



# Transcript

## Episode 42: Making Mega-Sporting Events Accessible

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**Dean Askin 00:02**

This is You Can't Spell Inclusion without a D, the podcast that explores the power of inclusion in business, in employment, in education and in our communities, and why disability is an important part of the diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility conversation. With your hosts, Amy Widdows and Dean Askin. Hello there. Welcome to the show. This is episode 42 of You Can't Spell Inclusion without a D, part two in our season seven kickoff series about accessibility. If you haven't caught part one yet, be sure to have a listen to that or a read of the transcript, if that's how you catch episodes of this podcast. Episode 41 was a great conversation about making tourism accessible. Hi there. I'm Dean Askin, and in this second and final part of the series, we've got a conversation about sports and accessibility that's tourism related. And for this episode, sitting in for Amy widows at the other mic, our associate producer and resident sports junkie, Sue Cervoni, hi there, Sue, welcome to the other mic. Hey, this is kind of a new experience for you, I guess. I mean, you're usually a behind the scenes mastermind, steering things to make sure they go off without hitch.

**Sue Cervoni 01:18**

Hi Dean. What can I say I've been looking forward to guest hosting this episode since we were planning the season lineup at the start of 2026 this episode sports related. So anything to do with sports, I'm there. And this is a big year for sports, mega sporting events in particular,

**Dean Askin 01:36**

That's right, Sue in February, there were the 2026 Milano Cortina, Winter Olympics and winter Paralympic Games and the geopolitical climate aside, here the upcoming FIFA World Cup, with matches happening in Mexico, the US and Canada from June 11 to 19th.

**Sue Cervoni 01:53**

And then there's the 23rd Commonwealth Games happening in Glasgow, Scotland, from July, 24 to August 2. Glasgow, 2026 will be the biggest sporting event of the year in the UK. All of these events happen in numerous venues in their host cities, with 1000s of athletes competing and 1000s of people attending and working at these events.

**Dean Askin** 02:14

Yeah, here's an example of that in 2022 1.5 million people attended the common wolf games in Birmingham, England, that was a record this year. 1.3 million tickets were sold for the Winter Olympics. 500,000 people visited the fan village, and 300,000 people attended shows at the Calderon now here's the thing. The thing is, there's a huge issue with mega sporting events like these, accessibility.

**Sue Cervoni** 02:45

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the international human rights treaty that says people of a disability have a right without discrimination, to be able to fully participate in society, and that includes attending mega sporting events such as the Olympics, FIFA World Cup and the Commonwealth Games,

**Dean Askin** 03:05

but, and it's a big but, from how they're promoted to the built environment of venues they're held in, how accessible and inclusive are these kinds of mega sporting events? Well, that's what we're exploring in this episode, and we're doing that with some authoritative voices on accessibility in Canada, out in Vancouver, Brad McConnell, now, Brad's been on the show before, in Episode 22 when we explored the overall state of accessibility in Canada,

**Sue Cervoni** 03:34

And Brad recently retired from his role as Vice President of access and inclusion at the rich Hansen foundation. Over his career, he's been the universal design consultant on several large projects, including all venues and operations of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games. He's a member of the International Paralympic committee's accessibility working group,

**Dean Askin** 03:55

And way back in 1990 Brad formed Canadian barrier free design Inc, it was created to fill a gap between building codes and the real needs of the disability community in municipalities across Canada. So with that, CV, Brad is pretty much Canada's foremost expert on accessibility in the built environment,

**Sue Cervoni** 04:15

And joining us from Ottawa is Jenn Bruce, PhD. She's the research lead social impact at the Sports Information Resource Centre. Over her career, she's been involved in para sports at all levels, including being the manager of sport development at para sport Ontario.

**Dean Askin** 04:32

For almost five years, she was the senior coordinator Paralympic pathways on the Canadian Paralympic Committee, and she was involved in legacy planning of the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto, and she also volunteered at the Games.

**Sue Cervoni** 04:48

Brad, welcome back to You Can't Spell Inclusion without a D and Jen, welcome to the show for the first time. Thank you both for coming on the show and to help us and our listeners understand how accessible or not accessible. How these mega sporting events can be.

**Brad McCannell** 05:02

Thank you so much.

**Jenn Bruce** 05:03

Thank you

**Sue Cervoni** 05:03

So let's dive right into some questions for both of you, when we look at mega sporting events like the 2026 peaceful World Cup and the Olympic Games, how would you both describe the current state of accessibility today?

**Brad McCannell** 05:16

Well, if it was me, I would describe it as haphazard all the games that are going on out there, they're all working in this vacuum, and they all seem to think they have to create their own standards for their own games. And they start from square one, and they form a committee, and we rediscover the wheel as a group. So that's my biggest problem with what's going on there right now, is we constantly rediscover the wheel instead of building on what the previous games have done. There was opportunities 2208 in Beijing and in 2010 but there's a there's a process between the big games, the unit, the IPC games and the APC games. It's called the transfer of knowledge, and all the departments meet, from transportation to built environment to all the different and they all meet, and they meet with the new team, and they transfer that knowledge over on what they the experience they had, and how to improve on it. But that doesn't happen with accessibility, and I don't know why.

**Jenn Bruce** 06:22

I would echo that statement. That's what I was going to say. You know, I think we've seen some small move of the needle, some improvement, but it is haphazard. Haphazard. You see a different level of prioritization from games to games. Some of it comes down to regional and political differences. When games are awarded, there are, is a lot of, you know, political might that comes in behind them to bid and to to fund these games, and so, you know, legislation and policy in those regions can also play a role in how accessibility gets prioritized or gets forefronted in the in the bidding process, and then subsequently in the planning process, and to What extent as well.

**Brad McCannell** 07:20

It's very easy to put a statement out saying we're going to be the most accessible games yet, but it's a very different story when it when push comes to shove and when the games actually hit the ground.

You know what that looks like, and think that's where we see some of the biggest gaps come into play.

**Jenn Bruce 07:42**

Brad is laughing.

**Brad McCannell 07:44**

That statement every game, oh, we the most successful games ever, uh huh. And the moment they say that, my antenna go up, go oh, now we're in trouble.

**Brad McCannell 07:56**

Great. Thank you so much. So our next question is based on your experience. Where have you both seen accessibility done well at these events, and where does it fall short in practice? So we talk about that these statements and now in practice. When has it been done well?

