Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan: In order to meet its goals such as housing, transportation, self-advocacy, and education, a CIL relies and builds on community partnerships.

Pat Morse: BVCIL has a significant number of community partnerships, not only for Brazos Valley, but for the other community underserved areas that we have that I’ve already mentioned. So it’s crucial that any emphasis from, especially Brazos Valley Council and Governments that we are represented because anything related to housing, or transportation, or anything regional that relates to the other services as well, it’s crucial to know that those services can be accessed by persons with disabilities. What we have found, two key issues not just for our participation, but what we can bring to the table is number one representing individuals or trying to have individuals that we serve on those committees, on those boards. Because they can speak for themselves in terms of what that service needs to look like, what it needs to entail in order to be accessed by persons with various types of disabilities. And we don’t want to overlook that that’s where the voice needs to come from, so we can help obtain individual’s consent to be able to come or provide some transportation for them to be able to come, as well as speak for people here that may not be able to or choose not to do that, but we can give their voice to the table of what the challenges might be. The other issue is a lot of times community partners want the very best for this community. I find that always to be true. And there might be a need for education in terms of what human rights or what civil rights needs to be considered regarding Americans with Disabilities Act, for example, or specifically about technology laws and making sure that everyone knows what the most recent laws are that we all are supposed to be in compliance with. And one of the things that we can do is educate community partners and also make sure that they know what kind of referrals that we can accept for persons with disabilities, so that they can receive the services that they need to access everyone else’s services.

Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan: Additionally, CIL’s support other local transition programs that are seeking to provide independence skills to students and clients.

Pat Morse: One of the specialty areas, I suppose I’d say in terms of BVCIL, is the uniqueness in how we can partner with entities in this town regarding students in transition age. So we work a lot in terms of the relationships with College Station ISD, Bryan ISD. At this point, we are not able to do it in the other outlying counties, but I am very hopeful that we will be able to. We do go to the transition fairs, and we partner as much as we can at that time. Currently in this area, what we are able to do in terms of transition is there are classes, such as the post-secondary learning class at Bryan High or post-secondary classes for over 18 year olds with the Center for Disability and Development at Texas A&M, they have a class for post-secondary access to health services. We are in a unique position of being able to provide independent living skills services, advocacy, benefits training as needed directly here at BVCIL, where the class, the entirety or parts, can come. Our facilitators are paid to do the independent living skill training directly with those students, and what we can do is support what BISD is already doing in their post-secondary class. We can support what the past program is doing and yet it’s somewhere in
the community, so it’s much more independent living philosophy than in a classroom, and we can simply support what the curriculum already is.