**Full Spark Card Info & Audio Text**

Purple text indicates the stories that we have full sign off on now. Blue text indicates the story has not been transcribed yet. Red indicates areas of concern.

**Sol (is a musician and wheelchair user, he was born with cerebral palsy but has a lot of control of his arms, he is studying at York U to be a teacher so interested in pedagogy)**

* Drive Through
* Performing & Labelling
* Sense of Humour

**Jack (is a visual artist who has an extensive background as a practicing artist and educator, he has dyslexia and has lost the use of his right arm, he is a senior artist and interested in issues around aging)**

* A Disability for One, an Ability for Another
* Painting with Shorter Strokes

**Christine** **(is retired and has been blind from a very young age, she is interested in the use of humour)**

* Prayer on the Bus
* Blind Humour
* Purdy’s Chocolate
* Braille & Chocolate

**Myra (is retired and is fully blind now, however she has a memory of being sighted as her blindness developed over time, she also has other health challenges such as inconsistent control of her right hand)**

* Father’s Brailler
* Walking into a Mailbox (ft. Christine)
* Bringing Friends to the Gallery
* The Big Brailler Bounce Initiative

**Anonymous (Pitched Down) (This person is a psychologist but retired from an active role in that profession, they live with arthritis and are always managing pain)**

* Pain & a Cane
* Impact of Aging

**Michele** **(is an early childhood educator, she has worked with children with a variety of disabilities, she does not identify with having a particular disability herself)**

* Seeing abilities rather than disabilities
* Teaching & Technology
* Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Story

**Dan (is a lawyer who is currently not practicing as he has progressive multiple sclerosis, he is a wheelchair user and has limited ability to use his arms and hands)**

* Growth

**Eamon (ft. Jonah) (is a game designer and a grad student at OCAD in inclusive design, he has dysgraphia and other learning disabilities)**

* Finding a Positive Spin

**Wesley (is an actor and student, he was born with cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user and has limited control of his upper body, he also identifies as neuro-divergent)**

* Stabbing Packaged Food
* Quiet Sense of Yes
* Service Dogs & Ableism
* Being Saved by Cameo
* Bow & Arrow (Short)
* Bow & Arrow (Long)

**Nedward (is a student of game design, has transgendered and now uses the pronouns he/his, he identifies as autistic)**

* Diagnosis Later in Life
* Off in Space
* *Stimming* at a Lacrosse Game

**Furyal** **(is studying to become a lawyer, she was born with detached retinas and has limited vision in one eye)**

* Early Diagnosis
* Growing up with Vision Equipment
* Hidden Disability and Cellphones

**Alexa**

* [David Interpreting] Cathartic Art
* [David Interpreting] Communicating with her Mother & Teaching ASL
* [Jo-Ann Interpreting] Born Deaf & Only Deaf Person In Her Family

**Courage**

* [David Interpreting] Professional Running while Deaf
* [David Interpreting] Running with a Hearing Aid & Focusing on the Gun
* [Jo-Ann Interpreting] Family Life/Guyana & Only Deaf Person in Her Family
* [Jo-Ann Interpreting] Everything Happens for a Reason & Deaf Culture

**David Bobier**

* Adoption of Children who are Deaf
* Raising Children who are Deaf
* Hearing Loss and Working with the Deaf Community

**Team: Lynne (I don’t identify with having a particular disability but have realized that I have an undiagnosed learning disability, maybe a form of dysgraphia?, language can be a challenge for me)**

* The Ass-bassador

**Team: Nina**

* \*\*Will Record a New Story?

**Team: Martin (is a designer, was a member of the DD team for quite some time, he does not identify as disabled)**

* Insomnia and Day Planning

**Team: Jonah (is a programmer, gamer and designer, he has dysgraphia)**

* Being a Leftie in Catholic School

**Team: Ted**

* Having Tinnitus as a Musician

\*\*\*There Will be a Total of 46 Spark Cards, as of Jan 24…\*\*\*\*

**Spark Card Text**

**Sol**

*Going Through the Drive Through*

I’ve certainly got some funny stories… When I was about 10, I tried bringing my chair through a restaurant drive-thru. It worked too. They asked, “How may I help you?”, and they looked around, and all they saw was a hand! But my 10-year-old logic was, “There are cars on wheels, I'm on wheels… It's even the same number of wheels!”, I thought to myself.