**Brad McCannell 08:15**

Well on our projects, once we and I, Jen, and I work on it's outstanding. Yeah, if it's easy for me to say 2008 Beijing Games, I'm not sure if this number is still true, but at the time, was the largest Paralympics ever held. Over 4300 athletes and I, in many ways, we hit it out of the park. But that doesn't mean there were gaps and weren't problems 2010 again, tooting my own horn here, but 2010 was the first Olympics, Winter Olympics, sorry, first Winter Paralympics, where we put all this into play, and we were doing things in 2010 unheard of, things like putting vent dependent quadriplegics on the side of a mountain to watch a downward ski race. Nobody ever bothered with that before we just pushed him off to the side. Yeah, in 2010 Oh, God, Alexander. Oh, I'm gonna butcher his name. I'm sorry. Alexander bullode, the person who won the first gold medal on home turf, and when all when they interviewed him, all through that process, he talked constantly about his inspiration was his younger brother. I believe he had CP, but I'm not positive of that part, but significant disability. But his inspiration for everything was his brother. And at the end of the race, you may not recall it, but it's a there's a wonderful clip on on the internet. He skis down, he does the mobile run. It's sensational. He wins the gold. Oh my God, and he turns and his brother's right there, and he hugged his brother, and it weighed great. Tell. Original. But the reason his brother was there is because we designed the spectator seating so it was right there, so that people with disabilities weren't off in a wheelchair ghetto on some stands back in there. It was it was integrated. It was part of it. And so that moment could happen. And so all the work that Jen and I do is to create that situation, and it happens naturally. His brother was right there. Pull the clip. Anybody, any of your listeners, pull the clip. It makes your heart sore. But in so she that couldn't happen. Even in even in 2010 in London, that couldn't happen. The Spectator areas were separated. We made a real strong push in 2010 to make sure that didn't happen. We spent a lot of time on the on the spectator areas to make sure that didn't happen. And simple things, having a spectator area with two exits. You can't put a bunch of people, especially if you're going to block the front, you're going to put all the wheelchairs in front. That's going to block the exits. So when you design temporary seating for people with disabilities, you got to have two exits. Because you got to have two exits with anybody else. Why wouldn't you for people with disabilities? So all the work that we do behind the scenes, people keep asking, can you send me a picture of some really good universal design, some really good accessibility? No, I can't, because if you do it right, it's invisible. Nobody knows why Alex's

brother was sitting right there, and nobody needs to know, because when we do our work properly, everything's integrated, and it all looks so normal and so natural when we don't do our work or we get blocked for one reason or another. Jen was talking about politics. Boy, there's a lot of politics doing big games, IPC games, APC games, the Invictus Games. They're harder to do because of political interference. I talk a lot, I'm sorry,

**Jenn Bruce** 12:08

Yeah, the the Vancouver games stand out in my mind, as well as a really great example of accessibility done well, I remember that moment with Alex Bilodeau, very clearly, at that time, I was just at the beginning of my career. I was still an undergrad going through a sport management program, but engaging from home watching those games. You know, you remember those moments. I think one of the other points about that that games is, you know, there was a lot of work happening behind the scenes, but that intentionally, intentionality was set from the get go, and if Brad correct me, if I'm wrong, but I think the Vancouver 2010, games were the first games where the organizing committee For the games had the Olympics and Paralympics integrated. Prior to that, everything stayed separate. So you had a separate committee delivering the Olympic Games and then a separate one delivering the Paralympic Games, even though they're hosted just two weeks apart in the same location, off in the same venues. And so there you have a little bit more seamless integration of conversations around accessibility. Accessibility doesn't come into place when the Paralympians arrive. It is there throughout the entire I think ends up being, you know, two month journey from the very start of the Olympic games to the close of of the Paralympic Games. You know, I think things have continued to progress. I think the jury's still out on Paris 2024 but I know they had some really strong commitments. I think it'll take some time for some of the research to come out around some of the actual experiences of spectators, athletes, fans on the ground. But Paris really elevated in terms of digital or digital and technology advances in accessibility, enhancing the fan experience, things that we haven't seen before, and I'll touch on that a little bit more later. But then, on the same the flip side, you know, we still have events where these things are not being considered at all. I did a little bit of looking. I'm an Olympic Paralympic fan. I've been to two Paralympic Games, so that's where my heart is. I'm not as in tune with the FIFA World Cup. So I did a little bit of research, little poking around, just to see what I could find. And to be honest, I couldn't find much for Toronto and. Particular and you know, when Brad was talking about the accessible seating and how integrated it was into the entire experience, that it was seamless, I saw, you know, had a few question marks in my head raising as I was looking at the accessible seating plan and guides for FIFA in Toronto, companion tickets are being charged, which is not something that was seen in Qatar and other games, major games, so people with access, access needs who come with a companion to be able to access the Games. That's an important access support and something that can reduce barriers for people to to watch sport, and so having your companion have to also pay for a ticket. Ticket prices are quite expensive for this upcoming games compared to to pass games. So again, you're adding in another financial barrier for people to to enjoy and experience games in real time. I heard, I, you know, saw some reports of some of the companion tickets, or accessible seat tickets being sold separately. So again, you're you're splitting up, potentially splitting up people, or creating less opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy the games alongside their friends and family, you know. And it's becoming more segregated. So, you know, on the one hand, we have these great, really great examples and best in class practices that continue to get built upon. But then that's not consistent games over games due to a number of factors, and Brad alluded to it already, in terms of

how major games works, but also just the prioritization and the will to make these things a priority, and to think through what the various different barriers might be or needs of fans and people coming through the door or engaging with with your events.

**Dean Askin 17:13**

I want to pick up on this a little bit and give get Brad talking again.

**Brad McCannell 17:20**

Can I just take you back to a second? Because did something really important, and we got, we got access into the 2006 bid for the games for the 2010 so access, and our goals for access, became part of the bid. It became a requirement of the International Paralympic Committee. It wasn't something we added on after like all the other games do. So for us, there was consequences if we didn't. And something really simple, it sounds so silly in 2010 it was the first time whenever you referred to the internet the games as a whole, you always had to say it was the Paralympic or, sorry, the the international IOC. It became an IOC ruling that you would always say it was the Olympic and Paralympic Games. You couldn't separate those. And it seems silly and almost frivolous, but what that did was it put Paralympics in every sentence, every time the IOC was caught, and the IOC is where the money is, so suddenly we married these two events that they've been trying for decades to keep separate. So just in when you change the language, the pen is mightier than the sword, right? You change the language, you change what happens and when. Now, all of a sudden, people are always referring to the games as both not just not separate. And that simple little change. It changes how people react in the boardroom, and that changes how Dean and I do our work. So that's simple, just making that sentence a little longer by including Paralympics every time it meant, in a subtle way, we were included. Holy smoke.

