

Larry Jacobs: Happy Monday, everybody. I'm Larry Jacobs. This is the [inaudible 00:00:16] talk radio. It is [inaudible 00:00:17]. August 19th [inaudible 00:00:32]. That means that summer's almost [inaudible 00:00:40]. That should do it, I hope. Okay. Sorry about that everybody. There's nothing I can do when I click on stuff and it doesn't work. What can I tell you? We have a lovely show for you today, one I've been looking forward to from good friends of mine over at Clarke Schools. Okay, and Clarke schools are for children with hearing loss. All right? They're a lovely group of people. Each year they have their conference on mainstreaming children with hearing loss. All right? Then it's going to be in Windsor, Connecticut this year. We're going to talk about it. We've got Claire Troiano.

Part of the celebration at this 40th annual meeting, right, is that they're going to have a performance from a group called No Limits, and they have a production called Silent No More. Obviously it's about children I believe more so than adults, but maybe everybody who have a severe hearing loss being involved in the regular world, and they should be. You'll find out all the wonderful things about this production and the conference, etc., as we go along, but it's Clarke Schools. All right, and this is No Limits. It's going to be great. We're going to archive the show at education-talkradio.org. We will tweet it out over it Edutalk Radio. Our full schedule's up on the website as and you know that we tweet at Edutalk Radio, LinkedIn, Edutalk. Larry and Facebook is Edutalk radio. Sorry about that.

Okay. First show of the week, give me a break here. Also, I want everybody to know that our new issue, the back to school issue of Accessibility, Compliance, and Equity magazine is up on site at Ace-ed.org. It's 80 pages; you'll love it. Great advertisers, great editorial, Clarke Schools is one of them. All right? You'll see them on there in the magazine. It's really wonderful and I hope you share it with your friends. We're very proud of it. There are actually, on page 80, I think it's 85 and 87 towards the end of the magazine, we have these incredible video ads. That's right, video ads inside our magazine. It's pretty cool, so check it all out. It's Ace-ed.org. We're proud and we hope you enjoy it. Please let us know if you do. Okay. Without further ado, I'm going to bring on my guest. I think, I'm not sure, I got three lines open and I think I just have two guests. I'm going to start with Claire and ask her. Hi, Claire. It's Larry.

Claire Troiano: Hey, Larry. How are you?

Larry Jacobs: We do have an extra guests. I have an extra warm line open here.

Claire Troiano: You know what? I think Rochelle from our communications department is just listening yet. I don't think she's participating.

Larry Jacobs: Okay. Rochelle [inaudible 00:03:35], how are you? You're my buddy and if you want to come on, give a high sign or something like that. Okay? If you want to

come on you can. Okay, so it's good. Claire Troiano, who I just said hello to, is the director of mainstream services, the educational administrator of the K-8 program for Clarke Schools. She's going to tell us all about them in a second, okay, in Northampton. Great town, by the way, Northampton, Massachusetts. All right? Claire is the producer of the conference, right, Claire?

Claire Troiano: That's right. That's right, Larry.

Larry Jacobs: Mainstreaming children with hearing loss and they can learn more. I got it right here. Hold on one second. Okay? Here's the website at Clarkeschools.org. Go over there and then there's a little icon at the top right. You can go over there and register. It's really cool. We'll talk about who should go there, etc. All right, but it's Clarke, C-L-A-R-K-E, schools.org. We also have from California, across the whole country, Dr. Michelle Christie. Hello, Michelle.

Michelle Christie: Hello, Larry. How are you?

Larry Jacobs: Welcome. You got to shout louder. You're all the way across the country. That was a joke.

Michelle Christie: We are; it's early.

Larry Jacobs: You're our in LA, right?

Michelle Christie: Yeah, we're out in Los Angeles.

Larry Jacobs: How's the weather out there because it's beautiful here today.

Michelle Christie: It's beautiful. It's really nice. No complaints.

Larry Jacobs: No complaints. I know that Claire feels like I do. When you look at August 19th, oh my God. It's almost the end of summer. Is that right, Claire?

Claire Troiano: [crosstalk 00:05:00] the end of summer. That's right. School starts in a week. It's a scary thought.

