

TRANSCRIPT: Cocktails & Connections 2021

This event was livestreamed on March 12, 2021.

[A slideshow with images on top of a blue background with stars. Slides, in order: event sponsor logos: BECU, Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort, Lane Powell, Perkins Coie, Russell Jones Real Estate, United American Mortgage, USI; Mixology with Aleksa Manila, with a picture of Aleksa; Kaila's Story, with a screenshot of the video; Call to Action, with a picture of Bill Schiffmiller; ASL Performance with Christian Vasquez, with a picture of Christian; one minute warning for show start; ten-second countdown to show.]

[Cut to a set with blue curtains in the background, a small round table with plants, and a blue chair. Buddy Elledge is sitting in the blue chair, with a blue facemask.]

BUDDY: Hello, hello!

[Buddy removes their mask and puts it on the table.]

Is everyone ready to celebrate tonight? Because I am. Hi, everybody. And welcome to Cocktails & Connections.

[Camera cuts to Buddy alone, without table.]

I am Buddy Elledge. I am a Graphic Designer and Social Media Connector. I am your emcee. Welcome, everybody. I am wearing a black tie, white shirt. Caucasian man with gray beard. Wearing blue pants in front of a blue background. The chair I am sitting on is also blue.

We have a wonderful program for you tonight, everybody. We will have a client story. We will have not one, but two ASL performances for you. And we're going to have a nice little sit down chat with the executive director of HSDC. It's going to be fun.

Before we get started on tonight's activities, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that the land on which the Seattle office of HSDC sits was once belonging to the Duwamish people, the first people of Seattle. And we acknowledge and extend our gratitude for the land itself and the people of the Duwamish Tribe. We would like to acknowledge our part in restoring power to the Duwamish Tribe. I would also like to acknowledge that this evening, in our act of restoring power to the tribe, we are donating a portion of the funds we raise tonight to Real Rent Duwamish. Thank you, everybody.

All righty. Now, first of all, we need a drink. Who doesn't need a drink? We have a Connection Kit. I hope you have yours ready to go. Because I am about ready to turn it over to Aleksa Manila, local drag queen, as well as an Honorary Mixologist. And she will be with us in a moment to show you how to make an extremely delicious cocktail. Take it away, Aleksa.

[Cut to video. On the right side is Aleksa Manila in front of a sparkly silver curtain. Aleksa is a tan-skinned, feminine-presenting drag queen with lots of glamorous makeup. They have purple hair with flowers on the top left. They are wearing a shiny yellow shirt-jacket with colorful rings, and holding a teacup and saucer. On the left side of the video is an American Sign Language interpreter in front of a plain gray wall. They have olive skin, long dark hair, and a gray shirt. Tinkly background music plays throughout the video.]

ALEKSA: Oh! Well, hi there, friends! My name is Aleksa Manila and welcome to the annual Cocktails & Connections. Benefitting the Hearing, Speech & Deaf Center.

And on behalf of HSDC, first and foremost, THANK YOU!

[Aleksa puts down the teacup and saucer, and signs “thank you”.]

You know what? I’m really sad that we cannot be all together for this year’s fundraiser, but don’t you worry. We still plan to have lots of fun tonight and we intend to bring back “fun” in fundraiser!

Plus, we have very special cocktail (or mocktail) concoction. Just. For. You. Our friends of HSDC.

[Aleksa holds up a white paper bag with “Nue” on it.]

It’s called the Kat Chai. Created by Nue Restaurant here in Seattle.

Here are the things that you’ll need to have with you to make this specially delicious cocktail or mocktail concoction.

[Aleksa’s side of the screen briefly changes to a blue background, with a cocktail image and the words “Are you ready?”]

First, you must have your juice mix.

[Text appears on Aleska’s side of the screen: “6 oz Limau juice mix”. Aleksa holds up a green plastic bag with the juice mix.]

I know it looks like my purse. And it does match!

[Text appears on Aleska’s side of the screen: “Salted plum”. Aleksa holds up a small plate with some salted plums.]

And your salted plum. One of my favorites. If you haven’t noticed yet, I’m Asian! I grew up with these in the Philippines. I remember going to the market after church because, you know, you are Catholic. Well, I am-raised. Anyway, back to this plum. It’s so frickin’ delicious, and I wouldn’t blame you for grabbing one of these before you make your concoction. Let’s try!

[Aleksa eats a salted plum.]

YUMMMMMMM!!! YUMMMMMMM!!! [garbled] Anyway, it's so good.

