

Episode 60: I'm Determined

(Intro Music)

E: Hi, I'm Emily Ladau

K: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian

E: And you're listening to another episode of The Accessible Stall.

K: What are we gonna talk about today, Emily?

E: Okay we have some business to take care of first

K: What's that?

E: So I don't wanna be "That Guy" who asks people for money, but it looks like I'm gonna be "That Guy!" So, did you know that we have a Patreon? And we obviously don't expect our listeners to fork over their hard earned money, but if you feel like supporting a couple of rag tag creators who have been doing this little old podcast for two years, we would be super grateful. What is the URL, Kyle?

K: www.patreon.com/theaccessiblestall Your money will go toward, transcripts mostly! We get to afford to feed our transcriber if you donate us a couple bucks.

E: Yeah actually, the whole asking for money thing aside, none of it goes into our pockets.

K: No

E: The truth is that it goes into a special bank account that neither of us touch and only use for putting money back into the Podcast. Largely used for transcripts like Kyle said, so it's access.

K: Yeah. It literally goes toward paying for the website, paying for the podcasting platform, and our transcriber. That's it. So if you care about any of those things and you're willing and able to afford it, please donate what you can www.patreon.com/theaccessiblestall ...And now that we've got that out of the way, What are we gonna talk about today, Emily?

E: Oooh. I have to like, shake off that icky feeling, I don't like asking people for money (*sighs*).

Both sing "*Shake it Off*" by Taylor Swift.

E: Shake it off, shake it off! Oh, okay. Taylor Swift don't sue us! So we're finally, finally gonna talk about our really cool experience at something called the I'm Determined Summit. And this episode has been a long time coming already but I'm still pretty amped to talk about it.

K: I'm so freaking amped to talk about it!

E: So somehow some guy found us on the internet, listened to our show, and was like, "You know who would make really good keynote speakers for an event? Emily and Kyle would!" I don't know why they thought that but you know, it turned out to be a pretty gosh darn cool experience.

K: Absolutely. It was so amazing.

E: So, "I'm Determined" is a Summit that is held every summer at James Madison University and it's led by the Virginia Department of Education, and this is not a paid advertisement for them, just making sure that you have some background on what it was that we did. So we were invited to be keynote speakers at the event which focuses on providing advocacy skills, and guidance and advice for young people with disabilities who are working on transitioning from high school to college or high school to the workforce or just generally transitioning to another stage of their life. And we've talked about this before, kind of growing up disabled it can be a little scary. Also, the other side of the whole thing is that the parents are there too. But the point is that the parents and the young people don't spend all their time on top of each other. So the young people get to experience independence, and the parents get to learn what it's like not to be Helicopter Parents.

K: Yeah, I think the parents only spend time with them during the mealtimes if I remember correctly?

E: ...And our keynote!

K: Oh yeah, right. Well that's because everyone had to be there for that. We were the VIPs

E: The most important thing. But for real, so we spent the whole week there actually, and oh my gosh, it was such a cool experience because it was a program that I wish that I had when I was younger.

K: Yeah man! We kept saying that, even weeks and weeks before we even got there and then when we got there, it was like every expectation that Emily and I had was not only like met, but completely exceeded! And it was just the coolest thing! And every day, like every activity, Emily and I just looked at each other and were like, "Damn this would've been really cool when we were teenagers!" Like, it was just so cool.

E: I'm trying to pinpoint why exactly. Like what it was that was so valuable.

K: Well I mean, the exercises and the things they were teaching the kids and parents were all well and good, but I think what it made it go the extra mile was the genuineness of all the youth and the youth leaders and the parents there. All of the extreme positivity without any bit of the pity that is usually found in the background of that. Like it was very genuine, it was not like a facade, it was not like, "Oh I'm so inspired by you cause you're here!" It's like, "I'm inspired by you because you're doing this cool thing we're doing." You know? And it was just legit. It was so good.

E: That was something I grappled with a lot that whole week, was the feeling of having to let go of my discomfort of seeing disabled people as inspirational, because I kept having to remind myself of the context.

