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>> We will be starting in about 5 minutes.

>> STEVE WOODERSON: We are having a technical delay, so don't go away. We will be starting in just a moment.

>> STEVE WOODERSON: Good morning! That's pretty enthusiastic, right? Good morning!

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Morning.

>> STEVE WOODERSON: How many just got here? Welcome to San Diego, for the rest of you I know it's been a full week. We have been as we have said several times drinking from the fire hydrant, right? We have an opportunity to change the pace for just the next few moments. Before we do that, though, I want to acknowledge for all of us that have been through a lot of talking and thinking and whatever the last 24 hours we live in a great country would you agree? We live in a great country.   
(Applause.)

I think we need to stand on that principle today and I also want to take a moment and recognize one of the many reasons that we live in a great country is that we have among us a number of individuals that have proudly served in the United States armed services. We have veteran's day coming up for those of you here would you let us know you served, raise your hand, stand, give us an indication, and we thank you.   
(Applause.)

We have many things that be thankful for and one of those is that we are in a position even in our own profession to have a responsibility similar to our veterans but specific to our profession and that responsibility is that we are here today to really think as we leave our CSAVR Conference, what can we be doing to have an impact on the future of our profession? We set this particular session up to be our last session for that very reason, that we can take a few moments and kinda step away from the rush that we have been about for the last several takes and to really take time to listen with intent. And to listen with our hearts. I want to ask you for the next hour or so to just step back and let a lot of this other stuff that's been going on around us, all the other noise aside and let's just embrace the thought that we're here today to be energized and to go and do the things that we are here to do in impacting the lives of people with disabilities. For the next few moments we have two speakers that are going to be sharing with us from their perspective about leading change.

Very pleased to have to my left Jessica Rafuse and Jessica probably looks familiar to some of us because she was with us about a year ago in Washington, D.C. She is with Microsoft. She is from Seattle, and here in a few moments she is going to talk with us about their initiatives that have led to transformational change in their organization. Jessica is the nongovernmental organization program manager. Did I manage that well?

>>JESSICA RAFUSE: I think so!

>> STEVE WOODERSON: She manages relationships. She is the one that is responsible for customer experience as it relates to individuals with disabilities. Our other speaker is our own. Mark Schultz, immediate past‑president and director of Nebraska general and Mark is going to share from his personal and professional experience as relates to our responsibility inside of the public VR program to lead change.

We all have a responsibility, and I would ask that you take a moment before we begin to listen to these two folks to think what role might we play in the future individually our role as it comes to leading change. Some of us here still are involved in direct service in one way and our job there is to do good things, prepare for tomorrow. We've got folks that are in the middle management arena and our responsibility there is to create and foster that environment for innovation and resource those activities and then some of us here are at an executive level position as well. We are responsible for setting that vision and resourcing that as well. I've had the pleasure of going across the country over the last several years and seeing great local state regional kind of leadership opportunities, because our investing in our future leaders is what's going to lead us for change tomorrow. We're also really pleased that in our world we have a partnership with Inner Work Institute at San Diego State University there are a number of graduates right here in this group, and we are thankful we have that access in preparing our leaders for tomorrow and to lead change. So I ask you to take the next little bit, listen with intent, listen with your heart, and listen if a way of identifying what your responsibility is as we lead change. Jessica?

>>JESSICA RAFUSE: Can everyone hear me all right?

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: No.

>>JESSICA RAFUSE: I'm actually a lawyer so I know nothing about technology or math but I am so happy to be here. I woke up this morning a little bit down in the dumps, to be honest, and I am reminded that this is the audience that I want to be around when we are facing the challenges that we have ahead of us, that we are all colleagues in ensuring that we're removing barriers for people with disabilities so I am glad that we can move forward together and you guys are the people that I want to be with right now so thank you for having me it's really an honor to be in this room.

The title of the presentation that I put together is on the screen and it says "Leading Change, igniting a cultural transformation to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more" pretty daunting but that's the ambition of Microsoft and I'm looking forward to walking you through that today.

