CFSI Conference Reflections
By Ray Parker, 2018

A little introduction about myself: My name is Ray Parker, and I am currently a Technical Program Manager at a blockchain startup called Dragonchain in Bellevue, WA. Dragonchain is focused on bringing blockchain to enterprises, startups, and small companies in an easy-to-use platform-as-a-service (PaaS) that works with their already-existing business infrastructure, allowing them to utilize the benefits of blockchain in an effective manner. I am originally from Boise, ID and currently reside in Redmond, WA.

During the EMERGE conference, the accommodations that were made accessible to me included closed-captions during most events, such as the main speaker plenaries and the breakout rooms, which were very helpful. Being an individual with a hearing impairment, having this accommodation really helps me to understand and follow along with what is being said, especially in large rooms where sound doesn't travel as well.

The in-person captioner that provided captions during the lunch and breakout sessions

EMERGE focused on finance and fintech. Being an individual with a disability, working in the fintech space, I find that taking into account diverse thoughts and customers' point of view is very important to consider, especially as fintech begins to grow rapidly over the coming years. This shift that we are seeing in finance and fintech will shape a huge part of the future (I believe), and we must consider disability and diversity as much as possible into this shift so that

we can to ensure nobody is left behind. Disability is important to consider in the finance and fintech space because it is one of the largest minority groups in the world, with a large component of individuals with disabilities being unbanked and under-served in the world of finance and fintech.

As a working professional in the fintech industry, EMERGE and WID benefited me professionally because of the networking opportunities I received, as well as the exposure I got in the field of finance and fintech. As blockchain and new technologies arise in the field of fintech, it is important to be as up-to-date as possible in an ever-changing technological world.

I really do hope that by going to EMERGE, I was able to open up people's eyes about what individuals with disabilities go through and the point of view that must be considered when thinking about finance and fintech. By exposing other people to new points of view and difference in capabilities, I hope to have educated and pushed individuals to think more about individuals with disabilities in the world of fintech and finance!

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Ray Parker is a Technical Program Manager at a blockchain startup called Dragonchain in Bellevue, WA. He has served on the board of the USBLN's student advisory council and has experience matching individuals with disabilities to mentors. His interests lie in innovations within financial services and artificial intelligence.

Ray as a Disability Ambassador