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FUNDING YOUR BUSINESS

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>> JANE JONAS: When I'm presenting, will it be me or the wall or more of an interactive session?

>> CIARA LADROMA: Very casual between you, me, and Renee.

>> JANE JONAS: Got it. The interpreters were wondering for setup purposes.

>> CIARA LADROMA: I will typically ask a question and give a prompt to say, Jane, do you want to answer that one first? Or, Renee, do you want to go ahead?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Okay, great.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Renee, how are you?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: I'm good. I'm trying to get ready for my grand opening Saturday. And I finally just got the place all set the way that I want it. And now I'm, like, okay, I can breathe for like two days. And then I have the ribbon cutting on Friday. And the party is Saturday night so I'm excited.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Wow. I wish you the best. If you have the energy for it, please take pictures and post them on Instagram. I love following you them. I think Claudia is here. If we can let her in for support, as needed.

>> LEXI JONES: Absolutely. I just admitted her.

>> CIARA LADROMA: I'm going to practice my screen and make sure this all looks okay.

>> LEXI JONES: Go for it.

>> CIARA LADROMA: We got this. Can we see it?

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Perfect.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Okay. So I will start with sharing the housekeeping slide, and then I will stop. After I introduce you, Jane, and Renee. And then I will lead us into our conversation with the first question of: Please tell us about your business.   
 And so, Jane, I'll ask you first. And when you are done, if you could just let me know or I'll take the queue, and I will play two ‑‑ I will play two parts of a YouTube video that you sent me to really emphasize what the Lost River Vacations looks like. And then the kickstarter campaign, because it's such a good example and so relevant to the topic today. And then, Renee, I'll kick it over to you and ask you the same question. And then I will share your PowerPoint and I'll share slides 1 through 4 first.

If you are okay with it, I will ask you the second question and just ask for you to answer that first, because it's the why in your business. And the next slide in your presentation is talking about the why. So I just figured that would make sense.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: All right. Yeah. I'm going to pull up my PowerPoint right now just so I can follow along.

>> CIARA LADROMA: For sure. Do you want to pull it up on your end or do you still want me to share it?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Oh, you could ‑‑ you could share it, if you want. During the meeting. But I can pull it up right now. I just did another presentation yesterday so I did pretty well.

>> CIARA LADROMA: I bet. You're going to do great.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Ciara, if you want me to do some of the sharing on my end, I can. It's a lot on your end. See how you feel. Let's run through it. Your brain is there, you're in it. It may be worse just to undo that.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Let's try it and then we will see.

>> INTERPRETER: Lexi, do you mind making Josh and I co‑hosts?

>> LEXI JONES: Absolutely.

>> INTERPRETER: Thank you.

>> LEXI JONES: I knew I was forgetting to make someone a co‑host.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Renee, there are going to be times where I will be where your presentation won't be shared but you'll have it on your end to help and help you through the questions. But I will be sharing the parts or the slides that fit to the question. So I'll go back and forth sharing and not sharing. So just a heads up. Let's start with Jane's video. Can we see this okay?

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Yes.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Can we hear that?

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: No.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Okay. I know there was some sort of button to push.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: So stop sharing. Now, when you click share, a window will pop up. Before you choose to share your screen or to share just the video, there's a little button on the bottom.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Listen, if I knew it was that easy.   
 (Laughter).

>> CIARA LADROMA: I'll go ahead and pull up this. And then we will just slide right into the first one. And I'll just take your hint if you choose to read this or if you choose to use these as notes to continue on the next one. I can't wait for this slide to show everyone your actual work.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Thanks. I can just say next slide or, you know.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Please, yep. So I'll do 1 through 4 for that first question. And then the second question I'll ask you first and that will be 6 through 8.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Okay.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Okay.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Awesome. All right.

>> CIARA LADROMA: I wish I could go to Rhode Island and go to your opening. I can't wait for that.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: That would be awesome.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Are you working on any special projects right now?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: No. Unfortunately I haven't been able to because I'm trying to with the studio and everything. But so I sell out of a gallery in Bristol, my finished work. And I haven't been able to stock that since Christmas. So right after this grand opening that's what I'm going to be doing. And I'm actually doing a window display for them, too. It's one of my favorite ones because I did it a few years ago.

Now, I can do it for the 4th of July. Bristol, Rhode Island, has one of the oldest 4th of July parades in the nation. I'm going to have five gallon paint bucket suspended from the ceiling, one has red, white and blue paint. We will put the red ones with the red paint so it looks like they are splashing out with the artwork that's the same color.  
 So yeah. I did it before but it was, like, red, orange, and yellow but that was still cool. We want to do it for the 4th of July. I was like, cool.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Wow, that's incredible. That sounds so cool. I realized I didn't introduce people here. Jane, please meet Renee, Renee, please meet Jane.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Hi, Jane.

>> JANE JONAS: Hello.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Molly ‑‑ go ahead.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: I was going to say to Jane that I looked at her website and I was like, wow, these are nice. I want a stain.

>> JANE JONAS: Thank you.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Yeah, I have personal feedback of that. They are nice. They are absolutely beautiful. We stayed at the black Oak just a couple weeks ago and it was stunning.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Then we have my colleague Molly.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: It's a pleasure to meet you both. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Happy to be here.

>> JANE JONAS: I also think it's important that we invest into the next generation so that we can help small businesses grow. I think that's a really important part. And part of our duties as people who created business to pass onto the next generation of owners. This weekend in fact I'm going to be giving a presentation, be a part of a judge at the Gallaudet summer camp for the kids. It's like a bis camp. We do presentations. So I find it so fun. I like being able to give those, teach the next generation, show them what they can do, and what deaf people are capable of.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Fantastic. Yeah. Inspire youth with the idea of being self‑employed. I mean that's not something that kids learn about when they're growing up. Usually the only way kids learn about that is if they have a family member who has gone that path. So that's fantastic.

>> JANE JONAS: Absolutely.

>> CIARA LADROMA: And we also have Lexi and Caroline and Ruth from the National Disability Institute team.

>> LEXI JONES: Hi, nice to meet everybody. We will be here behind the scenes making sure everything works well. And Ciara, Caroline will be doing the ending slides at the end so you can turn it over to her after question and answer.

>> CIARA LADROMA: And we have our wonderful interpreters, Josh and Nicole, and then our captioner, Annamarie. And then we have Claudia who is here to kind of just help out, if needed. Claudia and Renee worked a lot together through a program that we will learn more about. And so just the more support the better, right?

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Right.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Hi, Claudia.

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Hi, Renee.

>> LEXI JONES: Hopefully, Claudia, this is something different in your day. So, you know, we are glad you can join us for a little bit.

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Thank you. I'm glad I could join actually. This is great. We have been doing a lot of these lately, right, Renee?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Yeah, but it's been good though.

>> LEXI JONES: Good to practice public speaking. (Multiple people speaking).

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Renee, I broke my foot.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Oh, no!

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: I'm in a boot. It's like just when we can get back out in the community, I can't.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: When did that happen?