**Dean Askin 19:13**

I mean, I am a communications professional writer, and that's the power of words making change. I want to, I want to throw something out at Brad here. And you know, Jen, you were kind of mentioning some of the things I think will come out when I put this to Brad. I mean, what makes making sure there is accessibility at and of mega sporting events different from other sectors like the general tourism sector or live events. I mean, is it a matter of scale that these events are so huge, or is it a matter of so much coordination is needed? Or is it something else? What do you think? Brad,

**Brad McCannell 19:55**

Well, scale for sure, because scale equals budget. It so you can do more. You can slide things in under the budget that you can't do on a smaller event. You know, you can sneak some stuff in, but it's the scale of it. But it's a double edged sword, because when you get this that kind of scale, you get that kind of screw. And you've heard me say this before, nothing happens without the advocates. God bless the advocates. The problem I have as an access professional is when they cross the line. Advocates need to identify the problem. The moment advocates start to solve the problem, we get into trouble because they have no experience with the games. They have no experience with the built environment. Their their solutions are often, most often personal preference. And so I want the advocates to all day long, especially the sports advocates. We do a lot of work on athletes villages, and the organizers run and ask the athletes what they want. God bless the athletes. God bless you. Don't know what you want.

Don't tell me you. You don't know, but tell me the problem. You know, the hotels aren't working, or the venue is not working, or the change rooms aren't working. Tell me the problem, but let us solve it. Please. Let us please solve it. And big projects, let you do that a little more, but it brings so much more scrutiny. So there's nine levels of committees you've got to get through on big events. Whereas if you're doing the, you know, the local Fun Run, and you're working with organizers, and there's three of them, and you can talk reasonable to them, but when you get into the big, large events, it's its preconceived notions all over the place. And the other thing with the big events is they focus on the athletes, which is totally reasonable. But IPC doesn't have designations for people who are deaf. So now deaf, until we came along at the 20 tab, Deaf issues never got dealt with. There weren't any Deaf issues because we don't have any deaf classifications. But you have deaf audience, you have deaf spectators. You have even a lot of the organizers are people hard of hearing because they're older, right? And so all of those things come into play when you're doing big, large events that don't happen when you're doing smaller.

**Dean Askin 22:38**

So it's like, you can't, you can't, you can't work in silos. So, I mean, you know, Brad, I want to explore that just a little bit more. I mean, for someone who's planning on, you know, coming to Canada or Mexico to a World Cup match this summer, or took in the Olympics, or is going to go, you know, to the Commonwealth Games, what does having an accessible experience for them. What does it take from the moment they're planning their trip to when the events over and they leave the venue? I mean, where do Where do things break down most often or happen for fans?

**Brad McCannell 23:18**

Transportation. It's the thing that gets missed every single time, and it's a huge problem for organizers when you look at the athletes, but when you look at spectators, it tends to get kind of shoved aside as your responsibility as a spectator. So transportation. Can you get yourself from the airport to the hotel. Can you get yourself from the hotel to the venues? And I'm talking, I'm not talking athletes here, because they're handled everybody, you know, they've got Wranglers, and everybody looks after them, and it's a problem for the organizers. But by the time the athletes get there, we've probably got the busses sorted out and things like that. But for individuals coming to a city like Vancouver, it's unbelievable. Taxis are accessible, busses are accessible. And there's all kinds of solutions, SkyTrain. But when you go to a Saskatoon or Winnipeg or you can't make those assumptions. So my advice to anybody attending an event like this is challenge your assumptions. You've got an accessible room. I would make sure that I would make that phone call and I would say, What do you mean when you do? You mean you lowered the peephole and called it a day. Which most hotels do, is your accessible room. Got one of those big, high beds they all like to use now, when you need a Sherpa guide to get on top of I mean the wheelchair accessible room, the bed is eight inches higher than my chair. An interesting call with Marriott, the organ, or the head of operations for Marriott. And he said, you know, we used to get calls wake up. Calls, now, can you wake me up at 7am He said, Now we get, can you get me up? Calls. Of older adults and seniors in beds that they're afraid to get in or out of because they're so high.

**Dean Askin 25:06**

Wow,

**Brad McCannell 25:07**

Right? So as a, as a and remember that people with disabilities aren't wheelchair users, it's the whole community. So when we talk about that, the tendency to go straight to wheelchair accessible room, but there's all kinds of issues around deaf spectators. There's all kinds of issues around the neurodiverse community, and hotels don't give a rat's butt about it.

**Brad McCannell 25:31**

So if you're traveling to an event, God challenge your assumptions. Watch your transportation, make sure your hotel and you understand what accessible means, because it will mean something different to you than them. I almost guarantee it. And the final thing is seating. Seating at the events. Jen was referring to it earlier, too. It's a big challenge to get people who want their their companion, as we like to call it, or what is it. You know, I've been to events where they make your companion sit behind you, and that allowed them to have more wheelchair seating along the front. So they take the Companion Seat. I'll put the person behind you, and now you're hub to hub with wheelchair users. And they get their quota. They get everybody in. But I didn't come to watch the game with some stranger in another wheelchair. I want my wife or my companion or my caregiver. I want them beside me, not behind me. So check your seating. Trust me, they screwed it up. So those are as a spectator or any kind of participant in the game other than the athlete. The athletes are so covered and handle it, and that's a problem at the planning stage, but during the games, God, challenge your assumptions. That's my biggest advice to anybody. That's great. Challenge your assumptions. I'm going to take that one away with me. I have that in a giant letter so I don't I'm retired now, am I? Oh, and I had an office. I had that in giant letters along the back of the wall. So whenever we had a planning meeting, whatever you're assuming you're wrong. That's kind of how it works.

**Sue Cervoni 27:12**

So my next question is actually for Jen so Jenna, how does accessibility show up differently for athletes competing at these events, during the training phase competition and their daily life during the games. Can you share examples of athlete accessibility that has been done particularly well, or where it's fallen short in those areas?

**Jenn Bruce 27:36**

Yeah, I'm going to build off of what Brad just said and challenge your assumptions. I think, you know, accessibility behind the scenes doesn't necessarily get a ton of media attention, but I think maybe one would soon, one would assume that accessibility for the athletes is well taken care of. They're at the forefront of of any games there, you know, have requirements in terms of what they need to perform, and that those are, are are supported. But that is not the case. And always. I think you know what it looks like is, is just a seamless transition and seamless movement from space to space. Athletes are living in the Athletes Village, which are typically, well at at, you know, Olympic Paralympic Games and Commonwealth Games in particular, staying at athlete villages, which a lot of times are constructed specifically for the games, and then you have this almost like city that is built up and enclosed in a bubble that exists for the period where they have their meals taken care of, accommodations, You know, recovery areas, you know, training things like that. And then when it's time to go to training or competition, there is transport ready and assigned that takes them to the training venue and back and back into the village, into this bubble where they, you know, have all the supports that they they need.

