

2019 welcomed some incredible guests from within and outside the senior living industry! Join us as Josh and Lucas recap season 2 of Bridge the Gap.

Watch this episode [here](#).

Lucas: Welcome to Bridge the Gap podcast and Merry Christmas to all of our listeners. We're so excited to be bringing this to you right now. And I just want to say, Josh, for anybody that is listening to this right now and is not watching it, you need to stop what you're doing right now and go to our YouTube page or one of our social channels because you need to see what Josh has on right now.

Josh: Hey, what you have on.

Lucas: Okay, I'm joining in the fun because we are in the Christmas spirit. We love Christmas. This has been a fantastic year, 2019, on the podcast. So many guests and we have a treat for our listeners today. What are we going to be bringing to them?

Josh: So we're going to recap, just not everything, but little nuggets. You know I like to use that word lot nuggets, but we literally have sprinkled in and we're going to recap some of what we think are some of our best moments from 2019 in somewhat of a chronological order, so you can kind of follow along, listen along. Many of you have already seen these episodes so I know it'll be great reminders, but if you haven't and we give you something that you're like I got to go get that full scoop, then they can go back and get it right?

Lucas: We have a full library and if you're listening on iTunes or Stitcher, Spotify, whatever you're listening to, you can go back into these episodes because much of this information is really timeless information. It's current information that you can use right now, even though it may be a way back episode twenty or thirty or forty. So we're going to run through some of the highlights of this year's best shows to bring you some of the best pieces of information and so let's kick it off right for our highlight reel for Christmas 2019. If we think back in January when this all started, the season two all started, we sat down with a country music star out of Nashville named Jay Allen.

Josh: Yeah. Oh my gosh, Jay, you know what an incredible guy to just sit down with us. He spent a ton of time with us. What an incredible story, not only is a country music star, but he's

really just shaking the nation with this song that he wrote. It's his personal story about his family's struggle with Alzheimer's and caring for his mom at a very early age. And I believe if I'm not mistaken, was it just before this episode in January his mom had just passed or was it just after?

Lucas: It was afterwards. Yeah.

Josh: We were actually with Jay right when it was a really critical time for their family, but the song "Blank Stares," we've heard from so many of our listeners, and I think me and you Lucas can attest to this, the first time you hear this song and you can hear Jay's story and his family's stories, it's really touching. So loved that he spent time with us and it's awesome. We'd love to take you through it.

Lucas: And we're going to cut right now so that you can listen to Jay Allen's hit song ["Blank stares."](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7H3JJ4iFY7U>

"It's the first thing that I think about
When I wake up and when I lay down
It's the last thing I feel crawling through my mind
I'm still trying to understand it
Sitting next to you holding your hand
And hoping you won't fade away this time
Just stay a little while
Please stay a little while
If I can only seal the cracks you're slipping through
Wish I didn't feel so helpless when it comes to helping you

Hold on

So I keep holding on

To every little memory made of you and me

Every little glimpse of who you used to be

I know you're still in there

Deep down somewhere I swear I still see you

Between the blank stares”

Lucas: Josh that raw emotion, I remember that so vividly that moment of spending time with Jay and hearing about his story and that song it was just so meaningful and it was an incredibly emotional way that we started off season two.

Pivoting off of that, we traveled to twelve different conferences in different cities all over the United States. One of them was ASHA (American Seniors Housing Association) and we went to Rancho Palos Verdes. It's easy for me to say right and we had an incredible time. It was a very intimate conference, a lot of the big decision makers there. Great staff, just so grateful for our relationship with ASHA, and one of the big names we sat down with was CEO [John Cochran](#) of Human Good, we had a great interview with him.

Josh: Great interview.

John:There's kind of an open field of green field opportunity for us as we remake an industry and it's something we've done well for the past fifty years, we've got a lot of providers, for-profit and not-for-profit's, who have been in business for fifty years and doing a great job. But the business is shifting and I guess either people are afraid of change and afraid of that shift and in the challenges that are coming or they're really excited about it. And I think the right people will be attracted to this field because of all of those shifts that are going on. And I can't imagine a better time to be jumping in this field than today.

Lucas: Another great conference that we went to is the NIC conference (National Investment Conference) . It was a spring conference in San Diego. What a great organization that NIC is.

