

*Central
New York*
DEAF/HH TEENS

5th EDITION
2019

"Inspiration flows from springs of learning"

C. Hall

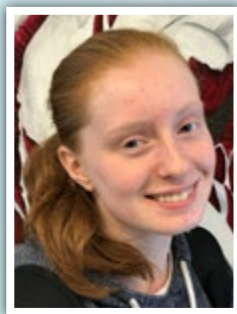
Dear Readers,

We are proud to present the 5th 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, edition photos, and crafting 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 teen from across New York State, as well as to expand ones knowledge regarding deafness. This magazine's primary focus is to support Deaf/HH students, their families and educators.

Best wishes,

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Central New York Deaf/HH Teens magazine online at:**

www.CiTiboces.org/ExceptionalEducation

Abigail ANZALONE



Unadilla is a small town in the country. It has mountains near it. It has a gas station and a few stores. People in Unadilla speak English and do not use American Sign Language (ASL). I live in a big house with four other family members.

19 years old (soon 20)

12th grade (senior)

EDUCATION:

I currently attend New York State School for the Deaf (NYSSD). However, my education began in public school in Unadilla, where all my classmates were hearing and used spoken English. I had an interpreter in school all day. I remember it being difficult because students would speak to me and I wouldn't understand them. I moved to a school for the deaf because students were all deaf!

NYSSD has a lot of space in the buildings. It has about 50-60 students and the students are deaf. Students and staff at NYSSD use ASL and English. NYSSD has a dormitory for students who live far away. My favorite class is advanced graphic arts because I learn how to make edits on pictures, make pictures clearer and other techniques related to pictures. The electives I have taken in school include ASL, Latin, art, music and workshop. I also participate in French Club as well as basketball, soccer, Academic Bowl, Close Up, handbells, softball and cheerleading. If the

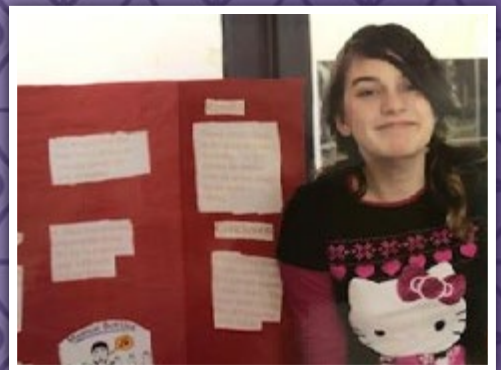
school has a program or sport, I always join! If there were one thing I could change, I wish NYSSD had a volleyball team!

For equipment I use a hearing aid on the right side, and a cochlear implant on the left side. I use a sound field system in school to help me hear people who are talking.

Some awards I have received are Academic Bowl Award (2018), Excellence in Music Award (2017), Academic Perseverance Award in English (2017), Most Improved Student Awards (2017), Academic Perseverance Award in Reading (2016), Academic Perseverance Award in History (2016), Merit Roll Awards (2016) and Excellent Attendance Award (2016).

HEARING LOSS:

I have a reverse slope severe to mild sensorineural hearing loss in my right ear, and a profound loss in my left ear. My hearing loss was suspected and then confirmed when I was 2 years old. I think the earliest I had hearing aids was when I was 4 years old. I had cochlear implant surgery when I was 12 years old. I have a



hearing aid on my right side, and a cochlear implant on my left side. I feel a connection with other deaf people because I like to use sign language with them.

COMMUNICATION:

At school, I use ASL. Sometimes I use signed English and talk. I don't use an interpreter because NYSSD has staff and students who know and use ASL. At home, I use voiced English and a little ASL. I use writing on paper with hearing friends. I use ASL with deaf friends.

STRENGTHS/CHALLENGES:

I have challenges. When I was younger and in public school, it was hard to communicate with my hearing friends and I used an interpreter. In the future, I want to become a photographer. It will be a challenge to communicate, but I will write with people. I have learned that I am a strong girl.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

I have had teachers of the deaf, speech-language therapy and an audiologist at school. Sometimes an interpreter is at school for presentations. Teachers of the deaf are important to me because they know how to teach me because I am deaf. I use my iPhone and laptop to use Facetime so I can communicate with friends.

I also use the Internet to show what restaurants I want to go to.

ADVOCACY:

I feel I have had equal access because we have the same requirements at NYSSD as public schools. We take the same state Regents exams. In school and in my future at college, I would/will raise my hand and ask the teacher to repeat it if I was/am unable to understand. I would also ask for an

interpreter if I needed it. If my batteries on my hearing aid die, I find the speech therapist or audiologist and ask for a new one! If I am in a social situation and cannot hear very well, I can use texting and/or notes to help me communicate.

GOALS:

After high school, I want to go to RIT and I want to become a photographer. I enjoy editing pictures.