Occasionally, they might go outside of that village or that games bubble to visit friends and family, but largely day to day, they're they're really operating in this bubble that is fairly well controlled. But that's not to say that accessibility is is, you know, 100% and great all the time. I was at two Paralympic Games in the past, and on the ground in the lead up, you know, in the planning, constant conversations with organizing committee members in the planning to make sure that things were in place for the athletes when they they arrived. That their barriers were removed. But then also on the ground. When you get on the ground, you know, you parachute in, you know, you've been on many site visits leading up to but then you you come in, and it's, it's full on for three to four weeks, and we've run into situations where, you know, there wasn't enough accessible seating on the busses for athletes to get them to and from training and games, and so in that situation, you're splitting up teams. So yes, maybe, maybe the busses have, you know, they they're marked accessible because they have an accessible seat, but they are not designed to carry, to transport a team. And so you think about, you know, accessible, but also dignity, so to have to split up a team to get to training. Well, what does that feel like? Or, you know, in it's not always the same at each venue as well. You have some venues that were built new and so maybe have more modern accessibility built in, but you have other venues that were retrofitted or so. You know, you're dealing with obstacles and barriers, crumbling steps that create tripping hazards, narrow doorways, you know, so, you know, we've had situations where athletes are, you know, getting themselves out of their chairs and trying to, like, crawl up, you know, stairs, or into seating or things like that. In Pyeongchang, we got a lot of snowfall in the 2020 18 Winter Games. We got a lot of snowfall in the day before, in the day of, I believe, arrivals and so snow can be a barrier and an obstacle, which in Canada, for the most part, we might recognize, not always. You know, there's still a lot to go in terms of sidewalk accessibility, but snow removal was not top top of mind for the organizers. And, you know, slippery sidewalks for for many of our athletes, not just chair users, for many of the athletes, created obstacles and barriers. And I distinctly remember, and this is a cultural difference. They don't get a lot of snow in Seoul, which isn't where the games were held, but in many, many volunteers came from Seoul in Pyeongchang itself, they don't get as much snow as as we do here. And so we were teaching volunteers games volunteers how to shovel and showing them how to shovel effectively. So this is like these really small, micro examples of maybe things that might be taken for granted for us, but are not in other situations, in other countries, or in other contexts that might be different from what you're used to. And so I always talk about in my work, accessibility is not a destination. It's a process. It's a journey. It is something that requires ongoing attention and thought and planning and responsiveness. You know, particularly because we live in a generally inaccessible world.

**Sue Cervoni 33:43**

So I have another question for you, Jen, when we think about sport and para sport, are they being developed and invested in equitably through these events, are we still seeing a divide in funding, visibility and the long term impact,

**Jenn Bruce 34:03**

The gap is closing, I would say there has been a lot of significant change in development Vancouver, 2010, was a real shape shifter. You know, Brad talked about the how much accessibility was built into the planning from the get go, there was a lot of attention towards legacy as well. And so from that legacy of the games, there were fairly significant and transformational investments put into para sport and into accessible sport for people with disabilities. So so that that big jump in funding and investment

and attention really, really helped to transform things suddenly, para sports becoming more of a household name in the the years. Post, post Vancouver, we've started to. See pretty large incremental shifts in the attention and visibility. Games to games, more people tuning in, more demand, and with that greater broadcast coverage, I would say 10 years ago, even less than 10 years ago, I'm thinking back to Rio in 2016 I think coverage of the Paralympic Games was largely through social media and and there was not huge visibility in terms of the the events across all the sports and being able to watch live sport. And so a lot of the content that was being produced were small snippets or live streams through through Facebook, with not necessarily like commentators actually commenting. Fast forward to Milan Cortina 2026 just just wrapped up completely different experience. CBC has very, very close to equal coverage of the Paralympic games to the Olympic Games with daily recaps, full coverage of events. So that's been a huge shift, and so with more opportunities to view, more people are able to tune in, and more people are able to hear about it and watch it real time and engage with the athletes on social media. So we're seeing tons of change. You know, I think we still have a long way to go. We're not there. There is still a ton of barriers in place to accessing sport and para sport for people with disabilities. Sport in Canada largely operates on a pay to play model. So if you want to play sport, you got to be able to pay for it, for kids, children, youth with disabilities, in particular, but not exclusively that that can and for families that can just create exponential barriers in terms of cost, equipment can cost a lot, you know, thinking about transportation, how to get to sport, and just even the actual sport environment itself, is it safe? Is it supportive? Will it meet, meet my needs? It's not always the case. So there has been some significant shifts and moves forward, but we're still not there in terms of of long term impact and shape shifting the experience across the board.

**Dean Askin 37:56**

You know, you've mentioned lots of, lots of the cities around the world, where the where the Olympics have, you know, have been held, and you know whether we're talking, you know, way as far back as Lake Placid, 1980 or Calgary or or Vancouver, Seoul or Tokyo. I mean, these host cities, they have to, you know, when they win the bid, they've often got to invest heavily in infrastructure to, you know, to bring the people in and make the event happen. So I want to ask you, Brad, you know, what tends to remain accessible for communities after the event ends and the athletes are gone and the visitors are gone, and what's off and lost? I mean, I remember being in Calgary and, you know, and seeing Calgary Olympic Park, and I remember a decade ago, you know, the ski towers at Lake Placid were, you know, we're still there. So what remain remains behind for the community?

**Brad McCannell 38:52**

Well, every games is so different as I look at it, and again, very biased, but as I look at it, and I watch the Olympics come to town, and I watched stadiums get built and highways get built. In Vancouver, they built a sky train near basically rapid transit. They build all these things physically. And when the circus leaves town, they leave all this behind. And this has always been a kind of a bone of contention with the IPC. I work a lot with Chevy Gonzalez when he was CEO there, and it was his great lament that they left nothing behind. And I argued with him in Beijing. I saw a miracle happen again. The Observer job, greatest job at the Olympics. Go watch. I was there for the Olympic part of the Beijing experience before we transitioned into the IPC section during the Olympics. It was I rolled around the street as a quadriplegic in Beijing as a complete anomaly. They didn't see wheelchair users. Was they didn't see people with disabilities, generally speaking. And during the games all over the city, there was

