**Kevin O’Brien**

**Interviewed March 2021**

Debbie

Okay, well, the first question is, what is your story of disability? And do remember what we were talking about this morning about your disability?

Kevin

I'm disabled.

Debbie

And what are your disabilities? What are your challenges?

Kevin

I can't walk very good.

Debbie

And that's because of what?

Kevin

Mild CP.

Debbie

Right. And then you have eating issues, right?

Kevin

Yes.

Debbie

And why do you have those?

Kevin

Because I have an esophagus problem.

Debbie

And then what's your biggest problem that you have?

Kevin

Mild CP.

Debbie

No. You're breathing.

Kevin

Breathing.

Debbie

Breathing issues. So you want to tell her what your issue is and you know what your problem is?

Kevin

Mild CP.

Debbie

It doesn't have anything to do with the CP, Kev. It's just because you were born so premature, your lungs didn't develop properly. And so you have breathing issues.

Kevin

Right.

Debbie

Okay. Okay. And before COVID hit what did you do every day? What was your routine?

Kevin 7:37

I went to CADES and took the CTT bus.

Debbie

They took you to CADES every morning?

Kevin

They drove me to CADES every morning.

Debbie

Right. Did you go by yourself? Or did someone go with you to help you? Did I go with you? Did anybody go with you? Or did you do it totally by yourself?

Kevin

Somebody went with me.

Debbie

Who went with you?

Kevin

Oh, okay. By myself, sorry.

Debbie

You were on the bus with other people. But nobody went with you to help you get there right?

Kevin

No.

Debbie

No, you did it all by yourself. That was good. And then you went to CADES and what did you do there?

Kevin 8:40

Exercise and did plays over there. And volunteered at City Team.

Debbie

What did you do for City Team?

Kevin

Put silverware into napkins.

Debbie

And then you wrapped it up so it wouldn't come apart?

Kevin 9:12

Yeah, wrapped it up so it wouldn't come apart.

Debbie

And did they ever take you out of CADES other than City Team? Did you go into the community?

Kevin 9:28

Yeah, we went into the community and went to the dance studio.

Debbie

That sounds like fun. What else did you do? Did you ever go to the mall?

Kevin

Went to the mall.

Debbie 9:51

What to do there?

Kevin

Walked around and shopped.

Debbie

So you got exercise there too walking around, huh?

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie

Did you ever go do anything fun like bowling or movies?

Kevin

Yeah, bowling. Went to the movies.

Debbie

And you also went to a church to play bingo?

Kevin

Yeah, went to church to play bingo.

Debbie

And what else did you do there with \_\_\_\_\_\_? Maybe I shouldn't have said her name. Do you remember what you did with a bunch of your friends?

Kevin

Oh yeah we went to a membership dinner to sing at the Springfield Country Club.

Debbie

That was always fun. But then you did reading and you did some math. You did schoolwork too besides doing exercising.

Kevin

Reading, math, and exercising.

Debbie

Right. Did you have some free time where you could just do things with your friends there?

Kevin

Yeah, I had free time, hanging out.

Debbie

You always had a lot of fun, right?

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie 11:45

Okay, so once COVID hit How did that change things? How did that affect you? What happened when COVID came?

Kevin

Couldn't see friends or family.

Debbie

Were you able to still go to CADES?

Kevin

No.

Debbie 12:17

No, and what else couldn't you do after the COVID hit? Couldn't do anything right, Kev?

Kevin

Couldn't do anything, right. Couldn't go to the store. We couldn't get together with family or friends.

Debbie

Right, because it was too scary for you because of your breathing problems. It was a big risk for you to go anywhere.

Kevin

Right.

Debbie 12:57

What else happened that was big in our family that it postponed and cancelled?

Kevin

My twin's wedding got postponed.

Debbie

How long did it get postponed for?

Kevin

Six months.

Debbie

Right, and were we able to have the wedding eventually?

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie 13:39

You want to say anything about that?

Kevin

I was the best man speech.

Debbie

And how'd that go?

Kevin

It went really good.

Debbie

What else has been a problem during COVID? What challenges?

Debbie 14:24

Washing and wearing a face mask.

Debbie

Yeah. We did get out once in a while though, right? We'd just take a ride in the car.

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie 14:55

But you had to wear a mask and we had to wipe everything down. That was kind of challenging, right? And then what are you thinking about like, what are your concerns now? And what are you hoping is going to happen in the future?

Kevin 15:05

Me moving out looking for a place.

Debbie

Yeah, we're working on plans for the future in that respect, but even that got slowed down because of COVID. Right?

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie 15:25

Because we can't go look at places, staffing is down because of COVID, the offices that do all the paperwork are short handed. So that’s slowed everything down as well. Right?

Kevin

Right.

Debbie

Right. So that's a little frustrating. And you're hoping that CADES will reopen, right?

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie

And we did recently get some news that they may be reopening in early May.

Kevin

Reopening on May 3rd.

Debbie

Right, that's the plan. That doesn't mean it's a definite, but that's what they're aiming for. It will be a couple days a week, right?

Kevin

Yup.

Debbie

And have you been doing anything with CADES since they closed?

Kevin

I've been doing CADES on Zoom on the computer.

Debbie

And is that every day or just a couple days?

Kevin

Every day.

Debbie 16:49

How many classes have you been taking?

Kevin

Two in the morning, two in the afternoon.

Debbie

Did that help having those in classes? Did it help you get through this?

Kevin 17:09

Yes.

Debbie

It was nice to see familiar faces.

Kevin

Yes, I did.

Debbie

Was it fun? Or was it boring?

Kevin

Fun.

Debbie

It was really fun. You did a lot of a lot of fun things. Played game. They took you to places all around the world through Zoom. Right?

Kevin

Yep.

Debbie

What kind of games did you play?

Kevn

Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, Hangaroo, Bingo.

Debbie

Yeah. And have you been able to get vaccinated?

Kevin

Yeah! I got vaccinated twice.

Debbie

Right. Where did you get your vaccination from?

Kevin

CADES, they had a special event.

Debbie

So you actually got to see a couple of people there that you knew, right?

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie 18:34

Did you ever get COVID during this?

Kevin

No.

Debbie

No, do you know anybody that got COVID?

Kevin

My dad.

Debbie

Was that scary?

Kevin

Yes.

Debbie

And what happened at the house while he had COVID?

Kevin

He got banned to the basement.

Debbie

Yeah he was isolated in the basement.

Kevin

And me and mom stayed upstairs.

Debbie

Trying to keep you and me safe, right?

Kevin

Yes.

Debbie

Was he OK? Did he get better?

Kevin

Yeah.

Debbie

Yeah, he's fine now, right? So we're lucky that way.

Fortunately, we didn't personally lose anybody to COVID. But we have people that we know that lost people to COVID. So we're very grateful for that.