*Performing & Labelling*

As a disabled musician, I’m an odd duck in my field, you know? I mean, rolling up on stage guitar in hand in a wheelchair, is a weird, it is a weird thing for people to see, it often takes people aback, because it’s not… I mean, name three musicians with apparent physical disabilities, it’s kind of hard, you know? Jeff Healy, Itzhak Perlman, there are a handful of others, but we’re not common, by any stretch of the imagination. So, it’s one of those things where we do have to advocate for ourselves, or you know, those in the special needs or special learners community.

*Sense of Humour*

You’ve probably noticed, I try to laugh at myself as much as possible, you know? I think it’s important, you know? Where someone goes, “Hey Sol, you want to go for a walk, I mean roll, I mean, oh, oh right…”, you know what I mean? Really? A walk? Let’s try that again. I just like being a dick about it sometimes, it’s just funny.

**Jack**

*A Disability for One, an Ability for Another*

As a child, I was considered unintelligent, because I couldn't read. And I remember even to this age, even at age 84. I remember that sickening feeling of not even knowing what on earth the world was talking about, and why couldn't I do it. And I fell back in grade school and had to repeat years. But, on the other hand, quite literally, I was able to draw, and drawing became my principle language, through which I’ve built a lifetime. So, even in the situation called dyslexia, which turns out to be one small aspect of reading readiness and understanding what’s involved in a child learning to read, through my own children, I discovered there's different kinds of brains, that develop at different rates, and what is a disability for one is an ability for the other.

*Painting with Shorter Strokes*

At this stage of the game, I have a disabled right arm, it’s really advanced arthritis, is the simplified version of what it is, and I’m right handed, and so I’ve learned to draw all over again starting from a different perspective. I can’t get a large sweeping motion of any kind, so I’ve done recent work where I do small sections and build up like a mosaic, images that I then transfer to a larger surface. This is my situation, through which now, I access new work.

**Myra**

*Father’s Brailler*

I still have the Perkins Brailler and use it every day, the one that my dad gave me when I was seventeen. Which was, over sixty years ago. And, it works beautifully, I’ve never had to have it repaired. I also make great use of real estate stuff that comes in the door that has a nice weight to the paper and I can put in my brailler for writing shopping lists and stuff, rather than it going straight to the recycling. It’s fast, it’s mechanical, a wonderful, wonderful machine.

*Walking into a Mailbox (ft. Christine)*

Myra: … And things like, especially travelling with white cane, you know, walking into…, you think it’s somebody and you say, “excuse me”, and then you find out it’s a mailbox.

Christine: Yeah, yeah, done that, done that…

Myra: Or asking a post if the bus is on its way.

Christine: right, right, yeah, I’m sure I’ve done that too.

Myra: “Can you see the bus coming, please?”.

Christine: Yup, “Is this the bus stop?”, and you’ve just spoken to the pole.

*Bringing Friends to the Gallery*

There’s a program, *Vocal-Eye* on Wednesday nights coming out of BC which is wonderful. And sometimes, the program is about art, and they might have 4 different people describing one piece of art, like Mona Lisa, and from each person you get a different perspective. So, it’s made me feel, when I go to an art gallery now, I don’t want to take one friend, I want to take 4 or 5, because they all pick up on different things.

*The Big Brailler Bounce Initiative*

A number of these braillers, because they’re mechanical, they're not digital, have been sort of recycled under people's beds or dark cupboards. And, so we called it the *Big Brailler Bounce Initiative* and *Braille Literacy Canada* continues to collect braillers that people don't use, get them refurbish, cleaned up and refurbished, and then they're given away free of charge to people who are learning Braille or people who use Braille but their braillers don't work or they never have them, and they're shipped all across Canada. So that's, that's just a little treat to let you know that these things are still valuable because when you buy them new now, they’re over $1,000, and lots of people can afford that.