giant, massive TV screens showing the events, and I'd roll along. I couldn't get into any of the stores. I couldn't, people didn't. People just ignored me. It wasn't that they pushed me away. They didn't consider me at all. And so I'm rolling around and I'm watching all this happen, and then a miracle happens. We start transitioning into the International Paralympic section. We have that two week period to change all the billboards, change all the signs, and as the events started happening all of a sudden in Beijing, on these giant screens all over the city, because the events are tied together now, all these Paralympic athletes were blowing people's minds, of what they were capable of. You know, the swimming events in particular were blowing people's minds. The track stuff was and all of a sudden, everyday Beijing population opened up. They started stopping me in the street, and they asked me what my sport was. They were starting asking. Me really interesting question. Do you think my brother could do this? Do you think my uncle could do this? Because in their culture, what they would do is put you in the basement and leave you there. And all of a sudden, this miracle happened. They were seeing people participating. They were seeing people who, if you met them on the street, were so disabled they'd be discounted. But all of a sudden they're winning gold medals, and they're winning, you know, they're showing what they're capable of. And what happened was that cultural shift in that community, suddenly recognizing the value of people with disabilities on a human level, just that you can swim, you can run, you can participate. And that cultural shift, I think, is the most important thing that the IPC lives leaves behind. It's not tangible, like subway cars or buildings or convention centers. It's much more important than that. I think what we fail to do is cultivate that when we leave, we let that feeling there, everybody's heart soars, and then we as a community don't take advantage of that. And now, a decade or more, later, two decades, I guess the I don't know if that feeling still exists in Beijing, but I know we could have, we could have done a lot more as a community, and we could do that at every event, if we, if we as a community, whatever that, however that looks, moved in behind the games and built on that cultural shift that happened when people recognize it's what Jen was talking about before. The idea that we can get television coverage at all now speaks volumes about what people are seeing, and it's a sledge hockey hottest ticker ticket in any winter IPC event. Isn't that amazing? You know, wheelchair basketball, or the ultimate event, in my humble opinion, of course, is murder ball. Well, we call it, we have to call it wheelchair rugby. Now, because the IPC said you can't call it murder ball, but it's murder ball. If you've ever been to an event, I don't have the guts to play that game. But when when people saw people with wheelchairs taking a run at each other, slamming into each other, knocking them out of their chairs, when that penny dropped, that we're not fragile. That's the cultural shift I'm after. You can keep your bricks and mortar, let me change the culture. Now, having said all that, because I never say anything quickly, having said all that, one of the things we're trying to do at the Rick Hansen foundation is leave a legacy that's more tangible. So we want to use the games themselves as a training ground for architects and planners. This is how you do it, instead of game. This is how you create access at that level and train those people get low. You'll send a pro, a pro team in from the Rick Hansen Foundation, pick about 10 locals and say, we're going to show you how this works. We're going to show you the practical application of universal design, where it works, where how specific it is to be to your organization, to you what you're trying to do. Train these people up and leave them behind at the end of the games. So that culture now has skilled professionals, people working in the built environment every day, architects, planners, engineers. They've got the experience of the games. They understand. They've taken that cultural shift that they saw on TV, and now they're owning it, which is what you.

**Brad McCannell** 45:00

My program at the Rick Hansen Foundation was all about. The certification program was to put a face to disability, to the people doing the designing, at the very beginning.

**Dean Askin** 45:13

Cultural shift and learning opportunities, the two key leave behinds. I mean, okay, so we've been talking about different host cities and in different countries and different events, you know, whether you're talking about, you know, the in the Invictus Games or the Commonwealth Games, or the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup. And they're always held in different, you know, countries and cities. When you look across all of these different countries and events, are there approaches or practices on accessibility for these that in places where some have stood out more as effective or innovative and whoever, whoever wants to jump in and take the first crack at this One?

**Brad McCannell** 45:57

Go. Jen.

**Jenn Bruce** 45:58

I prepared for this question. So I said before I would come back to it and I'll just highlight, and I'm going to use this example just to show what some of the advances in technology can do. So Paris, 2024 you know their their mantra, approach games wide open. So paid, tried to pay really close attention to the spectator experience, and planned and anticipated to welcome fan spectators with all different abilities, disabilities and so to kind of talk about some of the tech that's out there that that is shows potential of You know, what's possible. You know, audio description available at at at games, headphone sets for people to listen and engage that way. They had subtitling available they were using. There's technology, I guess, touch tablet technology, so people with who with visual impairments, who are who are blind, can still engage with with the events using a tablet that shows the position of of the ball or the the main sporting object, and kind of follow it along through touch to show the intensity of a match through vibration. So if you think about Goal Ball or wheelchair rugby tracking the movement of the ball to show the speed at which it's it's moving between players, they had low vision helmets so that we're able to help zoom in to to the field of play, so that people could could really engage with what was happening on the field of play. So you know, all of these tech pieces that were being made available again, like I said before, the jury's still out on the actual delivery. I have not heard or read how that actually landed, but it just gives you a sense of of the possibilities that are out there when you when you think broadly, when you think about how people can enjoy sport and and try to leverage technology. Technology can sometimes be a limitation. It sometimes gets a like, you know, technology, but technology can also do great things.

**Dean Askin** 48:59

I mean, if you summed it up in one sense, it would be great things can happen when you put accessibility first and it's not the afterthought.

**Sue Cervoni** 49:08

Okay, well, we've discussed a lot about accessibility and the built environment, but these events often create 1000s of jobs. How is inclusion being considered in our hiring? The volunteers and the operations at these mega sporting events,

**Brad McCannell** 49:25

In my experience, a lot of focus on the volunteers, few opportunities at an organization level. And that's pretty typical of the whole world right now, but it's infuriating. To be honest.

**Jenn Bruce** 49:41

I would echo that at Cirque, I have a lot of conversations with colleagues. In fact, I was just in one the other day. How in sport, we also we often default to thinking about people with disabilities. These as the participant, as the sport participant, and we don't think broader than that. And so when it comes to training for volunteers, like Brad said, that's where the focus often goes. And it goes, you know, how to interact with athletes with disabilities, how to understand the sport environment, or how to interact with with spectators, with disabilities, but we forget all the the differences that exist out there, the differences in in experiences, in ways of moving through the world when I do work with organizations around accessibility, we think about policy, you know, we think about culture and we think about practices. We think about, you know, how are you creating the work environment or the volunteer environment so that it's not creating barriers. And then, you know, how do you, if somebody does have an accommodation need, how do you, how do you plan to welcome accommodations and and meet needs that people have? I often find it helpful to think about access across two dimensions, time and space. And so if you think about accessibility across those two dimensions, and you're thinking about it through the entire journey of how somebody a volunteer or a person who's employed, from hiring, onboarding, the actual employment, and through to how they might leave the position. And you know how assumptions can easily get baked in, assumptions about what people can do or how people should do certain types of jobs. So it takes a lot of thought to read through your job descriptions, read through your volunteer descriptions, read through your policies. Look at where have you put in assumptions about people's capacities, people's abilities to do certain things, our certain ways that people are supposed to work well, are those ways that you've prescribed? Do they actually? Are they actually necessary for the job that's being needs to be done? So just a few, a few things that people can think about, but often don't get thought about.