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Friday.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Oh, geez. Oh.

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: I'm going to the orthopedist on Friday. I'm hoping a miraculous thing is going to happen and he'll say you don't need the boot. I'm hearing a thud. It's like in the horror movies that awful noise when I'm walking through my house. I broke the fifth metatarsal bone. It runs from your pinky toe down the side of your foot. It's not painful all the time. When I'm under the desk and go to cross my legs I whack the wall. I haven't figured out how big my foot is in relation to this. It's just so silly. It's just silly.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Oh, no. I hope it heels up pretty quickly.

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Yeah, yeah. My daughter does self‑employment, too. She has a DJ business and she makes cards. And we are supposed to do a DJ gig a week from Friday, so I'm hoping that I can at least take the ‑‑ don't tell anybody, don't tell any physicians, I might take the boot off to drive and put it on when I have to be mobile. We'll see. I don't know. I don't want to let Katie down so...

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Yeah.

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: So there's always something, right?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Yeah. Timing.

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Is everything. (Laughing).

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Yeah. I've been through the ringer lately, too. Go figure, I'm trying to open a business. But what are you going to do?

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Sometimes it's just a test to say oh, well. Keep it coming.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Yep.

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: We can do it, we can do it.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Yep.

>> JANE JONAS: So true.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: So how many people are going to be on here about? I'm just wondering. I don't know how big it is or...

>> LEXI JONES: There are about 60 people registered.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Wow, oh boy.

>> LEXI JONES: Usually we have about half of the people that have registered come to the live event. So probably around 30 or so people will be joining us to listen. And then of course all of us are here.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: That's not bad.

>> LEXI JONES: Yeah. And you'll have Ciara guiding you. We have done many of these this year. People are just so excited to learn from your stories. And a lot of the feedback we have gotten has been wow, if they can do it and overcome what they have overcome, maybe I can do it, too. So that's really what we see a lot of people taking from these, you know.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: It's so weird because I used to listen to people's stories, too. And I'm like, well, but you know that's so situational. And that would never happen to me because I'm not in that situation, da da da. I feel like mine is kind of, like, different in a way. But it's not just, like, well, you know, I had a lot of money so I opened a business. Because it was far from that. You know what I mean?  
 So I hope other people realize that, you know, if they do the best they can every day, good things will come to you in different ways. That's all I really want people to know.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: For what it's worth, while we absolutely have people joining who are either on the path of starting a business or thinking about it, we also have a number of people who join that work in the field of vocational rehabilitation. And it's a fantastic thing for folks in those roles to see what is possible so that they're more supportive of this idea.  
 So also to hear about some of the challenges you run into. So that they recognize the things that they might need to support someone in barriers in getting over. So your stories are actually going to reach a pretty broad audience and are meaningful in so many different ways to each of those groups.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Great.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: These are such fun conversations. I look forward to these. It's such a delight.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Not only are you thinking about the audience that's here in person today but we archive and have them available on our website. So we have a lot more people that will watch them after the fact.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Nice. So you guys are going to have a link I can post it to.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Yeah.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Cool. Awesome.

>> NIKKI POWIS: Yeah, yeah.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: That's great. Because I'll advertise, if I can, too, probably after the grand opening. Still, at any rate.

>> LEXI JONES: All of our webinars become permanently archived on our website so I'll make sure you guys get the links so you can share it with anyone you want to see it.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Great, thanks.

>> LEXI JONES: We have about two minutes until show time. When we get to 2:00 I'll mute myself, I'll start the recording back, and we will let the waiting room in. Ciara will start with basic housekeeping stuff about using Zoom and accessing the closed captions and those kinds of things. Then she will introduce both of you, Renee, and Jane. The biggest things is to make sure your cameras are on when she introduces you so we can spotlight you so attendees no matter what view they are in they will see both you, Ciara and the interpreter.  
 So other than that, you know, you'll just have a good conversation with Ciara and we will let it flow.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Sounds good.

>> NICOLE: This is Nicole. Because you're talking about spotlighting, I think it's easier if Josh and I take care of spotlighting our self, too. I think it would be easier if we spotlight ourselves.

>> LEXI JONES: That would be great. Any other last‑minute questions or concerns?

>> CIARA LADROMA: No. I'm red. I'm excited. Be looking forward to this one. (Multiple people speaking).

>> LEXI JONES: Claudia, we'll only spotlight you if you're chiming in. If they ask a question that's directed to you or you start to speak, I'll put the spotlight on you so folks see you also. Otherwise I'll lever it off so you feel a little less ‑‑

>> CLAUDIA LOWE: Okay. Sounds good.

>> LEXI JONES: And it's 2:00 so I'm going to start the recording and let everybody in. Ciara, do you want to start your screen share?

>> CIARA LADROMA: Yes. One second.

>> OPERATOR: Recording in progress.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Hello, everyone, welcome. We are going to give it another minute or two to allow others in from the waiting room. But meanwhile, please go ahead as you get settled in for this webinar that I've been looking forward to. Pull up your chat box. Say hello. Feel free to drop where you are and where you're tuning in from. We always love to see that. We'll go ahead and get started in about a minute.