FAMILY:

My dad uses ASL sometimes. My dad is encouraging me to go to college, find a job, be independent and be responsible for myself. Communicating with my immediate family and my extended family is hard. I could teach them sign language to help the situation. I can use my voice, but I don't understand everything people say when they talk. I do try to match whatever people use when communicating.

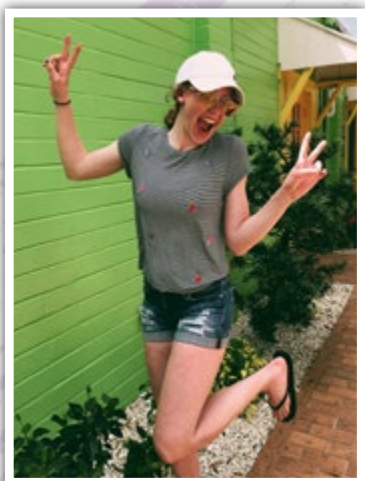
MORE INFORMATION:

My favorite colors are light blue and dark red. I love to play basketball. A quote that inspires me is, "Don't stop believing." My role model is Jenny Roberts. Jenny Roberts was a dorm staff before she became a teacher assistant, which she is now. She is my role model because when I was younger and I didn't know sign language, she taught me ASL. She is always respectful and nice to me.

ADVICE:

The advice I can give to students and families is to learn ASL. If they have a child who is deaf, I would tell them to have the child go to a deaf school! At a deaf school they would be with friends who are like them.

Ashley FINCH



I live in Oswego, NY near Lake Ontario.

I am 16 years old.

I am in 11th grade.

Oswego High School is the name of my high school. There are about 1,200 students in the school, and I am in a public/mainstream setting. I went to Trinity Catholic for elementary school then switched to public school for middle school.

My favorite subject in school is gym because it lets me be active. I don't enjoy sitting in a classroom. I have taken photography as an elective and I will be taking a class comparing old Disney to new Disney in the spring. I am also an honor roll student. If I could change one thing about my education, it would be learning American Sign Language.

I love sports! I am a goalie for two different hockey teams, I run cross-country and I play mid-field in lacrosse. I have received the MVP Award, and Shutout Award for hockey.

I have bilateral cochlear implants. I wear them at all times unless I am sleeping, showering or going in the pool.

I am profoundly deaf. I was diagnosed during the newborn hearing screening. I was 11 months old when I got my first cochlear implant and 5 years old when I got my second one. I like having the option of taking my implants off. I do not like

that people judge me by my appearance when they can see my implants. My communication method is 100 percent oral. I am really good at speech reading.

One challenge I have faced in school is bullying. I tried ignoring it but had to ask my teachers for support. As a kid, I definitely struggled to fit in, but now I can just be myself. I have learned that it doesn't matter what people think, eventually you will find your true friends.

I have had a TOD since early intervention and still have one in high school. I use closed captioning, computers, smartphone, FM system and my implants for technology. They support me in all different ways throughout the day.

I do think I have equal access at school because I advocate for my hearing needs by asking questions, going for extra help and using my HAT system. If my battery dies, I have extras with me. When I am in a social situation, I usually ask a close repeat what was said if I did not hear or understand.



My goals for after high school are to go to college at either Green Mountain or Paul Smith's College. I want to major in natural science and play hockey.

My family has supported me by getting my cochlear implants and participating in therapy sessions from when I was little. We go to New York City to get mapping done every year. I can communicate in most situations. When there is a lot of different conversations going on at once, it is most difficult to communicate.

I want people to know that there are advantages

and disadvantages to having a hearing loss. The disadvantages are you can be bullied, you miss things people say and other people can be rude because they don't understand. The advantages are that you get quiet time, extra support in school and cool technology to support you.

The quote that best describes me is "Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." The advice I can give to students with hearing loss is don't let your disability get in the way of your personality!



Hai Nay

HTOO



Syracuse, NY 13203

I live on the northside of Syracuse. This is a part of the city where many families from other countries come to live. I live in the Syracuse City School District.

I grew up in a refugee camp between Myanmar and Thailand. I did go to school for a short period of time.

It took a long time for me to get used to the food, school and how people lived in the United States. I feel I am comfortable here now.

I am 21 years old and a senior in high school.

EDUCATION

I go to Solvay High School (public school). It is a small school in Solvay and near where I live. I go to the OCM BOCES Deaf and Hard of Hearing program, which is at Solvay High School. I have been here since 2012.

My favorite subject is economics and I am learning about jobs right now. I like this because I hope I can get a job when I graduate. I enjoy taking food and baking classes because I like to cook. I can't think of anything about how I would change my schooling.

I have been on the bowling team for a few years. I am good at bowling. Some of the other deaf and hard of hearing students

were on the team.

