

Genia: Well, good morning, Good Things in Life Podcast listeners. I am Genia Stephen. I'm tired. It's morning for me, early morning in Toronto and I'm here to attend a conference. Now, I don't know if you know, but my family and I had been driving across Canada in a secondhand RV, which is not accessible and it has been quite an adventure. It's taken us longer than we anticipated. And as of yesterday morning, I left a campsite on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island and made my way back to Vancouver to or back to Toronto for this conference. And then I'm going to be turning around and flying back to Vancouver Island so that we can continue our adventure all the way to the very west coast of British Columbia before we turn around and start driving back. Now, I'm doing this because I really am committed to making sure that Good Things in Life is as valuable and helpful to you as possible. And this conference, I know, is going to help me with that.

Genia: I have to say it's not a true hardship to spend a couple of nights on a real bed with comfortable sheets and have access to a full bathroom. But that's just an aside. Anyway, one of the reasons why I am recording this this morning when it's supposed to get published today is because we realized that as I was recording and uploading these intros and outros to the podcast episodes while on the road that this body, Internet access meant that the files were there but they were empty. And so, I am doing this again. Now, that seems like a bit of a metaphor for life parenting somebody with a disability, you know, you put a lot of work into something and you really are committed to it and you do a good job and yet no matter how hard you work, it just doesn't work out over and over again, which is kind of how I feel about these recordings right now.

Genia: And so, what do we do? Well, we just keep going, right? We just keep working on it over and over again because it's that important. And that's really what this episode today is about. Linda Till who is the mother of Becky who sadly passed away a few years ago, Linda till was a mother who believed very, very strongly, who still does believe very, very strongly in the rightness and the effectiveness of inclusive education. And when her daughter, Becky, was excluded from her regular class in her community school, Linda went so far as to take the school board to court and she won. Now, that's remarkable on a number of levels. You know, if you remember Becky's story, if you've heard Becky's story, you'll know that they were up against an awful lot. If you haven't heard Becky's story or if you don't remember, you can go back and hear that story in episodes 10 and 11 of the podcast where Linda talks about saving her daughter from neglect and deprivation in an institution.

Genia: So, it's a pretty striking story. So, what's the other thing that's really interesting about this is that Linda continued to fight for this even after she found Becky in inclusive placement. And she did that because she believed that inclusive education is worth fighting for. And because she won, those of us who live in Ontario, Canada, which is where I live, we really, our kids have the right to inclusive education at least in good part because of Becky. So, that's pretty remarkable. Anyway, I won't keep you any further. We'll get right into the interview with Linda till.

Genia: Linda, thank you so much for joining me today and agreeing to talk with me about your story of advocating for inclusive education for your daughter, Becky. Now, for people who haven't been following the podcast for a very long, you told Becky's story in

episode 10 and 11 of the podcast, the captivating life of Becky Till. So, if people are interested in hearing more about your story after they listened to this episode, then that's where people can find it. So, goodthingsinlife.org/010 and 011. But today the focus really is on Becky's school experience and your advocacy around inclusive education for Becky. And I wonder if you could give just a really brief kind of two minute backgrounder on Becky and where she was coming from as she entered the school system. Just for context, if people haven't listen to your previous episodes.

Linda: Certainly. So, always so difficult to capture her story in a short bit. But briefly, Becky was not born to me. She was placed in an institution immediately after birth and I adopted her from that setting. She was in extremely frail health at that point. She was 10 years old and we had a number of challenges to face on the health front. But additionally, of course, I had school to address and I had really strong convictions about the fact that children all belong to together is just simply one of my guiding principles and beliefs. And I wanted her to attend her local school. And I knew that that was not something that the school board that was providing services in our community was open to. But nevertheless, I approached them and asked if they would work with me towards placing her in the local school in an age appropriate setting. And their response was worse than I had thought because they told me that anything short of placing her back in the institution that I had rescued her from would result in them bringing charges against me for failing to put her in an educational setting.