It's very salty. I'm so sorry. My lips are smacking. But it's like a natural candy. You let it sit in your mouth and let it kind of melt in there. Yumm...and it's so good!

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "1.5 oz of vodka or sparkling water". Aleska holds up a bottle of vodka.]

And your favorite brand of vodka! This one's a favorite at Nue Seattle restaurant and it's called TAAKA [pronounced "Tah-kah"]. Or it might be "Tah-ah-kah". I don't know. But it's got a K in it, like vodka. Like Aleska! Heh!

Or of course, sparkling water.

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "Pour 1.5 oz of vodka or sparkling water into a tall glass". Aleska pours vodka into a small measuring glass, then pours the measured vodka into a tall glass.]

So you will want to measure an ounce and a half of vodka or sparkling water to pour into your glass. But before that you must measure it. So an ounce and a half is right about there. And you'll want to pour your one and a half ounce of vodka or sparkling water into your glass...like so.

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "Add 1 salted plum into the glass". Aleska puts a salted plum into the tall glass.]

And...the special ingredient: your salted plum. [soft gasp of delight]

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "Add 6 oz of Limau juice mix". Aleska pours juice mix into the tall glass.]

You'll want to add 6 ounces of your juice mix. So I have pre-measured this. It's about 6 ounces and you'll add it to the mix of your vodka or sparkling water with the plum. And you'll start to notice that it will change colors.

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "Stir the mixture in the glass". Aleska stirs the drink with a chopstick.]

So stir it, stir it. If you have a handy chopstick, that's a good one to use for mixing. And you'll start noticing it will become...oooooh...this orangey red with a hint of yellow. And there you have it. It's just a really simple mixture.

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "Add ice into the mixture". Aleska drops a large cube of ice into the tall glass.]

And add ice.....not these eyes! [joke about "ice" sounding like "eyes"]

That is so gorgeous, isn't it? If I had two of these, I'd wear them as earrings.

[Aleksa holds up the finished drink while talking.]

And a final stir. And there you have it. A nice, refreshing, Kat Chai.[whispers] Or Aleksa's Kat!

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "Don't drink and drive".]

Please remember to always to drink responsibly even if it's just sparkling wine. I meant sparkling water! And do not drink and drive, especially in the snow, cuz no one in Seattle knows how to drive in snow!

[Text appears on Aleska's side of the screen: "Please remove mask before drinking".]

And please remember to remove your mask before drinking, cuz then it's really just sloppy.

Have a great night everyone, and please support HSDC. And on behalf of our friends and family at HSDC... Thank you, and Salamat Po! Back to you, Buddy!

[Aleksa puts a straw in the drink. Aleksa's social media handle appears: @aleksamanila.]

Now this is drinking responsibly. A drag queen with a straw.

Hmmm...!ma have two of these!

Let's double up on that sparkling water, please!

[Cut to shot of Buddy, with table. Cut to shot of Buddy alone.]

BUDDY: Thank you, Aleksa. For those of you who are interested in sign language, this is her name sign.

[Buddy makes the sign of the letter A, moving from his left shoulder to his right hip.]

She did such a wonderful job, I hope your drink is as delicious as hers looks. Aleksa, I love your hair. I think it will clash with my beard, though, so maybe I should just dye mine.

But tonight the word "Connection" is going to be the word of the evening, because it is an important part of the HSDC's vision of an inclusive, accessible world. So tonight we're going to celebrate connection. You will see people donating throughout the evening, supporting each other and pitching in to help the community that the HSDC serves. And showing how we can all connect together.

And, you know, I have a secret I got to tell you. I cannot wait until later. Tonight is matching donation night. How cool is that? Each gift of \$50 or more will be matched dollar for dollar up to a maximum of \$10,000. Now, the match is given to us by the

Akoio Foundation. And to them, we have a big round of thank you, thank you, thank you.

Now, you may be asking yourself: How do I donate this evening? We have a couple of different ways. The first way is look at the top of your screen and hit the DONATE button in the top right. Then fill out the form that will pop up there or you can text in your donation. What you will do is bring up text, type in the word Connection. Input the amount of your gift. And then you are going to text put down your name and text to 41444. It's pretty easy, isn't it? Let me give the number again. Text Connection to 41444. It is that easy. And your gifts will help HSDC help our community even more.

All right, on with the show. Next we are going to look at a client's story. It is one by the name of Kaila who was a client of ours a couple of years ago. We are so thrilled to have her here with us tonight, because her story shows how important communication is to all of us. Kaila, take it away.

