



Central New York **Deaf/HH Teens**

FOURTH EDITION 2018

*"Full access allows us to conquer barriers that we encounter along life's path."
C. Hall*

Dear Readers,

We are proud to present the 4th edition of Central New York Deaf/HH Teens. The creation of this publication followed a similar process as the previous magazines: recruiting interested students, having those participants complete an extensive questionnaire, drafting and editing their personal stories, editing the photos, and crafting the pages. This process involves extensive collaboration in which to produce this diverse educational resource.

Our purpose for publishing our own magazine is to highlight the talented deaf and hard of hearing teens from across New York State, as well as to expand one's knowledge regarding deafness. This magazine's primary focus is to support deaf/HH students, their families and educators.

Best Wishes,

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Charlotte Hall • Michele Alagna

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Find a digital copy of the
Central New York Deaf/HH Teens magazine online at
www.CiTiboces.org/ExceptionalEducation



Alexis Beckwith

**Alexis is a senior at the NYSSD.
She lives in the country,
in Rome, NY.**

Education:

"The **New York State School for the Deaf (NYSSD)** is the school I go to. The school is small. The entire school has about 60 students. The city the school is in is Rome, NY. I have always gone to NYSSD but I took technology and home and careers at the local public school when I was in seventh and eighth grade. My favorite subjects are art & advanced graphic arts. I enjoy making things on the computer, such as pictures. In advanced graphic arts, we do many different things. Some examples of things we do: make edits on photographs, make pictures darker or lighter, remove blemishes from skin on photographs, take off red eyes, and change the focus of photographs to specific parts by making it very clear and the other parts blurry and many more things! The elective classes I took in high school were keyboarding, work study, graphic arts, current events, studio art, life skills/ readiness, and personal finance."

"Also, I participated in Youth Interaction Through Theatre. In YITT we do performances of theater by using ASL (some people) and voiced English (some people.)" Alexis is also involved in yearbook club, soccer, basketball, cheerleading, softball, academic bowl, handbells, math competition, and dance. "NYSSD used to have a dance team and I was on it. We had performances in the gym on stage. I am also involved with a group called Email Buddies. NYSSD has email buddies with students in an ASL class at Hamilton College. We write back and forth, meet each other, and I help my buddy learn some ASL. I have also been a part of the holiday play and the science fair. If I could change one thing about my educational setting, I wish NYSSD had more students like public schools do! I want more students because I would like to socialize with more people and become friends. It would be fun with more people at school!"

Awards/Achievements:

- **Most Improved Student** - 2013, 2016
- **History** - 2013 Academic perseverance
- **Reading**
 - 2013 Academic perseverance
 - 2015 Academic achievement
 - 2017 Academic perseverance
- **English** - 2014 Academic perseverance, 2015 Academic perseverance
- **Math** - 2015 Academic achievement, 2017 Academic achievement
- **Science** - 2015 Academic perseverance
- **Peter Savino Award** - 2014
- **Certificate of Merit**
 - February 4, 2013 - April 19, 2013
 - November 12, 2013 - January 31, 2014
 - September 3, 2014 - November 7, 2014
 - November 12, 2014 - January 30, 2015
 - February 2, 2015 - April 17, 2015
 - November 21, 2016 - January 27, 2017
- **Certificate of Honor**
 - February 1, 2014 - April 11, 2014
 - September 9, 2015 - November 6, 2015
 - November 9, 2015 - January 22, 2016
 - January 25, 2016 - April 8, 2016
 - September 7, 2016 - November 18, 2016
 - January 30, 2017 - April 7, 2017
 - September 11, 2017 - November 17, 2017
- **Excellent Attendance** - 2014, 2015
- **NCAC Scholar Athlete (Excellence)** - 2016, 2016-2017
- **CharacterShip Program Winner** - 2016
- **Soccer**
 - 2013 NCAC All star
 - 2014 NCAC All star
 - 2015 NCAC All star
 - 2016 NCAC Co-ed soccer all star
- **Basketball**
 - 2013 Most valuable player
 - 2013-2014 2nd team girls all-star
 - 2014 ESDAA girls basketball tournament division 2; honorable mention
 - 2014 Girls basketball MVP
 - 2014-2015 NCAC 2nd team all star
 - 2015-2016 2nd team girls all star NCAC
 - 2016 ESDAA division II girls tournament 2nd team all-star
 - 2016 MIP
 - 2016 Girls tournament champs
 - 2016-2017 First team girls all star NCAC
 - 2017 ESDAA division II girls basketball all-tournament team
 - 2016-2017 Girls basketball most valuable player
- **Softball**
 - 2012 Softball MIP
 - 2014 NCAC all star
 - 2015 All star
 - 2015 Softball MVP



Support/Technology:

"Teachers of the Deaf (TOD) are good because they teach me best since I am a deaf person. A TOD knows about deafness. My speech therapist helps me improve my vocabulary, grammar and communication. I don't really use interpreters a lot. When I go to college I will need to use an interpreter. I do use Acces-VR. Acces-VR is helpful to pay for things I need in college and to help me find a job in the future."

"I use CC (Closed Captions-are a text version of the spoken part of a television, movie or computer presentation) at both home and school, so I can understand what is on the TV. I can use text on my phone to communicate. I have a [video phone](#), but I will need to have it updated. I use video chat on my laptop and iPad."

Hearing Loss/Amplification:

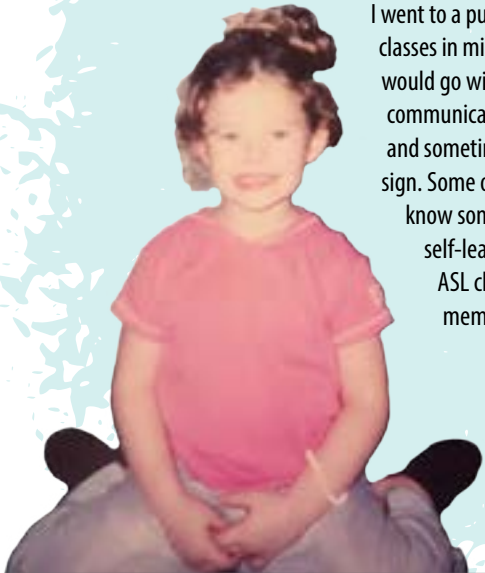
Alexis has a bilateral severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss. "My mom became concerned when I was very young, maybe a year or younger. She would stand behind me and say my name and I would not turn to look at her. A hearing loss was confirmed with some test by a new doctor. I am not sure when I was first amplified. I wore two hearing aids when I was younger. Then I didn't wear hearing aids, then I did, then I didn't. Right now, I do not wear any hearing aids."

"When I was younger, in elementary school, I wished I could hear. I didn't understand and had a hard time in school a lot. Now, as a high school student, I feel differently. I like being deaf!"

"I have amplification, two hearing aids. When I was young, I would wear hearing aids at home and at school, but now I do not wear them. When I wear hearing aids, I only hear some sounds, not everything. Hearing aids don't give me a lot of sounds. The hearing aids I have now are very, very old. I don't wear them at all. I don't like the feeling of something in my ears. It is not comfortable for me."

Communication:

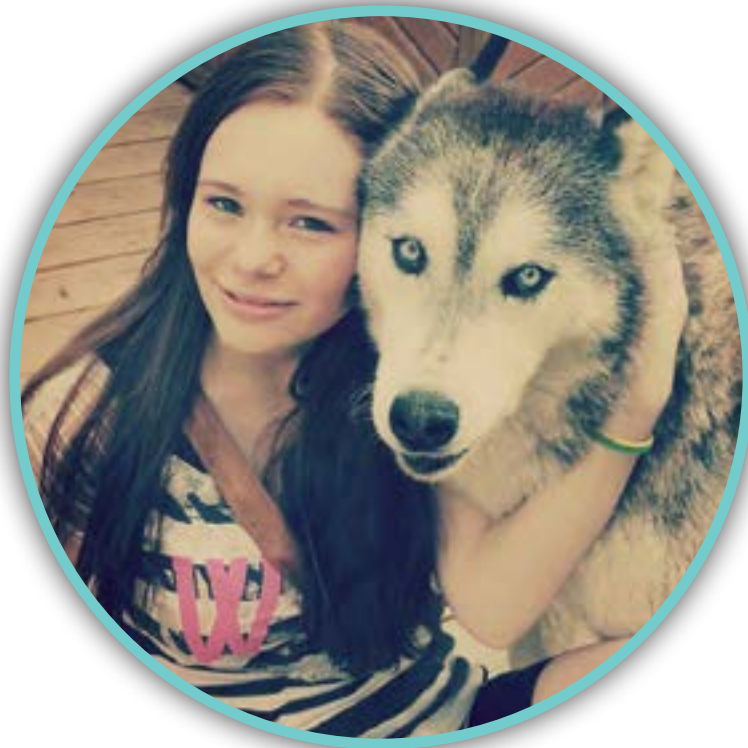
"At school I use sign language for all classes. At home my family speaks, uses fingerspelling and some sign language. I communicated using signed English when I was younger, now I use [American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#) most of the time. At NYSSD teachers sign. When I went to a public school for some classes in middle school, an interpreter would go with me. I write on paper to communicate with hearing friends, and sometimes teach them how to sign. Some of my hearing friends know some sign language from self-learning through the Internet, ASL class or from a deaf family member."