Before I do that, I have three pictures on the screen. One is of myself in front of a green mermais, the Starbucks logo, one is with Kathy and Andreas and one is in front of the Microsoft logo. Some people may say I know it's the last day of my conference but this lady looks familiar I think I'll get a cup of coffee will anyone notice if I leave? I'm the coffee lady you recognize me from Starbucks because six months ago that's where I was. It's a pleasure to be back with you and I am with Microsoft leading our NGO programs so any organization that focuses on people with disabilities or accessibility from a technology perspective, I'm responsible for that relationship. Whatever that might mean.

So lease talk about Microsoft. As many of you know I'm an employment lawyer by trade so how did I end up being at a technology company focusing on relations? It's a journey. About 20 months Microsoft appointed a new CEA, and this was the first time in the last 14 years ago that we had a new CEO moving from Steve Balmer who had been with the company since the inception. So over the last 20 months I have seen how the company has made a quarterbacks decision to commit the same level of passion that we have for technology to people. So being from a company at Starbucks that was focused on people this was something that I thought was very, very interesting from afar. So this cultural transformation also included with it a revisiting of the mission. You may be familiar with the previous mission at Microsoft which was to put a computer in every household and on every desk. Also fairly daunting but I kinda think that was accomplished, mission accomplished, at least we have several computers on our desks and at home.

What's the future of Microsoft and what does that mission become? Today the mission is to empower every person in every organization on the planet to achieve more.

So just take a moment to think about that ambition and I'm hoping that in 20 years we can look back and say the same thing, that this has also been accomplished. Every person on the planet to achieve more.

So clearly that includes people with disabilities. When we are walking about every person on the planet. Because we believe that there is no limit to what technology can do when it reflects the diversity of our customers, including people with disabilities. For you guys you know the working‑month‑olds has changed. In the 21st Century we were creating products that were reflecting what was predictable, what was known. We were going into a well‑lit room and looking for something. Now as we go into the 21st Century we are creating products for what is unknown, unpredictable, for what is uncertain. We are going into a dark room and looking for something. From my perspective there is no better person to navigate this new model that be someone with a disability. Someone who has something about their body or their mind that works in a way that is different than expected. If you ask them to go into a dark room and find something people with disabilities will be innovative and creative and communicative and find a way to find that "something" so for us at Microsoft this isn't charity, it isn't a "nice to have" this is a business imperative and this is the way we are going to design and implement our products with people with disabilities.

So how are we going to do that? With the cultural shift that was happening at Microsoft from a leadership level really making that focus on people through the lens of technology, we had to change our commitment to accessibility. On the screen it says we will create and deliver technology that is accessible and functional for all people of all ages and we will continue to push the boundaries of technology and what they can do to empower every person on the planet.

Through these guiding principles: Transparent, accountability and inclusive.

So candidly, Microsoft had not done the best job they could in the past. We didn't always get it right when it came to technology for people with disabilities when it came to accessibility, when it came to disability inclusion.

But I kinda love that that I work for a company that says we admit it, we didn't get it right, but we're working really hard to fix it.

I think that level of self‑awareness and self‑criticism is, for me, allowing me to take risks and try to fix something that might be broken, knowing that if we are all in this together, doing this for the right reasons, we, in fact, can empower all people. So let's be transparent. Number two, let's be accountable. So we are going to prioritize inclusive design of your products to include accessibility in the development, early on, let's get this right the first time.

If we don't get it right we're going to prioritize that fix so making sure that products that are released, that may have a bug, that may have a level of accessibility that we're not happy with, we go back and prioritize that fix.

And third, inclusion. That means integrating people with disabilities throughout the company making sure that the customer voice, which is my world is also part of our decision‑making at Microsoft.

So the FY17 strategy and this is a photo of a woman on a train using her device and using bone‑conducting headphones as well. The accessibility strategy for FY'17 rather than boiling the ocean which my boss Jenny and I sometimes try to do we are look to look at in a construct mash, product web sites, customer voice, employment, innovation, and lastly readiness and I say "lastly" because this is something that should be threaded throughout all of those four areas. I've heard culture eats strategy for lunch ‑‑ culture is eating something, I'm not sure what it is   
(Chuckles.)

