

Inside the Kennedy Collective: Creating Opportunities in the Commercial Cleaning Industry

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Tim Clagg: Welcome to the Business of Cleaning podcast - your number one source for information on the commercial cleaning industry. We release new episodes monthly, live from the Janitorial Management Studio located in Toledo, Ohio. I am Tim Clagg, the Marketing Communication Specialist at Double A Solutions and your host of the Business of Cleaning podcast. This month, we're talking with Valerie Reyher, who is the VP of Workforce Development, and Social Enterprise with The Kennedy Collective based out of Trumbull, Connecticut. She has been with the company for the last 28 years and has certainly seen a lot of growth and a lot of changes during her time. Welcome, Valerie. We're so glad to have you in this month's episode.

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Valerie Reyher: Oh, thank you. I appreciate the invitation.

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Tim Clagg: Let's go ahead and talk about the overview of the Kennedy Collective, your initiatives, and your goals from day one until now.

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Valerie Reyher: Sure, thank you! The Kennedy Collective is a nonprofit organization that was founded by Evelyn Kennedy in 1951 to serve individuals with intellectual disabilities. The organization has evolved over the years, ensuring inclusive and dynamic opportunities for any person with a disability, employment being a major component of those services. We've spent over 30 years creating employment opportunities for persons with barriers to employment. Our janitorial operation is a social enterprise that provides jobs to individuals with disabilities in the janitorial custodial services, and we are a business meeting our customers' cleaning needs.

01:42

Tim Clagg: Evelyn Kennedy founded the Kennedy Collective in 1951. How much of her impact back in those early days help lay the foundation from then in 1951, all the way here in 2023?

02:00

Valerie Reyher: So, I believe the initiatives are alive and well today. Our core values represent what Evelyn wanted for all. When we start with challenging the status quo, her not settling when someone told her to institutionalize her son and go out, reach out to the community, figure out who else is in the same predicament, and so building that community, uniting folks on a common mission and objective, ensuring inclusion and purpose for everyone. So, all of our core values are certainly represented today of what Evelyn wanted way back when. And even though she's not with us, I'll tell you, she was an amazing person who brought a tremendous amount of light and fight into the world. She did not have a problem arguing with folks to ensure every opportunity for individuals was afforded, just like you and I would receive.

03:00

Tim Clagg: From 1951 until last year, you guys were known as the Kennedy Center. What was the reason behind updating the name last fall to the Kennedy Collective?

03:11

Valerie Reyher: That is a great question. When I started with the organization, it was the Kennedy Center. And within this local area, people knew us, and certainly, it was easy to find. But we're in the day and age of Google. And if you ask anyone outside of this area, they're typically leaning towards the Kennedy Center or the Canet Kennedy Performing Arts Center in Washington, DC. So they aren't learning about who we are. Additionally, we aren't a center (air quotes) 'the center' anymore. We are a collective of individuals, partners, and communities. And when we unite as a collective to empower and employ, our abilities have no bounds. So changing our name represents who we are and removes the boundaries of being seen in one place but being all around wherever our services are needed.

04:03

Tim Clagg: Valerie, you've been with the company for 28 years. Why did you decide to join this organization? And for you, what's been some of the most satisfying parts of the job?

04:14

Valerie Reyher: Oh well, 28 years ago, you know, fresh out of school, I thought I was looking for a job and I don't want to be as simple as they hired me. But I think at the time, it probably was that, but what's kept me here is the drive and passion of our board, our senior leadership. I did not start in this role here. I did start as an entry-level. I was just a case manager and helping people on their vocational rehabilitation journey. And ultimately, it really allowed me to find... it's my home, and I met my husband here, we both have shared missions and he's not here anymore. But organizationally, the mission is alive and well in everything we do. When we talk about our core values, and I use that term, challenge the status quo, build community, create purpose, and ensure inclusion. And that's been such a huge element in everything. I've had the opportunity to take ideas and to run with it. I've had the opportunity to work with amazing, kindhearted, motivated, just eager people, and not just persons that we serve, but also my colleagues, the family members, and the community at large. And so, it's kind of hard to see myself being someplace else when it just feels natural. When you asked about the successes and impact, the janitorial line of business, the lines of business that we do, the creating employment opportunities that we do, that's what makes the difference. My background is in psychology and

