

Below are a few statements from LTD' artist members and community leaders as well as a link to the LTD' Web Series: "Us Too". Please do not feel like you must read or view all this material. We simply feel that when the community speaks people understand us better.

Web Series Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSB8mqE9vUU&list=PLevBNoEevWjdrpwaFcdIJ9dcKCAzHekC9>

LTD' Artist Members Speak

Ammanda Zelinski – LTD' Artist

I was in the third year of my theater degree at the University of Regina, when I met LTD'. I had been used to auditioning for projects friends would invite me to. Expecting to go through the usual theater process (audition, learn the role, rehearse, do the show, close the show, repeat), little did I realize how much this organization would broaden my opportunities and my experience in the field. I had been auditioning for musicals in the city and for short film projects, but LTD' would soon prove to be something I had never been in previously. I quickly became an emerging professional theater member with touring and paid opportunities.

It's hard to believe it's been a little over 8 years since joining in with Listen to Dis' and the theater company The Other Ordinary (how time flies!). Since watching my first Globe Theatre show in 2011 (Buddy: the Buddy Holly Story), I always wanted to be part of one of their shows. I would join in on general auditions here and there because of how much their shows inspire me. Getting to put on our shows Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People and Mine to Have through their Sandbox series have been such terrific experiences. And the latter show being part of my degree as well (thanks to calling it a professional placement), it was a great way to tie up my theater studies with a neat little ribbon. And making Mine to Have into a Radio play AND a digital production, how profound! The fact that we will be making more productions like that just sets my heart ablaze. I feel truly blessed, no doubt. Though we haven't gotten to a show on the Globe Theatre's main stage (yet ;)), I am floored at just how much Globe Theatre has wanted to collaborate with us over the years, a dream come true really :) :)and never would have happened without LTD'. It truly feels great to do paid gigs through Listen to Dis' and our productions, tours, and their workshops/script reading opportunities, and it has given me lots more confidence with pursuing other projects as well! I had never toured shows out of Regina before, so there is another experience like no other. It really felt

like we were officially a professional traveling group going from town to town, and I'd like to think it helped me improve on my driving skills as well :P

Being a theater kid for pretty much my whole life, the community of Listen to Dis' sure did strengthen my sense of belonging. Sure, I could have learned theater without going to university for it, but if I hadn't gone to the U of R, I wouldn't have met all the lovely individuals I have over the years. I wanted to incorporate personal stories into my art, "but how?", I thought to myself. With Traci being the lovely soul that she is, gave us amazing mentorship to be expressive and unapologetic in our work. Listen to Dis' has definitely provided me with many theater opportunities I wish I had growing up. Time and time again, people ask us/me how our work with the organization is going and "when is the next show?", it feels so great to have our voices heard in the most edu-taining way possible. Theatre has been part of the early intervention of my autism diagnosis. My involvement with the program just furthers my ability in performing in an ensemble as well as in solo work. For all of this, I express all the gratitude possible. To John and Natasha, for encouraging me to audition, to Traci for being an amazing theatre mom, and to all those I've got to meet over the years. Let's keep making history!

Finn Burke Eggertson – LTD' Artist

My name is Finn Burke Eggertson; I am 21 years old; I identify as an adult on the autism spectrum, and I have been a member of Listen to Dis' Disability theater for over 4 years. After finishing high school and getting accepted to the University of Regina, I felt lost and overwhelmed with the transition to higher education; in my first month at U of R, I suffered a panic attack, and this behavior became a regular occurrence.

It was only in November of 2018 that I was introduced by family to the Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization; to this day, I feel like I belong. This organization is made up of individuals like myself who were dealt a unique hand in life; this organization has made it possible for me to function as an adult mentally and emotionally. Before joining Listen to Dis', I had no issue with working in both a school/work setting; however, I always felt like an outsider from my peers as the passionate, and excitable theater kid who was a little slow socially.

Thanks to Listen to Dis', I was allowed the opportunities to use my talents as an actor, artist and writer to entertain, educate, and engage with people through issues involving the disabled people. My first production, Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People, brought me to Swift Current, and gave me a chance to perform for the community rehab center for disabled individuals as well as at Lyric Theatre.