But, what it means is for those of you who have seen things in the peaks and the valleys, today especially I am terrified that what we have accomplished over the last few years will be unraveled so how do we imbed it in a way that is sustainable and long‑term and at Microsoft that means readiness so every employee at the company is required to take accessibility training, world wide. Isn't that just awesome! I can't take credit for it but I can brag about it because I think that's so cool. We are committed to creating accessible content, so we are teaching people on our teams to create an accessible Word document, before you hit send, making sure you are going through the accepts to create accessible content. And lastly, disability et quit and this is fun for me because as I'm coming to Microsoft I'm learning new phrases that people are using and I'm flattered that they feel comfortable using those phrases with me but they make me laugh that some people are earlier on their journey than others in terms of etiquette, so we have to remind them not to snuggle the service animal and make sure they are using first‑person language. The fact that they want to engage in that conversation, I encourage that at every step.

So first products, web sites and services, and on the screen we have a picture of two Surface devices. Like I mentioned, we haven't always got it right but I want to show you a video which makes me believe that we are trying to fix it. (Away from mic.)   
(Laughter.)

There was just a photo of my baby boy, he's fifteen months old that popped up on the screen. I apologize for that. I'm going to try to play it in this window. Let's see if this works.

(Video playing. Video is captioned.)

I apologize that was so small!   
(Applause.)

Thank you. I hope you can now understand why I've taken this leap of faith to come work for Microsoft. It really is an exciting time. The next area of strategy is our customer voice. Before I was hired six months ago I was excited about the people business that Microsoft was taking. I got a phone call from Jennj LeFleure and she said "did you want to come work for me?" And I said "yes, I do!"

And then I said "Now, what's the job?"   
(Laughter.)

Maybe next time I will reverse that record but I'm transparent. I think that's indicative of how cool I thought this work was and what I'm doing at Microsoft. I think unfortunately the last few months has been damage control so repairing those relationships that were damaged because we missed the mark in the past but I think we are making improvements there and I can focus less on I'm sorry and more on what can we do together.

That's going to be my focus hopefully for the next six months.

So strengthening partnerships, providing feedback channels for our customers for organizations that focus on people with disabilities and assistive technology and the disability answer desk is one of those. On the screen I have a screen shot of the disability answer desk web site and the disability answer desk is a place where people with disabilities can come 24 hours a day and have pre free help desk support so we have people who are experts on AT helping them with why Windows isn't cooperating with JAWS, and we have American signing language, although last time I told you guys about this we broke it, too many called in, but I like that, keep breaking it, it shows that there is a volume and a need out there and we can fix the system on our end so keep the calls coming in. So how many people by a show of hands are hoots or hollers were aware of the disability answer desk.   
(Applause.)

Good, awesome. So I saved this piece for last because I thought this is what you might be most interested in. Here is our strategy for employment. So this is really important for sustainabilitiwise making sure that we have people with disabilities sitting next to designers, developers, engineers, day in, day out so they gain an appreciation for what it means to have a disability, not from a compliance perspective alone but usability. So employment is really critical to that.

I'm going to play a video. Fingers crossed.

(Video playing.)

(Video is captioned. )

Our last strategy for FY' 17 is innovation and I intentionally included this last because I believe we have to get all other areas correct before we have the right to play and that's what innovation is, inventing the future of accessibility is what we hope to do through innovation. On the screen we have a picture of a gentleman walking a guide dog on a city street holding his device. The areas that I wanted to briefly mention, you may have heard about these which is why I thought I would CSAVR the time and not show you some of these videos but if you do have an interest in seeing those I can pull them pickup. The iGaze technology, Steve Gleason called up Microsoft and said I want to be able to talk with my son and control my wheelchair through my eyes. He has ALS so the nerds got together and said challenge accepted and they went into the hack and created technology that allows him to do both. Turns out I think he actually wanted to argue with his wife as well because they are a kick, so I encourage you to watch the Gleason movie which is not related to Microsoft but give us you a glimpse into his life and the experience he has had.