counseling, and one of the things that I found is that I like purpose-driven activities. And so the career counseling, the vocational rehabilitation just lends itself to that, and helping people aspire to be what they want, get rid of the barriers. If you want to work, we want to help you find that and whether it's working physically at the Kennedy Collective, and one of our lines of business or us helping to find a job for you out in the community at one of our other business partners. We want to make other employers help meet their business needs as well by providing them qualified, competent candidates.

06:41

Tim Clagg: When did you start to see that desire, that interest at the Kennedy Collective? When people really started taking interest and wanting that opportunity to really enter the workforce and have that self-fulfillment that we all search for in life?

07:00

Valerie Reyher: You know, I think it's always been there. I think that as a society, when you go back from 1951 to the present we just made assumptions. A person would get a diagnosis and say, okay, you can't work. And I'd probably say over the past 50 years, the initiative has been laying the foundation work of saying everyone can work. If you want a job, we can make that happen. And even when we go back to when we were at center base, we saw that people had abilities, and maybe not every human being is going to have the same skill sets as each other. But finding the right jobs, finding the right tasks, the right skills, the contributions people want and can make really allows us all to be contributors in society and gets away from this misnomer that a person with a disability cannot work. We talked about as a foundation, the Kennedy Collective was based on persons with intellectual disabilities. However, that evolution of person served can be a physical disability, could be blindness, it could be a person who is maybe deaf, hard of hearing, it can be a person that has a medical diagnosis that creates some limitations for them in the job. Any one of us can experience a disability at any point in our lives. I always say we're one car accident away from our lives changing. And I want to know that there's a place like the Kennedy Collective out there that's going to say, yeah, you had a hiccup in life, but we'll get you back on the road so you can be contributory. So, you can meet your needs, and you feel rewarded. We identify based on the jobs that we have. And so, we want to instill that passion and desire in each person and tell them you have no limits. The only limit you have is the one you set for yourself, and we can work around it.

09:09

Tim Clagg: The Kennedy Collective truly has some impressive contracts. When I was kind of doing my research, government federal agencies, just to name a few, the Department of Development Services, the DMV, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Social Services as well. Everybody, when they enter a job, they want that respect. Sure, a wage is great, but you want that respect from your peers and that sense of belonging. Truly, they are earning that respect from everybody, especially very well-respected organizations like the ones we just mentioned.

09:52

Valerie Reyher: Yeah, we're so fortunate that in our state they have seen, and in most states, they are recognizing the value that our workers can provide. Ultimately, that's the messaging we're trying to get out, even though this podcast is having the availability to get people thinking, hey, maybe I should

partner with some of our local community organizations that have a workforce that can help us with diversification. We're hearing now all about DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), and we've been champions of that for years. We can be a part of that solution, and diversity includes people with diverse abilities and diverse contributions. You're absolutely right, the value that people bring to the table when you're working with folks, and you're seeing how they approach new jobs, new tasks, and new logic. It really allows us to capture everyone as our audience. We're seeing this every day in the commercials that are airing on TV. I think that there's so much value that our individuals can offer employers and businesses and how they can do their jobs better.

11:16

Tim Clagg: And they're earning that respect from their dedication to the job. You and I were talking, we had a chance to have a conversation about a week ago. You mentioned that you had seen some employees taking the bus or walking to work, and nothing is stopping them. I know a lot of times sometimes we'll hear some excuses from people, like "I need a PTO day, or I need a scam day, just to decompress, but these employees are truly dedicated and take pride in their responsibility.