One thing I would recommend to any parent, student, adult or child interested in joining Listen to Dis' is that the organization allows a safe-space for people, both with internal disabilities and external disabilities, to discuss their own struggles and find ways as a family to improve themselves. Not only do we offer professional training in theater from experts such as Traci Foster but we also have paid opportunities, and paid-insurance for members in transportation and medical expenses.

If an adjudicator is reading this, I would ask you all to think of Listen to Dis' not as a case of charity, but as an investment. Every theater organization in Saskatchewan has been hit hard by the pandemic, and this new year is a chance for artists to rebuild what was destroyed; grant investment in Listen To Dis' will be just what is needed to take our theater to communities across Saskatchewan.

In conclusion: As far as I can remember, I've always wanted to be an actor. Perhaps it was due to my delayed development in social intelligence over the past 21 years, but through my involvement with Listen to Dis, I have improved my social skills, leadership skills, educational skills, communication skills, and certainly my artistic theater skills. Thanks to reaching a wider community of people involved in disability theater, it has built up my confidence and I have become involved with projects that are important to me. Because of the multiple hours of work put into each performance, I am better at managing the anxieties and frustrations that come up in the local theater I now participate in thanks to working with such a diverse group of people. They have taught me much about the value of hard-work and the benefits of different styles of acting. In the beginning of my membership at Listen to Dis Disability theater, I had many misconceptions even as a member of the disabled community about people with disabilities. However, through interaction and hearing the stories of each person, I now understand that theater is not limited by the abilities people have onstage, but rather the goal each actor sets out to achieve. The beauty of theater is that anyone can bring a bit of themselves into their performance. More than anything, Listen to Dis has given me a place where I feel like I belong; in many ways, we're a family.

Thank-you,

Finn Burke

John Loepky – LTD' Artist & staff member

Let's start here: Saskatchewan is a violently ableist province and Listen to Dis' is part of the balm that makes this place survivable for me as a disabled person. When I started with the organization almost seven years ago there was no way to know how much this work would change my life.

When I first met Traci and LTD's group of artists, I was a recently former athlete struggling with my identity personally and professionally. I would soon be shifting careers – having been semi-shoved out of my education degree – and a back injury ending my para-sport career within a few months of each other. This art world was odd to me, to the point where I actively resisted being asked to slow down and breathe. At that point, thriving felt about as likely as learning to talk to birds or buying a time machine. That person is almost unrecognizable to me now. I mean, for one, when it comes to disability rights in Saskatchewan, I don't even need the time machine.

Without Listen to Dis', I would not be employed in the way that I am, but I would also not have been given the opportunity to dance with world renowned choreographer Alice Sheppard and dancer/artist Danielle Peers. I would not have had the capacity or understanding to write for American Theatre; I would not be in a space as a journalist, outside the art world, to be writing the Canadian Encyclopedia's entry on ableism; I would not have the acting capacity to have my own CBC series as part of their creator network; I would not be being asked to provide consultancy services through Listen to Dis'; and I certainly would not have the understanding to be able to write about just how taxing it is to create as a disabled artist in Saskatchewan. The list truly is endless but, without this organization, I would not have the tools, the capacity, or the team to make meaningful change in this province in the way that it is so desperately needed. It would be very easy to be unspeakably angry about the injustice here, and in a way I am, but through the creative support I've gotten at LTD' I no longer feel as if it is all for naught. I have written, in articles, grants, and elsewhere, that this province's attitude is "If you have to be crippled then can you at least be quiet." Well, I may be crippled, but I'm sure not quiet, and LTD' has helped me – amongst many others – find my loudest voice.

To be frank, to create as a disabled artist in Saskatchewan is a process of continual grief. Grieving that you cannot speak the way you'd like to, knowing deep down in your bones that you will not be recognized for your work, that your friends will be shoved out of this industry, and that funding will keep going to the same seven people because they all go to the same dinner parties. I'm proud to be part of the seismic change this province is seeing through LTD's disability audit program, I'm proud to be part of shifting that narrative, and I'm grasping onto hope as more and more people make the changes that are so drastically needed. Despite that grief. I choose to find hope however I can.

I am an entirely different person from the person who walked into that rehearsal room at the University of Regina seven years ago. Sadly, the industry isn't. I'm writing this testimonial in support of the organization being funded in a way that allows its members and staff to work like there is a

tomorrow, to dream past today, and to feel supported as the vital artists that they are rather than the nice to have poster-worthy disabled people that they continually get asked to be. As my friends and collaborators says in one of The Other Ordinary's plays, "We're working on it. Will you?"