[Video starts. The video has a white background, with line drawings appearing on the left side, showing the story in pictures. On the right side, an American Sign Language interpreter is on top of the white background. The interpreter is feminine presenting, with tan skin, short white hair, and a black shirt.]

Hi, my name is Kaila Felix.

[A drawing shows a self-portrait of a waving Kaila. More drawings show Kaila drawing, reading, playing a game on their phone, and looking at a computer.]

I am 34 years old with cerebral palsy who loves to draw read and play video games. I am currently self-studying web design and web development, and I'm attempting to build my own website and create a coding portfolio.

[A drawing appears with Kaila in a wheelchair, holding a hot drink, thinking. A thought bubble says, "I wonder if I can get speech therapy. I think it will help me." Another drawing shows a computer screen with HSDC's Speech & Language webpage.]

In 2019, I finally learned to manage my social anxiety and really pushed myself to work towards my goals. One of them was to improve and get more comfortable speaking to other people outside my immediate family.

I began looking into getting speech therapy and I discovered it was difficult to find a place that not only accepted my Medicaid insurance, but also didn't have age limitations. Luckily, I found HSDC.

[Drawings appear showing the different techniques that Kaila describes.]

When I met Elizabeth I knew I was in good hands. She was kind and warm and I was excited to see what we could accomplish together. During our first session she taught me different strategies to use. For example, taking a deep breath from my stomach instead of my chest, slowing down and over-articulating my words, and exerting enough volume to be heard.

[A drawing appears with Kaila and Elizabeth sitting at a table, reading from a tablet while Kaila thinks about Harry Potter. A speech bubble from Kaila says, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are far more than our abilities." – Albus Dumbledore". A speech bubble from Elizabeth says, "Good, Kaila. Let's work on your 'TH'".]

After learning I was a Harry Potter fan, she gathered fun quotes from the series for me to read out loud. As I read, we noticed I needed more help on pronouncing the "TH" sound, so we decided to focus on that. We started with a list of different "PH" words to practice with.

[Drawings appear representing different words with a "TH" sound. "Thread", "third", "through".]

As I progressed, we moved from words to phrases. Then to sentences, and ended with paragraphs. When we began working on the "TH" sound, my clarity score was at 60 percent. By the end my clarity was at 80 percent.

[Drawings appear showing Kaila and Elizabeth doing a mock job interview, practice small talk, and practice conversations. In the job interview, Elizabeth asks, "So, Kaila—what is your greatest strength?" Kaila says, "My greatest strength is my persistence." In the practice small talk, Elizabeth asks, "Hi, how's it going?" Kaila says, "Hello. It's been good. I'm loving this weather today." Elizabeth says, "Me, too. It's nice and sunny." In the practice conversations, Elizabeth asks, "What was your last vacation?" Drawings show Disneyland and the Lincoln Memorial. Kaila asks, "What are your Thanksgiving plans?" Drawings show a turkey and side dish.]

Two of my hopes for the future are to become less socially awkward and get a job. We thought it was a good idea to do a mock job interview and spend our sessions practicing small talk and having conversations. To help guide me, Elizabeth gave useful examples of successful interview answers. I then prepared my own answers and we practiced them by reading what I wrote out loud. After reading it a few times, I was able to respond to the questions from the top of my head.

During our conversations, we laughed a lot. We talked about our last vacation and what our plans were for Thanksgiving. When we were done, we would critique and score each other. My clarity score was now 90 percent.

[Drawings appear showing Kaila thinking about their progress. One thought bubble shows a resume that is stamped with "Hired". Another thought bubble shows Kaila talking with an unseen person. Another thought bubble shows Kaila making a website.]

As a result of my hard work I am better with my "TH" sound, feel more prepared for a future job interview, and feel more at ease with having conversations. Also, prior to having speech therapy, I was always reluctant to call and make my own appointments. I would ask someone else to call for me, but now I do it myself. I think hearing a

recording of the sound of my voice on a weekly basis has helped me become more comfortable with it.

[A drawing appears of HSDC's exterior entrance. Kaila is going up the wheelchair ramp to the front door. There is text in big letters: "Speech at HSDC".]

My overall experience at HSDC was wonderful. I am happy to have worked with Elizabeth, and thankful for all the new techniques she taught me.

[Text appears: "Written & Illustrated by Kaila Felix".]

[Cut to shot of Buddy, with table. Cut to shot of Buddy alone.]

