**SLIDE 1:**

**Alt text: Conference Logo: Black sans serif text says, “BACK TO THE FUTURE”. To the right, digital font in bright, bold orange says, “2024”. Underneath, [NCIL Logo: National Council on Independent Living] Annual Conference on Independent Living.**

**2024 Annual Conference on Independent Living**

**BACK TO THE FUTURE**

**Presented by the National Council on Independent Living**

**SLIDE 2:**

**Innovation in Technology, Entrepreneurship and Well-being**

**Presented by:**

**Synergies Work, CareSource & NCIL**

**Alt text: Photo of a woman with down syndrome working at a desk on her laptop computer.**

**SLIDE 3: Introductions**

**Solomon Parker**

**Director, IDD Program Strategy**

**CareSource**

**Alt text: Photo of Solomon Parker, an African-American man, smiling and wearing a business suit.**

**Aarti Sahgal**

**Founder & CEO**

**Synergies Work**

**Alt text: Photo of Aarti Sahgal, an Indian woman with dark hair and wearing a grey sweater.**

**Mary-Kate Wells**

**Program Director, NCIL**

**Alt text: Photo of Mary-Kate Wells, a white women with light hair and smiling at camera.**

**Dominique Dunford**

**ENDependence Center of North Virginia**

**Alt text: Photo of Dominique Dunford, an African American woman wearing a green shirt.**

**SLIDE 4: About Synergies Work**

**Building one world where people with disabilities belong.**

**We are the largest startup hub for disability-led businesses that serves over 300 founders through our pre-incubator, incubator, accelerator, and venture hub programs.**

**Alt text: Photo of a business woman with down syndrome with shoulder length brown hair smiling. Photo of a smiling African-American man, using a wheel chair and working on a laptop. Photo of the Synergies Work logo.**

**SLIDE 5: A Personal Mission**

**A Personal Mission**

**Alt text: Photo of Angad Sahgal, an Indian man, posing for the photograph.**

**SLIDE 6: A Tale of Two Worlds**

**People with Disabilities**

**Limited opportunities and choices**

**Success is measured at every point**

**Effort is not valued**

**General Population**

**Abundant opportunities**

**Failure is an opportunity for growth**

**Difficulty & overcoming struggle is applauded**

**SLIDE 7: Intersectionality of Disability**

**68.9 Million**

**Americans**

**have a disability**

**Unemployment**

**has been stagnant at 20% for over 30 years**

**People of Color**

**are significantly more likely to have a disability**

**50%**

**of people living in**

**poverty are disabled**

**SLIDE 8: The State of Entrepreneurship in 2023**

**33 Mn Entrepreneurs employ over 61 Mn people**

**Surging new business applications from 2020- 2022. In 2023- 5.5Mn applications filed.**

**99.9% of businesses in the US are small businesses; 43.5% of entire US GDP**

**8 out of 10 businesses do not have any employees**

**In 2023- 33 Mn entrepreneurs - employing more than 61 Mn people Small businesses make up 4.1% of the US labor force**

**SLIDE 9: Growing Independent Workers**

**There are 64 Mn freelancers in the US (38% of the workforce)**

**Contributing 1.27 Trillion to the US economy**

**47% of all freelancers provide knowledge services such as computer programming, marketing, IT, and business consulting in 2023.**

**Gen Z & Millennials are more likely to be freelancers**

**SLIDE 10: Massive Potential For Change**

**People with disabilities are**

**2x as likely to be**

**self-employed as those living without a disability.**

**Alt text: A table showing Self-Employed as a Percentage of the Population and Labor Force by Disability Status, Age 18 and over, 2019.**

**Self-Employed as Percentage of Population is 4% with disability and 8% without a disability.**

**Self-Employed as Percentage of Labor Force is 17% with a Disability and 11% without a Disability.**

**Labor Force Participation Rate is 26% with a Disability and 72% without a Disability.**

**SLIDE 11: Barriers to Entrepreneurship**

**Barriers to Education**

**Education is focused on limited skill development**

**No clear career paths**

**Higher education is very limited**

**Barriers to Health**

**Choices limited by health, illness, loss of insurance, and physical limitations**

**Requires them to sacrifice their health in order to work**

**Barriers to Finances**

**Lack of opportunities for savings and earnings**

**Limited capital to launch businesses**

**Forces them into labor-intensive industries**

**Barriers to Networks**

**No interaction with larger business community**

**Lack of guidance**

**Segregation by socialization**

**SLIDE 12: Limited Financial Access**

**People with Disabilities**

**•43% of People with Disabilities**

**are Underbanked or Unbanked**

**•40% Have No Mainstream Credit**

**•61% Do Not Save for**

**Unexpected Expenses**

**•12% Use Alternative Financial**

**Services (Pawn Shops, Cash**

**Checking, etc)**

**People without Disabilities**

**19% Underbanked or Unbanked**

**15% Have No Mainstream Credit**

**37% Do Not Save for**

**Unexpected Expenses**

**•6% Use Alternative Financial Services (Pawn Shops, Cash Checking, etc)**

**The disability community has the lowest levels of financial literacy and access to financial tools among any minority group in the United States. These numbers have remained stagnant for the last 20 years.**