Linda: And they were arguing that because they had what was referred to as a section 16 classroom in the institution, which by the way, had only just started the year that I took her out. That was her education placement. That was where she belonged. And they were not going to even consider anything else end of discussion. And so, that shook me to my core. I didn't expect that the challenge was going to be starting from that kind of a perspective. But it was. And

Genia: When was that?

Linda: My, oh boy. Well she was 10, so it would have been 94, 1994. It was not easy to even figure out how to begin tackling the institutional resistance to her being included or any other child being included in regular education with mindsets of that sort with depth of resistance and bias. I don't think it would have been possible for me to do this on my own. I did need a lot of people around me who believed in what I was seeking, who you know, with whom I could bounce ideas often and build a strategy and set of strategies and a campaign to try and bring about some changes so that she would in fact be allowed into the regular school. And that resulted in a great number of activities, including a trip to San Francisco where we wrote a book, a booklet, I suppose with all of the participants at a large conference in San Francisco of people with like minds with over 3000 people and where people from all over North America and including some other parts of the world.

Linda: And all, not all, many, many, many took opportunities to make contributions to the booklet, arguing in favor of why children should be together in a neighborhood schools. And that was distributed when we came home, was printed and distributed, first of all to the school board and to many other people within the community and more broadly.

And all in the, in an effort to try and broaden the understanding about why children in general should be together, and in particular in my efforts to get Becky into the inclusive setting and her regular school, her neighborhood school, why she should be there. And so, that was just one of many strategies that we employed and to try and bring this together. So, bit of a summary

Genia: And, well I have two questions. One, I want to know what was in the booklet? And two, was it successful? But let's talk more about just the journey. And so, let's start with question two. So, you gathered together with other people who could support you in this advocacy work and you came back to the board and said, "Here are all the good reasons which you and I'll review in a few minutes, but you're all the good reasons why children need to be educated together." And, and they said, "Oh, we didn't realize, Becky, you can start on Monday."

Linda: Sure. They said that.

Genia: Right.

Linda: I only wish, no, they said, "Linda Till has nothing that she can teach us about education." And I was not surprised that they were resistant. I offered to hold and host a conference and invite anybody from within the board, teachers, board members, administrative people to the conference. They resisted, I held the conference anyway. And they refuse to attend. The position of the board altered some degree in that they said, well, they would offer her a placement in a fully segregated school. And that was as far as they were willing to budge.

Linda: So, I was, I felt very compelled to keep on working towards a lot of utilizing as many strategies and ideas that I could to try and bring this forward. And I had one person telling me at one point, and it was one of our supporters and I think this person was being, was making an effort to help me be realistic which is not, perhaps not one of my strongest points on things that I believe strongly about. But this person said, "Linda Till is not going to be able to change the education system." And that's like putting a red flag before the bull I think in some respects. But it wasn't Linda Till, it was because of Becky and we've talked before about, you know, you coined the term #becauseofBecky. Maybe there are a lot of things that we could explore on that.

Linda: But, she really was the impetus for persistence at aiming towards a goal that I believed was absolutely critical for her development. And it was not something that I could just simply sit back and say, "Oh, well. Gee, too bad I tried and therefore, you know, we'll just have to accept something that is what I believed inappropriate for her." And in the long run we did change the education system. And subsequent to so many of the things we implemented, I would have families calling me time and time and time again saying, "My child just got into regular kindergarten. I can't believe it. In the end, the school board said it's because of Becky Till." Like every single time, it were calls that were too numerous to count and there were children from across Canada who were writing to me, seeing that they wanted to write about Becky in class because they heard about it and they believed it was right.

Linda: These were just typical kids who'd been captivated as so many people had been by her and her stories. And the growth and understanding was phenomenal and change did happen. Enough change, perhaps not. And then, and that's now the challenge for the next generation of families to take the changes that had and have been created much like I built on the efforts of families before me who were even having to battle just to get education period for their children. I'm now the generation of families who are currently rearing children of school age, the challenge becomes let's make it more. Let's make it better. Let's broaden our capacity. Let's utilize what we've learned and enhance that so that we can address the issues of concern that people still have as is always the case when systems have to face change.