K: Yeah. I mean, there was a lot of dialogue there that you could say that was Inspo Porn but the thing is like Emily said, the context of the event we were at, mixed with the age of the youth there, the majority of which who were seventeen and eighteen and some were even younger and some were older but like....

E: I think it was thirteen to twenty-one?

K: Thirteen to twenty-one but the vast majority were seventeen and eighteen. But those are vulnerable years! You didn't know what Inspo Porn was when you were that young! I mean you might have felt it, but like in those years when you were very young and impressionable, you might need to hear those things! And when it comes from a place that isn't patronizing and you know, genuine? And I hate to say this but really, "From the Heart," it changes the entire message behind it even if the words are the same. If that makes sense...

E: No, absolutely. Because a lot of people told us we were inspiring after we gave our talk, which by the way was about our experiences going from highschool to college. And I don't find myself inspirational at all. I mean... I'm a person!

K: I mean yeah, it's easy to say what you did what you're "supposed to do" but then like when you really step back and think about it you know you have the kids in there that don't know what the next stage of their life is gonna be like, you have parents there who are no doubt didn't think that their kid would even get to be here, let alone where we are! And you know when you take both of those things into account like, I could honestly see it. Like I don't think I'm particularly inspiring either but like, I don't know you and I are a force to be reckoned with! And I could totally see why people would say that. I really do! And they said it for all the right reasons too.

E: I think we're just average human beings who are held up as an example of the fact that disabled people can aspire to be more in life. And that was the thing that I was focusing on the whole week, was that there's a big difference between inspiring to people who are genuinely either looking up to you or respect the path that you made for yourself and want that for

themselves or for their kid. Versus the stuff that the media puts out there where it's purely warm and fuzzy and does absolutely nothing to further anyone's cause.

K: Definitely! But to your point there was also a ton of like, "Warm Fuzziness" to be had at I'm Determined but it was backed by what you were saying before. Like when we were ziplining! When we were up there everyone was cheering our name...And not just us, like everyone was cheering everyone's name, like whoever was up there, their name was getting cheered. And you would think, that that would be weird and patronizing, but it wasn't! It was like it made you wanna do it, it was cool and we did do it! Emily did it first.

E: No no no, correction I was like, "Yeah I'm gonna zipline!" And Kyle was like, "I don't wanna do that..." And then once you saw me getting set up you were like, "Alright, I guess I'll do it...But you go first"

K: Alright. Listen, listen. You and I have very different ability levels, and if they can make it safe for someone who can't walk at all, I was like, "Okay, they can make it safe for me." Sorry if that's like horrible to say but like honestly, that was my thought process! Like "Oh, It's fine!"

E: No it's not! Although Kyle climbed up this like, rope, net, ladder thing. I was kind of waiting for him to fall backwards and die.

K: But I didn't!

E: We should clarify. So we did the whole episode where we were ranting about the accessible shower and the ziplining, if you haven't listened to it, kind of like the juxtaposition and the contrast between the two. But the reason we were even doing ziplining and all this wild ropes course stuff in the first place is because it was team building exercises. Which the fact that you get a bunch of disabled people together and do team building exercises on a ropes course and it's not inaccessible to them? It's like, whoa.

K: Yeah. That in and of itself was impressive enough.

E: That's not a very good descriptor but do you know what I'm saying?

K: I don't wanna say this in like, the wrong way but it was something that really like shouldn't have been accessible and they made it accessible anyway and it wasn't even weird. Like they didn't even remove the core experience of ziplining just to make it accessible to some. No! They were like, "This is a badass ropes course and we're gonna make everyone do it," and that's exactly what it was.

E: Well they didn't make you do it, but...

K: No they didn't, but my funny memory was like me telling the guy that i don't have to sign the release because I'm not doing it, and the guy was like, "I insist, c'mon!" And I was like, "Whatever dude, I'm still not doing it." And then fifteen minutes later I was up there and was like, "I'm guess I'm doing this now." I don't know, being there made you wanna do it.

