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- ANNOUNCER: 00:00 Welcome to the 2023 Fall Brainstorm Virtual Speakers Series. Listen as Kelsey Boyer shares her dramatic story of traumatic brain injury and forming the nonprofit Save a Brain. She presented My Invisible Injury on Thursday, October 5th, 2023. The Fall Brainstorm Speaker event is sponsored by the Northern New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury System and Kessler Foundation.
- JEAN LENGENFELDER: 00:22 It's now my pleasure to introduce Kelsey Boyer who will be presenting today My Invisible Injury. Kelsey spent most of her life following her passion of being a competitive slopestyle snowboarder in high hopes of competing in the Olympics. During 2016, she sustained a TBI, which resulted in immediate brain surgery. Her life drastically changed, and she had to find herself and her purpose while dealing with bad post-concussion symptoms. This led her to create a nonprofit, Save a Brain. Save a Brain is a Utah-based nonprofit whose mission is to provide education, encourage prevention, and spread awareness of the long-term mental and physical effects of TBI and concussions. Thank you so much, Kelsey, for being here with us today.
- KELSEY BOYER: 01:21 Thank you for the intro. Kelsey, like she said, I'm a 30-year-old white woman with blonde hair, blue eyes. I'm also sitting in my office. If you want to use your imagination, I could look like Blake Lively. Thank you for taking time out of your Thursday to be here with me. And I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to sit here and share my story with you. You'll see me glance down to my right. I have some notes because also from my brain surgery, I tend to wander. So if you see me glancing down, it's just to keep my own brain on track. So how did I get here? Sitting in this chair. Oh, there we go. So today's takeaways, grit and resilience, silver linings, and knowing that you are not alone. These three things have and I feel like still are critical pillars in my life that help me get through every day. And yeah. Just truly have gotten me to where I am today. I'm going to show-- we're going to hit like a quick Thursday midday movie. [laughter] So grab your lunch, grab a snack. It's a five-minute video. So we will just be hunkering down for a minute. And then I will continue talking after. So I hope you enjoy.
- BOYER: 02:55 My name is Kelsey Boyer, and what brought me out here was just the snowboarding in the mountains. [music] In 2016, I was competing in high hopes of going to the Olympics for slopestyle, and I sustained about eight concussions in about a two-month period. And my brain started bleeding, but I had no idea. And all of the doctors just said, "You're fine. You're fine. You're fine." I was actually on a film trip, still snowboarding through all of it. I don't really remember those two weeks at all filming. I was gagging a lot and having mood swings. Everybody that I was with was like, "This is not who you are. Something's wrong. We're taking you into the emergency room." The ER physician or lady was like, "We think you're okay, but just in case, we're going to take a CAT scan." She came back in and her face-- that's when she said, "You are lucky to be alive. You've been bleeding in the brain for two weeks. Your brain has shifted 11 millimeters, and you have a subdural hematoma. You're on your way for brain surgery right now."

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BOYER: 04:47

I woke up from brain surgery in the ICU, and I was very confused. They weren't really letting anyone in the room with me, and I had tubes all over. And I had to pass a bunch of cognitive tests, walking test, talking test. They didn't really tell me much, but I went through all the steps, made it to the recovery floor after about two weeks, I'd say, told me I was good and released me on my way. The doctors did not tell me anything as to what to expect after brain surgery, just told me to come back in three weeks to get the staples out of my head and to get a checkup. I'd say after about three months of my surgery, I started experiencing more mood swings, depression. I couldn't look at any screens without getting head pains. It hurt to move my eyes as soon as I would wake up. All these little things just kind of kept stacking. And I was just like, "What do I do?"

BOYER: 05:49

After about 4 years of my recovery, I started speaking up more on my social media about it. That's when strangers were reaching out and felt like they were in the same boat as me. They felt lost. They felt hopeless, which led me to create Save a Brain as just an Instagram account to share facts with people because I felt like people-- we aren't as educated as we should be about the brain. So I went right for the nonprofit organization and felt like we could do more by filling the voids of being the finances that need to get people to treatment because the financial burden on an individual family is just huge, along with providing awareness and education about TBIs and head injuries. We don't want individuals to think that a traumatic brain injury is the end. It's not your new normal. There's so much life after it. It's just navigating and having the right resources and having a safe place to go. The long-term goal for Save a Brain is to save as many brains as we can by financially supporting an individual to go receive treatment. After everything that I've been through, I feel as if I've been given a second chance. Creating Save a Brain is my second chance to make a greater impact on the community. It's an extension of who I am, and it will forever mean more to me than winning any contest will. I can't wait to see where it goes, and I'll forever just keep fighting for the TBI community.