11:48

Valerie Reyher: Absolutely, yeah. One of the stories I was sharing with you is that I'd be driving into work on an inclement weather day. And whenever snow is in the forecast, and here we are in Connecticut, people panic, "Snow, oh my god, there's snowflakes." And we've had some days that, yep, it's been questionable. And there, I see I'm at an intersection, and I see two of our guys that we've helped find jobs and off the bus they go, and they literally have to walk down this really main highway and go up this hill to get to their job site at an assisted living facility. And they're just chugging away like nothing's at it. And meanwhile, I've got other people calling, my non-disabled employees calling, saying, "Oh, I can't make it in because of the weather." That dedication when people love their job and they value their job, and they appreciate the fact that they don't take for granted that it's always going to be there. That's one of the difficulties we're facing right now, is so many job candidates are like, "Oh, I'll get another one" type of thing. But our guys that we are assisting to help find employment they really value the work that they're doing. When they get in there, they just embrace it wholeheartedly.

13:07

Tim Clagg: And that type of attitude, that type of mentality, it rubs off. It's infectious. If one of your employers sees that, "you know, I'm having a bad day", or they see them showing up, going above and beyond, it rubs off. And pretty soon, productivity or other little things help brighten their day.

13:34

Valerie Reyher: It really does, it becomes contagious. If you think about when you're sitting next to a negative Nelly versus a positive Polly, that positivity really rubs off. I'm a big Ted Lasso fan, and that saying that we hear from that, the feel-good, let's not be judgmental, let's not see the impossible, see yourself as "I'm possible." And I just think that that's an element if we can bring more of that into each of our employment environments and business environments, that it's just going to make the world a whole lot better.

14:17

Tim Clagg: And like Ted Lasso always says, just have to believe!

Valerie Reyher: Yes, believe.

Tim Clagg: I know you guys recently started with Janitorial Manager here not that long ago. And for our listeners, Janitorial Manager is a work management software built for commercial cleaning industry to streamline their operations online and through the app as well. What has your guys' experience been like so far using the Janitorial Manager program for your employees?

14:47

Valerie Reyher: Well, first off, I want to say our account rep, Claire, is amazing. We love her tremendously. She's helped guide us in all of the different phases of development as we're building this platform for ourselves, and the information that we're putting in, helping us clarify areas. What I've really appreciated is that when we've approached things, being an organization that hires individuals with disabilities, we wanted to make sure that this application would cater to folks that might have limited reading capabilities and might not be tech-savvy at all. And she's brought people to the table that say, 'We want to understand more. We want to figure out how we can make this work.' So I'm truly appreciative of that because there's so many companies that just say, 'Nope, this is our package, take it or leave it.'

The other piece that I really love about it, and we're very new into it, so we're still getting the finessing of how we're supposed to do things. It's the contract details, information about our employees, information about every single contract, and the inventory that we have, and we're using. It's ultimately bringing everything down to a granular level for us to understand, what do we need to do? Have we done it? Did we check up on it, and are we meeting our customers' expectations? And then it has features that are going to allow our customers to interact with it and provide immediate feedback on the performance that we've done and allow them to comment back on the performance that we've done. And so that, it really becomes an interactive collaborative experience versus us just going there. Before, everything was paper and pen, and paper and pen is great, but you can't analyze any of that. It just takes so much more manpower.

And so using the JM Connect application on our phones, and being able to be here, I'm in Connecticut, and if I have people out at one of my other work sites in Pennsylvania, I'm able to see the work that they're performing, and be able to follow up with them and ask questions and comment and look at what those needs are. So I feel like it's such a dynamic platform, and we've just scratched the surface. And if what I'm seeing is just scratching the surface, I can't imagine what else it can do for us.

17:21

Tim Clagg: And a lot of people may not realize that the Kennedy Collective has been in the janitorial industry for between 30 and 35 years. How important -- you mentioned some of the customization. You mentioned from the customer standpoint, but how is it going to allow you to better help your employees with training, problem-solving, especially the features to fit what each customer is looking for? And for you guys, whether it's customized step-by-step pictures or videos, so they can get that hands-on knowledge to complete the task in the field.

