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Virginia Adult Learning
Resource Center

Voices from the Field: Learner Spotlight: Lygia Yates

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Host: Hello, welcome to the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center's podcast series voices from the field. This podcast series highlights the stories of adult education educators and learners around the state of Virginia. I'm Hali, the ESL specialist at the Resource Center.

Host: Hi, I'm Katie, the Senior Instructional Technology Specialist at the Resource Center.

Host: Thanks, and I'm Elizabeth, the literacy specialist at the Resource Center. And today our episode is going to highlight the journey of one adult learner Lygia. We will also hear from a career coach and an organization that advocates for people with differing abilities. We want to thank our guest speakers for joining us. Can you all introduce yourselves?

Colleen: Hi, everybody. My name is Colleen Miller, and I am the director of the disAbility Law Center of Virginia.

Duane: Good afternoon. I'm Duane Poe. And I am the career coach for the Learn4Work program of the Peninsula Regional Adult Education program.

Lygia: Hi, I am Lygia. I'm a student in the Learn4Work program and also the administrative assistant at the disAbility Law Center of Virginia.

Host: Thank you. And we're going to start off by hearing from Lygia. So Lygia, can you briefly tell us about a little bit about yourself and what you do at the Law Center in Virginia?

Lygia: Okay. I'm from Chicago. Um, I came here because of Virginia Union. And I went to and I graduated from VCU after I had children. I'm also a student in the Learn4Work online program. And in my job here at the disAbility Law Center in Virginia, I'm an administrative assistant and I use Microsoft products and other computer programs at my work.

Host: Thank you. And can you tell us a little bit about your journey and what prompted you to seek adult education services?

Lygia: I made some bad decisions in my life. And I've had five strokes. I'm a stroke survivor, I had to relearn to walk, talk, and eat after eight months. And I felt really worthless. And I felt like I didn't have anything to contribute. And I was depressed, of course. And I just knew in my heart that I want to work. But I didn't know what my value was. And people kept suggesting in DARS, the Department of Aging and Rehab Services here. And then I finally heard about the program to Learn4Work program. But everyone wasn't positive, okay? I was positive though. I've seen it as a way to refresh my skills and get out of my house. So happy it worked out. I was able to make it work for me.

Host: Great, thank you for sharing that. And you mentioned that you use Microsoft in your job at the disAbilities Law Center. And you earn some Microsoft Office Specialist certificates. So what drew you to that particular certificate program?

Lygia: I had the skills from long, 20 years ago, but of course no one wants that, to hire you for what you knew 20 years ago. So it was an opportunity to get current, to get current certification. And the program is much deeper than anything I had before. It is actually very intensive. But it's all about you and how... it's not like Friday you have a test. It's when you get ready when you feel ready. So it was very, it was very good.

Host: Thank you. And I like that you highlight that you can move at your own pace and go and do what works for you. I'm sure that's really important. So how did you prepare for your certification test? Since you had to kind of move at your own pace? How did you prepare for your certification tests?

Lygia: Okay, well, first of all, what I tell everyone is you have to be comfortable with the material. Like, it's videos, so just watching them over and over again, just watch them you know, just over and over and then try to do the labs and and then I would do the practice test. And I am crazy. I do stuff like I made a grid. And I keep up with my test, it's like 11 practice test or something and I keep up with my scores. And when I started getting all 90s, I'm ready to test, I'm ready to test. And I also pray a lot, you know? Make sure... I pray that I'm able to be successful. Period. Not just today, just with my overall plan, plan. And then I do everything over and over again. Okay. Until I'm so comfortable. I can just go 1-2-3 and four. If I'm not that comfortable, I'm not ready. I have, um, certifications in Word, Outlook, and Powerpoint, and right now I'm studying Access. But my job is Access, which they were kind enough to see the faith, I'm gonna get this certification soon.

Host: Very good. Thank you. And so you want to talk a little bit about how you use each of those because it sounds like, because you have different certifications for different aspects of Word. So how do you use those certifications in your current job?

