE IF THEY ARE NOT LISTENING TO MY RULES I JUST TAKE THEM OUT AND SIT THERE AND LOOK AT THEM.

BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HAVE HUMOR. EITHER YOU CAN GET UPSET OR CRY, BUT CREATE A SENSE OF HUMOR IN THE SITUATION, SO THEY HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

KEY THING, EDUCATE, AS YOU ARE ALL SAYING. EDUCATING, EDUCATING. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> GEORGIA: I REALLY FEEL FOR YOU, HEATHER, HAVING A KITCHEN FULL OF PEOPLE. THAT WOULD DRIVE ME NUTS.

(CHUCKLES)

I CAN'T COOK WITH ANYBODY IN THE KITCHEN. NOT EVEN MY DAUGHTER. "OUT!"

THAT'S PROBABLY A REAL CHALLENGE FOR YOU. BUT I AGREE, YOU KNOW, IF YOU CAN JUST TELL EVERYBODY THAT YOU HAVE A HEARING LOSS, YOU CAN'T HEAR THEM UNLESS THEY ARE LOOKING AT YOU, YOU KNOW, FACING YOU. BUT I DO HAVE A SUGGESTION:

MAYBE YOU CAN WEAR THAT LITTLE YELLOW BUTTON THAT SAYS "FACE ME." DO YOU HAVE ONE OF THOSE?

>> HEATHER: I HAVE ONE OF THOSE. YEAH.

>> GEORGIA: MAYBE YOU CAN PUT ONE ON YOUR BACK TOO.

(LAUGHTER)

>> HEATHER: LIKE A "KICK ME" SIGN. RIGHT?

>> GEORGIA: (CHUCKLES)

>> FLORENCE: I DO HAVE A COUPLE OF SUGGESTIONS IF YOU ARE COOKING. ONE IMPORTANT THING, I DO AS MUCH AS I CAN THE DAY BEFORE FOR SOMETHING FOR THANKSGIVING. I COOK THE SAME MENU EVERY YEAR. AND SO PEOPLE KIND OF LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING THE SAME. IT IS LIKE A HOLIDAY THING. SO I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE TO CONCENTRATE TOO MUCH AND WORRY TOO MUCH.

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BUT WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN THE KITCHEN, IT IS HELPS TO DELEGATE. PEOPLE REALLY LIKE TO HELP OUT. YOU FILL THE WATER GLASSES. YOU CUT THE BREAD UP. YOU DO THIS, YOU GET THAT ON THE TABLE FOR ME. AND SO ON. THEY LIKE IF YOU THINK AHEAD OF TIME WHAT CAN BE DELEGATED.

BUT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT RELIEVES A LOT OF STRESS FOR ME IS WRITING DOWN BEFORE I -- THE DAY BEFORE -- SORT OF PLAN. AS I MOVE THROUGH WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AND IT IS NOT IN MY HEAD BECAUSE ON THE PAPER. SO I'M NOT WORRYING ABOUT, OKAY, I WRITE DOWN THINGS, EVERYBODY COMES OUT AND DOES WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. I STARTED THAT, I STILL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL. THERE'S ONE OR TWO DISHES THAT NEVER MAKE IT TO THE TABLE BECAUSE I FORGOT TO TAKE THEM OUT OF THE REFRIGERATOR.

WHEN A GOOD PIECE OF ADVICE IS NOBODY CARES IF EVERYTHING IS HOT ON THE TABLE OR NOT. YOU KNOW. NOBODY REALLY CARES THAT A DINNER PARTY IS EVEN THAT MUCH ABOUT THE FOOD. YOU KNOW.

SO, AND ALSO TOO, HALFWAY THROUGH THE COOKING, A LITTLE WINE HELPS TO RELAX YOU. (CHUCKLES). SO YOU DON'T CARE. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> HEATHER: OKAY.

SO WE ARE TALKING ABOUT ME. MY PROBLEM. ALL RIGHT. SO WHEN YOU ARE COOKING -- AND I LOVE ALL OF THESE SUGGESTIONS, REALLY WONDERFUL. AND I'M --

KIRSTEN, I THINK THAT'S REALLY WONDERFUL. YOU ARE SO FORCEFUL AND YOU ARE ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF SO STRONGLY.

BUT SOMETIMES IT IS HARD FOR ME TO DO THAT. SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE YOU KNOW, I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO SAY IT AGAIN. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO GET IN EVERYBODY'S FACE. EVERYBODY IS HAVING FUN. I DON'T WANT TO STEP UP AND SAY, "WHAT DID YOU SAY? WHAT WAS THAT?" THEY HAVE FLOW GOING IN THE CONVERSATION. AND I JUST

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FEEL A LITTLE BIT NERVOUS ABOUT YOU KNOW, BEING THE BUMMER AT THE PARTY. AND SO, I LOVE THESE IDEAS, BUT SOMETIMES I'M GOING TO WORRY ABOUT FEELING NERVOUS ABOUT NOT ADVOCATING PROPERLY.

>> KIRSTEN: I'M THINKING TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER.

CREATE A FUN POSTER SIGN WITH RULES.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

"WELCOME TO MY KITCHEN."

"1. FACE ME."

MAKE A LITTLE SILLY FACE AND LIKE EMOJI OR SOMETHING.

"2. I REALLY WANT TO KNOW."