Larry Jacobs: Unbelievable. You know it happens. Now Dr. Michelle Christie is a special lady, not that Claire isn't. I don't mean to imply that, but she's extra special. Okay? Plus, Michelle, your CNN Person of the Year or hero. Am I correct?

Michelle Christie: Yes. I was selected as one of the CNN heroes. Yes.

Larry Jacobs: A hero, congratulations. Cool.

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Michelle Christie: Thank you. It's humbling and a little embarrassing. [crosstalk 00:05:31]

Larry Jacobs: I'd be proud of it. I know you are. I know you are and I'm thrilled and honored that you're here, my hero. Do you wear a cape now to work? Let me just ask you that.

Michelle Christie: I'm sorry?

Larry Jacobs: Do you wear a cape when you fly to work?

Michelle Christie: Yes.

Larry Jacobs: You do? No you don't. A cape, C-A-P-E, like Super Girl.

Michelle Christie: Oh, no not at all. I'm sorry. I apologize. I didn't hear you.

Larry Jacobs: Let's do that again. We're going to do that again. Do you wear a cape when you fly to work, Michelle?

Michelle Christie: Absolutely not.

Larry Jacobs: Thank you. I knew that was going to be the right answer, so I [crosstalk 00:06:08]. I think it's great. Okay. You're going to be the keynote speaker at the conference on mainstream children. When is the conference? Claire?

Claire Troiano: The conference is in October, October 24th and 25th. That's a Thursday/Friday. As you said it, it's in Windsor, Connecticut this year.

Larry Jacobs: Nice, and by the way, that's important because you can fly right into Bradley International Airport. That's right where Bradley is. Yeah, Which is a beautiful little airport. [inaudible 00:06:40] a little, okay? A regular airport, big airport, excuse me. Most people don't know about Bradley. Bradley is the one that serves Hartford and Springfield, Springfield, Mass, Hartford, Connecticut. It's in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, beautiful airport. You're right at what? The Marriott Airport Hotel?

Claire Troiano: We are, yeah. One of the reasons we chose that location is because it's so convenient to the airport.

Larry Jacobs: It is?

Claire Troiano: Bradley is an international airport and there's a free shuttle right to the Marriott from the airport. It's about a 10 minute drive. We're very excited about that

aspect of it. Marriott's got a beautiful conference center as well that really meets our needs.

Larry Jacobs: It's perfect. Okay? It's perfect. Then again, go to Clarkschools.org, everybody, if you want to learn more. Who should attend that, Claire? We'll talk about what Michelle's doing in second, but who's going to attend?

Claire Troiano: This is our 40th year as and we're quite excited about celebrating that. When we first started the conference, it was specifically for classroom teachers out in typical schools that might have one or two kids with hearing loss in their classroom. But we've grown so much over the year that now classroom teachers are just a small piece of our attendance. We have teachers of the deaf parents, special education teachers, audiologists, speech and language pathologists, really anybody that you find out there in a typical school who would interface and work with a student with hearing loss. We love it when principals and administrators come. We always try to draw as many of those individuals as we can because we really believe that they really set the tone in a school. The better educated they are, the better experience for everybody. But we have a hard time getting those busy people to come.

Larry Jacobs: They should come. [crosstalk 00:08:34] Okay? They should come and we got a lot of listeners here. Hopefully they'll learn more. Okay, go to Clarke schools.org, everybody, C-L-A-R-K-E, schools.org. It's really worthwhile to get easy to fly into, okay, because every airline services Bradley. Okay? It's a big airport. All right, so got to get someone that services Hartford, Connecticut and Springfield, Massachusetts. Okay?

Claire Troiano: Right.

Larry Jacobs: Please, yeah. Good. By the way, great place to put it. By the way, Windsor Locks is a pretty town, and Windsor as well. I really mean it. Have you ever been there? Have you ever been there, Michelle?

Michelle Christie: No, I haven't, so I'm excited to go.

Larry Jacobs: I hope you have a chance to explore New England a little bit because it's a really nice spot. Okay?

Michelle Christie: Absolutely.

Larry Jacobs: I hope you-

Claire Troiano: And a beautiful time of year. Beautiful time of year as well.

