

Help America Hear Scholarship

My name is _____ and I am a senior at Cherokee High School in Cherokee County, Canton, Georgia. I have been accepted into the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at RIT and Gallaudet University. I am very interested in technology! I love to play video and computer games, but I know technology is so much more than that. I am interested in video game design and development possibly as a software engineer, but I realize this field is very competitive. I am also interested in the field of video editing possibly for a newsroom someday. I know my possibilities are endless. I have been the president of the American Sign Language club at Cherokee High school for two years and been in the club for four years total. My duties include teaching the attendees sign, playing games to promote sign language acquisition, and organizing our annual ASL club float in the homecoming and Christmas parades. I enjoy attending monthly Deaf socials at the outlets in Woodstock, Georgia where I am able to interact with my friends who are Deaf; since I am the only Deaf student at Cherokee, I enjoy times where I can interact with other people who are Deaf. I am also involved with my school news where I work as an editor, but I also was involved as an anchor for a segment to promote Deaf awareness and Deaf culture within my school.

Hearing loss for me means that I cannot hear what others can, but it does not mean I cannot do what they can. I do need accommodations in school that allow me to achieve academic success. I sit at the front of the classroom, where I can see my interpreter. I have notes provided for me so that I only need to concentrate on the interpreter. I usually can't watch examples on the white board or look at my classroom teacher because I will miss what is said through the interpreter. I am not afraid to ask questions and get help if I need it. My parents, teachers and therapists have always strived to support me both academically and personally. I have faced many challenges as a hearing-impaired student: I cannot always tell what my teachers or peers are saying, I have a hard time hearing in large groups like the auditorium or cafeteria, and sometimes I struggle to connect with hearing people on a social level.

I was born profoundly deaf in 2002 in Georgia. I was the only Deaf person in my family, so naturally my parents tried everything they could to help me hear from hearing aids to early interventions in speech. Of course, being profoundly Deaf, the hearing aids did not do much for me. I began learning sign when I was 6 months old when Babies Can't Wait would come to our house and help with speech and therapy. I received my first cochlear implant in my right ear when I was five years old. I suffered two implant failures within a two-year span. Third times the charm- I am still using the implant I received when I was seven years old! I do have a left side cochlear implant, but I didn't get that one until I was twelve, so I do not care too much for it. I would consider myself a part of the hearing world and the Deaf world; I can speak but I prefer to use ASL. I was genetically tested for CHARGE syndrome during my freshman year of high school, which came back positive. Having the diagnosis really helped me understand why things had happened the way they did when I was growing up and gave me a better sense of identity.

As for my future plans, I hope to be in college one year from now and be successful in my classes. In 5 years, I hope to be working for the Deaf News station in Atlanta called Sign 1 News. I am very interested in video editing and how the news works, especially within the aspects of the Deaf community and I hope to receive a degree along the lines of that, even though I am still a little bit undecided about what I want my degree to be. I do hope that I can

attend a university with a large Deaf population, since I did not get to experience that throughout my childhood and school experience. With all that I do, I look to be spreading awareness about the Deaf community and Deaf culture.

While I am nervous to leave for school, I know it is what I want to do. I have never been away from home except to attend a few Deaf camps in the summertime, so I am excited but nervous for this journey. Being immersed in a community of other people like me is very exciting! I have never experienced school without an interpreter, so I am ready to feel what it would be like to be in a school where the teacher *is* the interpreter and the students are all able to communicate directly with me instead of through my interpreter. I believe I am a perfect candidate for this scholarship because I am an honor student (above 90% GPA for 3 years), an active member in my school of hearing people and within my mainstream classes, and an active member in the Deaf community. Most of all, I am ready to further my educational aspirations in college. This scholarship would really help me fund my dreams of becoming a successful, professionally educated, and proud Deaf man.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.