Genia: So, what did it take for you? We haven't really explained what it did take in order for you to change the school system in order for Becky to be welcomed into her community school.

Linda: In the final analysis, we did have to take a complaint forward to the Human Rights Commission in Ontario. And through that process we were, it was quite a lengthy process actually. It was quite a few years in the process from beginning to end. The final analysis was a settlement that was in Becky's favor whereby the school board acknowledged in writing that she did have a right to attend her neighborhood school that children, and this was my request you could do right. They had to write that all children had a right to be in their neighborhood school with the supports that were appropriate for their needs in a regular age appropriate classroom. And that was a right. And there were a number of other details in the acknowledgement. It included the fact that by that point I had, like he had reached high school age and I enrolled, had already enrolled her in the local Catholic school board, which offering inclusive education and she was successfully participating there.

Linda: So, my concern at that point was taking her out of a setting that she was being successful in and was familiar with and putting her into a setting that had resisted her so long and hard and spent over \$2 million to fight her inclusion. So, I said that I wasn't going to move her into the public school board, which was her school board on for those reasons, but that I wanted to see that the public school board did have to pay the Catholic school board for her education for the remainder of her time there and her transportation there. That those were their obligations to provide on the basis of the settlement. All of which did get implemented on and was agreed to and was part of the settlement agreement. And indeed the Ministry of Education was the correspondent in that human rights complaint. And the Minister of Education at the time did issue a directive to all school boards across the province that all children were to be given the opportunity, the option of attending their neighborhood school and age appropriate classroom with the supports they needed. So, those were the outcomes of a multiyear effort that eventually culminated in that legal action and those developments.

Genia: So why, why did you fight so hard? Like why did this matter so much?

Linda: It's pretty simple to explain. I think in the grand scheme of things, I just looked at Becky. So, if I took out of the context of my, of the whole situation, my beliefs more broadly about inclusive education and just looked at her. I wanted to ensure that she was

immersed in a setting that maximized the greatest learning opportunities for her, especially in light of the fact that she had been deprived of so much up until that point by being in an institutional setting. I looked at her and I said, "Okay, there's no question that she has experienced a very severe brain injury. There's no question that she will remain dependent for her whole life. There is question about how much she will be able to learn." It wasn't clear and it could not be assessed on the basis of what she knew at that point, age 10, 11, because of the years of deprivation that she'd gone through, if nothing else. And secondly, because it's extremely difficult to assess the learning potential of anybody, but particularly a child with very significant challenges.

Linda: So, I had to look at her and say, "What are my main goals for her?" My main goals are to find a way to ensure that she can live as safely and as productively as possible in this world. And to do that, she needed to build competency as much as possible in communication and she needed competency in social interaction. And to build those skills she needed to be immersed in settings where language was rich and where social experiences were rich. And they needed to be age appropriate in the setting where that occurs with the most richness is in a setting where other children of similar age are gathered and for children of school age that school. So, I wanted her in a setting where the other children were exhibiting age appropriate language, age appropriate social skills where the other children, because Becky could not walk and could not move her wheelchair herself, could come up to her and interact with her because she was not going to be able to go up to them and interact with them of her own accord.

Linda: And if I had her place in a segregated setting where the other children didn't speak or didn't speak at age appropriate levels or didn't have mobility and couldn't approach her and interact with her, then the immersion she would have in language would be adult language from the adults around her. And the immersion in social skills that she would have would be the social skills of adults around her. And that did not to me seem to be a setting that was going to be most enhancing for her. And so, I believed that she needed to be in the neighborhood school where she already had friends because she was participating in a number of other integrated settings in the community starting with brownies and then moving onto girl guides, etc. And going to inclusive camps with other children day camps and expanding on her skills in wonderful ways. So, there was a lot of evidence that this would be a wise direction for her.

Genia: So, you mentioned that Becky ended up going to school in the Catholic school and that you didn't transfer her to her home school when you had the option. What about, what would you, I'm sorry, the question I'm trying to get at is whether or not inclusion is a good option when the school is not enthusiastic about inclusion.

