

Should We Cancel Capacity-Building?

WITH

Melissa DeShields
and
Marcus Littles
Frontline Solutions



INTRO (00:04)

Welcome to the Fund the People Podcast! I'm your host, Rusty Stahl. I'm President and CEO of Fund the People, where our mission is to maximize investment in America's nonprofit workforce. We give funders and nonprofits cutting edge ideas, research and tools to help drive equity, effectiveness, and endurance in the social sector. So let's start the show!

RUSTY [00:34:00]

In today's episode you'll gain important perspectives on the problems with capacity building and how capacity building is sometimes detrimental to nonprofits, their people and their communities. And we discuss some concrete ways we could all improve the framing and practice of capacity building to better support the brilliance and resilience of diverse nonprofit workers and organizations.

My guests today are two of the senior executives of **Frontline Solutions, a Black-founded and Black-lead consulting firm that works with funders and nonprofits to help them plan, innovate, learn and transform.** Since it was established, 19 years ago, Frontline Solutions has built a diverse team of activists, scholars, advocates, coaches, strategists and artists. They draw on these multifaceted perspectives and lived experiences to engage with organizations in the journey toward their boldest most expansive visions.

So my two guests are Melissa DeShields who is CEO and partner of Frontline Solutions, **and Marcus Littles** who is founder and senior partner at Frontline Solutions. As CEO, Melissa actively fosters a culture of learning, reflection and deep connection. She considers herself an unleasher of talent and a celebrator of black brilliance. As such, she works tirelessly to ensure that Frontline Solutions acknowledges, affirms and rewards the genius creativity and wisdom of staff members and community partners. Melissa has been a member of Frontline senior

leadership team since 2015, helming projects for grantmakers, for girls of color, the WK Kellogg Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among others. Prior to joining Frontline, Melissa launched her own consulting practice and held senior leadership positions at the Urban Affairs Coalition and the Philadelphia Foundation and she's a graduate of Rutgers University.

Marcus Littles is a strategist and visionary who has been instrumental in directing philanthropic investment at the intersection of race and gender. In 2005 he founded Frontline Solutions to advise philanthropists on a multi-billion dollar investment in Gulf Coast recovery in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Since then, Marcus has led Frontline in reimagining the role of consultant and becoming an integral part of the racial justice ecosystem. Over the course of his career Marcus has pursued racial justice in several sectors, including government, philanthropy and education. In 2016 Marcus was named one of Living Cities 25 disruptive leaders who are working to close the racial opportunity gaps, alongside Ta-Nehisi Coates and Angela Glover Blackwell. A native of Mobile, Alabama, Marcus is a graduate of Auburn University. He holds a master's in public administration from the University of Delaware.

Melissa and Marcus are two people who I've had the opportunity to work with over the years including as a client of Frontline Solutions and as an affiliated consultant at one point. I'm really thrilled to have you both here on the Fund the People podcast to discuss capacity building today.

MARCUS: [00:04:13]

Yeah, thank you, man. Great to see you as always.

MELISSA: [00:04:16]

Good to be here, and yes, thanks for being such a great ally and partner to Frontline over the years. We really appreciate you and are grateful for it.

RUSTY: [00:04:24]

Oh, yeah. Well, I'm appreciative of you guys as well and excited to be talking with you and learning from you. I think this is an area I'm interested in and have a lot to learn. And so Melissa, share with folks what is Frontline Solutions and how can people work with you?

MELISSA: [00:04:43]

Yeah, thanks for that Rusty. Frontline Solutions is a black-owned, black-led management consulting firm. We have been around for 19 years -we will celebrate our 20th year in business in 2025- and **we provide strategic planning, typical management consulting services to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector, and mostly to those organizations that are working towards justice and equity.** And so we write strategic planning, we do evaluation and learning design, convening design and facilitation and, you know, increasingly are called on as thought partners and strategists to organizations who are trying to achieve their wildest aspirations around equity and justice.