**Anonymous**

*Hidden Pain & a Cane*

So, when I first was experiencing arthritis. I had a lot of pain in my wrists. And this is before I was on any kind of treatment. And, when you describe pain to people, it’s very very difficult for people to understand. You can’t describe it, and no one can see it. And, no one will be interested. So, whenever I went to any kind of cocktail party or a place where there were no chairs. I actually had to find a spot where I could be comfortable. And one day, I said I wish I had a cane to carry because then nobody would be suspicious of why I was doing what I was doing. So when you carry a cane you actually are giving people a signal that you're not like them, that you need some help. And I never did carry a cane but at one point I really felt that that would have been helpful to me.

*Impact of Aging*

I think the experience of pain is something that is very hard to describe, and is something that is omnipresent in our society, because people are living longer, I really believe it’s aging. It’s one thing to have pain when you’re in your 50’s or 60’s, it’s another to have pain when you’re ten. So, I would say, you have to differente aging pain, in my case it’s aging, so whether it’s lack of estrogen, and I’m speaking to a female audience here, and that’s what the trigger was, was the decline of estrogen in my body.

**Dan**

*Growth*

I practiced Law for about 10 years before my MS progressed to the point that I couldn’t work anymore, and I think with time and experience, I developed a much different perspective of what’s important in how you practice Law, and through experience and the challenges I’ve had, I think about things, and I would be much more open now, to listen, and let go of it and not be so controlling. So, that’s my experience.

**Eamon (ft. Jonah)**

*Finding a Positive Spin*

Eamon: I think at a speed at which my hand can’t keep up with, nor my typing, which often leads to many misspelt words and repeated words, or parts of sentences that get left out. I have yet to come up with a positive spin on that unfortunately. It ends up with assignments taking much longer, and me repeatedly going through documents, trying to piece together what my train of thought was before I jump to the next thing

Jonah: I think that’s part of why I chose the Humanities. You know? You’re rewarded for going over your paper so many times, it’s like “that’s such a great thing”, and I’m like “no, it’s a necessity, but that’s okay”.

**Wesley**

*Stabbing Packaged Food*

This is another MacGyver-Tinkerer story, when I get food at university, they always come in those plastic packages that are a little bit difficult to open. So, I had up to this point been using a knife to stab through the lid and lift it off. It was honestly very violent, but it worked. And I talked to my Dad about it and he again pulled something out of his garage, and it was like this weirdly shaped pick that I could wedge under the container lids, so it was much less dangerous for me, than violently stabbing a knife through containers to open things. I mean, I’ve just figured out ways to open containers and open wrappers that are very unorthodox and that include violently stabbing it like you’re skewering your enemies.

*Quiet Sense of Yes*

For me there’s a quiet sense of *YES*, everytime I pick up something off the ground, or I open a container that I otherwise wouldn’t be able to open. Cause if I was home, you know, I could just go to my Mom, and be like, “Mom, can you open this?”, but when I’m living in my residence, my attendants only come at set times, so what am I going to do if I get food and it’s like three hours before my next attendant’s supposed to get here? I need to eat. So there is a small private sense of yes, I did this physically challenging thing, that’s very easy for a lot of other people, but it’s challenging for me.

**Nedward**

*Diagnosis Later in Life*

I did not get diagnosed until later on in my life, right, and that only came into action because I would talk to my roommates all the time, because we lived together, and I would turn to them and go, “you know when your brain does this, and you try to do this, or try to do that and you can’t, or you can’t stop thinking about this one thing, or certain textures really throw you off?”, and my roommate would turn to me and go, “Yes Ned, but that’s not a neuro-typical thing, like, yes, my brain does that, but that’s because I have autism, you have autism then.”, and eventually, after a few times, I’m like oh no, okay, it’s just all coming together isn’t it…