Lygia: Okay, well, my current job I maintain the Access database, I use Word and other computer programs. I use Excel to track the reports I use in the database. I recently used PowerPoint to help a colleague, show her PowerPoint. And we had a virtual summit. I also use

Excel. I used Excel to create a form used company to track expenses. I use Outlook every day to communicate with my colleagues. Um, also I'm a FIT team member. FIT means financial information technology and talent. And, what we do is back up this whole agency and whatever they need. We try to do formatting or anything in the previous categories. But my team members are like sharks and we like to fight for requests. But it's ok, we are all trying to help, I just want to help, you know, around here, I want to help. But I hope to do more of the fiscals stuff here.

Host: Great and sounds like you're very busy and it sounds like you are definitely putting your certifications to good use. So do you have any plans for additional education or training? You said you want to do some more financial management stuff. So do you have any plans for future training?

Lygia: Well, what I want to tell you guys about Specialist, the Microsoft Office Specialist, versus the Microsoft Office Expert. Um, that Access certificate is an Expert certificate, and I'm studying for that right now. And the next two, I'll be studying for is the Expert Word, Expert Excel. I also do some tutoring to my students students in my class and I want to create a YouTube channel that helps people study like me, basically because I don't see anybody like me. So and I just wanted to tell you I do love the Learn4Work program because it's on my own time. I love that. There's nothing like that. And I think that to thrive we have to make decisions and plans, everybody, all the time. So I think I was in a spot where I just did nothing and I felt like nothing. So to get out of that spot I had the make decisions and plans.

Host: Great and it does sound like you are well on your way to being an expert in all these Microsoft products and and I I love the idea of your YouTube channel because I think you're, clearly the way that you've been studying has been working for you and I'm sure that you definitely have some tips and tricks to share with others and that would be a really great resource. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Lygia: Um, only that I'm so happy that I have a job, you know. Um, I think that people don't be happy to go to work every day. It's like 'oh man, I got to go to work,' and I think disabled people work harder. But I just think that people who are not usually given the chance, when they are given the chance, they appreciate it more.

Host: I agree. Thank you, Lygia. Yeah, you're, I know you are getting emotional and you're making us get emotional, and we are so grateful that you are so willing to come out and share your story with us. Thank you.

Host: So just to echo what Elizabeth said, Lygia, thank you so much for sharing your journey with us. It really is inspiring on so many levels. But most importantly, we really just want to acknowledge your drive and your courage to come back to education and all the hard work that you've put into that. So thank you for your positivity. And really just sharing your experiences of how these certifications can be used by adult learners to grow their professional experiences and their skills, and your advice and example of what it takes to be successful in a program like Learn4Work. I think having a real life example of what it looks like to get these certifications, and

then take them into your professional work is just so important to motivate our adult learners. So we really appreciate you being kind of that example of that. And again, we can't say thank you enough, I don't think so. Thank you. We are going to transition now to hear from Colleen who will talk a little bit about the disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV). So to get started, Colleen could you just briefly tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do?

Colleen: Sure. Sure, I'd be glad to do that. Let me start first of all, by saying thank you so much for putting your spotlight on Lygia. She has just been wonderful to work with in our agency. And we're so lucky that she found us and we found her. And thank you to the Learn4Work program for the great support that you've been able to give her to be able to work with us. So she and I talked about this a little bit, and she was pretty sure she could not get through the conversation without getting emotional. And she did, she came so close right up until the end. So I'm glad you're able to embarrass her a little bit like that. So my name is Colleen Miller, and I am the director of the disAbility Law Center. We are a statewide organization, we work all across the state of Virginia, we have a staff of about 35-36 people who are responsible for fighting for the rights of people with disabilities. And every kind of disability you can think of. We work with people with cognitive impairments, with communication impairments, with physical impairments, anything that might be considered a disability, we can work with. We work just on legal rights issues. So we're not a case management agency. We're not a service provider, we just work on legal rights issues. And my job is really to support and encourage our staff of attorneys and advocates as an administrative support. We also have a lot of interns who work with us, Social Work interns and law interns. And we've got an excellent volunteer program. So as the director of the agency, it's my job to basically support all of those different aspects of the organization. Personally, I do a fair amount of work with the legislature, developing policies that are supportive of the rights of people with disabilities, and also helping them to steer in a better direction, when they're starting to develop policies that maybe would hurt people with disabilities. So a lot of time that I spend, particularly in January and February, working with the legislature.