BE -- BUT CREATE A SILLY POSTER. PUT IT BY YOUR -- WHERE YOU NORMALLY COOK. PUT IT BY YOUR OVEN, AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T GET BURNED UP. BUT PUT IT SOMEWHERE IN THE KITCHEN SO THAT PEOPLE CAN READ IT FOR FUN AND GO, LIKE, "OH, WAIT. WE NEED TO INCLUDE HER IN," IN A VERY SILENT SUBTLE WAY. HOW'S THAT SOUND?
(APPLAUSE) . . .

>> JENNA: I WAS GOING TO SAY, I MEAN, I THINK AS HEARING IMPAIRED PEOPLE, YOU ARE NOT A "BUMMER." PEOPLE ARE THERE BECAUSE THEY REALLY WANT TO SEE YOU. THEY -- AND IF YOU ARE OVER A CERTAIN AGE, LET'S SAY 40, (CHUCKLES), EVERYBODY HAS SOMETHING, RIGHT? WHETHER IT'S HEARING LOSS OR VISION PROBLEMS. THEY HAVE PROBLEMS WALKING. EVERYBODY HAS SOMETHING. RIGHT? AND PEOPLE ARE MORE COMPASSIONATE THAN WE GIVE THEM CREDIT FOR. SO I THINK IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO THINK THAT EVERYBODY HAS SOMETHING. I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES WHEN I FINALLY SAID I HAVE A HEARING LOSS. OH MY GOD, I WEAR HEARING AIDS. LIKE YOU WOULD NEVER KNOW MAYBE OR WHATEVER.

SO DON'T THINK YOU ARE A BUMMER. BUT THE OTHER THING I WAS GOING TO SAY, I THINK IN THE END YOU ALSO HAVE TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF. AND THERE'S A GUY WHO COMES TO OUR THANKSGIVINGS

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AND FAMILY GET-TOGETHERS AND I -- HE'S MUMBLER. AND I SAID, "I NEED YOU TO --I CAN'T HEAR YOU. YOU NEED TO ENUNCIATE." AND HE NEVER DOES.

THE LAST TIME HE CAME UP TO ME, I SAID TO HIM, "I CAN'T TALK TO YOU," AND I SAID IT WITH A SMILE ON MY FACE, "UNTIL YOU CAN ACCOMMODATE ME, I CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU." AND YOU HAVE TO BE OKAY WITH THAT. YOU HAVE TO BE OKAY WITH TELLING PEOPLE IF YOU CAN'T ACCOMMODATE ME, I CAN'T TALK TO YOU. AND YOU CAN SAY IT VERY FRIENDLY.

BUT AT THIS POINT, I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM NOT TALKING TO HIM AT THIS POINT BECAUSE HE DOES NOT ACCOMMODATE ME. I CAN PUT IT UPON MYSELF AND WALK AROUND AND SAY I'M A BUMMER BECAUSE I CAN'T BE IN THIS CONVERSATION. I'M PUTTING THE BURDEN ON HIM. IT IS LIKE IF I WAS IN A WHEELCHAIR, COULD YOU JUST SLAM THE DOOR OR KEEP IT OPEN FOR ME? I THINK THAT'S THE OTHER THING. IS YOU REALLY HAVE TO BE OKAY, EVEN THOUGH IT IS FAMILY OR WHATEVER, YOU HAVE TO BE OKAY WITH ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF AND SAYING, "I NEED YOU TO SPEAK UP. I CANNOT HEAR YOU."

AND BUT I UNDERSTAND IT GETS OLD TO SAY IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN. BUT I FINALLY, THAT'S MY THING. AND IF HE CAME UP TO ME NOW AND SAID, "WHY AREN'T YOU TALKING TO ME? I WOULD SAY, "I TOLD YOU, I TOLD YOU."

AND SO, ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF. BE KIND TO YOURSELF. I THINK THAT'S THE BIGGEST THING WE ALL DO IS THAT WE, YOU KNOW, WE THINK WE ARE A BUMMER OR WE FEEL LIKE WE ARE MISSING EVERYTHING.

AND THAT'S THE OTHER THING I WAS GOING TO SAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PART OF EVERY CONVERSATION. WE FORGET THAT FOR THOSE OF US WHO MAYBE HAD BETTER HEARING AT SOME POINT, THAT THERE'S 20 PEOPLE AT THE TABLE. YOU WEREN'T LISTENING TO ALL OF THOSE CONVERSATIONS, RIGHT? YOU WEREN'T PART OF THOSE

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CONVERSATIONS. SOMEBODY COULD HAVE BEEN TALKING RIGHT NEXT TO YOU AND YOU ARE SHOVING FOOD IN YOUR MOUTH.

SO YOU ALSO HAVE TO BE OKAY WITH JUST BEING LIKE, I DON'T NEED TO BE PART OF EVERY CONVERSATION. SO, ANYWAY, I JUST -- I UNDERSTAND THE BUMMER ASPECT. I DON'T WANT THIS TO FALL ON YOU. BUT I'M JUST SAYING WE NEED TO BE OKAY WITH OURSELVES AND TELL PEOPLE WHAT'S GOING ON. IF THEY CAN'T DO IT, EH, MOVE ON TO THE NEXT PERSON AND DON'T TAKE THAT BURDEN UPON YOURSELF.

(APPLAUSE) . . .

>> MARILYN: THE STRESS AND ANXIETY FOR ME HAS ALWAYS BEEN BECAUSE I DIDN'T ACCEPT MY HEARING LOSS. AND AS SOON AS I WAS ABLE TO REALLY -- WELL I'M STILL ACCEPTING. I'M STILL IN THE I-N-G STAGE.