BOYER: 07:40

Let's see. Okay. Am I still good, or do I have to go back into slideshow? Good, Jackie? Oh, okay. Great. [laughter] Well, thank you all for watching that. Nothing like a quick midday movie to enjoy your lunch. And yeah. Now you've seen what got me here today and sitting in this chair. And it's been 7 years or like 7 and a half years since my brain surgery. And I currently started resurfacing things and digging through my recovery because I feel like-- I didn't necessarily accept what had happened. And now 7 years later, I've been, yeah, like, "What got me here today?" And that's my first pillar, grit and resilience. These terms are new for me, so I'm also learning them, which is what the definitions are there, but I do resonate with them heavily as to how I got through my brain injury. And grit and resilience can look different for everyone. I think we can all collectively probably put ourselves in a moment where we had to dig deep within ourselves to see a light.

BOYER: 09:00

So the definition of grit. Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina and sticking with your future. Resilience. Resilience is the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties. Toughness day in and day out. My grit. My grit I come to find out is journaling. What you see on the screen are notes that were in my journal. And so my grit on the right there, my passion of

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snowboarding. I made a trick list. So like I said, this could look different for anyone as to how to relate it in your own life. But for me, this was it. So in 2016, I had my brain surgery. And then in 2017, not even a year after my recovery, I am making an absurd amount of a trick list. Even before my injury, this would be like-- I don't know what I was thinking. It's like funny to look at it, but it also just shows the grit. I had brain surgery, and I just was looking forward, looking ahead. It wasn't enough that I was like, "I'm going to give up on my goals." It was enough to be like, "I'm going to persevere. And what does that look like for me?"

BOYER: 10:33

And my resilience is the one in the middle there of the definitions. So it says, "You are stronger than you think." And as I looked, I just started digging through my journals, honestly, to put this slide together. So I went back through all my memories. And yeah. Consistently throughout my journal, it says, "You are stronger than you think. You are stronger than you think," over and over. And for me, I realized that was my resilience. Making that note to myself was like the light that I needed to get through. And yeah. I think finding that light as well as surrounding myself with good people, that's what got me in day in and day out. And I also just loved-- on the notes on the right, if you can't see it, it says-- at the bottom of a trick list of like 20 tricks, it says, "Have fun and believe in yourself." And I think that's also a note that is easy to forget in life, especially when something bad happens and you're just trying to find the good. So grit and resilience is my first pillar there that kept me going. And I'll just let everyone take one last look if they're reading anything. And next slide here.

BOYER: 12:02

So the second pillar, silver linings. The definition of a silver lining is a negative occurrence and taking a positive aspect out of it. Again, this could look different for everyone in their life. But for me, it was very tough to accept my brain injury. I had this goal, and I had an idea of how I was going to hit it. And I did not plan for my brain injury to happen. That was not in the plan. And it took me years, and I feel like I still go through it, like takes me a while to accept it. But for me, accepting it was huge because it just made me realize that there are blessings within the pains that we endure in life. And it's up to us to find them.

BOYER: 13:02

And another big thing was life was never going to be the same for me. It's never going to be the same for any of us. If you even think about who you were yesterday, we're not the same person that we were yesterday. I truly believe we're meant to be on this earth to grow. And life tends to throw things at us, which was my brain injury. And if you look on the screen, on the left here, we have Bethany Hamilton. She is a professional surfer who was a victim of a shark attack. They didn't think she would live, let alone ever surf again. For Bethany, obviously, I can't speak for her, but the silver lining out of what happened to her, she is now on a bigger stage to show what resilience looks like. She's took her story to give people hope. She's filmed movies, done public speaking. She might have even wrote a book. I don't know if that was her, but the silver lining of her shark attack, she didn't plan for that either.

BOYER: 14:18

In the middle here, you just watch my Netflix documentary. [laughter] And for me, my silver lining is having the opportunity to sit here with all of you. I get to make these new connections and these bonds and spread awareness on this invisible injury and just have a voice for the traumatic brain injury community and community itself, which in my life, I never thought it was going to go this way. But that's the silver lining

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within my brain injury. And on the right here, we have Simone Biles, world-class gymnast, gem of a human. She had, what people are saying, a mental health breakdown. But what it led her to was becoming a global advocate for mental health awareness. And now she has the ability-- by finding the silver lining in what happened to her, she has the ability to connect with people on a deeper level and just understanding.