Host: Thank you for explaining that. I think, you know, advocacy is so important on so many levels. So it's really good to learn about your organization and what you all are doing. So I know that you mentioned that your organization focuses solely on legal rights issues. But just to kind of get a little bit deeper into what you all do. What type of services does the disAbility Law Center provide? Just maybe highlight a few of those.

Colleen: And I'd be happy to highlight some of them. The overarching theme is that we are fighting for the rights of Virginians with disabilities. One of the perhaps fundamental rights that people with disabilities have, that we sometimes don't even think about, is the right to be free from abuse and neglect. A lot of the work that we do in the agency is directed towards preventing programs or systems where people with disabilities can be harmed by the systems. And that's one of the things that Lygia works with us on. We do that through the collection of abuse and neglect reports from adult protective services from licensed providers. And Lygia helps us to put those into a database and to review them, call them to our attention if there's something really really alarming going on. We do investigations, we do monitoring, we do data analysis, we look for patterns and trends of problems that may be impacting people with

disabilities. And we couldn't, we couldn't do any of that without folks like Lygia helping us to get that data in good shape. We offer a lot of training and resources and educational materials, we have an outstanding website. It's www.dlcv.org. And if you get on that website and just go to the Resources tab, you can find amazing things. I think some of our resources there might be the best in the country. So I'd encourage your listeners, in particular, if they had issues concerning social security. I think that our resources on Social Security are useful to anyone in the country, and might be some of the best that you would ever see. But we've got information there on special education, on managing Medicaid, on filing abuse and neglect complaints, a whole range of issues on our website, it's very, very jam packed website. We do provide direct representation to individuals when they come to us. And sometimes that's just a few hours of conversation, maybe with an employer or school district. Sometimes it's just sounding really threatening and making a problem go away. And that conversation or just maybe helping a provider to understand what their responsibilities are supposed to be. But it can go all the way up to legal representation in court. And we have had cases that we've taken to the Virginia Supreme Court and to the United States Supreme Court, in order to make the point. As I mentioned, we do do a lot of policy work. From the individual representation that we do, we try to learn lessons and find out whether something needs to be fixed, maybe in a piece of Virginia law, or in policies that an administrative agency is administering. So we do try to get a larger systemic fix when we encounter a problem like that.

Host: Thank you for explaining kind of the the spectrum of services that you offer, I guess that's the word I'm looking for. It's a lot to process. So I'm really excited to look at the website and get kind of a better idea of everything that you all are offering. Just to get a little bit of a better idea of how you connect with people. How can clients or their family members access your services? And I know you said that you do provide services across the state. But are there specific areas of the state where you're more prevalent or kind of what does that, what does that service look like?

Colleen: We do provide services across the state. And if there's an area where we concentrate services, it's probably because there is an institution of some sort in that area. So we work in all of the state operated mental health facilities, and do have higher caseloads in those areas as a result of that. But really, our intention is to be available to all Virginians, at some level, people can, people can reach us through our 800 number by calling 800-552-3962. And on three days a week, we have what we call an 'advocate on duty'. So Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, if you call us you will actually speak to an advocate who will help you figure out whether it's a case that we can take. And if it's a case that we can't take, what kind of resources we can hook you up with otherwise. So that's available to anybody who calls us three days a week. But actually, you can reach out to us seven days a week, all day long, by going through our website. And again, that's dlcv.org. And if you get on that website, there's a tab that says 'contact us.' And if you scroll down, it says 'get help.' When you get to that site, you can just fill in whatever your issues are. And we will get back to you within two business days after that is filled up. So that's you don't have to be able to reach us Monday, Wednesday and Friday. If you're somebody who has a job or you're caring for kids, and the only moment you have to even think about contacting us is at 10 o'clock at night. You can do that just by getting on our website and filling out the 'Get