>> CIARA LADROMA: One of my favorite parts is to see where everyone is tuning in from. If you're up to it, jot down where you're joining us from today in the chat box. We are definitely hitting all corners and coasts. Nice. Hi, Marty. All right. As people continue to join the webinar today and share where they're joining in from, I'll start with some housekeeping slides to make sure we are all comfortable with following along and we kind of know why the supports are and how to get support if needed.  
 Welcome to Funding Your Business. Let's start off with the Zoom settings. I'll give us a minute to read this. The audio can be accessed by using computer audio or calling in by phone. If you select computer audio make sure your speakers are turned on or headphones are plugged in. To call in for audio, dial 301‑715‑8592. The meeting code is 864 0919 1049. The ASL interpreters will have a spotlight throughout the presentation. For the best viewing experience, please navigate the speaker view using options at the top right of your screen.   
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Please note this webinar is being recorded and the materials will be available at www.disabilitysmallbusiness.org on the past events page within 1 to 2 weeks.  
 All right. Hello, everyone. Welcome to today's session titled Funding Your Business. My name is Ciara Ladroma with Griffin‑Hammis Associates. I am joined by my wonderful colleague Molly Sullivan. Molly will help us monitor the chat box. If you haven't already which it looks like so many of us have, please pull up the chat function by clicking on the icon that reads "chat" at the bottom of your Zoom screen menu. Use the chat box to ask questions, sharing ideas and leaving comments.  
 There will be a short Q&A at the end of our conversation with the entrepreneurs on today's webinar. And real quick on Griffin‑Hammis Associates. GHS has over 30 years of experience providing training and technical assistance to support individuals across the spectrum of disabilities that become self‑employed and small business owners.  
 Lastly, we want to thank the U.S. Small Business Administration and the National Disability Institute in leading the community Navigator pilot program that creates the space for this webinar. While the webinar is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration, all the opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.   
 At the end of today's session we will share upcoming events and the National Disability Institute team will share some exciting information with you about the small business hub and resources available to you.  
 All right. So let's get to the good part. I am so excited to introduce you to today's guest speakers. Please meet Jane Jonas of Eyeth Studio and Lost River Vacations. Jane has an extensive experience in videography, creative writing, project management, accessibility, web development, and graphic design. With over 20 years of expertise, Jane is efficient and results‑driven, and that is applied to every project. Jane also co‑owns several other businesses with other deaf entrepreneurs. This has naturally lead to providing strategic consultation and organizational transformation services.  
 And real quick about Jane's businesses. For more than ten years Eyeth has provided a wide spectrum of web design and creative services and is proud to work with all deaf contractors.  
 Jane's second business, Lost River Vacations, located in West Virginia, is 22 acres of absolute beauty. Lost River Vacations currently has two beautiful tiny homes, several trails, a nine‑hole disk golf course, and so much more. I'll have Jane share way more about both.   
 I am also thrilled to introduce you to Renee Metropolis of fulcrum stained class. Renee is the artist and owner of Fulcrum stained glass which is a Rhode Island based stained glass design and fabrication studio dedicated to making glass more functional in today's world. Renee has been honing our stained glass fabrication skills since 1998. She draws inspiration from color, light, and the works of Frank Lloyd Wright. She also strives to create a balance between form and function of stained glass.   
 Since Renee is a fabricator at heart her techniques include using heat, copper sheeting, decorative soldering glass layering, wire work, and intricate glass grinding. She's also involved with light carpentry, metal working, interior home restoration and painting. As a former jeweler he has various knowledge of the jewelry process and semi-precious gem stones. You'll hear more about Renee and Fulcrum glass more in a bit. Real quick to Jane and Renee, thank you so much for sharing your time, your knowledge, and energy with us today just to learn more about how the both of you started your business, your advice to entrepreneurs, your growth process and planning, how your business was funded, and what resources or communities you leaned on or continue to lean onto receive support for your business.  
 And then lastly I hope that this conversation serves to inspire and guide those that are tuning in today or if you're watching this in the future.  
 All right. So I'm going to be doing some screen sharing during this webinar, so please be patient with me as I kind of navigate that. And let's get into the conversation.   
 So, Jane, can you please tell us about your businesses?

>> JANE JONAS: Okay. So I graduated from college. And after that I started working for a big company as a web designer. And during my time there I realized, you know, there wasn't any true connection with different co‑workers, and I had no interpreters provided to me. It was a very hearing‑centric environment.  
 So a lot of my friends had started setting up businesses or promoting into different positions after college. And I had already worked for another web developer company. I had a lot of experience with coding, web designing. That's something that I was always into growing up. And friends had asked if I could do some web developing on the side. So I developed some websites. And I thought to myself, why don't I set up my business?  
 And my father is also a business owner, as well. And he was a great role model to me throughout my childhood. And there's not a lot of deaf folks in our community who own businesses. As a deaf child I did not see any deaf business owners, especially role models out there who are entrepreneurs. There are deaf teachers and those who work in vocational rehab. But when it comes to true business owners I did not see many.  
 So I started working as a solo entrepreneur. I was a bootstrap. I started contracting with different clients. Since 2006 ‑‑ I'm a little old now ‑‑ since 2006 my business has grown. I've done really well. I onboarded a lot of my deaf friends.   
 I always wanted folks who were deaf and who could sign ASL because I know that they have the potential to do on this job. So I grew my business to over 30 contractors plus now I have over 500 to a thousand websites I've developed. We also host over 100 clients. And really business is booming. I also have an assistant supporting me with clients, as well.  
 And I've done really well. And I went to a deaf‑owned brewery with a few friends, we were just chatting and having a few beers. And another friend of mine owned a film production company and another friend had also owned, like, a renovation company for homes. And we were discussing a camp that we went to as kids. Unfortunately it shut down because there wasn't enough funding for the campground to continue. So we were thinking how can we create a deaf outdoor experience? We thought it was so needed.  
 So we said why don't we go ahead and buy land in West Virginia? Of course we were discussing this over drinks and didn't think it was serious until the next day we were like into, we are all serious and we were all in.  
 We started discussing and looking for different places, different land. And when I started Eyeth, my other business, it was a bootstrap. I did not receive any funding from investors. We needed some extra money from Lost River Vacations because we all did have funding but we wanted community support and we wanted to grow more organically. So our kickstarter started there. So that is the extent of my experience. I hope I did not go too far.

>> CIARA LADROMA: No, that was perfect. And to kind of show you all just how beautiful Lost River Vacations is, I do have two segments of a video that I want to share with everyone. But please know that the full video will be available under the resource link for this recording in about 1 to 2 weeks. And, Jane, I have a quick question. Did Eyeth Studio help create this video?

>> JANE JONAS: Yes. Yes. We supported with that when my friend also owns a film production company. But we, Eyeth, actually set up the website for Lost River Vacations and also my friend who also works on homes, as well. And we have other companies who supported us during our journey, as well.

>> CIARA LADROMA: This is stunning. This is a perfect opportunity to not only show Lost River Vacations but the work and passion of Eyeth Studio. So I'll go ahead and share these individuals. Again, thank you for being patient as I work through the sharing process. Can we see this okay?

>> Yes.   
 (The following was a video:  
 (music playing)

>> Hi.

>> Hi.

>> Hey.

>> My name is Jane Jonas.

>> I'm Shawn Harrington.

>> I'm Andrew St Cyr. We built a house here in Lost River in West Virginia.   
 (Music playing).

>> This is a really beautiful place called Lost River located deep in the hills of West Virginia.

>> Beautiful, right? Let us tell you a story of how we started out.

>> A few years ago I came here and thought this place was gorgeous. I really wanted to do something here so I discussed the idea with two friends.

>> Those memories of deaf people congregating and camping, where do we go these days? We should do something about it.

>> Why not buy land and build a tiny house on it?

>> I can build a house.

>> That's a good idea.

>> We can help the deaf economy by providing this. I'm all in, yes! After mulling I talked it over with my classmates at Gallaudet and discovered more friends interested. Then we proceeded to establish this. With all in agreement we started LRV, bought 20 acres of land in the wilderness. Why not make a business out of our passions.  
 (Video concluded).

>> CIARA LADROMA: That is the first video. Then we are going to get into a bit of what Jane mentioned about the kickstarter and how Lost River Vacations was kind of funded by the community which is beautiful. So let's go ahead and move into that video.   
 (Video was shown:

>> I mean, wow.

>> We have a large piece of land to fill up with more houses. We now have one house so do we want to have just one house used? No. We want to build more house.

>> We built this as a seed as a place for the community to come together, connect, and interact.

>> Yes, we do need your help in building more of these houses to create a beautiful community here. Donations will help us expand, hence being able to create more houses. We will be able to give back even more to our community.

>> We set up a kickstarter which will help us proceed quickly with this. With the house behind me we have shown you what we established so far. How can we make this happen and become a literal reality with your support?  
 (End of video).