BUT I ONCE -- I REALLY ALLOWED PEOPLE TO KNOW HOW BAD IT IS, THEN I FOUND THAT THEY BECAME MUCH MORE ACCOMMODATING TO ME. I FAKED IT FOR SO LONG AND EVEN THOUGH MANY PEOPLE IN MY FAMILY HAVE HEARING LOSS, MANY OF THEM DON'T WEAR HEARING AIDS OR THEY HAVE THEM AND DON'T USE THEM OR WHATEVER. BUT FOR ME, I JUST FELT LIKE, KIND OF LIKE YOU, JENNA, I SAID EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT I HAVE A HEARING LOSS. EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS WHERE I'M COMING FROM FROM THAT STANDPOINT. NOT WHAT IT IS LIKE. YOU CAN'T KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE UNTIL YOU ARE THERE. BUT -- AND IF THEY CAN'T ACCOMMODATE ME, THEN I'M WITH YOU. I DON'T TALK TO THEM.

THE THING IS I ALWAYS FELT GUILTY FOR SO LONG I FELT GUILTY LIKE OH I DON'T WANT ANYBODY TO HAVE TO ACCOMMODATE ME. LIKE I HAD TO TRY TO FIT INTO THEIR WORLD. AND SOMEBODY TOLD ME ONCE, THEY SAID, "YOU KNOW, IF THEY REALLY WANT TO TALK TO YOU, THEY'LL ACCOMMODATE YOU." AND I WAS LIKE, I'M NOT KIDDING YOU, I FELT LIKE A THOUSAND POUNDS WAS LIFTED OFF MY SHOULDERS. OH MY GOSH. EVEN THOUGH INTELLECTUALLY, OF COURSE, I KNOW THAT. BUT WHEN

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SOMEBODY SAID THAT TO ME, I FINALLY THOUGHT I'M GOING TO GO WITH THAT. AND EVER SINCE I'VE DONE THAT, IT'S BEEN MUCH BETTER.

I STILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE MY CHALLENGES ALL THE TIME. BUT I DO THINK THAT ME ACCEPTING IT AND NOT TRYING SO HARD HAS REALLY HELPED ME.

(APPLAUSE) . . .

>> WENDI: YEAH. HEATHER, I AGREE WITH WHAT JENNA SAID AND --

WHAT IS YOUR NAME? MARILYN. I AGREE WITH HER AS WELL.

I NEED TO SEE THAT. SO, I DO BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT A BUMMER. FIRST OF ALL, ALL THESE PEOPLE ARE COMING TO YOUR HOUSE. SO, RIGHT OFF THE BAT YOU ARE HOSTING PEOPLE. THEY ARE APPRECIATIVE OF BEING THERE, OR THEY SHOULD BE. SO, THERE'S NOTHING ABOUT BEING A BUMMER.

AND JUST THINK OF IT THIS WAY AS WELL. JUST LIKE PEOPLE HAD TO ACCOMMODATE YOU IN A WAY HAVING BEEN IN THIS WHEELCHAIR NOW. I MEAN, THERE'S NO -- NOTHING TO THINK TWICE ABOUT. YOUR NEEDS ARE YOUR NEEDS. I MEAN JUST BECAUSE THEY CAN SEE THEM MAYBE THAT HELPS THEM TO SAY, OOH, I NEED TO DO THIS. I NEED TO MOVE OUT OF THE WAY. I NEED TO GET THE RAMP. AND IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT YOU HAVE TO BE ACCOMMODATED. SO YOUR HEARING IS NO DIFFERENT. IT HAS TO BE ACCOMMODATED. AND AS A MATTER OF FACT, YOU KNOW, IT IS PROBABLY JUST AS IMPORTANT. I MEAN YOU KNOW, SO DON'T FEEL BAD. YOU ARE NOT A "BUMMER" WHATSOEVER.

SET YOUR HOUSE, YOUR -- I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU WANT TO SET THE RULES OR -- BUT WHATEVER IT IS, THOSE ARE YOUR NEEDS AND YOU ARE BEING KIND AND GRACIOUS TO HAVE PEOPLE COME. YOU ARE COOKING. YOU ARE DOING MORE THAN LOT OF PEOPLE CAN DO IN A WHEELCHAIR WITH A HEARING LOSS, DA-DA, DA-DA-DA. GOOD GOD.

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SO WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU NEED, IT IS SHOULD JUST FALL INTO PLACE. AND I THINK THE PROBLEM WITH HEARING LOSS IS THAT IT IS FOR THE MOST PART INVISIBLE. AND PEOPLE FORGET AND FORGET AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN TAUGHT OR THE DEMANDS HAVEN'T BEEN MADE LIKE THEY HAVE BEEN FOR ACCOMMODATING WHEELCHAIR ACCESS AND THE VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS AND THINGS. SO IT IS UPON US TO MAKE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT WE NEED, WHAT'S EXPECTED, AND HOW IT NEEDS TO HAPPEN.

AND I HAVE A FRIEND, AND SHE KNOWS, BUT I GUESS BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T SEE IT AND MAYBE I'M ON MY GOOD DAY WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER IT SEEMS LIKE I -- SO SHE FORGETS. SOMETIMES SHE'LL SAY THINGS, "CAN YOU HEAR ME?" OR OTHER PEOPLE SAY IT. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY, "I HEARD YOU. I DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU SAID."

