# Audio file

[EBHASDIXIERUSSEL (1).wav](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

# [Transcript](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[The VCL Special Collections Department presents everybody has a story in cooperation with the 2025 NEA Big Read program. This year's selection is sitting pretty by Rebecca Taussig and memoir of a disabled woman in her daily life in a wheelchair. Taussig wrote the memoir as a means of providing a better understanding and appreciation of the struggles of those with disabilities. Likewise, these oral histories provide insight into the lives of Wabash Valley residents who also face challenges from various disability. Ladies, my name is Sean Isley, and I am interviewing Dixie Russell and her daughter Sophia. So could you tell us a little bit about yourself? Either of you or both of you?](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[So I am a mother of three. I have three daughters. My oldest is a senior, and then Sophia is an eighth grader and I have a younger daughter who is 1/5 grader. I work at a. Elementary school and.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[That's it.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Yeah, yeah. And I do mom things. Yeah.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[That's a lot. I shouldn't say that's it. That's a lot. So describe Sophia's disability. And what do? You do to manage it.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[So. So Sophia has Down syndrome and we found out that she had Down syndrome after she was born. So we had a post diagnosis. And some things that come along with her diagnosis are when she was younger, especially a lot of medical issues. So we make sure that we follow up with all of her specialists and and her doctors. She used to have lots of therapies. When she was younger. UM, behaviors. We have a behavioral interventionist that we talked to just to kind of manage some. Non compliance type behavior. She's grown out a lot of her eloping behaviors and all of that. Those were things that we dealt with when she was younger, but for the most part, I mean Sophia is a typical 15 year old. She is full of Sass and likes to talk. Back sometimes. So yeah, we we look for a lot of support in the community just to to manage everything that that needs to be.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[OK. Well, you're are you're part of that support, right? Or do you work for an organization?](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Yes. So yes, I also work part time for Down syndrome Indiana, which is an organization that serves like 46 counties over central IN and Terre Haute and surrounding counties being some of those and so. The place that I work, we also provide support. We have a local community group here in Terre Haute, and so we get families together and connect families with other families who may be going through similar experiences in their Down syndrome journey. And so, yes, Down syndrome. Indiana is has been a great support for. Us as well.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[OK. And I thought I read that you do like a fundraiser or a walk every year.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Yep. So in April is our buddy walk, which is an awareness walk for the Down syndrome community. And this will be our ninth walk here in Terre Haute. Indianapolis does a walk every year, too. I think they just did. I don't know. Like they're. 25th walk or something like that. But this is our 9th annual Walk in Terre Haute, and so I help organize that event as well. And it's been a really great event just to let families in our community know about Down syndrome Indiana and to get people together. Just to celebrate Down syndrome in our community.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[OK, So what does a typical day look like?](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Pretty much just like it looks like for my other kids. We get up and eat breakfast and get ready for school, and Sophia does most of those things all by herself, unless she's extra tired. Like a lot of teenagers are, and I have to pry her out of bed. And then she goes to school. She's an accreditor at Sarah Scott Middle School and. She stays after school right now. She's playing on the basketball team, so she has practice her games after school and she comes home and we eat dinner and hang out as a family. She has some other activities that she does in the evening and. That's pretty much our typical day.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[So it's not that much different really.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[It's not too much different. Yeah. Like I said, when she was younger, it used to be filled with more therapies and doctor's appointments. But we have kind of outgrown that. So that's still something that we do, but it's nothing on the the. Lately.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Well, so I guess I should ask if there are any tools or assistive technologies that help you in your day-to-day life. Some of the other people I've interviewed, they had disabilities and that that like they couldn't. The first guy that I interviewed, Danny Wayne, he. He's. Blind. So he talked about that a lot. I don't know if. That applies to your. Situation or not, if there's anything. Special or different that you would use? Technology wise.