Help' form. We also offer clinics across the state and virtually. And these are really helpful for people who are seeking vocational rehabilitation supports. So we will offer those clinics and people can attend them. And if they have issues that we're not able to deal with in the clinic, then we can screen them for greater case services. We also offer those kinds of clinics also on social security. And those are really, really helpful for people to figure out how to manage their benefits, how to apply, how to get through the various bureaucratic loopholes that they can encounter, sometimes in Social Security.

Host: It's really great hearing about all the different points of access that you all offer. I know in adult education, that's something we have to think about too, is, you know, we have people coming to us from all different, different places. So how do we provide that access for them, no matter how they're coming to us? So it's really great to hear that you do have a range of access points. I think the next thing we wanted to hear a little bit about was your volunteer program. So can you talk a little bit about how people can volunteer with your organization?

Colleen: Absolutely, happy to do that. You know, just to give you a sort of a context, there are approximately 1 million people with disabilities in Virginia, and somebody with a disability might have a variety of different issues that they need to have addressed. So there could be millions and millions of issues in any one year, that DLCV could be asked to help with. And as I mentioned, we've got 35-36 staff. So you, we've got to figure out some way to stretch this a lot further than seems really logical. And the volunteer program is one of the ways that we do that. So we have volunteer opportunities that are available to anybody with any kind of interest. It can be somebody who might be interested in administrative work, like Lygia does, and can only contribute a couple of hours a week. And we are happy to have those folks come in and get a little bit of work opportunity, a little bit of socialization in the office, and also help us out with the administrative tasks. Maybe at the other end of the experience level would be people with advanced degrees, who could help us with our written product, who could proofread briefs before we file them in court. We also have people volunteer with us to serve on the various board committees. So we've got a Personnel Committee, and we have volunteers who help us figure out what our personnel committee should look like. We have a finance committee. And it's great to have volunteers with some expertise in finance, who can ask us hard questions about the way we manage our money. And then there's like just really short opportunities to help us out. As you might know, if you were able to see the screen, you would see that Lygia has a backdrop that encourages people to learn what their rights are to vote, and to help us out on Election Day. So if you get onto our volunteer site, you will see that there's an opportunity to get a survey for your election site. And you can tell us whether the place where you vote is accessible to people with disabilities, we get some 300 of those surveys back every election day. And we're able to sort through them all and get in touch with those polling places to make the corrections that they need to do to make their polling places accessible. So that's really, really helpful to us, because we can't be in every polling place in the state. And it's really great if people in, particularly in areas that are harder for us to reach, can fill out that survey for us. And we have some other kinds of surveys, from time to time, we maybe are looking at a particular fast food provider, particularly in COVID. We had some trouble with fast food providers who were putting their pickup parking spots in the handicap parking places. And so essentially, were

refusing to serve people with disabilities as a result. So we had to do some work on that and had a lot of help from volunteers who alerted us to places where this was happening. If you get on our website, again, under dLCV.org Yes, I know I'm promoting that a lot. But you can. You can just see there, the volunteer tab. And there's a big, long list of volunteer opportunities that people can sign up for

Host: Great, thank you so much again, there's just such a range offered. So it's great because I know people, you know, they want to give back. But sometimes they have a certain amount of time to do so. So having those options, that range and kind of the commitment level and what people are able to do. And also just thinking about what's available in your community. I know I'm thinking about now, looking at those things, you know, when I go out places and, and how I can share that information with you all. So we really appreciate you sharing that as well. And we will provide links to, to the website on our website, where we have the podcast. So if anyone's listening to this, and you're you really want to access the website, or some of these more specific links that Colleen was just mentioning, we will have those listed alongside this podcast. So that should be easy to access. So again, Colleen, thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you for you know, the work that you're doing with Lygia. And to serve our, our, our population in the state of Virginia that do have disabilities.