Challenges:

"Sports at NYSSD have not been a challenge because I can see what is happening. Yes, I can't hear a whistle or the time buzzer, but I can see what is happening. If there is an emergency, I cannot hear it! For example, if a fire alarm goes off without strobe lights, I can't hear it. If a stranger breaks into my house or breaks the window, I can't hear it happening! If there is an emergency, I depend on my vision. In sports, I rely on hand motions and asking people around me what's happening."

These challenges have taught Alexis that she is both strong and a good person.



Advocacy:

"Yes, I think I had equal access at school because my teachers used sign language. I was taught information through teachers using sign language. They taught the same information students at public school learned, but they used sign language instead of speaking."

"I like going to the movies. I would ask my mom to contact the movie theater to see if they will have [CC \(Closed Captions\)](#) for the movie, before I go. One time I went and we forgot to ask before I got there. My mom asked when we got there and they said no, it was broken. The movie theater workers gave me big headphones. They didn't help me hear because I am deaf. It is frustrating. All movie theaters should provide closed captions for every movie. I should not have to have a group of deaf people in order to watch a captioned movie. I should not have to schedule it. I would like to go to the movie theater anytime with my family to watch a movie and have closed captions available."



"In a social situation with peers, if I don't understand what people are saying because they are talking, I use my sister to interpret for me if she is there. I need to write sometimes too. And use gestures with people who do not know sign language."

Family:

"My family has always supported me because my mom cares about me so much. My family treats me the same as a hearing person. I feel it is hard to communicate clearly to my family sometimes because my entire family doesn't know sign language fluently. My sister, Carly, is fluent in sign language. The rest of my family know some signs and the letters of the alphabet in ASL. They will fingerspell if they don't know the sign. I do wish my family knew more ASL, but I do understand it is not easy to learn for everyone. It can be challenging for anyone to learn a different language."

Background Information:

"I love cartoon books, movies and TV shows. I like to meet other people from sports, different schools and colleges. My favorite sport is basketball, it is my life! I love to play video games. I also love to travel because it is fun!"

The quote that sums up Alexis' personality is, "Say yes to new adventures."

"I picked this quote because I like to travel for enjoyment, meet new friends, have new experiences, etc.!"

"My role model is Zendaya, an American actress and singer. She is my role model because I want to be like her. Her actions are funny. She is an awesome dancer and a good spy in *K.C. Undercover*."

Goals:

"I will go to college at RIT/NTID or MVCC and I will major in graphic design and photography. When I graduate college, I want to have a job related to my major, but I am not sure what kind yet!"

Advice:

"Advice for students: don't give up when communication is hard. If you have to write to talk with a person, do it. **Advice for families:** always communicate with your child. A lot of times, schools can help families, if families want help. Also, understand it can be hard for others to learn ASL. For some it may be easy to learn, but for others it is difficult. It is not that they don't care about you."

“Say *yes*
to new
adventures.”

Anna Major



Anna lives in Orchard Park, a suburban town with a lot of trees. Orchard Park is 15 minutes south of Buffalo. The village has a lot of specialty restaurants and bakeries. It gets very snowy in the winter.

Education:

Anna is a senior at Orchard Park High School. "We have roughly 3,000 students. My school offers a lot, academically and athletically. The students are driven to succeed and teachers challenge us to be successful. I have always attended a public school and I have always been mainstreamed."

"My favorite subjects are math and Spanish. I enjoy working with numbers and finding solutions to problems in math. I love the language of Spanish and enjoy conjugating verbs. In Spanish class, I had to use my FM system and sit next to the teacher so that I could hear how the language was spoken. I also studied a lot on my own and used [Quizlet](#) online to hear the pronunciations of the vocabulary we were learning that week. Overall, learning Spanish has inspired me to want to travel to Mexico or Spain in the future."

"I participated in the Academy of Finance program all four years of high school and will be taking anatomy in the spring of 2018. Academy of Finance is a program you start taking your freshman year and it is designed for students who are interested in business."

Extracurricular activities include; Orchard Park varsity girls' gymnastics, club gymnastics, Spanish club, and [DECA](#).

"In gymnastics, my favorite events are beam and vault. This year, I am varsity team captain. I have been involved in competitive gymnastics for 10 years and have qualified for Sectionals six years in a row. I now teach gymnastics at my gym for ages five to 12, two days per week."

"I wish I would have learned some ASL during my life. I did not need to learn it to communicate, so the opportunity to use it never came up. I still hope to learn some [sign](#) because it might help me in my nursing career if I come across a patient who is deaf."

Awards/Achievements:

Scholar athlete for six years, National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, honor roll and Bob Rine's Team Sports Award (gymnastics).

Supports/Technology:

"In elementary school, middle school and high school I only had TOD (Teacher of the Deaf) services. We would work together on lipreading, [auditory training](#) and building up my self-advocacy skills in elementary and middle school. In high school we really started to focus on building up my language skills for the SAT and working on college entrance essays that focused on the challenges I have overcome with having a hearing loss. I started out seeing my TOD four days a week and every few years it would lessen by a day. Now in high school I only see my TOD once a week. Fun fact . . . I've had the same hearing teacher since I was in first grade! She has always been there to support and motivate me!"

"I use CC (Closed Captions) at home on my TV and my iPhone. I use my FM system at school and teachers will put it by the speakers if we are watching a video in class. At home, I use my iPhone to communicate with my friends and family through text."

Hearing Loss/Amplification:

"I have a bilateral mild conductive hearing loss. The cause of my hearing loss is malformed stapes bones in my middle ear. My hearing loss was detected at my kindergarten screening when I was five. I was first amplified in kindergarten with hearing aids. I remember being able to hear more things around me in school and at home after I started wearing my hearing aids every day. I have accepted my hearing loss and feel like it's just a part of who I am."

"I wear two brand new Oticon Sensei Pro hearing aids and use a Phonak Roger FM system at school. I wear my hearing aids at home so that I can hear what my family is saying. This year I recently got new hearing aids and I like them a lot better than my old ones. My new hearing aids have volume control that I really find beneficial at school. I can turn them up during class and turn them down in noisier environments."



Communication:

"I use [lipreading](#) and speaking with my friends and family. I lipread my friends a lot."

"I found it challenging to advocate for myself in school because I am generally a very shy person. I've also found hearing the music in gymnastics for my floor routines very challenging. I can't hear the beats of the music so that can sometimes mess up my entire routine. My coach and I agreed that when I would go out to do my floor routine that she would turn the music up a bit louder so I could feel the beats of the music better on the floor. I had to learn to speak up more at school and at gymnastics. If I wanted or needed something I had to go do it. Many people around me were very understanding of my needs and would appreciate me stepping up to ask for help. I would feel good about myself. It would motivate me to be more determined and to be a better version of myself. Advocating for myself also developed my confidence."

Advocacy:

"I think I have had the same opportunities at school as my hearing peers. I even think I've had more opportunities because teachers always would check in with me to make sure I had everything I needed."

"If I miss what the teacher said, I usually advocate for myself by asking a friend in my class. I feel comfortable talking to my teachers after class, but not during class. I still get a little shy in front of others. If I can't hear what my friends are saying, I ask for clarification on what they are talking about."





Family:

"My family has always been very supportive of my hearing loss. I have no issues communicating with my immediate family".

Background Information:

"I am a very giving and kind person, which is why I picked the nursing profession." The quote that bests fits Anna's personality is, "She believes she could, so she did", by R.S. Grey.

"My mom is my role model because she is a very strong, independent woman who is very determined and adventurous. My mom recently put herself through nursing school with four kids at home and graduated with an accelerated bachelor's degree of science in nursing with honors. I hope to follow in her footsteps and be as successful as she has been."

Goals:

"My plans for after high school include going to nursing school to become a registered nurse. Currently, I am applying to D'Youville College in Buffalo, SUNY Plattsburgh and Sweet Briar College in Virginia. My plan when I attend college is to live in the dorm and get the full college experience. I also would like to travel a lot around the world to experience new places and food. I would also like to become a foster mom for kittens."

Advice:

"I would tell the family to love their child unconditionally and be as supportive as possible. I know that growing up with a hearing loss can be difficult, so my advice would be to advocate for your child in school and learn as much as possible about hearing loss and how it affects them."



Christina Burns



Education:

Christina lives in Canastota. Her home is outside of town surrounded by many nearby neighbors. She lives about 15-20 minutes away from the nearest store or business.

"I started school in Homer City, Pennsylvania. My family moved to New York when I was about seven or eight years old because my father got a new job. When I moved to NY, I started homeschooling with my mom. I did homeschool for two-to-three years. My mom was my teacher and helped me do my homework. Then I went to public school at Newfield School District, where I started at third grade until 10th grade. Then my family moved to Canastota because my father got another job. When we moved, we got an apartment in Oneida first. The school district area I lived in was Oneida. Oneida is a very big school with a lot of students. Then we finally got a house in Canastota! I never went to school in Oneida, but it was my "home school district" when I started at NYSSD. I applied to New York State School for the Deaf when we first moved. I started at NYSSD shortly after that. It is a very small school and does not have a lot of students. I like it! I started school here in 9th grade until now in 12th grade. I am not a dorm student. I go home every day."