18:01

Valerie Reyher: Right in the moment, we certainly want to be everywhere for everyone. We have that need, but we know we can't do that. And so JM is offering us that opportunity. We can take videos of folks, the instructional guides, provide a team, if someone has a question, they know they can just go here and ask it. Then they have the about availability to reach back out to us for further detail if need be. We also know that we have folks that have some memory difficulties. I myself, I'm at a point in my life where my memory is not where it used to be. And so having the checklist right in my hand, I'm able to ensure I'm doing everything that's needed. I'm a person, I don't want my performance to lack simply because I can't remember something. So we're giving a very natural tool to folks and something that people are comfortable with. I think it's going to offer greater employment opportunities. It's going to increase our own efficiencies around how we're setting up each contract site and the work tasks that need to be performed, and ensuring that ultimately the customer's needs are being met.

19:14

Tim Clagg: You guys have roughly around 50 employees, right? As of now that they'll be using Janitorial Manager software. What is your guy's vision for the future using the JM software?

19:29

Valerie Reyher: Well, we certainly want to expand our janitorial line of business. We're constantly looking at additional contracts both within Connecticut as well as in our surrounding states. We want to make an impact in the Northeast region. We also see that it has the availability to offer us options around our landscaping line of business because it serves the same functionality. And then we also have a lift station cleaning line of business. That, again, has the same elements. There are tasks that need to be completed, equipment that we need to have on hand, and products that we need to use. And we want the customer feedback. And so this creates that platform that's capturing all of that information and allows us to do scheduling and see the manpower we have and the manpower we need. I do envision that it is going to go from 50 to at least double that in the near future. We're being very aggressive about how we approach this. We want to create employment opportunities, and we know there's a need out there.

20:42

Tim Clagg: We are speaking with Valerie Reyher, VP of Workforce Development and Social Enterprise with the Kennedy Collective. Let's talk about going green, green products. I know during COVID, the Kennedy Collective facility maintenance teams were one of the first to provide electrostatic mist (e-mist) disinfectant services in Connecticut. With obviously the changes and everything happening so fast back in March of 2020, what kind of training did you guys have to put in place since it was new for everyone, new for the staff, new for the employees, and everybody?

21:23

Valerie Reyher: So, we started out with our Janitorial Manager, Deshaun. He worked with each of his team members and put together instructional videos around the use of the unit's machine, as well as the products. He taught them how long the products need to stand before they're wiped up to ensure that it cures to the level that it is creating disinfection. We also taught each of the individuals how to use the backpack, how to do the spraying around the buildings. Ultimately, realistically it was pretty simple,

but making sure that we did coverage and that every environment that they were going in, they left it in a very safe, sanitized, and disinfected state.

22:14

Tim Clagg: And you mentioned safety, so important, especially when working with those kinds of chemicals. Success stories: preparing for this podcast, I was able to dive into your guys' website, your YouTube channel, and watch a video on one particular person, Nevin Frank, on your guys' site. He was recently featured at your 70th-anniversary event. At the podium, he had said, "I've been down so many times, I've been trying my best to get a job, and I mean, no one, no one else would give me a chance. Kennedy just gave me the chance. And that's all I ever wanted." And even just saying that, repeating that, and summarizing it, it just kind of gives me goosebumps and puts things in perspective of truly how important and how life-changing this really is.

