

00:00:02:20 - 00:00:38:01

Beth

Good evening and welcome to Speaking on Ability with Beth Blick. On this podcast we center all kinds of quality of life issues for people with disabilities. Tonight, we will be having a conversation with Kari Sheldon, who is the chair of the DFL Disability Caucus and a member of MN, St Paul Mayor Melvin Carter's Advisory Committee.

00:00:38:01 - 00:01:13:14

Beth

Oh, which deals with uh, um, uh, disability issues here in Saint Paul. Uh, caring and I have been friends for some years now. And we're going to talk tonight about the importance of people with disabilities involving themselves in the political process, especially with the midterm election coming up on Tuesday, November the eighth. I am going to let Kari introduce herself and then we'll get started with our conversation.

00:01:14:23 - 00:02:25:20

Kari

Thanks, Beth. thanks for having me on your show. I definitely took I first got started with the political process back in 2002 as an election judge, I, I just felt that I wanted to start getting kind of involved because then it was just an interesting job. We used to have elections in our building where I live now, and they have since had moved over to the Rice Street Library and uh, throughout that process I've come to realize that I need to get more involved with just all types of disability issues.

00:02:25:20 - 00:03:22:09

Kari

For instance, the PCA program, metro mobility or transportation and housing and it's been a long ride, a long road, but it's been a fun time getting to know different people. And I political people and trying to make sure that the disabled are being heard. And I'm also going to be I'm seriously considering running for Ward one city council because our our city council stepped down and moved out of state.

00:03:22:20 - 00:03:47:14

Kari

So I thought, well, the North End, I live in the North End and the North End has not gotten very much attention. So I might as well see what I can do.

00:03:47:14 - 00:04:07:13

Beth

Um hmm. Hm. Okay. Um. Yeah. Thank you, Kari, and Happy Happy Halloween. Uh, can you talk a little bit about what you do politically and what that means to you?

00:04:09:03 - 00:04:42:11

Kari

Um, politically, I'm. I'm. It excites me, actually. It excites me, but it for me frustrates me at the same time because I'm wanting to get some things changed. But it's hard, it's frustrating when you don't feel like you're being listened to.

00:04:42:11 - 00:04:43:13

Beth

Yeah, I can relate.

00:04:45:01 - 00:04:48:06

Kari

Yeah. Um.

00:04:49:20 - 00:04:59:17

Beth

Kari, can you talk about why people with disabilities should get involved with the political process and some things we all can do?

00:05:01:05 - 00:05:50:21

Kari

Um, well, I think I feel that getting involved, if you're finding yourself not being heard, it's better to get involved. Instead of sitting and complaining about stuff. Because if you can keep complaining and not voting and not getting involved, nothing is going to change. You're just going to be sitting and doing absolutely nothing and complaining and complaining, which I think that if you vote and get involved, there is nothing to complain about.

00:05:51:24 - 00:06:13:18

Kari

If you want to get things done, if you want to change things because I hear this, I hear this a lot. People don't want to get involved because they feel like nothing's going to change. Well, you don't know. You're not going to if you can't if you don't try. So I'm going to try. Right?

00:06:14:13 - 00:06:24:18

Beth

Very true. Um, can you talk about the recent event with the DFL Disability Caucus?

00:06:25:18 - 00:07:13:23

Kari

Oh, we had a great event, voting event. We invited Steve Simon, who was able to speak with us about the importance of voting. And we also invited Nikki Villavicencio to the event. And and they both talked about the importance of voting. And I focused on my part on the process of voting because a lot of when you're a voter, you're on one side of the table, you're at the table, but you're on one side and you're doing one process.

00:07:14:10 - 00:07:51:21

Kari

Well, behind the scenes, there's a whole different process, and that is really well, it's really quite new. And so, you know, you get to see what happens to the ballots and how they're how they're handled. And yeah, that's that's that's actually the most fun is seeing that part.

00:07:51:21 - 00:07:59:15

Beth

Yeah, definitely. With the election coming up we want to make sure that everyone can get out and vote.

00:08:00:00 - 00:08:01:04

Kari

Now we're talking.

00:08:01:04 - 00:08:13:13

Beth

About some, uh, voting measures or excuse me about voting resources for people with disabilities.

00:08:13:13 - 00:08:18:23

Kari

Right, because it is definitely is important.

00:08:20:10 - 00:08:26:23

Beth

Mm.

00:08:26:23 - 00:08:52:18

Matt

And we can also, we can also post some resources for people who are getting out to vote. We can put some links in the podcast, the podcast description. So everybody that's listening, take a look at the podcast description and we'll put some links in there for finding your polling place and anything else that you might need to know to get out and vote.

00:08:53:12 - 00:09:05:22

Matt

In terms of nominations, I don't know. Do you do you care to speak at all to accommodations with voting and if somebody's scared to get out and vote or they feel unsure, what do you think they should do?

00:09:07:05 - 00:10:04:23

Kari

Um. Oh, definitely. Definitely. Call the elections office and get your ballot sent to you and get out. Get involved with people in your in your surroundings to get your ballots and find out what the process is. Yeah, um, like, for instance, we have an auto-mark and that process that basically is you put on headphones and you listen to each category that you're voting and they will list every, every single candidate that you're that is running.

00:10:05:18 - 00:10:41:13

Kari

And then you get to make your choice and you just tap on the screen which, which, which candidate you want. And the narrator will ask you, Is this what you want? And it'll do it. It'll do it for you. And then at the end of the the whole ballot, it'll actually print it out for you so you don't have to worry about marking your ballot in person.

00:10:42:18 - 00:10:47:16

Kari

It'll do it for you. Mm.

00:10:48:14 - 00:10:49:11

Beth

Sounds good.

00:10:50:01 - 00:11:22:06

Kari

That's quite frustrating. Really frustrating thing that Iâ€™m not understanding is why we don't have, um, people designated to bring people to the, to the elections. We'll be all excuse me. That's always, that's baffled me for the longest time.

00:11:22:06 - 00:11:27:24

Beth

Definitely.

00:11:27:24 - 00:11:32:24

Kari

That's really how that. Mm.

00:11:32:24 - 00:12:04:00

Beth

Um, well, thank you, Kafi It has been wonderful talking to you tonight. Happy Halloween, everyone. This has been Able Mediaâ€™s Speaking on Ability with Beth Blick. Thank you for tuning in. Be sure to look for my next article from the Minnesota Women's Press and get involved with the conversation. I'm Beth Blick, keeping you in the loop, one story at a time.

00:12:04:06 - 00:12:05:04

Beth

Good night.