RUSTY: [00:05:30]

Fantastic, thank you. Well, we're honored to have Frontline on the show today. So I thought we could start with you know, some basics. Melissa, can you just talk about what capacity building means historically and, you know, how it is kind of used in philanthropy?

MELISSA: [00:05:50]

The way I think about capacity building, which is how I think when we hear philanthropy talking about investing in capacity building, it's really all of the back of the house things that organizations need to live into their missions, right? And so **historically, I think, those investments in capacity building have been about technical upscaling**, and so it's those things that organizations need, everything from fundraising, and sort of development works, and how do you work with your board or grow your board, to succession planning, to communication strategy... And so **it's all of the infrastructure and the things that folks have been less likely to think about and invest in, but that organizations absolutely need to fulfill their mission.**

RUSTY: [00:06:41]

So tell us about the problem you set out to address in the article you wrote which is called: A Capacity Builder's Crisis of Conscience, in the Nonprofit Quarterly in August of 2022.

MELISSA: [00:06:57]

Yeah, I don't know, I mean now 2022 feels like it was 20 years ago. So, **I don't know if I had set out to address the problem of capacity building as much as I wanted to lift up some of the challenges that Frontline was experiencing, sort of in the role as capacity builder**, some of the opportunities and some of the lessons that we've observed that I thought could be helpful to other folks in the field, whether they be in philanthropy or other capacity building intermediaries. But it was really part of, I think, my style and Frontline's commitment to learning in public and I'm always surprised when I write something that I feel like no one ever saw or looked at, and then I run into someone and they're like, man I saw that piece and I sent it around 5 different people. And so it was an affirmation that the things that we are thinking about and wrestling with, and struggling with, others might be too. And so, that was really kind of **the genesis of the piece, it's like we've been doing a ton of capacity building work, and we had been hearing a lot from the folks who are the intended recipients of capacity building support and so really wanting to use it as a space to lift up some of the things that we were hearing and learning from our work with them and their experience, and offer that to the field** as some things that they might consider or hold as ways to approach thinking about and framing capacity building support.

RUSTY: [00:08:26]

What was getting under your skin or you know, what were those contradictions or or some of those problems that you were hearing about or feeling at Frontline?

MELISSA: [00:08:39]

One was that a lot of what we know about capacity building support is from the purview of the foundation or of philanthropy and foundations. And so, it is what injection of skill and support do organizations need to make them more fundable? That's been the metric for capacity building support. Like, we'd love to give this organization money, but they don't actually have the infrastructure to take it on, so how do we sort of help them build that infrastructure? And so, you know, having tried this, Frontline has been around for 19 years, and so we've had many opportunities to work with organizations around capacity building, and so **lifting up some of the practices that we're committed to use to interrogate our own approach to capacity building is what I was hoping for.**

You know, I look back at this, I don't think the force of the practices I laid out in the article are particularly groundbreaking, but they were engaging deep, long-term and transparent processes to reckon with organizational culture, and that is really about organizations walking the talk. And so **we've been in positions and been hired to work with grantees through organizations who have not done any work around equity or racial justice, or have not sort of done the organizational development work that they are requiring of the institutions that they want to fund.** And so that comes up often as a big tension with grantees and it's something that we hold as we're interacting with clients and that we want institutions who are in the position to support capacity building to also hold.

And then **the other was you know, ask folks what they need.** We often, and again from the perspective sometimes of philanthropy, we have a sense of the checklist that needs to be in place, that organizations need to have in place to be fundable, but that's not necessarily, that's their checklist, that is not necessarily from the purview of the folks who are out here doing the work. And so I think in every instance **when we are designing capacity-building, when we are designing communities of practice, we are always constantly asking folks what they need, have their needs changed, what can we do to support them today.** And the pandemic, you know, we were jumping on calls during the pandemic, just that 45 seconds so: hey, what do you need today? Right, because the world was on fire and no one knew what was happening and it's a very stressful time for a lot of people, and being able to sort of create some space for folks to actually articulate their needs is really critical and important, I think, and being good partners to them.