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- Larry Jacobs: Perfect time of year, October, my God. Okay. [crosstalk 00:09:28].
- Michelle Christie: Especially in California, we really don't have any seasons, so it's going to be nice to actually go to a season.
- Claire Troiano: Right.
- Larry Jacobs: You're going to be one of those people who says, "I want to live here forever," and I advise you to [crosstalk 00:09:37].
- Michelle Christie: All right, Claire, you're going to have to give me a job then.
- Claire Troiano: [crosstalk 00:09:43] Hey, Larry, I wanted to mention-
- Larry Jacobs: Make sure she gets you a lobster. That's key. Okay?
- Claire Troiano: [crosstalk 00:09:50] Larry, I wanted to mention when we were talking about-
- Larry Jacobs: Yeah, Claire you said something. Claire, you said something that struck me. Please, go ahead.
- Claire Troiano: No, I just wanted to mention when we were talking about who the conference was designed for, on the second day of our conference, we have a really special program called Making Connections that's designed for students actually fifth grade through high school who have hearing loss who are out in mainstream settings. They come on Friday and spend the day with their peers. We have two different facilitators. One of them actually has hearing loss himself and grew up in the mainstream. It's a great opportunity for kids to meet other kids like them and make some social connections. That's a really exciting piece of the conference as well.
- Larry Jacobs: Yeah. Yeah. The whole thing is very important. You said something that really struck me, before we get into the rest of this stuff. You said at the beginning, you only had a few teachers there that had maybe a kid or two in a whole school with hearing loss. Okay? We were trying to figure out what to do, etc., and now it's a much bigger conference, and all those people you mentioned are involved. I just wanted you to talk about this for a second. There's nothing going on these days that has created more people with hearing loss. It's just that we now know that there are more people with hearing loss. What has changed over those years? Every school can go; every teacher could go; every principal could certainly go, superintendents, speech-language, but something's increased the numbers. What is that?

Claire Troiano: Yeah, that's a really good question. I think it's a couple of factors. We have what's called newborn hearing screening now. Children are being identified much earlier or at birth actually with hearing loss, getting intervention hopefully pretty soon after being identified. Those kids are benefiting from cochlear implants or hearing aids at a very early age and really getting that base of language that they need in order to be successful in a mainstream school. That's the real big shift. These kids are hearing, listening and learning to speak through their hearing and able to develop that language and just develop the skills they need to be more successful in a mainstream setting. More and more kids are out there in the mainstream as opposed to being at a school for the deaf or in a program for the deaf. That's a really big shift. Then there's always the philosophical shift in wanting children to be in the least restrictive environment and being out with their peers in the mainstream, and that over the years becomes a bigger and bigger push. But it's an exciting time as well. These kids have opportunities-

Larry Jacobs: It's great.

Claire Troiano: Yeah, that have limited opportunities,

Larry Jacobs: Unlimited accessibility, compliance and equity, everybody, our magazine. That's exactly why we publish it for kids just like this, Ace-ed.org. Check it out, Michelle. You'll like it and you'll see that ad they're from a Clarke Schools. Okay. That was a great definition of that situation there. Thanks, Claire. Michelle, you're world famous now, now that you've been on Education Talk Radio and you're a CNN hero. Okay? I'm going to let you explain all this. You're going to be the keynote speaker at the conference. Congratulations on that.

Michelle Christie: Thank you.

Larry Jacobs: You're welcome, and also you're going to put on a performance from your group, which is called No Limits, and people can learn about that at Nolimitsfordeafchildren.org, one word, Nolimitsfordeafchildren.org, but you have a production that you put on, which is pretty cool. I want to say something about that. It's called Silent No More. Okay? People can look that up. But if you do look that up, everybody, be careful because there are a couple of things. I learned this when I did look it up called Silent No More. Some of them don't have anything to do with children with hearing loss. Okay? Just be sure you're on the right one. Okay? If I may just leave it at that. Okay? But the website of the group is Nolimitsfordeafchildren.org. Now Michelle, tell us about that and What you're going to do at the conference.

Michelle Christie: Silent No More has been a passion of mine. I've been teaching for the last 25 years. I started the program called No Limits based in Los Angeles, since I was working with kids, like the Clarke School, from zero to 21 and watching their

accomplishments, watching their struggles, and really getting to know the kids on a personal basis. A lot of what Claire was saying too, the teenage years tend to be pretty difficult trying to find people that are like them because a lot of these kids are getting mainstreamed earlier. What we did is we created a set of individual monologues where these individuals are now grown up and they're alumni of No Limits. They share their personal story of what it's like to have a hearing loss. It is a great opportunity for other people who have hearing loss to hear their story and identify with them, but also for educators to see what can I learn from these individuals?