>> CIARA LADROMA: All right. This video, Jane, is such a good idea of a kickstarter fundraiser and to get that buy‑in and investment from community members and friends. I'm just so glad this exists for us to show. All right. Thank you for sharing a little bit more about your businesses. And, Renee, I would love if you were able to kind of share a little bit about your business, as well. And I'm going to go ahead and share a screen. But you can go ahead and get started.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Okay. Great. Hi, everyone. I'm Renee. And I'm the owner of Fulcrum stained glass. If you're wondering what a fulcrum is, it's the point on which a lever rests. So if you think of like a see‑saw, that point. And when I was apprenticing I used to score sheets of glass and there would be chips under it because I didn't sweep it properly. And it would break over the chip. And that little chip creating a fulcrum in the glass. So this is a running gag around the store for I don't know how long. 15 years later I remembered it and I was like I think I'm going to go with Fulcrum Stained Glass just because of the memory and because it kind of sounded cool, too. So that's the short story behind the name.  
 When you think of stained glass, most people think of church windows and Victorian windows. I wanted to kind of give a different feel to that and let people know that it can be so much more than that. And I like to balance form and functionality, so I wanted to also let people know that glass can be used for almost anything, as long as you have structural integrity and, yeah. So I wanted to let people know it can be more functional.   
 So next slide, please.   
 So this is an example of some of my work. The first one is called it's like a copper foil overlay, and that's all solder. And then copper. That's just one piece using one type of technique.  
 And the next picture is a custom light bulb installation made with acrylic (phonetic) glass. It's very expensive so I only use little pieces. That came out really awesome.  
 When she sent me the pictures of the installation in the house that was really nice to see.  
 And the next picture are Monstera (phonetic) leaf propagation planters bud vases. Monsteras (phonetic) are very popular. But everyone makes sun catchers. I said I'm not going to do what everyone else is doing, I'm going to wait until I have a really good idea for an application for one of them. I said oh, I think I have it because I've been seeing a lot of propagation stations as they call them. And I said I kind of wanted to jump in on that. But, again, I don't like to do what everyone else is doing. I like to put my own little spin on it and I think that's what makes me unique.  
 The next one on the left middle is actually a three‑sided, like, ‑‑ it's like a candle cover. So you put it over a candle and it lights up. The flower and gems are acrylic also so when the flame flickers the glass changes colors. The next one is me. Then there's what a friend of mine and I did in Colorado. I became friends with her ‑‑ this was my second co‑lab with her. I became friends in late 2018 through Instagram. Hey, I love your work. We both love rainbows and color, why don't we co‑lab. And we hit it off ever since. She did the polar bear and I use acrylic class. The bottom is an Australian sheep dog. The bottom left was a commission. And that one came out really cute. And that has glass paint on it so that's showcasing another one of, like, the facets of stained glass techniques.

And the middle one, so I also sell these acrylic (phonetic) gems to other glass artists. And these are rondelles. They change different colors in the light. Other artists love to use them in their work. I sell those, as well. And the last one is a corso (phonetic), that was another commission. The painting was incredible by the time I was done with it. For those eyes I tried an experiment of using a domed gem that I ground, like, that would fit in the eye socket and more paint glass around the edge of the eye. It looked so good. I loved that one. I almost didn't want to give to it the customer. So that's a little sample of what the kinds of things that I do. Next slide, please.   
 So I like to ‑‑ I mean, I like to make panels which is ‑‑ it's not like a window, per se, but you could hang it in a window. So a lot of the work I do is panels. I like to do 3‑D structures, as you saw before. And so, yeah. I like to kind of see what is possible. I do a lot of different experiments and most of them turn out pretty well. Over the years I've trained my brain when I see a picture in my brain, I've trained my hands to make it to create it and fabricate it, whereas when I was younger I used to be so ‑‑ I used to get so frustrated because it wouldn't come out right. And now when I see something in my brain I know. And I'm like would that work? I think that's probably going to work. So I do it and then, yeah, that's awesome. And find a new way to do something in stained glass or make something really cool that, again, you might not expect.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Incredible.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: That's about it.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Thank you. I was wondering if you could answer the second question first. Can you just tell us a little bit more about why you started your business or what need you found yourself kind of filling for customers?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Sure. As it says, as a kid I've always been drawn to color. My world needed to have colors in it or else I'd be very bored. So that was one of the things that kind of drew me to stained glass in the first place. I never had the means to do it. And my environment wasn't very supportive of that. So when an art teacher held up a roll of copper foil and said I don't know what this is but do you want it, I said sure. I looked up on the internet what it was and oh, that's how you join stained glass together and solder it. Because I already knew how to solder from my father teaching me from a young age from repairing electronics which I also know how to do. Oh, perfect. I know how to do stained glass now. That's how it got started.  
 I love learning and I also love teaching other people. I also love passing on information that I get and experiences and whatnot. And so when I went into business five years ago I was operating out of my apartment. What I wanted to do was, again, show people that, you know, more was possible with stained glass than you thought with church windows and, you know, stuff like that. Not that they're not beautiful. But I got a little taste of teaching through my classes that I took with other people. When people, the other students would come to me and say what are you doing here, what are you doing here? And it was really kind of awkward with the teacher standing there.  
 But I loved their faces and I loved inspiring people. Because just letting them know that you can do it, and I will help you. I'll be here to help you. And I really wanted that when I opened my studio.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Wonderful.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: That's pretty much why I wanted to do this.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Incredible. I'm going to go ahead and stop sharing. And, Jane, I'm going to ask you the same question. What need have you realized that you are filling with both Eyeth and Lost River Vacations?

>> JANE JONAS: I feel that the deaf community hasn't had a lot of successful business owners. There hasn't been an opportunity for businesses to grow that way. So I want to be able to show you there my website what we can do and deaf kids can look at that and see what they can accomplish. I think it's important to have an outdoor space. I'm hoping we are going to have a community space at Lost River Vacations so people will be able to come together for those purposes. That's ultimately one of our major goals is to really create a place where we can come together and celebrate our own as a group.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Yeah. And I want to continue this conversation with the next question of when you were first starting Eyeth or Lost River Vacations, you can choose which ever you would like to start with, what were the initial thoughts of, you know, before I do this I'm going to need A, b, and C, do you remember what those needs were?