Kelsey Culbert – LTD' Artist

My name is Kelsey Culbert. I have been a part of LTD' for 8 years. LTD' has helped me grow on a personal level and on a professional level. I've been able to find myself in terms of being able to express myself in a positive way in a positive environment. Before LTD', the programs I was involved in, and my workshop participation was very limited because of the lack of programs offered for people with disabilities to express themselves in art in general or anything were created to keep me busy not to hear and see me and build me as an artist. I did do workshops prior to LTD' but they were not age appropriate and not really art related. LTD' has helped me become a better public speaker, writer, and has given me many opportunities I may not have had. For example, writing articles about the arts, doing research projects, and being able to get paid as an emerging professional disability artist, for something that I enjoy doing but was often overlooked before. I never thought of acting as a career for people with disabilities and more specifically mine because I experience complex physical disability and compromised health, so I did not think it was possible. When I entered LTD' for the very first time, I felt very included, and I was able to express myself not only verbally but physically which I didn't think was possible with a complex physically disabled body. I also got the chance to express myself in topics like sexuality and sensuality which I never would have been able to do if I wasn't for LTD'. All the programs I've been in leading up to LTD' were not age appropriate and not for my cognitive level. LTD' makes it possible for anyone to function regardless of their cognitive level or ability to act to express themselves in general. I really enjoyed the workshops we are currently doing with LTD'. It has particularly been a great experience for me because I also do a podcast so LTD' has helped me to figure out how I can do my podcast but also give me the opportunity to save and express myself in whatever way it may be. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for LTD' in terms of being able to engage in workshops, being able to write testimonials like this one, being able to write articles, being able to have a sense of contribution through the equitable pay and honorariums that we receive. I just feel like I belong because I am not being labeled or discriminated against. When I drive into the rehearsal hall there is no asking about diagnosis or asking about cognitive level. It's whatever you can do in whatever capacity you want to be there in. There is no judgment. There is no "aw can you do this assessment so that we can sign you up?" No. It's come and be yourself and we will accept you for who you

are. No labels are being put upon me. Also, I'm able to just be myself which is the beauty of it and to be on stage and to get to know great people such as artists, that is a great thing for me. I feel very confident in my speaking career and my theater career. Like I said, before theater there was no sense of belonging. There was no sense of inclusion in a way of expressing my feelings or opinions or even myself. It's also taught me self-reflection, self-discipline, the list goes on. I could talk all day. I've had so many great opportunities just because of one program because with other programs that I have participated in, it's basically you go, and we will see you next week. With LTD' I feel connected everyday, I just don't see them every weekend and then it's over. We reach out to each other and connect daily. The sense of connection and longing is very strong. I never had that before LTD'. I was a little nervous going into LTD' because of my past experiences with other programs. There needs to be more like LTD'. Disability led disability arts - LTD' - is where I belong if I want to write, draw, or do any art in general. It's accepted at LTD'. Limitations don't matter. Limitations for LTD' just means learning and discovering. It doesn't mean that we don't accept you or you don't get to do that because you are of disability. It's however you want to participate. That's what I love about LTD'. It's basically going at your own pace and whatever capacity you are participating in is okay. It's not "You should just go home because we can't handle it today". I can't say enough about how much I feel included, and I feel like I've contributed something to society. I'm able to express my feelings without judgment or assessment or even proving myself. At LTD', I don't have to prove anything. Basically, just have fun, be yourself where you are in your day. It will get better with LTD' and I mean that from my heart. Every other program that I've been in has been "Let's access you and fill out all these application forms' ". There are no labels or papers attached to you with LTD' You can be your own person. I can be Kelsey. You don't have to be a label. It's helped me start my podcast and with the filming workshops, it's helped me learn and grow my public speaking career. All the things that I speak about, I feel that LTD' stands up to inclusion, diversity, and really looking beyond labels. AT LTD', you're a person first, you're not a label first or a number or just somebody's name that you write in a book. You're a person and you're contributing to society and having a little bit of compensation for your time is also important to me. It makes me feel that I'm contributing to something other than a day program. It's something more that I never had prior to my involvement with LTD', I would go to a recreation program once or twice a week and that would be it. Yes, I did get to the university but that's actually how I got involved with LTD'. My first university class. I was going through some compromised health at the time, I missed our very first performance, but it was okay because there was no stress being put on me. Everybody supports one another. Everyone is included and has a voice. Not every program allows me to have a voice like LTD' or even use my voice. A lot of people don't like the fact that I can speak. Traci really is an artist and accessibility specialist that understands how to work with

