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SAGE New Orleans Regional Roundtable

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>> Hello everyone and welcome to our roundtable conversation today. We're so excited to get started with you all and I encourage you to grab a coffee, a tea, a water, whatever you need to feel settled as we continue to wait for folks to trickle in. But we are going to go ahead and get started. So I just want to thank you all for joining us for this really wonderful and important conversation today. We're so grateful that so many of you decided to participate in this event.

My name is Thomas Godwin, my pronouns are they and them and I work with SAGE, a national

organization that provides services and advocacy for LGBTQ+ older adults across the country. I will be the event emcee today and I can't wait to get started. If you need Closed Captioning for this event, we will be providing both English and Spanish captioning. Felt to turn on your English captions, please click on the closed caption or live transcript button at the bottom of your Zoom window. For Spanish captions you can visit the link that we will provide in the chat. If you're having technical difficulties, please try logging out of the Zoom call and logging back in. If you are still having technical difficulties after trying that, feel free to type in the chat what's going on and we will try to support.

I would like to thank our colleagues at Ai Media for helping us to provide Spanish closed captions for this event and thank our colleagues at Interpret That for providing ASL interpretation for this event. As a participant at this event, you will be able to message in the chat and I encourage you to put questions in the chat, to introduce yourself. I see folks already introducing themselves in the chat so this is great.

We will do our best to monitor the chat and answer your questions as they come up.

Please note that this event will be recorded and the recording of this event will be posted on our YouTube channel and can be shared publicly with colleagues or friends in the future. I'm going to briefly go through our agenda on this slide here for today. We're starting with this brief introduction but we will quickly go into the community panel today. This panel will allow us to hear from local LGBTQ+ older adults in New Orleans. This panel is the heart of our work.

It's the voices of these members in the community who will center us in this important conversation today.

After hearing from the folks on this panel, we will get to hear from local organizations that are developing housing initiatives for LGBTQ+ older adults in New Orleans. We're very excited to hear about how these initiatives are working to address the housing insecurity issues in our LGBTQ+ older adult community.

After we hear about these exciting projects we will be taking a short break. And then after our break we will finish our event today by hearing from a panel of local community advocates. These advocates are all trying to increase access to affordable housing and this conversation will help us to brainstorm ways to support LGBTQ+ older adults who need affordable housing in New Orleans.

So before we dive into our exciting agenda today, I would like to take a brief moment to thank our event planning partners TuttleCo. TuttleCo has been a longstanding partner of SAGE and to our friends at Tuttle co, we appreciate your flexibility, your persistent advocacy and your proficiency in this event planning work. Thank you all so much.

We also want to thank our local organizational partners in New Orleans, NOAGE, and a home among friends. These partners helped us get this event off the ground and we're so incredibly grateful for their support and their continued advocacy for this community.

During the break we will be showing a video with some information on how to donate to these organizations, so please be on the look out if you would like to support their work. And lastly, I would also like to thank our generous sponsors of

the event, the The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. Without your persistent support much of our work would be impossible so thank you so much.

Okay! So we are going to dive into this wonderful agenda today. And I'm so excited for this first panel. These community members are active members of the LGBTQ+ community in New Orleans. They have been community advocates and deeply resilient in the face of adversity and we're honored and thankful to get to hear from them today. I will start off by introducing each of our panelists and then they will come on to the screen for our conversation. So panelists, as a reminder, as I introduce you, as you hear your name, you can turn on your camera. Once we start the conversation, make sure to come off mute as well.

I will be introducing each panelist with an abbreviated version of their bio for the sake of time today, but all panelists' whole bios can be found on our event website if you would like to know more about them. So our first panelist today is Kyra Kincaid who uses she and her pronouns. Kyra is a dedicated professional with over 18 years of experience in the field of HIV. Her passion for making a difference in the lives of those affected by HIV has driven her work tirelessly within the community. Thank you so much for being here today, Kyra.

Our second panelist is Wayne Sizemore, who uses he and him pronouns. Wayne is a visual artist, a performer and an activist. His current points of concern are building a personal friend base, building LGBTQ+ elder support, encouraging considerate political conversation and keeping his bills paid. He enjoys breaking into song

unexpectedly, caring for his plants, wining and dining with friends, and going to sleep on crisp, clean sheets. I also enjoy many of those things, Wayne. We are so glad you're here to join us today, Wayne.

Our third panelist today is Sally Jackson, who uses she and her pronouns. Sally Jackson is a strong advocate for social justice and diversity. As a member of PFLAG, Sally supports this community organization and she also reaches a wide audience through the radio program Expanding the Rainbow, on W HIV FM, a community radio station. She is an accomplished public speaker, interviewer, author and observer of life. She enjoys travel, music and photography. Welcome to this panel, Sally.

Our fourth and final panelist today is Teryl Lynn Foxx who uses she and her pronouns. Teryl Lynn is a native of New Orleans. She received a Bachelor's degree in speech education from the University of New Orleans. She is a former member of SAGE New Orleans, a member of T Cher and a member of the plays an active role within the community for various causes. We are so excited to have you here, Teryl Lynn.

So we are going to go ahead and dive right into this panel conversation today. Panelists, we are just so excited that you are here and I'm very very much looking forward to our conversation. We will be having an audience Q&A session after the panel, so audience, feel free to drop your questions in the chat. We'll try to respond to those once we get to our Q&A session. So panelists, we are going to start by hearing from each of you individually about who you are.

For starters, could you please introduce yourself and share with us about who you are and

what brings you here today. We are going to hear from each of you on this question. So why don't Kyra, why don't you start us out today.

>> Hello everybody, my name is Kyra Kincaid. You know, I have been working in the community for since the turn of the Century. And I have, since then, I've started things have changed, the way my body operates, the way my brain operates. And just different things are more of a challenge than it was for me back then, that it has recently come to be. When I first got back here to New Orleans and I was doing some research and reading some of the articles that were previously posted written by trans women, one of the panelists that's on here today, it was actually written by the fabulous Ms. Teryl Lynn Foxx. And when I read it, it got me to thinking and realizing exactly how things were looking for me, you know. I hate the word aging. I hate it. I had this conversation with Teryl Lynn and she was like, we are evolving, we are not aging. You know? And I much prefer thank you for that outlook, Teryl Lynn, that helps me to go through some of the things that I'm going through at the moment.

Not too long ago, just about a week or two ago, I found myself in the hospital, you know? It's real, you know, and it makes you wonder how you're going to get through these moments if you don't have the things that you need lined up. And sadly enough, for the members of the LGBTQ community, a lot of us do not have those people that we can depend upon. A lot of times we don't have organizations that we can depend upon. Or don't know that they exist. This is one of the main reasons that I found this, something very important, that I needed to become a part of and

that if it wasn't there, then let's create it while we still can.

That's why I'm in this fight right here.

>> Thank you so much, Kyra. It's such a pleasure to have you here. I'm so grateful for your presence here. And since you mentioned her, let's go to Teryl Lynn next, if you don't mind going next, Teryl Lynn.

>> Hi everyone! I'm Teryl Lynn Foxx. My pronouns are she/her/hers. What brings me to this is that for so many years I lived a sheltered life during my transition. And living that sheltered life, I was not aware of some of the issues that my Trans community and my LGBTQ+ sisters and brothers were facing because of that sheltered life that I lived. And it wasn't until the issues about the bathroom issues, which oh, my God, I'm sorry which restrooms should Trans youth and all that kind of stuff, wasn't really I didn't have the types of obstacles to face when I transitioned. And when I saw that, I said oh, my God, I need to find some way to join in this fight. Then after that, my Trans sisters of color started to be killed and they were being labeled as they were sex workers, doing this and all that. I said: My God, that could be me and I have not been a sex worker since 1985. So I said what can I do to join in the fight to show support for these young Trans people?

So I found T Cher and thanks to Kyra and White who introduced me to the group. There are so many resources available. So when it comes down to the aging process at that time, I'm sorry, evolving process, sometimes I slip, I find myself questioning where do I go, who do I have to help me to navigate through this process? And actually, there was no one.

So I was contacted by Michael Hixson and he introduced me to SAGE New Orleans. And we started to group and started to do the website and started our Facebook page. Then COVID hit. I have no idea what happened to SAGE New Orleans. So all my contacts and possibly finding persons dealing with issues that I'm dealing with, the accepting and evolving process and dealing with these different issues, that's why we have the roundtable, because it's going to be a new experience for me as well.

>> Thank you so much, Teryl Lynn. Again, we're so glad to have you here and your experience in this community in New Orleans specifically is just so valuable to our conversation. So thank you. Why don't we go to Wayne next. Wayne, if you don't mind hopping in. Wayne, I believe you are on mute. If you could just unmute yourself.

>> Did we lose him?

>> I think we're dealing with some tech difficulties right now. There it goes. You're good, Wayne. We got you.

>> Okay. I'm 73. I came out when I was 23. And in Columbus, Georgia, I was married at the time. I had been married for two years. I came out and started living as a gay person for these 50 years. Let's see, I'm an artist of a lot of stuff between performance theater and visual art, all kinds of visual art. Been productive for these 50 years doing those kinds of things. The last major things that I've done professionally are the French festival that was here in New Orleans through about 2015. I did a lot of visual work for them. And let's see, the Earth Day festival, also, did a lot of stuff for them.

But the last few years, I've really been spending time growing older and dealing with the things that I've had to deal with growing older,

because I've really found that it is very much a full time job just to take care of myself now. People say, oh, you don't have anything to do. Well, yes, if I want to stay alive, I have a lot I have to do. So I have been busy with that stuff.