>> JANE JONAS: Really for Eyeth it was much easier for me because as a startup I just worked with my laptop which I already had, I knew how to do web development. It different require as much investment to start the business. I basically started with the skills I had. And using my computer to build from there I created a lot of different opportunities for that.  
 So really there was almost no startup required for Eyeth. I just did that based on my own capabilities. But for the Lost River Vacations that was very different. I was really lucky that I already had those two other people who owned businesses, as well, that we can work together. And because we were a little bit older we had the experience. I started Eyeth right out of college basically from nothing. Once it came to Lost River Vacations then there was a little bit of money we can invest and an experience to create that.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Thank you. Renee, what about you? What were your first thoughts of when you were thinking to yourself, okay, I think I'm going to do this as a business. What are the top three things do you remember needing?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: One was obviously funding because I didn't have anything. I actually ‑‑ this is my third time trying to start this business. First, like, similar to Eyeth when I apprenticed back in about 2008 or so, she ended up closing the store and left and moved. So I purchased a lot of her tools and glass. Now I have what I need to start my own business. But I didn't know too much about business. So I guess the second thing would be knowledge because it took me years to learn how to open a business, how to get the proper paperwork and become legal, file taxes, the whole thing. And then I would say those two things were really off the top of my head were all that I needed. Probably I just needed more life experience, as well, because I wasn't in a good place for a long time. And I had to heal from that before I could do anything with glass.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Yeah. Maybe let's just continue on here. I have a question about what resources did you use to start your business and grow those life skills, but also who did you reach out to? Who helped you?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: So first I got in with a group called ORS, ocean state rehabilitory service. And they helped with grants. They referred me to ‑‑ they didn't really ‑‑ I don't know what the deal was at first. They were switching their supervisors and I kind of got lost in the mix. But they referred me to the Rhode Island developmental disability council, the RIDDC. There I met Claudia and a few other people that helped me. I got in with them and did a program where it's an eight‑week course, like a business class. And then at the end of the eight weeks they also gave me a grant. And that helped out a lot. And I found support with them, as well.   
 And then I went back to ORS and then I also was eligible, I did a presentation about my business. I was a little bit more established, I guess. You know. I had all the documentation and I also ‑‑ I had a backer, too. I'll get into that in a second.  
 So they gave me a grant for $10,000. And that helped out a lot, as well. But to start everything off actually one of those ladies that I mentioned that would crowd around me at the table saying what are you doing? How are you doing this or that? I reached out to her because she also owns a plumbing and heating business. And I said, hey, would you want to support me just to get my feet off the ground? And she said of course I would. So that kind of got the ball rolling. With those two agencies, ORS and RIDDC, RIDDC still really helps me because they hold meetings every Thursday just to catch up and see how you're doing. And that support has been really great for me because it's somebody that didn't come from a very supportive environment that was kind of invaluable and continues to be.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Thank you. Thank you so much. You just dropped so much information on there and just how important connection, community, and just asking ‑‑ asking for help, so important. So thanks.   
 And, Jane, do you remember any communities or resources that you kind of leaned on or continue to get support from with Eyeth or Lost River?

>> JANE JONAS: Unfortunately when I started there was really nothing. I didn't really have anything at that time back in 2008, 2006 when I was first getting started I didn't have anything much that I knew of. Luckily my father owned his own business and had a lawyer. I can ask for help with anything for setting up my business, these little things I needed. I was able to have an ongoing conversation with him as I needed. I would help him out if he needed help with accounting or other things with his business. I did pick up some knowledge that way so that was very helpful for me. Now, because Gallaudet University has a program for entrepreneurs, so it helps them as new people coming in who want to become entrepreneurs, they know how to do it. Now I work as a mentor with the students who are in that summer program with that summer camp to help them out with their next steps so I'm able to provide support to the next generation that way.

>> CIARA LADROMA: That's so great. And you had shared before the event started just how important that is to kind of really make it part of the normal conversation and to start young so that we can really show that option s aren't restricted and our futures can look very different than maybe what we don't see or see around us. So I would love to kind of talk more about the kickstarter campaign that you had with Lost River Vacations. I know you shared that with Eyeth Studio. You had your laptop and that was go, you know. But with Lost River Vacations you created and brought in people to help grow that. Can you just talk more about what a kickstarter is, how that really helped you create Lost River Vacations and your experience?

>> JANE JONAS: Absolutely. Sure. First when we were first coming up with the Lost River Vacations it was just the three of us. We did invest some of our own money. We bought the land, invested in a website. There was no community support at first, just the three of us getting together building a house. Once we got the point where we finished the first house that's where we opened up the kickstarter and started asking for money for a second house. We thought we had a proof of concept to get others excited. That's when we would have events at a deaf‑owned business, as well, deaf‑owned brewery. More than 500 people came to our original launch so we were able to announce the kickstarter during that launch to get that excitement going.

Then we had a go‑live party. Everyone was already anxious and excited to start donating. And, you know, they were also able to stay at our vacation spot at a discount, get T‑shirts. We had drawings from deaf‑owned people that you can get at different levels on the kickstarter that people donated. So people are really excited. More than 30,000 donations came in on our kickstarter. It was so exciting because we already had a guest list, we were booked out way ahead because of all this excitement and because we already built this nobody had to wait for anything. So we had a really good foundation.

And when people would come, they will come again. I'm not sure how much we needed. We could do it without it but it really helped and it helped us tie in with our deaf community, as well. And we talked about people having vacations with other deaf‑owned businesses. We put a lot of information on Instagram to keep the excitement going. And everyone wants to know what we are doing next. It's exciting to have that energy in the community and they have been very supportive of us.

>> CIARA LADROMA: That is so great. Thank you so much for sharing. I do have a follow‑up question in regards to the kickstarter. How did you go about creating a message that resulted in 30,000 people ‑‑ was it 30,000 people that helped out or what was that?

>> JANE JONAS: We were able to get cash donations. I think it was around 200 or 300,000, somewhere around there total. Around 300,000 that we were able to collect.

>> CIARA LADROMA: How did go about creating that message to get people invested. How did you get people to show up or even read one of your newsletters or pamphlets?

>> JANE JONAS: We reached out with the deaf news that was one of our good friends who runs a particular news announcement that goes out through YouTube. It's called the Daily Moth. There are several people that watch the news on a regular basis through that channel. We were brought in for interviews so we can get our attention into the community. Also talking about the party, Sorenson Communications sponsored us. They were big in the deaf community so they were able to advertise for us.

That helped us get the word out so everyone in the community heard the word about it. Friends in the network of people we know as well as the other two people who co‑run with me. Even though we live in different states we are able to share with both and local communities. We had a lot of people in the community interested, excited, and ultimately involved with us.

>> CIARA LADROMA: That's beautiful. I think it's so important, again, with both of your businesses to really emphasize how great a power it is to involve the community in your work. And just asking for help. Renee, I know you mentioned for funding your business you were helped by RIDDC and you were able to get a grant from them as well, and the ten K from maybe a backer, I can't quite remember. Was there anything else you wanted to share about how you funded your business?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Not really. But I will say that I have wanted this for about 15 years. And when I apprenticed for the other person, you know, I was like oh, she offered me her studio for $5,000. And I'm about ‑‑ I was very young ‑‑ well, you know, I haven't had a lot of life experience then. And she said yeah, just buy my business for $5,000. I knew I wasn't ready so I would say the number one thing to getting funding is patience and do the best you can every day. I know it's not, like, you know, an easy fix but that's what I found out. And things will come to you. I found out that if you just do the best you can every day, things will come to you that you've never even thought would. But yeah. That's about it for funding because I didn't have any of my own ‑‑ I am on disability so I didn't have any savings or anything. I kind of started this from nothing pretty much.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Thank you for speaking on the realities of entrepreneurship and how it's not an immediate success, it's not an immediate income. But it takes time. And it might be a couple years or more in order to really get to where you were kind of envisioning for yourself.  
 All right. Jane, can you share with us a unique barrier or instance that you still kind of maybe laugh about now when you experienced starting your business, whether that's Eyeth or Lost River Vacations, and then how you overcame that.