"My favorite subject is United States Government because I really enjoy it! I have already passed the Regents test. I take elective classes: Life skills/career readiness, studio art, and intro to art, and workshop. Workshop is a program to teach students how to work. Some things I have learned and practiced in workshop are: copying, packaging, binding papers, typing activities and laminating. Some students learn cooking in the cafe, kitchen prep and cleaning. Also, I help students and the teacher in an elementary gym class. In PE, I lead exercises for the children. I also help them when they play games."

"In Newfield Central School, I played soccer for two years and then I played basketball for six years. When I moved to NYSSD I played basketball for two years but I don't play soccer. Last year I was on the [NYSSD's Academic Bowl](#) team.

I also joined a program after school with NYSSD and Hamilton College. We write letters to students there to get to know each other. The letter writing is for social reasons. No staff person edits the writing. We write the letters with pen and paper, not email. I have not met the person I write with. There was a trip out to Hamilton College for students to meet each other, but I was not able to attend."

"In Newfield Central School, I had an interpreter but it was still so hard for me to pass Regents tests and I did not do well. Now at NYSSD, I have passed US History and English for Regents credit already. I have passed Earth Science and Global Studies for local credit. At NYSSD, I appreciate that it is small, has few people and has some sports opportunities. I like the two art classes I have this year, they are my favorite classes."

Awards/Achievements:

Girls' soccer award from Newfield, humanitarian award, girls' basketball award, principal's award, academic perseverance, academic achievement, sign-language, 3 honor roll, 2 merit roll, Triple "C" award- commitment, character, courage, and Daughters of the American Revolution.



“You are not
alone
because there are
many
deaf people
in the world.”



Support/Technology:

“I have teachers of the deaf because they help me learn in each class and help me the best to prepare for quizzes or tests. I have an audiologist to check my ears to make sure they are okay and to help me use my hearing aids to the best of my ability. I have speech-language services because it helps me to improve my voice, writing grammar and to learn the meaning and how to pronounce vocabulary words. I had a teacher of the deaf and a speech therapist at public school. I did not have an audiologist at school.”

“I use technology: CC (Closed Captions), a Soundfield System to help me hear a teacher talking, text on my smart phone, and Videophone at school. I use some of these at home too. I use these because they help me to hear or to see carefully what they saying.”

Hearing Loss/Amplification:

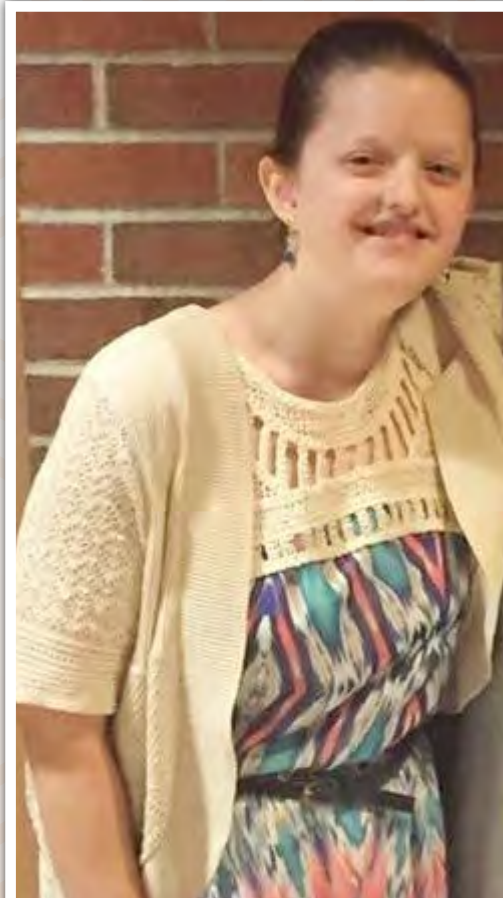
“I have a sensorineural hearing loss that is bilateral and severe-profound. My hearing loss was detected at 18 months old. I was first amplified at two years old. I am currently using Oticon hearing aids. I think about why I am deaf and how I became deaf a lot. I wish it was different. I want to be hearing and hear what people are saying, but, I do accept I am deaf and I feel happy that I have met many new deaf people at NYSSD. I am happy that I feel at peace about my hearing loss, some hearing people don't have peace. I have two hearing aids I wear all the time. In Newfield Central School, I used an FM to connect my hearing aid with boots. It helped me to hear the teachers in my classes. If the battery died, I had the interpreter so I did not miss what they said. At school now, I use a [Soundfield](#) system to help me hear in class. I do not use it at home or in the community.”

Communication:

“At home, I communicate with my family by talking and sometime using signs. Sometimes my family doesn't understand my voice and I have to sign. At my old school, I communicated with kids and teachers by talking all the time, and using an interpreter. At NYSSD, I use sign language most of the time, but sometimes I talk with people at school too. I enjoy communicating with hearing and deaf friends. At my Homer City school, I remember that I had my best friend and we signed to each other to communicate, but now I moved out of state. I miss her very much. I haven't heard anything from her. I have met new deaf people and we have become friends. We chat on Facebook and sometimes using FaceTime to communicate in sign.”

Strengths/Challenges:

“In my old school, I had the challenge of not understanding all my classmates because it was difficult to hear their talking. At my old school, I played sports and I could not hear when people called my name. For example, in soccer and basketball, if a person wanted to pass the ball to me and they called my name, I couldn't hear them. At my old church, I had a hard time trying to understand what people were saying and I missed things. I have new church now and people talk, but I know some of what they are saying. Some people know a few signs too. At my old school, I used an interpreter to help me understand what people were saying. I also taught people there to sign. I played sports and I had an interpreter and we taught my team some sign language. In my old church I would give them a notebook to write down what they were trying to say to me. In my new church, I taught some people signs and they are doing well. In my family, sometimes I have to ask them to sign or to write down what they want to say on paper. Some of my cousins know a little bit of sign language.”



"I learned that I like to communicate with other people. I needed to help figure out ways to communicate with people on my sports team and in other places too."

Advocacy:

"At public school, no I didn't have equal access. I had to learn through an interpreter most of the time. Sometimes learning through an interpreter is hard. At NYSSD, yes, I had equal access, because my teachers used sign language when teaching directly."

"At school, I would tell my teacher if I didn't have my hearing aid. If my battery dies, I get one from my bag and change it. Also, I would write notes on a piece of paper and give to them to people as a way to [communicate](#). Another strategy would be to teach them how to sign to communicate."

Family:

"My family supports me in regards to my hearing loss because my parents love me and want to protect me from troubled people in the world! My parents sign all the time and my brothers and sister only sign a little. I don't communicate with them a lot now because they are really busy and live far away from home. With my parents, yes I can communicate effectively. With my extended family, my cousins do not sign much. I play games with them, but we don't talk, we just smile. My family is all hearing and I am the only one deaf."

Background Information:

The quote that Christina believes in is "Finish strong and do your best!"

"I would like to be like Kevin Maki. He cares about deaf people and works hard to teach them."

Goals:

"My goals for after high school are to go to college. I want to become a teacher of young children. Also, maybe I want to go to [NTID/RT](#) in Rochester, for a good career. I might be good at graphic design on the computer. Then I want to go to work, but I am not sure where I want to work. I might stay with my family for a while. Later, I will move to an apartment."

Advice:

YOUNG STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF –

"You are not alone because there are many deaf people in the world."

THE MOM AND DAD OF A PERSON WHO IS DEAF –

"Learn sign language to communicate with your deaf children!"

Emily Cott



Education:

"The name of my high school is Springville-Griffith High School. It has around 525 students. The students here have a lot of school spirit. I have always attended public school and have always been [mainstreamed](#). My favorite subject is math because I like challenges and to work with numbers."

"I am taking a class called forensics that studies the methods of investigating and solving crimes through science. Other than that, I am in all regular 11th grade classes. My grades are usually really good." Christina has been named to the honor roll and achieved perfect attendance.

Emily participated in Soccer, SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving), Bowling and Tennis. "In [SADD](#), I helped with our Red Ribbon Week by decorating doors and mailboxes with red ribbons and organizing the daily events for the students of the week."

"I've played soccer since I was seven and have been playing on a school team for a few years. I've been bowling since I was six and I've been playing on a bowling team for two years for my high school. I recently tried playing tennis over the summer and hope to play it again next summer. I like being able to be active and have fun. There is nothing I would have change about my school experience."

Emily lives in Springville.

"Springville is a rural town that is about 40 minutes south of Buffalo and near a popular ski village called Ellicottville. There are always seasonal decorations on the light posts in the village, which makes it feel cozy. We have a lot of little restaurants in the village. Sometimes Springville gets a lot of snow."