**SLIDE 13: Is Disability an Advantage?**

**Breaking Misconceptions**

**Line chart showing the business failure rate between small businesses and disabled entrepreneurs with support. Over a 5 year time frame, entrepreneurs with support show 10% less likelihood of business failure than the average small business.**

**SLIDE 14: Carving Their Own Path**

**Video: Learn about individuals from diverse backgrounds who share their journeys of overcoming challenges and finding success through Synergies Works. From facing employment barriers to carving their own paths in entrepreneurship, these stories exemplify resilience, determination, and the power of community support.**

**Synergies Work is a platform that connects disabled entrepreneurs with the resources, networks, and communities they need to launch, grow, and scale their businesses. We invite you to join the largest community of disability-led startups in the United States today.**

**Learn more at https://synergieswork.org/**

**Join at https://app.synergieswork.org**

**Donate at https://synergieswork.org/donate/**

**SLIDE 15: Synergies Work: Igniting a Movement**

**Nurturing the Grassroots**

**Building Collective Action**

**Creative Pathways to Capital**

**Alt text: Photo of a Synergies Work Entrepreneur, an African-American man smiling.**

**SLIDE 16: Why Entrepreneurship?**

**“It’s given me a drive, a purpose. I feel fulﬁlled when I get up in the morning.” - Brandon Cantrell, Owner of Brandon’s Crochet Shop**

**“Being an entrepreneur has allowed me to be my best self without having to be at the mercy of the ADA or the able bodied world. I’m my own boss and decide my own future.” - Madeline Smith, Owner of Blind Bear Designs**

**“After graduating with a degree, I still could not ﬁnd options for employment. This is the most accomplished I have felt in a longtime” - Joshua W., Founder of Handi Acc**

**SLIDE 17: Framework of Support**

**Ignite (Aspiring Founders): Igniting Ideas Program**

**2. Incubate (Early Growth Stage Startups): Incubation to Impact Program**

**3. Finance (Late Growth Stage Companies): Synergies SEED Fund**

**4. Sustain (Supporting Sustainability): Community Hub**

**Supporting founders at every stage of their entrepreneurial journey - from ideation to venture funding. Building sustainable businesses requires post launch strategy, consistency, ability to change, ability to change and perseverance.**

**SLIDE 18: Impact in Numbers: 2023**

**3,600+ People Impacted (Founders, Families, Networks)**

**300+ Founders Supported to Date**

**130+ Active Founders in Our Community**

**1150+ Hours of Business Coaching Provided**

**449 Professionals trained on empowering disabled founders**

**SLIDE 19: Diversity of Disability**

**The next wave of entrepreneurial innovation comes from diverse disabled founders.**

**46% of our founders are people of color**

**54% of our founders are women**

**Self-Identified Disabilities Among our Founders**

**56% IDD**

**6% Mobility**

**24% Sensory**

**12% Mental Health**

**2% Other**

**SLIDE 20: Building Social Capital**

**Our community consists of world-class leaders from across geographies, industries, and backgrounds to mentor, coach, and support our founders.**

**ASHISTH THAKUR (Atlanta CEO Council)**

**SHAKIR MOIN (The Coca-Cola Company)**

**LYNETTE BELL (Truist Foundation)**

**GINA KLEIN (Enable Ventures)**

**ERNESTO GONZALES (Latin American Assc.)**

**JAGDISH SHETH (Emory University)**

**RACHELLE KURAMOTO (Panoramic Ventures)**

**SHAN COOPER (Journey Forward)**

**JOSEF SCARANTINO (AllRaise)**

**TIFFANY KIRK (Pinnacle Financial Partners)**

**DANA COGAN (Carabiner Communications)**

**ROBERT LUDKE (The Harkins Institute)**

**>> SLIDE 21: The EDDIE Awards**

**Video: Synergies Work was proud to host the 2nd Annual EDDIE Awards on April 11, 2024 – a groundbreaking awards ceremony dedicated to spotlighting and elevating entrepreneurs within the disability community who are helping build a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem and innovating in their respective fields.**