>> JANE JONAS: Okay. Well, for Eyeth I remember when I was first starting out I didn't have a lot of accessibility. So really, for example, when I would try to reach out to other people for referrals or I would send my business to other people who were hearing and they would want to call me on the phone to talk about projects. I would explain I'm deaf. And they would say forget it. That happened I can't begin to tell you how many times. I can't even count how many times that happened. Even today that still happens.  
 So with phone calls, you know, any time I would say you can call through this other agency, they would say forget it. So I always appreciate who was willing to take that extra step. We can make a phone call, find another way to make it happen. I didn't consider it as a barrier. 80% of the people that work with me from the deaf community or other deaf businesses, deaf residential schools. And 10% are general hearing people of the public who are willing to work with me. There are people auditorily based and they can't find other ways to communicate with me, that has been a huge struggle. But when I talk about what the websites can look like, that helps.

But with Lost River Vacations there is no phone number listed so they don't have a way to contact me. Everything is based on the service for renting vacations, everything is web‑based. So they have to figure out how they want to contact me. With Eyeth it's a whole separate business. So for people to make sure water is running in the house, everything is working in the tiny house, we can reach out through reach and figure out how to talk. It's really more they are accommodating me and the conversation I allow ways of contacting me that allow for that. I still have problems that people are struck by the fact that I'm deaf but overall it works.

>> CIARA LADROMA: To follow‑up with that, can you share maybe some advice that you have with someone tuning in today and they are still in the process of navigating those accessibility scenarios where it might end up with a potential client saying oh, no, never mind, what advice would you have with someone in that situation right now?

>> JANE JONAS: Well, my favorite quote is the interpreter is not here for me, the interpreter is here for you.

>> CIARA LADROMA: That's it. Love that.

>> JANE JONAS: It's not about my disability, it's about your inability to sign and accommodate me in a way that we can communicate. Often times that's surprising to people and gets them thinking in a different way.

>> CIARA LADROMA: I love that so much. And I do want to echo just how great you have been in communication with Lost River Vacations because you do provide so many options. And one thing that I've noticed with your tiny homes and your rental stays compared to other Airbnb's or hotels that I visited is that you provide so much detail that it's almost just read it, have it with you printed when you're on your trip and you're good to go.  
 So thank you for that.

>> JANE JONAS: Absolutely.

>> CIARA LADROMA: And, Renee, can you tell us about a unique instance or barrier that you experienced in starting your business, and how you kind of overcame that?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Sure. About the time I wanted to open the business, I ended up getting Lyme's Disease. And I didn't know that I had it. So I got all these weird symptoms and I don't think I had health insurance at the time. So I didn't go to the doctor. And my parents were, you know, they were like, well, just, you know, if it goes away then it's okay, kind of deal like that.  
 It did go away and it would come back. And I had difficulties, I had cognitive difficulties, physical difficulties. I was bed‑ridden for about three weeks. And I kind of lost hope in I stopped doing glass as a hobby because back then I was doing it as a hobby. And I didn't really know what to do. So then I started seeing specialists maybe a couple years later, I was going in and out of this. I was on unemployment. I worked in jewelry for about 15 years on and off. And it was a very rough time.   
 Then I was also like I mentioned a couple times I was also in a place that my environment was not good for me at all. So what I had to do specifically for me I ended up joining a 12‑step group called adult children of alcoholics and dysfunctional families. Through that group I found a different kind of healing that I didn't realize that I needed before. Because if I were to try and open a business before then, just like plow through my symptoms and pretend they're not there, and along with everything else in my life it would have crashed and burned.  
 And so I believe everything has, you know, a right place and a right time. And through ACA or the 12‑step group I found a bunch of people that were extremely supportive. That was quite a few years ago. And that was my first taste of being around supportive people. And that's kind of for me like I had to heal myself before I could learn about business and because I just wanted to rush to the finish line. As we all know that doesn't really happen. So I had to do a lot of inner work before I could work on the outside stuff. So it's not really business‑specific but that was one of the huge hurdles that I had to overcome. And just learn how to do what is right for me. That's basically what I had to learn before I opened the business. As I said, I tried two times before and for reasons that weren't even my own it just failed. Actually it didn't fail, I didn't get off the ground, which I was glad for because I wasn't ready at that time anyway.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Thank you so much for sharing that. And, again, entrepreneurship it takes such a toll on your entire self. And so it's so important to have care and balance as part of the plan of being an entrepreneur. So thank you for shining light on that.  
 To continue to grow your businesses can you share a glimpse of what the planning or preparing for a new service product or even maybe hiring on another consultant kind of looks like for the both of you? Jane, do you want to go first?

>> JANE JONAS: Well, I'm so sorry, my puppy is seven months old, I need him to calm down a little bit. He's a good boy but needs more training. Would you repeat that question for me one more time?

>> CIARA LADROMA: Can you give us a glimpse of what it kind of looks like for you to plan and prepare to add maybe a new service or product or maybe a tiny home or...

>> JANE JONAS: Perfect. With Eyeth I am continuing to grow. I have several ongoing large contracts. And I've already got up through 2024. So I'm starting to pull in some more contracts for the year to make sure we continue to grow, we keep our revenue growing, expanding and the number of people continuing to grow. For the Lost River Vacations we are starting to build a third house soon so we are getting architecture work, we are designing how we wants it done. We also want zoning approved for four more houses. We want to add on four more zonings. We are working on getting those done. So that's our progress. It's a little bit slow but we want to have a little outdoor kitchen space where people can come and gather and socialize, have events.

>> CIARA LADROMA: I can't wait to continue following your businesses and to see that. Renee, what about you, can you give us a glimpse of what your planning process is and how you prepare to maybe create a new product or service, or you can share about what is going on this weekend, too, because that's going to be a pretty big moment.

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Oh, right. Yeah. So, well, first of all, so I have a grand opening finally after moving in in March, in the beginning of March the studio is finally ready. I'm pretty much for the most part physically I'm a one‑person show. I do have a website. It's run through Shopify. So I update that. I put new products on there. Everything like that, I do all the photography, I do everything. But I had to advertise classes ‑‑ actually I'm sorry. One of my friends that I sell out of a gallery, the gallery in Bristol, Rhode Island, I mentioned.

And they ‑‑ one of my friends there helps me with writing little blurbs and making the graphics so I can post them. Once in a while, hey, I'm having a grand opening, can you make a graphic? And she keeps it pretty cohesive with my branding and what not. So I'll have her do that. I'll advertise on Facebook and Instagram. I have a little Instagram following, kind of modest. I have a few people over there. So that's basically what I do. So this Saturday from 6:00 to 9:00 I'm going to have ‑‑ I went to New York and New Jersey to get ‑‑ hand‑picked sheets of glass to bring back here and sell to people because people in Rhode Island do not like to drive more than 15 minutes.