Support Services/Technology:

"In elementary school, I had speech services and PT (Physical Therapy) and OT (Occupational Therapy). In middle school, I had speech services, teacher of the deaf services and PT. PT was important to me when I was younger because I had a problem with my balance. In high school, I only have teacher of the deaf services. With my TOD, we work on lipreading, auditory training and building my listening comprehension skills. This TOD therapy has helped me to be successful in my classes."

"Sometimes I use CC at home when I watch TV. My phone helps me to text and Snapchat with my friends."



Hearing Loss/Amplification:

"I have a severe bilateral sensorineural loss from 1500-8000Hz, but can hear within normal range between 250-1000Hz. My hearing was tested during my chemotherapy treatment before I turned 1. It was discovered that due to my treatment, I developed a hearing loss. I was first fitted for hearing aids between two and three years old and started using an FM system during preschool. When I was younger I hated having a hearing loss because of my old hearing aids. They were very big and made loud noises when the battery would die. When I was able to get new hearing aids, I accepted having a hearing loss. It was a part of who I was. I learned to deal with it and my saying was "whatever."

"I have two Phonak Bolero hearing aids that I wear at school every day. At home, I take out my hearing aids to have a break from wearing them. I've always taken out my hearing aids at home because sometimes wearing them irritates me."

Communication:

"I use speaking and lipreading in school and at home. With my friends I use speaking and lipreading. I do not have any deaf/hh friends."

Strengths/Challenges:

"In school and sports I have a tough time hearing directions when the person is far away from me. I ask the person to repeat what I missed. I know I need to ask either my teachers or my coach to repeat what they said. If I can't get to them, I will ask a friend or teammate to repeat what was said. I feel brave because sometimes asking the person to repeat what they said is embarrassing to me. I really do not like being singled out for being different."

Advocacy:

"Yes I feel like I had the same opportunities as my hearing peers. I don't feel like I was excluded or treated differently. If I missed something the teacher said I feel most comfortable asking a friend who is in my class. I would try to go with the flow or ask them what they are talking about so I can keep up. If I don't know what they are saying, they might get annoyed with me."

Family:

"My family helps me if I need anything that relates to my hearing loss, like appointments with my audiologist or fixing my hearing aids. I feel I am able to communicate effectively with my family."

Background Information:

"My favorite things to do are listening to music, watching TV, reading books and hanging out with friends. My favorite actor is Vincent D'Onofrio and my favorite singer is Michael Buble. I have traveled to Florida, Tennessee, NYC and Arizona. I have been a part of Camp Good Days since I was 13 and every summer I stay at camp for a whole week and hang out with friends, play sports and participate in talent shows and musicals. My mom is my role model because she is kind, generous and funny. She helps me whenever I need it and is always there for me."

Goals:

"I would like to try a community college and explore a job working with animals. I enjoy caring for animals and people say I am good around animals, especially dogs. Maybe someday in the future I could move to NYC because I really like Times Square and the Brooklyn Bridge."

Advice:

"The advice I would give to a student with a hearing loss is make sure you listen and learn from your teacher of the deaf, don't be afraid to use your FM system in your classes and if anyone asks about your hearing aids just be honest and tell them what they are for."





Jammie Bailey

Education:

"I am a senior at Elmira High School. It is a mainstream public high school. Elmira is a city in Chemung County, New York. We are the Elmira Express and our school colors are red and black. There are 1,200 students in my high school, but only one other student is hard of hearing. I have lived in Elmira since I was born. During some of my elementary school years, I was mainstreamed part of the day and spent the afternoon in the classroom with other d/hh students. It was fun during elementary school because I used to communicate with my friends who were d/hh using sign language or speech, depending on the conversation. Since then, my friends have moved away to different schools. Now, I rarely see any d/hh friends. In high school, there are many activities that I can be involved in. I have no problem making new friends, but I like having my friends from elementary school."

"Math is my favorite subject because it is easy and I can solve equations very easily. However, word problems are difficult to understand. English is my least favorite because writing is difficult for me."

"I have been in marching band for three years and concert band for two years. Marching band is a fun way to listen to music and be involved in many parades such as the Christmas parade and Memorial Day parade. I played the crash cymbals in the parades. In concert band, I always play percussion instruments. I have played the triangle, bass drum, shaker, crash cymbal and other percussion instruments."

"I have been in the GST (Greater Southern Tier) BOCES cosmetology program for the past two years. I have learned that cosmetology is the study of beauty treatments, including: hairstyling, skin care, cosmetics, manicures, pedicures, waxing and other services. Sometimes we also learn English, science and math in class. During my junior year I learned how to do roller sets, haircutting, perms, finger waving and other techniques. Everyone has been kind and friendly. We do a lot of writing and communicating with classmates and clients. We also do team-building activities. During my senior year, we have clinic every Monday and Thursday. We wear black scrubs during clinic days. I like clinic days because we have clients come in and ask for specific cosmetology services. When we don't have clinic, we may practice for the state board test. A person will watch the cosmetology students and grade them on haircutting, perms, finger waves, roller set, pin curls, sectioning the hair with clips and using a curling iron."

Jammie participated in marching band (parade), concert band and key club. "Key club is an organization that I joined in school this year as a senior. It provides opportunities to develop leadership skills, occasions to serve others, and it helps build character. Also, I was a member of yearbook club, CPR/First Aid certified, National Junior Honor Society for three years and high honor roll."

"If I could change one thing about my school, it would be having other deaf or hard of hearing students at my high school. During part of high school, I was the only deaf/hh student. At most, there has only been one other deaf/hh student at my high school. Also, I wish my high school would provide sign language class because sometimes I feel left out when talking with people. If the school provided ASL classes, then my friends could have learned to communicate with me through ASL. I would have felt more included."

Support Services/Technology:

"I have a TOD to help me become better at communicating clearly, writing (which I hate), vocabulary and pronouncing harder words. I have an interpreter who helps me make sure I don't miss anything while the teachers are speaking. When we watch movies, they may have closed captioning, but not always."

"I wear hearing aids all day, every day, at home and at school. I use a personal FM system in school. This helps me to hear my teachers better, but background noise still makes it a little harder for me to concentrate on what the teacher is saying. At home, I use a vibrating alarm clock to wake me up. This makes me more independent because I don't need my grandma to wake me up."

"I use closed captions all the time when I am watching TV with my family. My family doesn't mind using closed captions. They said it can be helpful for them too. I just recently got a CapTel phone. So now I can talk on our home phone!"

“Make your own voice be heard.”

Hearing Loss/Amplification:

“I have a bilateral severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss. My left ear is better than my right ear. I was two years old when my family found out that I couldn’t hear at all. My grandma took me to the doctor and my doctor explained to my grandmother what I would need. She decided to get me hearing aids and my doctor said I also needed tubes to clear my ears. It didn’t change me at all. I fell in love with my hearing aids because I could talk with my family and my friends and I could hear other sounds around me. Honestly, I don’t even think about my hearing loss. I’m a human being—I just can’t hear. I have an alarm clock that vibrates my bed to wake me up on time to get ready for school. I love my alarm clock because I can get up on time and be independent. I feel confident wearing my hearing aids because they help me hear and monitor my own voice. My FM system does help me hear my teachers better especially when background noises is present. Sometimes the microphone picks up strange noises.”

Communication:

“At school I use an interpreter for all of my classes. At home with my family, we communicate orally. I started learning sign language when I was three years old. My cousin and I learned sign language together. It was fun because we could communicate with each other. My cousins always talk to me in sign language because they like using their hands to communicate with me. Now, I use my voice to talk to everybody. Everyone knows that I have a loud voice. If you ever met me, you would probably say that I have a loud voice. Sometimes I use sign language to talk to deaf or hard of hearing friends. When I go out with my deaf friends, we all sign. I use my voice or sign language whichever is easier in conversations with friends.”

Strengths/Challenges:

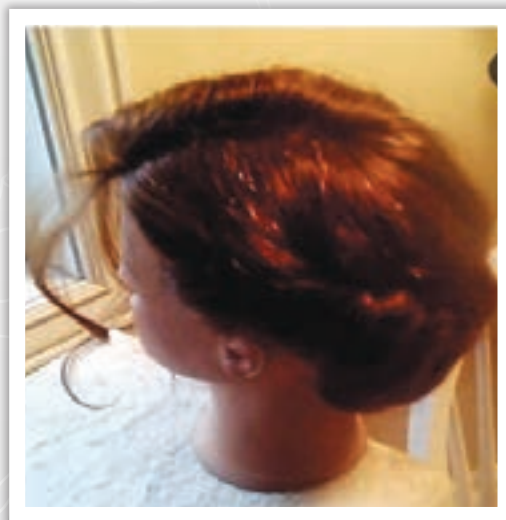
“Many people know that I can’t hear well, and they know to look at me when they are talking to me. However, even when using my FM system, when teachers talk fast, I miss some of what they say. When this happens, I usually ask my teacher to repeat what they said, and occasionally I ask my interpreter. I have preferential seating and get a hard copy of notes, this helps too. In loud environments, when I speak too fast, or when I try to pronounce difficult words, sometimes my friends don’t understand what I am trying to say. I practice saying difficult words so that people can understand me better when we are talking. When I first started band, it was difficult for me to follow the beat because I couldn’t hear it. My band teacher taught me to watch other band members’ feet tapping, and then count the beats. That made it easier for me to follow the beat. In cosmetology, it is difficult to communicate with clients. Sometimes they can’t understand me and sometimes I have trouble understanding them. If another cosmetology student is available, I ask them to repeat what I said to my client.”