**Brad McCannell** 52:41

And it's want to add a little piece there. It's when I talk about how the organization, organizing committees, miss the boat. It's it's innocent. They're not doing it intentionally. They're just relying on their old ways of doing things like, for example, I have one client, no, no, we're doing everything possible. Okay, well, have you got application forms in Braille? Oh, no, we don't have that. Do you have it in large print? No, we don't have that. So you're not really doing everything possible. So how? So when you offer these jobs, how are you reaching out? Well, the same way we always do. Well, why not get into the local in Vancouver, the coalition of people with disabilities have a terrific newsletter. Did the job get advertised, advertised there, or did you just use your normal able bodied crap? So innocent in the sense that they It wasn't intentional. But good Lord, if you're actually trying to hire people, you actually trying to include people with disabilities, wouldn't you go to where they are? It is, I don't know.

**Dean Askin 53:59**

You know, we've been talking a lot about the things that are that are happening immediately at the event and around the event. You know, let's in entire nations and cities, they get ramped up with all the excitement of the events and the medal winners and but how can all of these host cities, you know, from whether it's you know, making future events accessible or making you know, leaving a legacy of accessibility for the community. How can these host cities ensure that you know, the funding that they that they get and the attention that they get? How do we make sure it's not just focused on the on the event itself, but on long term community partition, participation in sports. Jen?

**Jenn Bruce 54:50**

Yeah, it's, it's a really Yeah, it's a really important, important question. So my easy answer is. Is you got to plan for it early, and you need to engage with community. And I'll just, I'll share a bit more of a experience from my time working with the 2015, Pan Am para Pan Am Games. I was involved with legacy planning after those games. Legacy was something that was really important we, you know, at that time 2015 or in the lead up to 2015 the, you know, the AODA Ontarians, Accessibility for Ontarians with disability, Act came out five years earlier in 22,005 No, yeah, math. And that was, that was the talk of the day. How can we really leverage these games to help make Ontario more accessible and, and that was a big, a big question. And, you know, colleague, Dr Laura Meisner, out of Western this is her sweet spot, and she, as a researcher and her colleagues, followed this process for years. And one of the show notes includes a blog that that Cirque wrote about this, this process, but essentially in the early days, even before the games were put on. So 2013 2014 the organizing committee helped convene community organizations who worked in para sport around the table to have conversations about legacy. You know, how can we leverage this opportunity to build more accessible Ontario in sport. Interestingly, at that time, that was the first time that a lot of these organizations had sat at the table together and been in conversation. So when we talk about silos, there were some big silos that were in place, but over the years. So you know, there was a lot of work done on how these community organizations, which are all doing great things, and all doing great things, probably largely independently, could come together, pool resources, pool their expertise to help support the games experience. But then what comes after? So how do we work together after to try to address some of the real gaps that are in the system, you know, preventing an accessible, accessible sport in Ontario. And when I say Ontario, we were thinking Ontario wasn't just GTA, GTA focus, but we were thinking broadly beyond Ontario or beyond Toronto. And it took years of conversations of people at the table from all kinds of sport organizations, funders, different funders, government, people from the education sector, athletes, participants, their families, all around the table together in conversation to figure out how we could create a legacy. And we were able to secure a pretty large five year investment in funding to continue this work. And what resulted were investments in para Sport Coaching, which still continue today. So specific training modules and apprenticeships for parasport coaches. There were resources and toolkits and on the ground training delivered to physical education teachers in elementary schools on how to introduce and para sport in the classroom and how to include kids with disabilities in physical education. So there's just a few examples of the types of projects and initiatives that came about that left a lasting impact on their own, but what also came about was a more connected sports sector working in in greater collaboration and coordination to create more opportunities and reduce barriers. But it took time. It took planning. It took attention and it took engagement to really see some of those, those changes.

**Brad McCannell** 59:27

Really what we're talking about is creating opportunities at a local level. The Paralympic move is completely reliant on everybody, all the other things feeding into it, but unless they have an opportunity at a local level, even to just try a sport. Even did the very beginning of it, you know, the number of times we put on an event where people can experience that, but we get people with disabilities who can't believe the idea of, I know I forgot this name. Is it called gold ball gym? Know, called, yeah, it's basically a ball, a ball with a bell in it. And, you know, people with vision impairments can play ball, and it's a wonderful experience for everyone, but again, challenging your assumptions, even the athletes themselves, just being having at a local level, no pressure, no audience, no TV cameras, to go play the game and go, oh, oh, I can do this. Archie ball is another great example. People with severe disabilities, you can participate, but until they have that opportunity at a local level that they're never going to get to the Paralympics,

**Sue Cervoni** 1:00:42

That's great. Thank you. And I know we talked about, Jen, you hit on legacy a little bit already and what that takes. But is there anything you wanted to add on? What would success in terms of accessibility? What would success look like five or 10 years after? So I know you've both talked about, you know, community participation afterwards, and, and really working with the community sporting groups. But is there anything else you wanted to add to that?

**Jenn Bruce** 1:01:11

No, I mean, I think that's, that's a really important, important piece about it. I'm a piece attached to it. I mean, the physical infrastructure is important as well and and can can really help be a piece of that puzzle in in enhancing participation. If you have a really well designed space that considers accessibility from all all different directions, it can really become a community hub and a community space where sport can can thrive for a lot of people. And I would just the only other thing I would add was is to encourage in terms of social legacy, you know, we talk a lot about the potential for major games to really shift perceptions and attitudes to inspire, and absolutely it can. But I think we'll also need to think critically about what messages we're we're sending when we try to inspire, or when we try to leave social legacies around attitudes and and how do we think about this beyond the period of the games? What does it look like in five years? How do we actually sustain changes in attitude or changes in behavior? And that's a tough nut to crack, but it's something that that we you know, it gets touted a lot. You know, these games will really change, you know, change our communities, change perceptions, but when we think about a legacy responsibility, how do you sustain that? Is a really important question that needs to be addressed and unpacked.

**Sue Cervoni** 1:03:07

Brad, do you have anything to add to that?