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Sophia used to have a communication device in elementary school that we tried to get her to use, but she never really latched on to it super well. She preferred to try to vocalize, and so she's always had words and could say. Could say some things she just didn't form complete sentences. And so as she's gotten older and she's had more speech therapy and been around more peers her. Their sentences have grown, and so she can pretty much tell us what she wants by just using her words. And so she's never really been a big fan of that. She does have hearing aids, so that's something. But other than that.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[So the word ableism is brought up in conversations about disabilities. What does that term mean to? So.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[So UM. One thing that we always say in our Down syndrome community community is people. Individuals with Down syndrome are more like than different. So I feel like that just kind of reiterates that people with Down syndrome, even though they sometimes learn a little differently or talk or look a little differently. They are just as capable as everybody else, they just may need a little extra time, little extra support. But they are definitely able to do almost everything that everybody else can do with the right, with the right tools and support to help them.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[So let's talk a little bit about social attitudes towards disabilities. Do you think that these have that social attitudes have changed over time or have some things that maybe weren't so good have kind of stayed the same or well, how do you feel about that?](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[I mean, I feel like from my experience, like in my personal life that. People have been very supportive of Sophia and of our family. Even at school, we have gotten a lot of positive feedback from people regarding her disability. A lot of people that we surround ourselves with know that she's very capable and I think some of that. Possibly comes. From my perspective on things, I really push inclusion and acceptance, and I think that people in our lives kind of follow that lead and expect that from Sophia as well because they know that I do. However, I mean, I do feel like there is still. I I think people maybe get nervous around people with disabilities, maybe they don't know how to interact with them just because that's not part of their life. They don't know people that have disabilities. And so I think that sometimes. People just don't know how to approach people with disabilities. They they see them as different instead of. Similar to how they are and so I think the more exposure, the more education that people can get about disabilities would be super helpful and just approaching people that have disabilities and knowing that they want the same thing that you do to be loved and accepted and just included.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Yeah. Just kind of, it's like a universal thing to just want to feel respected and treat it the same, yeah.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Yes, yes, yes, for sure.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[So I'm not sure how how much the supplies, but accessibility. Is that something that you that comes into your lives? Do you think about that? Is that, I mean, she's not in a wheelchair. So I don't know how that applies. But if if you can think of any ways.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Right, right. Yeah, I don't know. Yeah, she's we don't really have any motor type disabilities or even. But I, I mean, I do. I see all the time just. That. Things out in the community are always accessible to people with disabilities that might need a wheelchair assistance or even just restrooms. There's a lot of people with disabilities that need help using the restroom or adult restrooms, and you hardly ever see anything like that. But it doesn't necessarily, I guess, affect us personally, but I think there's definitely lots of room for improvement to. Think about everybody when you're out in the community and what they may need.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Well. This is the more fun part. Just talk about yourself or talk about Sophia as an individual. What are hobbies and things you enjoy doing? Like you've mentioned before, a lot of typical teenager things. But if you can.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)

[Yes. Yeah. So Sophia has always been involved in sports since she was little. She has always really thrived in doing sports. She loves basketball. She likes t-ball. She does swimming. She swims for Special Olympics as well. She has always loved to be active. She loves to just be included and be around people and peers. UM. And so yeah, she's very typical like a 15 year old. She likes to be on her phone, and she likes to watch videos. She likes to text and call friends and and hang. Well, so in those aspects, she she's she's very typical. She does require extra assistance at school. She has a one-on-one aide that just kind of helps her stay focused more than anything and get her work completed. But she loves to go to school. She's very. Social usually. She has definitely opened my eyes to a lot more. I personally did not know anybody really with a disability growing up. I really wasn't surrounded in that community at all. And so once Sophia was born, it really opened my eyes to a whole nother. For all the people, and it's really made me passionate about. Exposing people who maybe don't know a lot about disabilities to open their eyes as well, and see that it's a whole beautiful world out there that is worth. Looking at and and getting involved in.](https://vigolibrary-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sbarker_vigolibrary_org/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/EBHASDIXIERUSSEL%20%281%29.wav)