HEARING LOSS

I have a bilateral profound hearing loss. I do not know why I am deaf, if I was born deaf or I became sick. My feelings about being deaf are I am glad I know sign language now. I use sign language to communicate. I do not use hearing aids. I tried them when I came to America but I didn't like them and I didn't find that they helped me. I have a friend who is deaf. He lives near me. We spend time together going to the park or shopping.

COMMUNICATION

I use sign language all the time. I need to sign because I do not use my voice. While I am at school, I use sign language to communicate with my friends. I need an interpreter for the School to Work program that I attend in the afternoons. At home, my family speaks a little English but mostly Karin (native language). They do not know sign language so I use gestures to communicate the best I can. I can write notes to them sometimes.

STRENGTHS/CHALLENGES

It was a challenge for me when I moved to America. I did not know the language or how to communicate, and I did not like the food. School was very different also. I remember taking about five different planes to arrive in Syracuse. I did not know where I was going or why. It was very difficult. Now I feel strong that I can do many things on my own.

I have learned to use sign language since I came to the United States. I did not know sign language when I lived in Myanmar/Thailand and I was happy to be able to learn sign language and communicate with my teachers and friends. It is difficult and a challenge to communicate with my family because they do not know sign language.

I am working on figuring out how to find interpreting services outside of school.

I am learning to know when I need to use agencies and tell my doctor or other community places that I need an interpreter. I have practiced this as part of my goals in school. For example, I recently went to the dentist and I got help setting up an interpreter for the appointment. I was given a prescription. I decided I should have a card in my wallet with written information for the pharmacist. They will need me to give information when I go to pick up my prescription. This helps me communicate. I have a card that says, "I am deaf and I need an interpreter." It also lists community agencies that will give interpreting services.



It can be frustrating at times. I am learning more and more how to use community places to get an interpreter when I need to go to a doctor's appointment or other appointments in the community.

A new challenge for me is learning to use public transportation to get around. I have people in school who help me. I can be more independent if I can do this better.

SUPPORT SERVICES

I have an interpreter for all my classes or a teacher of the deaf. I am beginning to get help with different community agencies in Syracuse that help me with living on my own after high school.

I also rely on my iPhone to text people and communicate when I am not in school and sometimes I use FaceTime. I can share information through my iPhone. If I use a community agency, I can get text messages.

ADVOCACY

I feel I have very good access to information at school. I always have an interpreter available and in my classes.

GOALS

My goals for after high school include getting my own apartment or renting one with another person. I also

really want to find a job in my community, but I am not sure exactly what I want to do.

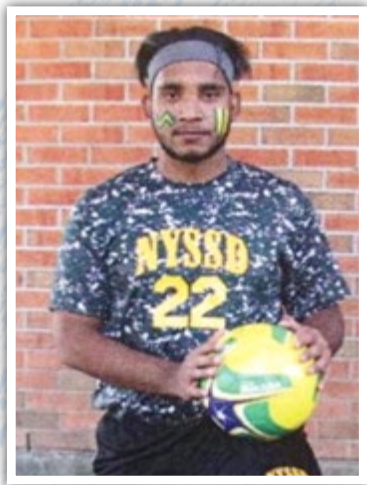
FAMILY

I live with my parents and brothers. They do not know sign language. They are learning English right now. It can be frustrating when I need information from my family or I want to share information. My writing skills are getting better but it is difficult to only communicate through writing. It would be great if my family could learn to sign.

ADVICE

Being able to communicate with others is so important. This means signing. It helps me learn and have friends. I would say that more people need to learn sign language. If more people know sign language it would help me have better access to information and to communicate and share information with everyone.

Ka DIL



20 years old

12th grade

EDUCATION

I attend New York State School for the Deaf. It has about 60 girls and boys. NYSSD also has a dormitory where some students stay during the week. After school on Friday, the students go home. At school, some people use American Sign Language (ASL) and some people use spoken English.

My favorite subject is social studies because I like to learn history. Electives I have taken include music, Madison-Oneida BOCES' Foundations to CTE program and work study. I have participated in Academic Bowl and I enjoy playing soccer, basketball and softball.

I have received several awards: Merit Award (2016), Academic Perseverance Award English (2016), Model Student Award (2017), Academic Perseverance Award in Math (2017) and the Daughters of the American Revolution Award (2018).

If I could change one thing about my education, it would be to have more students at NYSSD.

HEARING LOSS:

My hearing loss is a severe-profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. I became sick with meningitis when I was 3 years

old, and they suspect I lost my hearing at that time. I have hearing aids, but I don't use them.

I was first amplified at a later age around 11 years old. The first time I wore hearing aids was after my family moved to the United States from Thailand. I remember being surprised at the sound, but not really liking the sounds. I accept my hearing loss and now I am happy I am deaf. I do wish I could hear and speak, but I accept that I can't.