Then we get another phone call, Steve Gleason says "Hey, by the way I would like to sign a football with my eyes."

Did I mention he was a football player? Probably critical to the story. He's a football player that acquired ALS.

Again, the nerds got together and created technology that allows him to sign a football with his eyes.

So beyond footballs, there is also some really great work happening in the area of navigation for people who are blind. One of those projects is called "cites unlocked" and that's a partnership with an organization in the U.K. called "guide dogs" and it's important to say that we want to give these scientists the room to play, research and explore without setting expectations that this is something that must go to market. We are researching for the purpose of inventing the future and they are doing that at rapid rates within the City's Unlocked Project.

The last area of innovation that I would to talk about is the "hack‑a‑thon culture that we have. This happened for me for the first time in July. It's a week where everybody at Microsoft gets to leave their day job and go play on a "hack" and a "hack" is a positive word at Microsoft, I didn't know that either, but it means you get to use technology for good. So we spent the entire week focusing on a project, and really seeing how technology can change the world. This year we had 102 projects that related to disability. This is how excited folks are. Of course you will see a lot of language that was outdated in the projects and inventing some problems that might be early on their journey with disability, but I didn't care, I said let's ‑‑ the more the merrier, if you think there is a problem to solve we have people with disabilities that can give you their perspective on how to solve that, what the problem is and how to do it in a way that is respectful to others. 500 people were involved in those hacks, all using their individual skill set from coding to project management to ‑‑ I even had a hack, I had no idea I could add value to a hack, but I'm a hacker, turns out.

So that's really key for me from a cultural perspective but also from an innovation perspective, allowing people to come together for good.

That is what I had to share with you today. On the screen now it says "thank you" and we have the Microsoft logo up there. My "ask" of you is to think about companies like Microsoft as your partner in this. Not just today because I'm feeling emotional after the news last night but really think about us as someone you can collaborate with and we can work together to reduce the epidemic of unemployment for people with disabilities. I get a lot of questions ‑‑ I spend a lot of time benchmarking with other companies that want to do what we are doing at Microsoft. I'm not best suited to answer those questions. I can speak about what we have done at Starbucks, what we are doing at Microsoft, and I can also be very candid that we have made a lot of mistakes, because we are not the experts in this. But I encourage every one of those employers to reach out to folks like you who can advise them. So please reciprocate, please partner with them.

What I do tell them and I am confident in this piece of advice is to just do it. To jump in, hire that first person with a disability, to focus on readiness but know that you'll never be 100% ready and you just have to make that first step.

I know that at Microsoft we fail every day, every day we fail at something, my onboarding experience through Microsoft, Kathy will tell you, there were a lot of tears involved and I hope that the next person who is hired doesn't have those same troubles that I do but they might, and that's okay because we are trying our best and I think intent is everything. Be hungry to learn something new, ask questions, include people with disabilities every single step of the way. That's the advice I give to them. I really need you guys as a partner there to expand this beyond just Microsoft's efforts, because empowering every person and every organization on the planet to do more is much greater than our company alone. It really is going to take all of us in this room and beyond. Thank you. With that I will turn it over to Mark.   
(Applause.)

>>MARK SCHULTZ: Okay, well, Jessica let me tell you a little story that maybe will help you with your mood today. Something to remember. It's an ancient Chinese tale about a farmer who had a horse and he used that horse to plow his fields and one day he left the gate open and the horse ran away and his neighbors said that's such bad luck and the farmer said bad luck, good luck, who knows? A week later the horse comes back. Behind that horse is an herd of wild horses following him in and they all run into the pen and his neighbors go, you are so lucky! And the farmer said good luck, bad luck, who knows?

Couple days later his son was trying to break one of those wild horses and he got thrown off the horse, landed on his back and broke his leg. The neighbors said oh, that was really bad luck. The farmer said "bad luck, good luck, who knows?"

A week later, the Chinese Army comes into town spew the village and they con script all of the young boys into the Army and they get to the farmer's son and he has a broken leg and they leave him. Good luck, bad luck? Who knows!