Larry Jacobs: Mm-mm (affirmative), anybody.

Michelle Christie: How can I be a better educator? How can we change the system? How can we create more equity for these children who have struggled in the schools because they didn't caption videos, so they never were able to participate in the class, or they didn't have a note taker, someone to help them along the way or get the accommodations that they may need to succeed and the really inspiring and raw and enriching stories. We've been able to go across the country with this show, with different cast members, because we have kids all across the country. We have Kathy Buckley, who's a famous deaf comic who shares her story along with Rebecca Alexander, who is deaf and blind. She wrote a book called Not Fade Away.

We also have alumni who just share the story about what it's like to be mainstreamed because it's a new generation of deafness right now. We have kids getting early diagnosed and now they're not with other kids like themselves in the classroom. They go out into a school and they may be the only one in their entire school. They really don't feel like they fit in. We struggle with a lot of kids feeling lonely and feeling like they're not part of the hearing world because they can't hear.

Larry Jacobs: If I may, the downside of mainstreaming. That's interesting, the downside of [crosstalk 00:00:16:31].

Michelle Christie: It's a part that we can, with Clarke and what we do here, is having teen clubs, having teens interact with teens so we can just be aware of what we can do to help them through the process so they don't feel alone. Part of the show, when I started it five years ago, it was just here in Los Angeles. Just what I would do is interview all these different adults now who have hearing loss. I know their story; I've been part of it. It's a theatrical documentary. I can use footage when they were five years old, learning how to communicate to showing their whole life story. It's very personal because you see video of them. You see them as little creatures going up and growing through this age of learning how to speak or not being able to speak, to being able to speak, to learning about their

struggles and their accomplishments. It's a beautiful way to highlight how well they can do but also highlight what we can do better.

Larry Jacobs: Good point.

Michelle Christie: At the show, people walk away learning, even educators like myself. I continue to learn about their stories. For instance, we had this girl, Angela, who's in New Jersey. [inaudible 00:17:44] New Jersey theater program and she shared a story about when she was 10. she had a hearing sister who was five. The little five-year-old had some friends over and they were talking about the word "survive." Angela said, "What does survive mean?" They all just laughed at her, including her sister. It was the first time she realized, "I'm 10 years old, and my five-year-old has more language or understands language better than me."

Larry Jacobs: That's right.

Michelle Christie: Being aware of what can we do for those situations, in our school system here in Los Angeles, we are the second largest school district. A lot of our kids that we work with, we have an afterschool program, are economically disadvantaged. Over 95% live in poverty. Those are the kids we really want to help. Yet they go to the school and they sign something called an IEP. It's a contract between the school and the parent, and it's not in their home language.

Larry Jacobs: Sure.

Michelle Christie: They just make them sign it in English. Just blatant inequity, and then also these kids, if the parents aren't-

Larry Jacobs: If I may, blatant idiocy, not only inequity.

Michelle Christie: Yes. [crosstalk 00:18:53] It happens so much for a lot of kids from different races and from different economic backgrounds.

Larry Jacobs: Sure.

Michelle Christie: We're always fighting to try to get these kids what they deserve, not only a least restrictive environment, but the equity and the quality of education. We passionately are fighting for that all of the time. Right now, they will give hearing aids to kids at the school who say the hearing aid breaks. They have to rely on the state to replace them. It could take a couple months here, so a child going to school without hearing aids, that just not acceptable. [crosstalk 00:19:31].

Larry Jacobs: What's the point? Yeah.

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Michelle Christie: The great news is the school will provide them at the school, but then at the bus stop they take them away.

Larry Jacobs: Sure.

Michelle Christie: They say they can't take them home. The child's going home with no device, no way to access sound in their family, develop those incredible relationships.

Larry Jacobs: This is a dumb question. I have to ask you something. What can possibly, this one I do not get, would be the rationale for taking away the hearing aids when the kids go home?

Michelle Christie: Maybe they were too expensive. But, see, out in California a lot of at risk kids were given iPads to take home.

Larry Jacobs: I know.