BUDDY: Wow! That story gave me goosebumps. I found it quite inspiring. Kaila, you are an amazing artist. Did you see the amazing art she put forth? You should be doing books. The importance of connection. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

Her story is crucial to our theme tonight, because it reminds us: Communication is the key to connection, right? We were so lucky to have Kaila with us, because with more people like her out there in our community, sharing their stories, their voices, and their talents with us, it provides more of an opportunity for this world to be more inclusive and accessible for everyone. Kaila, thank you so much. By the way, we have to get together to do art together, okay? [whispering] I will call you.

Moving right along, I want to recognize and celebrate the hard work HSDC does in our community and for the public at large. I know, many of us are working from home and, you know, doing everything from our living room, and we want to say hats off to the extra mile you have put in. I would like to introduce a Board member, Bill, who will take a few moments and explain how you can help all of us tonight. Okay, Bill.

[A video starts. On the right side is Bill Schiffmiller from the shoulders up, in front of a dark gray background. Bill is light-skinned and masculine-presenting, with dark gray hair, glasses, and blue button-up shirt. On the left side is an American Sign Language interpreter in front of a black background. They are light-skinned and masculine-presenting, with brown hair and a goatee, wearing a black polo.]

BILL: Good evening. My name is Bill. Bill Schiffmiller. I serve on the HSDC Board. It is true that what goes around comes around. And so we should never forget those who helped us, influenced us and when we have an opportunity to give back. We should take advantage of it.

I am a person with a profound hearing loss. As a child I endured much frustration going through speech therapy and learning to use hearing aids. Fortunately, for me a caring and talented audiologist took the time to help me. He provided me with the training and tools I needed to gain confidence as a child thus becoming a successful adult.

His name was Ira Springer. I met Ira when I was just 6 years old. He was a cool 20 something guy who had just started his audiology practice. We connected immediately. He didn't feel so much like a doctor but he was definitely like a big brother. He fitted me with my first hearing aids.

We met regularly for our appointments but I would get more than a mere check-up. He really, he truly saw me and not as a patient but as a person. He always asked about my family, we chatted and joked for so long Ira was often late for his appointment. Our doctor patient connection was a friendship that lasted more than 15 years.

In fact, his influence is a big reason why I am here today. You know, you just witnessed Kaila's story and what she experienced at HSDC. I count on her as someone who feels supported and in turn is confident and is on her way to meeting the challenges of the world. It was a partnership between Kaila and Elizabeth that made it happen. Just like Ira and I did. HSDC is a place of many Ira Springers. A place where you are welcome, where you get the necessary care for your unique communication needs. Whatever those needs may be.

HSDC is a special gathering of talent and expertise who impact each other and the community they serve. We all need to be seen. We need to be treated with compassion and shown respect. In the past year, HSDC has continued to see the people we serve by adapting our services to changing times. Our staff include Deaf and hard-of-hearing people who see and connect with our clients on a fundamental level. Of course, these services require funding. My wife, Ninez..Ninez and I are so inspired by the work of HSDC that our foundation, The Akoio Foundation is providing a \$10,000 matching challenge tonight. So please consider giving a generous donation so that like my friend Ira, HSDC can continue to see and help those with communication challenges. Thank you.

[Cut to shot of Buddy, with table. Cut to shot of Buddy alone.]

BUDDY: Thank you so much, Bill. And guess what, everybody? We have already matched \$10,000. Seriously. It was a blink of an eye and already we have that matching gift. I am just astounded. Holy cow. Thank you so much. I mean, really. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Thank you so much.

So with that, that's a nice segue to check out our thermostat over here for the evening.

[Thermometer image appears on left side of screen. Buddy is on the right side. The thermometer image has the Cocktails & Connections logo on the left. Under the logo, it shows a goal of \$100,000 and an amount raised of \$79,179. The amount raised increases slightly. In the middle of the thermometer image is the thermometer itself, with a yellow progress meter that is almost all the way to the top. On the right side of the thermometer image are scrolling donor and sponsor names. Cut to a full shot of Buddy alone.]

\$79,000 already. Our goal is \$100,000. We are at \$79,000 already. I am in shock here, seriously. The show has just begun. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

And as a polite reminder, all of you, that your gifts can be sent in in two different ways: By pressing the DONATE button in the top right of your computer screen or texting the word Connection, as well as the amount of your gift, along with your name, to 41444. And that will help our community get the support and services that they need.

Hats off to all of you. I am stumbling over myself because I'm in such a state of shock. The show is not over yet and we already saw the matching gifts go quite high on the thermometer, all thanks to you.