And then building authentic relationships. I mean, we talked a lot about identifying, having a power analysis and working with foundations and other folks who have power and money and influence to level a playground or at least acknowledge that it's not a level playing ground. And so really working to build authentic relationships with grantees, so that they have the space and the container to tell funders what they actually need. This requires asking for feedback and taking it in and not personalizing it and receiving it humbly. And I think I would add, in 2024, and commit to building authentic spaces and opportunities for folks to do that work. And then, you know, just an overall rethinking of how we define capacity, and even **as I'm looking at this now, what about investing in healing practices and somatic work and creating space for rest and joy? And I'm just like, yeah, what about investing in people? You know, it's all framed around institutions. Well, institutions are run by individuals who need investment**

and support and I think we see day after day folks getting burnt out, folks getting sick, folks not being able to continue the work because they haven't been invested in and so I think an expansion, at the very least, of reimagining of what we mean and how we define capacity.

RUSTY: [00:12:56]

Amen, I mean the lack of connection between institutions and the individuals who compose them is one of my ongoing beefs with how funders behave and how we all think about organizations and they're sort of, it's just not part of the way things have been done. And then I think you're highlighting the sort of top-down nature of when funders sort of provide capacity building and you at a place like Frontline, are kind of in between the nonprofit recipients of the dollars and the capacity building and the providers, and trying to navigate that space. I can see why you would feel torn about like who am I accountable to, who's boxes am I trying to check here, you know. So...

MELISSA: And are we being helpful? I mean, at the end of the day, like are we helping organizations to live into their mission and to do great work?

RUSTY: [00:13:55]

Yeah, thank you for laying that out, the four practices and how some of what you are thinking about that is evolving.

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RUSTY: Marcus, let's bring you in here. About a month after Melissa's article you kind of added your voice in another Nonprofit Quarterly piece that sort of built on hers and cited hers and asked the provocative question: Should we cancel capacity building? So, can you share in brief a little bit about that and the four reasons you offered for why the sector should retire the capacity building framework all together?

MARCUS: [00:15:40]

Yeah, absolutely. You know Melissa, again my good colleague and friend and nemesis and all these things like, you know, pin this reflective, thoughtful article and so then my response was I took the easy route and essentially said: should we just burn the whole thing down? And so, it was meant to be provocative but it really, what I tried to say in there, the four reasons I think the

social sector should, I think my words were retire, or reconsider, or reframe capacity building. **First, capacity building overvalues the perspectives and acumen of the capacity builder,** right? I think about it in the context of, I have a son, He'll be 8 soon, only child, right? And so I think it's important, as an only child, that he gets involved in a team sport. All the things research say, like I think you know team sport will be really helpful. And so, you know, I signed him up for soccer, because there's this really great youth soccer league and this amazing soccer coach that everyone says is amazing, so good with kids. But the problem is my son DR, he doesn't want to play soccer. And no matter the research, I'm like, oh, it's really great for an only child but doesn't want to play soccer and even though the coach is great, and even though his parents or "his funder" think soccer is a great sport for him, he's not interested. And so, **often capacity-building values "the coach" and the funder, more than the actual needs of the nonprofit,** like my son, right? And so we're asking him what group or team activities he wants to be a part of, based on our analysis and role in his development, and capacity building does not value the organization's view enough in the same way I went and signed this boy up for stuff that he didn't ever say he wanted to do. And so, **even if a funder has a good analysis on here's what this organization may need, they should partner with that organization to figure out what's the way in which we can support you to get there.** And I didn't really realize I was going to share with the world my bad parenting techniques, but like this notion around, you know capacity building over values the perspectives and acumen of the capacity builder.