Michelle Christie: If they're letting them take home iPads, why can't they take home hearing aids?

Larry Jacobs: Hear, hear.

Michelle Christie: Something that's vital to their not only social-emotional growth but their academic growth?

Larry Jacobs: Their survival.

Michelle Christie: If you want them to do well, they have to be able to hear.

Larry Jacobs: Everything. It's unbelievable. One of the problems, the challenges, not problem, the challenges for deaf people, okay, is that it's a hidden disability, if I may.

Michelle Christie: It is; it's invisible.

Larry Jacobs: Most people think, "Oh well, you can't hear maybe, but you can certainly read, and you could certainly understand the word "survive," but in actuality you can't do those because all those things, you can do those of course, but the things depend on language and hearing and nuance and depth of language hearing. Okay? You can't believe how much, I hope people understand that how much hearing has to do with your vocabulary, your understanding of things. But years ago, I've told Claire this, I think before. My wife years ago in Philadelphia, it's still there I think, started the Southeastern Pennsylvania legal Services for the Deaf, with a few other friends. Yeah. Why? Why can't they just go to a regular lawyer, [inaudible 00:21:17] as a regular lawyer can't sign. I tell you I'm talking about '70s. A regular lawyer doesn't understand that those words, like you were

saying, "I'll sign the IEP," they don't understand what those words mean even though they're in English and they spoke English. Okay? We don't even [inaudible 00:21:32]. Okay?

Michelle Christie: [crosstalk 00:21:32] I think there's this belief out there, Larry, that it's like putting on a pair of glasses. You put them on; you can see. You put on a hearing device, a cochlear implant, which is amazing, and digital hearing aids, the technology is so good today, but without programs like Clarke are No Limits, these kids just don't automatically start learning to speak.

Larry Jacobs: That's right.

Michelle Christie: It just doesn't happen that way. They need that intervention. They need the educational support to do well, and then throughout their school years to keep up with their academics and keep up with their social-emotional wellbeing and the health of who they are inside is equally important.

Larry Jacobs: Of course. [crosstalk 00:22:07].

Michelle Christie: The show is so great about sharing that. You walk out of there and you just never forget these stories because they're shared by the person.

Larry Jacobs: You never forget that stuff once you learn it. You never forget this stuff once you learned about the deaf. To me, it's fascinating.

Michelle Christie: Yeah, it really is. [crosstalk 00:22:24] The show's been going on across the country with different cast members and we're supposed to be able [crosstalk 00:22:29] to bring it. Yep.

Larry Jacobs: Let me just get this point. Sold out at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Art and at Carnegie hall. How about that, everybody?

Michelle Christie: [crosstalk 00:22:37] out of all the shows across the country. It just gets a lot of recognition. What we also do, Larry, which we don't talk about too much, is we do discuss the debate between sign language versus spoken language, which we know is a heated debate of which direction to go, because what's happened is a lot of our kids are growing up, and they've been just learning how to speak. They didn't learn sign language and then they get into high school and college, and they start meeting people who use sign language and they want to be part of the deaf community. We call it the big D where it's signing only. These kids want to be part of it, so they learn sign language. Then the deaf community's like, "Wait, you wear cochlear implants. You use spoken language," and so it becomes a little bit of a debate.

At all of our shows, we invite 50% of the deaf community, signing only folks to come to the performance. We have it in captioning as well as ASL. Then we do a Q&A with the cast members. We can educate too the deaf community on what some of the struggles are about the new generation of kids with hearing loss learning to speak, and try to bridge that gap, because there's nothing wrong with sign language. It's not our choice as educators. It's up to the parents, and for these parents, if they choose to use spoken language or get a cochlear implant, and if a kid wants to become part of the deaf community and also be able to speak too, do both, should they be rejected by the deaf community? Should the deaf community welcome them? That's up to them, of course, but trying to shed light on it. What we've been able to do is bridge that gap. A lot of deaf community folks who come into the show are hesitant to come because they all are speaking on stage and they're deaf and they should be learning sign language.

We can talk about it and say, "This is what's happening," and not be afraid to discuss it because a lot of these kids are confused. They just feel like, "I want to be part of the deaf community. I want to be part of the hearing community," and they're really stuck in the middle. They don't have a culture of their own quite yet. They don't have their spoken language community unless you're at a school, like Clarke, or your little pockets. But if you go out there, most people are going to say, "Oh, you're deaf? Do you sign?" They say, "No, I speak." How do you speak? I didn't know that it was possible. We're still struggling with giving them that platform to have a voice.