Only looking back over the course of time are we going to know if it was good luck, bad luck or how the story will be written.

It's true for the VR program as well. The VR program is 96 years old. In 2020 it will be the 100th anniversary of the program. Over those 96 years the VR program has experienced a will the of changes, a lot of changes that at the time might have looked like bad luck or good luck. Who knew? So here we are again. We've got WIOA and I think a lot of people are on both sides of that coin, bad luck, good luck, and who knows?

About a year ago I woke up ‑‑ I'm running two things at once, here. About a year ago I woke up and opened the paper and this was the head line on Section B of the paper. "Vocational rehab not working in Nebraska, employers say."

After I put my heart back in my chest, I thought I ought to read the article and it ended up it wasn't about us at all, it was about workers' comp in Nebraska.   
(Chuckles.)

But I don't know how many people were like me and never read past the head line so I had a lot of staff calling in that next day. We have an image problem. If you look at ‑‑ this is happening in other places. Some of you may have heard about what's going on in Minnesota but this is a report that was done and the head line reads "eligible got nothing, hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities blocked from college aid" and then tables on to talk about how the VR program that was create to assist people has become a barrier. It outlines why and some of those reasons are true.

So in the first instance, I had a marketing issue. In the second instance we had an issue that we needed to change.

If you've been following along with what we have been doing in CSAVR we started outlooking at marketing and we said we need to do let more people know about the program and as we were doing that we brought in Bobly Silverstein ‑‑ clearly I can only do one thing at a time! So we were talking with Bobby about the need for change and marketing and we thought we were bringing him in to help us with our marketing strategies and as we looked at those headlines I think that depicts why we know we need to do both. Marketing is great but if you ‑‑ and as Bobby said, if you market "crap" it's tough to make it look beautiful and keep selling the same thing over and over. Unless you have change going on and you've improved the product that's when true marketing can begin. So as we looked at it what we thought we needed to do was look at change and CSAVR as members, leading that change.

You can't read this. How many of you are familiar with Pearls before Swine? The first panel is rat is talking with pig and pig says I have to go to a dinner party with a bunch of academic types and I'm afraid I'm going to look stupid and the rat says just talk like they do and use all the buzz words, you know, like existential angsts and paradigm shift.   
(Laughter.)

So the last panel shows pig at the party and he's talking to the host he is and he says "thanks for letting me use your bathroom where I relieved my existential angst with a nice paradigm shift!"

(Laughter.)

Speaking of paradigm shifts, you know, our goal and when we looked at this is we needed to do marketing to improve the public image. We have an image that's probably thirty years old and I know at least in Nebraska I'm working with agencies that still think we're doing things we did 30 years ago. Seems like that's true at the national level in some places as well. The other difficulty when we started looking at how do we do this as a marketing issue is we have 80 agencies spread across the country and thinking that we're going to be able to get 80 programs to agree on a single message and a marketing strategy was something that we didn't know that we had enough time or resources to do.

Looking at how too we two strategies for change so that we are not just marketing "crap" became our focus. We could provide some assistance to everyone at a state level in terms of here are strategies that you can put into place to incorporate some of the things that we got from our marketing study, from Reingold when we were looking at that and one of those was a change management strategy at that level. That strategy is heavily reliant on partnership. You talked about that a little bit, Jessica, about involve people with disabilities and involving our partners in this process.

Just up the road and actually quite a ways north of San Francisco lies Muir National Woods and in that woods are Redwood trees that are 350 feet tall. How deep do you think that you are roots go? About four or five feet deep. You've got that 350‑foot tall tree. The reason is because the roots go out 100 feet or more and they're all interdefined and no one tree can stand on its own and that's pretty true of the program. When we look at what's happening and I will share more with you about why, later, but we need to do this together with our partners. They need to be talking about VR and the changes we have made. People with disabilities need to be out there talking about those changes as well as businesses.