Secondly, capacity-building expects transactions to produce transformational results. Funders and consultants sometimes expect widgets in transactions, like assessments and workshops and training and retreats to automatically produce wholesale institutional change in growth. So in the article I say something about a board development training plus a communications audit does not equal sustainability in seven months, right? And so, you know, sometimes of course trainings, and workshops, and capacity building like in technical assistance of course, those things are helpful and they can contribute to the ability of an organization, a community based organization, or all types of nonprofits to produce long-term liberatory results. They can be contributors to that, but **the current configuration of capacity building is inadequate. What if capacity-building efforts were more honest about structural inequities? What if they were structured around how to grow collective power and dismantle barriers? What if nonprofit organizations could ask how funders and intermediaries should change to be better partners?** And so yeah, it's just this notion of expecting transactions to produce transformational results.

Number three, that's **the third point was capacity is the wrong word.** And this is essentially just naming and affirming that **capacity building has become jargon** and as someone who has been in the field for a while and who speaks jargon fluently, I thought **it was important to interrogate the word.** And in the article, we reference an informal survey, an anonymous informal survey, with about 11 folks at black led community based organizations that are current or former Frontline clients, and it was like, when you hear the word capacity building, what do you think and their responses were varied and a couple stood out. In one being capacity building is the consolation prize money that foundations offer when they are willing to pay us to

get our advice, but they aren't willing to resource us to help our people get free. Another quote that resonated was when I think of capacity building the first thing I think about is that it's the wrong word, really capacity being the wrong word again, there's around the jargon but it is a notion of one of the reasons we thought about retiring it.

And **lastly, capacity-building tends to perpetuate white dominant norms of effectiveness.** In the article, you know, we share an observation that **largely white led foundations have long claimed for themselves the role of defining what it means to be an effective organization. The nonprofits they fund are then supported or invested in to meet a goal or a standard that these same nonprofits don't necessarily buy into.** So too often they're never asked what they think, so the finish line was framed for them. So they're running a race and they don't know if they were in the 200, the 400, the 800 or a mile, right? Because they had no say in that. And so, you know, those are really kind of the things I talked about in the article around why I believe that the sector should either retire or revisit the accepted capacity building framework.

RUSTY: [00:21:26]

So we got two good sports analogies in there, the soccer one and the race. Thank you for that. I think folks listening get the gist of both articles and I think together they just offer us important questions and thoughts. I was curious just, to sort of further clarifying, I'm kind of annoyed by this question I came up with myself, but I think it's a question people may have, so how much is this about the framing i.e. the terms capacity and building and the way they position institutions and people and sort of the trajectory of like you don't have this thing and we're going to build you up, you know, WE are going to build YOU all of that, so the implications of the words and the phrase, and how much is it about, for you, the practice, the fundamental contradictions inherent in the actual practices of capacity building.

MARCUS: [00:22:29]

Yeah, it's not an annoying question Rusty, it's a great question. I mean, I think it's both. I mean, **it's about the term as much as I think terminology has a shelf life for how long its meaning is clear and shared,** right? I started my career as a community development practitioner at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and now, 25 years later, if someone says to me that they are a community development practitioner, I have five follow-up questions to understand what they do because the term, community development, does not adequately describe the sector or what it works. I mean the term civil rights to many references a movement of the yesteryear, but what does it mean in terms of if someone does the work of civil rights now? So **interrogating terms is an academic but necessary part of how things evolve, including capacity building. But the main point is about the contradictions and fundamental problems with capacity building practices, which sometimes deprioritize the needs of institutions and, as Melissa said, the people in those institutions.** And so rightsizing staff salaries is in my view, you know, sort of capacity buildings, for example. But I don't know if that meets the standard definition and how the sector thinks about capacity building. So **it's not just about reframing what capacity building is but about reimagining practices to be anchored and human centered in equitable values.**

RUSTY: Thank you for that. Let's actually go back over to Melissa, I was so intrigued by both of these articles and I really wanted to have you guys on the show talk about it. So, I forced you both to reread these things you wrote and published, I can't believe it's 2024, but Melissa as you kind of thought back on this and maybe took a look back at it, how do you think your thinking is changing from when you wrote the article and what's kind of influencing your thinking about capacity building and these issues today?