Larry Jacobs: You are. We are, and that's why it's important again, educators, especially around New England, New York, down through the mid-Atlantic, okay? In October, Clarke School's mainstreaming conference in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Easy to get to. Okay. Believe me, easy to get to. Southwest Airlines for a good example. Okay? Up in Windsor Locks in October. Claire, let me ask you something. This is going to be a weird question, but I live in a little town in Maine called Cornish, Maine. Before this I lived outside of Boston, and I ran into very few deaf people, or at least I didn't run into many at business and that sort of thing. I'm just curious. How are we doing with deaf people? Your job is to get these kids ready into college and all that. The colleges or wherever want to prepare them for the workplace. These are very into obviously equal intelligence like everybody else. Okay? How are we doing? How's the job market? What's the end goal? However you want to answer that question. How are we doing? That's my basic question.

Claire Troiano: I think we're doing much better than we were doing 30 years ago.

Larry Jacobs: Hear, hear. I would agree. Yeah, absolutely. I just never seen anybody, so I'm just curious. I'm out of the mainstream of that. How are we doing? Yeah.

Claire Troiano: When you say you just don't see anybody, I think you said it a little bit earlier.

Larry Jacobs: It's hidden.

Claire Troiano: Maybe Michelle said that it's the hidden disability. Today, with the cochlear implants and the high powered hearing digital hearing aids, most of the individuals who were able to make use of those from a young age sounds like you and I. That's an added ...

Larry Jacobs: It's great.

Claire Troiano: It's great, so how are they doing?

Larry Jacobs: Yeah, the workplace. [crosstalk 00:27:01] They have to work at Google and everything else and they can work wherever they want to work. How we doing on all that?

Claire Troiano: Yeah. I can speak from my experience of the other students that we work with here at Clarke, who graduated from Clarke, go onto high school and go onto college, and I think we're doing pretty good. Clarke itself has a pretty high statistic rate of 86% of our kids who graduate go on to higher education, and hopefully then get gainfully employed. I certainly meet a lot of older deaf individuals who will talk about the challenge it is to find a job. But I don't hear that from the younger generation.

Larry Jacobs: Great, that's great.

Claire Troiano: Yeah, yeah, I think we're doing pretty well. I think as Michelle talked about earlier about the social isolation that kids experience in school. I think a lot of individuals might continue to experience that at the workforce as well. It's always there and it's always a challenge because as well as all of these individuals are doing, they still have a significant hearing loss. They're never going to hear like you and I do. They're going to miss conversations, especially if there's a group, they're going to miss things in those conversations. They're going to have to advocate for accommodations in the workforce, just like we help them advocate in school settings. In other words, the hearing loss doesn't go away. There's still ...

Larry Jacobs: No, it doesn't.

Claire Troiano: Yeah.

Larry Jacobs: Are the common colleges and universities, are they accommodating these students?

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Claire Troiano: Much, much better. The choice is-

Michelle Christie: Yeah, I think they're just fantastic. Yeah.

Claire Troiano: Yeah. The choices the kids have today, the whole awareness of disability services and accommodations is great.

Michelle Christie: [crosstalk 00:28:58] I don't know, but I know out here, just like in Los Angeles, the school systems haven't caught up with colleges and universities. College/universities, our families don't have to fight for anything. They're like, "What do you need?" They're there for these kids to succeed in college. That's been a wonderful opportunity for kids not to be afraid to go to college too, feeling like, "Oh gosh, am I going to get those accommodations that I had in high school?".

Claire Troiano: Right.

Michelle Christie: Out here, that has happened, and there's some really good schools. There's Rochester Institute of the Deaf. If you want to go to a deaf program, there's other programs out there that kids can participate in. But I agree; I think the future is bright and I think we have learned as educators to start at birth with advocacy rather than waiting until the high school.

Claire Troiano: Right.

Michelle Christie: I think ingraining that in a child and a family's life, this opportunity to go to colleges is much greater now because they know how to advocate.

Larry Jacobs: [crosstalk 00:29:51] Yeah, there also have been taken care of since birth. Okay? As opposed to the old days, if I may. But anyway, you were going to say, Claire?