“I am always a positive person. I stand up for myself. I like my voice to be heard and I like talking in my own voice.”

Advocacy:

“I don’t normally get equal access for school announcements. When an announcement starts, it is *hard for me to hear* because the class is often talking. We have daily video announcements during second period. This includes things such as the weather, birthdays, sports and lunch. However, they do not have captioning. If I think I missed something, then I ask someone.”





"I advocate for myself and my hearing needs at school. If my batteries die in class, I change my batteries quickly without anyone knowing. Sometimes a friend will write what the teacher has said while I am changing my batteries. I keep my batteries in my backpack and I have batteries from school because I have an FM. When I get low on batteries for school, I let my TOD know. If I miss what a teacher said, I ask the teacher or sometimes my interpreter, to repeat what was said. If I don't understand a friend, then I let them know and ask them to repeat themselves. My friends know that I want to be more social. So they all agree one person will let me know what is going on in a conversation. I don't miss out on conversations as much when I talk with less than three people. I also let my TOD know when I have any hearing needs in school."

Family:

"My family has always supported me. When I was three years-old my grandparents decided that I needed hearing aids and set up speech therapy for me. My grandma and I go to my IEP meetings to figure out what supports I will need in class or for extracurricular activities. My grandma always makes sure that I have everything I need for my hearing loss especially my hearing aids. I can communicate with my family by using my voice, but when I want to talk in private with my cousins, I use sign language. My grandparents know some basic sign language such as bathroom, eat, hungry, tired, yes and no."

Background Information:

"I was raised by my grandparents. I'm grateful that they took me in and treat me as their own child. I love baking with my grandmother. I enjoy doing manicures and pedicures and anything involved in cosmetology. I love pickles. I like watching crime shows such as *Criminal Minds*, *Law and Order SVU*, *Chicago Police*, *Blue Bloods*

and anything that involves solving crime. I love all kinds of music. Many people know me personally because I am always helping everywhere. Everyone loves me because I have a great smile. If you are feeling sad or down, I know how to make you laugh. I have no problems talking to anyone."

"Personally, I have so many quotes, but this is my favorite, Make your own voice be heard."

"[Marlee Matlin](#) is my role model. She inspired me that she has been able to do anything despite her hearing loss."

Also [Ashley Fiolek](#), because she is deaf and rides motocross. People say that she shouldn't ride motocross but she overcame the challenges she faced and has proven she can be successful."

Goal:

"My goal for after high school has been to attend RIT/NTID and to major in business. I am excited to be fulfilling that goal as I was recently accepted at RIT/NTID! After college, I want to own a salon where deaf and Hard of Hearing people can communicate easily with me."

Advice:

"A hearing loss can be stressful, but before you know it, you will get through it. Also, sign language can be the best medicine for those who are hard of hearing or deaf and who don't speak or choose not to use their voice. Knowing sign language will make it easier for those that you want to talk with. Don't let your hearing disability limit you from things you want to accomplish. Try to live your life as normal as possible. Don't let others say that you can't do something, if you believe in yourself you will find success in the future."

**“After college,
I want to own a salon where
Deaf and Hard of Hearing people
can communicate easily with me.”**

Samantha Majchrzak



Education:

"I have finished Churchville-Chili High School. I am attending what's known as the [BELL](#) program. BELL stands for Bridge to Earning, Learning and Living. It is a BOCES program that transitions students from school to work or further education. It is housed on the Roberts Wesleyan College campus and allows me to audit college classes. I take classes without receiving grades or credit. Right now I am taking Criminal Justice. I like the BELL program because it is helping me become independent. Like all BELL students, I live at home and commute to school. I am currently the only hard of hearing student in the program."

"Math and history have been my favorite subjects in school because I enjoy learning about the past and I also like working with numbers. I did take electives in high school. I took science, health and an American Sign Language class. I started signing when I was two years old. In elementary school I did not have an Interpreter. In middle school, I started working with a signing skills coach. When I was preparing for this program, I said an interpreter was better in this environment. I also took culinary food service classes at WeMoCo, which is the name of my district's [CTE](#) program. We learned how to make different kinds of food to sell to other people. I learned how to protect the food by washing hands, wearing a hairnet, apron and close-toed shoes."

In high school I was involved in a lot of extracurricular activities. I was in the year book club, social club and book club. I also played unified basketball, took horseback riding lessons and tap and ballet dance lessons. I didn't wear my hearing aid for these activities. When I started I didn't have hearing aids. Later, I got a hearing aid, but I didn't want it to get broken."

"If I could change one thing, I wish there were more deaf and hard of hearing students attending my program with me."

"I do use amplification. I wear a hearing aid in my right ear. While in school, I also use FM/DM hearing assistive technology fit to my left ear. When I was little I had frequent ear infections. In second grade they discovered my right ear drum was perforated. I used headphones for FM access until in sixth grade."

"I am 19 years old. I live in a house, in Chili, New York, which is a suburb of Rochester. I live with Mom, Dad and one older brother named Sean. He is in the Army Reserve. I have two dogs. Grandma and Grandpa took in a dog named Baby. When Grandma died and Grandpa went to a nursing home, I got Baby. Now I also have a new puppy named Lola."

I got fitted with wireless FM so that the good hearing in my left ear wouldn't be blocked. In eighth grade, I had surgery to repair my right ear drum. My school district has supplied the FM (and more recently DM) technology for me through Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES. Just last year, I began wearing a hearing aid on my right ear. I recently used a [loop](#) system when I attended a college musical performance. The loop system helped, but it was kind of hard to use. Before the performance I had to go to the box office and reserve the loop. Then I had to take it to the sound tech at the theater to connect it. I do recommend a loop to other hard of hearing people. It's not just for deaf people."



Support/Technology:

"In school I use a sign language interpreter, and I get a small amount of TOD support. My interpreter is an important part of my program. She helps me understand what is going on."

"When I was in high school and again last year I had a sign skills coach. That person really helped me learn the skills I needed to be independent. She helped me learn more signs and supported my school subjects as well as communication. Now with my interpreter who supports me for communication purposes, I am responsible for carrying out all the requirements of my program. I am the one who makes the decisions of what is best for me."

"I use closed captions on the TV at home and it is used in school as well. I use computers and software such as [Cowriter](#) to help me write.

I rely on my smartphone for the calendar app, texting, email, Proloquo, and for setting alarms to remind me of appointments. I plan to apply to ACCESS-VR when I finish the BELL Program."

Hearing Loss/Amplification:

"I have a [conductive moderately-severe hearing loss](#) that then rises to the mild level and then falls back to the moderate level in high frequencies in my right ear. In my left ear I have a normal to mild hearing loss.

I actually got my first hearing aid last year when I was 18 years old. However, I have been using FM/DM technology in school since I was in second grade. My parents and I decided to get a hearing aid to help me understand the students around me in my college classes. My hearing loss doesn't bother me. The only thing I don't like is when someone teases or makes fun of me."

Communication:

"I rely on speechreading at home and school, although I do have an interpreter with me at school whom I can look at when I need clarification. When communicating with others, I first use my voice, but because of muscle weakness it is sometimes difficult to understand my voice. If someone doesn't understand me I will try sign language and my interpreter can voice for me. I also use Proloquo which is a text-to-voice app. I use [Proloquo](#) on my iPhone and my iPad. At first it was just on my iPad, I asked to have it on my iPhone because I carry my phone with me lots more than my iPad."

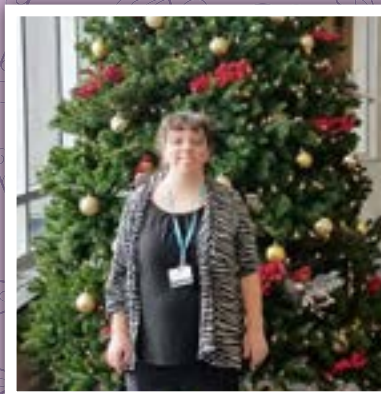
Strengths/Challenges:

It is a challenge when people don't understand my voice. There have been times when people have made fun of me. I remember a year ago an ex-friend of mine teased me and called me unkind names. I avoided this person and surrounded myself with friends who supported me. I use the strategies of signing, repeating, and Proloquo to help me when others don't understand what I've said. I learned that I can't control how other people behave but I can protect myself by avoiding hurtful situations. I have also learned that I make good choices. I am independent and like to take advantage of all the good things my program has to offer."

Advocacy:

"Yes, by having support services, I believe I had equal access to information. When I miss something that was said in a class, I ask the teacher to repeat. I also watch my interpreter for clarification."

"When I am with hearing friends in a group, it can be difficult to understand and follow the conversation. I will ask my friends to please talk one at a time or to slow down and that usually helps."