MELISSA: [00:24:38]

You know, I think one, that article was written I think still during the pandemic, so folks weren't outside as much. And since then I've had the opportunity, as I said we lead or have led a number of capacity building initiatives in a number of different communities of practice. So watching people in spaces together, sort of engage in printable struggle and have the spaciousness to do that, is a critical part of capacity building for individuals, for institutions and for the collective of folks who are trying to pursue justice and equity. And so, that's the biggest piece for me. I think I was, you know, very focused on sort of the structural supports. No one has an argument about, every nonprofit should have a fundraising plan, absolutely. But I think I **was sort of more focused on the technical aspects and missing people part of it, that we have to have these spaces where we can be in trouble together.** And just hearing from leaders, everyone that I've talked to in the last year or so is struggling in some way shape or form, with their leadership, with the scarcity model, with lack of investment, with too much investment, everyone is struggling. And so, having spaces where folks can process. It's hard to be struggling and burnt out and you know, literally fighting for your life and the institution, and then go home and write a 50-page grant report. So **the need for connecting, the need for people to be in spaces that feed them beyond sort of what we think their institution needs, I think is the sort of edition that I would add to the 2022 piece.** It is something that I've been sitting with a lot as I've had the opportunity to be in some rooms and some spaces where I think we've done that really well.

RUSTY: [00:26:37]

Yeah, completely. I mean that makes so much sense. I think doing all of that work, whether it's the technical or the personal, in isolation from each other, just made everything so much worse. How about you Marcus, any thoughts on since you wrote this, what has changed in your thinking if anything or what's influencing you since then?

MARCUS: [00:27:01]

Yeah, I appreciate the opportunity to reread the article because if you hadn't asked us to, we probably would not have, so you know, **at the end of the article I lift up the work of the Black Equity Collective and the thinking of Casey Patterson, the founder of that, where they talk about replacing capacity building with organizational resiliency** and again, not just the words but the frame. And I think here almost a couple years later, you know, are we founders, consultants, organizational leaders, preparing or supporting organizations to be prepared or did we prepare organizations to be ready for the onslaught of sexist and racist punches that we've experienced from the Supreme Court more recently. I mean, what's influencing my thinking most are the ripple effect of these cases, affirmative action and other things, the backlash of DEI, the

attrition of nonprofit leaders, particularly nonprofit leaders of color, or maybe even more specifically black women nonprofit leaders, right? Like the attrition due to the climate, due to the normalization of a sector that doesn't take care of its people. And so I think that's just applying the notion of capacity building, but even if I reframe it, **if the aspiration is different around organizational resiliency, like if we were building resilient organizations that were prepared for the moment, then we wouldn't have let the sector beat up on people like this.** People talk about sort of, organizations talk about staff turnover and a lot of transition, but that didn't happen in a vacuum, right? It's because we didn't prioritize wellness, because we didn't ask institutions what they need and then you know, then we turn around whether we are funders or media, etc. to ask these very same folks who've been taking it on the chin well, what do we do about this Supreme Court case, or what do we do about all these things that are right in front of us. And so like that's just some of what I think what's influencing me in this moment is that like thinking about those very same questions, but in mind our leaders now juxtaposed to like sort of what leaders were navigating, you know, where we thought were navigating the hardest thing ever at that point in time. And it was a thing, the pandemic, you know what I mean? But then like, just hearing those leaders say the same things now, or not hearing from some of those very same leaders because they're not in their position anymore, because they moved on willfully or via circumstances. So yeah, that's some of what I'm thinking.