Let's see. And I've also found voice with NOAGE here, very glad when I connected with them about four years ago, I guess. Really helped me through the pandemic because we did Zoom meetings. That connection really curbed my feelings of isolation which was very heavy and has curbed my feelings of isolation since that. I have several friends I've made through that. And NOAGE provides with a lot of activities too so I have been very happy about that. Let's see, was there anything else? Yeah. Oh, I love being with my friends, I love eating food, I love drinking alcohol, I love gardening, and I love singing.

>> Thank you so much, Wayne. We're so glad you're here. I did just want to name something that Wayne said and also something that our colleague, Jim meadows put in the chat, is that what used to be SAGE New Orleans, which Teryl Lynn mentioned, is back to just being called NOAGE as an organization. They were one of our colleagues who helped us plan this event and Jim Meadows is working with them. As Wayne mentioned, NOAGE does incredible work in the community in supporting LGBTQ+ older adults in New Orleans. I just wanted to offer some clarity there. And thank you, Jim, for putting that in the chat.

>> And just I would like to say, for people who may not be seeing this in the chat. NOAGE is for New Orleans advocates for gay elders.

>> Yes. Thank you, Wayne.

>> For some reason, I'm not hearing you coming through. I'm not hearing.

>> Can you hear us okay, Teryl Lynn?

>> No. Barely.

>> Okay. Why don't we have Sally, why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself, and Teryl Lynn, we will try to troubleshoot what's going on with your audio while Sally is introducing herself. Sally, if you want to go ahead and take the floor.

>> Sally: Okay. Well, I'm just approaching middle age and I plan on living to be 144. I'm always very serious. I started my life and transition and everything in Fort Worth, Texas, are which is not a very welcoming place for gay anything at the time I was there.

They didn't want to know about any of the letters of LGBTQ. So I found a therapist in Dallas, which is 50 miles from my house to go see a therapist to start my transition. And she suggested I go on to a website for a social thing since there was nothing in forth worth. It's called Laura's playground that's changed and gone away into something else now. I went there for a place to feel like myself and where I could talk to people.

And this is why I refer to myself as the accidental activist. Because I went there for help and I ended up becoming a moderator and I was hearing all of these stories from everybody else that was having much worse time than I was. And one of our duties on it was, we did suicide prevention for Trans people. So we took suicide prevention classes and everything else. And through that I met some people who told me you're not in a good place to transition and one of them invited me to move down to New Orleans.

And we started off as roommates. She later became one of the founding members of the

Louisiana Trans advocates. So we all became activists by accident. But if we listed all the careers I had along the way, I'm very stable, I worked in nine different things that would be called professions. But my favorites are as a trumpet player, musician, I'm an educator, that was what my degree was in, and now I'm a talk show host and an author and anything else that anybody needs along the way that I can still do. Carpentry is out because my knees are gone.

>> Awesome! Thank you, Sally! We're so glad you're here as well. And I believe that Teryl Lynn has logged off the call to log back in in order to fix her audio. We are just going to go ahead and get started. When Teryl Lynn comes back in, she will be able to hop into this panel conversation. But thank you all so much for being here. We're just so excited. It's so wonderful to be around folks who have had such an impact on the community as a whole.

So as we are talking today about housing needs and access for housing for LGBTQ+ older adults in New Orleans, what are some of the housing needs and challenges that you see in your community today? And I'm going to open this question up to all the panelists so we can just have a conversation together, but the floor is y'all's for that question.

>> Kyra: Where do we start? So many needs for people, period, regardless of their age here in the New Orleans area. You know, but when you get older, the concern for your safety and well being and appropriate bathrooms, you know, you have to think about falls and slips and how you are going to get up, is someone going to hear you, you know? How long are you going to be stuck there? Are you going to die there? You know? We

don't like to think about those things, but they become real. They become real and if you don't plan for those things or somebody else have, you know, the fortitude to think about those things and have them there for people who will need them one day. Right now, I don't have grab bars in my shower. But that's going to have to change quickly.

>> Sally: On that particular note, a lot of the things that are done for I live in a subsidized housing because cost is one of the biggest things when you're living in New Orleans. I am living in a small studio apartment. This is pretty much the whole thing that you're seeing. And I'm paying a third of my Social Security check to live here. Which is less than a third of what an apartment I was in before for about the same size was costing me.

So if you're looking at that difference, it was almost the same as my Social Security check for the rent. So if I had stayed there, I couldn't get food, I couldn't do anything else.

I'm in the assisted living for subsidized living for elderly. The problem is that they are designed, and I wish I was on that panel, they're designed for efficiency and to be inexpensive. They try to be geared for us, but like the shower in my apartment is in a tub, standard, step over the rim into the tub, and the grab bars are both on the far wall. So getting back out of the tub is a trick. So one of the things that makes it difficult and also holding down costs, you don't have dishwashers in your apartment. That means standing for prolonged periods, which is not easy for a lot of elderly people who have balance issues.

So the little things like that that are done,

I understand to lower costs, but it's something we need to think about if it's really that great of an idea to lower the costs those ways. But the main thing is you have a place that's affordable, you have a place that is secure, this place has security on the premises 24 hours a day. So you don't worry about that. We have pull chains placed a couple places in the apartment if you're lucky enough to fall near one of them, you can get help almost immediately.

But they are not the places I worry about falling. But you have that feeling of security. The only problem is, a lot of places aren't as accepting of having Trans people and Gay people in their facilities. I'm pretty lucky with that, but I have better than average hearing for someone in their 70s. And sometimes after somebody's gone around the corner if they haven't been terribly pleasant, I hear them talking to their friends about what was that, was that a guy, was that a girl. I feel better when the other one says: I don't know. They're always pleasant.

I get by that way. I live from the great words of the great Elwood P. Dowel Harvey, you can get through life by being terribly (?) or terribly pleasant and it's so much easier to be terribly pleasant.

>> I could speak up now. I agree with the things that both Kyra and Sally have already mentioned. I have notes to myself about those things. Also, something that I need is I need lights, I need natural light coming in, so I need I really love plants. And if I'm to have any plants, they also need natural light. So that's something I very much look for.

You know, of course, things like good condition of heating and air conditioning, not

many steps to have to go up to to get to my place. Right now I'm on the ground level. And while that's a god send in many ways, I'm also in a place where it doesn't flood much but the possibility of flooding is here and I'm on sidewalk level. So there have been a couple times in the past five years that the rainwater has built up to just at the top of my door sill. So I have been lucky that no water has come in during the time I have been here, but it's obvious it could happen very easily so that's a concern that I have.

Transportation, you know. Access to things. So if the neighborhood doesn't have any of the things that are needed, then access to those are an issue for me. I don't have a car. I travel on a bicycle when I can. Very glad to do that. It helps to keep me healthy, but it also is quite limited, as you can understand, to get to things, especially doctor appointments and things that it's raining and I come in soaking wet to go to a doctor appointment. Not good.

Internet connection, phone connections, and travel waves. It's like where I am now, it's very iffy. I pay for connections, but I'm in a section where there's difficulty with that, with connection a lot of times. So that's very important. Accepting pets in a place. For working out things, case manager access. I'm HIV, so I have been in positions where I've been able to access case managers at times, but right now I have a great difficulty accessing a case manager for things. And even when I do have case manager help, it's like I already have to know a great deal about what I need in order to be able to access anything. I can't depend on somebody else to be observing my situation enough to be able to

help me with things.

So I think a good case manager is something across the board that elderly people could use access to. Yeah. I think that covers most everything. Oh yeah. Some access to the outside. Some access to where there's a courtyard or some kind of yard space, something, it would be ideal for me to have some space where I could actually work my hands in the dirt somewhere, because that's been a great deal of what I've done with my life is working in the dirt. I would really hate to give that up. I have that where I am now, only because I've created it myself with potted plants. I don't have any actual dirt.

But I've offered my help to neighbors in their yards doing things so that I could have that sort of connection. I think I can stop there.

>> That was a lot, Wayne. Thank you. Thank you, seriously.

>> What did I miss?

>> Hey, Teryl Lynn, welcome back.

>> Thank you, I don't know what happened.

>> No, we're so glad you're back. We were just discussing what some of the housing needs and challenges for the community are today. What I'm hearing from folks is so insightful. I'm hearing that when we're at this intersection of being LGBTQ+ and also being in this stage of life where we're evolving, which I love that reframe as well, Teryl Lynn and Kyra, but when we're at this intersection, there are these needs that need to be met as a person who is evolving. And oftentimes spaces that do meet some of those needs are not as inclusive to LGBTQ+ folks. So there is this wondering of where are we going to go, where are we going to land to get some of these needs met.

And Teryl Lynn, if you have stuff you want to add to that as well, I think this has been really great.

>> Teryl Lynn: The things when I came back on the line, at the tail end of the conversation and Wayne was speaking, I've never really had those kinds of concerns. I'm thinking oh, my God, where was I living to not have the concerns because I never thought about aging, you know? I was busy being a party girl. But then when it comes down to, wow, I have to possibly think about where am I going to live. I have to possibly think about will I have access to healthcare. Those things never ran across my mind. And it's like, oh, my God, I'm transitioning to a whole new life right now.

And it's kind of scary to me.