**The event was an amazing evening filled with joy and celebration as we honored and celebrated the remarkable achievements of disabled entrepreneurs. Whether attendees were disabled entrepreneurs, business leaders, or supporters from within the community, it was a memorable occasion that showcased the resilience, creativity, and innovation of individuals within the disability community.**

**Synergies Work is a platform that connects disabled entrepreneurs with the resources, networks, and communities they need to launch, grow, and scale their businesses. We invite you to join the largest community of disability-led startups in the United States today.**

**Learn more at https://synergieswork.org/**

**Join at https://app.synergieswork.org**

**Donate at https://synergieswork.org/donate/**

**SLIDE 22: Beyond Inclusion**

**Led by and With,**

**Not for and To**

**Alt text: Photo of Angad Sahgal with his brother**

**SLIDE 23: Let Me Do It Platform**

**To Empower People With Disabilities To Make Informed Decisions And Have their Own Voice with a goal to build a community to share our collective experiences.**

**A Structured Decision Tree And Task Management Platform**

**SLIDE 24: Meet Our Team**

**Aarti Sahgal**

**Founder & CEO**

**David Eckoff**

**Accelerator & Operations Director**

**Paola Blanco**

**Program Manager**

**Jennifer Parr**

**Multimedia & Strategic Initiatives Manager**

**Madeline Smith**

**Social Media Manager**

**SLIDE 25: Synergies Work Board**

**CHARLIE MILLER**

**Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities**

**DR. SERENA LOWE**

**AnereS Stategies**

**ARJUN SAHGAL**

**Ascent Platform**

**AARTI SAHGAL**

**Founder of Synergies Work**

**ATHAR KHAN**

**Delta Air Lines**

**PETER BARON**

**Carabiner Communications**

**STEVEN HARTMAN**

**General Electric (Formerly)**

**SLIDE 26: Synergies SEED Fund Board**

**RUBY MOORE**

**CEO at Georgia Advocacy office**

**AMIT SAHGAL**

**Cofounder, Letmedoit.org and formerly Director, The Coca-Cola Company**

**AARTI SAHGAL**

**Founder of Synergies Work**

**HON. JOHNNY R. MASON, JR.**

**Judge, State Board of Workers Compensation, State of Georgia**

**SITARA NAYAK**

**VP of Programs at Parent To Parent Of Georgia**

**LISA ASHBY**

**Director Of Client Services Foundation and Endowment Specialty Practice at Truist**

**SLIDE 27: Partner with Synergies Work**

**(404) 491-9549**

**synergies@synergieswork.org**

**www.SynergiesWork.org**

**Join our community at www.app.SynergiesWork.org**

**SLIDE 28**

**Let Me Do It**

**Empowering Independence**

**Presented by:**

**Angad Sahgal**

**SLIDE 29: I am not broken. I do not need fixing.**

**Student at GSU - IDEAL program**

**I am a black belt in karate**

**Avid Soccer fan**

**Georgia Youth ambassador for Supported Decision Making**

**Alt text: Photo of Angad practicing Karate.**

**SLIDE 30: Cause and Effect**

**Cause**

**Misguided perception of limitations**

**Systemic disregard of potential of people with disabilities.**

**Effect**

**Exclusion from social, civic and Economic engagement**

**No Choices, No Right, No Independence.**

**Don’t let your ASSUMPTIONS become my REALITY**

**SLIDE 31: THE SOLUTION**

**Alt text: Let Me Do It app logo**

**Welcome to the world of Empowerment and Acceptance.**

**Alt text: Photo of Angad posing with his father Amit.**

**SLIDE 32: I DECIDE**

**Let Me Do It**

**BRIDGING THE SOCIAL & ECONOMIC GAP**

**Alt text: Photo of a woman with down syndrome practicing Yoga**

**SLIDE 33: Empowering Independence**

**Structured activity flow, enabling user driven customization, managed by the user & their support network**

**I can add decisions and decision steps**

**I can add decision aids which can**

**guide and help me**

**I can add people who can help**

**SLIDE 34: Let Me Do It Platform**

**Raising Awareness for Supported Decision Making**

**Alt text: Photo of Angad speaking at a podium. Google play store and apple play store logos and qr codes.**

**SLIDE 35: CONNECT WITH US**

**Alt text: Let Me Do It logo of a colorful flying bird**

**tech@letmedoit.org**

**SLIDE 36: ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia**

**Dominique Dunford, Executive Director**

**Alt text: ENDdependence Center of Northern Virginia logo**

**SLIDE 37:**

**Questions?**