**Brad McCannell** 1:03:10

I'll add this. When we do a big event, we do temporary solutions, and often, most often, the temporary stuff gets yanked out at the end. And it's most frustrating because, for example, we did, when we did 2010 we made sure there were dog relief areas intended for working dogs, but everybody needed it,

you know. And I used to the joke I used to make is, if you build it, they will go, because the reality is, these dogs are present, service dogs, working dogs, and they're going to go whether you provide a space for them or not. So better to contain it, better to manage it. But what frustrated the heck out of me is, when we left, they took them all out. Why they were they were designed to be unobtrusive, out of the way, out of the path of travel. No one even knew they were there, unless you were looking for them. But, oh, we don't need them anymore. The events over. Then I've failed. I have not educated you if you think events over so you don't need it anymore, then I have failed.

**Sue Cervoni 1:04:31**

Thank you for that. So I guess my next question is, mega sporting events have global visibility, in your opinion? And I know Jen touched on this a little bit. What role can sport play in shifting attitudes and expectations around disability inclusion? So I know Brad, you touched about that at one of the Olympic Games. I can't remember if it was soul I think that's what you said. It was soul games when you were there and you saw the attitude change. Once they started to see our Paralympians competing. Beijing, sorry, okay, yep.

**Brad McCannell 1:05:08**

Let me take you back to Torino, not Torino, yeah, Torino is a different place altogether. There was a moment there that the whole world held its breath. And there's always at the end of the closing ceremonies, there's always the moment when the the flag is passed to the next mayor of the city where the games are going. Big moment in every games, it's we work really hard to make sure that that goes smoothly in Oh, it was a great moment, because they introduced the mayor of Vancouver, and out comes Sam Sullivan, a quadriplegic in a freaking wheelchair, and he rolls out on the stage. Half the world is going you have a mayor in a wheelchair, and the other half of the world's going. How the hell is he going to take a flag? Well, we spent, I don't know, four months redesigning his wheelchair so that we could put on a 30 pound flag pole and a flag and it wouldn't tip him over. That chair, this chair, the modifications that chair went through or nuts, and what did he do? He didn't just take the chair and sit there. He ruled around that stage like a madman, and the whole audience went, Holy crap. We didn't know they could be mayors. We didn't know they could run an Olympics. We didn't know they could run around the stage and wave a flag. That one moment changed more people's attitudes than all the disability awareness training in the book. Those are the magic moments that the big events can capture. You know the Alex Bullivant build a new moment that bullet do moment? These are the moments that that shift the culture. That's why we have to take advantage of them when they happen. But that moment with Sam that made it really easy for me as a part, as part of the van crew organizing the Olympics, because all of a sudden there was this, sympathy is the wrong word empathy. Let's call it all people were talking to suddenly went, Oh, I get it. You're people. Oh, you're humans. We didn't know that. That's what the games do.

**Jenn Bruce 1:07:36**

Yeah, I would agree with that. There's so many great moments that can be had in such a large audience, and these moments of people being people, of humans being humans. The only things I would add is we can't we can't leave it just to the Paralympics to be the ones to do that job. You know, there's, of course, they have, they have and continue to do really important work. But we don't talk about social inclusion and disability once every two years when the Paralympics comes up, you know,

the Commonwealth Games, they're an integrated event. They have athletes with disabilities competing in those games and a couple of different para sports at the more you know, local regional level. Here, we have integrated games all the time, provincial games, Canada games, and so how are we talking about it and thinking about it? I think there's some research that has come out again in integrated game settings where disability accessibility stays an afterthought, so that's not what we want. And then the other piece I'll just add, as much as there are so many great opportunities to shift attitudes and perceptions, there can also be really big unintended consequences, or potential for greater harm or backwards steps to be done. For the listeners who may not be familiar with the Super cripp narrative. It's a commonly known about term that refers to how sport for people with disabilities often portrays athletes with disabilities as old. Overcoming their disability in the pursuit of their athletic achievements and excellence. But you know, when people see those narratives, and they play out all the time, still in in ads and campaigns that that we consume, possibly unconsciously. What? What does that do to our perceptions of people with disabilities who have to overcome something in order to do something, or who are only seen, you know, in these specific settings as a as an athlete, but aren't seen in the rest of of their lives and their day to day lives. So again, we have to be careful, because sometimes there might be unintended consequences to how some of these perceptions can can impact people.

**Dean Askin** 1:10:57

I've never heard the term super crypt, but I think it's also known as inspiration porn. I've used that term when I'm when I'm writing and talking to people sometimes.

**Jenn Bruce** 1:11:12

Yeah, and super cripp refers to just the you know, athletes are athletes. They do not represent the general population. They train hard and a lot, and so if you are using them as your portrayal of what a person with a disability looks like, that does not represent all people and all experiences of disability. So that's that's where super crib comes in as well.

**Dean Askin** 1:11:47

I am still trying to process all these just brilliant insights. I mean, you know, I always love talking, talking with Brad about this kind of thing, because all you have to do is ask him one question, and he's often running with really colorful and really powerful insights. I mean, we've talked about so much. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think is important to you know? To mention just before we wrap things up?

**Brad McCannell** 1:12:15

Don't miss the chance. Sport is your best friend. If you're a person with a disability, it does amazing. And I'm not a sports guy. I went through high school avoiding all that stuff. I am not a sports guy, but I've seen what it can do. I've seen the social impact, I've seen the physical impact, the skills you create just by even something as simple as volleyball after you end up in a wheelchair. It's amazing what sport can do at almost every level. And so I would just encourage your listeners to get involved. And if you are like me and sport isn't your thing, then get involved in the organization of it. Get involved with making people easier for people to get there. If you don't want to play, then drive the car that gets them there or something. Just get involved. Because it's remarkable what sport can bring to the table. It's just remarkable,

**Jenn Bruce 1:13:11**

Yeah, and I would just add, I mean, we have, you know, the Olympics and Paralympics are behind us, but we have FIFA coming up. We have Commonwealth Games. 2027, will bring more games. 2028, will bring more games. Pay attention. See what's happening. See when, what? What's happening in terms of sex, accessibility, what people are saying, What? What is out there? You know, Brad mentioned the very beginning. You know, look around. See what, see what accessibility means and how it's being, you know, offered. And then the other thing I would add is, I at Cirque, we always like to ask the question, okay, how do I take all this? How do I take this great conversation and what we learn? I mean, I don't. I'm not a person who's gonna go be a part of an organizing committee, but I really love sport. What can I take away from this conversation? And I would just encourage people to think sport happens in so many places. It doesn't just happen at Mega sport events every couple of years. It happens every day in your community. And so start to think about, are there things that you can take away from this conversation that you can apply in your own community, in your kids soccer program or or whatever it might be, and just to plug something that's coming up, I would encourage you all to take a look@cirque.ca very closely or very soon, we're going to be launching a blog about about accessibility in sport events, and so some very simple tips and insights on how sport organizations can think about making their sport events accessible, whether it's a. Competition, whether it's a meeting with your board of directors, whether it's a social gathering, how can you think through this, this process of accessibility in your own sport environment? So hopefully that can be a takeaway for folks listening here today.