So we are look at a strategy then to reach out to our partners and to conduct an environmental scan and asking them some questions and I will let you know what the questions are here in a second. We're also doing an internal scan so we're looking at what do we know that are misperceptions but also what are the realities that exist where we might need to make changes. So we're starting with the external scan with our stakeholders and partners, being our customers, consumers and businesses, reaching out to partnerses such as service providers, associations, advocacy groups, researchers and technical assistance centers, and then the third leg of this is our Congress and administration

Look at the Senate and the House as well as federal agencies. We are going out and asking them. The questions for consumers are why did you seek VR services? Did you get the help you expected? What one change do you suggest that would have made the program more responsive to your needs?

We haven't done this yet we're going to be developing some round tables and pulling information from individuals and various states prior to April of 2017. You're going to see that date a lot because that is the date of our spring conference. We're hoping to bring all this together and bring information back to you from what we're doing with these scans.

The questions we're asking businesses? What support do you need to attract, hire retain people with disabilities? Who provides you with the information and support you need regarding disability employment matters? Are you working with your state VR agency? If not, why? What recommendations do you have for VR to be more responsive to your disability employment needs?

Again, this is done through round tableds and we will have the information back for spring conference.

The Staff has been going to the Hill and I'm going to share information because they're still in the process of doing this but the questions for Congress and administration are in your opinion how is of intended to positively change the VR program? Who do you feel gives Congress the best and most accurate assessment of the quality and impact of VR services? What do you believe are the expectations of Congress for the VR program as we implement WIOA and work toward the one00 anniversary of the national VR program?

As I said, that's going on right now and when we ask who do you feel gives Congress the best and accurate assessment of the program? They said the disability community and the constituents. The other thing that they said, which I think speaks volumes is no one outside F VR touts had as a great program. So think about that. When they were asked the second question they said to demonstrate collaboration and partnerships with work force partners, community providers and independent living and embrace WIOA. So they expect we are going to achieve more outcomes. So the questions for our partners and stakeholders are in your opinion what is the VR program doing well? In your opinion what do we need to do better? What evidence is need to do validate that the national VR program is demonstrating positive change? That last one is critical to me.

What are the measures that our partners are using? Individuals with disabilities, service providers, advocates how are they measuring our progress toward change because if they don't know how to measure it and we're not managing that message and don't give them the information they need to see the success of the program they're going to have a tough time defending our program to Congress and we will be alone once again and the only ones touting VR as a great program.

One of the things that they responded to, in your opinion what's the national VR program doing well? We had some things that came to mind right away, our strategies that we can market and they were appreciative of this process of Vision 2020. Just the fact that staff ‑‑ and this has been primarily Rita and Steve going to meetings with our partners but they are appreciative that we are reaching out and asking these questions, that they felt engaged in being a part of this process.

The other thing that they responded to is in your opinion what is what does the national VR program need to do better? Their an was that we create positive relationships with them, address misperceptions about the program and increase awareness of the VR program.

And to answer the question, why are services delivered differently from state‑to‑state?

That's another important point, because this is not just a national problem. The issues vary from state‑to‑state ask there are very good reasons why they may look differently. We need to be able to respond to that, we need to be able to do that in a state‑by‑state way. That's part of what this Vision 2020 and strategy is going to incorporate. The other thing we are looking at is what are we doing internally, what are miss perceptions that we have that we think others have but also which is a reality. That internal scan, many of you received an email asking you to respond to the questionnaire. The questions for VR staff and we're hoping to get at least 10% of every program staff responding to these questions are: What are the miss perceptions about VR services? What is the reality? What evidence do we have to debunk the misperceptions? What can VR professionals do to increase employment outcomes? We want to get those responses back by December of this year, it says 2015 on here. I think we want to look forward.   
(Laughter.)