Josh: It was in sunny San Diego and we had a great time, another just treasure trove of great talent, great people that took time to speak with us. What an awesome opportunity we had to sit down with none other than the founder of NIC, [Bob Kramer](#), and he talked about high-tech, high touch great episode, highly downloaded. I can't believe it's our listeners missed that they got to see it, right?

Lucas: And here's a [clip](#) from that interview.

Bob: But I think the thing is, we've got to use it again as a means to an end not the end. Because no one wants a brave new world where people are in there, you know, two hundred foot cubicles with a screen and their human contact is turning the screen on and their ability to get out is all virtual. So it has to enhance human touch. So we have to have both high tech and high touch. If we use the high-tech instead of the high touch, we will fail and we'll ultimately have an epidemic of shut ins and loneliness rather than using technology to truly help solve the workforce crisis that we have, is a part of the solution.

Lucas: Josh, Bob Kramer was a real bucket list for me and I know he was for you too. What a great influential figure that has really dedicated a long career to influencing the outcomes in senior living. And while we were in San Diego, this is a big transition, totally different than conferences on capital markets and deal making is we got to sit down with [The Glama Project](#) and talk about this special organization founded by Callie Ahern.

Josh: Oh my gosh, what a great opportunity to talk about a mission that Callie created to make seniors feel great about themselves by doing basically these glamor days and she kind of equated it to making them have a Cinderella experience and making them feel good about themselves. And what was really special, not only did we hear from Callie, but we got to actually meet one of the residents and hear from Adrienne, one of the residents in one of the communities that she has been to, these residents in these communities have been blessed by what Callie is doing and we want you to take a listen right now.

Adrienne: So then I experienced her actually applying the makeup and we got to talk and I understand what her purpose was and what she was doing and I realized how fun this was. And wow, I'm like Cinderella. And suddenly someone's paying attention to me and there's an intimate conversation during the whole thing, and I kind of felt really important."

<https://btgvoice.com/episode-57-the-glama-project-special-edition/>

Lucas: What a fun interview that was with Callie and [The Glama Project](#) and if you're not following them you need to, because go to their Instagram page you're going to see photos and videos of all of their makeovers. What a great and fun thing that they're doing and what a great outcome for seniors.

Josh: Absolutely and don't worry, we're having them back. And next time they're making over me and Lucas. So you'll get to see and hear all about that. Moving on, Senior Living 100 Leadership Conference in Dana Point, California, beautiful place. Great people. This was my first time at this conference, connected with so many great friends and colleagues in the industry. One of my great friends [Lori Alford](#) of Avanti Senior Living sat down with us. And actually we started talking about some interesting topics. One of those was mom guilt.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BynkMdkApjB/>

Lori: It happens a lot of times in the workforce, and it doesn't matter men or women, we both face it. It's that guilt of disappointing your children and then we don't realize that sometimes unintentional disappointment actually make them stronger. But if we talked about them more openly I think people would be like, oh that's happened to me too. Oh my gosh, I'm so glad I'm not the only one that's happened to.

Lucas: I really appreciated Lori tapping into that human element side of the business and there's a lot of people that are working at the communities and then there's leaders behind those workers. And so to show that vulnerable side, to get raw and real, I think is why that episode is one of our highest downloaded ones of all time.

Josh: I totally agree and you know, one of the cool things about what we've been able to do is go to some of the best conferences, but there's such diversity. And one of those conferences that brings together the best designers, interior designers, architects and really leads thought in design of communities is EFA (Environments for Aging). We got to go to Salt Lake City. What a treat.

<https://youtu.be/SX1h9GnGsF4>

Lucas: From the beach, to the mountains, to Salt Lake City and we had some really great interactions there. There was actually a beautiful weather while we were in town. We talked to Thomas Garvin of Waverly Heights. They were the gold medal winners of the renovation award while we were there. It was a really great interview and here's a clip from that [conversation](#).

<https://www.instagram.com/p/By8VpXHgJfg/>

Thomas: You have to involve residents in the process. I mean in this day and age it can't be management and the board making all the decisions for things are going to affect resident life, residents have to be involved in it.

Lucas: I think one of the big takeaways from Thomas's episode and interview was the fact of just the importance of communication with the residents during the renovation projects. Josh you and I have both been involved in renovations before and this is something I've actually implemented into my standard protocol, is these town hall meetings to go over the project before it ever starts to get that buy-in.