BOYER: 15:31

And like I said, I think silver linings, it's hard. When you're in a dark, unknown situation, it's really easy to start digging the hole of finding the negative in all of it. But I can confidently say that finding the silver lining and the positive day in and day out is what got me through. Even when I felt like I couldn't find it, finding something small, even if it was just like-- I have a bunch of gratitude journals actually. And yeah. Just finding gratitude for like one small thing that you did that day can get you through.

BOYER: 16:17

And the third pillar here, you are not alone. The quote on the screen says, "Asking for and accepting help is not giving up. It is refusing to give up." And the photos up there, the bottom left, it's a girl that is just alone, feeling the pain of being alone, just kind of to herself and taking a moment. And the photo on the right is two people climbing a mountain. And the person on the top is helping the person by holding their hand to get to the top of the mountain. And I feel like that's also been a big part of my life. This lesson has come. The more I dug in my injury, I realized that I didn't ask for help. My recovery was very lonely, dark, unknown, terrifying. I had people that wanted to be there for me, but I just wouldn't let them in. And now that it's been 7 years, I am opening up again and being like, "I need help. I don't want to do this alone." I surround myself with good people. There's a community out there that can also relate to what you're going through. I think it's just like changing the narrative in your head of asking for help is actually strength and not weakness.

BOYER: 18:01

People always ask me. They're like, "Why didn't you ask for help?" And for the longest time, I was like, "I don't know. I couldn't figure it out." But for me, I didn't ask for help because I had five doctors, as you saw in the video, tell me that I was fine. So I started to just think I was fine, even though I wasn't. Also, the invisible injury aspect, I felt unseen. I also had no idea what was going on in my own head at the time. And a lot of my mood swings and effects of my traumatic brain injury that came along, I felt very emotionally unstable. And I didn't want to be a burden on the people around me. But truthfully, yeah. I mean, my recovery is ongoing. Like I said, it's been 7 years, and I feel like I'm still learning from it every single day and learning to ask for help. And if it wasn't for the journey that got me here today, like what I created next was Save a Brain. And I created this nonprofit because I just took my own recovery and realized no one should have to be alone. Nobody should have to walk that journey alone because for me, it was just very hard. And so I was like, "How can we come together? What does that look like?" And that led me to Save a Brain.

BOYER: 19:47

So as you heard in the video, we are a nonprofit that focuses on prevention and education of traumatic brain injuries and concussions. Obviously, it's a massive void to fill. So we have our hands in a few pots. One of them being we provide resources. So our Happy Helmets program, we donate brand new helmets every month to nonprofits and youth programs. And that's been our longest program now. So I think we've donated like 2,500 helmets, which is really cool because I feel like it's like

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people get into these sports, and then the financial burden of having to buy a helmet is there. So we just want to make sure people's brains are protected. We offer support. Blair the Brain here. Blair is a new program this year. So it's an animated brain that does all of our education. It's for 8-year-olds and up to understand. So it's like we learn through storytelling. So Blair just takes us through their life, and we learn about everything that could come along with brain injuries.

BOYER: 21:01

We have our Intentional Eating series. So every month, we release an Ingredient of the Month. And within the Ingredient of the Month comes an easy recipe that you can cook at home because, raise your hand. Let's see. Can I go on-- I don't know if I can go on gallery view, but who likes cooking? Who likes eating yummy food? I feel like we can all relate there. Yep. I see some hands going up. We all love food. We're here for food. And we wanted to just let people know that you are what you eat. And how can we learn about this together? I'm just going to go to the next slide. These are just some photos here. But yeah. Along with all of that, we have a resources tab that lives on our website that helps navigate people to trustworthy clinics in their area and might also just offer a few other treatments that people could try. So we have that on our website. We also facilitate helmet checks at action sports contests for the professionals so they get their helmets checked before they go out and compete. I feel like it's like we have-- yeah. We do so much over here.

BOYER: 22:19

And I could go on forever talking about this invisible injury and this big void that we're trying to fill. But for us, at the end of the day, it's been 3 and a half years now since starting Save a Brain. And I have no experience running a nonprofit. You've seen my past. I've just been an athlete. But for me, it is an extension of who I am. And it's super important for the world to educate themselves on their brains because we truly only get one brain. So yeah. I feel like, like I said, my brain's wandering. But yeah. Save a Brain, we want everyone, especially in this call, to know that we're here for you. We're here to provide that education, the resources, the support and just offer you a sense of community to know that you don't have to be alone. The brain doesn't have to be scary to learn about. How can we all just normalize this conversation and come together to learn?