Family:

"Most of the time my parents make sure I understand them and that they understand me. They repeat or reword what they are saying if I don't understand them. At parties with my extended family I sometimes struggle to understand people because of the noise. I tend to walk around, watch people and hang out."

Background Information:

"I want people to know that I'm friendly, kind and helpful to other people."

"The quote that best sums me up is from Emma Watson, the famous actress. She said, 'I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm going to be who I really am. I'm going to figure out what that is.' I am also figuring out who I am and what I want to do."

"Taylor Swift is my role-model because I like her music. I like her romantic songs. She is a person who stands up for herself. I also like Shawn Mendes because of his talent and his belief in himself."

Goals:

"My short term goals are to finish the 2-year BELL Program, attend Project SEARCH and then go to college. Project SEARCH is a program that teaches job skills while I do an internship at a job site. There are two Project SEARCH programs in our area. One is housed at Strong Hospital and the other at Wegmans. Each of these could allow me to use the skills I learned in food services. As for long term goals, I have several interests. I would like to work in the teaching profession or with animals or food service."

Advice:

"While in school or anywhere in your life, you should try different options. You should take part in activities and groups. If you are interested in something and it doesn't exist, make it happen, like starting a book club. I am doing this in my program. I love reading and my book club ended. I decided to start my own book club."





Sarah Stanz

Sarah resides in East Aurora.

"East Aurora is a combination of suburban and rural, it has small shops in the village that line the main street, it feels safe and it is not commercialized. East Aurora is located about 20 minutes south of Buffalo."

Education:

Sarah is in 11th grade at East Aurora High School. "It has roughly 650 students from ninth to 12th grade. It has a modern-looking design. Teachers have high expectations and want the students to succeed. Students have a lot of independence and are treated like young adults. Many students participate in athletics at our school. "I have always been mainstreamed in a public school."

"My favorite class is my Small Animal Science CTE program because it is hands-on and I have a love for all animals. The CTE program is right across the street from our high school and we walk there to participate in all of the CTE programs offered. The building is called the Ormsby Center and it is a part of Erie-2 BOCES. Recently, we had some new animals come in to our program and I really bonded with the new baby bunny. We also have classroom dogs, named Remi and Holly and I am doing a project with Holly to have her gain a little weight. I weigh her regularly and chart her progress, along with giving her some extra food and treats. We wear scrubs and are hands-on with all of the animals in our lab area. The program has rabbits, rats, hedgehogs, chinchillas, mice, guinea pigs and dogs. Taking care of all of our animals teaches us responsibility and provides a lot of experience with animals before we head off to college. We care for each animal daily during the school week and learn

how to treat the animals if they have any medical issues, such as tumors, eye issues or illness."

Elective classes, Sarah enjoys at her HS are DDP (drawing, design and production) and graphic communications. "In DDP we learn about 3-D printing and architecture and in graphic communications we use wood burning to make designs as well as learn about screen printing."

Sarah's extracurricular activities include; soccer, lacrosse, stage crew, costume crew, FFA (Future Farmers of America), science club, adventure club and spirit club.

"In soccer and lacrosse, I enjoy playing defense and usually play mid-field. In stage crew we create sets and backgrounds and in costume crew we sketch and design costumes. The most recent plays and musicals that I have worked with are *Mary Poppins*, *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *Guys & Dolls*. In adventure club, we would go on all sorts of outings (like horseback riding) to work on trying new things and making new friends. In spirit club we put together the Pep Assembly and organized the daily events for spirit week."

"I wouldn't have changed anything about my school setting."

Sarah has achieved high grades, placing her on the honor roll.



Support/Technology:

"When I was in elementary and middle school I had TOD (teacher of the deaf) and speech services all week, but when I got to high school, I only had TOD service a few times a week. The service most important to me is TOD because it has helped me to do well in school. My teacher has worked on lipreading and auditory training with me since elementary school. She made sure I had those skills to be successful in the classroom. My TOD has always supported me in school and with my hearing loss. She checks in with me often to make sure I have everything I need and asks if I am having any problems in my classes."

"I use CC (Closed Captions) at home; FM at school (teachers wear the microphone and they also would place it by the speakers if we watched a video in class), and my iPhone helps me communicate with my friends through Snapchat, texting and Instagram."

Hearing Loss/Amplification:

"I have a bilateral profound sensorineural hearing loss. My hearing loss was detected when I was a toddler. My mom would call my name and I would not respond. She called my doctor and set up testing for my hearing. To my mom and dad's surprise, I was diagnosed with a bilateral profound hearing loss. I was implanted on my left side with a cochlear implant when I was two years old in 2003. I still only have one cochlear implant on my left side and probably would not consider getting an implant on my right side when I am older. I wear a Cochlear Nucleus 5 that pairs with a [Phonak](#) Roger FM system at school. I've always really needed my FM system at school to block out the classroom noise around me. It helps to hear everything my teachers are saying. I'm okay with my hearing loss and have accepted it as a part of who I am. At school I use my cochlear implant and an FM system; at home I take off my CI because I like to destress and lay in bed to watch shows with CC on."

Communication:

"I use both speaking and [lipreading](#) at school, home, and with my friends."

Strengths/Challenges:

"Noisy environments bother me and I tend to talk less in a large group. When I was playing soccer this year I did not hear the whistle to stop playing so that was a bit challenging for me during a game. I had to develop good advocacy skills and pair up with a friend who talks a lot and can help me if I get lost in class and during afterschool sports. I learned that I can make responsible, mature decisions and do what's best for myself."

Advocacy:

Sarah feels that for the most part she has had "equal access" while at school. "The only thing was that my sports coach would tend to talk quiet and I would miss directions. I would then need to [advocate for myself](#) and find out what I missed by asking a friend or my coach. After school I would not use my FM system, so I had to make sure that I found out what my coach said. It was just something I got used to and it worked for me. I can see my teachers during study hall or after school and I can rely on my good friends that know, sometimes I miss things that the teachers says. I would move myself to where I can see everyone's faces or move the person speaking to my left side (where my CI is)."

Family:

"My family has been very supportive and has made sure I had every opportunity to succeed. My mom and dad are willing to help me in any way that I need and I am comfortable going to them for advice on everything. I have no trouble communicating with my extended family."

Background Information:

"I would want people to know that I have built up my confidence over time because when I was younger I was very shy. Now I have no problem speaking up for myself and being confident in my decisions. I am also an avid traveler. In my life I have traveled to many different places in the US and around the world. I have traveled to Chicago, Arizona, Texas, Hawaii, Florida, California, Mexico, Italy, France, Amsterdam, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Iceland. Recently I have been touring colleges with my mom to prepare for graduation. I've been to Rochester University, St. Bonaventure, University of Buffalo and Hobart and Williams Smith College. My top favorites are Rochester University and Hobart and Williams Smith College."

"This is a saying that I like: 'Don't let your fears hold you back and let others make you feel any less because you have a hearing loss.' My mom is my role model because she always pushes me to be the best person I can be. My mom

is always there for me, is a good advocate for me, is a great listener and does not ever judge me. I find my mom's strength encouraging and I want to grow up to be like her. We have a great relationship and I love that!"

Goals:

"I want to go to college for either veterinary science, architecture or a job working with kids."

Advice:

"I would tell a student with a hearing loss to be honest with your friends and let them know what you need. Do not be afraid to advocate for yourself if you cannot hear or understand the conversation. Also, don't let your hearing loss prevent you from doing sports. Talk to your coach and let them know what your needs are so you can participate. Make sure you use all the resources you can while you're in school, like FM systems and CC."

"I would tell a family of a student with a hearing loss to have patience and give a lot of support. Treat all of your children the same and advocate for your child at home and at school. Make sure siblings have patience with having a brother or sister with a hearing loss."





Education:

"I am a junior at Paul V. Moore High School, which is in the Central Square School District. There are about 1,200 kids in my high school. I have always attended school in the CSQ District. The district has four elementary schools. There used to be five, but the one in Cleveland, where I went to school, closed down when the students were redistricted."

"My favorite subject is math because I am very good at it and I don't have a hard time understanding it."

Savanna's elective class was chorus and currently, cosmetology at CiTi BOCES CTE program. "This is my first year in cosmetology at CiTi BOCES. So far I have learned how to give a manicure, hair design, four techniques of hair cutting and how to section and wash the hair. Right now we are practicing for a small test to prepare us for the state board exam which will take place after my second year. Additional skills we are practicing include the proper way to blow dry hair, how to roller set and to do pin curls. I'm excited for my second year, because we are going to be learning new skills such as how to apply makeup and hair coloring, which are my main interests."

Savanna's extracurricular activities were baseball for the North Shore League and she plans on trying out for cheerleading in the future. "I made honor roll in middle school, but after I got into high school it got difficult. I'm still trying to get higher grades, so I can get on the honor roll again. One thing I would change about my educational setting is, I wish I could learn more ASL."

Support/Technology:

"My support system that I have in school include meeting with a TOD (Teacher of the Deaf) once a week and access to an FM system which is the Oticon Amigo. I wear one hearing device on my left ear that is connected to FM. It doesn't work like a regular hearing aid would. It only works if the FM

microphone
on and

I don't use the

classes. I mostly use it for

I use it in global and English. I leave it in class to make it more convenient.