disabled people and the diversity within that. AT LTD' everything matters. Whatever you want to say or do you can. It's a person centered and person driven.LTD' listens to the people they serve. They don't just plan a bunch of stuff and say, "That's what we're doing today". They give us choice and autonomy. I feel like LTD' is where my future of acting and art in general began. Before that, I didn't even think of the art of acting as possible for a complex body like mine. Any spasms or differences in the body doesn't matter to LTD'. I am a part of something, I'm connected all the time to these people. That's what's so important to me is connection. Interaction and self expression.

Sincerely,

Kelsey

Kelsey Kilbach – LTD' Program Participant

Hi,

My name is Kelsey Kilbach. I am a 30 year old young adult, who happens to be a full time wheelchair user, due to a brain tumor in my late teens.I enjoy being involved with many types of activities, but find most are not accessible to me.I became aware of Listen to Dis' Voice several years ago when I saw one of their plays at the University.

I joined Listen to Dis' Voice just a few months ago, and have been attending virtually every Monday. I have participated in additional opportunities that I learned about through the group.

I have attended all kinds of live theater (Curtain Razors, Globe Theatre, On Cue, and Independant) plays already and I am looking forward to attending many more. I was invited to take these in and a ticket was provided to me and my care assistant (my mother), as a member of this group.

In addition to our weekly group, and attending live theater events, I have also been given the opportunity to attend workshops via zoom all across the country along with a few streaming plays.

The variety of programming enriches my life through meeting new people, learning new things and providing me with a sense of belonging.

The leaders in the group are strong advocates for those with disabilities.

I am looking forward to being involved with LTD' Voice for years to come and am excited about what programming opportunities will be available in the coming months.

Kelsey Kilbach

Maria Doyle – Listen to Dis' Artist

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Maria Doyle and I have been a part of Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization since its origin - 2008.

Prior to engaging in LTD' I had just moved to the city of Regina and heard about the monthly Open Mic Nights at SSILC, which is an organization that assists people living with disabilities live independently. I was 24 years old, had just been diagnosed with ADHD, and was drawn to becoming involved in the theater world in Regina. I hadn't been involved in any programming in Regina since I moved there. Previously, I had been involved in summer camps and school theater, and while in college I was involved in a lighthearted improv group.

It has always been a dream to be involved in theater and acting since I was 7 years old. I love theater and acting!! When I moved to Regina from Swift Current, I knew that this was a part of my life that I wanted to grow and nurture, and I got that opportunity through the programming at SSILC.

Hard to believe that that was 13 years ago! I am currently developing my first One Act play, as well as a video project, and a Podcast with another LTD' artists member. LTD' is helping support the development of those. Since the creation of Listen to Dis' Community Art Organization I have been involved in many fundraisers, the development and creation of numerous theater productions, and provincial tours. Our most recent tour was interrupted by COVID unfortunately in March 2020 and we quickly engaged in the creation of a digital production and Zoom presentation of the play.

I have found a profound sense of community with the company members. We care and love each other which shows in the way we listen and encourage one another. There is something to be said to have a group of people around that meets for a creative and supportive purpose. The ideas we come up with and the laughs and cries we have shared happen in a safe zone isn't anything I've found anywhere else.

The response we have gotten from our audiences shows me that this is a worthwhile path that I need to continue on. I have a career in the arts because of this organization! I would not have been able to have this opportunity if it wasn't for being a part of Listen to Dis' Community Art Organization.

Listen to Dis' has given me the opportunity to become a professional performer who is paid at an Equity Theatre standard and to see my dreams continue to be fulfilled. It encourages me to push myself, to create, and I'm beyond excited to be working on my first solo project. To have the support of the company behind me, and behind my dreams is a blessing in so many ways.