BOYER: 23:33

And yeah. I think that's the journey of my life. These photos are seriously my favorite thing looking at them. The kids on the right-hand side. If you can't see the screen, there's two kids on skateboards on the right-hand side having the time of their life. We just donated helmets to them. The top left, those are two of my best friends who helped me run Save a Brain, and we're just standing at our new tent that we're so excited about because we didn't even know we'd be getting a tent. And then the bottom left is a big, big, fat donation of 30 helmets to a nonprofit here in Utah called SOS Outreach.

BOYER: 24:15

But yeah. Now that I'm wrapping it up and just sitting here going through it all, my brain injury has been my biggest teacher. I truthfully can say that. And yeah. I think it's going to be for me, what I've been learning is it's a forever journey. Some days you sit with it; some days you don't. But the days that you don't, how can we just make sure we get through that day together? And then yeah. Just thank you all for listening to me talk, for taking time to be here today. And if anyone feels compelled-- like I said, it truly like takes a community to come together, like a village. And if anyone

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feels compelled, there's the donation QR code for Venmo, or you can donate on the website. But yeah. Even like \$25 could help cover a helmet for a kid. So that's where that money could go.

BOYER: 25:22

But yeah. Other than that, I just really encourage you to follow us on social media, subscribe for our newsletters because we have a lot of cool things in the works. And like I said, I could talk your ear off forever about Save a Brain, but I won't. So yeah. Just follow along our journey and thank you for being here today. And I just hope everybody knows in here-- I'm just going to cuss, but how badass they are. [laughter] And yeah. Just find that within yourself because if you felt compelled or inspired by what I just shared, that's a mirror. You hold that within you. And yeah. That's it. So thanks for having me. Like I said, feel free to follow us. And I have my personal one on there as well if anybody wants to reach out. But now I will stop talking, and I would love to answer some questions.

LENGENFELDER: 26:22

Great. Well, thank you so much, Kelsey. We really appreciate you coming here today and sharing your story. So we'd like to open it up for questions right now. And just so everybody knows, there's a few ways you can ask questions. So first, you can use the Raise Your Hand feature. To do this, you want to click on the Participant button on the bottom of the page. When that opens, there will be a Raise Your Hand button that you can press. And then one of us will call on you to ask your questions to Kelsey.

BOYER: 26:54

Oh, I'm so sorry. You were still going.

LENGENFELDER: 26:57

Yeah. That's okay. [laughter] That's okay.

BOYER: 26:59

I'm like I can't tell with-- I can't tell with the virtual thing. Can I stop sharing my screen? So then I can--

LENGENFELDER: 27:07

Yeah. You can stop sharing your screen because then we could see everyone who asked the question. We'll pin them with you. Second, if there's anyone who doesn't want to ask their question, you can feel free to type it in the chat, and then one of us will ask that question for you. So at this time, we can open it up for questions. Let's see. Dushan, is that how you say your name? I see that Dushan has a question.

MALE 1: 27:35

Yes. Hi, everyone. Thank you, Kelsey. I think it's wonderful what you're doing. I'm sure a lot of people appreciate it. But from one thing, maybe I jump in a little bit late, but I didn't get the extent of the injuries that you sustained. And in terms of the Save a Brain that you are doing, I see it's mostly focused on prevention, of prevention of the brain injury. But what about the people that there are so many that have already sustained? When I had mine, as you said, you didn't ask for help. I did ask. I was asking for help for 10 years, more than 10 years. And it wasn't for me researching and trying to find a way how I can help myself. It wasn't that I found it. And I think that's exactly what is also needed for a lot of the community, is to have all those resources that they can address to.

MALE 1: 28:53

I asked many doctors. One was sending me to a psychiatrist. The other one was sending me to a neurologist. So one is giving me medication for one thing. The other one is giving me medication against the side effects. And my goal right now, I'm training to be a doctor, and I want to be a neurosurgeon. So I'm designed for a neurosurgeon, but more for a neuropsychiatrist. So somebody who's actually focused

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on traumatic brain injuries and both on the physical as part of the neurological, but also the mental parts. So for me, it's 15 years now. There are days that I feel like you are, the days that I feel resilient and I have the grit. I have had the grit from the very beginning. But there are 2 or maybe 3 out of 7 days a week when I'm on the bottom, even below the bottom still.

