



**Virtual Ability, Inc.® presents the 6th Annual
International Disability Rights Affirmation Conference
December 1 and 2, 2017
in Second Life at
<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Virtual%20Ability/54/170/23>**

Title: "Diverse identities, diverse tactics: Bringing disability activist wisdom to all political movements"
Speaker: Ms Katie Tastrom, MSW, Esq., blogger and author

[2017/12/02 10:11] Carolyn Carillon: Hello everyone.
Today's presentation is being transcribed so those without audio or who require text only can participate in real time.

A little explanation about this service.

Voice-to-text transcriptionists provide a translation of the key ideas discussed, NOT a word for word transcription.

Voice-to-text services provide an in-the-moment snapshot of ideas and concepts, so that those who are unable to hear or to understand the audio program are able to participate in real-time.

You will see the transcription in local chat.

Transcription is provided by Virtual Ability, Inc.

The transcriptionists are:

Elektra Panthar

Carolyn Carillon

The following initials in the transcription record will identify the speakers,

KT: Katie Tastrom

[2017/12/02 10:12] Carolyn Carillon: <<transcription begins>>

[2017/12/02 10:13] PeacefulJames Resident: Good morning everyone, and welcome to the IDRAC Conference here at VAI's Sojourner Auditorium.

Before I truly begin, please let me remind EVERYONE (myself included) to only talk in Open Chat and/or Voice during Questions and Answers, or unless our input is directly asked for.

Also, please DO NOT USE Gestures, as they tend to be very disruptive; especially for folks using viewers for the vision impaired.

I was told to take this opportunity to first say a bit about myself...

My name in SecondLife is Peaceful James.

I chose that name as part of my personal 'rehab' work, when I came to SL to follow up on an article in the National MS Society's Magazine.

Prior to my being Disabled by MS, I used to work 40-60 hours a week at Hewlett Packard, teach at a martial arts studio most nights and weekends, and once a month I would spend the weekend with my National Guard unit. (A Special Forces A-Team) All of that was in addition to being a father and husband.

All of that went away when MS came to stay.

I was not exactly a 'peaceful' man back then.

So... My name (in SL), and my entire approach to life had to change.

I did a lot of inner work, to help reduce my underlying stress levels.

I actually became more 'peaceful, loving, and kind'.

Since I started those Holistic Changes, my overall health has improved a lot, though I am still disabled.

Changing from the inside out did wonders for me, made me a better man, and eventually brought me to my lovely wife, Suellen!

All in all, I would have to say, "I may have MS, but MS does NOT have me!"

But enough about me! I am pleased to introduce our next Speaker today.

Katie Tastrom is a disability lawyer, writer, activist, and sick person.

(Her words, not mine!) ;)

And that is all she had to say about herself, but...

someone did a bit of digging and learned the following:

Her work has been featured at Slate, Ravishly, and The Establishment,

and she is a former content writer for The Body Is Not An Apology.
She has a website at katietastrom.com, and she spends her days working to get disabled people in the US the benefits they are entitled to.

I understand her presentation today might include:

Diverse identities, diverse tactics: Bringing disability activist wisdom to all political movements.

Disabled-led activism has been transformational in enhancing the rights and lives of disabled people, though we have an incredibly long way to go.

As people with lived experiences of disability we have skills and talents that can be helpful in furthering the rights of other marginalized people, and it is crucial that we use these skills.

We have multiple identities and even though we may be oppressed in some ways due to our disabilities, we need to always think about areas where we are privileged and how to leverage those privileges to create change.

This presentation will talk about why and how we can do this.

[2017/12/02 10:19] Elektra Panthar: KT: Thank you for introducing, I relate to what he said about his life

I stopped working as well recently

It's my first time using SL

I am a lawyer, writer activist, with autoimmune illnesses

All these things influence my identity

Why it's important for people with disabilities to be politically active

It's going to have a US focus because it's where I live

ADAPT has been in the news about fighting against the new healthcare bill

The news covered the protests and people were outraged at seeing people with disabilities getting arrested

ACT-UP started during the AIDS problem in the 80s

People with disabilities are innovators because often they have to overcome many difficulties and have to find ways to overcome barriers

They also rely on each other

Activism is not always available to everyone though, so I want to try to find ways to make it so

These ideas might not be applicable to everyone but it might be a way to give people ideas and start a conversation

A good idea is to have a backup presenter in case I am too sick that day to do it myself

Next thing is to let know people in advance about my illness so they can manage their expectation

In a group you develop a culture, norms in place in case someone has to cancel/can't participate

Technology can help, like Skype

Another thing we need to think about for meetings in RL is the location's accessibility (seating, space, lighting, acoustic, transportation etc)

Another way to support each other is to help with daily tasks while the person is busy
For me something that worked is being able to do one time events instead of ongoing ones

That gave me the chance to pace myself better

For others the opposite might be true, but it might give others ideas of how to make events more inclusive

It's important to remember it doesn't have to be "fair", it's ok to adjust according to people's needs - for example an able bodied friend would have no problem always driving to my home for meetings, as long as it's in the evenings

A lot of times we don't need to be present in person to do the work

Sometimes it's better to be if people need to see the person to pick up on social/visual cues etc

It's important to be understanding that emergencies happen

Honoring each other's needs makes for a better activism in general

Ableism and prejudice won't go away overnight

Sometimes access needs will clash

If you do the work right this is a good sign that you're making it accessible to a wide variety of people

Being flexible is crucial, as is ingenuity

In the end all activism is disability activism, because if we overcome the obstacles we also help other 'minorities'

Intersectionality is the key - overlapping identities. Many of us have multiple identities

Some of them make us privileged, like being white in the US

While at the same time having identities that make us oppressed, like being queer

We need to take responsibility of the privilege to work towards improving things, and to help other groups as well

You can find links on my website about the different efforts

It's important to be honest with yourself - which is why I quit my job for example

I have to take into consideration what I can do every day and how both my disability and life events affect my energy/time

And organize accordingly

There's a lot of work to be done today in terms of equality

[2017/12/02 10:52] iSkye Silverweb: Message from Katie: "Please thank everyone and let them know that questions or anything else at this email or my website! I was 90% done with presentation. My other points were that we need to be creative in the work we do and we can also use our knowledge to make movements more accessible to us and other disabled people. Thank you!"

[2017/12/02 10:48] Carolyn Carillon: GH: how are you relating to what she's talking about?

Is she talking about you?

And the things you need to do?

[2017/12/02 10:48] 01 (01.hifeng): yeah, what she talked about actually sounded like some stuff I've been dealing with

I often can't attend, go out, etc

[2017/12/02 10:56] Carolyn Carillon: <<transcription ends>>