COMMUNICATION:

I use ASL and write English. My family speaks a different language: Burmese. I use sign language all the time with teachers and staff at New York State School for the Deaf. To communicate with hearing friends or in the community, I use notes or text on phone.

STRENGTHS/CHALLENGES:

I have had challenges because I am deaf. People think I can't do things because I am deaf. I tried to get my driver's license and I had a big challenge. A staff person from my school, Sandor,

When he took me, the woman at the DMV said a person who is deaf can't take the road test without a hearing aid. She said I had to wear a hearing aid! Sandor explained to the woman I did not need to wear a hearing aid, some people who are deaf wear them and some do not. She was being stubborn and called her boss. I had to reschedule my driver's test, and when I did it and took the road test, I passed. I have my driver's license now. I learned that I am brave, and I will never give up.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

My teachers at school use sign language. I went to BOCES for one year and I had an interpreter with me there. She also tutored me about the things I learned at BOCES. I have teachers of the deaf in school and I go to speech-language therapy to help me with vocabulary and writing. There is an audiologist at school all the time too. I also have a bed alarm that will vibrate and shake the bed, which wakes me up. I use my Smartphone to help me communicate at restaurants. I will type things I want in the notes section and show it to the waitress or waiter. I use closed captioning whenever I watch television. I use a video phone to call people. Hearing and deaf should both have equal access in school. I feel equal.

ADVOCACY:

I went to Madison-Oneida BOCES for one year and most of the students in class didn't know how to act with me in the class. I had to show them to gesture, write and use pictures or whatever to communicate with me. I have to be the one that asks for things I need. If I can't hear in a social situation, I use writing on a card with hearing people. After high school, my goal is to work for FedEx or get my Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

FAMILY:

I feel like my family supports me. It is hard to chat with them, but I try to use gestures and write English. My brother and sister can read English, so they help. I am from Thailand. My family moved to the United States of America to be safe. We left a scary place to come to a safe place. My old country had a lot of poor people and a lot of people died. My family is a refugee family. I am very proud to now be a United States citizen. I worked hard for two years studying for my test to be a citizen. Now I can vote and stay in the United States of America forever.

ROLE MODEL:

My role model is Vicky Stockton. Vicky is a teacher at NYSSD. She is my role model because she helped me study for the citizenship exam. She helped me through the entire process of becoming a United States citizen. I look up to Vicky because of that.

ADVICE:

I think that parents of students with a hearing loss should learn sign language. The whole family should know ASL. If a baby is deaf, they should go to find a deaf school.



Mackenzie RICE



I live in Martville, which is a small town in upstate New York. I live on a farm. We have horses, three cats and two dogs.

I am 18 years old and I am in 12th grade.

EDUCATION:

I go to Hannibal High School, which is a small school with almost 400 students. It's about 30 minutes west of Oswego. Hannibal is a public school district, and I have always been mainstreamed.

My favorite subject is art. I love taking portfolio prep because it is helping me to get ready for college. I also like my ceramics class because I like to sculpt clay. The coolest thing that I have made in that class is masks. This year most of my classes revolve around art. I am taking many art classes because they interest me and the classes will help me get into college. So far, I have taken studio and art, drawing and painting, ceramics one and two, portfolio prep, and digital photography.

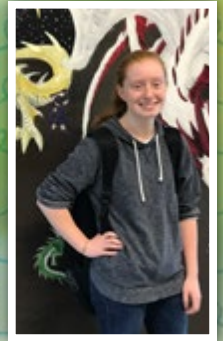
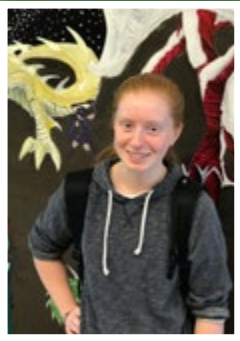
Since I have been in high school, I have started to take art more seriously and because of that I have gotten some awards for my art. One of the awards I have received is the Virginia Nevich Memorial Award, from the 2018 Oswego County Student Art Show and Competition. I also was in the Oswego County Academic Youth competition, where I had to sculpt the Statue of David; our team got third place in this competition. Another

award that I received was the Art Award for the first-ever districtwide art show for Hannibal Central School district. I take art very seriously and it has really paid off.

In elementary school, I had no support services up until third grade. In third grade I found out that I had a hearing loss when I was playing at the pool one day and suddenly realized that I couldn't hear. My mom immediately took me for testing and we realized I had a hearing loss since birth.

In middle school, my mom fought for me to get the help I needed, such as getting a resource teacher and a teacher of the deaf.

One thing that has occupied a great deal of my time during my high school years is the afterschool job that I had. This job took up a great deal of my time. This after school job included cleaning stalls and taking care of horses. Another thing that occupies a great deal of my afterschool hours is working on my family farm with the horses.