So it's, like, 45 minutes from like the top of the state to the bottom where the other two stained glass people are. And I'm right in the middle. So everyone is like that will be great. So that's kind of what I want to ‑‑ I'm trying to become, like, a glass salesperson just to have another outlet for people to go to. I'm advertising that. I'm having a sale on glass I have in stock. I'm having a raffle. And I hope ‑‑ from there on I hope people know about me and can find out about my glass.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Thank you. That's so neat that you are filling a need to provide glass to people in the area. Especially because you know people don't want to drive, don't want to make that trip, but here you are. That's awesome.   
 I have two more questions for the both of you. The next one being what advice would you share with someone who is joining us today or maybe watching this as a recording in the future who wants to start a business but they may be stuck on funding and they don't know how to take that first step, what advice would you share with them? Jane, do you want to go first?

>> JANE JONAS: Sure. Really my advice is simple. Start small. Test it out. See if people are interested in your product. Is there a demand? And grow from there. Don't start big and then in the future see that nobody wants to buy, right? Make sure this two demand is there and start slow and grow slow.  
 But really it's important to have that foundation.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Thank you. I agree completely. Renee, what about you?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: I also agree with that, as well. When I started out, I just ‑‑ it was a hobby and I was selling to, you know, friends and family for, like, a lot less than I thought I would because I was underpricing myself. So I was getting a general vibe and seeing how people liked my things, wow, I'm blown away and people were like you should do this on a bigger scale. I became a member of the co‑op, the gallery in Bristol. It was little and then I started gaining traction there. Don't do too many things at once. Just go step‑by‑step very tiny bit and just keep doing ‑‑ as long as you put love into what you're doing, you'll be great.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Excellent advice from the both of you. And the last question for today is how can everyone here support you and your business. Jane, do you want to go first?

>> JANE JONAS: Come stay with us at Lost River Vacations. If you need web designing, please reach out to Eyeth. I'll be sure to put our websites in the chat.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Renee, what about you?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: If you like custom stained glass work, I do that. Or you could always follow me on Instagram or Facebook or both and leave some comments, leave some likes. That supports my business, as well, from afar.   
 And yeah, that's about it. I'll put my website and links in the chat, as well. Thanks.

>> CIARA LADROMA: And don't worry, I'm going to speak as much as I can about all of your businesses. So before we transition into the Q&A portion, I want to just give the both of you another round of thank yous for being here today and sharing such great information and your personal expertise in starting and growing your business.  
 I do really strongly encourage all of you to connect with both Jane and Renee. And if you are starting a business and you're to the point of creating a website or looking for assistance with any sort of marketing or social media, or if you know someone who is looking for those services, you can put them towards Jane and her team at Eyeth. And I personally did vacation at Lost River Vacations and it was incredible. My family and I stayed in the black Oak rental for a day days. It was refreshing and the best way to connect. Lastly, art in all forms is so important. If you are looking to fill your space with unique and hand‑crafted art, please reach out to Renee and her shop, Fulcrum Stained Glass. And I know that you can design, you can do custom designs and commission. And I think it would just be perfect for your spaces, your home, or even as gifts or at the holidays.  
 And then you can find both of their contact information on this slide, as well as their business websites. And then Renee's Instagram, as well. Remember, just reach out, grow our network, grow your community, and just maybe continue to conversation if there was something that you connected with pretty strongly on this webinar. If you have any questions for myself or my colleague Molly and if you want to connect, please feel free to reach out to us via e‑mail. Molly will go ahead and drop our contact information into the chat box.  
 And then let's get into the Q&A. Molly, do you have any questions or comments from the group that we can ask Jane and Renee?

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Hi, everybody. Thank you, Ciara, and Jane, and Renee. Wow, that was such an amazing period of time learning a bit about all that you have been up to. I've got to say just hearing your experiences and your stories I felt like the entire time the underlying theme of community was just woven through, creating community, relying on community, just it sort of came up in all different corners of the conversation which was absolutely beautiful. It doesn't always happen when you talk about funding.   
 There are just a couple questions. I encourage folks, if you think of others please drop them in the chat and we would get to that. Jane, if it's okay, I'll shift to you first. In terms of the kickstarter that you and your co‑business owners set up and did, about how long did it take from start to finish to raise the funds that you were shooting for raising your goal?

>> JANE JONAS: So it took 30 days. I actually had a consultant who specialized in kickstarters, and also I had a press release through a specific platform. And we were planning on a 60‑daytime frame. And my consultant suggested 30 days because more people will buy in right there compared to a 60‑daytime frame and they feel like it's more leeway there so they decided to just do 30 days.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Great. Just a follow‑up to that, in case there are others attending or listening to the recording later, when you look back at your experience doing that kickstarter, what would you say are 3 or 2 or 3 things that were sort of key for your success with that kickstarter that you did?

>> JANE JONAS: Yeah, I think it's important when it comes to a kickstarter to have a really good price, right? And folks can see what they're investing in. And it's not just like a go fund me and having donations. They want something back, right? So having a good price and also having value there. For our rentals we typically charge $300 a night. We discounted different rates for rentals when they invested. So people would get half price for investing. So yeah, there was incentive there because of those discounts. And again, good prices people want to get and it is a good story is important, as well. Not just a little short blurb. Something that is a good story. Also the video we did helped bridge that connection with the community, as well.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Fantastic. Well, if it's okay, I'll go ahead and switch to Renee.   
 Renee, just a couple short follow‑up questions for you. One is about your funding that you used, and you shared that you did an eight‑week class and you got a grant at the end of that. And then you worked with I think it's the office of rehabilitation services, if I remember right from the slides.  
 And you got a grant from that organization.   
 I'm curious if you have a sense of about how long did it take to get the funding? Was it several months? Was it a year or two? How long was your experience?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: I'm still currently getting funding from ORS. But from the time that I actually saw this place that I'm in now for rent in February and I was like oh! So from February, right after Valentine's day I started to work on this and get this. So from around Valentine's day to now it actually to get the funding I would say it was from ORS, yeah, it was from around Valentine's day to about late May, I would say. And then from RIDDC I got their funding a little bit back. So I was able to do shows and get my name out there. So that helped with that.  
 So everything helped in increments to, you know, reach there. So yeah. That was good.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Fantastic. That's great. And I just have one other question for you, Renee, and that is you shared that twice before you had taken steps to move forward with self‑employment and those didn't work. I'm curious what's this time what do you think is contributing to your success?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Well, one is knowledge. I didn't know what I didn't know back then. You know, I didn't realize there was so much involved. I'm like, yeah, I can do this, sure.  
 And part of that, you know, was also me, you know, realizing that, you know, I need to learn a lot more and I need to absorb as much as I can and I need to be in a place to absorb that information, as well. Because as I mentioned, I was not before.  
 What else was I going to say? Yeah. So I would say that and also as you mentioned before community, that was extremely important. Having supportive people around me and having the right supportive people around me really helped me. And just like reaching out to different people that you don't think anything will come of it.  
 Because for me I would say, oh, you know, yeah, I don't think anything will happen with that and I wouldn't follow up. But just putting yourself out there and just reaching out pretty much and you'll be surprised at what can happen.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Fantastic. Yeah. Community. Who would have known that would have been a theme in our conversation today?  
 So actually Jamie has a question for you all in the chat. And I'll switch it back to you, Jane. Did you have an accountant or a business person help you manage the funds that you had coming in? Grant funds and kickstarter funds? I'll start with you, Jane.