23:08

Valerie Reyher: Now that we love Nevin, Nevin has been such an amazing contribution to our organization. And not just because he's willing to be a spokesperson. Just what you saw, he's so genuine. He really tells that story so often that we gave him a chance and we continue to give him a chance. And he'll share that. He's down at our warehouse and he was so nervous when he would come in. We just knew that life hadn't been kind in some levels to him. And he'd come in and he'd work. He's so kind, he's patient. He works with his other colleagues and tries to just boost them up and make them feel good about the work that they're performing, see the value that they're doing. He's reliable, he opens and closes the area. There's been times when my warehouse supervisor wants to take vacation, and Nevin steps up and says, "I've got it covered," and he'll call me if something arises and he needs assistance, but he's got it covered. Even when he calls me, it's just to say, "This happened. This is how we handled it. It's all clear. Just want you to know everything's done." He just does a top-notch job. We as humans, as general people, we often don't think about how we impact others' lives. We go about our day and we're so self-consumed. We just don't think about those interactions. And then when you have an experience like Nevin, it gives me pause. When people turn around and tell me, "Oh, you do this fabulous work," I'm like, "It's work, I'm doing a job," but when I see Nevin, he's just amazing. I can't say enough about him. But the work is that we helped him see his potential, we believed in him. And he's just shown that if someone believes in you, you want to give back, you want to do amazing things. And there's nothing that he can't do, he's willing to sit there and learn it. And so that's ultimately the engagement of our services. So we have our supportive line of services that we do to help people in mapping out what their skills and capabilities, and interests and matching them with the right employer so that they can be successful. And then we also have our line of business where we know we are a model employer, that we can say if you hire persons with barriers to employment, that you are going to achieve success. And here's how we do it. We partner with federal organizations, commercial companies, state departments. We work with all of them in order to create employment solutions by tapping into an invisible population, which are persons with barriers to employment. And I'm so thankful that you are asking more about that line of our services than just our janitorial operations, but the two work so hand in hand because we want to ensure success for individuals at their job sites. And so we've got that complementary service that we can talk with employers about how to fine-tune some of our job duties, how do we fine-tune some of the tasks that are being asked in a way that someone's able to complete them. A lot of companies that set themselves up don't look at how to build out

instructions and guidelines and tools until you absolutely have to. And we do that with our folks. We help them understand what the expectations are, so that they can meet each of those standards.

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Tim Clagg: And you guys do such a wonderful job understanding and realizing it's just not about work; it's creating relationships. And to finish on Nevin, he said, "I need to be around my work family," because at the time, before the celebration of the 70th anniversary, he had lost his mother. And he went right back to work that next day because he just said, "I need my friends. I needed my family during this time." And that shows that it goes so many more layers than just providing employment, and it's so great.

27:49

Valerie Reyher: Nevin, he's a person, and so, as my colleague, I went down and met with him, gave him a big hug, and said, "You don't need to be here." And he's like, "No, I do. I do need to be here." And that was such an enlightening moment of the power of the people that are around us. And he saw that we offered him something more than just a paycheck. We offered him that camaraderie, compassion, support, and connected him with other resources that we've had. We continue to do that, and we would do that for any employee.

And so when people think that when you hire a person who is different, unique, quirky, diverse, or whatever you want to term it, they are people like you and I. We all have our quirks. I'm a quirk. I love little quirks. But in regards to that, that is what makes us dynamic. That's what makes coming to the table as a team, that we're just such a robust group of people who are able to find solutions, create solutions, make things happen, be an impact, be a force. And Nevin is that with us. He's someone that we're so proud of, and what he's done for himself and what he's done for us, as an employee and as a human. So we thank him very much.

29:26

Tim Clagg: Take us through the process now in developing a plan and an action when you're getting ready to start the process to place someone in the workforce. Because each person does have their different set of goals and interests, how vital is that when looking at each piece to the puzzle and where to place somebody?

29:46

Valerie Reyher: So, as with ourselves, when you started asking about 28 years ago and how I came to The Kennedy Center at the time, and now the Kennedy Collective, that's a part of it. We always have this preconceived notion: finish high school and go to college, get a degree, and then go work in a career somewhere. But what we're noticing now is people don't know what they want to do. I have conversations with so many 24-year-olds that are like, "I have no idea what I want to do in two years, let alone 10 years." And because there's so much out there, that's the piece that we start with, getting to know the person. Tell us about yourself. Tell us about your successes, things you're most proud of, what you feel you do well, what you feel you struggle in, and we really get to know them at an intricate level. We then start looking at what they can offer. Have you considered this? Have you looked at this type of career? Have you looked at this type of job? What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? Some of our guys need a little bit more assistance in actually understanding what a job title is.