*Off in Space*

I tend to forget sometimes to emote, I sometimes forget to speak, and that comes across as me “going into space”, as I refer to it, and my roommates refer to it. So, sometimes we’ll be in public, I’ll be a part of the conversation, and then I’ll suddenly just stare off into the distance, and I’m still taking everything in, but my brain has decided it’s too much, no more… So I stopped interacting, but I’m still taking everything in, and they kind of look at me and go, “Ned’s gone into space, don’t worry about it, it’s either, he’s listening and it’s just too much so just let him interact like this, or we’ve got to get going, because it’s just too much”. And, I really like that terminology of just like, “I’m floating in space”, because that’s what it feels like, I’m sitting here, but my brain’s like “Wooo”, into the distance”.

*Stimming at a Lacrosse Game*

When I was a kid, I used to go to my brother’s lacrosse games, but the thing was, I wasn’t into Lacrosse at the time, I am now, which is lucky for me, but I used to get really bored, and I used to, as we were sitting in the bleachers, slap at my thighs, and I realize now, I was *stimming* and making sure I wasn’t annoying people, however, my father found it very annoying. so, my combat to that was that I used to wear headphones. Now, nobody knew this but I plugged them into my ipod and I wouldn’t play any music. And I’d go to a beat that I made up, and no one bothered me because I was just grooving to music, no one knew that I was never playing any music, I was just doing whatever I wanted, but I got that free pass because I was just, “listening to music”.

**Furyal**

*Early Diagnosis*

When I was born, my parents didn’t really know that I was visually impaired, I was born with retinal defects in my eyes, and I wasn’t diagnosed until I was three, by the time I was diagnosed I lost most of my vision in my left eye, but, the way they found out about it is I would bring everybody’s face very close to my face to look at them, because I didn’t have glasses or anything and I couldn’t see things, and every object I picked up I would like, go in like that, to look at it very closely, and that’s how they thought something was off and they took me to the Doctor’s.

*Growing up with Vision Equipment*

I had Magnifiers and I had Monoculars, and I had Domes to make things bigger on the page, and I always didn’t feel comfortable taking them, because all the other kids didn’t have to use that equipment, I had a bunch of extra stuff I had to carry from class to class, I actually started hiding my objects, so everybody wouldn’t ask me why I was using all this, because I didn’t want to feel different or left out. I think kids feel like they have to fit in, so they do stuff like that and I used to do that. I realize now that I don’t have to, it doesn’t matter what anyone thinks, I can use my monocular or my zooming stuff in class and that’s totally fine.

*Hidden Disability and Cellphones*

Now barely anyone knows that I have this eye problem because, I don’t need glasses, I got a surgery, so I don’t really use distance glasses, I use reading glasses. And, I don’t actually use my monocular all that much anymore because of my phone, like, a lot of the zooming or a lot of the things I need to see, you can use your phone to zoom into stuff distant, so you don’t need to carry all that equipment anymore. When I tell someone, “I’m legally blind, I can’t see out of my left eye at all”, they’re kind of shocked, like don’t believe me cause it’s so invisible. You can’t tell unless I tell you. So yeah, in that aspect I don’t really feel left out, but I guess there is a down side, you really have to explain it to people and get them to believe that you do have this problem and you do need assistance with certain things.

**Alexa**

*[David Interpreting] Cathartic Art*

I’m an artist, I’m very passionate, and that’s where I kind of took all my energy to. I mean, the experience is, basically working outside of the community, so just working in the general public, so a lot of that. You know, just the initial meetings with hearing people and then trying to communicate with them, whether it’s through an interpreter or what-not. So I think that’s where the barriers kind of lie, and I think, the academic settings quite different, and it depends on as an artist, whether you’re an artist, a deaf artist and what community you’re ingrained with. But looking back on it, I kind of express everything that I had with any barriers through my art, so it was very cathartic that way.