>> Sally: One of the things I can tell Wayne is that like I'm in one of the Christopher Holmes projects run by the Catholic charities. And they supply several things you were wondering about. We do have courtyards, one is right outside my window here. And you can actually rent flower boxes. They're fairly large but you can rent them for the people who like to work in the garden; they can set up their own gardens to go work in.

So you have that. They also have buses that will take people to doctor's appointments and grocery stores and the bank and everything else. So it's set up for people who have no transportation as well. Some of the communities are completely inclusive like that. Now, when I had somebody helping me move in, they got nervous because they were walking past pictures of the Pope, the statue of the Virgin Mary right outside the door. They say, are they going to accept you here? And surprisingly enough not really if

you know the Catholic charities versus just the Catholic church, they're very accepting. I haven't had any real problems here. Like I said, a few people mentioned at 5 foot 15 is what I call it, I get noticed when I go down the hallways.

It's like I've made friends with the people on the staff and the people on this floor and all. It's been very good for me. I just grew up in a house with multiple bedrooms and I like that space and that's what I don't have anymore.

>> Kyra: And that's what I'm hearing from you Sally. It makes me wonder and it's like I'm judging myself without y'all hearing me. I'm like I'm feeling like a spoiled little brat.

>> Kyra: Exactly!

>> Kyra: Because I'm so used to having my own vehicle. I'm used to having an extra bedroom, an extra bathroom. I'm used to having all this space and the ability to be able to do whatever I want to do to help other people if I so desire, if I'm able to do it. But you know, if I have to go into a place like this, then I won't be able to have those things anymore.

>> Sally: I still have my car. I have good eyesight. I can drive and I can drive at night, which puts me way ahead of most of the elderly community. So that's what I do now to help people out, when I can't physically help any other way, I'll give them a ride to wherever they need to go.

>> Kyra: Right.

>> Sally: Being limited in space and you spend your entire life accumulating memories which have physical things attached to them. And how there's no space for the things that are attached to though memories.

>> Kyra: But those memories mean so much. And those things begin to mean just as much

because then you can't remember those you can't remember like you used to be able to remember. I forget what I was thinking about mid thought sometimes these you know? it's a real thing.

>> Sally: It's one of those things where you do have to make adjustments. I went from 1700 square feet and an attached garage to a studio apartment. And that is a difficult conversion to make. That transition was hard.

>> Kyra: I also think about the work that I have been you know, in the 90s I was a sex worker. Life was different. It was party, go home, knockout, wake up, let's do it all over again.

>> Teryl Lynn: All over again, yeah.

>> Kyra: It kept repeating itself. It was auto repeat. And here comes my next big thing in life that knocked me off track and it was Hurricane Katrina! She really changed my life and knocked me off my status and it was time to make a change. And then I wasn't working as a sex worker anymore. So I got into the fight. And all of the trainings and becoming culturally competent and understanding and feeling what they means. And these days, you know, it makes you wonder if people actually understand what that means. And are you actually culturally? For people who are any one of the letters, you know, of LGBTQ. I mean, it's a real thing, you know? I'm going to need to understand that you're not going to hurt me or harm me and that you understand why we do what we do, and even if you don't understand, at least have respect enough to ask and let's have a conversation like a human being.

>> Wayne: I would like to just mention too that we are talking about access here to housing in New Orleans. And you mentioned Katrina and of

course Katrina destroyed a lot of homes and we've never gotten back to the point of housing being able to supply what the city needs. If you don't have a lot of money, looking for a place and trying to find a place that fits any of your requirements are really difficult and may not even be there.

So our housing is everybody's housing is short everywhere from what I understand. But we have this particular situation here where we are dealing with a growing population, with a lot of the housing having been destroyed and the housing that's being replaced may not be affordable or accessible to us.

>> Teryl Lynn: They're definitely not affordable because I hear people paying \$1,600 a month for rent! That's unheard of! This is after Katrina, of course. That's just unbelievable because that's a mortgage to some people.

>> Sally: That's more than my mortgage was on my house.

>> Teryl Lynn: That was more than mine too.

>> Just like living in an apartment these days, it's ridiculous. It is really ridiculous.

>> It's scary.

>> Very. Like you said.

>> Sally: Just to bring into perspective, we have all these battles about raising minimum wage and they say just work harder and get into something else. Minimum wage will not rent you an apartment if you're only working one job.

>> Kyra: You know, Sally, I'm working now and I'm glad to be working right now. My mind functions better when I can get up and start moving and get stuff done.

>> Sally: But those things, we need to address, if we are going to raise housing prices

so much, there needs to be some sort of compensation for the people who are working hard for a living or worked hard for 40 + years to be able to afford to live somewhere.

>> Kyra: Exactly.

>> Sally: Because you have the fact that there's a minimum wage law means they wouldn't pay the workers at all if they didn't have to.

>> Kyra: And resources are so important because there's so many unmet mental health, you know, care. It's just not there. It's just not there. When you stop and think about a whole city that was up rooted, you know, and then eventually they find themselves back in the same boat again, but you have not confronted the issues. How do you succeed after that?

>> Yeah.

>> Kyra: You know? I didn't own anything back then when Hurricane Katrina was there. I'm originally from appaloosa so I was young back then. I was all sewing my royal oats. At that time I didn't own anything. It was easy come, easy go. But that was not the same for a lot of people who lived out here at the time. And all over the state. You know, you actually own stuff, stuff that was passed down to you, generation to generation, and then it's all swallowed up by winds and water and nothing is there to help you get through that.

You know, that's detrimental to someone's well being.

>> We have I hate to interrupt this conversation. There's so much wonderful dialogue happening here. I'm hearing information about the impact of Katrina and how it deeply affected people's access to housing and affordable housing especially as prices have been rising. And we

know that this affordability is very much an issue for LGBTQ+ communities. As our communities are disparately affected. I am going to name that we do need to move to the audience Q&A to give folks time to ask y'all questions. I am amazed by how fast this panel has gone by. It's been such rich conversation so far.

>> Kyra: We have so much more to talk about!

>> I know! We need to have a whole other conversation sometimes, just record it, put it online. But this first question that I'm seeing is from one of our colleagues in Memphis, Kayla Gore. And Kayla, thank you for asking this question. This question is: How can housing providers make homes safer for the evolving community? I know that it's what's recommended from a development standpoint, but from your personal experience, what's practical? So for example, body alert devices, grab bars, security systems, what are some practical add in for folks that are evolving and want accessible housing?

>> Kyra: You know, for me it would depend on where I'm at. On that scale. And I still live alone. Is it feasible for me to live in an apartment by myself? Do I need somebody to live with me to keep a close eye on me? A grab bar might not be enough, you know? Somebody who can come in and assess those things.

>> Sally: There's a couple of small things that would help. Like I said, in the shower area in particular, grab bars at the edges, as you're coming out, vertical grab bars to hold on to. Or maybe let's not have the step over bathtub. There aren't that many of the elderly that can get in and out of a bathtub, let's be honest, because once you get down there, you gotta get back up. And most of the people I see walking around the

halls here or shall I say along with me staggering down the hallway with Canes and walkers, I don't see them getting in and out of the bathtub. And roll in showers would be a step up and the grab bar as you go from the shower to the bathroom floor.

The other thing it would be have grab rails to both sides of the toilet. Because that's the other problem area of getting up and moving around. It's things to think about that you don't think about. You say, well, we put a grab rail on the front of the sink there, the basin next to you, so you have got that for your left hand. Well, I'm right handed, so that doesn't do me a whole lot of good.

You have to we work these things out on our own. We put another walker in there or something. Little things like that that you don't think of.

>> Kyra: A bench to sit on while you shower.

>> Sally: Yeah. Little things. And they're very keen on certain things. Like they don't want any wires stretched across the floor because you might trip over them. Well, that's true of some thresholds too. But it's just the idea would be to get it as level as possible and as many places to grab hold of things as you can have. Because that's the problem my sister has at her house is that she's older than I am and just occasionally will be standing in a room and feel herself going over. It's not anything else except just her balance went, you know.

>> Kyra: I call it anticipating my fall and my rise. If I'm going to do something that I know is I know it's dangerous, you know, but I'm cleaning my house and I need to get down here and I need to get this because it fell under the table or something like that. So that means I gotta get

on my knees. That means I gotta think about hold up, let me make sure I plan my route back up. I need to make sure there's a chair here, that I'll be able to get I know it makes it sound like I'm so old and crippled and stuff like that. But you know, these knees, they are not (?) anymore and I have to anticipate how I'm going to get back up if I intentionally go down.

>> Are we at the point of talking about models, like model living situation?

>> We are actually, Wayne, just about to run out of time. But why don't you share your point here, Wayne, real quickly.

>> Wayne: Okay. Financial assistance, and a structure like section 8, section 8 is almost impossible to access here and it's there's so many people trying to access it. But that kind of model where the rent is based your rent is based on what your income is, more structures like that for assistance for people seems really good. Another thing is a model living situation. You know, those small houses, they said think out of your head if you wanted to, but those small houses that you see being constructed now, thinking about a central clubhouse like with small houses around it, something like that. I know that's far fetched but at the same time it sounds wonderful to me to be able to have independence of living by oneself, but at the same time with having helping hands real close by in case anything is needed.

So I just wanted to mention those two models.