AND, TO JENNA'S POINT, PEOPLE WHO ARE MUMBLING OR EATING OR COVERING THEIR MOUTH, SO THEN AGAIN, IT IS LIKE I -- "I'M UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU BECAUSE I CAN'T UNDERSTAND. EVEN IF I HEARD YOU, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND YOU." AND THEN SOMETIMES WE UNDERSTOOD ALMOST EVERYTHING, BUT THEN WE MISS THAT LITTLE PUNCHLINE OR THE BIG DEAL. SO MAYBE YOU CAN SAY, "WELL, I HEARD THE BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BUT WHAT WAS THE -- " YOU KNOW? SO IT IS NOT JUST "WHAT?"

BECAUSE THEN THEY KIND OF DON'T WANT TO REPEAT. THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START OR REPEAT EVERYTHING.

SO SOMETIMES WE DON'T NEED THEM TO REPEAT EVERYTHING. WE JUST NEED THEM TO REPEAT SOMETHING.

SO BUT I JUST HAVE TO STRESS THAT YOU ARE NOT A "BUMMER." SET YOUR HOUSE, SET YOUR -- (CHUCKLES) ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

SO JUST --

>> JENNA: I THINK YOU SHOULD WEAR A CAPE, PERSONALLY. THE

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FACT YOU ARE IN A WHEELCHAIR AND HARD OF HEARING AND HOSTING THIS PARTY, YOU SHOULD LIKE PUT A SUPER WOMAN THING AND WEAR A CAPE.

BUT JUST REAL QUICK -- YEAH. PUT IN YOUR MUSCLES.

WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY ACTUALLY THIS WAS TAUGHT TO ME BY A FRIEND WHO WAS BORN HARD OF HEARING. AND IT IS REALLY HELPED ME. IS THAT HE SAID, WHEN YOU DON'T HEAR SOMETHING, DON'T SAY "WHAT?" BECAUSE THEN PEOPLE DON'T KNOW, LIKE, "DO I NEED TO REPEAT 20 DIFFERENT THINGS?" SO IF YOU SAY, YOU WENT TO THE STORE AND WHAT HAPPENED? THEN THEY JUST FILL THAT IN . BUT THAT'S -- HE TOLD ME. HE SAID THAT'S GOING TO HELP YOU SO MUCH. BECAUSE I WAS WALKING -- WE ALL DO IT. "WHAT?" "WHAT?" "WHAT?"

BUT IF WE DO HEAR A PIECE OF IT, IT IS HELPFUL FOR THE SPEAKER TO SAY, "YOU KNOW, I HEARD YOU SAID YOU ARE GOING TO THE STORE. THEN WHAT HAPPENED? I MISSED THAT."

REGULAR HEARING PERSON WOULD SAY THE SAME THING. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN? WE JUST TAKE IT UPON OURSELVES. SO I THINK THAT WAS A TRICK THAT HE GAVE TO ME THAT I FOUND VERY HELPFUL BECAUSE WE ALL DO IT, IT IS KNEE JERK AT THIS POINT. WE JUST GO WHAT. BUT WE REALLY DID HEAR MAYBE SOME PART OF IT. SO JUST HELPING THE SPEAKER FILL IN "THIS IS WHAT I HEARD," AND THEN WHAT WAS THAT LAST PART IS REALLY HELPFUL. SO REPEATING THAT BACK.

I'M JUST SAYING IN DAILY LIFE, NOT NECESSARILY FOR THANKSGIVING OR THE HOLIDAYS, IT HAS HELPED ME TREMENDOUSLY. AND IT TAKES THE BURDEN OFF OF THE OTHER PERSON AS WELL. SO --

>> HEATHER: ONE MORE AND THEN --

>> MITZI: IF YOU ARE STILL UNCOMFORTABLE ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF, I THINK YOU SHOULD INVITE KIRSTEN TO THANKSGIVING.

(CHUCKLES)

>> MICHAEL: THAT'S FUNNY.

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I WILL BE SITTING THERE WITH MY DAUGHTERS, MY DAUGHTER AND MY SON-IN-LAW AND A FRIEND OF OURS PLAYING CARDS EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT. AND THEY ARE BUSY TALKING TO EACH OTHER, AND IT SOUNDED LIKE MUMBLING. THEY ARE TALKING LOW BECAUSE THE BABY IS IN NEXT ROOM. THEY HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON. AND I WAIT FOR A WHILE AND THEN I LOOK AT MY SON-IN-LAW BECAUSE HIS VOICE I UNDERSTAND, I'LL SAY TO HIM, "WHAT ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT?" HE'LL SUMMARIZE. AND THAT HELPS. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> GARY: I KNOW YOU ALL ARE GETTING HUNGRY RIGHT NOW. BUT FIRST, I'LL GIVE MY REPORT. FIRST REMEMBER WE STILL HAVE THAT LITTLE KITTY OVER THERE. THE KITTY CAT IS HUNGRY. TURKEY DINNER RIGHT HERE. HE NEEDS SOME GRAVY. HE NEEDS CRANBERRIES. EVERYTHING BUT THANKSGIVING.

SO, THE KITTY NEEDS MONEY. (CHUCKLES).

BUT DON'T EAT THIS. (CANNED CAT FOOD)

OKAY.

OUR NEXT MEETING IS GOING TO BE IN JANUARY BECAUSE WE HAVE THE HOLIDAY PARTY, SO I'M GOING TO TELL YOU NOW.

ONE, THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE ASKED FOR ME THE WRISTBANDS, WAIT. BECAUSE APPARENTLY THERE'S SOME SECURITY PROBLEMS WITH THE ROSE PARADE WITH THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. THEY ARE STILL WORKING OUT THE PROBLEMS RIGHT NOW. AND I'VE BEEN ASSURED THAT THEY ARE GOING TO SEND ME THE WRISTBANDS SO I CAN SEND IT TO YOU FOR THE PARADE. SO, BE PATIENT WITH ME. BECAUSE I CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.