Linda: Well, what a great question. I don't even know that you can answer that because I think it would differ in every single setting. What makes it work are people, it's not the school. It's not the other families really so much. It's the people who are particularly the leaders in the school setting, they're going to set the stage for the attitudes of the frontline people, the teachers, the educational assistants. And those people then subsequently going to set the attitude for the children around them. And you know, you can force a resistant setting to accept a child and you might have positive outcomes simply because

the child really captivates them when they start realizing, "Hey, this is really something that's working in great and we're happy with it."

Linda: And you could have an outcome that doesn't bode so well and work so well. My thinking is that it would be preferable if we could engage people in the process to that outcome rather than forcing it. So, I'm not a fan of going the legal route if we can help it. I would much prefer that our board had been responsive to the multiple efforts to engage in dialogue and work towards an agreeable plan that would have allowed Becky to be in the regular classroom and build the supports that were necessary around that and broaden the horizons. The opportunities were there. They simply refused. This particular board refused. And this particular board actually also went about the province interestingly, teaching other boards how to stop parents like myself who wanted inclusive education. So, you know, they invested an awful lot to resist.

Genia: Why? Like how would this [inaudible] them, do you think? Like why, why, that's baffling.

Linda: Yeah. It is very baffling. There were some personalities that were, I think egos were certainly big. There are a lot of people who believe that children with disabilities truly don't belong with others and that they are at other children who don't have disabilities in that these children are going to drag down the education of the other children. The, and by the way, there's a lot of evidence that shows that's not the case. But there are people who believe it. There are people who believe that their educators are not trained to handle the special education needs of these children. And there are special educators who are trained for that and they should be in that setting. And I think you also have just the very longstanding intransigence of systems to change. Systems have a great deal of resistance to change. They almost have a mind of their own, if you will, of people within them. Also have a belief that this is the way we've always done it.

Linda: If we admit that something else is better or is the direction we should move to, then by default, we somewhat admit that what we've been doing is wrong. That people don't want to do that. So, I don't know what all the reasons are, but it was very, very, very significant resistance in the school board. Would I changed my mind about putting her there at the time that we, you know, knowing afterwards, you know, how things went in her school career? No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't have put her in that resistance school board, but I would continue as I always have to try to break down the barriers and work towards trying to find a setting that was really rich in the ways that I believed were valuable to her and hope that the next child coming down the path would have an easier road.

Genia: Yeah. What, how did Becky's experience in the irregular school system and regular classrooms inclusive education, how did that impact her as far as her, the connections that she made with other students? Like was it just, you've talked about the benefits of being in a social and language rich environment with her peers, her age similar peers. But I'm wondering whether, like, did it matter, was this just, did it matter outside of just learning social and language competencies?

Linda: It mattered. It really worked. She developed friends who continue to stay in contact with me now. She

Genia: Which is relevant Linda. Just, sorry, just to provide the background context, if people don't know your story because Becky passed away a couple of years ago now, so they're no longer able to be in touch with her.

Linda: That's right.

Genia: Yeah.

Linda: That they mean, their recognition of the value of her role in their lives. She built the skills too, have boyfriends and there were boys who were fighting over her to be her boyfriend and in fact they came to fist fight in the hallway one day. She was invited to the school prom by one of the most sought after young men in the school and she was over the moon about that opportunity. She broadened her language skills dramatically, even though her ability to speak was quite limited. And subsequently at one point was lost to her by virtue of her having to move towards having a tracheostomy. But she did have augmentative communication with computer and voice output system. And she broadened and broadened and broadened in that environment in ways that allowed her to communicate and respond in the classrooms to the content, modified content as was necessary for her, but in ways that the teachers could understand in ways that the students could understand they were motivating to her.

Linda: The outcome spilled over into other settings. And so, she became very strongly and keenly involved in advocacy for young people with significant disabilities and played a very powerful role in the Tracy Latimer case which for those who may not know was a situation where a father in fact murdered his daughter and was found to have murdered his daughter in Saskatchewan a number of years ago. And Becky felt that very keenly and felt strong need to speak about it and did use her augmentative communication device for that purpose. She in her later years of high school, much of the focus then became oriented to building some skills for her to spend more and more time in the community in supported work kinds of settings. And she became involved in an elementary classroom where she was the reading tutor even though she didn't speak, even though she didn't read.