Host: I do, I just want to reiterate that the advocacy and fighting for rights with people with disabilities is such a huge need. And it's so wonderful to hear that your services are provided throughout the state. So it's really great. And we do, again, really appreciate you taking the time to come and share all that you offer. Because there's so much more than I even gathered just from looking at the website. So this has been very helpful.

Colleen: Yeah, if I could just toss in one more thing here. Just wanted to make it clear that we provide our services free of charge. So we are lawyers, we are social workers. We have case management backgrounds, rehab counselors, a whole variety of people working here. We provide them in a very interdisciplinary approach, but they are free of charge.

Host: Excellent. That's a very excellent point. Thank you for bringing that up and sharing that. We are going to transition to our next guest, Duane, who works for Learn4Work. Duane, would you like to tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do?

Duane: Absolutely. And first, I want to just acknowledge Colleen, thank you for your excellent presentation about the work that you guys do. I've only heard about you all through Lygia and her experience, but certainly all the work that you're doing for folks with disabilities in Virginia seems quite comprehensive and commendable. So thank you for sharing that. I know it was valuable to me, I'm sure it's gonna be very valuable to people that are gonna be listening to this. Again, my name is Duane Poe. And I am the Learn4Work Career Coach and I wear actually a number of hats. My professional background is mostly in higher education, and nonprofit, but nonprofit executive. When I came back to Virginia, I actually lived in the Bay Area for many, many years. But I'm from Virginia, and I came back here to take care of my ailing mother and, and had that experience, and then got asked to support some workforce development work at

Hampton University who was relaunching their workforce development program. And certainly, both pre COVID, and certainly now post COVID, we have learned that there's a tremendous demand, not for highly skilled, highly educated individuals, but really, worker skilled individuals and individuals who are really the backbone of our country. And so I with the regional director, Rachel Ambrose, the Peninsula Regional Adult Education program, we came up with this idea of how do we develop the skill level for those individuals getting back into the workforce, but also match that skill level development with personal development? Because we recognize that many programs do workforce development. They do skill development, but they don't really support the personal development of an individual as they are engaging in skill development. And the personal development piece is really important in terms of helping people really find the identity that they may have lost, and Lygia talked a little bit about that, adapt their previous work experience, or lack thereof to increasingly complex workplaces where the demands that you face in terms of the skills that you need, but also what we know to be work ethic is something that you really can't get in a skills development environment. And so we put this program together where individuals in this program got a career coach, a personal coach, to spend time with them as they were doing their skill development, talking about their past, talking about the vision that they have for themselves. That might not line up with their past, but it's the vision that they have for themselves for now and for the future. And through this, launching this program, it's only a couple of years old. We partnered with DARS, because we recognize that there was likely a population with that program, that could certainly benefit from the skill development, for sure, but would certainly be a beneficiary of personal development as well. So we have had a very good experience with with DARS, we've had a wide range of their participants come through our program and be successful. A little bit differently than Lygia, who is a top of class student. She likes to excel and I know, Colleen, you know that. She really wants to do well at whatever that she sets her mind out to do. Which is great. There are other individuals that just need a little a little boost, they might not necessarily be prepared or able to complete the entire course and complete all the certifications. But some of them will get the skills that they need in order to relaunch themselves. And, and so we help them with that part. We help them with that, again, their personal development there. I do resume rewriting, I do interview coaching. And one of the ways that I help learners connect with their next opportunity is really telling their story. And helping them because we all have a story. But what we know, certainly what I have learned through this experience with our DARS participants is that it can... somebody... it can be hard telling your story. Sometimes when you have a disability, regardless of whether or not you were born with it, or you acquired it, and you really just don't know how to talk to people about it. In some instances, you don't really want people to see it, you just want to be seen like everyone else, right. And so I help people tell their story. I help them tell their story in their cover letter, I help them tell their story in their interview, prep. And and that we do in conjunction with job search, using our network of employers, as well as the systems that we have locally with our workforce boards in order to plug people into employment, getting connected to employers.

