

# OCALI | Podcast – From my Perspective

## Series Intro Transcript

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**Simon Buehrer:** Hey, everyone. Welcome to a special edition of Inspiring Change from OCALI, our audio journey of stories and connections inspired by the equation  $A + B = C$  or Access plus Belonging equals Community. I'm Simon Buehrer, and I am delighted to welcome my colleague and good friend Jen Bavry, Jen B, as we like to call her. [LAUGHTER] Hey, Jen.

**Jen Bavry:** Hey, Simon, it's wonderful to be here with you.

**Simon Buehrer:** It's so great. We are excited to share some great news and a new twist in that Inspiring Change audio journey. What are we getting into?

**Jen Bavry:** As our listeners may or may not know, the Family and Community Outreach Center here at OCALI previously produced its own podcast called From My Perspective. It is full of wonderful conversations and stories with people with disabilities, their family members, their friends, their neighbors. We are now taking all 13 episodes and repackaging them under the Inspiring Change banner.

**Simon Buehrer:** I am really excited about that, and I'm super jazzed to reshare this series with everyone. Let's talk a little bit about it, Jen. I know this actually was our first podcast here at OCALI and I think it started in 2016, is that correct?

**Jen Bavry:** Yes, I believe you're right, 2016. That's a while ago.

**Simon Buehrer:** Can you talk a little bit about the origins and how it started and how we first brought this through the Family and Community Outreach Center?

**Jen Bavry:** I'm glad you're asking that. The podcasts really had the goal of just gaining a better understanding of what life is like from different viewpoints of individuals with disabilities, of course their families, and the various supports and services and resources surrounding them. There's something truly uplifting and inspiring about hearing others' stories. It's just ... this podcast, really, again, the purpose is, we're all on our own unique journeys, and the paths we take can lead us in all sorts of directions. Often these paths, they're shaped or influenced by the experience of others. Whether they've been on a similar journey or they're just starting out themselves. Having this opportunity to hear stories from different perspectives can really help others prepare or be ready for what might be coming next. The one thing too, I liked about these stories and I think some of the ones that I was more engaged in, really helped us with understanding what might be going on in our communities, in our state, or even in the world. They highlighted personal journeys that were fueled by unique interests, and really emphasized the importance of supporting our mental, physical and emotional well-being. I think just

together, these stories really show us new ways to foster a genuine sense of belonging.

**Simon Buehrer:** I think by hearing the voices of family members and individuals themselves, there's just something really powerful and poignant in those.

**Jen Bavry:** Yes, they can be so helpful, and they really can encourage others on their path.

**Simon Buehrer:** It's different than writing out a story. It's all the magic of audio.

**Jen Bavry:** Absolutely. Yes. We had some fun stories that we were able to capture through this podcast series and just really enjoyed those conversations.

**Simon Buehrer:** I know in the beginning it was ambitiously referred to as a weekly podcast and I know... [LAUGHTER] that you and I both... from working on podcasts over the years, it's a lot of work, and it's a pretty big lift, especially when it's not your only task to be done.

**Jen Bavry:** Absolutely, definitely. We had some lessons learned from this process, and what I'm excited about as we start at the beginning is, it's going to be wonderful to be able to connect these episodes to a main podcast platform or channel, because it shares the same vibes, the same goals, and it'll really give listeners a chance to enjoy other stories and other series, even if there's some that might be on pause for the moment, or if we're not creating new stories to go along with that series.

**Simon Buehrer:** We didn't want to just shut the whole thing down and archive everything, because there's too many rich conversations. Well, tell me a little bit about your journey with From My Perspective, Jen. You picked it up midstream, so what was that like?

**Jen Bavry:** Yeah, I did. I had the pleasure of engaging in this podcast series during my previous work with the Family and Community Outreach Center. For me, it was really just about paying attention to what was going on around us, and just being able to have that opportunity to engage with others, listen to others, share stories of how folks are getting through these changing times. It was really just helpful ... I was hoping, helpful for others listening, as well as for me.

**Simon Buehrer:** You were learning as you did it. You didn't really ... I don't think you had previous podcast production experience?

**Jen Bavry:** No, not at all. [LAUGHTER] Definitely, as you go back to the question about weekly, it definitely changed after going through my first episode. But I think it was just more about making sure you were setting the right tone for the conversation and having folks come into that space, being able to share and just making it a pleasant experience, I think was my ultimate goal in when I was doing these.

**Simon Buehrer:** We also call you our self-care sage for a lot of reasons, because you really helped center. And you were really focused on whomever you were talking to, and really focused on the stories of their experiences and helped really draw them out. So kudos to you, having gone through this journey with the latter part of From My Perspective. Are there particular stories or moments that stick out to you?