THE LAST I HEARD THERE MIGHT BE A PROBLEM DRIVING DOWN COLORADO BOULEVARD TO DROP OFF THE CHAIRS. BUT I WILL LET YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DECIDE ON.

FOR THOSE ON THE COMMITTEE FOR THE POSTCARDS, I HATE TO SAY

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THIS, BUT THE POST OFFICE IS RAISING THE PRICES IN JANUARY. THE POSTAGE IS GOING UP TO 50-CENTS AT .35 FOR THE POSTCARD. OKAY.

YOU HUNGRY? GO FOR YOUR BREAK.

>> HEATHER: I FOUND THIS REALLY HELPFUL AND I APPRECIATE ALL OF YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR WONDERFUL IDEAS.

AND WE NOW HAVE OUR WONDERFUL, YUMMY POT LUCK. HOPEFULLY WE CAN ENJOY FOOD TOGETHER AND CONTINUE TO GIVE EACH OTHER IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO MAKE THE NEXT MONTH AND A HALF ENJOYABLE.

OKAY. GREAT.

AND I WANT TO THANK OUR FABULOUS CAPTIONER FOR ALL OF HER HARD WORK. (APPLAUSE) . . .

THE CAPTIONIST: THANK YOU.

>> HEATHER: I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE DOES IT. IT IS INCREDIBLE THING TO ME HOW QUICKLY THOSE WORDS GET UP THERE.

ANYWAY. SO LET'S EAT.

(BREAK AT 11:09)

(BACK AT 11:45)

>> HEATHER: EVERYBODY FROM -- IS EVERYBODY BACK IN T-COIL MODE? T-COIL MODE? ARE YOU BACK THERE? OKAY.

WOW, THIS IS REALLY FUN. NOW THAT WE'VE HAD A CHANCE TO ENJOY SOME OF THOSE WONDERFUL DISHES, IS THERE ANY -- DID ANYONE ELSE HAVE ANYTHING THAT THEY WANTED TO TALK ABOUT IN TERMS OF THE HOLIDAYS? OR -- NO?

>> KAT: UM, JUST ONE THING I WANTED TO ADD WITH ALL OF THE OTHER SUGGESTIONS. I OFTEN HAVE MY HEARING DOG HERE WITH ME. (GESTERING TOWARDS DANNY) (LAUGHTER). AND I NOTICED WHEN I'M WITH DANNY, THERE'S A LOT OF CROSS TALK GOING WITH THE OTHER PEOPLE THAT CAN HEAR AND IT IS VERY FAST. BUT INSTEAD OF ME SAYING, "WHAT? SLOW DOWN," AND CONSTANTLY TRYING TO GET AN

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ALTERNATIVE WORD IN , I GO, "WAIT, WHAT WAS THE LAST THING THAT YOU SAID?" AND I FEEL COMFORTABLE INTERRUPTING HIM AND SAYING WHAT WAS THE LAST THING AND JUST HEARING WHAT HE SAID OFTEN GIVES ME ENOUGH INFORMATION SO I CAN KIND OF KEEP UP FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES.

SO, I DON'T FEEL BAD INTERRUPTING HIM AND USING -- (LAUGHTER) -- AND USING HIM TO KIND OF GET CAUGHT UP TO SPEED, SO THAT I CAN PARTICIPATE MORE IN THE CONVERSATION.

>> HEATHER: YOU KNOW, I HAVE A REALLY GREAT HUSBAND LIKE THAT TOO WHO IS REALLY HELPING ME OUT SO MUCH AND IS VERY AWARE AND MAKES A HUGE EFFORT.

BUT I SOMETIMES DO JUST FEEL LIKE A TERRIBLE BURDEN. I DO. I'M ALWAYS LEANING ON HIM. WHAT'S HAPPENING? HE CAN'T JUST COMPLETELY, FREELY BE INVOLVED IN WHATEVER IS HAPPENING. HE ALWAYS HAS TO BE TRANSLATING FOR ME. MY HUSBAND WORKS AT DOLBY, DOLBY CINEMA. SO WE HAVE TO GO TO ALL OF THESE SHMOOZE-Y PARTIES. ALL OF THESE PEOPLE I'M SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHO THEY ARE AND SUPPOSED TO BE FRIENDLY WITH THEM. SO HE'S CONSTANTLY TRYING TO SIGN PEOPLE'S NAMES AND KEEP ME GOING SO I CAN PARTICIPATE IN THOSE EVENTS. AND I FEEL BAD, BECAUSE HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE NETWORKING AND I'M KIND OF BEING DRAGGED ALONG.

SO, UM, I DON'T KNOW. UM, I FEEL GRATEFUL BUT I ALSO SOMETIMES IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE GOD, I'M SUCH A BURDEN OR SOMETHING.

>> MARILYN: THE ONLY THING I WAS GOING TO SAY I USED TO THINK THAT WAY TOO, THE ONLY THING THAT COMES TO MIND NOW IS I FEEL VERY VULNERABLE. I RELY ON MY HUSBAND A LOT. BUT I FEEL VULNERABLE WITHOUT HIM. KIND OF LIKE MY HEARING DOG. I DO. I DO. I GET IT.

>> MICHAEL: FIRST OF ALL HE LOVES YOU AND HE'S MORE THAN

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HAPPY TO DO THAT FOR YOU. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> DANNY: YEAH!