Next up for us is a performance in ASL that we have for you from Christian Vasquez. He is from Seattle. He is a graduate of Gallaudet University. And he has so many hats. Where to start. First of all, the man is an actor. He is also a writer, an ASL instructor. He is a counselor for our young folks. And he is a cofounder of ASL Cart. And this is the sign here, if anyone is interested in our sign name for that organization. He is here to have I'm sorry. ABC story telling card game is one of the biggest products of ASL Cart, his organization.

As we all know, songs and poems have structures. The same thing in American Sign Language. We have structure for ABC stories as well. It's founded on the handshapes in order to perform one part of the story to the next. Let me show you what we're talking about. I will turn it over to Christian Vasquez in a moment to show you an ABC story about the importance of connection. Christian, off you go.

[A video starts. Christian stands in front of a blue background. Christian is a tan-skinned, masculine-presenting person with dark hair and a goatee They are wearing a black shirt.]

CHRISTIAN: Hi, everyone!

[A title appears onscreen: "The Legacy". Christian signs the story without captions or voiceover. The story uses the American Sign Language handshapes for the alphabet, starting with "A" and ending with "Z". As Christian uses each handshape, the corresponding letter appears onscreen as text.]

[As the story ends, the screen fades to black, then shows the blue background without Christian. Christian walks in from the left side.

Hey, I've just finished my ABC story! what did it mean? What was it all about? Don't worry, I'll go through each chapter, and by the time I'm done, you'll get the message.

A-F starts with people. It could be you. What's inside of you? What do you wish for? For the future? For the community? What are your dreams? What is your voice? It's important to think about but it's not easy to put out there. But with the community and friends and family around you, it can grow. That's A-F.

G-M is related with investment. Investing in your words, your actions, the things that you do will have a huge impact that you might not even realize. Parents can have a huge impact on the future of their children. By saying positive things and encouraging them it will help them thrive. This investment will have huge payoff. That's G-M.

N-U is related to being a role model. Encouraging the community when you're young, helping it grow, mutual support, connections. Helping that flourish and by the time it's ready to go off on it's own it will be successful.

V-Z, that part was about young people looking toward the future. We all have dreams but getting those dreams to come true is not easy. But with community and family and friends behind you and supporting you along the way you'll succeed.

[Cut to shot of Buddy, with table. Cut to shot of Buddy alone.]

That ABC story was amazing. I could only dream of being as talented as you. Maybe what I will do is head to up ASL Cart, get some of your card games, and try my skill in the ABC stories.

How about if we take another gander at the thermometer over there?

[Thermometer image appears on left side of screen. Buddy is on the right side. The amount raised shows \$83,074. On the right side of the thermometer image are scrolling donor names. Cut to a full shot of Buddy alone.]

Wow. It was 79. Now it's up to 83. Wow. Thank you, everybody. Let's keep it up, okay? Just as a reminder to everybody, that for sending us your gift this evening, you have a couple different choices. Click on the DONATE button on your computer, fill out the form accordingly; or text the word Connection, along with the amount of your contribution and your name, to 41444.

Again, that number is 41444. (Laughter.) I feel like I am on QVC, the late night shopping network when you can't sleep at night and you crawl over to the couch because something's on TV. It can be dangerous: "Hello. Here is a gorgeous new plan for you. Call 41444 and it can be yours."

So now I am ready to bring to you our very own Lindsay Klarman. Lindsay is the Executive Director of Hearing, Speech & Deaf Center. Hello, Lindsay.

[Camera cuts to a wide shot with Lindsay sitting across the table from Buddy, on the left side of the screen. Lindsay is a feminine-presenting, light-skinned person with short blonde hair. Lindsay is wearing a flowing black gown with pink frill below the waist, and a necklace with three rings of pearl-looking objects. They are also wearing a face mask with a clear portion that shows their mouth. Lindsay removes the mask and puts it on the table. There are now two cocktail glasses on the table with liquid in them.]

LINDSAY: Hello, Buddy. [Laughter.]

BUDDY: Wow, take a look at that. I am so outdressed.

LINDSAY: What can I say? Thank you, thank you.

BUDDY: Outshining me already. How are you?

LINDSAY: I am good. Thanks. I'm so amazed with that match, how quickly we got it. Cheers to that.

BUDDY: I know. And a drink to all of you out there watching.

LINDSAY: Absolutely. Delicious. It's so nice to see you in person, finally.