Words are not my strong point written down. Even now, as I sit here frustrated (with my sister taking turns typing as I talk), I know the hurdles that face me in the arts world, grants, and obtaining my ultimate dreams. The world of grants, putting words on paper, organizing thoughts into a cohesive structure that others can understand is very very difficult for me. The continued support of LTD' company is essential to my growth as a performing professional and has given me the confidence to pursue my projects within the professional arts world in Saskatchewan.

Sincerely, Maria Doyle

Natasha Urkow – Listen to Dis' Artist

To Whom It May Concern:

Before my introduction with the Listen to Dis Community arts organization I was simply a bright and shiny, naïve newbie to the arts industry. I was just learning about the disability community and all of the barriers we face. I was having university professors refer me to other departments outside of theater because of my "situation" – a newly paralyzed girl. There just did not seem to be space for me at the time until I met Traci Foster and the Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization.

Prior to meeting Traci I did not belong to any acting or theater groups, I had little performing experience since my acquired spinal cord injury back in 2008; I did not really know if there was a place for me in performance or devising. Once I met Traci everything changed.

I felt like there was hope for me in this industry, I felt like I could pursue my passion of acting, writing and performing again and that there may even be an audience out there that will listen.

Listen to Dis' gave me the passion of writing autobiographically and taught me the importance of sharing personal experience with a larger audience. Professional development through workshopping, brainstorming and creating performance from our own personal lived experience and then performing it actually affected people for the better. It was the first time I truly saw results, the first time I reached people with a message that I believe in and the first time that I realized I can still be included as an actor with a disability.

Outside of LTD' I auditioned for different plays and theater companies, but nonetheless nothing really came of it. Fortunately, LTD' created opportunities to continue writing and collaborating as a company so I could continue making art and performing as an emerging professional (developing) paid artist.

I am truly the artist that I am today because of the opportunities and guidance LTD' provided for me while I was a green artist, a student with prospects and someone who could have completely given up on pursuing art altogether.

Thanks to LTD' I have not only found a place where I fit, and where I can create art, but I have helped pave the way for others like me to come.

LTD' will produce my personal autobiographical play *Seatbelt* in 2023/2024. They have supported the writing, workshopping, dramaturgical work, and initial university production of it. The goal is to now produce, tour, and help publish it. They are even looking at a film adaptation for me! I was recently hired as a Lamcone artist and flew to France for a photoshoot. Finally I was cast in a lead role for the new CBC series *Push* - about *Wheelie Peeps*. Absolutely none of this would have happened without LTD' and the work of Traci Foster.

Yours truly, Natasha Urkow

Nicole Bear - Listen to Dis' Artist

LTD' has built a more inclusive community by introducing us as artists who are as capable and talented as anyone else and creating an environment which we can actually exist within. As disabled artists, we have important things to say and we are increasingly being accepted as artists into companies such as Globe Theater (two productions), Sterling Productions, where I have been put on stage three times since the advent of LTD', and Live Five. As a result, I have had many more opportunities to audition for projects outside of the disability community. I have been able to be involved in projects as simply an artist without the label of disabled artist. As well, I have had the opportunity to audition for projects that are specifically looking for a wheelchair user. Without my involvement with LTD' those opportunities would not have been possible. They literally did not exist in Saskatchewan. The connections to the greater artistic community built through LTD' has helped me tremendously, personally and professionally. As well the skills that I have learned through LTD' programming and my involvement with *The Other Ordinary* has made me a better actor and

person . . . in fact, it has made me an actor. This was my dream and it has become my reality thanks to Traci and LTD'.

Tori Loughheed - LTD' artist member

I am an actor for LTD', and I started about two years ago. My favorite part of Listen to 'Dis is how inclusive the community is, and how it is a big opportunity to practice your acting with taking disability into mind.

Listen to Dis' is an amazing company about creating entertaining shows and educating about disabilities and showing more about disability culture. Educating others that we are human too and have feelings. Also to shed some light on any questions anyone has about disability, physical and mental. Listen to 'Dis is a theater company all about creating shows to help educate people on disabilities, and to show disability culture. I would describe my experience working with the company as a very positive one. Very wonderful people and inclusive and not judgemental.

My biggest fear about working as an actor was stage fright, and not being able to perform my best, and forgetting lines. None has come true yet, as I just basically black out and go on autopilot when I am on stage. Through Listen to Dis' I have learned how to overcome my stage fright and have learned more about acting. cues/boundaries. Listen to Dis' is an inclusive community with many talented individuals, ready to show the world that we too can perform in the arts.

