Lakshmi Mahadevan: Any parent, teacher, or guardian concerned with serving a student who is preparing for transition plays a significant role in the success of that student. We recommend that parents and guardians become aware of resources, such as the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services and CIL’s. Additionally, teachers can further explore person-centered planning and seek guidance on incorporating independent living skills training into their classrooms. For your convenience, we have created webcast on all of these topics, as well.

Pat Morse: For BVCIL, it’s crucial that we work with anyone in the educational system, meaning the teachers and also the parents. We have a lot of parents that call us because maybe they’re new in town or they’re referred from a community partner and they really just don’t know where to turn. And what we have found, in terms of independent living philosophy is transition begins at birth. So all along the way from the youngest children that are in school if we can instill person-centered planning, person-centered choice, for as little as that means to a student like choosing toys, or colors, whatever, in terms of them being a key partner in their own learning, so they’re taking accountability for that. Then parents along the way can maybe be able to find the resources through the teacher in terms of what’s in that community. What we have found at BVCIL is if there’s a teacher in transition or life skills who they’re trying to prepare that student for what happens after graduation, what happens after aging out at 22, the earlier that that teacher can bring the class over and contact BVCIL or another community partner, but come in and really look at what the community resources are. So it’s real, I can feel it, I can see it, I know who those people are. And so when it’s time to come in, it’s not so scary for the parents or for the students. One of the ways that we’ve done that at BVCIL over the last couple of years is have teen camp. The age is 15 to 22, so it is life skills students. It’s not scary; it’s not more than eight or nine students. And the students can come in around school, but yet they can know what we’re doing. Then sometimes the teacher, once a semester maybe, will call and they’ll do one independent living class over here with us. And that makes the connection for the student, so they can send home information and the parent will know what we can do after school. Or if it’s someone who really needs one-to-one assistance because of special accommodations, they can come in after school.