E: The whole thing was just super empowering. And I almost feel bad that we're sitting here talking about it and everyone who's listening couldn't have been there with us cause I feel like the whole world needs an I'm Determined Summit. And I know how cheesy that sounds but I just think if that had been part of my life when I was younger, it would have been huge. And I mean in a way, it was because I went to "Disabled Kids Summer Camp" and a lot of the kids there were saying that this was like their version of summer camp which was super cool. But the fact that it wasn't all fun and games and it was focused on moving towards the future, but in a fun way? That's cool!

K: Yeah so it's like you didn't know you were working. I don't know, there was like this one part where it was boring to watch but I'm sure if we were doing it it would've been cool. It was when we were watching the kids rescue a stuffed animal from a sinking boat but they couldn't touch it. It wasn't a sinking boat, it was like imagine the stuffed animal and rearrange these things such that you can save it. But you weren't allowed to touch it. So it was a whole bunch of teamwork and you had a time limit and they refused to help you unless you were like really stuck.

E: I don't think you're explaining this well. So it was a teambuilding exercise and kind of like a creative thinking exercise where you had a bucket and you had a stuffed animal and you had several different things like bungee cords and pencils and chopsticks and kitchen tongs. And you had to figure out how to use only the things provided to rescue the stuffed animal from the bin which was technically a sinking boat. But you had to do it all without touching the actually stuffed animal or the boat.

E: I know it sounds silly but it was one of those things where it was like a thinking exercise and you really had to put your mind to it, and it's just really cool watching a bunch of kids with toms of different types of disabilities working together to figure out something like that. And there was never a doubt that they were gonna be able to do it.

K: Yeah and then they did that positivity thing afterwards where it was like, "Tell me one thing that makes you awesome!" And that sounds really cheesy but I swear to God it was like the most wholesome thing. It was like after a hard team building exercise likem that's what you need to do. It's like a palate cleanser for your next thing. And I don't know, it was nice.

E: That's the thing. Okay so like this whole experience was so wholesome and yet in any other context I feel like it would have driven me completely up the wall because I know that I have a tendency sometimes to be like, a bitter disabled person. But the reality is that No, I love this stuff! I love when a group of disabled people get together and everyone believes in everyone, and everyone builds each other up and everyone's inspired for the right reasons. Like, I don't

even care if the parents are inspired for the right reasons. I really don't. And I'm really grappling with this still. I know I keep saying that but it was a lesson for me in stepping back from my fierce views that I have all the time.

K: And I like that they adapted the exercises to the age the kids were in this world we live in. So they talked about like posting things on the internet. Like those are little things but they go so far in communicating the lessons learned to the kids I think. But the parents! I mean, you would think...But we didn't run into many bad parents. I think I can count on one hand. I don't want to count "Bad" parents we ran into...

E: No not, "Bad." Those people just didn't get it.

K: Misguided. But even the parents were just like so incredibly there for the kids in all the right ways and it was so nice.

E: Or at least willing to learn how to be there in the right ways

K: Even like, we were there the first or second night we sat down with the parents because we were lame and the kids didn't want to sit with us because they didn't know us yet. And like the whole table was asking us questions and you could just tell they were all willing to hear us just because they were willing to make the best life for their kids and it was so nice. Like I can't stress that enough, it was just great.

E: This whole conversation feels like Inside Baseball to me (chuckles) I don't want people to feel like we're leaving them out of this experience, we're trying to bring you into it!

K: Well, as a treat, later in this episode...we don't know how long it's going to be but we're going to play an interview that Emily and I did with two of the youth leaders from the "I'm Determined Summit. So hopefully they will be able to bring you into the fold in so much as they can and make you feel how we felt while we were there.

E: You know, I don't feel like we should keep going on for too much longer I think that we should let the youth leaders do the talking, we've done enough talking!