>> JANE JONAS: Yeah, that's a good question. So my first business I established it myself. I really started small and kind of learned as I went.   
 But when it came to Lost River Vacations, one of my co‑owners has an accounting degree, Shawn. So he actually does our accounting, our taxes, and we fully entrusted him in all that until we realized we needed to sign up with a tax attorney to make sure we are benefitting when it comes to filing our taxes properly and also there are a lot of tax loopholes out there when it comes to owning a business so having somebody who specializes in that will help. So we just contracted with a new tax attorney.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Great. Renee, have you had anybody helping you with the money management side of the business?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Up until a few weeks ago I have not. I always did my own taxes. I learned, you know, all the ins and outs of a schedule C and what I can deduct and, you know, stuff like that.  
 But through ORS they set me up with a quick books workshop every week so I have somebody come here and teach me quick books. Now because you have a brick and mortar, I will be getting an accountant. I'm not handling that myself. So...

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Fantastic. And looks like we have one more question for you, Renee. I think I need to stop saying one more question. (Laughing).

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: That's okay. I'm happy to answer anything.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: That's wonderful. And that is this one is for you Renee. You shared at some point in our conversation that you're receiving some disability‑based benefits. Marty is asking if you can share about your process for starting a business and manages those benefits and if you have any experience with a PASS plan?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Sure. I'm looking to get set up with a PASS plan. Also with ORS they set me up with benefits counseling because I need to know what the cutoff is and I need to know how much I can make. So I'm currently scheduled for meetings in July right now. And also just knowing ‑‑ working that into taxes and whatnot because I would need to be informed about that. So far I'm not making a profit right off the bat so I don't really have to worry about that. But I do want to know and I'm curious being in good standing with everything.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Great. Fantastic. When we are done with our Q&A before we finish up I can drop a link in the chat box, if folks want to find a benefit planner in their state since we tend to have people joining us from all different states, that's great, Renee, that ORS that, office of rehabilitation services set you up with someone. And if there's other people on the call receiving benefits and going into business it would be great to get connected with a benefits counselor.  
 Karen has a question in terms of when you're asking for funding and Jane I'll kick this one back to you, first. When you were asking for funding, what information is it good to have about your business when you present that to a funding source?

>> JANE JONAS: Well, I didn't ask for funding so I'm not sure to be honest. But really you need to know your bank account, you need to have a bank plan, you need to have your tax information. But personally I have never actually reached out to somebody and asked for funding so I don't necessarily have experience with that. I just have experience with kickstarter.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: And thank you for that. Yeah. It's so interesting, it's so true with different people going into business you end up using different sources of funding.  
 So Renee, I think you mentioned that with ORS you did some type of a presentation. You put together some information. Can you share a little bit about what you presented and what information you pulled together?

>> RENEE METROPOLIS: Sure. So it was pretty much I made a long business plan. And I presented to them, you know, why I got into this business, kind of the same thing I did here. What has worked for me as far as selling, what I sold, and, you know, a little bit of my experience in my life. And it was kind of like shark tank where you go on and you pitch your product and why. It was kind of like that.   
 And I had a very good reception to that. And my business partner was there, as well. The one that backed me.   
 And it was a very good experience. Yeah. It was really good. There was about I think eight people there. And they made me feel very comfortable. It was really nice to talk about what I do for such a long period of time. Because usually I don't get to do that.   
 That was very nice. Kind of like here. So thanks for that.

>> MOLLY SULLIVAN: Yeah. Really the thanks goes to you. We are the ones that are really benefitting from everything you and Jane have been sharing.  
 Well that is it for questions in the chat. So Ciara, I will turn it back to you for any more details.

>> CIARA LADROMA: Wonderful, thank you so much for those questions and additional information.  
 So I'm going to go ahead and kind of wrap things up and share upcoming events with NDI. The first one is July 12th from 2:00 to 3:00 Eastern Time called creating accessible e‑mails. And it will be presented by results one LLC. And then you'll see Molly and I again talking about net earnings from self‑employment and SSDI slash Medicare, and that will be on July 19th at 2:00 p.m. eastern. And that third one is actually an in‑person event. It's a start a small business: Is owning a business a good fit for you? And that will be held on Friday, July 21st, at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time at the Washington County free library.   
 And I'm going to go ahead and pass it over to the NDI team to share a little bit more about the small business hub and resources available to you.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thanks. I just want to also share my thanks again to Renee and Jane for an amazing presentation. I've been on both their websites. And I'm very excited to continue to watch their progress. Amazing art. And just looks stunning.  
 So maybe you've heard the presentation and you're now thinking, wow, I would really love to grow my business. Maybe you have an idea but you're not sure yet what that is going to be. Or you have an established business that you really want to try and grow and scale. Well, please feel free to contact us here at NDI. You can go to our website at www.disabilitysmallbusiness.org or e‑mail our community Navigator Ruth at Rchavez@ndi‑inc.org. We also are about to start a new learning community. This is really looking at the financial health. So a lot of things we talked with today. How can we make sure that we are ready to seek funding? How do we know where to try and find some of that funding? It covers things like budgeting, managing cash flow, taxes, building credit and ends with how to develop your pitch and a small pitch competition. So we are currently accepting applications to start in September. If you're interested, please e‑mail me. CBOLAS@ndi‑inc.org for more information. We have a TV streaming channel that has a lot of original content, you can hear from entrepreneurs talking about their journey, how they managed to start and grow their business as well as content around financial information, from the SBA and a whole host of others. That can be found at www.disabilityowned.com.   
 And then we also want to make sure you know about our partnership with Verizon. Part of their small business digital ready program which provides self‑paced training you can do, 1 to one mentoring, coaching. And, again, we make sure that this is in the chat box as well as when we send out links after the webinar but you can register and get all that great content.  
 And lastly, hopefully you're already on our mailing list. If you're not and you want to know about all our next events and grant opportunities and so on, please sign up to our mailing list. Just quick introduction to the small business team at NDI, we have Nikki Powis, Ruth Chavez, I'm Caroline, and we have Lexi Jones who is behind the scenes making sure or webinar runs smoothly. Hopefully we can help you anyway we can with the small businesses you're involved with.   
 That takes to us to the end of our time today. Thanks for being with us. You'll receive links to the various ‑‑ everything we talked about today you'll get links about it. And then the recording will be on our website in about 1 to 2 days including the video of Lost River. So with that have a great rest of your afternoon. And take care.

>> Thank you so much, everyone.   
 (Webinar concluded).

>> OPERATOR: Recording stopped.

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