>> Thank you, Wayne. That's great! The tiny homes or accessory dwelling units can be used in some of those ways. I know some folks at my sister's house like Kayla Gore has mentioned. Section 8 is so important for housing accessibility for folks. But we do,

unfortunately, we have got to move on to some of the other wonderful content we are going to get to today. Just to flag, I did see some other questions in the chat for these folks and we made note of them. I'll be emailing panelists if this is okay, I'll email some other questions that folks had and we can have more conversation over email or hop on the phone to call to answer some folks' other conversations if that's okay because I know there's so much rich conversation to be had here. I just want to thank you all so much for this conversation. All of you have shared such informative details today about housing, housing need for the community and your own personal experience. I'm just so incredibly grateful for all of the resilience and expertise and advocacy that you all have brought to the community. So thank you so much. Before we move on to our next conversation, I did want to flag that we talked some about housing challenges in this panel today. One of those challenges can be housing discrimination and discrimination based on identity. So I did want to flag a resource for folks. The Louisiana fair housing alliance does support people who have experienced housing discrimination on the basis of identity.

If you have experienced housing discrimination, you can contact the housing alliance and the housing alliance information I'm going to post in the chat now. But you can contact them if you have experienced housing discrimination to get some support. So again, panelists, thank y'all so much for being here. We really hope y'all can stay for the rest of this conversation today and I'll be reaching out via email with some of the other questions folks had today. Thank you so much.

>> Thank you for having us.

>> Thank you.

>> Okay. So we are going to transition to some of this other wonderful content that we have for you all today. This next section of our conversation will be to showcase some interesting and unique housing efforts taking place in New Orleans. And these housing efforts are specifically working to bring LGBTQ+ affirming and affordable housing to the city.

And so we are going to start today by hearing from our friends at Shelter Resources Inc., iris known as Belle Reve. Belle Reve is an organization dedicated to bringing affordable housing to older adults in New Orleans, and they aim to provide affordable housing with an intention to serve diverse and minoritized populations that are often overlooked. I will let our next speaker today share more about their exciting project.

Our speaker today from Belle Reve is William Bedwell. William uses he and him pronouns and is the Executive Director of Belle Reve since 2019. William is a graduate of the University of Alabama with post graduate training from Columbia University and the sustainability and social enterprise Institute in Florida. William has extensive experience in both the not for profit and private sectors. And having lived and worked as a marketing executive in Spain for over a decade, William is committed to dedicated and expanding and strengthening programs that will result in economic growth with a focus on social equity and economic equity in New Orleans.

And beyond. William is bilingual and enjoys offshore sport fishing and the outdoors, cooking, entertaining and traveling. William, we are so

glad that you are here and we are so excited to hear more about Belle Reve's housing work for LGBTQ+ older adults. The floor is yours!

>> William: Good afternoon, everyone. Can you hear me okay? First of all, I would like to thank everyone today for inviting us to participate today and have the opportunity to share a little bit of the information about our current development. I'm also very excited to have John Leit on the call with us on the conference today because he is with Alembic which happens to be one of our partners in this development so he can join us as well. The other partner in this trio is DCHP. And I'm going to go ahead and share my screen with you if that's all right and I will walk you through some of the information regarding our let's get that up here for ya. There it is.

A little bit larger. So this is us, Belle Reve. We have been around since 1993. Actually, we were chartered in 1992. We began operations in 1993. So it happens to be our 30th anniversary this year. We just celebrated that about a month or two ago, so we're thrilled that the new development and the ribbon cutting of the opening and the occupies of this new partnership and new affordable housing opportunity coincides with our 30th anniversary in the community.

As you can see there, we started in 1993 providing housing. In the photo you can see our original campus over in the biwater neighborhood of New Orleans. That's where we operated up until 2019, when we liquidated that property. That was a very large property scattered all around a campus, if you will. Over a two year period we sold those properties to invest 100% of the proceeds into this development with Alembic and

GCHP. Up until that time we were providing housing for low income and homeless adults and families, People Living with HIV and AIDS, back in the beginning and 1993. In that time, 2019, our Board of Directors decided to change gears, although HIV is still present and still a challenge for many, many individuals, we are it has become a more manageable chronic illness rather than what it was 30 years ago. As such, we have been able to work with individuals to be able to find more permanent housing and people have been able to take care of themselves in conjunction with their healthcare providers and caseworkers, et cetera, et cetera. That's a good thing, we have a long way to go, but we're Fortune that we can focus on housing challenges, not just HIV. The Board of Directors back in 2019 decided they were going to expand the housing opportunities, focusing on the aging adults and particularly with a focus on those who are represented in the LGBTQ community. 85% of our board is made up of LGBTQ+ membership as am I, myself. We all have a dog in the fight, if you will. We have a dog in the race. We are thrilled for this opportunity when we were approached and started to work out the details with our partners, the development is now complete. I'm going to say it's about 99% complete. We're still doing some touch ups and punch list work, but we have our certificate of occupancy, we are in the lease phase. There are four, there you can see initial images. Pre construction, but this is pretty much what it looks like. There are 92 apartments dedicated to our aging community. Those apartments are called the Belle Reve apartments. The entire complex is referred to as H3HC. You can see an image of our development as it's been

completed. It's a pretty impressive accomplishment and we're just thrilled of our working together with our partners. There was no way we could have done this. The financing for it, as many will want to know, primarily through the low income housing tax credit program. So there are many investors in the project. But the principles are healthy partnership, Alembic, community development and ourselves, Belle Reve or shelter resources. There's another image here. What you are seeing here are two of the four blocks of housing, of apartments. This is the main entrance from OC Haley Boulevard. And to the right, the bottom right, behind the palm trees is the location of the ascension DePaul community health center that will be on site. We're thrilled to have them as part of the project. We'll not only be providing affordable housing for aging adults, in the back there you go, you see there's four buildings, a better view here. The two closest to you, those are the senior apartments, Belle Reve apartments, and the backdrop are the family units. Anyone seeking and applying and being approved for affordable housing would be in the back two units there. There's 100 units there, 50 in each building. We have 92 for our seniors. I'm a year away from senior according to the HUD regulations. This is for anyone 55 and above. We're focusing on individuals who are 52 and older in our Belle Reve because we want to create these programs and services. Here you see another view of the finished tariff on OC Haley. You can see all of downtown, Superdome. It's a wonderful location. Built on the ground dairy parking lot. The actual dairy is a little bit, in the grassy area there, that is still vacant. In the area of central

city. I did want to give some we are going to go into briefly talking about, there's the tear as I was showing you. Some of the outdoor spaces, there have been comments about requests for green spaces, outdoor spaces. Throughout the development we have lots of those. Wonderful accommodations for our residents.

A library will be on site, the health center, gymnasium, outdoor facilities, there's also additional parking down below. Here you see one of our important things we're trying to do is develop a sense of community. That's one of the Cs in HC3. Working with Blainey Kern, we're developing in the greenspace a giant sculpture that will be available, and it's visible from the street, so the general public will be able to view it. You can see on the right, there's Blainey when she was visiting for the first time to start her design process.

We imagine this as a crossroads. Located in central city so we want it to be a crossroads, not only an opportunity for affordable housing but across the community to bring in the residents and areas of central city. We want to here I can talk to you briefly about pricing. You'll see this is all income based. The affordable housing units. Before I go into explaining this, I want to tell you that the average rent in New Orleans in 2023 for a 900 square foot apartment is \$1,350. In central city, the same area where our development is located, the average rent is \$1,789. The least expensive area of New Orleans, Orleans parish is in the neighborhood oldrora, east New Orleans, and the same size apartment rents for about \$868. That's on the very extreme, headed towards Slidel across the lake in the direction of Mississippi. That neighborhood is probably I'm going to say at

least 20, 25 minutes away from downtown New Orleans.

Transportation issues. Central city is right in the middle of the city, as the name suggests. We have lots of public transportation options available to residents. Also available for non residents to come and visit their families or relatives who may be living there with us. We did mention the complex, the partnership is called H3C, the H represents health. We know that health housing is healthcare and healthcare is housing or part of it. The C is community, culture and commerce. We want, as I was mentioning, having a crossroads. We want to encompass all those aspects in this development.

Income limits. To apply to qualify for housing here, we talk about AMI, area median income. Income limit, the minimum one \$11,480 in order to be able to apply and afford the rent. The maximum, if you go over that's too much. Aggregate of total amount that encompasses all revenue that's incoming, whether that's from disability, side hustle, from one's job, whatever the case may be. These are the totals and they are not set by us, they're set by HUD.

Additionally, we do have utility allowances for each of the apartments, \$65 for one bedroom, \$85 for two. We have very few I think a total of about five in the senior development, we have about five two bedrooms. But you can also come down to what we are talking about, the difference between the gross and net, gross of 307 for one bedroom, if someone's 20% AMI, five dollars stipend for the utility allowance.

There you see the total number that we have 65 and 28. I told you incorrectly. These are the total number of units throughout the senior side

of the development.

Here's some of the marketing materials we have been using to promote the opportunities over the past couple of years. The various media through the radio, I think someone mentioned W HIV earlier, we did broadcasts in collaboration with WHIV, print materials, Ambush magazine, numerous things throughout the community working with the membership of the LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce, working with our associates at NOAGE here and his group. Very active over the past couple of years of participating in the LGBTQ Pride parade promoting the opportunity. We're in the process of there are still available units. We would encourage anybody locally who is interested to reach out. I'll get that number and put it in the chat. If you want to take down the number, I can give that to you. It's (504)332 0462. That is for the property management office if you would like to call and make an appointment, come by, take a look, have a view, we encourage you to do so. And we can provide specific information about what's required to apply, the process, the information that you need to bring with you and so forth. But the first step would be to give them a call, (504)332 0462.