So we want them by December 15th of 2016. So we have a small snapshot of that at the directors' forum but because at this point we have 437 responses from 30 agencies we have a majority that we want to hear from. I'm not going to share all that with you because it may change but some of it's not ‑‑ I think it's not necessarily unexpected because some of the things that are coming up right now are that people think that VR is a funder without limits, that VR is an entitlement and welfare program, that VR only serves specific disabilities and not others. That VR is a scholarship funder. That we are a staffing agency, that all people have to do is come to us and we have jobs ready and waiting. Those are the top things we are hearing right now. For those of you that were hear Sunday we met and started to group some responses around the last question that we're asking staff and that's what can VR professionals too to increase competitive integrated outcomes? What do we want to look like in four years when we are celebrate that go 100th anniversary? What can we do to show that we've improved. There were things that came back around staffing, marketing, business reelings, partners, consumers, resources, policies and procedures. So I'm not going to go into detail in terms of what those responses were but those are the buckets that we put them in. Unfortunately the one than stands out in my mind is one of the staff parentally responded that ‑‑ and this, again, is very much in some cases the responses are very much state based or local based. Someone came back and said that they needed more toilet paper.   
(Laughter.)

Ironically, someone else responded that they needed less paperwork.   
(Laughter.)

Just as with everything else we expect we're going to be on all sides of the issue, here!

What next? We're in the middle of this. This has just started. We will be having an executive committee meeting in January where we will start to put together the responses from the internal scan and what we have with the external scan to that point knowing that there are others that will still be reached out to and input provided before the spring conference.

So we will be developing these strategies as we move forward but it is very much going to be a national as well as a state‑based strategy, because we need to change not just at a national level but at a state level. If we don't start to change at a state level the advocates in your states that are going back and talking to their affiliates at the national level are going to be telling the same stories so that's where we need to begin that change.

I had a couple of stories that I wanted to stair. I'm going to share another story with you.

It's one of the reasons I think that we need to change.

Once upon a time there was a woman who really loved to go to work. She got her self‑esteem and self‑worth from that job. She was a plebotomist for three years and then she started to struggle with mental and health issues and she was hospitalized for those, over a period of time lost that job, got another job, worked that job for a year, had issues, lost it, continued to work various jobs off and on because her self‑esteem was wrapped up in working. Leading to over a period of three years, that woman held 26 different jobs. Finally, she couldn't do it anymore. Never saw VR as an option, because VR helped people get jobs and this woman never had a problem getting a job, the problem was keeping the job due to her disability. So the woman went on SSDI and over a period of time became despondent, became more depressed and lost all hope. Eventually she took her own life. I was married to that woman for 18 years. That was my wife.

I believe we need to change because I was ‑‑ I worked for a center for independent living for eight years and then was the director of the AT program and I never saw VR as a resource and it's because I knew VR provided jobs but I also knew the people that worked there and one of the things that I knew that they said is the VR process is one where people come and the way we know they're motivated is if they hang in there long enough then we know they want to go to work and we will provide them help. That's not a system that I wanted to be a part of. So just like the story about the farmer I can now look back over the years and I can see it's led me here and I've now got the opportunity to make some change.

So just as all of you have your stories if you look back over all of those who knows moments in your life, they've led you here to this point and given you the opportunity to be a part of changes. So just as ‑‑ I don't want any person not coming to our program and having hope. That was the change I was looking to make. I define hope as providing the opportunities for the future, and the belief that you have some say in it. That's the definition that we can do because we provide opportunities and if we engage people and as you said, you need to have people with disabilities there at the table with the design of your services, with your policies, your procedures, we need to have our partners there. I truly believe if we start to engage our partners in this process, in this Vision 2020 process we do it at a national and state level this will be the program that we want it to be and it's a program that we can all believe in. That's where I think we need to go. I want to share one last story with you so we leave on a positive note because we don't have to be perfect to be good.

In fact, I know that we are a great program. I'm going to leave you with a story that I think shows we can be a great program and we need to let others know that we can too that but, yes, we also need to make some changes. This is Hector's story.

(Video playing.)

(Video is captioned.)

(Applause.)

>>MARK SCHULTZ: Thank you.

>> STEVE WOODERSON: So our job is to figure out what our task s our role is in ladying change. Jessica, Mark, thank you so much for the words, the inspiration, for the rest of us, it's time for us to go back to work. Safe travels, we'll see you soon. Thank you.   
(Applause.)

(End of presentation.)

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