Claire Troiano: Yeah, I was just going to say, I will say that we find it continues to be a challenge to help high school guidance counselors understand about the accommodations that a student might need when they go to college because if you're a high school guidance counselor, you'll have a caseload of 500 kids and maybe one of them has hearing loss or two of them have hearing loss. [crosstalk 00:30:19]. We find that a big part of our job continually helping the guidance counselors know what the options are and what the needed services are on the college level. [crosstalk 00:00:30:29].

Michelle Christie: I have a situation right now-

Larry Jacobs: What percentage of kids who have hearing loss or deaf, however you want to describe that, okay, who would need special services because of hearing loss?

Let's put it that way. Okay? What's the percentage of kids in public education? Do you know? Claire?

Claire Troiano: Nationally? That's a good question, but I don't know. Do you, Michelle? I have no ...

Michelle Christie: No, I think it's a great question as well.

Claire Troiano: Yeah.

Michelle Christie: [crosstalk 00:30:58] I have a student here that, Larry, that's so interesting story is that he has a profound loss, didn't start getting hearing aids until he was eight. He's from Korea and came into America. But yet he learned to speak and he's a great reader and now he's in honors classes in high school.

Larry Jacobs: He's from Korea.

Michelle Christie: He's now 17, and it all sounds great. He got a note taker; he got car. They decided this year that he went to school last week and they said, "You no longer get car or a note taker because you need to advocate and we need you to be more independent." They're taking away something that's actually allowing him to proceed.

Claire Troiano: Making him a dependent, yeah.

Michelle Christie: It's what Claire thinks. You almost have to educate the educators and to say, "No, no, no, you cannot take away. It's for him. He has a profound loss. He can't get a cochlear implant because he can't afford it." He is off the charts with a profound loss, yet they're going to take away what allows him to succeed. We're now having to go to due process just to allow them to give him his accommodations. I said, "You're asking him to advocate and be independent. Yet he's advocating by saying what he wants and what he needs to succeed," and yet they're taking it away.

Larry Jacobs: Yes, good point, a catch 22. Advocate for what you need. We're going to teach you to do that. By the way, we're not listening to you. That's great.

Michelle Christie: Exactly. A good point. Yeah. [crosstalk 00:32:18] I think the education part of it is something that I feel as people who work with kids with hearing loss, it is important for us to not assume that educators know what to do with our kids, that we have to go out there and teach them as well.

Claire Troiano: Larry, your question about the percentage.

Larry Jacobs: The percentage. Somebody must have given you the answer. What is it? Yes? [crosstalk 00:32:39].

Claire Troiano: No, but you know what? We might be able to find out because actually one of our workshops at the conference this year is going to be by two authors of the latest edition from the National Association of State Special Educators. They put out a paper called Optimizing Outcomes for Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. It's a national paper. Two of the writers of this report, one of them so actually is a Clarke staff member, Barbara Heck, who runs our Boston program. They're going to present. They're doing one of our keynotes [crosstalk 00:33:16] documented at [inaudible 00:33:17]. I will try to get the answer to your question from them.

Michelle Christie: Hmm.

Larry Jacobs: Yeah, thank you, and actually send me an email when you get that because I don't really know. Yeah. Find out and I will broadcast. A couple little questions. I'll ask Claire. Claire, what brought you together with Michelle? I almost said Christine because you were Christie. I almost said Christine. Sorry.

Claire Troiano: Great question. One of the goals of our conference always is to include the voices of individuals with hearing loss. It's usually young adults or adults in terms of either somebody giving a keynote about their personal experience or a panel of intangibles. Actually Michelle had actually sent us a copy of her Silent No More book. I don't know if you also know she has a book.

Larry Jacobs: I do know that.

Claire Troiano: Which is a collection of stories from these individuals. Anyway, she had sent us this book right around the time when we were talking about this as our 40th conference. We want to do something really special and unique.

Larry Jacobs: Perfect timing, yeah.

Claire Troiano: It was great timing. I handed it over to my staff person, Caroline, who coordinates the conference, and I said, "Hey, check this out," and the rest is history. She connected with Michelle and we had some planning meetings and just couldn't wait to sign them on and get them to the conference. I had heard of No Limits through my work with colleagues, etc., but I had never had any direct experience with them.