BUDDY: You know, this is the first time we have seen each other in person, oh, boy, in a long time, since we closed—not closed. I guess that's the wrong word. But since the last time we saw each other in the office in the year 2020. It was a blink of an eye and now here we are. Looking back at the last Cocktails & Connections, I think of all the time that has passed. What happened between then and now, Lindsay?

[Camera cuts to Lindsay alone.]

LINDSAY: That's a great question, Buddy. Honestly, I think of all of the things we have learned as individuals, how we have all refocused our focus and our energy. We have had to really look at the way we are doing things. But to be honest, the last three and a half years HSDC has been focusing on equity issues. We established an Equity Change Team. Our Board in January 2020 had a Board retreat to discuss specifically about issues of race and equity.

But of course March 2020 came along, with both COVID and the Black Lives Matter movement, and it was clear the discussions weren't enough. We really knew that it was time to become bold and brave and take some steps. White supremacy and the impact it was having on Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Inequities were so obvious. These issues are real. We also had to acknowledge that our services that we were providing here at HSDC to people of color were not as accessible as they were to the majority white population, so we needed to address it. We began that last year.

There is an old African proverb that says: If you want to go fast, go alone. But if you want to go far, you have to go together. So, we took that to heart. We invested in our leadership model and we developed a shared leadership model here, which meant that our Equity Change Team and our Leadership Team merged together. And when they combined, we saw success immediately. We increased our diversity here. We increased our communication and the way we exchanged information, and we developed opportunity to resolve some of the equity issues. We also knew we needed to do some assessment, both of our time and of our resources.

[Camera cuts to wide shot with Lindsay and Buddy.]

So we decided it was time to fully commit to making sure we were doing things correctly, and we brought in a consultant that is an expert in Race, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion, what we call READI. So, we brought in a consultant and made a commitment for having the person here for an entire year, meeting with us on a weekly basis to help our staff build trust, to build more transparency in the services that we provide, which honestly, I have seen very many

agencies out there that have had to either pause or just stop doing that type of work, and we doubled down on it, frankly. We immersed ourselves in it.

[Camera cuts to Lindsay alone.]

We also recently had a Board retreat in which they decided to focus on our 11 commitments you will find on our website. And it was an awesome start to the process of developing a five year vision for our strategic plan. And finally, we realized we needed to pay our Deaf and hard of hearing, speech diverse, and BIPOC staff equitable pay. They deserved equitable wages.

[Camera cuts to wide shot with Lindsay and Buddy.]

BUDDY: Yeah, that's not easy, that challenge for all of us, for not only the staff, but everybody here at HSDC, and making sure that equity is something we all have. And it's not an easy challenge to overcome, but it's a good start.

LINDSAY: You are right. But we are in this together. Change is hard for everyone. But it's easier when you have a shared vision, which I believe we do. And we are constantly asking ourselves, assessing ourselves and one another: Are we sticking by our values? And we hold these values sacred, so we need to all make sure we are abiding by that now and going forward.

BUDDY: We're in 2021 now, and like I said, it's been a blink of an eye that a whole year passed. I understand you had visions for 2020. What does 2021 look like in the future, from HSDC's perspective?

[Camera cuts to Lindsay alone.]

LINDSAY: [Laughter] Right. Boy, 2020 was such a year [Laughter] I think it's important that we recognize that we need to get to the point of just acceptance, frankly. It's important to acknowledge our past, but at this point we really want to be looking forward. And we have the perspective that our community is not broken. It doesn't need to be fixed. Our community is very capable and ready to move on.

So, I have some examples of the things we are doing here in an effort to support that. Number one, in our preschool we established five years ago, we now have a second classroom, for hearing children to learn in a bilingual environment, to learn ASL, so that they can interact with the Deaf children, and we have a signing accessible environment here. We are establishing that community from the ground up.

We are also looking at our interpreting services. We knew before COVID hit that we had a lack of medical interpreters. And now with the pandemic, there is such a serious need for interpreters, so we are looking nationally for students and for interpreters to join us to provide services so we can increase diversity among interpreters and increase options for Deaf and hard of hearing people as they work with interpreters.

With our clinics, both our audiology and speech clinics, prior to COVID they were providing one on one therapy, naturally. But they didn't automatically shift and

provide the same type of therapy through telepractice, so they had to transform their thinking and the way they provided treatment to their clients, to make sure they were helping to support their language skill development, but also customizing the support they were giving to each individual to support language and hearing health both, through telepractice, so our clients can continue to receive therapies, which is wonderful.