The only time that I use hearing aid devices is at school; I use the FM system. I don't use anything at home because my hearing isn't that bad to where I would need one for home.

HEARING LOSS:

I have a unilateral hearing loss in my left ear. It is in the moderate hearing loss level. My hearing loss was somewhat of a struggle for me; I have always struggled in school and having a hearing loss didn't help my situation. When I was little I thought having a FM system was the coolest thing in the world to me because I could hear my teacher with the door closed, but that changed for me when I got to middle school. I didn't want to wear it anymore because to made me feel different and I didn't like that. I wanted to be like everyone else, and I didn't want to worry about the responsibilities that came with wearing an FM system. I was the only one in that school who had a hearing loss that I knew of, but now that I'm in high school, I have found other people who had a hearing loss as well. I also know now that it was good for me to have the FM system; it has helped me through the years to hear.

COMMUNICATION:

Communication is not hard for me; my only problem is that I wish people wouldn't get so upset when they must repeat things for me. I don't have many friends, but the ones I have are aware of my hearing loss. The one thing that is great is that they don't judge me for having a hearing loss.

STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES:

One of my strengths is horse riding. Outside of school, the only sport I like to do is horse riding. When I am taking riding lessons I need to make sure that my instructor knows about my hearing loss. Hearing is one thing that I worry about if I go to any horse shows. It worries me because I need to be able to hear the judges when they want us to do something, such as change directions. One way I could overcome this obstacle, both in lessons and at shows, would be to bring the FM system with me. The one thing that I learned about myself is that even though I have a hearing loss, I don't let that stop me from the things that I love doing.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Some of the support services that I have are a resource teacher and a teacher of the deaf/HH. The resource teacher helps me in anything that I need, and a teacher of the deaf/HH helps with homework or learning about my hearing loss. At home, I don't really have any support services, not even hearing aids. I do remember a time that my brother came in my room and told me I can change the accessibility to different settings on my phone, so when I watch something or listen to music I can hear the music like most people can. He also showed me an app that could add more sound to my left ear, which helps me hear better.

ADVOCACY

In my school I feel I have equal access or possibly more access than other students because of my I.E.P. I have access to a resource teacher and a teacher of the deaf/HH. One of the things I do to advocate for myself is I sit in the front row, so I can hear better, see better, read lips better and pay more attention in class. I also make sure that my teachers wear the FM system. If I ever miss something that a teacher or a student has said, I ask other students to get the information I need.

When I am with my friends, they talk a little louder, so I can hear them better. In my community, I normally go with someone. If I don't hear what someone has to say, I ask them to repeat what was said. Also, when I got my job, I let my employer know I had a hearing loss in case any situations arose that would require more attention to hearing.

GOALS:

One of my goals when I graduate high school is that I want to go to college. I would like to go to SUNY Oswego or Cayuga Community College and major in studio in art. In the future, I want to become a professional artist and sell my artwork all over the world. I really enjoy drawing in black and white medium. Currently, I am working on several different projects and my art teacher has entered some of my pieces into a Scholastic Art Show. I really enjoy drawing pictures of horses as well as the band members of Beyond the Scene (BTS). These two mediums are what I am known for around the school.

FAMILY:

I am the youngest in my family. I have an older brother and my parents have always supported my hearing loss and helped me to get what I need. When I am home, everyone talks louder so we can all hear one another, which makes it easier for me to hear at home. Since my hearing loss isn't that significant, I can communicate well with all my family members even without my hearing aid.

QUOTE:

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart." - Helen Keller

ADVICE:

Accepting your hearing loss might take some time. I was rebellious during my middle school years and didn't want to be different from the other kids. However, I finally realized that I would rather be different than like all those other kids. At some point, you are going to get through it and you will find people to connect with and be able to be yourself.

Puspakal BUDATHOKI



I am 21 years old and a senior in high school.

I was born in Nepal and came to the United States in 2014. Today, I live on the northside of the city of Syracuse, near a city park where I play with friends. Many of my friends once lived in Nepal, too.

In Nepal, I went to a school with other deaf boys, and I learned sign language. It is different from American Sign Language. When I came to America, I still was using the sign language from Nepal. I now know ASL well.

I also love to play soccer and volleyball. I have my driver's license, so I can go places by myself. I drive to the store and to visit friends. I like to drive.

I live with my parents and my two sisters and I also have family in Pennsylvania. We go and visit for holidays. Sometimes I miss some school because the holidays we celebrate are different from our school holidays. I enjoy being with my family here and in Pennsylvania.