RUSTY: [00:29:56]

Yeah, that's really powerful and, you know, we know from research that has come out from the National Council of Nonprofits and the Center for Effective Philanthropy that burnout recruitment, retention, compensation, that bundle of issues facing nonprofit workers and leaders is the top issue facing so many, many organizations. Melissa you were saying earlier, like just being responsive in the moment day-to-day to what people really need and want, as capacity builders in this in-between space. I'd be curious to hear you talk a little bit about, as things have evolved over the last year, even six months or whatever, in today's environment that Marcus you laid out so well, how are you all trying to pivot or be supportive on those issues of burnout and worker shortages and and retention issues? Whether it's at the executive level with the executive directors with whom you work or it's, you know, at other folks on their teams or people in between things, like are the things you're trying to do or being forced to do to help people deal with those issues?

MELISSA: [00:31:14]

I mean, and in addition to those issues right? It's like, it is also calling a thing a thing, like organizations and leaders are out here fighting, like the harm that organizational leaders experience, we're doing voting rights, we're doing reproductive justice work, like you name it, **there is trauma that we absorb doing this work that I don't think ever has gotten a space for us to process as individual leaders, as leaders of institutions, as a collective of folks who were working towards a more just world.** And so, you know, we have been really lucky, I think, that some of the funders that we're working with, that some of the work that's been going around with Cara Page, the work she's doing around healing Justice and sort of creating and fighting for these spaces for folks to come together, to connect, to vent, to figure out what self-care looks like today, right? Like fighting for those spaces that give folks the spaciousness

they need and the care that they need to get back up and get back out there and do it another day. And so, I think that's definitely been a shift, that's definitely been a principle and a value that we've held and continue to hold in all of the spaces that we design. And so making sure that yeah, I mean, it sounds so great, like it sounds so profound, but it's not, like making sure folks have, that leaders have the space that they need to be able to lead the tomorrow. And so, I think sometimes in the frenzy of getting through the checklist, and what are we doing about conversation, what are we doing about burnout, it's sort of very didactic and not about the people at all sometimes. It's about these other things that if we aren't taking care of the folks who are charged or are driven or fulfilling their purpose in doing this work, if you're not taking care of them, then we're not doing the work at all.

RUSTY: [00:33:10]

Yeah, you know You brought up the term healing justice, which I think is such a great affirmative framing, speaking of terms that are changing in the field, and earlier this season we had on Desiree Flores, the head of General Service Foundation, which is making healing justice sort of supplemental grants to their grantees. So for folks interested in hearing more about that, definitely go back and check out Desiree Flores and her episode, we'll put a link to it in the show notes. But Melissa, do you want to say anything else about Cara Page, and we'll link to some of her work as well, do you want to say anything else about what healing justice kind of means?

MELISSA: Yeah so, you know, what I understand about, I'm just getting introduced to Cara's work and she was a part of a convening we did recently and you know, **the work of healing justice is about collective care and it's about safety and healing strategies and integrating those healing and safety strategies that are really integral to our work towards justice and political liberation.** And so I'm excited to have had the opportunity to engage with Cara and definitely excited to learn and study more of her work.

RUSTY: Terrific, thank you. So I was curious to hear from each of you, I'll start with Marcus. If you were to think of a bumper sticker or a brief message for the funders who are listening and maybe one for the nonprofit leaders who are listening, it could be the same or different. What would your bumper sticker be, Marcus, about capacity building?

MARCUS: [00:35:00]

Yeah, it would be: **Resource our Humanity because our humanity is a resource.**

RUSTY: [00:35:04]

Very nice. Very nice. Okay,

MARCUS: [00:35:08]

And if this Frontline thing doesn't work out I'm going to start making bumper stickers.

MELISSA: [00:35:17]

That was so good.

RUSTY: [00:35:19]

That was so good. This is a side hustle, I see it. How about you Melissa?

MELISSA: Marcus had a show stopper there! I was thinking: People first.

RUSTY: [00:35:23]

I love that one. That's great, too. I want these bumper stickers. So now we've got a mandate to produce them...

MARCUS: The people first one, when I was first thinking it, it's talked about in terms of the corporations or the you know, industrial complex. They talked about people over profits, right, but it's framed around the corporate for-profit sector, but I think there's also, there's a frame around like people over profits for the nonprofit sector, right? But I couldn't figure out anything clever, so I'm glad you rocked it out Melissa.