We were very fortunate to receive a grant from the LGBTQ Fund from the greater New Orleans Foundation in the summer and spring. They were quite generous because of the advocacy that we are promoting and the work with the LGBTQ community because we do realize the importance and the challenges, the additional challenges for members of the LGBTQ community. Obviously, we can't guarantee X number of units, but we are actively promoting it and actively promoting a welcoming environment and active environment which is not a

retirement home. This is an active, vibrant community. And we believe and feel and encourage the LGBTQ aging adults to be a part of that community.

I want to thank you all for the opportunity again. And again, I'll put that in the chat. I'll stop sharing my screen and go back to the chat and get the telephone number for you. You can share that amongst yourselves.

Thomas has put it in there for us. Thank you very much. Again, yeah, anything that we can do, if we can provide additional information. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Our website is bellreef there's the website. I wish everybody well. I wish happy holidays, everybody and look forward to hearing back and some feedback from you.

>> Thank you so much, William. This is a very exciting project. There's lots of great feedback in the chat. People are commenting on the beautiful design and things of that nature. We are running behind on time here. We won't have an opportunity for questions for William, but William, there are some important questions that have been raised in the chat about previous properties from Belle Reve and then also a question about this current property. I would ask that you pop in the chat and answer those questions if you don't mind.

>> Sure. Not at all. I'll go back in there and will review while we move forward and get back to everybody.

>> Thank you so much. Of course, if you don't feel your question has been answered or want to follow up later, send me an email and I Can Connect you with William at the right time. Thank you all so much. We are going to move to our next

wonderful speaker today who will share about some more exciting development work happening in New Orleans. We are now going to get to hear from Joe Fay, who works with a home among friends. A home among friends is an organization dedicated to providing affordable housing and community experiences for LGBTQ+ older adults. I will let Joe share more about A Home Among Friends. Joe uses he/him pronouns and is the founder and president of A Home Among Friends founded in New Orleans. Prior to retirement, Joe spent 30 years in nonprofit marketing, development and leadership at organizations including the American Red Cross, reading is fundamental and the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation. Joe is a graduate of Boston college and Columbia University's graduate School of Business and between college and graduate school, he served as U.S. Naval Officer. Joe moved during retirement to New Orleans where his husband Dan grew up. Joe, thank you so much for being here today and I'm just very excited to hear about your initiative with the A Home Among Friends. So the floor is yours!

>> Joe: Thank you. And thank you all so much for letting me be part of this conversation. It's so gratifying to be among people who are concerned about this issue as much as we are at A Home Among Friends. We have, over the last 50 years, as I counted, done tremendous things in our community. We've fought battles against discrimination. We fought battles against AIDS. We fought battles against transphobia and none of those battles have been won yet but we've made headway, I think it's fair to say. And in that context, I think we have at least one more battle to fight together.

Part of what I would like to do over the

course of the next few minutes is just talk to you about what we're doing and ask you to enlist helping us to fight this battle. Here's the problem, if I can briefly synopsis size it. There are according to the census 1.5 million LGBTQ adults seniors in the United States. And that number is only going to grow.

The last of the baby boomers are going to turn 60 next year. And the first of Gen X will turn 60 the following year. Good news, at least to me, who's certainly an elder, there's lots of us out there. The bad news is that 40% of seniors overall rely solely on Social Security. Social Security median or average monthly payment is \$1,700 a month. It's difficult to find an apartment in New Orleans, let alone New York, Seattle, Chicago, Los Angeles, for even that amount. And in fact, if you have one thousand dollars a month that you have to spend on an apartment, you're left with \$750 to pay for food and clothing and medicine and medical care and utilities and what you have left to live your life.

I'm checking my notes.

The other point is that talking to our local datacenter, which is a community resource, there are, according to them, approximately 1000 LGBTQ seniors now living who are in need, who have limited resources that put them in rent dependent situation. They can't actually afford the rent they have to pay. Moreover, according to a local news station here, WDSU, there are more hungry seniors in New Orleans than there are in any other city in the country. We face more hunger here.

So obviously our rent dependencies here limits our ability to feed ourselves. Not all of us have that problem, but some of our brothers and sisters

do and our goal is to try to address that. That's the financial problem.

There's also a social problem. I'm going to put my glasses on for a second, because like many of us, I can't see without them. Peer research says that LGBTQ seniors are less likely to have supportive networks that are heterosexual counterparts. That isn't surprising. I suppose with any of us, we in many cases don't have children, in many cases don't have families that support us, but that has implications. According to Pugh, 60% of surveyed older adults in the LGBTQ community feel a lack of companionship and over 50% report feeling isolated. We heard that from the panel earlier. Social isolation has physical consequences. Those who are isolated, are 29% more likely to have heart disease; 32% increased risk for; 50% increase for developmental dementia. So clearly we have a problem to address, because our LGBTQ seniors or evolving folks like myself are both financially strapped and socially isolated.

Those two problems are two problems that we at A Home Among Friends believe we can help solve. We aren't the only solution. There are many out there. And we are eager to see all of them. Because as I said earlier, local census data says that even just in New Orleans there are at least 1000 LGBTQ seniors who are in need of low income housing. And to a point made earlier, I attended various conferences here, there are 40 thousand people overall here on the waiting list for subsidized housing and another 10 thousand people here on the waiting list for section 8 vouchers. We are not going to solve all those problems. We are not big enough. We're never going to be. But. We feel like we ought to try to solve the

problems of our shared family, our brothers and sisters who need the support. Here's how we propose to do it.

I'll take you through the slides in a few minutes but let me say a few things first. A critical difference is that we're between, in our efforts, is to try to create housing with a price point of about \$500 to \$600 a month. That would be less than or roughly a third of what the average Social Security income is, which we believe allows people to have resources to do the other things they need to do in life.

A second difference is that we're building small communities. I was so impressed by the size of the HC3 community. We have a different view, and of course it's just a different view. It's another way of approaching this problem that all of us need to work on. Our small communities, which I'll show you in a moment, exist in current neighborhoods. They are walkable neighborhoods. The property you see in front of us is actually not far from where my husband and I live and is walkable to grocery stores, to pharmacies, to restaurants, and all of our communities would be in those places.

A third difference is that we know by having spoken to community leaders, the government and the city that we can do these developments without applying for zoning variance, which is a big issue here.

And a final difference that we would point out is our financial structure. These facilities will be self sustaining based on rent receipts once built. All we're seeking is capital support and we know that there is capital support available from Louisiana Housing Corporation and locally as well. We've talked to a number of people very

successfully who are more than interested, enthused about this, and who know that we have resources to bring to the table. Once we're able to acquire, renovate and inhabit our first model.

The final difference is that we are a volunteer led board. We are grateful that Jim Meadows from NOAGE is on our board. We have Alan Wag speculate who works in the city and is an interior designer and well known in the community. My husband is also on the board. He is a residential landscape designer with many years of experience, and myself at the moment. None of us draw salaries. All of the expenses to date for this effort have been paid out of pocket by ourselves. We don't need salaries to be able to get this underway and we think that's an important difference too.

So let me just briefly take you through the slides.

These are being operated by a friend up in Brooklyn so I'm going to ask her to go to the next slide.

What you see are two different properties that are locally available for purchase, renovation, and conversion into the kinds of properties we have in mind. If we go to the next slide, this is just a rendering of what the first property could look like. And the next slide. A rendering of what the second property could look like.

Noteworthy: These are both properties that are in existing neighborhoods using a housing typology that's common here called Shotgun. Shotguns are basically five individual rooms, straight back, they can be converted from what are now typically duplexes into four plexes. And if we go to the next slide, this is the outdoor space that Wayne alluded to that we need to be able to have

community. So all of our properties would have outdoor space and encourage community development.

Next slide. And this is an example how we're divided up. So our basic proposition is take the housing typology of a shotgun, split it in two on each side, have 500 square feet of living space. You have two rooms plus an accessible bathroom and storage. You have a full kitchen. You have access to the outdoors. And the essential issue beyond being affordable is to use the small community model to create communities, to create friendships, to create someone who can come by and see if you're okay.

That, to us, is the essential issue. That, to us, is why our tag line is not just housing, but home, because we want to create homes for people, where they feel, look, in the LGBTQ community, we've created our own families for generations. This is the same approach. Help people live together in places that respect their dignity, give them what they need in ADA accessible housing, take into account all the things that the panelists talk about to make them work for our community, and then create an environment where our community can form, a family can form.

The next slide, shows a slightly larger version. This is the second property that we saw earlier. And again, the model is exactly the same. 500 square feet, not a lot, but enough to have two separate rooms, a full kitchen, facilities around the property to encourage communal living. And one of the things attractive about New Orleans I've found having lived in the northeast and the West Coast is that you can be outside much of the year. You might not be able to be outside in the dead of summer but most of the rest of the year you can be

outside. We're able to use these spaces year round. And the next slide, it shows an over head view of what you would see in this kind of unit. And again, these use abundant shotgun housing in this community, though I suspect in other communities around the country the same model could work with another typical kind of housing unit that exists in those communities.

And then the next slide. It shows what you would see from the inside of one of these units. Again, in this case it's configured as a kitchen with a bedroom in the back, through to the back space and then the next slide, and the last slide, shows what the bathroom would look like. You can see we don't have bathtubs. We have showers and specifically roll in showers and we'll put in grab bars to make sure that people are safe.