HEARING LOSS:

I have a severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss in both ears. I was born deaf. I did not use hearing aids when I lived in

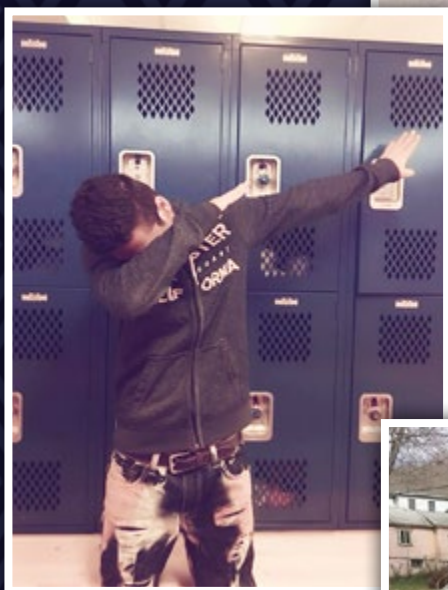
Nepal. When I came to the United States, the audiologist had me try hearing aids and I did not like them. I thought it was just a lot of noise. I am fine with using sign language.

COMMUNICATION:

My parents speak Nepali and have learned English. I can understand Nepali. I can speak Nepali and can write. I communicate with my family this way. I lip read the best I can. I feel I can communicate with them in many ways. We use a lot of gesturing, too.

When I am in school, I use sign language all the time when I am communicating with my teachers and friends. I use a sign language interpreter in my mainstream classes.

I have an iPhone and communicate using text messages. I also use FaceTime. I use my iPhone to listen to rap music and I depend a lot on my phone for communication.



EDUCATION:

When I lived in Nepal, I began school with hearing students. This was when I was 4 years old. My parents decided to send me to school with other boys who also were deaf and hard of hearing. At this school, I learned Nepali sign language.

Now I go to the OCM BOCES Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Solvay High School. Solvay is a small town outside of the city, about 15 minutes from my house. It is a small public school with about 500-600 students and the school colors are blue and orange. I like this school and I have gone to some of the school dances with friends. I will miss going to school, as I will graduate in June.

I take academic classes with a teacher of the deaf. I also go to mainstreams class for physical education and cooking. I like my economics class the best and I am learning about jobs and earning money. I attend a School to Work program, too. I do this in the afternoon. I have an interpreter with me and I work with another deaf student. I like doing this. I am learning to work with other people (co-workers, the manager). I work with a speech and language therapist to help improve my communication skills, to learn more words and to read and write better. My counselor helps with me with finding out what I will do when I graduate.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

I think my strengths are that I am a good driver and I am good at playing soccer and volleyball.

WHAT I LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

I like to play volleyball and soccer at the park near my house. I enjoy being outside.

I like to play soccer games on my phone and I really like to watch professional soccer too. My favorite team is Real Madrid. I like to read about the players.

Another activity I like is cooking. Some of the food I cook is food that we ate while in Nepal. I like to eat chicken, pasta, fish and I like hot sauces on my food. I had to learn how to cook on a stove because in Nepal, we cooked over an open fire.

I like to drive my car and travel to different places. I go to Destiny USA sometimes to shop and hang out. One of my friends from school lives near me. We go places together.

GOAL:

My goal is to get a job after leaving high school. I am interested in detailing cars (making them look clean and new). I also would like to get my own house someday.

"I like to play volleyball and soccer at the park near my house. I enjoy being outside."



Randy WALSHVELO



I live in a suburban area south of Rochester. I'm 43 years young and I am working on my master's degree.

EDUCATION:

I grew up mainstreamed at Central Square School District, starting with Brewerton Elementary School, then Millard Hawk Jr. High and eventually Paul V. Moore High School. There are hundreds of students in general at school. However, at beginning, there was approximately six of Deaf/HoH students, but the number dwindled down to only one deaf student, me, in my class of 1994. Although, there was another Deaf/HoH student who was a couple grades behind me.

I always find myself enjoying social studies and science the most.

I took few elective classes such as further study of core subject such as physics, participation in politics, and areas of interest like woodshop.

I participated in sports throughout the year, playing on football, wrestling and track & field teams.

After watching my deaf son currently attending a deaf school, I wish there were lot more deaf peers at my school. It would had been more fun to socialize with peers similar to me.

I wore hearing aids and phonic ear devices during most of years until high school, when I eventually stopped wearing them. I started to realize that I don't really benefit from those assistive devices. At home, I avoid wearing the hearing aids all the time because I would lose them playing outside all the time.

There were many awards and certificates but I could not remember agencies or organization that gave those to me. I remembered being on list of Who's Who Among the American High School Students, being recognized as Youth Person of the Year in Oswego County, being on honor rolls, and recognized for different kinds of roles being on sports team such as being a "Team Motivator" for our wrestling team.

HEARING LOSS:

I have a severe-profound hearing loss that was detected approximately at birth or shortly after.