RUSTY: [00:36:03]

People first, excellent, excellent. Well, so we haven't talked, you know, a lot about Frontline itself. But do you want to share any projects, products or reports or anything you guys have coming up that folks should know about, or services that are ongoing that people may be interested in that they can connect with you about?

MELISSA: [00:36:27]

there's a number of exciting projects and things coming up. I think **we've just announced our second or third round of funding through the Elevate Initiative, where we serve as an intermediary to The Gates Foundation to support black and brown worker mobility**, those are very exciting. I think we've made over 5 million dollars worth of grants to small to medium sized organizations who are doing this work, you know, very much on purpose for us and very much mission and values aligned, so really really excited about that next round of grants to the grantees to come with that body of work.

MARCUS: [00:37:05]

Yeah, and **we also recently finished Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) strategic plan**. You'll hear a lot about that under the incredible leadership of a great team. I mean Marcus Walton, its CEO has an amazing team that we'll work with, and so as there are conferences coming up soon, you'll hear a lot about their strategic direction and strategic plan.

And then even some thought leadership work, that amazing article, I mean this is fascinating, years ago Rusty introduced myself and Micah Gilmer, our business partner and friend, to Russ Finkelstein. And so Micah and Russ sort of have an article that came out in the Washington Post around Micah's sort of path, his professional path, this would be a great link for folk to look at, it was amazing, I'm biased, but it was an amazing article. It's beautifully written and articulated by two really smart and empathetic amazing leaders. And so, that is something that is in the streets and that folk can take a look at as well. Anything else Melissa? I feel like we're

knee-deep in all this work and then we're like uhm... Any other things you want to lift up for the people.

MELISSA: [00:38:17]

I'm sure our comms team is going to be upset with us because I'm sure there are other things, but none of them are coming to mind right now.

RUSTY: [00:38:26]

That's great. Those are great. I will definitely link to the Micah profile that Russ worked on. How can our listeners connect with Frontline Solutions?

MELISSA: [00:38:41]

We're on all the social media platforms. So **we're at Frontlinesol on Instagram**, we're pretty active **and also on LinkedIn and our website www.frontlinesol.com**. I think you can find us in all of those places.

MARCUS: [00:39:00]

Yeah, and then you know, I think within reason like we try to be in, you know, the sector spaces to both contribute and learn. Like whether it is GEO's conference coming up in May, but also, you know in our role, in our function like yes, we're at the the philanthropic conference, we're also at, you know, Race Forward and and Positively's gathering, and even kind of more regional and local spaces where folk are either building skills or building movements or building practices, whether it is from the investment funder standpoint, or as a community of practice of nonprofits, or service providers for nonprofits. So, you know, so we are hopefully around if you see someone who says Frontline, say hi to them, and most of them are really really nice.

RUSTY: [00:39:52]

In my experience that is true. Well, fantastic, thank you guys so much for coming on the show. And this was really great and I do hope people take a look at both of your articles. We will certainly link to them. They're brief, concise and I think worthwhile conversation starters for those listening who work in foundations, who are on foundation boards, who are non-profit executive directors or on nonprofit boards, anywhere in the sector these are worthwhile conversations to be having. So just encourage folks to take a look at both. And when I say article, these are really blog post length pieces, so very accessible. And it's great to hear sort of how you all have evolved in your thinking as well and continue to support communities of color in the nonprofit sector and others across the sector in their work. So thank you, thank you so much for your work that you do and thanks for being here.

MARCUS: Thank you Rusty, I appreciate it.

MELISSA: Thanks Rusty.

RUSTY: Next week on the show our guests will be the new president and CEO of Independent Sector, Dr. Akela Watkins. She is amazing, so be sure to stay tuned and keep an eye on your podcast feed. I'll talk to you then.

OUTRO [00:41:30]

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