So our proposition, which is different than HC3, but there is an enormous need, so all of us are welcoming to one another in this effort. Our proposition is that you can take the kind of housing that we have in New Orleans, convert it into four plex units or 8 plex units or 12 plex units for communities to grow up in existing neighborhoods that incorporate themselves into a neighborhood that are within walking distance of amenities, that create or provide the opportunity to create families within those housing communities.

If there are questions, I'm happy to answer them. There may be some. Again, thank you so much for letting me be part of this.

>> Thank you so much, Joe! There's such wonderful traction in the chat. I encourage you to check out what folks are saying. There's so much excitement around this really unique model. Similarly to William, we are running behind on

some time. So I would ask that you answer questions of folks in the chat directly if that's okay.

>> Sure.

>> And any questions that folks have for either of these two speakers, feel free to follow up with me after this event, at the end of the event I'll be posting my email in the chat. And I Can Connect y'all with Joe or with William to engage around these wonderful models more.

To both Joe and William, thank you so much for sharing more about these efforts to house LGBTQ+ older adults in New Orleans. We're so excited about these initiatives and we're so grateful for both Belle Reve and A Home Among Friends for your commitment to LGBTQ+ older adults.

So because we are running a bit behind, we are going to take a shorter break. I encourage you to stand up, to stretch, to use the restroom, grab some water, whatever you need to do to prepare for our final portion of the event, but when we get back, we will get to hear from our final panel of community advocates. You will not want to miss this conversation.

Our final portion of the event will start in approximately four minutes. I'll ask for you all to be back at 4:07 and that way we can move on into the panel. Thank you so much to Joe and William and we are going to take a quick break and I'll see y'all back here at 4:07 Central Time. Thank you all.

[Break time].

>> Welcome back. Thank you for sticking with us through this afternoon event. It's been such an informative conversation so far. We're really, really excited for this last panel today. So we are going to go ahead and dive in. This panel is

full of community advocates who are working to support community members in New Orleans and across the state of Louisiana. Our conversation today will center advocacy opportunities to help support LGBTQ+ older adults who need affordable housing. These panelists are experts in their field, organizers, some of them are community members themselves. So we're so grateful to hear about their experience and their knowledge today. So panelists, as I introduce you, feel free to come on camera so that our participants can see you. And I will be introducing panelists with abbreviated versions of their bios for the sake of time, but all, panelists' full bios can be found on our event site.

Our first panelist today is Lou Anne White. Lou Anne uses She/Her pronouns. Lou Anne White is the co founder and Executive Director of Louvis Services, a nonprofit affordable housing developer focused on increasing housing opportunities for people who are experiencing houselessness in New Orleans. Has worked in the supportive housing industry for over 25 years. Lou Anne, thank you so much for being here today. Our next panelist is paint Rose Michelle who uses she and her pronouns. Peyton is a 26 year old Trans woman based in Lafayette, Louisiana. She serves as first Executive Director of Louisiana Trans Advocates where she leads Louisiana Trans Advocates legislative initiatives and helps to lead low call, which stands for the Legislative Organizing Coalition for all LGBTQ+ Louisianans. She also became the first openly transgender person to be elected in the State of Louisiana in July of 2020. Peyton, thank you so much for being here. Our last panelist is Jon Leit who uses he and him pronouns. Jon is a real estate developer

and urban planner focused on implementing redevelopment projects in partnership with community based organizations. Since joining Alembic in 2006, Jonathan has worked in low income communities of color to build joint venture partnerships with nonprofit organizations.

And to leverage public and private investments for affordable housing, nonprofit facilities, and commercial spaces. Jonathan holds a Masters in city planning from the Massachusetts Institute of technology and was a Rockefeller fellow through the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence. Jon, thank you so much for being here.

So we are going to just dive right into this panel and thank you all for being here today. Panelists, we will be having an audience Q&A time at the end of this panel, so we will have audience members submit their questions in the chat, similar to the last panel, and we will have some time to answer them at the end of our conversation today.

So earlier today we heard from our first panel about some of the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ older adults in New Orleans when attempting to find safe, affordable and accessible housing. What are some ways that your organization helps support people with housing needs? And for this question I would love to hear from each of you. So folks get to know a little bit more about your organization. Peyton, why don't you start us off today, if you don't mind.

>> Peyton: Sure! I'm Peyton Rose Michelle, She/Her pronouns and I'm Executive Director of we are the state's only statewide Trans specific organization. We try to do everything we can with not historically very much. We focus on advocacy

work. We focus on socially supporting and like resource supporting Trans and gender non conforming people across the state and we do education like this on a more microlevel to just help folks feel more comfortable with Trans folks in their environment.

Housing, you know, it's it should be a human right, in my opinion. I always get frustrated just talking about it, because the idea that we even have to discuss accessing housing is something I think we should not be doing, because I think we shouldn't have to it should not be such an issue. But the work we do, we often help youth that are being having emergency housing situations and we'll help them find some people that can help them at least temporarily or more permanently.

We have communities who connect Trans and Queer people together so they can commingle and share the information that they know, because I just don't believe any organization can have all of the knowledge, you know, it's a communal thing. And we also work on an advocacy basis to try to ensure that Louisiana housing protections apologize for my dogs if you can hear them. Yeah, we do whatever we can. We support whatever we can to get housing for everyone.

>> Thank you so much, Peyton. It's just so amazing to have you here. I know y'all are holding a lot as the state's only Trans specific organization. So we're just so grateful for your time and your experience and expertise here on this panel.

Lou Anne, why don't you answer the same question, if you don't mind, and hop in next.

>> Sure. First off I would like to thanks for I am the co founder and executive Director

of Louvis services. We are a nonprofit affordable housing developer based here in New Orleans. We are a team of volunteers with experience ranging from homeless advocacy, fundraising, law. So we have a wide range of skills that we bring to the table. We have architectural, an architect on our team. We use collaborative approach to access housing, create housing opportunities for people who are homeless. We are looking to create inclusive projects and we're 100% volunteer run.

Our mission is to find creative solutions to housing, support people who are homeless. And our vision is to increase affordable housing opportunities for people who are living on the streets, in their cars, in shelters, and abandoned buildings here in New Orleans and create homes that are safe and comfortable for them.

We work in collaboration with lots of different organizations and corporations, and our goal is to significantly decrease the number of homeless folks in New Orleans. We have, in New Orleans, a little over 1300 people that are unhoused. We started in 2015. We organized and got our 501(c)(3) status and got everything going together with Propeller, which is an organization here in New Orleans that is an incubator for entrepreneurs. So we started there. And we created from a model that we think works for people.

We held listening sessions in the homeless community. We went to the Rebuild Center, a few churches where people got their food and took their showers and day shelters, and we got feedback throughout our process of developing our plans for the housing.

So our approach is we think pretty holistic. We have created a prototype that's located at 2229

Fats Domino in the Lower 9th Ward. And it is a tiny house duplex. It is very spacious, even though it's small. We have large porches, it looks like a traditional shotgun. We did a lot of meetings in the Lower 9th Ward. We were talking about Katrina earlier and the Lower 9th Ward, of course, was really devastated by Katrina and there's still quite a few empty lots and blighted properties. So our goal, in addition to creating housing for folks who don't have access to housing, is to add value to the lower 9th community. We think they need they clearly need more people, they need more houses to get rid of some of the blighted properties. That's part of the reason we decided to go there.

Our project is, like I said, at 2229 Fats Domino. It's accessible with a bus that goes right by the house. It goes to the grocery store and shopping incial mat and goes to downtown New Orleans. There's one other bus that goes through there. It isn't as accessible as central city, but as some point we'll be looking to build over there as well.

The housing is affordable and sustainable. One of the units is fully accessible. I heard people talking about the need to have showers instead of bathtubs. It's very accessible, accessible unit. We met with the greater New Orleans housing alliance resident advisors when going over the plan and they really helped us design the accessible unit. There's a ramp that leads to the unit and both units have these very nice, large porches.

We also include supportive services as a part of what we're doing. We're looking to make sure that either they're connected to services and have access to case management or whatever they are

getting their physical health taken care of, they have drug and alcohol issues, we are working with them to we use the harm reduction approach, so we are not forcing anybody to do anything. We're just trying to make sure they're in a safe, comfortable environment so they are not worrying about where they are going to get their food so they can actually focus on some of their needs.

Currently we have two tenants who came to us with case management services already in place. And they are doing well in the unit and seem to be feeling safe and comfortable there. The other part of our model is an edible landscape program. So we're planting fruit trees, vegetables and berries on each property. Tenants are encouraged to get involved. We have raised beds so that anyone who has mobility issues or needs to be in a chair, they can access those. We have a master gardener that is working with us to create the project.

So that is our idea. We actually have built one and our goal is to replicate the model. So the one unit, the prototype has been very well supported by the community, the lower 9 community, the City of New Orleans as a whole. We recently were awarded the built environment award for Love your City. And we were awarded four more properties that we're planning to develop as well.

We were lucky in our beginning to be able to get pro bono services. The nanointerior design, they did an amazing job with creating the design. They managed the construction for us. They did just an awesome job and we are very, very grateful to Terry Dryer and her team at Nano. We also had a great construction contractor, Colmax Construction. They were able to join us in the design process when we were all meeting to talk

about what we wanted. We would do the designs and take them to the community and get feedback. It was great to have Colmax in the room with engineers and architects so we talked about ideally what it would look like and have the reality check from the actual contractor to say yes, that works, or maybe we should change this. It was really a great process for us.