At the beginning of each class, I give the FM microphone to my teacher. I am responsible for making sure it is charged at the end of class and properly connected. I would like to pursue getting personal hearing aids to wear outside of school. During TOD time we check my HAT (Hearing Assistance Technology) and clean it if necessary. We also work on my goal. This year it is to identify challenging listening situations and apply strategies to improve access in the classroom. We also discuss self-advocacy. I also have an educational audiologist who comes regularly to check my HAT, and teaches my staff strategies to compensate for my hearing loss in the classroom."

"When I am at home I usually use closed captions (CC) on the TV. When I am at school the teacher puts my FM microphone right next to the speaker in the SmartBoard. They also turn on the closed captions. CC supports me because I can read what is being said, and I don't miss anything. I can understand the dialog better."

is turned
connected.

FM in all of my

core classes. Currently,

Hearing Loss/Amplification:

"I have a bilateral mild-mixed, primarily sensorineural hearing loss. With this type of hearing loss, it's common to miss fragments of what is being said, especially in the presence of background noise. During the summer before my



Savanna lives in Cleveland, a small town with a population of about 730. “The closest town with a store like Walmart, Dunkin Donuts, etc. is about 14 miles away in Central Square. Cleveland does have a post office and a gas station which has a convenient store. Oneida Lake is right down the road from where I live. In the summer people enjoy fishing and boating on the lake and ice fishing in the winter.”



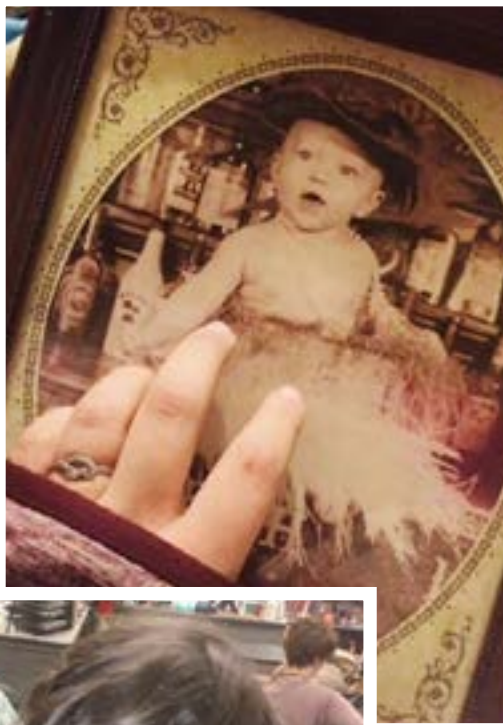
sophomore year, my mom noticed that I was having trouble hearing what she was saying. Also, I was always yelling when I was talking to her. My mom got me into the doctor and they referred me to an ear, nose and throat specialist. That was when I had my hearing tested. After that, we had a meeting at school to implement my services; TOD-1x/week, Audiology-10x/year, and my FM system. It has been about one year since I started getting help with my hearing from my school and my doctors. When I was first diagnosed with hearing loss, I was scared and nervous, but excited at the same time. When I started to use the FM, I got really nervous because I was scared that people would start picking on me. But, then I started to get used to wearing the FM and I was like “Why listen to what other people have to say, when this is benefiting you?” I use my FM system at school and sometimes at home.”

Communication:

“At school I use the [Oticon](#) Star ear level FM system and Amigo T30 teacher microphone. This HAT helps me hear my teachers better and sometimes I use it when I am home. I use it when I’m in my room and my mom is somewhere else in the house, so that I can hear when she calls me. I don’t really know how I would communicate with a deaf person, because I have never met anyone that I would need to use only sign language to communicate. I want to learn more ASL, so I can communicate with deaf people. My TOD has said we can start learning some sign language in our sessions.”

Strengths/Challenges:

“Challenges that I have faced while in school are that I miss information when teachers are talking because it’s hard to hear them when there is [background noise](#) or the teacher is far away from me. I have overcome these challenges by talking to the teacher and telling them I have to sit in the front or closer to where they teach. I also, use my FM system and lipreading skills. Experiencing these challenges, I have learned that I try to solve my own problems, by advocating for my hearing needs.”



Advocacy:

"When I have my FM system I think I have equal access, but when I don't have my FM system, I can't fully hear all that is said. If I miss what my teacher said, I would go to a student in my class and ask them to repeat what I missed. If they don't know, then I will ask the teacher to repeat what they have said. If I was with my peers and I couldn't hear them, I would normally ask them to speak louder."

Family:

"My mom is supportive about my hearing loss, but sometimes she doesn't remember that I have it. Occasionally, I can't hear her when she calls me. Also, I am always yelling when I think I'm just talking. It's hard for me to monitor my volume. Most of the time I feel like I can communicate with my immediate family. My sister, brother, mom and myself all live together. If I don't hear them they come to me and repeat it."

Background Information:

"Most of the time, I am a very happy and funny person. Sometimes I have to face my depression and anxiety, but I find a way to help myself out by going to a friend, a family member or sometimes counseling. I used to play baseball for a league. I love Harley Quinn from the movie *Suicide Squad*, because of her personality. I also love the TV show called *Vampire Diaries* and many others. I don't really spend a lot of time with my family, but I love to spend time with my friends."

The quote that means the most to Savanna is; "Don't change so people will like you, be yourself and you will attract people who like the real you" by Gaynor Parke.

"The person that inspires me is Ruby Rose. She is an actress on a TV show called *Orange is the New Black* and she plays on the new movie *Pitch Perfect 3*. She inspires me to be myself and not to act different just to fit in. She's a very brave and inspiring person."

Goals:

"My goal after high school is to attend an adult class for cosmetology at CiTi BOCES and get a four-year-degree."

Advice:

"My advice that I would give to someone with hearing loss is to always be yourself and don't worry that you have a hearing loss, because it is who you are. My friends accept my hearing loss and your friends should too. If they don't then I don't think that they deserve to be friends with someone amazing like you! I would suggest to families that you should always support your children. Then they will have more confidence to speak up about hearing challenges. They won't be afraid to tell others about it."



Andrea O'Bryan

**"I live in a house
in the city of Oswego
with my fiancé and
our children."**

Education:

"I am not in school, but I graduated with an associates degree in electrical technologies from Cayuga Community College in 2003. I am currently employed with Citi BOCES."

"My high school was the NYSSD (New York State School for the Deaf). I graduated from there in 1999, the last class of the millennium. It is a deaf school. I didn't grow up in this school. I was in public school while I was growing up. I was in a special class with a small number of students. Four of us had our own room; we blended in with hearing students during our specials (art, gym and music). As we got older, we blended in more with math, social studies, science, etc. We had an interpreter for our blended classes. We always had a TOD (Teacher of the Deaf). During summer time, I went to summer school at a little school in the Hughes building in Fulton, and also Camp Hollis, in Oswego."

"My favorite subject has always been math because I love playing with numbers and tricks. During my time in high school, I picked up more math courses, so I could complete my Regents high school diploma requirements."

"During my time in NYSSD, I joined a lot of extracurricular activities! Basketball was my favorite of all the sports I played. I participated in soccer, basketball, track (a short period of time), softball, Girl Scouts, hand bell club, DARE, work study program (off campus working as a volunteer), student newsletter – president/editor, youth education summit, drama club, math bowl, optimist club, Gallaudet-college bound, Science fair, student council – treasurer, senior class vice president, close-up (program where you travel to Washington, D.C. and explore politics) and volunteered teaching sign language and babysitting. I joined and was involved in a lot of activities while I was at NYSSD, compared to being at public school."

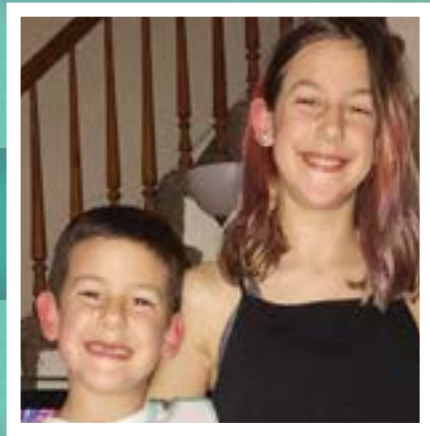
"If I could change one thing about my educational setting, it would be having public school education at deaf school setting. It was challenging education academically at public school and I loved social skills at the deaf school."

Support/Technology:

"While I was in school, I used interpreters in elementary school and a TOD as well. When I went to NYSSD, all of the teachers signed and so there was no need for interpreters. When I went to community college, I used interpreters and notetakers. If my hearing aid battery died, I always replaced it with another one. I always have batteries in stock and never run out of them. STOCK THEM UP!"