*[David Interpreting] Communicating with her Mother & Teaching ASL*

No, my Mom did not sign actually, no. She does sign but it’s very limited and she just actually speaks, so that’s the way her and I kind of communicate back and forth. I mean, she’s very knowledgeable about the deaf community and everything, and she knows what it encompasses. But, intimately, we have no problems, there’s no communication barriers. She’s very supportive and you know, sometimes I ask her to sign, but we have a very strong bond. It’s quite different in my household, for sure. And other people have asked me, “should I teach people to sign, or should I teach my mother”, and I’m like, “no”, I’m really bad at my sign, I don’t know how to do it technically, I’m not that great at it. So it all depends on your comfort level, and how you work with people, but, we’ve gone around it. It hasn’t been an issue.

*[Jo-Ann Interpreting] Born Deaf & Only Deaf Person In Her Family*

I was born deaf, it was very early on that my mom knew that I wasn’t responding to things that I guess a typical hearing baby would respond to. So, I went to the doctor, got a hearing test, and my mother wasn’t shocked at all. She had been involved with deaf organizations and deaf-blind organizations before and so, it wasn’t new to her, but again at that time, in my grandparents time, it was obviously a big deal, it would’ve been a big deal for them, but for my Momit was,” oh, okay, she’s deaf”, and on to the next… There wasn’t any generational deafness in my family, like I said, I’m the only deaf one in my family, so, just happened I guess.

**Courage**

*[David Interpreting] Professional Running while Deaf*

Being a runner, and obviously running against people who are hearing, there’s a lot of barriers. In terms of even the announcements, even the start time, like “1, 2, 3,”, by the time the gun would go off, certain things like that, the competition, and obviously every second counts, literally. So, if I was at the number 4 spot at the fourth block, then, by the time you would hear something, so making sure everyone hears something at the same time, but with me obviously, that being something, a deaf individual, so that would be one of the things, how do you get around that? And then obviously, a barrier would be calling my name, how do you call my name and do you get my attention? At the same time, going through high school, the competition, obviously everyone knew that calling my name, “remember”, and they would be so emphatic about, “You’re number 2, you’re number 4,”, so it was condescending the way it was done. So, as a result of going through that entire experience, and then finding something that works. So, it wasn’t easy to begin with, and getting all those things, and then being at a level where it’s going from a highschool level to a more world competition level, it was a long journey.

*[David Interpreting] Running with a Hearing Aid & Focusing on the Gun*

Well, first year, I remember looking back on it for myself, I would have my hearing aids, and then I would take them off and then I would actually look, I would pay attention and look at the same time, and just be aware of people moving. And I would see the smoke, sometimes with the gun, if I would see the smoke, or if I would see something, then I knew that that was the moment. The hearing aid worked at first, and then it didn’t work, cause it was so bothersome, physically on my ear, running, can you imagine? So, the second time I started running without it, I would look at the movement of the runners standing next to me and see when they would go, so the focus was laser sharp. Or, I would look at the gun, or look at someone in each lane. Depending on which lane I was in, if I was on the furthest, then I couldn’t see the gun so clearly, but if I was closer, then I could. So, then the benefit was I knew I would run my best if I was closer to the gun so I could actually hear it or sense it and then I could visually see the gun, and it gave me a leg up, so to say, because being closer in proximity to the gun worked with the gun. So it was all of these accommodations I was kind of going through, and just kind of trial and error working at.

*[Jo-Ann Interpreting] Family Life/Guyana & Only Deaf Person in Her Family*

It was always a challenge communicating with my Mom, we gestured back and forth, same as Alexa, but I mean, my world and Alexa’s were a little bit different, because my Mom wasn’t even born here. She was from Guyana, and in Guyana, there are way more limitations compared to here, we had ASL and we had the Gestural Sign Language, so the limitations were a lot more rampant in my hometown. But as I got older, our relationship did improve, and so, we’re a lot closer now, it’s not perfect, and, you know, my family as a whole does not sign, so we don’t have that bond as far as communication. I feel like, maybe, if my family did sign, they would know me a little bit better, but I don’t know. My entire family is hearing and I am the one sole deaf person in my whole family.