Host: Thank you, there's so much that you offer. And I really appreciate the holistic wrap-around as opposed to just skills development, because like you said, while that's important, that's not the only piece of a person. And so I do I really appreciate you highlighting that holistic wrap-around services that you provide. So in your job as a career coach, how do you help

learners connect with employers? Once you figure out and help them figure out like what types of jobs or what might be a good fit? How do you help them connect with employers?

Duane: We mostly use our partnership with the workforce centers here in our region. And so we work very closely with those employment counselors and those centers. And so we connect our participants directly to those folks. Sometimes we will do some introductions, make and share. For instance, if I was going to introduce Lygia to a career counselor, I would likely share her story with that counselor. Well, obviously with her permission, give that counselor a sense of who she is, which certainly can be learned and gleaned through that experience with the counselor, but it helps give a little bit of a boost to the experience and be a little bit more comprehensive in terms of how the counselor is able to work more collectively with the students, with the participants. I also encourage people and support them, will do some share screen stuff online, and really go through various websites on how do you look for a job? And how do you look at a job description. Not necessarily for the job, your dream job, but the one that you most likely will be able to get with your current resume, your current experience. And obviously, with the certification that we're giving, we talk about, you know, the difference, I think, certainly between those of us that are in on this call, and and certainly for the listeners, in this audience, there is a difference between a job trajectory and a career. And so for those of us that have a career, you can often kind of figure it out through your network or through your own experience within your job, you know, how do you move up or through? Or how do you find your next job as part of your career? But when you have been working at a job to support your life, you often don't think about a career. And so we spend time, not only, you know, certainly on websites, and certainly looking at job descriptions, but really helping people think about the steps that a person takes to advance and move forward with a job that ultimately can turn into a career trajectory.

Host: That's great. And that actually leads into the next question about, I was wondering if you could elaborate maybe a little bit on some tips or suggestions that you provide learners who are either seeking employment for the first time or for the first time in a while or maybe seeking to advance their employment.

Duane: So you know, it's I think all of us find it a little challenging, to see ourselves outside of ourselves, to see what others say. And so I encourage our participants to ask their family and friends, how do they see them? How do you? How do you? What do you see my skills to be? What do you observe to be my passions? And so we spend some time having them do that, and come back. And, and I think all of us are generally surprised by what other people think about us, we don't typically have those conversations, right? And so we use some of that information, which is often, can be quite illuminating. In many instances, family members will remind people of what you wanted to do years ago, but you got off track, or some, or life happened. And, and, and you didn't get to go in that direction. And they come back and say, you know, I always wanted to be, or this is what I'm really interested in. But I forgot that. So I help people find that in themselves. So that they can seek employment and seek their next job that actually segues into a career, that actually segues into something that they may have a passion for. They may have an innate interest or ability and, and, and then be able to then look at the marketplace and see,

well, where where do you and that ability fit. It really it really is about helping the person see themselves for who they are and who they want to be, and then go out and find that.

Host: I love that statement. And I think that's such an important thing. Because you're right, we often don't see ourselves the way other people do or we don't see our strengths the way that other people see them or we may not even recognize what those strengths may be. So in thinking about Lygia's journey and thinking from that third person perspective and that outside perspective, what would you like to highlight about her journey and how she came into adult education and got her certifications and then now has transitioned into a job that I, it seems like she enjoys and is passionate about and and seems like she's good at, so what would you like to highlight?