There was a mixed feeling about it growing up, especially being around hearing family and peers at school but eventually I embraced it, as it was a huge part of my identity and I could not change it for anything in world.

COMMUNICATION:

At school, I grew up using mostly PSE and total communication. It was eventually transitioned to ASL near the end of my school years as I got more exposure to it outside of school. I relied upon the interpreters during the classes at school. At home, it was mostly "home signs" and verbal/lip reading.

With hearing friends, I tried to communicate verbally and used lip reading often; fortunately, some of them learned sign language, which was helpful. Body language and gestures were used often too. With deaf/HoH friends and in deaf community, PSE and then later ASL was used frequently.

STRENGTHS/CHALLENGES:

Communication was a consistent challenge for me with everyone at school and home. Being part of "hearing world" forced me to adapt to their world and their culture. It was a struggle to fit in, until I start to embrace my deaf identity and eventually compelled them to accept me as a deaf person instead of being a person they want me to be.

I basically stopped viewing myself as disabled and start saying to myself "Yes, I am deaf and that's who I am." Eventually, some peers started to accept who I am, started adapted to my needs instead such as using interpreter, writing on paper or learning sign language to communicate with me.

An experience during high school taught me that with all people around me, it should be always a "two-way street." Sometimes, I adapted to fit into their world, but I need to also remember that they also had to adapt to fit into my world.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

The most important service I had throughout my schooling was definitely interpreters. I had many wonderful interpreters throughout my life that I cannot image living without! They are

my cornerstone in my education, career development and communication access in community such as medical services. To this day, I continue to depend upon the interpreters for my communication access within hearing world.

Currently, the smartphone/computer is the most important technology in my life. It holds all the methods of communication to everyone in world. I used different kinds of apps such as Sorenson videophone, IMO video chat, Skype, Marco Polo and even texting. Also, for my entertainment, closed captioning is significant especially when watching news, favorite TV shows and movies at theaters.

ADVOCACY:

Do you think you had "equal access" at school? What would that look like?

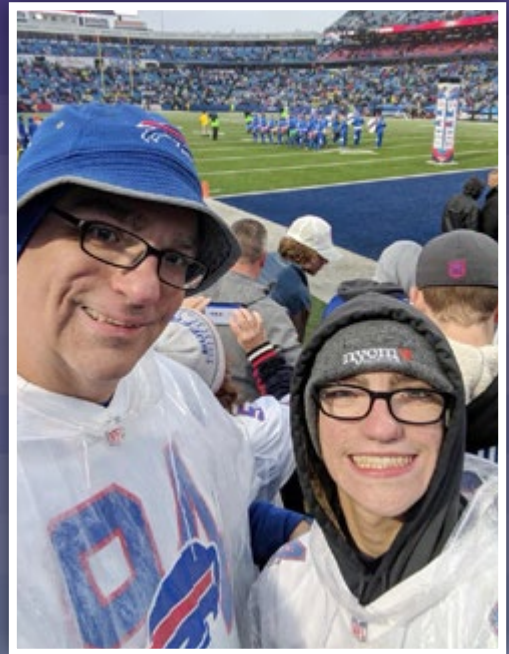
Good question, I would say both yes and no. For school and education purpose, I have to say yes. I was given equal opportunities just like my hearing peers. I was not isolated at all and had chances to try everything, including sports. At the same time, I was given a local diploma although I was taking Regents classes. I could not meet the requirements such as music, foreign language, etc. as I was exempted from those. Which was understandable, although I wish there were other options to make up for it.

Interpreters played an important role in my life during school. I depended upon them to ensure I got all the information, and I had a high expectation for them to do their job appropriately.

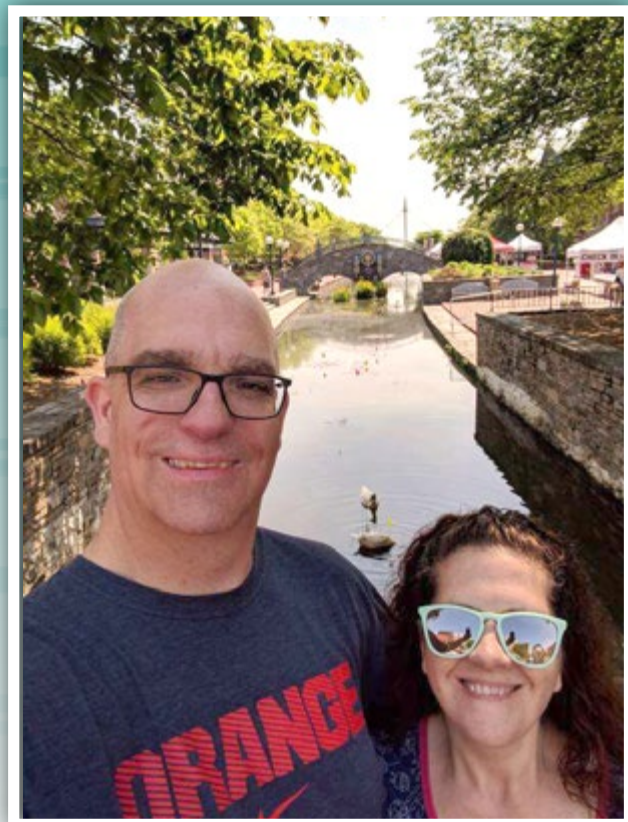
I am profound deaf, therefore I could not hear anyone or anything. When I am in social situations with hearing peers, I tend to focus on someone that is personally close to me (such as a close friend who knows sign language) and ask that person to explain to me what's happening. Otherwise if I could not gain any information, I just move on and do something else.