**Jen Bavry:** Well, can I say they all did? I think it's—

**Simon Buehrer:** Absolutely.

**Jen Bavry:** ... hard to narrow it down to just one.

**Simon Buehrer:** Who's your favorite child? [LAUGHTER]

**Jen Bavry:** Well, no, each story really provided a new outlook. I'd say I'd have a tough time picking one, but I think as we talk about the "Access plus Belonging equals Community," and  $A + B = C$ , I think the last episode I did really stands out as one that really offered a unique solution to that simple equation. It provided a glimpse into a community's revitalization and the innovative initiatives that they were moving forward, aimed at empowering people with disabilities. My guest for that episode really shared how they were focusing on providing opportunities and promoting independence, because they found that it contributed to, as they stated, bringing about a vibrant community where people lead fulfilling lives and make meaningful contributions. I would say that one—they all were wonderful opportunities to engage with others—but that one really stood out to me as a way of just truly seeing that  $A + B = C$  come to life.

**Simon Buehrer:** I love it. The episode you're referring to is Lucky Episode Number 13. It's called "Contributing to a Vibrant Community," and it focused on Art & Clay on Main and Square 7 Coffee House, in Lancaster, Ohio. Now, these are two nonprofit social enterprises of the Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Let's listen to a little bit of your conversation with Temple Montanez, who, at the time, was with the Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

**Jen Bavry:** Maybe we can first start with just a little background if you want to share more about Art & Clay on Main and Square 7 Coffee House and your role with both?

**Temple Montanez:** Absolutely. Well, thank you for having us. Yes, Art and Clay on Main and Square 7 Coffee House are social purpose enterprises of the Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities in Lancaster, Ohio. Art and Clay on Main is a paint-your-own pottery studio that was started well over 15 years ago by a local entrepreneur, and she was ready to close up and try something new in her life. At the time, our superintendent, John Pekar, decided, what a shame. It's such a vibrant business, and we hate to see any business in downtown Lancaster close. But also, he really thought that there might be some kind of opportunity there. He didn't quite know what that opportunity was at the time, but he did manage to

convince the board that this might be something that had a lot of different legs and moving parts to it and that they should further explore.

To make a very long story short, it was really a "ready, fire, aim" operation, but the Fairfield County Board of DD did acquire Art and Clay on Main, and at the time, one of the first things that we did was move a group of artists with developmental disabilities into this space. They were known as the Blue Shoe Artists. They were already functioning as an independent art group, but they were really looking for studio space, so that's the first thing that happened. We also resurrected the paint-your-own pottery business and opened that to the public.

Over the years, we went through a lot of metamorphosis. We started doing art lessons here. We started inviting different groups of people with developmental disabilities in to use the space, and of course, then kept that retail aspect going as well. A few years after that, we added the coffee shop, and with that, we started working with our job development arm at Fairfield DD on implementing an internship program that would teach job readiness skills and some soft skills to people who were really just beginning to explore the realm of possibility for employment.

We've gone through a lot of growth since then. Blue Shoe Art has expanded to the point where they are not a group of artists with developmental disabilities, but they are now an artist-in-residence group that includes people in the community with and without disabilities. The internship program is still in full swing, but on top of that, we now employ at Art and Clay and Square 7 a permanent workforce of people with and without developmental disabilities.

**Simon Buehrer:** That was Temple Montanez, talking about Art and Clay on Main and Square 7 Coffee House, two nonprofit social enterprises of the Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Lots of great stuff in there, Jen. Employment, art—one of my favorites, coffee—and a focus on building opportunities for belonging and community, all of which was featured in "Contributing to a Vibrant Community." Episode 13 of the From My Perspective podcast series, courtesy of the Family and Community Outreach Center here at OCALI.

Again, we are taking that episode, the last episode in From My Perspective, and we are simply repackaging everything under the Inspiring Change banner. We're going to keep all the episodes intact. We've added a little music here and there and maybe enhanced the audio quality a little bit. But otherwise, they're the same warm and wonderful conversations that you found in the original podcast. Excited to move forward with this.

**Jen Bavy:** I am too, Simon. I think the passions, the interests, the perspectives that were shared will just now be part of a bigger collection of exciting and inspiring stories for our followers to connect with and enjoy.

**Simon Buehrer:** I love it. Thank you so much, Jen.

**Jen Bavry:** Thanks, Simon.

**Simon Buehrer:** Thanks to the Family and Community Outreach Center here at OCALI for producing From My Perspective. Again, we are now moving that entire 13-episode series under the Inspiring Change banner. And you can learn more about the Family and Community Outreach Center at OCALI, [ocali.org](https://ocali.org). And you can find all of our podcast episodes at [ocali.org/podcasts](https://ocali.org/podcasts) or wherever you get your podcasts.

Jen Bavry, thanks again for joining us today.

**Jen Bavry:** Thanks, Simon.

**Simon Buehrer:** Thank you for listening. I'm Simon Buehrer. We'll see you soon.

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