K: Yeah, that's a good idea! Alright we'll keep this one short and just say final takeaways really quick because honestly the youth leaders ran...Actually we should mention that because the really cool thing about this summit was that the adults were there to make sure no one hurt themselves. Basically the Youth Leaders, the kids who wanted to take on the leadership roles ran all the activities and did all the things. It was so cool.

E: Oh my God, how did this take us so long to get to?

K: We always get to the best points at the end. But you know what? We'll just say our final takeaways and let the youth leaders take it from here at this point.

E: I have a Final Takeaway! Let young people with disabilities lead because we actually know what we're doing.

K: Yeah that was basically gonna be mine too because you know what? If there's anything I learned from these kids, it's that the kids are gonna be alright. Like there's so much in the world to be afraid of but when you look at these kids and see how good they are and their outlooks on life and it's like, "Wow, they're gonna be cool, they're gonna be okay!"

E: But we are officially old. We're not even that old, be we are no longer cool.

K: Oh no we're old. The current generation is like Alpha now, so there's two generations before us which is usually the amount of generations between you and your parents. So we are officially old.

E: Well actually I think that people thought that we were cool but I still felt old.

K: I mean we were cool in so far as we could be. They liked that we were from New York...from like, *(dramatically)* a new land! Especially that Spiderman kid

E: *(Laughs)* A new land!

K: Alright, without further ado, these are our friends Jonathan and Emily, two really cool youth leaders from the I'm Determined Summit.

E: And they're gonna fill you in on what actually went down. And hopefully you'll see that even though we were the keynotes, this was never really about us. It was much bigger than that.

K: Goodnight everybody! But don't stop listening!

E: There's more! We're like a real podcast now where we do segments!

(Start of Interview at the I'm Determined Youth Summit)

E: So this is the long awaited episode to talk about the I'm Determined Summit which is where we gave our Keynote talk and got to hang out with some really cool people already about a month ago. So now we have the opportunity not only to talk about it, but also to talk about it with two of the coolest people that we met there! We have special guests today!

K: I am so excited!

E: Me too! Okay so our first guest, if you would like to introduce yourself we'd love to know who you are!

J: Hi guys, my name is Jonathan Brooks, I'm seventeen years old and I'm a rising senior at Lee Davis High School and I've been a youth leader at I'm Determined for three whole years!

E: Oh my God, that was such a professional intro it was so good! (*Jonathan chuckles*)

K: Yeah I know, it was better than ours!

(*All laugh*)

E: And now if our next wonderful guest can introduce herself?

EL: Okay, I don't know if I can follow that up but...Hi, I'm Emily LeSueur, I am almost twenty-two years old in two weeks and I've been part of the I'm Determined Project for...oh gosh...seven years? And I am in college, and I also work in an elementary school.

E: So, and you're a youth leader too right? Because Jonathan mentioned being a youth leader.

EL: Oh, yeah!

E: So for those of you who are wondering what in the world a youth leader is, can one of you explain it to us Jonathan or Emily I'll let one of you....

J: She can go ahead and explain that one!

EL: Okay Jonathan....At I'm Determined we have students that come but once you come as a student you can be chosen as a leader and what that is, is we actually get to run the whole summit. With adult help of course, we get to plan and have the most fun I guess!

J: Yeah, it's a lot of fun.

E: I would say you guys definitely have the fun

EL: Yeah

J: Yes!

E: So okay, we wanted to have you both on today so that people wouldn't think that we're just making stuff up about the Summit. We're gonna hear from the experts. So Kyle, what should we get them to tell us about the Summit?

K: Oh...My God...Um, how did you guys get started with it? That's what I'm curious about

J: Like how did we get started with the Summit? Or how did we decide to attend?

K: The whole thing I guess!

(Technical Difficulty; Emily and Jonathan were talking over each other...)

E: Maybe if Emily gives her answer first, and then Jonathan give your answer, does that work?

J: Yeah, that's fine! *(laughs)*

E: Okay cool. Alright Emily, go ahead!