Duane: We don't have enough time for me to highlight everything about Lygia. But first and foremost, Lygia is, from the first call that I had with her I could tell that she is... And I think your listeners can hear it, and those of us can obviously see it there on this on this podcast, is really quite remarkable. And, and she's remarkable in so many ways that I think she didn't really recognize, which goes back to why career coaching and personal coaching is really important. Because I see, you know, it's, she said, she got into a certain way of seeing herself, and feeling about herself. But knew that wasn't all there was to her. And so what I would say about the highlight for the journey that I've had with Lygia is I just helped her see that. And, and she was mostly a willing participant, sometimes she could get a little resistant. But she, really, always, to the point that she made earlier, she loved what she did before, and she wanted to come back to have the next step in her life be something that she would love to do again. And so that's what we worked on.

Duane: That's what we talked about. And as I said, she's a very, very tenacious student, and a very good student. What Lygia didn't acknowledge, which is a little bit different than most of our participants. She has a master's degree. And correct, you do not, She has a bachelor's degree. All right, sorry. See I gave you a master's degree along the way, right. She has a bachelor's degree. And and, and so she already had a foundation of education. She had a career, she had experiences. And so it really was just about pulling out what it was that she liked about what she did before who she is now, and then matching that up with what she felt like she wanted to do next and what we thought would make sense. Yeah, so it's, and I would also say that what's Lygia has certainly been a highlight of the program, which is why I'm really excited about being able to talk about her experience. But I've certainly worked with many individuals, we probably have about, oh, I'd say about 25 participants in our program at the most at any given time and and people participate in the career coaching and in the skills development at varying levels, as you would imagine, it's not unlike any kind of training or school. But across the board like Lygia's journey. Everyone wants better for themselves. And they're looking for a way to do that. That certainly is about skills. And like Lygia many people already had really good skills, they were just a little dated, or they needed some more refreshing. But mostly, they lack personal confidence for their ability to be able to take the next step. And, so that's what I mostly spend time with people talking about how to turn your past into your present, that becomes your future.

Host: That's excellent. I almost wish like, I need that on a t-shirt, or a hat, or something on my wall. I love that. And I really appreciate you highlighting not just Lygia's journey, but just the journey of those who come through your program and in the various ways that you're able to meet their needs and build on their assets and build on their strengths. Because I think that that's really important and that is, you know, kind of the mission of adult education. So really highlight what we all do. So is there anything else you wanted to share before we went to Katie?

Duane: Well, you know, you make, I think my final point, Elizabeth is we're all adult learners after the age of 18. And we kind of operate in a system that makes us get siloed. You go into college or you're going to community college, are you going into the military or whatever, right? But after 18 I think society says, generally speaking, you're responsible for what you want to do now, you're responsible for your education. And I think that is challenging no matter how easy it may look for some people, it's always challenging to try to figure out what it, because what's embedded in that is 'what do I want to do with my life.' And as I tell my participants and I happen to do vocational career counseling for young people, as well as adults and other programs, as well, group adults in group settings, you will have many lives, you know, they, you, when you're 18, or 19, or 20 years old, in college, everybody thinks all you need to know what you want to do for the rest of your life. And being the oldest person on this call, I can tell you that is not the case, you don't know, you know, I said I tell people all the time, you can, most of us work about 40 years. And you can do a, you can develop an expertise in 10 years, four times, and have many different experiences along the way. And so, I think the thing that I would share to all adult learners is be open to the journey of possibilities of all the things that you can do. That's what I would say.

Host: Duane, thank you so much for sharing and for the important work you do. I really appreciated what you said about being learners throughout, regardless of your age, and how challenging that can be. So thank you for the work that you do and helping supporting us learners throughout our you know our journey. Thank you so much. We appreciate all of you giving your time today to help us highlight the importance of supporting learners with varying abilities. The Resource Center recently launched our Inclusive Virginia website, which provides adult education program staff with information, instructional strategies, resources and accommodations for providing access to effective adult education for all learners seeking adult education opportunities. Learners can explore various categories to learn more about each ability as well as instructional strategies and accommodations that can help support adult learners with each differing ability. The website can be found at inclusive.valrc.org. We will post a link to the inclusive Virginia site, disAbility Law Center of Virginia, along with the podcast on the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center website. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or need any additional information related to this topic. Again, thank you to our guests today.