Josh: You can't over-communicate, you really can't and I thought it was so interesting that he literally made the residents part of the communication tree and residents communicating to other residents so that they could understand each other. So what a great example, what great lessons for all of us.

Lucas: From the mountains to the hill country of San Antonio, Texas we went to Argentum and this was one of the biggest events of the year and we had a jam-packed lineup of interviews.

Josh: People inside the industry, but also outside of the industry some legends really and got to meet some really awesome people. So [James Lee](#), [David Sawyer](#), [Brad Williams](#), [Anthony Ormsbee-Hale](#). gosh the list goes on and on, and then we got to sit down with [Sarah Thomas](#).

Lucas: The first female NFL official and she stepped in, I remember she walked in and I was just like awestruck. I was taken aback by her by her beauty, her presence, her leadership. It was really incredible.

Josh: But super humble. I loved that she just made you feel right at home. And so she explained some awesome practical things with us. We want you to listen and follow this clip.

Sarah: I've often said, "You do not go through life doing things for the recognition because the toes you will step on to get up the ladder will be the backside you will kiss on the way down because you wouldn't have done it the right way." But if you truly are doing something because you love it and I try to tell my children this, the recognition will come because people will recognize your work ethic and how you love it. It's not all about what you're doing inside the lines when you hit the court, or you hit the field but it's how you get on and off and how you interact with authority and your teammates.

Lucas: Incredible takeaways from that interview with Sarah Thomas. Don't burn bridges.

Josh: You can't do it, you never know when you might need to go walking back across that bridge. So instead you got to be the bridge, right?

Lucas: So important. Another great heavy-hitter that we had on was [Kat Cole](#) in episode 85. Business woman, undercover boss, Focus Brands president and COO and she brought the thunder.

Josh: Yeah, you better just listen in, this was awesome.

Kat: So when you are the only in the room; the only person of color, the only young person, the only person who didn't grow up in the industry, whatever it is, you are the diversity in the room. Diversity of thought or diversity of other types. It is natural when I'm the only, it's very obvious that I'm the only. I walk in and I'm the only woman, I'm the youngest by thirty years, I dropped out of college, these people all have, you know, the fancy degree, I am so aware of the differences almost to a fault. Sometimes we put things in our heads that are more dominant than really what people are thinking. I just saw a quote which was people would worry less about what other people thought of them if they knew how seldom they did.

Lucas: I took so much information off of Kat's interview and what great encouragement to all the young people getting into the business, then that took us to SLIF, the Senior Living Innovation Forum in Santa Barbara, California. Incredible location, incredible audience, an incredible time.

Josh: It was incredible. We were so lucky to be invited to this again and can't wait to get back there. This is a very important event for our industry and it's a very exclusive event. It's invitation-only. What a great group they bring together of entertainers, of some of the best

thought-leaders in the industry, people from all over. Everyone from Run DMC was there to entertain us. Wow, we got to meet him, all the way to Hurricane [Hazel McCallion](#) the CEO, Chief Elder Officer of her company and it was just so amazing.

Lucas: We had [Kris Engsov](#), he is a former executive at Starbucks, now president of Aegis and many, many others. Here's a clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI7tFffEblQ>

"I'm the king of rock, there is none higher

Sucker MC's should call me sire

To burn my kingdom, you must use fire

I won't stop rockin' till I retire

Now we rock the party and come correct

Our cuts are on time and rhymes connect

Got the right to vote and will elect

And other rappers can't stand us, but give us respect"

Lucas: West Coast, to the East coast, hotlanta took us to Interface Seniors Housing and Josh was on a panel. You did a great job there. Great moderator was [Traci Bild](#) who we also had on the program, John Sims, Richard Hutchinson, which is yet to come out that's going to be a big season three and then we had a mastermind dinner.

Josh: Yeah, so our Mastermind, if you're not familiar with these, these are an exclusive event. We're going to give you just a little peek into this mastermind that was hosted by none other than our friend Melissa Banko and Banko Design. So take a watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2O4vLfu0IM&t=1s>

"I could not be more thrilled with where the conversation went tonight. Invigoration and the passion.

The ideas, the ideas, the thoughts, the energy.

What can I do to get that change?

I need to see how that cultivates.