MALE 1: 29:55

And just one more thing to add before I do my final thing is that I think that the grit and the resilience is not something that we can come up with. It's something that is more of a subconscious mind. Because when I tried to go back to the days when I was-- I was in coma 40 days after my head injury. And I didn't know who I was, but the grit was there in me. And I got out of the hospital within 5 days after I got from my coma. Even though I was all with fractures, I even walked out with casts out of the hospital when they were letting me go. That was just because of that grit, but I was not aware of it. It was just more subconscious. So I actually want to redefine the definition of grit where it's not something that, oh, you don't have it because you have not developed it or you're not-- people are just not aware that they have it because to some conscious minds, sometimes it's not more active or more a way-- they're now more aware of it in the present based on the what type of injury.

MALE 1: 31:21

Like I lost all of my memory, which probably was not the case for you. I had to relearn what a family is, what a mom is, what a brother is, what it is to be a brother and all those things. So it's very, very subjective, every injury. And it's very difficult to-- I mean, I think it's wrong to compare one with another. But the best thing to do is to have somewhere where we can-- I mean, I'm willing to help and get in with you with whatever you're doing to actually-- besides the prevention, we can also focus more of the injuries. There are not many patients who are aware of you can actually become better than before. And that's my actual goal. I'm still working on it. I'm not there yet. But hopefully, within around 5 years, I'll think I'll get there, better than I was the one from before.

BOYER: 32:32

Warrior. No. Thank you for sharing that with me. And I feel like with all of us, And I think everything that you're saying, it's like yeah. Brain injuries are like fingerprints. Every one is different, and what works for somebody else might not work for you. And it's kind of like a journey that you just embark on that. Like you said, you're googling like anything. And I did the--

MALE 1: 32:57

And not only googling, researching, researching doctor, asking-- I went to so many different doctors. And some of them, as you said, they're telling me, "You're fine." No. But I know I'm not fine. You're not going to-- you're not going to tell me that I'm fine when I know I'm not fine.

BOYER: 33:13

For sure. And I think for me, it's like-- I mean, I resonate with all of that. It's just like I had to be my biggest advocate. Like I went two weeks with a bleeding brain and no-- I went to five doctors, and none of them caught it. And the last doctor was just like, "You wouldn't have made it through the night." And that's why Save a Brain does exist as well. And to answer your question of, yes, we focus heavily on prevention. But for us, we're also in the space of if you're going through it, we're here. Here's a community. We can learn together. We help connect people to treatment facilities, to resources that they might need. And if we don't know it, I'm the one on the other end. I'm like, "I will help find that for you." Because I might need it just as-- we all

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need it. And I think it's just kind of-- even for like caregivers, just educate yourself, be here, see what people need around you.

BOYER: 34:14

And I didn't hit on this, but we have a program called the Thrive Program that's new of this year, and we are trying to financially support people to go get the treatment that they need. So we helped one person thus far.

MALE 1: 34:29

I'm going to be the second one to sign up for it. [laughter] But at the same time, I have a lot to give, too, because googling up, it's not just sitting one day and finding. Not only you find information. You reach out to them and get to know what they can offer. And even with the ones that offer-- say that they offer things and you see them face to face, and they're like, "Oh, well, this is the only thing we actually," which is not-- it's completely different from what you were expecting them. And I went through so many things, and we can share. I mean, I can email you or can give you my phone number, and we can get in touch and make this Save a Brain even bigger. So we can also do the prevention. I mean, not only the-- the prevention is very important as you are doing. The same thing for all the other problem and disease like cancer risks and everything like that. Prevention is number one thing. But that's not where we have to stop. We have so many other people that already had suffered and are afraid to share. They feel so impotent. And they don't want to-- they feel embarrassed for feeling impotent.

MALE 1: 35:56

For many years, I've even felt impotent because I was not able to even recall what happened to me three hours before that. So there's many different aspects. That's why it's not well-addressed because now there is not one professional who actually is able to put all these things together. And that's where I want to come. That's where I want to be able to see, evaluate the patient, and tell them, "This is one thing. This is on one side. Physical stuff is the brain, physically. And this is what the mental aspect of it." So how much the mental is involved into the physical and the incorporation. I was not able to walk. I still see double. I can't drive a car. I do visual. But if I wasn't researching, I wouldn't have known there is visual therapy. It has improved. And now I'm at a point of I can almost see single. And I have a monocular diplopia, which means only on one eye I see double, which it doesn't make sense. You can't see double on one eye. You have to have both eyes to converge. If they don't converge, you see two things. But if they converge correctly, you're going to be only one eye seeing. But if only one eye is doing that to you, what is going on with the brain?