We have been working with the Department of Health. I am so thrilled we have established this partnership with them. We knew marginalized people were not getting equal access to information. There was really nothing out there for them. Nothing in their language, nothing in the community. There was no way for them to receive this information. Oftentimes they didn't have Internet access. So the Department of Health has teamed with us to share this information. We are now transmitting information through vlogs, through social media, about how people can go about getting the vaccines and helping make the information linguistically accessible to make sure the equity is there. It is important that we at HSDC take care of our entire circle.

[Camera cuts to wide shot with Lindsay and Buddy.]

BUDDY: That sounds great, because we know there was an awful lot of work done during the pandemic, which had overcome quite a few challenges and obstacles. For the people watching us tonight, how can they help?

[Camera cuts to Lindsay alone.]

LINDSAY: Again, I talked about our circle and how important it is that everyone is involved. You know, if you take care of the circle, no one is left behind. We need you people out there. You are our circle. Please continue to support us in whatever way possible so we can continue to support you. Give whatever you can. Give whether it's in the form of money, time, volunteering. All of that helps us so much.

[Camera cuts to wide shot with Lindsay and Buddy.]

Stretch a little tonight. If we could just all stretch, get outside of our comfort zone tonight, I imagine we can go there. It's so important we emphasize your love inspires us and keeps us going. We feel that. As you continue to support us and support the clients we serve, I know it will be amazing. I feel your love. Hopefully we can all be together again soon.

BUDDY: Yes, I miss our people too. Thank you so much for coming here tonight and talking with us, Lindsay. I am looking forward to the positive future and the positive things happening. Cheers to us.

[Buddy and Lindsay pick up the cocktail glasses, cheers to each other, and take a sip.]

LINDSAY: Absolutely. Bye bye, everyone.

[Camera cuts to Buddy alone.]

BUDDY: Thank you, Lindsay. It was a wonderful chat with you. That was really great. I am so embarrassed. I have to up my game when it comes to my clothing. Holy cow. You look amazing, Lindsay.

I want to thank our sponsors this time: BECU, Russell Jones Real Estate, Lane Powell, Perkins Coie, Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort, United American Mortgage.

[Buddy repeatedly and humorously misspells United American Mortgage in sign language.]

I am so sorry. I'm having trouble spelling names tonight. Thank you, United American Mortgage and USI. Thanks to all of those sponsors for tonight's events. Truly a heartfelt hats off to all of you for what you have done for us here. All right.

Now, our sponsors feel honored and recognized. It's time to turn our attention back to Christian Vasquez. He has a story for us in something called Visual Vernacular or what we call sometimes just the letters VV.

Is anyone having a hard time spelling tonight? I think I'm just a horrible speller. Holy cow. Visual Vernacular or VV. I think I am jumping ahead in our program. I will ask everybody to hold on a second, if you could, please. Wonderful.

Everybody, I'm really sorry. Can we back this whole train up a minute? I took a giant leap forward in time. Let's back up. We were going to consult our thermometer once again. So let us see what it says.

[Thermometer image appears on left side of screen. Buddy is on the right side. The amount raised shows \$94,870. On the right side of the thermometer image are scrolling donor names. The right side of the screen cuts to a wide shot with Buddy and Lindsay.]

What? What? Just a— 94,000. We are just a hair's breadth away from our goal.

LINDSAY: Incredible.

BUDDY: I am so flummoxed. I never thought we would see this happen. I need a minute. I need a moment. Thank you. Holy cow. Thank you to everybody. Okay, that's it. Don't stop with the gifts and donations, okay? If you can't give in a way of a gift financially, that's okay. Be part of our community. Show up. Volunteer. Show us your support. There is a lot you can do and your time is appreciated and welcome. Thank you. Woo! Wow!

[Cut to Buddy alone.]

It's really important for us to acknowledge what connection really means to all of us, because tonight is not yet concluded. We still have more for you. I'm going to share the link or website for HSDC.org and please pass along to your friends and loved ones and garner their support for us. And your gifts and contributions can continue well

past this evening's show. Go to HSDC.org. Press the DONATE button and donate through our website. And we thank you in advance.

Now we're going to see Christian Vasquez's story. He has a wonderful performance in store for all of you. He is using Visual Vernacular. For those of you who don't really understand what it means, it's a way of using our emotions, our body, and face, like an actor on stage to deliver a story, very similar to what you might see on a scenario from an actor who doesn't use any words. We will show a story about a painter who has such passion for his art, the art comes to life. Everybody, Christian Vasquez.