Our biggest challenge, of course, was money, financing the project. We heard a lot of no's from banks and finance agencies. Lots of no's. But we are not a really we don't take no very well. We finally got financing through New core corporation. At our open house, the representative from new core talked about how many times they came in there and they would say no and we would go back and do something different and go back again and they would say no. I think on the fourth try we were able to get the financing for it. We got our permanent financing through Hope Credit Union. They have been really wonderful and are interested in financing our next project. So we're working on putting the money together to build four more houses. We originally had a contract with Louisiana housing corporation for this first house and they provided project based vouchers. So it was a situation where if they have an income, they pay 20% of their income. If they don't have an income, then they don't pay anything.

We pay for utilities and everything that they need. The homes come fully furnished with washer and dryer. And we were able to move forward with our plans and we have been able to get lots of opportunities. So we used the voucher program with Louisiana Housing Corporation. And while the we were waiting for tenants, we had a bunch of

tours and invited organizations and community members to come look. What came from that is more collaborations for us, which is what we really think needs to happen in order to help people get off the streets. It needs to be a community effort. We're working with, for the next four houses, we're working with the travelers aid society and they are going to master lease the units and they will they work with folks that are living outside and in shelters so they will be able to bring their folks in and provide all the wrap around services including transportation, case management, so we're really excited about this opportunity that we are going to have to work with them.

I think that's it.

>> Awesome. Thank you, Lou Anne. It's very exciting to hear about your work. We really appreciate your dedication to supporting people who are transitioning from homelessness. We know that that particular transition is an acute need for the LGBTQ+ community, specifically for Trans folks and Trans older adults. We know that that is a real need as well. We appreciate your commitment to folks who are transitioning from homelessness and your work is very incredible so thank you so much. Lastly, excited to hear from Jon about his work with Alembic and some of the ways that you are supporting folks who have housing needs. So Jon?

>> Jon: Good afternoon, everybody, and thank you for this opportunity to be here and join these other panelists. So Jonathan Leit with Alembic community development. We are a mission driven developer. We focus on affordable and supportive housing and commercial spaces that are community serving. So we create a grocery store in low

income food desert, schools, nonprofit, office spaces. Cultural arts spaces. We're currently working on two early childhood education centers that serve low income families. Everything we do are joint for us that's incredibly important. We know that unfortunately our we consider ourselves a bit of accidental developers, as Thomas mentioned. I'm the planner by training, real estate, unfortunately is history, and discrimination, racism, extraction of communities is one of the worst offenders. So we see real estate as a means to an end. Unfortunately it gets prioritized, but what's important is real estate is serving people. That the spaces that are created are for people, whether or not that's affordable housing or nonprofit for organizers and other things. We completed two senior projects now in New Orleans. William, it's great to hear William's presentation earlier of the HC3 project and central city. We're one of the co developers on that development and have worked in that community for many years. So it's incredibly rewarding to finally have that completed and starting to lease up. One thing I wanted to note about HC3 is actually 100% affordable. I believe one of the slides said 40%. It's 100% affordable for seniors earning less than 60% of area median income. The first senior development we completed in New Orleans is in the Lower 9th Ward, not far from where Lou Anne's project is as well, called the temp center. It stands for pre vost center, one of two schools that was first desegregated in the deep south in November 1960 several years after Brown versus Board of Education. And at the same time the many people may know that story, lost to history was that three other six year old Black girls

desegregated in Lower 9th Ward on Stefanie Claude avenue and we were very fortunate to meet one of the girls that formed a community organization as an older woman. And we joint ventured with them to salvage, make the school building and redevelop it into 25 affordable senior apartments along with an anti long time anti racism training organization here in New Orleans along with an interpreter center Civil Rights. Anyway, lots of other thoughts and ideas but I'll pause there.

>> Thanks so much, Jon. It's so exciting to hear about your work as well. We appreciate the work you've done with Belle Reve to create affirming and affordable housing for our community. Thank you so much. We are here to talk about advocacy. I know that lots of folks on this call are curious about ways that they can engage with some of these issues, whether the issue is houselessness, whether it's rights for Trans folks, discrimination, affordable housing, I know earlier in our panel we talked about issues with folks who are navigating housing as an older adult. There are so many different ways that I'm sure people are curious they can engage in these issues.

So as folks in this field, what are some creative ways that we can engage with these issues? I will open this conversation to all the panelists, so hop in and engage with each other. Go for it.

>> I can start. I think we're a developer and we always are seeking out nonprofit partners. Mentioned was a phenomenal one. We started when the agency development was starting, we knew it was going to be affordable housing. We knew we wanted a component that was senior housing, we

were not initially focused on the LGBTQ affirming housing. It was really a meeting that our partner had with William that helped steer us in that direction and we are beyond receptive to it, I mean, once that came forward. We were really excited to go in that direction. Before we've done regular senior housing.

The interaction between developers and community organizations that advocates can be pretty fraught. I would say that's not true for all developers and we are not the only example of some who are looking for real partnerships and are looking for real value, real engagement with individuals, with residents, and with organizations.

I would say I think sometimes working with advocates and organizations, they don't always recognize the power and influence they can have within real estate development. William knows that their involvement really supported the financing of H3C. Their involvement was able to help secure Weinberg Foundation money. Having narrative plays a very important role in real estate development these days. Particularly when so many of the community development tools are so hypercompetitive, narrative around the impact it will have. And I don't mean BS narrative, I mean actually authentic, real narrative around impact that projects are having, can really help set a project apart. And I think that gets informed best by advocates, by folks who are working, organizing, folks who are really in community in a way that developers just can't be and aren't good at, frankly.

>> Yeah, thanks for sharing that, Jon. I think having community partners engaged with developers really brings important community

perspective and also just really, like you said, really important narrative to the work that affordable housing developers are doing. So thank you for sharing that. Peyton, Lou Anne, any other thoughts on how folks can engage in advocacy around the issue of housing, around the issue of LGBTQ+ rights, especially for older adults? Opening the floor.

>> Lou Anne: There are a couple of organizations that we're members of that I think are key and we participate with the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance. They fight or advocate for more affordable housing in New Orleans. They address issues of poor housing. They we recently got a housing trust, money for a housing trust in New Orleans, which is the first time, and they were proponents and they designed the thing, the funding model.

So we will have more access to funds and regularly have access since the city created this affordable housing fund. So we're excited about that. I think there's opportunities for small communities to get involved. I know in the lower 9th ward we originally faced quite a bit of push back in terms of, first of all, building tiny houses. And then the fact that we were providing housing for people who are experiencing homelessness. We educated people. We encouraged them to tell us how they felt about it, and then we addressed those issues. We were able to build support over the years just by getting involved.

The other thing I think is helpful is we consider ourselves a community developer, so we need community support and community feedback. We have worked in the lower 9th. We joined several organizations, and we're not seen as just a developer that comes and builds something and then

goes away. We want people to see us as members of the community. We work with the lower 9th ward voters commission for civic engagement encouraging people to register to vote and educating people.

We think that that is one of the things that needs to happen. So we all need to educate folks and listen when people have issues and address those.

>> Peyton: Yeah, in my preparation for thinking about what I wanted to say here, I was already preparing to say that I think redevelopment of housing and of property is a superpower, having the funds and capacity to do so is a superpower. And I'm just so grateful that both of y'all, in your own ways, are just making it happen, because as an advocacy person, I feel so disconnected from that in my way. I talk to the legislators about why they should be caring, right, et cetera, but I really love what Jon said about kind of connecting the community and the advocacy with the financing of it. Because you're absolutely right.

That's why it's a superpower, because you're able to connect all of it and make it become one and do something amazing with it and heal the environment with it, the land. So I really love that.

And the question was something about advocacy and how people can get involved. While I don't have anything specific, I think the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance is a great place, the New Orleans Center for Action are great places to plug in and other organizations and alliances and coalitions that get involved. I always try to tell people there are a million ways to be an advocate. Many ways just existing is advocacy these days.

So just find what makes sense to you, find what you're capable of, and just lean in. And for some people that's getting involved with these organizations and doing email action alerts to City Council or the legislators. For some people it's making phone calls. For some people it's showing up to meetings. For some people it's donating money. For some people it's sharing stories. And there's so many other ways. So I think it's a good reminder for me as an advocate to expand my advocacy and connect more with people doing this kind of work more so to ensure that we can all be empowered in our works, because that's what it's about.

>> Yeah, thank you all so much. I think it's so important to hear about the local organizations that we can engage in and really important to hear about the development efforts that are happening. And I think even what you are saying, Lou Anne, about educating communities and making sure that communities feel engaged in this process is such a beautiful way to bring community members into this space. And I think that what you have done is a real beautiful example of how to make sure that, as developers, as folks who are building housing, we are not just running into communities and staking our claim, but we're really engaging folks in what their needs are and how we can support them. So I really appreciate all of the perspectives that you all are bringing.

We have about five more minutes before we are going to open the floor to some of the questions that folks are bringing up. So to close us out today, I wanted to ask a more visioning type question. This question is: When you envision a more equitable housing landscape for LGBTQ+ older adults in New Orleans, what do you see and what

would it take for us to get there? We have got about five minutes. I know that's not enough time. But I'm going to ask that y'all just dive in. So go for it.

>> Peyton: I think while it obviously is a very specific needs, a lot of which were voiced earlier and throughout this panel for Queer elders or LGBTQ+ elders, I also think it really just takes our state or our country, our communities to care about housing for everyone. I mean, we're all barking up a tree when our legislators don't care if we have housing or if we have access to affordable housing or good quality housing that meets the needs of the community. And I don't see that happening right now in any super meaningful way on a statewide level and I know that the City Council I'm in Lafayette, but as you know the New Orleans city council has stepped in and laugh yet too. It takes engaging with our electeds and educating them and really holding them accountable .