FAMILY:

I was well-loved and respected in my family, especially by my parents. They were there to support me the majority of my life. My older sister is deaf too, therefore, she was my single special connection to a deaf world while I grew up in a hearing world.



continued



Unfortunately, it was difficult and frustrating communicating with extended family. I had to depend on my parents to be able to communicate with any of my aunts or uncles, etc. It would be helpful if they at least knew the “home signs” that my parents and I use.

MORE INFORMATION:

I love sports; I enjoy watching my sons playing sports, soccer, basketball, track and baseball. I am an avid Syracuse University football and basketball fan. Also love and enjoy watching Buffalo Bills football team. I was known for my sense of humor, which allows me to carry on through this crazy thing you call life.

I have many favorite quotes but those two are perspectives I like reflecting on my life.

“In three words I can sum up everything I’ve learned about life: it goes on.” - Robert Frost

“You see things; you say, ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say, ‘Why not?’” - George Bernard Shaw

Who is your role model and why?

My dad, he was a kind of a man I always want to be. He was a simple man with a good heart, sense of humor, and was respected by everyone.

ADVICE:

Keep things in perspective, remind yourself that EVERYONE faces obstacles. A child with hearing loss is no different from their hearing peers; provide them with love, support and guidance. Like everyone else, they won’t be perfect, but they eventually will be OK.

POST- SECONDARY QUESTIONS: FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE GRADUATED HS

What college have you attended?

I graduated from RIT/NTID with AAS degree in Industrial Drafting Technology, graduated with bachelor’s in history from Le Moyne College and am currently working toward my master’s in social work online at Walden University.

Why did you choose that college?

Mostly because they fit my goals and ambitions.

What helped you prepare for the transition from high school to college?

This is difficult to answer, I think nothing can prepare you. It was a crazy transition going from a hearing high school to a deaf college (NTID). I was unprepared and overwhelmed but would not trade this experience for anything!

Looking back- what would you change about your education or communication mode from birth to 12th grade?

I believe that bilingual-bicultural education approach would be more useful for students such as me, using both ASL and English as language in our education.

What advice do you have for high school students?

Believe in yourself. A sense of self is critical in relation to your self-esteem and confidence; the stronger it is, the better chance to breed confidence and ambition. With many external influence and variables, a robust sense of self is what keeps you grounded and on the right course.

What is your current job title and where do you work?

I am currently a full-time student working toward my masters. However, I am working part time at Heritage Christian Service as a direct support service, working with a client with a special needs to develop independent living skills.

What self-advocacy skills do you think are important in your work place? How did you learn those advocacy skills?

It is essential to be patient; to understand what you need, knowing what will help or support those needs and how others can be taught to meet or bring in resources for your needs.

Are there any challenges you have faced at work, with your family, in the community, and with friends as a result of your hearing loss?

An access to communication continues to be challenge today, similar to the old days in high school. However, the technologies have made it easier and better.

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>

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>

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>

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>

ACCES-VR

(Vocational Rehabilitation)

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

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

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>

NTID- National Technical Institute for the Deaf

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students at RIT/NTID receive a world-class private university education at a public college price, unparalleled educational support services, dynamic academic programs that reflect the needs of the marketplace, and unmatched support in starting a career.

<https://www.ntid.rit.edu/>

Camp Mark 7

Camp Mark Seven (CM7) offers an array of recreational, educational, leadership and spiritual programs for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing individuals of all ages. CM7 offers many waterfront and outdoor/indoor activities such as; swimming, canoeing, arts & crafts, lawn games, basketball and various ball games. There are many nearby trails for enthusiastic hikers. Located on Fourth Lake in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York.

<https://www.campmark7.org/>

TOD/HH Staying Connected

Central Square High School
Central Square, NY

Oswego High School
Oswego, NY

Hannibal High School
Hannibal, NY

Solvay High School
Solvay, NY

New York State
School for the Deaf
Rome, NY