My life has changed my life a lot since starting with Listen to Dis'. I have found new friends, and it increased my love for acting. To discover more about myself, and to learn about the capabilities that I as an actor can provide, despite my disability. What has changed in my life since I began working with Listen to Dis' is self-confidence and my friend circle, and I would like to think this improved my skills as an actor and about social cues.

As a result of LTD', I have now made a career as a VTuber. From money that I made from acting for LTD', I bought equipment and hired an American artist to create an avatar for me – Haruka Caribu. Within a year, I was off SAID's subsidized income for I was earning enough money to no longer qualify. Now, two years in, I am a professional VTuber with over 118,000 followers, over 25,000 of those paid subscribers - Canada's top V-Tuber.

Here are links:

<https://www.twitch.tv/harukakaribu>

Haruka's story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbmPS9bQ-CY>

One year prior:

Listen To Dis' has offered me a safe environment to be myself, with all my flaws and quirks. A place where I can explore creativity with support and love. I have never felt more welcomed than here. It is a place where I can call home, have fun, and be safe. Never would I have thought I would be so open in a community like this, it certainly surprised me, and I am so happy that I am a part of this community. I found the first place where I can develop as an artist. Something I never thought possible until now.

When I first joined, I never thought I would be so dedicated to something and make friends within *Listen To Dis'*. I learned a lot of things about able-bodied barriers and about other disabilities. It has also been a path to accepting and understanding myself more. I have always told myself that I would never be able to perform in front of a live audience, and I did. It gave me some confidence that, maybe, I can try to audition and perform somewhere else.

The opportunity of being able to act, and perform on stage was never available to me before *Listen To Dis'*. I love acting, it is a huge passion for me, and now I can do it!

Besides acting and art, I have learned a lot of why people act the way they do. It made me understand them better, if that makes sense. I think logically a lot and am simple minded, so *Listen To Dis'* work made me understand more about feelings and reading people.

Since I joined LTD a couple years ago, I get that art and community is all about expressing yourself with others, and making something amazing out of it. I love the professional inclusion focused artists that I have had the chance to meet and work with. Feeling included in a community, I think, is such an important thing. A community is working together, and feeling included, to make something good out of it.

I love how inclusive *Listen To Dis'* is and how fun it is! I learn something new everyday, and I feel my confidence grows a little bit every day. I cannot think of anything more it could offer if it tried!

December 23, 2022

The question of whose voice and who tells the story has been rising in our shared consciousness and the quest for *authenticity* is evident in the Arts, alongside discussions of appropriation and truth. These can be uncomfortable discussions as it forces us to re-examine our practices. Prior to meeting Traci Foster, I had never really considered disability theatre. I had heard of it (ie: Famous Players Theatre), but I did not have a personal connection to the form, nor did I consider the purpose of such a theatre. I believe the purpose of theatre is to entertain, educate and/or transform the audience by viewing what it means to be human, leading one to understand others (and myself) in new ways. Theatre can radicalize both spectator and player, the experience is shared in real time. Listen to Dis' understands that the purpose of theatre benefits the actor while in creation of the work, and onstage, empowered to tell a story not often heard; the audience is moved to a new place of understanding, preconceptions challenged, and prejudices addressed. The actors share their truth, in their words and with their bodies.

I invited Listen to Dis' to perform *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People* in North Battleford in 2018. The audience was comprised of high school students and community members, both with disabilities and those without. As our audience entered, some in wheelchairs and others with helpers, I remember feeling nervous, wondering how things would go – how would people feel about the show? Would the high school students be respectful and empathetic? What if someone laughs inappropriately? Will the adults with disabilities feel uncomfortable? I was also nervous as we prepared for the show – would the cast and crew be accommodated to meet their physical needs? Have we considered accessibility in the building? The stage is not

wheelchair accessible and so how will we create a theatre on the floor? Can they get through the theatre door with their chairs? Are our bathrooms set up well?

I have never honestly had to consider these pieces of management before and it was an eye opener to do so. Most of us can move through life without ever having to consider doorways or steps, physical barriers remain invisible and beneath our notice. Emotional barriers presented by dismissive or patronizing people, revealing undermining preconceptions and rejection – these may be unseen but deadly. Much like the white person confidently stating that racism is no longer an issue... we don't know what we don't know. It is unnerving to realize how unaware one can be of that which we don't personally experience.