Linda: The way that we structured it was such that using your communication device, teaching the grade one children, how she responded and what have she used it on building a whole protocol around their reading to her. They saw her as their reading teacher. And so, we would be out in the community in the children one time and again I would have little children come running up to her room. I didn't know and saying, "Becky! Becky! Becky!" And the moms would come up and they'd say, "Mom, look! This is Becky, our reading teacher." And the parents with jaw would drop into the "What?" And, but the kids saw her in that valued role and what a benefit to her, to her sense of self, to her sense of pride, to her sense of accomplishment. All of that came out of her ability to be able to communicate in regular world environments, to socialize in regular world environments, to be valued by the people in those regular world environments because she had those opportunities and they came to know her.

Genia: Yeah. So, how do you think that those, all of those opportunities and contributions that Becky had and made, how do you think that they would have been? What would've

been different had she gone to the segregated school that the school board wanted her to go to? I mean, presumably they would have, but let's work on the assumption anyway, whether it's true or not. Let's work on the assumption that they would have offered her very, very rich language curriculum so that she was able to develop those language. Like be able to use her AAC device.

Linda: Well, I think that proof is in the pudding already because she was in a segregated setting and there was a classroom there run by that school board. And it did nothing for her. Nothing at all. It was in fact targeting all of the wrong things. What they did do by that, I mean, for example, they wanted her to learn yes/no response. It was built into her program. But to do that they wanted her to raise her right arm for, to answer yes and raise your left arm for no. And they thought, "Oh, we'll kill two birds with one stone" because she doesn't use her arms. So they wanted her to use her arms and they wanted her to use her arms to communicate and she couldn't use her arms, so therefore she couldn't communicate. It was just, it was really quite, quite ludicrous. It was misguided and inappropriate.

Linda: She did learn yes/no response. That was interpretable utilizing competencies that she already had. Because the way one wants to target something like this with a child with significant disabilities is you don't magnify the task, you bring it to a level that they can achieve utilizing some of the repertoire of skills they already have when you're putting a challenge in front of them. So, you don't want to double that challenge. But that's just an example. Know that it didn't work. The other thing that we know, and this comes from pedagogical studies, this comes from psychological studies. This is a well established principle of learning amongst many others. And that is something called the Rosenthal effect. And the Rosenthal effect in other words is an explanation of something called the fulfilling of expectations.

Linda: So, the studies that were done that established the Rosenthal effect clearly illustrated that the expectations you have for a person, but in particular, this was in education settings. So, for a child we're ones to which the child would rise. And so, if you set your expectations high, the probabilities were that the child would more likely to reach those expectations. If you set the expectations low, the expectation, the likely outcome would be that the child would reach those lower expectations. And what they further then went on to demonstrate was that in a setting with high expectations, the principal that was governing that achievement for the children was that by setting high expectations, the opportunities for learning or expanded or enhanced, created a greater likelihood of learning to a higher level. And if you take a child and you put them into a congregated setting, where the targeted goals are to focus on the needs of the group, the more common denominators of the group.

Linda: Generally those then are of lower levels of skill acquisition simply by virtue of the fact that many of the children are exhibiting delays in learning. So, you put them in a segregated setting, the chances are that they're going to be lowered expectations for learning. The chances are that there are going to be lesser opportunities for enhanced learning to higher levels of expectations. So, where are the settings with the greatest opportunities for highest expectations and consequent greatest opportunities for learning? That is where children of similar age are learning together. Is it as simple as

that? So, I believe absolutely that she would not have acquired the competency in language. The motivation that was provided to her, she was keenly interested in other children and keenly interested in what they were doing in [inaudible] leading them whenever possible. In all of the settings that she was in with other children of similar age that were not disabled, she did strive really hard and wanted to participate in one way or the other in what they were doing.