EL: So I'm Determined is a program for students for disability. And for me for example, my mom is a special education teacher and she got an email from her special education director about this awesome program and she was like, "Emily, you're gonna apply!" And I was like, "What's this program, what are you talking about, Mom?" And then I saw there was an essay, and I said, "Mom, I'm not doing that!"

E: Uh-oh!

EL: But my mom being the mom that she is said, "Yes you are!" So I did the essay. And...there's an application process. So I guess that answers your question, sort of.

E: And you ended up getting in! So then it's all good right? And then Jonathan, what about you?

J: Mary Anne Moore started this whole thing and she wanted a way for students and their parents to come together to find ways to be self-advocates for themselves and speak up in their IEP meetings.

E: Can you tell us what IEP stands for?

J: Individualized Education Plan if I'm right?

E: Yeah so we always try to explain what the heck we're talking about to people who are listening.

J: *(chuckles)* No problem! I think that's what that means

E: Okay so, what's the experience like at the Summit? Because we only experienced it from the outside, if you wanna say that. So tell us a little bit about what that was like.

J: I liked it because....actually the Youth Leaders get there a couple of extra days early, and we just do team building activities, and we actually did a ropes course this year....which you guys did awesome at by the way

K: Thank you

J: And those are just ways for us to team build and communicate better so that when the youth and the parents come we know what we're doing. But it's a better way for us to communicate with each other and make sure our sessions go smoothly.

K: Nice

E: That ropes course? Oh my gosh you guys! So Kyle and I went ziplining and Jonathan did you do any of it?

J: I just did the cargo net and that was enough for me (*laughs*)

E: And uh...I know Emily you were a little bit of ground support

EL: I did it like four years ago

E: So we missed it is what you're saying?

EL: Yeah

K: As far as I'm concerned that still counts!

E: So what's the whole point of I'm Determined? Why do you guys go every year?

J: I go every year just because I love meeting new youth and their parents. And it's just a fun way to learn different tools and things that you can use the next school year if you haven't already done that

EL: It's such a nice great way to bring these kids together and say, "Hey, it's okay to have a disability! And here's all these people with a disability and they're graduating, they have a job." So it's really cool for me to be a role model and to be able to teach some of the skills that we work on at "I'm Determined."

E: So what have you gotten out of it? What have you taken away from it? Has it changed your outlook on something? Has it changed how you've advocated for yourself? And Kyle, feel free to chime in, I just have a ton of questions.

J: It's really changed the way I am as a person. Before "I'm Determined" I was this shy kid who was kind of in his shell. And after my first youth conference and my first Summit, I started speaking up more in my meetings and I just became a more energetic I would say, and outgoing person. So it really had a positive effect on me I would say now.

K: That's a great answer!

EL: So, "I'm Determined" has totally changed my life. When I first entered the program in tenth grade, I was not a person who talked to people I didn't know. So "I'm Determined" came into my life when I really needed those self confidence skills. That "Hey, you're a person and your voice matters." And now I'm actually speaking, and speaking statewide and learning that my voice matters for other people too.

E: So what you're saying is that you're both total badasses, if we're allowed to say that.

J: *(laughing)* Basically!

K: Yeah

E: We're all friends here, we can say that! But now this is only a Virginia thing, right? So if somebody wanted to practice these skills but they can't go to this really cool program, what do they do?

EL: Okay, so we have an awesome website, I'm Determined.org with some great resources. With the One Pager, and the Goal Plan and the Good Day Plan that can be used even in the home setting or if a school is trying to implement these self-determination skills in students. We also have...they just did a Mini Summit in New York actually.

K: Oh, really?

EL: I don't know much about it because I didn't get to go but

E: Oh, hold on, hold on! We're from New York what are we missing here?

(unintelligible)

E: And if I'm not mistaken you were not in New York because you were busy being a world traveler, right?

EL: Um, yes! I was in Ukraine doing some Disability Advocacy over there.

K: Cool!

E: So yeah, I'm Determined doesn't mess around. They get really legit people to be their Youth Leaders. So Jonathan, is there anything else that people can do if they're not really sure....