People say, "I want to be the CEO of Pixar." But do you know what that means? Do you know, what it means to be a CEO? Do you know what you need to do in order to get there? And so those are part of our conversations as well. As much as I say it's limitless, there are still steps you need to take in order to achieve different milestones in your life. So we work with folks in mapping what that looks like. We then begin to go out and talk with different employers. If we have an opportunity, we ourselves will offer that opportunity. We often try to separate our line of business and our support services. In the context of if you want to be hired as an employee, we hire you as an employee, and you can get your support services wherever. But if we're doing support services, we want to look at what are all those avenues out there that you may want to consider. So we present job opportunities and different employers that we've had conversations with. We're members of all of the local chambers of commerce, and we attend a variety of networking activities to continue to promote who we are as an organization and as an employment service to individuals. We ask people to tap into their own networks. Who do you know that's in that environment? Let's just start by talking to them. And then listen. We couldn't do what we do without having some of the resources that come from our state funding organizations that provide those tools. So we use them as well and how can we capture it. And then through that relationship development, we find that our guys get hired, they find an employment opportunity that matches their skills, interests, and needs, and it is a match to their environment. Like putting on a jacket, you gotta make sure it's the right fit. And so that's what they're doing, is they're trying it out. It's so gratifying to see people as they're progressing forward. Then we start to have conversations about how do you advance? What does that look like for you at this company, at this location? Also teaching people you don't have to stay someplace just because you start there. That doesn't mean that's where you got to end. So we help them map out where they want to see themselves. We meet with them on an annualized basis to go through some of those expectations of where you're at in your job and how can we help you grow in advance, and make more money and achieve more for yourself.

33:36

Tim Clagg: Per year, the Kennedy Collective helps over 2000 people. Are you currently seeing those numbers grow based on your continued success and branching out? I know you recently got a contract in Pennsylvania, so it's not just based in Connecticut.

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Valerie Reyher: Right? We're not just based in Connecticut. We have a contract that we work on doing administrative support services up in Albany, New York. We're also looking at extending out into Newport. Our vision is that by the year 2030 - which is hard to believe I'm saying that number - we will be supporting anywhere around 10,000 people. We do have that vision. If people want support means, we want to be able to provide that. If you go to our website, you'll see that we have a combination of different services that we offer. We know we are not the only organization around, and depending on where your listeners are, I am sure there's a community-based organization doing similar to us, and they're great partners. They're great people. Connect with them and figure out how you can be a source of change in relation to creating employment opportunities and creating connections for networks, or potentially even giving monetary experience or even strategic experience. We're always looking for partners that come to the table that help us expand out and grow. We wouldn't be where we are today if Evelyn Kennedy hadn't pulled together a group of 12 other parents and started that conversation. And

that's all it takes. I mean, it's a conversation of how do we grow? How do we shift? How do we make an impact? And recognizing what we did then, we are light years away now. But we still have a tremendous amount to do. My ambition in life, to be perfectly honest, is that people never need our services. We get what we need intrinsically and naturally within our own communities. I don't know that, as confident as I am, I don't know if that's going to happen. But I want to be that source, I want to be helpful to individuals, and it's not restricted to persons with disabilities. It's persons that have barriers to employment, persons that have support needs. We welcome them. We are happy to have them at the table and figure out what we can do in partnership to help improve someone's life.

36:21

Tim Clagg: And especially the need, in the urgency to hire workers in the workforce in general, is going to be ramping up over the course of the next 10 to 15 years. With people leaving the workforce and an aging population, that should allow even more people to enter through your guys' program and programs just like yours.