[A video starts. Christian stands in front of the same blue background as the previous video. Christian uses American Sign Language to show a visual story of a painter with a palette and brush. As a tree is painted, it comes to life. When the painter adds water to the picture, the tree absorbs the water and grows. Fruit grows on the tree and falls off. The painter checks their own pulse to make sure nothing is wrong, but keeps painting. Next, the painter adds a whale in the water. The whale comes to life and swims through the water happily, bubbles forming around it just like fruit formed around the tree. The painter struggles for an unknown reason, exerting a great amount of effort to paint a bird. Once the bird is complete, it comes to life and flies through the air as the painter sighs in relief. As the bird soars, the painter imagines themselves as the bird. It appears that the painter has been so absorbed in their work that they embodied the bird, whale, and tree, causing the painting to come to life. As they move to dip their brush in paint again, they shake their head and offer the paint and paintbrush to the audience, inviting us to paint our own stories.]

[Cut to Buddy alone.]

BUDDY: Wow, what amazing work. Thank you, Christian. World-class storyteller. Thank you so much for sharing your talents and gifts with us.

[Camera cuts to Buddy and Lindsay.]

I will check the thermometer once again, because I am so curious what it is up to now.

[Thermometer image appears on left side of screen. Buddy and Lindsay are on the right side. The amount raised shows \$98,506. On the right side of the thermometer image are scrolling donor names. The right side of the screen cuts to Buddy alone.]

Okay, what is our thermostat at now? 98. 98. Wow.

Everybody, cheers. And this is for all of you out there.

[Buddy and Lindsay pick up their drinks, cheers to each other, and take a sip.]

LINDSAY: Mm hmm.

BUDDY: Thank you so much. Wow. We are so close to our goal tonight. Remember, everybody, nothing is going to happen without you. Thank you so much. You are our inspiration.

[The right side of the screen cuts to Buddy alone.]

As you can tell, I am so flabbergasted by the things that happened here tonight, that I am stumbling over myself.

Again, the gifts do not end with this show. You can hit up your friends and family and give them the link to HSDC. They can send their gifts to us after the show is concluded. They can go to the DONATE button on the home screen and fill out the form, or they can go ahead and text their gift to us by texting the word Connection, the amount of the donation, your name. It's very important to put down your name in these type of situations and text all of that to 41444.

Again, text Connections to 41444. I feel like Vanna White here. "Here you are: Text 41444." I hope you feel as inspired by tonight's events as I do. Do you feel that connection? Because I certainly feel as if I am connecting to you.

[Cut to Buddy alone. Cut to Buddy and Lindsay.]

Wow. I just feel the love here. I feel the support. I feel the connection from our community. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. And now as we near the end of the evening. And I am not ready to say it's over. Are you?

LINDSAY: I feel like we should make a song: 41444.

BUDDY: Four, four, four. Yeah, something.

LINDSAY: [Laughter]

BUDDY: All right. And again, I want to say thank you to every single one of you out there. I am breathless, shocked, and inspired by what I see happening before my eyes.

[Cut to Buddy alone.]

And again, go to HSDC.org for your contribution, if you prefer not to text. And on behalf of myself and the whole HSDC team, I want to say thank you for such a wonderful evening. I want all of you to be safe out there.

[Cut to Buddy and Lindsay.]

Stay healthy. And mask up.

LINDSAY: Mask up! Mm hmm.

BUDDY: There you go. How about one last goodnight toast.

[Buddy and Lindsay pick up their drinks, cheers to each other, pull down their masks, and take a sip.]

LINDSAY: Absolutely.

BUDDY: Cheers, everyone.

LINDSAY: Delish. Thank you all so much.

[Cut to Lindsay alone.]

Goodnight.

[Cut to Buddy alone, with his mask on.]

BUDDY: Bye everybody, goodnight.

[Cut to a short Zoom clip of HSDC staff members waving.]

[Cut to a short Zoom clip of HSDC board members waving.]

[A slideshow with images on top of a blue background with stars. Slides, in order: event sponsor logos: BECU, Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort, Lane Powell, Perkins Coie, Russell Jones Real Estate, United American Mortgage, USI; Audiology Services with a picture of an audiologist looking at the ear of a patient who is sitting in a chair; Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, with a picture of two people signing to each other through a window; virtual Interpreting Services, with a picture of a person signing in front of a laptop; virtual Rosen Family Preschool, with a Zoom screenshot that has an image of a bear being shared in a room with teachers and students; virtual Speech & Language Services, with a Zoom screenshot of a speech therapist and child client, reading a YouTube book together; Cocktails & Connections logo.]