Larry Jacobs: Now you do.

Claire Troiano: [crosstalk 00:34:50] I really can't think of a better way to showcase the stories and the voices of individuals with hearing loss than through this performance.

Larry Jacobs: Like I keep saying, it's a hidden disability. We got to be really careful with this one, okay, because it's all the potential in the world as usual and you don't want to miss it. Okay? We want to make sure we grab it all. The conference again, in October, just go to Clarkschools.org and you'll see the icon in the upper right hand side, and just click through there. No excuses period. If you're No Limits, no excuses if you live anywhere in New England or mid-Atlantic. Okay, you should go. All right? Let me put it this way. Every school district who sends somebody, let's at least go that way. Every school district should send somebody. Let's at least go that way. [crosstalk 00:35:41].

Claire Troiano: Yeah, that'd be wonderful.

Larry Jacobs: That's a simple way to put it. No matter who they send, okay, it will be good, and you'll be able to get the word out there. All right? Again, it's Clarkschools.org, and also check out what Michelle does, which is a long URL. Nolimitsfordeafchildren.org, one word, Nolimitsfordeafchildren.org, pretty cool stuff I got to tell you, a CNN hero, and now an Edutalk Radio hero. There you go. Congratulations, Michelle.

Michelle Christie: Thank you.

Claire Troiano: Michelle, I didn't know you were a CNN hero. That's fantastic.

Larry Jacobs: Yeah, she is a CNN hero.

Claire Troiano: Will you highlighted in this upcoming year?

Michelle Christie: It was a year and half ago?

Claire Troiano: Oh, was it?

Michelle Christ: Yeah, it was 2017 actually, so it's two years ago.

Claire Troiano: Oh, okay. Okay, cool.

Larry Jacobs: But she's still a hero. She still is. [crosstalk 00:36:32].

Michelle Christie: I don't know. Heroes are meant for firefighters. [crosstalk 00:36:35] We love it. It's always a joy.

Larry Jacobs: [crosstalk 00:36:37] of heroes. There are different kinds of heroes. You're were a different kind of hero than our firefighters and police officers and soldiers and all that sort. [crosstalk 00:36:45].

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Michelle Christie: Thank you, Larry.

Larry Jacobs: You're not that kind of a hero. You were a different kind of hero, okay? You can't de-hero. I don't think you can de-hero or un-hero.

Michelle Christie: Thank you.

Larry Jacobs: Okay, Michelle, congratulations. Claire, this is just great. I wish you a lot of luck and really good fortune and lots of great stuff with the conference and everything you guys do.

Claire Troiano: Thank you.

Larry Jacobs: Okay? Thank you very much. Okay? Both of you, you have a great day, enjoy, and come to New England and make her buy you a lobster.

Michelle Christie: Absolutely. I'm in.

Larry Jacobs: Okay, do it. Okay? [crosstalk 00:37:19].

Claire Troiano: I don't know. We're not that close to the coast here, but we'll try.

Larry Jacobs: They have lobsters in Windsor, Connecticut. Are you kidding me? They have signs [inaudible 00:37:25]. Tourists are coming up and they think they're close to the coast. Okay, so just do it. I'm telling you.

Claire Troiano: All right.

Larry Jacobs: Okay? Thanks guys.

Michelle Christie: Bye, Claire. [crosstalk 00:37:34].

Larry Jacobs: Thank you, bye-bye. Isn't that great? Wow. You still there, Rochelle? Bye, Rochelle, okay. My buddy Rochelle Farelli over there who was listening. I didn't bring you on. Okay. All right. That was Michelle Christie, executive director of No Limits, Nolimitsfordeafchildren.org, and please check out the conference. This is worth knowing about. It's worth getting in touch with Clarke Schools when you deal with kids who are deaf and hard of hearing. All right? It's Clarkeschools.org and Clarke is with an E at the end. All right, we're going to archive the show, education desk, talkradio.org, tweet it out at Edutalk Radio. Sorry, the music was so screwed at the beginning of the show. What are you going to do? Check out our magazine, which is wonderful, the spec school issue, H-ed.org, accessibility compliance at equity. My name is Larry Jacobs. This is pre-K-12

Education Talk Radio. Can't thank you enough for listening. You guys have a great day.