The amount that I'm learning that is what was so magical about the conversation.

I can't wait for the next time.

No matter who you are, and what you're doing in this space, how can we all work together to make our industry the best industry there is."

Lucas: And one of the biggest things anticipated every fall is the fall NIC conference, and this year it was in Chicago and we had another incredible lineup of thought leaders. This conference brings in some of the best people from inside and outside the business to talk about where the senior living industry is and where it needs to be going and it's full of disruptors. One of those people that we had on the show was the CEO of LCS [Joel Nelson](#). I found it incredible to hear his story over thirty years working at LCS and he started from the ground level.

Josh: Yeah. Absolutely. So many great stories, so many great guests. NIC is full of thought leadership and industry leadership, but another great aspect of NIC is they know how to throw a party. And we were part of a great party at House of Blues and none other than our own Lucas McCurdy got to solo. Man, what was that like?

Lucas: So it's called the Senior Living Band and they bring together people that have talents in the industry and I somehow weaseled my way into that group and people like Eric Mendelsohn the CEO of NHI, he's on stage playing the guitar. Bobby Guy an attorney in Nashville and many, many others. It was a fun night to showcase the talents of the industry and share the stage with none other than Mark Roberge of O.A.R., incredible night.

You've got to listen, you've got to watch. Check out our own Lucas McCurdy solo.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=morXSVJqw78>

"Lucas McCurdy on the guitar and Mr. Eric Mendelsohn."

{Music playing}

Lucas: While the majority of our year is spent going to these amazing conferences. We don't want to forget that our industry partners and the partners of our podcast also put on some of the best symposiums in the industry.

Josh: Oh my gosh, we had so much fun. NRC, we had Sherpa's Sales Culture Starter and we had the NHI Music City Symposium. These were action packed and also had tons of great guests.

Lucas: A ton of great guests from those, a ton of great thought leadership and a lot of fun times in Nashville this year for us.

Josh: Absolutely.

[Dustin](#): If we spend our time just as a problem solver, we are already behind the 8-ball okay? Because we're solving problems that exist today versus causing the disruption of what needs to

change for tomorrow. So somebody's got to come in and help shake things up to see what a different alternative future could be and how the heck do we get there?"

Lucas: Another really fun thing that we started this year, something called our mastermind dinners. And this is a VIP exclusive evening around a dinner table with thought leaders talking about the industry.

Josh: It's amazing how many creative ideas and actually action items we got from these events. They're small, they're intimate, but they're action packed. They are a ton of fun. Connect with the who's who in the industry. These are highly sought-after events now, so we're excited to bring you even more in the upcoming year.

Lucas: Okay Josh, it's that time in the episode. Drum roll, please.

Josh: Yes.

Lucas: We're going to talk about our number one downloaded episode of 2019. It is none other than [Severine Petras](#) of Priority Life Care.

Josh: Yes. Way to go Sevy.

Lucas: Awesome interview. And you guys definitely go back into the database and listen to that episode. Seve and her brother Bobby and the rest of her family, actually run an incredible business and the culture that they created in their company is something that she talks about on this episode that you definitely want to go back and listen to.

Josh: We love them huge fans. Check it out.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BxiB5uYAQjn/>

Sevy: Oh my gosh, this is what I want every vendor, family member, employee that is exactly how I want them to have an experience with us in a very difficult situation. I mean, we had really outstanding AR at that point, you know, accounts payable at that point and they could have been really angry and just the way that he handled that.

Lucas: Josh what a great year. We put in the miles, we put in the hard work, but it's stuff that we love to do and we've had so much fun. And what a great time and we're just so thankful. We have a lot to be thankful for.

Josh: We do, so much to be thankful for in our personal lives, so much to be thankful for in our professional lives. And so thankful for all of our listeners, all of our subscribers, those that are following us. Gosh, how many awesome comments and we love those five star reviews that you've taken the time to give us and so many comments that you've left us.

Lucas: We've been shocked, we go back and look at the ratings and there's so many of you that have rated us and given us that five star and written great comments about our episode. From

the bottom of our hearts we are so grateful for you and we just want to tell you that we have big plans coming up from season 3! Continue to follow us and we won't disappoint you and you know, Merry Christmas.

Josh: Yes, Merry Christmas to you. Have a blessed wonderful, holiday season.

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