I invited them to consider North Battleford as a destination for this tour and they are embarking on the first tour of its kind in Saskatchewan and possibly in Canada. They will present their show at the Dekker Centre in North Battleford on May 4th, 2020, which I felt was the most appropriate venue when considering audience and performance accommodation. In addition to the performances, Traci Foster will conduct a two inclusion-focused voice and movement workshop – one for adults and one for youth.

Listen to Dis' provides a wake up call for all of us. Our communities need to see more of this kind of theatre, we need greater exposure to authentic voices and stories of Otherness. Only in sharing these stories do we find our common humanity and grow in our ability to accept one another, creating a society for all bodies, all people – and removing the concept of Other. As a Learning Consultant, I see an urgency in reaching young people with these stories and experiences with theatre and opportunities for

workshops. Education is charged with important work - creating students who see the world with empathy, courage and joyfulness alongside social responsibility and social justice. Listen to Dis' is the only theatre of its kind in Saskatchewan and I commend organizations and funding bodies who support them financially, allowing them to develop high quality productions, tour and provide outreach to the province. I am dedicated to helping them develop networks, exploring future artistic collaborations and building audience and interest with my community. Without travel support, this company can not be expected to sustain its initiative as ambassadors of Crip Culture in Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherron Burns". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sherron Burns

Indigenous Learning Consultant

Living Sky School Division – North Battleford



Dear adjudicating committee,

I am pleased to submit this letter in support of Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization's application for funding.

I can think of few arts organizations more catalyzing to their communities than Listen to Dis'. LTD has pioneered awareness and understanding of disability culture and disability art in Saskatchewan and has brought about profoundly and permanently changed lives for many to whom artistic expression and practice were formerly inaccessible, due to ableist assumptions and barriers within our performance art ecology.

Beyond the fostering of new artistic voices and careers, Listen to Dis' has become an essential resource in our province for artistic leaders and organizations wishing to develop creative spaces and workplaces that are more equitable and accessible. Their work grows more burningly relevant with every passing year as the arts community seeks to lead in the dismantling of oppressive and exclusive systems that quash individuals' artistic potentials and silence important voices. It is essential that these efforts be led by those with the lived experiences to lead them, and LTD' remains the only disability-led disability art organization in Saskatchewan.

Before embarking on my current role with SATP, I spent a profoundly educative year working with this organization's leaders and witnessed firsthand their persistent and passionate efforts in the face of slim resources, overwhelming demand, and disability-related fatigue/fluctuating capacities. Listen to Dis' is eminently deserving of stable, core funding. Our province's artistic life is stronger and more diverse for its work, and that is only going to be truer and truer in the coming years. I fervently hope you will support this organization with operational funding.

Sincerely and with best regards,

Mark Claxton
Executive Director
Saskatchewan Association of Theatre Professionals



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To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to wholeheartedly support **Listen to Dis**' application for funding. This is one of the country's most innovative theatre company's, producing exceptional theatre through collaboration and experimentation. It is widely accepted that the works created exemplify artistic excellence and professionalism. Funding amplifies the company's artists, it's mission and the work created, and this is good for everyone. Disability arts and artists play a critical role in transforming how theatre is created and how audiences engage with it.

Listen to Dis leads the way.

Before I stepped into the Artistic Directorship at Globe Theatre, I was a theatre creator and director working in all kinds of communities across the country. I was aware of **Listen to Dis**' accomplishments. I knew they created compelling scripts and dynamic performances. Traci Foster leads her team with strength and compassion. I want to support her and the company's work in any way Globe Theatre can.

Listen to Dis is poised to be a major player in the ecology of Canadian theatre. Working with constant and everchanging barriers to society, artists with disabilities are in a constant state of re-inventing norms and recalibrating 'protocols'. As the rest of the theatre world experiments with ways to decentralize power and decision making, we look to those who have been on the front line of renewal for guidance. I am grateful for the hard work **Listen to Dis** has already done to expand all our knowledge. I hope we can emulate their practice, one that honors difference and exemplifies grace in the process of making great theatre.

A robustly supported **Listen to Dis** offers its team room to experiment, innovate and entertain and all Canadians will be the better for it.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Brewin
Artistic Director,
Globe Theatre