LENGENFELDER: 37:27

Dushan, I just want to thank you for your comments.

MALE 1: 37:31

Sorry.

LENGENFELDER: 37:31

I'm sorry to cut you off.

MALE 1: 37:31

I'm going for details. I'm very sorry.

LENGENFELDER: 37:34

I just want to move on to a few questions, but thank you so much for sharing your thoughts. And hopefully, you'll be able to connect with Kelsey offline too. I see Cooper has a question. So Cooper, if you'd like to ask your question.

S5: 37:49

Yeah. Hi there. Kelsey, you just want to say that I'm a huge fan of yours. I originally heard your story listening to The Bomb Hole podcast probably about two months ago

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now. I'm someone about 6 years living into post-traumatic brain injury life. So even just hearing your story is something really inspiring to me. But I do want to ask, what has your experience been like educating those close to you about your injury, both on the friends and family side and then also in terms of the snowboarding community as well?

BOYER: 38:20

Wow. Hi, Cooper. Super nice to meet you. Thank you for all those kind words. And yeah. I mean, it's interesting to think about my friends and family. I mean, truthfully, I always say, yeah, my family, they're like my best friends. I lean on them constantly. But people don't understand what it's like going through a brain injury unless you've been through it. And so for me, that's been hard because, yeah, my family didn't understand. And that was also really hard for me because I was just like, "Why don't you get it? I feel crazy because you're not understanding this." And what I really have come to terms with is that-- I'm just like, "You won't get it. This is my own experience." But for me with friends and family, I've just been trying to be better about communication. So even if it's just like they don't understand and they won't understand, it's like, "Okay. You won't understand this, but can you just listen?" has been kind of a big one for me because, yeah, I used to just get so angry. I was just like, "Why don't you get it?" But I don't know. It is very complex. So yeah. I think communication is just huge because they don't know what's going on inside your head. So if you can communicate that to them, that would help. I still am really bad at it and working on that.

BOYER: 39:50

And the snowboard community is an interesting one. The snowboard community is one that-- honestly, the needle has been shifting, even just seeing like people talk about mental health. People wear helmets. People are more receptive to learning about that, more now than ever, which has been really cool to kind of get on in there and also shake shit up a little bit. But yeah. I don't know. The snowboard community is hard because we-- if you've never had it, it's like the black sheep of injuries. You almost don't want to talk about it or acknowledge it. But lately, we've been trying to be like, "You know what? If not if, but when? When is it going to happen?" And that's kind of-- the snowboard community in action sports has been our hardest one to shake up a little bit, but people are opening up to it, which is really cool.

S5: 40:53

Yeah. That's awesome. I appreciate you answering those questions. The snowboarding community one was definitely interesting to me because you'll hear about it, especially listening to your podcast, and you can talk about it through social media, and everyone's really receptive to it. But when it comes to actually getting up on the mountain, it's still very style-oriented. A lot of people are like, "Oh, I'm not going to look cool wearing a helmet," or, "I'm not going to get this shot." So just seeing you make strides to kind of shift that within snowboarding and the action sports community in general is just-- it's awesome to see, and I'm glad that you're pushing that conversation.

BOYER: 41:28

Well, thank you. Yeah. And that's what it takes. That's what I'm learning. Yeah. It takes like all of us existing within that space to practice what we preach and lead by action by wearing our helmets. And that's like what I've learned more than anything, so. But thank you.

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Boyer: 41:46 Yeah. Thank you.

LENGENFELDER: 41:46 Thank you, Cooper. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, asking the questions. We also have Michelle with her hand raised. So Michelle, you want to ask your question? You might need to unmute, Michelle. There you go.

MICHELLE: 42:04 Sorry.

BOYER: 42:05 There you are.