Linda: So, she was in an inclusive camp. One of the things they did was set the children to play in the stream. The other children were really learning about streams and how things worked. What Becky was learning was that the other children didn't get their butts wet in that cold water because they were standing and we had worked and worked and worked and worked on helping her figure out how to bear weight. And it was not jelling. She wasn't connecting. And all of a sudden watching all those other children standing in that cold water, walking around in the stream, splashing and having fun and her butt getting cold in the water, she figured it out real, real fast. And from that point on, it's not only a weight bearer, but a walker and started walking with support, not alone, never alone, always with support.

Linda: But my point on that is it is not that, "Oh yeah, right. Well that's not education." The point is that we don't have to teach children with disabilities the exact same curriculum when they're in an educational setting as the other children. We can teach them goals that are important for them in conjunction with what's going on with the other children in ways that enable the other children and this child to integrate together in those learning goals. So, a lot of examples would be things like children are working on a group project in grade three class and the child who's using augmentative communication needs to use augmentative communication device. Even if all they are learning at that point is just activate the switch and nothing more. Very, very simple. Get the hand on the switch or their head on the switch or they're you know, cheek on the switch or whatever the particular is.

Linda: If that's the goal, the rest of the children motivate the tug, "Get your head on the switch. Get you know, do da da da." And we get some learning going on that the child contributes to the group's process. Even though the other kids might've been working on an environmental topic that in this job may be needing simply to activate a switch then let us build that in and have them integrate and have them all socially, communicatively and motivationally involved in the process. And the outcome for the child, all the children, if you, if I, in my beliefs is a hugely positive one and it's evident every time I see kids together in inclusive settings that are well-structured, they all benefit. The evidence from inclusive school research in settings where schools are inclusive across the board has been very, very clear that the education of all of the children is enhanced when children with disabilities are included in the regular setting. It's not the reverse and that includes the child with disabilities as well as the children who have different levels of need.

Genia: Great. Thank you. I wonder if you, if a parent of a child with a disability came to you and said, "I'm trying to make a decision about my son or daughter's school experience or their school placement." Are there particular things that you would want to impart to them or do you have further thoughts on this topic that we haven't covered?

Linda: Well, it's so difficult. Parents I know have so many challenges in front of them and it is not an easy road on any given date facing all of the things you do need to do for your children. I would encourage any family who wanted to talk to me about schooling to seriously look at the evidence that exists in educational literature about the benefits of inclusive education and not rely on what they have learned to date just by you know, their own experiences. Don't rely exclusively on the responses of your school's educators because they may not be conversant with the most advanced material on inclusive education. And by broadening your understanding of what those benefits could be for your child, weigh whether that is what you want to see in place for your child. And if it is to work towards as broad a dialogue, as cooperative a dialogue as you can get with your school board to seeing if that's something that could be achieved. And remembering that the schools are not allowed to withhold the supports that the child needs if they go into the inclusive, regular age appropriate classroom.

Linda: A lot of school boards will say that to families. They'll say, "Well, if you want the special ed new instruction, if you want physio, if you want the consultations, if you want speech and language, if you want, you know, any of this equipment, if you want any of these other special resources that your child needs to be successful in education then they need to go in this congregated class. And we'll give them some reverse integration. We'll let them go into the regular classrooms for some things here and there. But to get those supports, they have to be here." And the bottom line is that's not so. They will argue it, but that's not so. They do have to provide the supports that child needs where the child is placed.

Genia: In Ontario.

Linda: With that being said ... in Ontario. That doesn't mean that it's, it's an easy road. And so, on that front, I would also encourage families to join together with others to try and achieve eventual changes within their school system if they've got some resistance in their school system. Because it is an important change. It's an essential change, but it's not an easy change. If it's an easily acquired, a relatively easily acquired option for your child to consider, seeking and obtaining that kind of a placement, then I think the challenge becomes to that family making sure that you are negotiating and achieving the maximum supports that your child needs to be successful in that environment. And encouraging and supporting the school and the classroom to enhance the learning of all the kids in that setting and whatever ways possible.