*[Jo-Ann Interpreting] Everything Happens for a Reason & Deaf Culture*

I feel like, you know, for my family, the deaf culture has been a little bit overwhelming for them and there’s a whole host of reasons, but just to summarize and to keep it simple, I believe, everything happens for a reason. I was born hearing, I was born a healthy baby, and it was around eight, that things started to shift and then when I got into highschool I was fully deaf. Nobody knows why, there’s no medical reason, I didn’t fall and hit my head, I didn’t have any crazy illness, and it’s just a medical mystery, there’s no generational deafness in my family history so. I don't know, I feel like as I’ve gotten older, I believe I’m here for a reason, and I’m deaf for a reason, you know to impact my family, impact the world, the fact I’m here with you sharing my story with you all to have a better understanding. I think that’s the reason. And, I do wish my family was more involved in my culture absolutely, but again, deaf culture is mine, and it’s my gift and I chose to treat it as such so, I’m happy.

**David Bobier**

*Adoption of Children who are Deaf*

I guess, well, my introduction obviously to the deaf community and deaf culture was in the adoption of two children that were born and living in Saskatoon at the time. We adopted my son first knowing he was deaf, so we had done a fair bit of research, or I had done a fair bit of research and preparation before hand, and started taking Sign Language courses with the intent of raising the children as much as possible through a deaf culture perspective. They also have an indigenous background, so that was a second culture that we wanted to emphasize in raising them.

*Raising Children who are Deaf*

Anjalee picked up Sign very quickly because she was much younger, Thomas, it was a much longer process for him to pick it up, and the frustration level really got quite heightened as he got older. He’s much more comfortable now. It’s all those sort of decisions parents make, and I’m judgemental about what decisions are made, In terms of a hearing parent with a deaf child. You know, there’s a lot of politics involved, the medical perspective is involved… Just an interesting side point here is that hearing aids for the deaf are only partially covered, whereas cochlear implants are fully covered. And, implants can cost 10-12 thousand dollars fully covered. So there’s still a real discrepancy.

*Hearing Loss and Working with the Deaf Community*

Having a hearing loss was something that I experienced from birth, really, but never really felt that it was unusual. I think it was a very long and challenging process, I think to be integrated into the culture. But I think as an artist, I had to start exploring all of this experience through my work, so I actually but an exhibition back in the mid-90’s now, that kind of dived into and encompasses some of those experiences of being a parent of deaf children and my research and my understanding of deaf culture and language from a non-D/deaf person. And, that exhibition opened up a kind of connection with the deaf community.

**Lynne**

*The Ass-bassador*

I can’t always express the words that I hear in my head, they just don’t come out of my mouth, the same way I’m hearing in my mind. I think I have a sort of George-Bush Syndrome. So, I often try to say a word, and it comes out wrong, and most of the time that’s just a tad uncomfortable, but one time it was actually very funny. I was in Cuba, and really lucky to be showing my work there, and we planned this opening and, once again were really lucky, the Canadian ambassador agreed to come to my opening, and so everybody arrived, and there were remarks, and I got up to thank him, and I said “I would like to thank the Ass-bassador for coming today”, and the audience erupted in laughter, so, yeah…

**Jonah**

*Left-handed in Catholic School*

I had kind of an old-guard teacher for JK, and she called a parent-teacher interview because I was a leftie, I went to a Catholic school, and she was like, “I have some terrible news, your son’s a leftie”, and so she came up with this program, she told my parents about how she was going to exercise the devil within me because I was a leftie, but both of my parents are also left-handed…

**Ted**

*Tinnitus as a Musician*

I have the condition known as Tinnitus, which for me manifests in a high pitched ringing in my ears that never turns off. And, as a performing musician and producer, I know a lot of people who are like me, who also have this. And, I’ll hear stories about my peers, who have the same condition have tried to make a bad situation better, and have used it for example, this ringing in their ears, to tune their instruments, or play around, and use it almost like a psychic ability, or pseudo-perfect pitch mechanism that they can pull on at any point, and I think that that silver lining, is quite interesting, especially when you think about musicians who have to deal with something as pervasive and chronic like tinnitus. Anyway…