>> MICHAEL: MY JILA (PHONETIC?) PASSED AWAY THREE YEARS AGO. SHE COULDN'T HEAR. SHE WAS DEAF. BUT SHE COULD LIPREAD. SHE COULD LIPREAD IN FARSI AND IN ENGLISH. SHE WAS AMAZING. AND SO WE WOULD GO TO A PARTY AND SHE WOULD BE LIPREADING AND UNDERSTANDING WHAT PEOPLE WERE SAYING AND TELL ME WHAT THEY SAID IN SIGN. AND SHE WAS MORE THAN HAPPY TO DO THAT. SO I KNOW THAT YOUR HUSBAND IS MORE THAN HAPPY TO HELP YOU OUT. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> WENDI: THIS IS ANOTHER ONE NOTE. BUT WHILE TIM AND I WERE TALKING DURING THE BREAK, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I WAS SHARING WITH HIM AS IT RELATES TO THE THANKSGIVING DINNERS THAT I GO TO BECAUSE USUALLY ABOUT 25 PEOPLE, SO IT IS KIND OF BIG, AND BUT ONE OF THE REASONS THAT I THINK I DO KIND OF WELL HAD TO DO WITH THE ARRANGEMENT. SO I KEEP HEARING A LOT OF PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT AT THE DINNER TABLE AND HOW HARD IT IS. BUT I REALIZE I DON'T HAVE THAT PROBLEM BECAUSE WE DON'T SET UP ONE TABLE. WE SET UP LOTS OF TABLES AND SO NO TABLE SEATS MORE THAN ABOUT FOUR TO SIX. AND I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE EVER -- IF THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT OR THOUGHT OF IT. BUT THAT HAS MADE A WORLD OF A DIFFERENCE; BECAUSE NOW WHEN I SIT DOWN, I'M HAVING A CONVERSATION AROUND THE TABLE OF FOUR. AND THEN AS THINGS MOVE AROUND, AS THINGS PROGRESS, YOU CAN MOVE AROUND. ONE TABLE PEOPLE GET UP AND THEY MOVE AROUND. BUT YOU ARE SITTING WITH A MORE INTIMATE ENVIRONMENT. THAT JUST KIND OF HAPPENED ORGANICALLY. I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A HAND IN THAT. BUT I REALIZED THAT THAT'S PROBABLY WHAT MAKES IT SO MUCH LESS STRESSFUL FOR ME IS THAT -- SO I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S SOMETHING YOU CAN TRY. BUT IN EACH TABLE IS SET WITH, YOU KNOW, THE TABLE CLOTHS, THE DISHES,

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THE CENTERPIECE, BLAH, BLAH, BLAH. BUT IT IS ONLY ABOUT FOUR FOR EACH TABLE, AND IT MAY BE SIX OR SIX TABLES AND THEN THERE MAY BE ONE TABLE WITH SIX PEOPLE OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

BUT YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER YOUR ENVIRONMENT. THE LIGHTING IS ALWAYS PRETTY GOOD. WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF BACKGROUND MUSIC AND ALL OF THAT. WE DON'T HAVE ANY BACKGROUND MUSIC FROM WHAT I CAN REMEMBER. SO, JUST MAYBE YOUR SETTINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO LOOK AT.

>> KIRSTEN: GOING BACK WITH YOUR HUSBAND, MINE IS MY SON. I DON'T HAVE A HUSBAND. I'M A SINGLE MOMMA. MY SON LIVES IN NEW YORK --

>> YAY!

>> KIRSTEN: GOES TO SCHOOL IN NEW YORK. NO, BUT HE CALLS HIMSELF A CODA. CODA. SO HE'S, YOU KNOW, HERE'S THE THING. HAS ANYBODY THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN? YOUR CHILDREN, CODA, CHILD OF A DEAF ADULT.

SO MY SON GREW UP INTERPRETING FOR ME ALL THE TIME SINCE HE WAS YOUNG ENOUGH TO SPEAK. I ALWAYS FEEL GUILTY BECAUSE WHEN I WAS WRITING THE PLAY, BASED ON MY LIFE, WE HAD A COUPLE OF MONOLOGUES ABOUT HIM BEING A CODA. AND SOME OF THE THINGS HE SAID SINCE HE WAS 3 YEARS OLD -- (VOICE BECOMING EMOTIONAL) -- HE FELT RESPONSIBLE.

BUT I KNOW OUR CHILDREN KEEP AN EYE OUT ON US AND TAKE CARE OF US AND BE THANKFUL -- MY THING IS JUST BE THANKFUL. AND I KNOW WE ALL FEEL GUILTY BECAUSE WE ARE TRYING TO ADD ON BURDENS TO OUR HUSBANDS, TO OUR CHILDREN, OR EVEN OUR CLOSEST FRIENDS. BUT THE KEY THING IS, WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE? THIS IS FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN IN A GROUP LIKE THIS, EVER! I HAD NO IDEA THERE EXISTED UNTIL MARILYN CAME INTO MY LIFE A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO.

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SO, WE ALL HAVE A VOICE. JUST REMEMBER, EACH ONE OF US HAS A VOICE. MY SON ALWAYS REMINDED ME, "MOM, JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE DEAF, BUT YOU STILL HAVE A VOICE. YOUR VOICE NEEDS TO BE HEARD."

SO, ALL OF OUR VOICES NEED TO BE HEARD. SO GIVE EACH OTHER ENCOURAGEMENT TO KEEP OUR VOICES BEING HEARD.