J: Yeah, just go on the website! If the website isn't enough, there's an email there at the bottom and those people can help with whatever it is you're questioning. But it has really good tools, Everything from Good Day plans to goal setting sheets, and teachers and administrators and youth, they all use them. It's a great way if you can't get to the Summit, there's a lot of good tools that you can use.

K: Nice. And how would you say that you guys practice the skills you've learned from "I'm Determined" in your day to day lives?

J: For me I would say I use the Goal Setting sheet more than any of the other tools especially now that I'm getting to the point where college is. And so whenever I need something done or I wanna know how far I am I just fill out my Goal Setting sheet and I'll give it to my Case Manager and we'll review it in my IEP meetings. And it's just a way for the Case Manager to know what you want to do academically and what you want to do after high school and all the other stuff that you want to pursue.

E: I wish I had a goal setting sheet when I was going from High School to College!

K: Yeah that's extremely practical, my goodness!

J: It really helps

E: Good that's awesome

K: And what about you, Emily?

EL: So now that I'm older, a lot of these skills have become just everyday for me. Like, waking up and thinking through the Good Day Plan, and thinking, "Well I may not have that sheet in front of me but I know to make today a good day, I have to have a cup of coffee."

K: Hear, hear!

EL: And I don't necessarily have to have the One Pager sheet in front of me to be able to speak up for myself, and to tell people what some of my strengths are but also what some of my needs are. And I still use the Goal Page because it's always nice to have a visual for your goals.

K: Nice

E: What I have learned is that I'm gonna go print out this Goal Setting sheet as soon as we're done talking

K: Yeah really, it seems like a good idea for my professional life

(All laugh)

K: So we're gonna be a little self aggrandizing here if we may. I'm gonna ask the two of you what you guys thought of our Keynote Speech. And Jonathan you can go first

E: Or just having us around in general!

K: Yeah not just the speech. What was it like dealing with the two of us all week?

J: I honestly thought you guys were hilarious! I thought you did great!

K: Aw, thank you!

J: You're welcome

E: We did not pay them to say this you guys

J: Yeah, I thought you guys did an amazing job

E: But more than that like I wish that someone had talked to me about this stuff when I was transitioning from high school to college. So as cool as it is to hear, "Oh you did an amazing job!" Do you feel like getting to talk to people who are where you want to be in the future is a helpful thing?

J: I think it really is! Yeah I really do because you can see what they've done and you can aspire to be just like them.

K: What a wholesome answer!

E: Oh my God, so good! But then Emily you're little bit further along. You know, you're already in college so you're kind of like us in that you're giving the same message- you can do it! You can transition from high school to college with a disability. So is there anything that resonated with you or anything sort of about hanging out with us that made you think of things differently?

E: So yeah, I'm definitely thinking about the transition from school to finding a job now and so being with you guys for the week definitely put some thoughts into my head of, "Hey, they're

making a career out of this!” Because ultimately this is what I want to do with my life and maybe this is something that I could do too. So that was really cool for me.

E: I would say not, “Maybe” I would say, “Definitely!” I think both of you are more than capable of doing whatever you set your mind to.

J: Oh gosh, don’t get me to crying, Emily!

(Laughs)

K: I mean, it’s not like it’s recorded and gonna be put on the internet or anything!

E: But you guys are doing really great things already, and you know I think the reason why we wanted to talk to both of you is because we saw that you guys were being such incredible leaders the whole week. And you were showing us the ropes too. I mean, we were brand new, we had no clue what was going on!

J: Yeah you guys adjusted really well. You really did.

E: Well, we appreciate it, and it was nice of you to let us into your cool circle of people because we’re just like these nerds out of nowhere!

J: Nah, you guys are more than welcome to join!

E: So we do something on the show called “Final Takeaways” and we’d love to do that with both of you kind of talking about what you want people to take away kind of from hearing about the Summit, and also what you hope people who were at the Summit took away from being there. So what words of wisdom would you leave us with? Jonathan, we’ll have you go first.