MICHELLE: 42:07 Okay. I better go out of where I am right now. Sorry. I don't want to speak much because I feel like we could go on forever since we get each other. And you are amazing. I also had a TBI. So that was in 2020. And as far as helmets, it would definitely make sense in my story with having a sledding accident where I hit my head, and I got to go back to my neurologist and probably ask her the same questions that I've asked her before since I had a seizure from my TBI. And I'm not sure. I don't think I have a question for you, but I am trying to get involved in TBI because I just feel like if you haven't had a TBI, you don't get it. And people could empathize, but they're not going to get it. It's living in our shoes, and everybody is different. So I'm trying to--

MICHELLE: 43:49 Sorry. I feel like I should be speaking faster, but that's never been me. So I'm trying to plan a meeting with someone. And the next couple of days are really busy for me. It's probably too much. I'm like, "Okay. I have to keep track of everything." So I get it with-- and also writing things down and communicating, which have never been very good for me. Anyway, I should stop because I'm sure that a lot of people have questions.

BOYER: 44:34 Oh, well, thank you for sharing, Michelle. And yeah. I mean, I think that's like part of the brain injury. And that's why we have to lean on each other and find the community where we feel safe to be-- you're like notes. I'm like I write so many things down. It's like insane. My desk is just like notes. But it's like what works for you is what works for you. And I don't think it's meant for anyone else to understand. And it's just kind of like-- it's part of the journey and getting to know yourself, right?

LENGENFELDER: 45:09 Yeah. Thanks for sharing, Michelle. We appreciate that. We got still about 10 minutes left for questions. I see that Shane [crosstalk]--

MALE 1: 45:16 Just to add, I'm sorry to interrupt. And post-it notes. Post-it notes is what helps me a lot because it's like a reminder. Those are the things that I forget, especially to finish one task before starting a new one. So I have a post-it notes, "Finish first this, finish the other thing first." Just a suggestion, what helps me.

LENGENFELDER: 45:38 Right. Shane, would you like to ask your question?

SHANE: 45:42 Yeah. Can you hear me?

BOYER: 45:45 Yep.

SHANE: 45:47 I think I kind of have a moderate TBI. And when I originally got my TBI back in 2005, I depended on family. And just in the recent years, I've gone out and done my own research. And I'm kind of a technical guy, and I'm in this group called Heads and Tails.

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It's in Indiana. And I've decided to build a website called Traumatic Brain, the Traumatic Brain Project. And I have the URLs, and I'm getting a building, and I'd like to know if we like to coordinate.

- BOYER: 46:36 Yeah, Okay, tech guy. I love that.
- SHANE: 46:40 What?
- BOYER: 46:41 I just said, "Okay, tech guy. I love this." Thank you for sharing that. And yeah. I'll get the URL, and we can dive in.
- LENGENFELDER: 46:55 Thanks, Shane, for sharing.
- SHANE: 46:57 How do I get my email to you?
- LENGENFELDER: 47:00 You can go through the Save Your Brain website.
- SHANE: 47:07 Okay. Thank you.
- BOYER: 47:11 Yeah. The website is just-- it's saveabraininc, I-N-C, dot com.
- SHANE: 47:17 Yeah. I have it.
- LENGENFELDER: 47:19 Thank you, Shane.
- SHANE: 47:20 Thanks.
- TERRY: 47:21 I have a question.
- LENGENFELDER: 47:23 We also have Terry with a question.
- TERRY: 47:26 Hi there. Kelsey, thank you for your testimony. And I just want to ask one question. Do you ever say, "I know how you feel?"
- BOYER: 47:38 I mean, it's hard. That's a hard statement because even in my time, I'm like, I can relate to how people maybe feel, but it's like everyone's feelings are very different. And everyone's experiences are very different as well. So for me, I'm just always like, "I see you. I hear you. I'm here for you. I understand the unknown and the frustrations of maybe what you're going through." But I don't know if I'm ever just like, "I feel the exact thing," because I think everyone's going through something different.
- TERRY: 48:20 Yeah. The reason I ask that is because I've been able to work with a lot of veterans. And for them to come back from war, I've never been in war, but we both have a TBI. So I've been very careful not to say, "I know exactly how you feel." So I wanted to know how you handle that.
- BOYER: 48:39 It's hard. It's hard. And yeah. That's like what I've resulted to, is I'm just like, "You know what? We've all been through traumatic brain injuries, but I still don't know how you feel exactly." So it's like I think just being like, "I see you, I hear you. I'm here for you." It's like, I think, how I've been kind of navigating it, but it's different for everyone.
- TERRY: 49:03 I just want to say one more thing. You can make it. I'm 28 years out for my TBI, with a lot of education. You can make it.