Hearing Loss/Communication:

"My hearing loss was found at the age of 8 months. My mom told me that she called me, and I didn't respond. I was in the living room playing and my mom got a couple of pans and banged them so loud. I didn't respond, so she moved closer to me. I still didn't respond. I was labeled with a severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss. My mom and dad both started learning sign language and then started teaching me. I had therapy after therapy for my speech impairments and to learn sign language. First, I learned SEE (Sign Exact English) then later mixed it up with homemade signs. As I got older, I picked up some ASL (American Sign Language). Now, I sign mixtures of language to communicate with anybody who needs it. If you sign SEE, I will sign SEE. If you sign ASL, I will sign ASL. If you speak and sign, I will speak and sign, and so on. I lipread and use body language to communicate with people who don't know any signs. Body language and gestures are very generic, and everyone knows them."



Technology:

"The technologies today are WOW! While I was growing up, we used [TTY/TTD](#) (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) to communicate through phones.

Then two-way pager, sidekick, text phone then and now iPhone or touchscreen phones. We use Closed Captions all the time on television and also on our phones. We also use either our iPhones or Videophones to communicate. I have the N-Touch 2 VP ([Videophone](#)). It uses high speed internet to communicate with another videophone users. We call phone numbers and use relay services still through the VP. The system is awesome because we do not have a lot of delays in communication due to saying GA (Go Ahead) or SK (Stop Keying)."

Strengths/Challenges:

"The challenges I had while growing up made me who I am today. If I didn't understand that person, I would adjust to make myself understandable. The challenges made me realize that I adjust very well to any kind of situation. If I think I missed information, I ask the five Ws (Who, What, Where, When and Why). I do ask missed information to be repeated to me. If I still don't understand using body language or gestures, then I use writing or texting."

Family:

"My family is very supportive because I also have two deaf brothers in my family. We all sign and communicate with our voices as well as our hands. I have a large family of six brothers and no sisters. Yes, I am very proud of being a single girl in the family and no, I did not get everything I wanted!"

"As of today, I am engaged to my fiancé, Brian Vooris and have two beautiful children, Brianna and Blake Vooris. I am also a step mom to two beautiful older

children, Ashley and Armand (AJ). I am also a grandma! Ashley has two children of her own, Kaden and Emma. All of the children are hearing. They use sign and their voices to communicate with Brian and myself."

Background Information:

"Outgoing, down to Earth, flexible and respectful are the words I would use to describe myself!"

"My favorite quote is "BE YOURSELF". Don't change who you are for the people around you... If they don't like you for you, then you don't have to like them. Don't please other people to make yourself happy. Walk with your head up from the ground! You don't know what you are missing!"

"I had several role models while I was growing up. Everyone's role model changes over the years and the last role model I have is ME. I use my mind, my knowledge and my experiences to live."

"I went to Gallaudet University and Cayuga Community College. I graduated from CCC (Cayuga Community College) in 2003 and went back for more. When I had my first child I decided to stay home and be a full-time mom. My advice to high school students is, "Don't give up"! You set your mind to achieve a goal, something you want to be and you shall succeed regardless of the obstacles. Life is full of obstacles! You shall break through! You can be SUCCESSFUL!"

"My current job is a match made in heaven! My high school goal was to be a teacher when I grew up. I am a teacher assistant at CiTi BOCES where I attended growing up at the elementary level! Yes, I am proud to be working for where I started when I was a child. There are lot of obstacles at work, but I leap through and make it work for me. That is what obstacles are there for, to see how strong you are and how far you are willing to go."



HearingLikeMe.com

HearingLikeMe.com is an online community for people whose lives are affected by hearing loss. We bring together people from all around the world to share stories that inspire hope in almost any hearing loss situation.

We created this site with a simple idea: Sharing our hearing loss stories with each other is a powerful thing. Together, we can learn to live with hearing loss more successfully and advocate in a more meaningful way.

<https://www.hearinglikeme.com/>

Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss

Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss began in 2011 and was created by Karen Anderson, PhD, with the goal of creating an 'umbrella website' for teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing. Karen had many practical materials that were frequently requested and had developed a personal website of these tools. Supporting Success built on the concept of making practical information readily available, resulting in the current resource-packed website.

<https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com>

ACCES-VR (Vocational Rehabilitation)

Assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living

<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr>

Livescribe 3 Smartpen

Because the Livescribe 3 Smartpen captures everything you write and hear, you can focus on engaging with your peers and instructors during lectures rather than frantically scribbling notes.

<https://store.livescribe.com>

The Clerc Center

The Clerc Center is thrilled to announce that the K-12 ASL Content Standards are ready. On the website, you will see Anchor Standards, grade-level standards, the glossary, and more.

<http://www.gallaudet.edu/k-12-asl-content-standards>

Described and Captioned Media Program

We're here to educate students with sensory disabilities, along with their parents and teachers. Our major network-produced, educational content is carefully customized to serve the needs of K-12 students, as well as adult students studying to meet the needs of blind and deaf students.

<https://dcmp.org>

CROS system

The CROS system is designed for single sided deafness. It wirelessly sends the sound from the side where you cannot hear to your better hearing ear.

<https://www.phonak.com/us/en/hearing-aids/phonak-cros-ii.html>

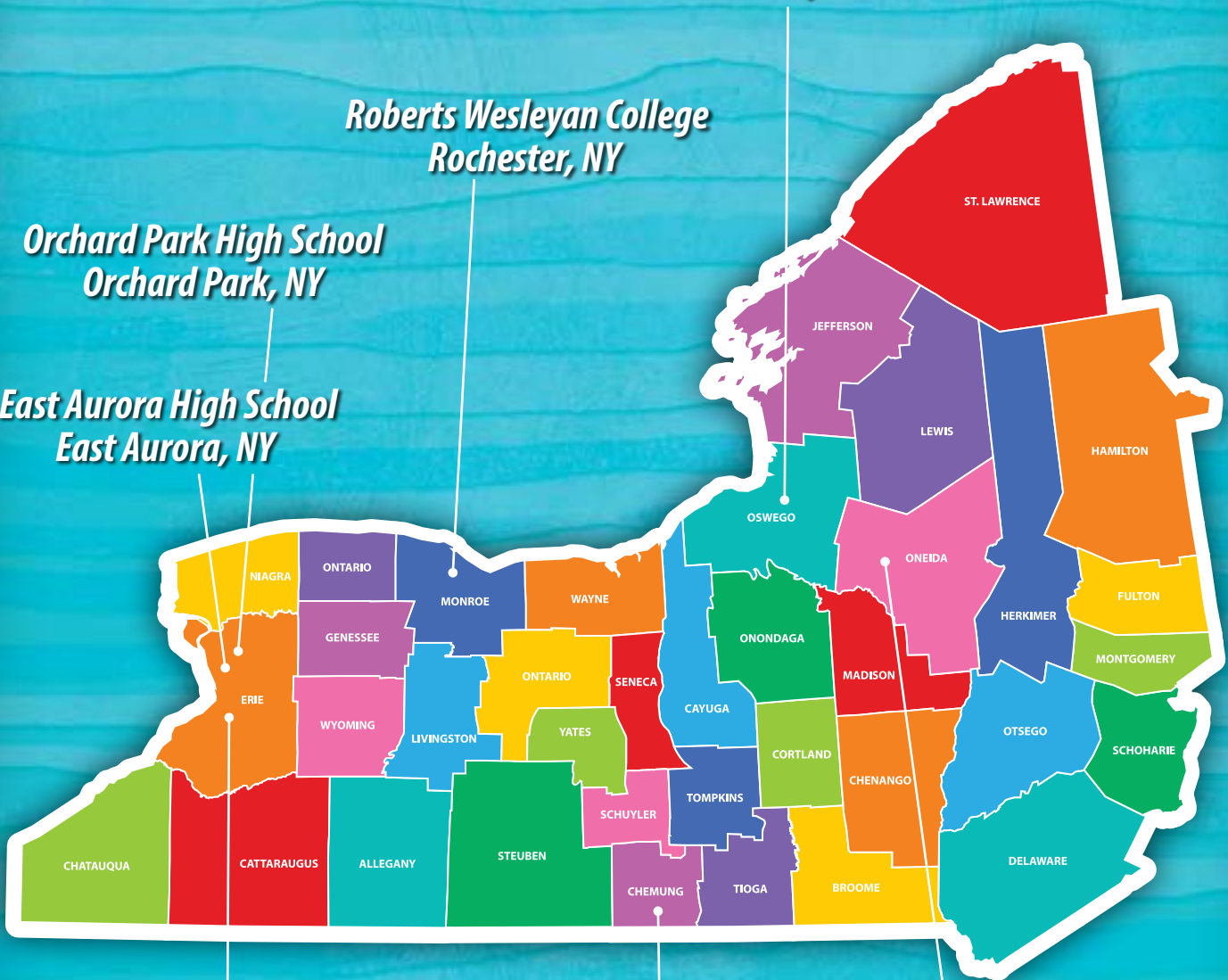
TOD/HH Staying Connected

***Central Square High School
Central Square, NY***

***Roberts Wesleyan College
Rochester, NY***

***Orchard Park High School
Orchard Park, NY***

***East Aurora High School
East Aurora, NY***



***Springville-Griffith High School
Springville, NY***

***Elmira High School
Elmira, NY***

***New York State School
For The Deaf
Rome, NY***