>> Lou Anne: I guess I envision for the future just, well, aside the fact that everybody is in a safe and comfortable house and not on the streets and in tents, I envision that and I think there are lots of different ways to get there. So when we are talking about developing housing, most recently we had a conversation with Tulane University's architectural school and they want to collaborate with us on creating a tiny house that they build somewhere and then disassemble it and move it to the property and then reassemble. So we think there's I think we need to be creative and we need to be open to different ideas.

We have abandoned buildings that need to be brought into space where people can live in them. We have lots of empty lots in some areas of the

city. We have people talking about tiny houses and the possibility of what they used to call mother in law accessory dwelling units, but they used to call them mother in law units. I think there's just different what we can build the scattered site housing model that we're doing, just building in different communities. We can do the buildings, but what's been presented today, we just need to be open and flexible and look at everything. Any and everything that we can do to make it happen.

>> I would echo what Peyton Rose said initially which is housing should be a human right. I hope that is what we should hold on to. And even further, affordable housing should be a human right. We know there's a lot of steps to get there. I would also say that housing is not enough in communities, it's an overwhelming problem, but we need many times, we need services, commercial development, we need all kinds of things that serve people. And I think too often that the focus especially as we know in low income communities is affordable housing and that's at the expense of I'm not talking about gentrification investments but actually responsible investments. And lastly I would say we also know we can't build our way out of this problem of affordable housing across the country and beyond. And there's an income side equation to this. So in order for everyone to live in an age with dignity and to care for themselves and care for our families. We have a huge income problem. And so my vision would be that we're attacking and addressing this in multiple ways, not only production and provision of more affordable housing, but also working to raise people's incomes and standard of living.

>> Thank you all for that. I think it's very hopeful to envision a world in which, as you said, Jon, people can age and live with dignity, especially for LGBTQ+ older adults, many of whom have been advocating and have been resilient for years and years and years in the face of great adversity to have a place to rest and age with dignity is so, so important.

And as well, I think Peyton, what you shared about engaging with electeds is so important as we think about developing affordable housing, having folks care about housing as a human right, and also engaging around issues of income and income inequality, as Jon shared. And I know it was mentioned on our other panel as well. This has been really rich so far. Thank you all so much. I know we do have some questions in the chat. We're probably not going to be able to get to all of them.

So same as the previous panel. I have been taking note of all of these questions and folks on our team have as well. If your question does not get answered today, we will certainly try to follow up and make sure that all of these questions get addressed. As I shared, I will put my email in the chat at the end of this event for folks who want to engage around their questions further, especially if your question did not get answered. The first question I'm seeing here, and I think this will probably be a question for folks who are more on the development side of things, but the first question is: Can there be carve outs for people living with HIV who are aging when it comes to housing? And I know with affordable housing regulations and carve outs there can be real complications in terms of making sure that minoritized communities are supported. If y'all

could share about opportunities for carve outs for people living with HIV and people who are aging, that would be awesome.

>> William: Again, with the affordable housing and affordable you can't carve out as long as anybody qualifies and age requirements and income requirements, we encourage everybody to apply, with/without HIV, with/without disability. Important to affordable housing development. It's independent living situation. Any resident will have to be taking care of their own health will have services and healthcare, community health workers that will assist and help. But again, it's just up to the individual and the qualifiers are primarily that the income limits are met and the background checks and everything else that's required. That's across the board the same for everyone. There are no specific carve outs for HIV or diabetes or any other illness.

Jon?

>> Jon: Fair housing is such a tricky thing. It's such an important thing, obviously, from a policy perspective, and we know it's not followed and it's violated constantly, unfortunately. And the protections that it should offer are so important. At the same time, the goal of preventing discrimination also doesn't have the flip side of facilitating inclusion and actually then targeting in the positive sense of serving people, like serving communities that have been underserved. it prevents that. That can certainly be a charge for advocates, for developers or policy folks or everyone, there's constant conversations around fair housing and how can it go from just a prevention tool at least in theory, to one that's more activated and one that can also followed. I should say, we can do

and do do set aside for folks that are permanent supportive housing, right, which comes with certain things. There are things that can be set aside, you can actually target and communities set aside for veterans, you can say you are serving just seniors. There is precedent and there are, as we know, populations that can be directly served without having to do this dance of we're LGBTQ affirming housing as opposed to, no, there's potential set asides. It's a conversation for community members to have, what is desirable and is that an advocacy push that can be taken on.

>> And Jon, just for clarity as well, can you speak a little bit to happen ua housing and how that carve outs creates carve outs for people living with HIV?

>> Yeah. I mean. There's some dedicated housing for that for a long time. We don't have direct experience with that, but we know folks who do. So much of it, unfortunately, is tied to funding and whether it's low income housing tax credits or the entitlement money that cities, municipalities, Federal Government, HUD receives and programs, it's all about political will, as always. And if there's enough pressure put on and the right kind of pressure, then programs can be capitalized in underserved communities that need it.

>> Awesome. Thank you, Jon and William, for stepping in there. This next question from an audience member, I absolutely love this question. How can we create an interstate dialogue and exchange of resources as activists and housing providers across states? Is there a way that we can create actual meaningful dialogue across states, ideally I would love it if we could all advocate for low income housing tax credits

nationally or for example, to allow for more LGBTQ+ older adult federal support and legislation? So really asking about opportunities for interstate dialogue and cross over, which this is such a wonderful question and is so important.

>> Peyton: There's always an opportunity to talk to. Someone just has to be responsible for facilitating the space. That's my opinion. Louisiana Trans Advocates is a part of a body Federation, which it's a national grouping/coalition I guess, of statewide equality works across the country. I think we have like 39 states involved. It's very helpful. I think everyone should have something like it and I I'm not aware of one that's specifically related to housing or even Queer housing, but you know, I think someone like SAGE might be in a great place to at least try to pull people together to make it happen or find the people that can.

>> Any other thoughts from folks on this? I see in the chat, Joe, that you have thoughts you could share as well. Any of our panelists or Joe, if you want to hop in, go for it.

>> Joe: I just wanted to share that at a point in my past life, when I was running Children's Brain Tumor Foundation there was an organization that I also ran called the North American brain tumor coalition. It was a collection of organizations focused on pediatric and adult brain tumors, but the basic model was a collaborative model that people joined by choice that worked together on common issues. It strikes me that SAGE could facilitate a national dialogue simply by being willing to provide a mechanism for people to speak together on a regular basis. In the case of the organization I ran, we actually had a day on Capitol Hill where we went up and

talked to Congress people and senators about our common issues, but it needent take that particular focus. But it could certainly start as a way in which we could talk together by having simply a platform where we can do that.

>> Lou Anne: There are some national organizations that focus on housing. I know national alliance to end homelessness, they have a component to address affordable housing and different groups that provide that focus on populations. I know there's that. There's also an national affordable housing. I haven't seen anything that separately addresses the LGBTQ+ community, but I know that there is a national affordable housing organization.

>> Wonderful. Well, thank you all for this wonderful conversation. We do need to move on to close up for today. I want to extend so much gratitude to you all for the amazing work that you're doing and just the time and energy you shared to put into this conversation on a Wednesday afternoon. We are so grateful for you being here. If you're comfortable and would like to share contact information for your organizations in the chat, feel free to do that so. This has just been so invaluable and there's so much wonderful engagement in the chat so I would encourage you all to look in there if you have the opportunity. but thank you all so much for being here and helping us close out this wonderful event!

So to finish us off today for this event, I want to thank everyone who attended and participated in the chat. We hope that these conversations will nourishing and thought provoking and we just thank all who participated as organizers, partners, speakers, event planners,

interpreters, captioners, panelists, everyone. It was just so incredible to see all the support that came around this exciting conversation. Before you all leave, I would like to share some information about SAGE's state of LGBTQ+ aging survey. This survey is created to better understand the experiences and needs of LGBTQ+ older people in the United States. The findings of this survey will improve and inform SAGE's policy advocacy, our program offerings, and our strategic direction. Anyone who identifies as LGBTQ+ and is age 50 or older residing in the United States can fill out this survey. I'm going to put the link to this survey in the chat. Again, this survey is so important in informing the work that we do and making sure that it is centered in the needs of LGBTQ+ older adults across the country. And I'll also add that if you share your email address on this survey, you will be entered into a raffle to win a 50 dollar gift card. Here is the link in the chat for that survey. Feel free to share it with any friends or colleagues who also are a part of the community.

And as we close the event, you will also be prompted to fill out a post event survey. This is a separate survey from the one I just mentioned, but it is a short and sweet survey about your experience at this event today. These post event surveys really help us understand how to create the best event for participants in the future.

So please, if you have a chance, fill out this survey. We'll also be sending the survey out in an email to everyone who registered tomorrow. As I promised, I'm going to post my email in the chat here now as well. Feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions about the event or follow up. And of course, if any of your

questions didn't get answered today, please, feel free to reach out to me via email. We want to make sure that you get all of the information that you need from this event. If we had all day to spend on this topic, I'm sure we would have. There's so much rich conversation points here.

But of course, thank you everyone for being here and a special thanks again to TuttleCo for your support in this event and to the The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation for their generous funding that made this event possible. Thank you all so much!