36:42

Valerie Reyher: Yes, absolutely. You know, we see even now some of those trends. There's a lot of people retiring, and we think that's wonderful. But we also want to prepare the next round of workforce that's coming in so that they're able to address some of the dynamic needs that are coming about. There's always a full circle going back, even to janitorial. Most people don't think anything of their custodians, janitors or what have you. Pandemic hit, who are your critical people? You know, they're the people that were making sure the environment was safe. I always say there's usually two key people you want to know, in an organization: who's at the front desk, and sort of running things, and then who's your janitorial custodial people, because they can make things happen for you. They know where, 'Oh, you need an extra chair,' 'Oh, you need some extra tissues or toilet paper or what have you.' They're the people that go out of their way. There's a job for everyone. Everybody, anybody that wants to work should work and can work. Our goal is to help people, instead of being taxpayer recipients or recipients of those dollars, they are now contributors, so that they're able to give back to their communities. And they're able to show that through those efforts, 'I am now able to be just like you, just like everyone else that I'm interacting with.' That I can own my own home or have my own apartment, or purchase my own items and not feel - we all feel restricted in some manner - but not feel like I have to choose between, 'Do I pay an electric bill or do I eat?' We want people to be thriving in a way that they can sustain themselves.

38:39

Tim Clagg: Mentorship is so important in helping development, growth and expanding your role. What kind of mentorship programs are there for people once they do land in a position with you guys?

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Valerie Reyher: So, we look to have our individuals receive natural supports from, obviously, a leadership standpoint. We want their supervisors to be engaging with every employee, establishing what each employee's needs are for them to be successful. That is one of my big asks: What do you need to be successful in your job? And how can I make that happen? And then we work collaboratively to figure out what connections we can make.

We also look for employees that have been here at the organization for a number of years to now be mentors to new people who are coming in to talk them through, 'how do you handle a situation?' 'Where can you find information?' We all do an orientation and an onboarding of new employees, but that's a lot of information right at the onset of learning when I'm most nervous too. And so, we want those points of contact. Technology has improved that availability to say, "Here's where you can find this resource. Here's where you can go if you need this." Certainly, we have an open-door policy in our organization. That if anybody comes, I had to make sure I put notes on my doors that I was doing this. Normally, people would be knocking and calling because that's just the nature that we are. If somebody has a question, we want to be able to provide an answer. And we look to do that in any place that someone is hired.

Our goal is to create those natural supports so that they have peers, they have people they can connect with, and we help them identify who those resources are. Every company will say, "Oh, Johnny's gonna talk to me or off, but if you have an issue, go to Sally instead." And so that's what we try to do: get them in the right direction of who's going to be your resource for you to be successful in your job, and how do we cultivate that? I do my job well, I work myself out of a job. That person is successful, and I move on to someone else who needs my assistance. So I'm never truly out of a job, but with that individual, I would be because they've done it, they've achieved what they needed. They don't need me. And that's saying, "I'm impactful." And that's what my team of support services is doing: helping people to be included in their community, to feel the purpose that they need, and to be able to show the impact that they can have, whether it's bagging groceries, doing a graphic design project, or some administrative work, whatever it may be, that they've been hired for, that they are a contributing member of that team.

41:38

Tim Clagg: Valerie, we appreciate you coming on the show, sharing the Kennedy Collective story, and all the wonderful things that you guys have done and continue to do with your organization. If someone wants to learn more on the Kennedy collective, where can they go and find that information?

41:56

Valerie Reyher: Yes, they can go to, www.thekennedycollective.org, and we have a plethora of information about who we are as an organization, our lines of businesses, and how you can partner with us to further expand your employment needs.

42:16

Tim Clagg: That will conclude this month's edition of the Business of Cleaning podcast. Be sure to subscribe to us on Spotify, Apple Podcast, Google Podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts from. From everyone at Janitorial Manager, my guest Valerie Reyher. I am Tim Clagg saying so long. Until next time!