AND YOU MY NEW FRIEND -- (LAUGHTER) -- YOU ARE NOW PART OF MY INNER CIRCLE. ALL OF YOU ARE. BUT YOUR VOICE IS BEING HEARD WITH YOUR HUSBAND.

>> HEATHER: OKAY.

>> DANNY: HOW DID YOU MEET MARILYN?

>> KIRSTEN: THAT WAS AN INTERESTING NIGHT. HA!

WE END UP GOING TO STARBUCKS FOR AN ASL DEAF EVENT. AND I HAVE A FRIEND, HER NAME IS TERRY KELLY, A VERY WELL-KNOWN INTERPRETER. HER HUSBAND IS DEAF. SO I WAS COERCED TO GO TO THIS. I'M LIKE, "I'M NOT GOING."

"YES, YOU ARE. YOU'RE NOT GOING?"

"YES -- THEY ARE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT ME BECAUSE THEY'RE DEAF. THERE'S NO WAY. YES, I SIGN, BUT THEY THINK I'M HEARING," BLAH, BLAH, BLAH.

SO TERRY SAID, "GET YOUR BUTT THERE."

I'M LIKE, "OKAY, FINE. HERE I AM."

ABOUT 20 MINUTES INTO THE EVENT, I MEET THIS WOMAN WITH A MUTUAL FRIEND OF OURS WHO I HAVEN'T SEEN SINCE HE WAS A TEENAGER. WE BECAME FAST FRIENDS AFTER THAT.

>> DANNY. NICE. YEAH. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> JON: I CAN RELATE TO A LOT OF THINGS, CONVERSATIONS ABOUT BEING DEPENDENT ON SOMEONE THAT WAS BEING SORT OF YOUR DEFICIT FILLER, WHO FILLS IN THE DEFICIT, FILLS IN THE GAPS, THE HOLES.

AND IN MY CASE IT WAS MY MOTHER. AND WHEN I LOST HER IN

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2004, AND THAT WAS A VERY TRYING PERIOD BECAUSE I NO LONGER HAD THAT PERSON AVAILABLE TO FILL IN THAT GAP. AND SO I DID TRY TO RECONNECT WITH FAMILY, RECONNECT WITH FRIENDS. AND IT DIDN'T EXACTLY WORK. AND SO, IT'S BEEN A LITTLE TRYING.

SO WHAT I DID, WAS AT THE SAME TIME I WAS LOSING MY HEARING, AS YOU KNOW, SOME OF YOU KNOW, I RECENTLY GOT THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT. I'VE BEEN ACTIVATED AND I CAN ACTUALLY HEAR NOW. (APPLAUSE) . . .

IN PROGRESS. IN PROGRESS. BUT I'M ACTUALLY -- YOU NOTICED I HAVE NOTHING ON THE LEFT EAR TODAY. JUST MY COCHLEAR.

BUT, ONE OF THE THINGS I CAN ONLY SAY, YES, IT IS A GREAT IDEA TO INVOLVE FAMILY. BROTHERS, CHILDREN. AND IN MY FAMILY, MY GRANDPARENTS, MY UNCLES AND AUNTS, MY BROTHERS, MY -- WHOLE FAMILY WAS INVOLVED. THEY WOULD ALSO CORRECT ME WHEN I MISSPOKE ABOUT SOMETHING. IT WAS A FEELING OF EMPOWERMENT.

FOR EXAMPLE, MY MOTHER WOULD SAY, "WHO WANTS ICE CREAM?" "I DO, I DO." RIGHT? AND WHEN IT WAS TIME TO ORDER, MY MOTHER MADE ME ORDER. SHE WAS TRYING TO EMPOWER ME TO BE INDEPENDENT AND THE WAY THAT I COULD BE INDEPENDENT.

SO, YOU CAN KIND OF ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILIES, MOSTLY FAMILY. IF YOU HAVE A LOT OF FAMILY, THAT HELPS. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WHEN YOU HAVE FRIENDS, I TRIED TO DO IT WITH A FRIEND AND I BECAME TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON HIM. AND I FOUND OUT THAT THAT WASN'T A GOOD THING. BECAUSE SHE BECAME CONTROLLING. SHE BECAME DYSFUNCTIONAL. SO TRY NOT TO FALL INTO THOSE TRAPS.

SO, MORE SO, IT'S -- I'M DRIVING TO WORK TO COMMUNICATE THE BEST I CAN TO NETWORK LIKE OUR ORGANIZATION HERE, BUT ALSO THROUGH ALL OF THE TOOLS WE'VE BEEN PROVIDED. SUCH AS CAPTIONING. I'VE ACTUALLY TRIED TO FIND OUT HOW DID THE DEAF DO IT? I'M LIKE, AS BAD AS IT WAS FOR ME TO BE LOSING MY HEARING, I

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DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO BE DEAF. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE DEAF. I SUCK AT BEING DEAF.

(LAUGHTER).

SO, THE WHOLE POINT IS, I -- YOU KNOW, GOT THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT BECAUSE I COULD NOT BE DEAF. I JUST DO NOT KNOW HOW TO DO IT. BUT HOW DO THEY DO IT?

SO WE CAN FIND OUT MORE STRATEGIES AND WAYS THEY DO IT AND THAT THERE WILL BE MORE TOOLS FOR US TO COMMUNICATE. I'M NOT A SIGN LANGUAGE PERSON. I MEAN I KNOW THE BASIC SIGN LANGUAGE WE USE FOR TRAFFIC. BUT OTHER THAN THAT, THAT'S ALL I KNOW. BUT I HAVE TRIED TO KIND OF ADAPT A LITTLE BIT, NOT ONLY BECAUSE THAT WE NEED TO, BECAUSE I WANT TO. SO THAT I CAN BROADEN MY ABILITY TO BE INDEPENDENT FOR ALL OF THE THINGS I NEED TO DO FOR MYSELF.