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BOYER: 49:13 Boss moves.

TERRY: 49:15 Thank you.

BOYER: 49:16 Yeah. Thank you.

LENGENFELDER: 49:17 Thank you, Terry.

TERRY: 49:19 You're welcome.

LENGENFELDER: 49:19 And for anyone who needs the Save Your Brain website, Jackie put it in the chat. So you could copy that so you can contact Kelsey after this. Let's see. Bree, you have a question?

BREE: 49:36 Hey, KB.

BOYER: 49:37 Hey, Bree.

BREE: 49:39 So with exhausting what you feel within the extreme sports world, what do you think the next steps are for Save a Brain?

BOYER: 49:50 Like just how we're going to continue to try to move the needle?

BREE: 49:59 Yes.

BOYER: 50:00 I don't know. I feel like people are like, "What do you think about this?" I'm like day-by-day over here. But I think what-- I don't know. I think it's just like creating that safe space for people to come to and feel comfortable to learn is important. And also, for us, people are like, "You could be the helmet police." Or like, "You could be these people." But for Save a Brain, I'm just like, "We don't want to be the people yelling." Nobody likes that guy. But I think it's just like, yeah, creating the understanding and the middle ground of like, "Okay. We can come together and just learn about this." And the more people learn, what I've been seeing is, yeah, people are more receptive to educating themselves. They're more receptive to wearing a helmet, more receptive to even just looking out for their friends. So yeah. I think just moving forward, we're just going to remember why we're here, keep doing what we're doing, and create that safe space for everyone. So thank you.

LENGENFELDER: 51:06 Thank you, Bree.

BOYER: 51:06 Thank you so much, Bree.

LENGENFELDER: 51:07 I think we have time for one more question, and it looks like Arthur has his hand up.

ARTHUR: 51:14 Yes. It's really more of a question about-- my TBI has nothing to do with concussions. I'm probably nearly three times your age. And I relate to lots of the things you're saying about deficits and psychology and psychiatry. My question is, have you interacted at all with the NFL in terms of concussions? Because they're doing tremendous amounts of work on helmets and reducing concussions and things like that. I don't know if it's completely off the topic of how sledboarders get concussions. But the second comment is I saw your activity. I looked on your website. It's great. See a lot of your activity in Utah. If you can get or at least reach out to Mitt Romney, if you can get him on your board or whatever. I mean, I went to school with him. I

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haven't had a relationship with him in years, but he's a wonderful, wonderful person. And I think he would relate to finding ways to help your organization.

BOYER: 52:24

Hi, Arthur. Thank you for sharing that. I'm like, "Great idea, writing that one down," but. And that's like how we're here. Like I said, it's been 3 and a half years. I know nothing about the nonprofit realm, which is a beast of a realm. And yeah. For us, we rooted in action sports because that's where it was easiest. But for us, our goal is to expand outside of that. This year, especially we've been trying to get our hands into, yeah, football and soccer and all of these other sports, but it definitely just takes time because, yeah, getting into the football realm would be huge. But yeah. Currently, we've just kind of implemented like concussion protocols for athletes in surfing, snowboarding, and skiing. But I love that idea of the Mitt Romney. And this is what it takes, these conversations. That's how Save a Brain's here. It's just been people connecting and being like, "Okay. Have you thought about this?" And then I'm like, "No. I haven't. Great." So thank you for all of that.

LENGENFELDER: 53:32

And thank you, Kelsey. We really want to thank you for your presentation today and sharing your story and taking all of the questions. And anyone else who wants to reach out to Kelsey, please reach her through the Save a Brain website below. We want to thank you all for attending today. Immediately after this presentation, there's going to be a survey for you to answer about today's presentation. We'll also be following up with an email survey if you're unable to complete it right now. Also, be on the lookout for our winter brainstorm newsletter, which will actually feature an article about Kelsey, so you can read about that. And we are going to have a winter brainstorm speaker, which will be Kyla Pearce from the LoveYourBrain Foundation on Thursday, January 11th. So hopefully, many of you will join us. And if you're interested in any more of our events or participating in our research, much of which can be done remotely, please check us out on the Kessler Foundation website. Again, thank you, Kelsey, and thank you all for attending today.

BOYER: 54:40

Thank you, everyone. And yeah. Reach out on the website or even Instagram, Save a Brain or Kelsey Boyer Instagram. It will take me a minute to respond, but I will respond.

ANNOUNCER: 54:52

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