**Sue Cervoni 1:15:18**

Thank you so much, both of you for coming onto the podcast. It's been a great conversation. I took a couple notes, and there's a couple of things that stuck out for me. One of the things is Brad, you mentioned right at the very beginning, if you do your universal design properly, you won't see it. That hit for me, and also that moment with Alex Bilodeau and his brother was something I vividly remember with my kids at the time and them saying, Look, he has his brother with him. They were he was talking about him, and for me, I was like, I can't believe they got him there. Like, you know what I mean? Like, what that would it take, right? The mom brain goes, that says, what, what it had to take in order to make that happen.

**Brad McCannell 1:16:10**

And we had no idea he was gonna win, right?

**Sue Cervoni 1:16:14**

But, and then something else, Jen, that you said, that I'm gonna take away personally, is you have to look at accessibility across two dimensions, time and space. And so that was really key for me. And as a as a sports mom, when we talk about the benefits of sport, Brad, you hit on it. People used to ask me, you spent 1000s of dollars over the course of your kids to participate in sports, but it's so much more than that sport. And I have one who's still living he's been all over the US. He's now finished playing this year in Missouri, and he's staying there, and so that was really great. And I've got my daughter playing, and my son who was not an athlete, Brad, and a high like he's just finishing grade 12, but he mountains, bikes. He absolutely wants it. They tried to get it to compete. He stayed in the novice, but

he loves it. And those are the skills. Trying to get other parents to understand that. Those are the skills that they're building.

**Dean Askin** 1:17:16

And

**Brad McCannell** 1:17:17

God, you know, the greatest thing about sport is it teaches you have

**Jenn Bruce** 1:17:20

for sure

**Brad McCannell** 1:17:21

that

**Brad McCannell** 1:17:22

you're gonna lose and you know life, and that

**Sue Cervoni** 1:17:27

Was a motto.

**Sue Cervoni** 1:17:27

So I coached all the way through. I coached high school volleyball. I've coached little kids soccer. And one of the things I always say, and I had, I had a group of girls, we could have gone to office like they were right there, and I said to them, until you learn to lose together, you will never win together. And they didn't quite understand till one came back her first year university and said, I get it now. And that was really, really, really great. So and I will say next time I'm at one of my kids games, it will be now watching the coach Coach instead of watching him play. But that's okay, and I know I'm going to pay more attention not to the accessibility of the venue, per se, but to the accessibility of the athletes, right? What accessibility do the athletes have to make their experience, because I always look at it from an AODA perspective and things like that, it's really gonna flip in my head a little bit. So thank you again for that.

**Brad McCannell** 1:18:31

Good

**Sue Cervoni** 1:18:32

And thank you for coming on the show.

**Jenn Bruce** 1:18:34

Thank you for having

**Brad McCannell** 1:18:36

Always fun.

**Dean Askin 1:18:39**

Well, I want to say thanks for me as well. Jen and Brad, you know, I feel more informed and aware, so that if I, you know, if I was going to go to a mega sporting event, my brain would be noticing accessibility issues more than taking in the sports action. But it was nice to hear that that Brad's not a sports guy either, because I'm not a sports kind of guy, but Okay, all right, maybe when I was 12, you know, I went to Saturday night Hockey night in Canada games, six of them a year with my dad when I was a kid, because my family had a season's ticket that was divvied up among a group. And by sheer luck of the dean. When I was 12, I was lucky enough to be at the 1976 Toronto Maple Leafs game against the Boston Bruins with the night Darryl Sittler had his famous 10 point night.

**Dean Askin 1:19:32**

Oh, geez, it that's, that's, that's 50 years ago now. And I mean, I know, I sure wasn't thinking about accessibility when I was 12, and especially on that night.

**Jenn Bruce 1:19:43**

Well, it's just amazing how many memories and experiences sport can give us, and each of us talked about them right from when we were kids, adults with our kids not only playing, but I mean, I have, I. Vivid, fond memories of being at the Paralympic Games. That was such a special experience that I had that not everyone gets to be in that that environment so

**Sue Cervoni 1:20:15**

Perfect. Thank you so much, guys. We're going to wrap this up. My name is Sue servoni, and thank you for joining us. And I've had a great time sitting in for Amy widows, our normal co host.

**Dean Askin 1:20:27**

It has been fun. Sue thanks for sitting in. I mean, I think I'm going to have to get you back at the mic to guest host another episode

**Sue Cervoni 1:20:34**

Won't be the next one. Amy will be back in the co host chair for next month's episode in Episode 43 a conversation about intersection of lived experience with disability in rural and remote communities in this country. Research shows there are some distinctly different challenges compared to experiencing urban life with disability. Amy and Dean will get the perspective from both ends of the nation, way up in the vastly remote northwest territories and from New Brunswick, the most rural province in Atlantic Canada. Stay tuned for Episode 43 which will be coming out Tuesday, June 16.

**Dean Askin 1:21:12**

Yes, Sue. I'm looking forward to that conversation, especially now that I'm living with multiple invisible disabilities. I'm up to five now, and I'm living in an urban part of that most rural province in Atlantic Canada. Here's a factoid to frame that conversation coming in June, about 8 million Canadians 15 and older have at least one disability. But you know what? There aren't any statistics on exactly how many of them live in rural parts of the country and face those distinctly different challenges. And by the way, two thirds, that's almost 3400 of the 5123 municipalities in Canada are considered moderately remote,

more remote or most remote, by Statistics Canada. I'm Dean Askin, thanks again for listening wherever, whenever and on whatever podcast app you're listening from, join us each episode as we have insightful conversations like this, really, really good one about making mega sporting events accessible with Brad mccannell And Jen Bruce and explore disability inclusion in business and in our communities from all the angles you can't spell inclusion without a D is produced in Toronto, Canada by the Ontario Disability Employment Network. Our podcast production team, executive producer and co host Amy widows. Our producer is Sue Defoe, associate producer and co host Dean Askin. Audio editing and production is by Dean Askin. Our podcast theme is last summer, by ixin. If you have feedback or comments about an episode, email us at [info@odinetwork.com](mailto:info@odinetwork.com) that's info at o d, e, n, e, t, w, O, R, k.com, join us each episode for insights from expert guests as we explore the power of inclusion, the business benefits of inclusive hiring and fostering an inclusive culture, and why disability is an important part of the diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility conversation tune into you can't spell inclusion without a Dean podbean or wherever you find your favorite podcasts.