Genia: Thanks very much, Linda.

Linda: You are welcome. Okay.

Genia: All right. Is there anything we haven't covered that you think we should?

Linda: Let me just tell you a little story. A little story because I think stories are fun. And this is talking about kids in the school. And this was a story about my two kids and a day that we were in a park. And my son was three and we were walking along and he saw a bunch of kids climbing a stone wall on the edge of the park. And he said, "Mommy,

mommy, mommy, can I go climb that wall?" And mommy, as mommy's tend to do, says, "Oh, no, no, no, no. You're not big enough. You're not old enough to climb that." That, well, it was a big stone wall. There's no way a three year old was really going to be able to climb that wall. No, it wasn't really all that safe, nor did I want them doing it. Anyway, he says, "Well, how will do I have to be to climb that wall?" Well, and I said, well, looking at the kids and they're all about 12 or so. I said, "At least 12." And he looked at me and he said, "Well, Becky's 12." And I'm thinking, "Oh." And then he says, before I had a chance to respond, he said, "I know. You'll do the holding part and she'll do the climbing part."

Linda: And I love that story because it shows you how quickly children understand that for a child with disabilities in their midst, we simply need to provide support and adaptation. But the bottom line is the most common denominators that they were all 12 years old. So, they should be doing 12 year old things. And at three he understood that. If a three year old can understand that, then educators can get there and many, many are there. And we just need to keep on encouraging those who are not there to give it a shot and see how well it can really work.

Genia: That's a beautiful story.

Linda: Thank you. I like it.

Genia: I love it. I love it. All right, Linda will thank you very much. That was a lovely way to finish up.

Linda: Well, you're welcome. Good luck with the next junior series.

Genia: Thanks. Where is your cottage?

Linda: It's on a lake called Go Home Lake. And that is directly west of Bala. You know where Bala is? But between Bala and Georgian Bay. So, we're in the smack-dab in the middle. It's about 45 minutes northwest of Barrie.

Genia: Well, I'm just looking at your background there, which is really just trees. I can't really see around you too much, but it's making me

Linda: Better?

Genia: Oh, that's beautiful.

Linda: Yeah. Unfortunately the setup of my computer here didn't allow for the lake to be evident. But yeah, it's there.

Genia: It's gorgeous. I'm so looking forward to this trip that we're going to be taking and being outside and in beautiful environments. So, this was lovely to be able to spend this time with you while you're at the cottage.

Linda: Well, thank you. I hope you have a very good trip. And I get the challenge of sorting that RV. We never had an RV, but we did have a tent trailer that we used for a while and before we had the cottage. And I get it. I really, really, really get it having lived it. And at a certain point, I finally said to King, "I can't do this anymore." And we did get the cottage, but there was, you know, a lot of resistance on his part. He didn't think we'd be able to do it. This is a boat access only cottage.

Genia: Thank you so much for joining me today with Linda to talk about the "Why's" of inclusive education, why it's worth fighting for and Linda's experience. I'm really interested in hearing about what you, what you believe is worth fighting for for your kids and what you believe to be most valuable about education for children. Either specifically kids with disabilities or just education for children in general. And then from that, figure out where you think inclusive education and segregated education fits in. Might be a helpful reflection because next week on the podcast we will be talking to Bruce Uditsky who has a Masters of Education and is the CEO Emeritus of Inclusion Alberta and its former CEO for over 25 years. He's internationally recognized for his leadership and advocacy in social justice and inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Genia: And he served as an adviser in an advisory capacity to governments on many issues contributing to the development of legislation and policies that advanced inclusion. His bio is long and you'll hear it next week, but the bottom line is that Bruce knows an awful lot about inclusion and he knows an awful lot about segregation. And next week on the podcast we will be talking about the lies of segregation. And it's a quite provocative conversation. I hope that you join me then. If you are interested in the topic of inclusive education, consider getting on the wait list for the upcoming course called Belonging in School: The What, Why, and How of Inclusive Education. And you can find the link to that at goodthingsinlife.org/bis for belonging in school. Until next week. Take care.