J: Um, I would really say just speak up for yourself! Self-advocacy is really the key to everything because people aren’t mind readers and they don’t know what you’re thinking, they don’t know how you learn, so if there was one thing I would say really tell people what you want, speak up for yourself and don’t limit yourself, the sky’s the limit

K: Awesome. And what about you, Emily?

E: So what I hope people take away from “I’m Determined” is that no matter who are or what people think of them, they can be successful. And when you set your mind to what you want to do, you can reach those goals and be the person that you want to be.

K: Oh my God, you guys are like the best!

E: What...wait Emily did you have more to add to that

EL: No

E: Oh my God okay because now I feel so inspired that I'm going to start crying.

K: Before we go though, I was talking to Jonathan before the two of you showed up and he was telling me about the other Summit that "I'm Determined" just put on and I thought it was so cool. Jonathan, would you mind just telling us just a one or two sentence version of what you were telling me before?

J: Sure. So I was just at this conference called "Move" and "Move" is a Summit that is for African-American males with learning disabilities. And every year, we actually just celebrated our fifth year doing it...every year it's hosted at Virginia State University where we're based out of and it's just a three day conference and everybody comes down from all parts of Virginia. It's basically the Youth Summit but in a Nutshell and everyone enjoys it and they take away lots of information.

K: That's so freaking cool, man!

E: Oh my God, so basically I'm Determined is doing some really cool stuff. And you know what? I wish that every state in the United States was doing this kind of thing because I've never seen a more empowering event than when we were at "I'm Determined."

K: Absolutely! Even on the parents' side I would say that was true, they were teaching them good stuff!

J: Yes they were. My mom has a lot of information from "Move" that she just learned. She loves it every year. It's not the same information year to year. Some people go one conference and then they don't come back because they think they're gonna get the same information. "Move" is not like that, the Summit is not like that. We have different themes every year, and we change the information every year so it's helpful to you guys.

K: Nice

E: And Emily can you tell us about the parents' side of things because we've been talking now for over twenty minutes and parents haven't come up once. And that's kind of the point, right?

EL: Yes. "I'm Determined" is a youth event for the most part but the parents are there because the parents are a huge part of this team. I would not be the person I am today without my parents but we want to space ourselves from our parents. So they have their own separate event and my mom goes every year and she says amazing things. And part of it is that they're

able to meet people that have children that are going through the same struggles. So it's some of the same impact that we go through in meeting similar people to us.

K: That's such amazing stuff. Like I can't even, I'm gonna start fawning all over. Like it's just so good!

E: Yeah, you guys are just giving us really, really awesome answers.

J: Thanks. We try, we try!

EL: I can't hear Jonathan so it's super confusing!

E: Nooo! You can't hear him?

EL: No I can't hear Jonathan

K: Well he's giving good info too.

EL: Oh, good!

E: I don't know why you can't hear each other but I promise you're both saying useful things.

J: Good!

E: So I know you already gave your final takeaways but is there anything else that we missed? Anything that you want to say? Emily, go ahead

EL: I would just say that I am thankful that I have been able to be a part of "I'm Determined" for such a long time. I've been able to have lifelong friendships; the people that are Youth Leaders are people that I contact on a regular basis when I need something or when I'm celebrating something so they really become family at the end of the day. So I'm really just grateful to be a part of this project.

E: That's awesome! And Jonathan, anything that we missed?

J: I'm just gonna say, I don't know if Emily said anything like this but I'm gonna speak to the parents. "Parents: Don't limit what your youth can do just because they have a learning disability. Your children can do anything they set their minds to, and they really need a good support system. So as long as your backing them up 100% of the time, they're gonna do great things and they won't even know that they have a learning disability because you're letting them do whatever they set their mind to. So don't limit them, they are great people, and just don't limit them.

K: Sage advice!

E: You guys are both awesome, thank you for joining us

J: No problem, thank you for having me!

EL: Thank you for having me!