ANYWAY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

(APPLAUSE) . . .

>> HEATHER: UM, ALL RIGHT. THIS IS A REALLY GREAT MEETING, YOU GUYS. IT WAS SO WONDERFUL TO HEAR ALL OF YOUR VOICES. TO SEE HOW HELPFUL AND SUPPORTIVE EVERYBODY IS OF EACH OTHER IN THE ROOM. THAT'S JUST WARMING MY HEART.

AND SO, EVERYONE REALIZES THERE'S NO MEETING NEXT MONTH. IT IS JUST THE HOLIDAY PARTY WHICH IS DECEMBER 9. WE WILL HAVE A LOOP THERE FOR OUR ACTIVITIES AT THE PARTY TO MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR YOUR HEARING. I'M GOING TO BRING MY FAMOUS CHRISTMAS SANGRIA. WOO HOO, LIKE LAST YEAR.

I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THAT.

>> JENNA: ARE WE PROVIDING A MAIN COURSE?

>> HEATHER: THE CHAPTER WILL PROVIDE A MAIN COURSE. I'LL PROBABLY GET A HAM OR A TURKEY OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND WE'LL SIGN UP TO BRING SOME SIDE DISHES.

>> MITZI: AS USUAL, HOT EARS PROVIDES THE TURKEY. THE

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CHAPTER DOESN'T HAVE TO. YEAH. I'VE BEEN PROVIDING IT FOR YEARS.

(APPLAUSE) . . . (CHEERS).

>> HEATHER: I'M SORRY. YOU TOLD ME THAT AND I WENT IN MY EAR AND FELL OUT.

SO -- SORRY ABOUT THAT.

THEY'LL PROVIDE THE TURKEY. WE DO A HAM OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. I'M SURE WE'LL GET A VEGETARIAN DISH. I HAVE A LOT OF VEGETARIANS IN MY FAMILY.

>> DANNY: WHAT IS GARY BRINGING?

>> GARY: HE WANTS ME TO BRING THE CHICKEN WINGS.

>> DANNY: OH. YEAH.

>> HEATHER: THOSE ARE SO GOOD. YOU BROUGHT THOSE LAST YEAR, RIGHT? YEAH, YUM.

>> KAT: BARBECUE TOO. ARE WE DOING THE WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE TOO?

>> HEATHER: DO WE WANT TO?

>> KAT: WE HAVE TO, TRADITION.

>> HEATHER: AND THE STEERING COMMITTEE WILL HAVE SOME END-OF-THE-YEAR AWARDS FOR VARIOUS CHAPTER MEMBERS. AND I GUESS WE'LL DO THE WHITE ELEPHANT THING. AND DO BRING YOUR SPOUSES ON, YOU KNOW. PLEASE BE FREE TO OPEN IT UP TO PEOPLE YOU WANT TO BRING AND INCLUDE. (APPLAUSE) . . . YAY.

>> TIM: SORRY. I KNOW EVERYONE IS ALWAYS ASKING HAVE THE PARKING PASSES HERE FOR YOU. SO REMEMBER THIS IF YOU NEED IT GOING OUT AND YOU DON'T SEE THE ATTENDANT BUT USE THE PAY STATION. MAKE SURE THAT YOU PUT THIS IN FIRST AND THEN YOUR TICKET. SO THIS ALWAYS GOES IN FIRST. REMINDER, IF YOU NEEDED TO BE ADDED TO YAHOO GROUPS, SEE ME OR DANNY. WE'LL ADD YOU.

ALSO FACEBOOK, WE HAVE A NEW FACEBOOK GROUPS. SO DIANE HAS DONE A GREAT JOB ON THAT. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT

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BEING ADDED TO THAT, SEE ME AS WELL. WE'LL GET YOU ADDED. A LOT OF OUR HOLIDAY PARTY INFORMATION, DIRECTIONS AND EVERYTHING WILL BE ON THERE AS WELL AS THE WEBSITE. SO JUST FRIENDLY REMINDER. CHECK IT OUT. WE HAVE A LOT OF DIFFERENT WAYS TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET WHAT YOU NEED TO AND INFORMATION. SO ONE WAY OR ANOTHER YOU'LL FIND IT. ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, LET ME KNOW. (APPLAUSE) . . .

>> DANNY: THANK YOU.

>> HEATHER: THANK YOU.

>> GARY: OKAY. HEATHER, I KNOW YOU ARE ASKING FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE. I KNOW ONE PERSON WHO WILL BE PERFECT FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE? I'M LOOKING AT HER?

>> KIRSTEN: ME?

>> MITZI : I SECOND THAT.

>> KIRSTEN: I NEED TO KNOW WHAT A STEERING COMMITTEE IS. THANK YOU, EVERYBODY.

>> DANNY: WELCOME TO THE CLUB.

>> KIRSTEN: THANK YOU.

>> HEATHER: GARY, I JOINED THE GROUP AND TWO MONTHS LATER WE HAD THE PARTY AT MY HOUSE. I WAS LIKE, "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THESE PEOPLE."

>> JENNA: "AND YOU ARE GOING TO BE PRESIDENT." (LAUGHTER)

>> DANNY: THAT WAS A FUN PARTY.

>> KIRSTEN: DANNY OR TIM?

(MEETING ENDS AT 12:04)