

LIBRARY OUTREACH GUIDE:

Ideas for Celebrating Deaf Culture Year Round at Your Library



Welcome to the guide! Put together by the experts at Signing Savvy, this is a thematic planning tool to help your library incorporate Deaf culture, history, and language into your library's displays, programming, and outreach.

This guide supports libraries in highlighting ASL, Deaf culture, interpreters, CODAs, and accessibility through curated articles, recommended books, programming ideas, and suggested learning tools across eight inclusive themes. It's designed to be flexible and used year-round, with optional tie-ins to national awareness months and programs your library may already be running throughout the year.

Use this guide to plan monthly displays, pair storytime with cultural education, or recommend books for patrons of all ages interested in ASL and Deaf culture.

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Don't miss the resource list for librarians at the end, which includes free ASL courses and printables!

Deaf Culture & Community: Language, Identity, and Belonging

Theme Focus: Exploring and celebrating Deaf culture, language, identity, and community.



When to Share:

- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month



Articles You Can Share:

- [Deaf President Now Protest](#)
- [The De'VIA Art Movement](#)
- [What is the correct terminology when referring to deaf people?](#)
- [What is American Sign Language \(ASL\)?](#)
- [Name Signs: What Are They and How Does a Person Get a Name Sign?](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- [Deaf History Month – 5 Signs to Know](#)
Learn key ASL vocabulary that celebrates Deaf identity, culture, and community. Perfect for pairing with Deaf History Month displays, programs, or community events.
- [Deaf History Month – ASL Sentences about Deaf History and Community](#)
Practice full ASL sentences that highlight Deaf history, identity, and culture. Perfect for classroom enrichment, library programs, or cultural events during Deaf History Month.



Facts & Trivia:

Spark curiosity with quick, engaging facts about Deaf culture, history, and language. Each fact is linked to a video of the fact signed in ASL, making it both fun and accessible. Use these in library displays, newsletters, social media posts, or trivia nights to encourage learning and start conversations.

- [Fact 1:](#) Deaf Awareness Week is in September.
- [Fact 2:](#) Deaf history includes the history of deaf people and their culture.
- [Fact 3:](#) Alice Hagemeyer was a deaf librarian and active leader that established Deaf Awareness Week and Deaf History Month.

- [Fact 4](#): As a young girl, Alice Cogswell, inspired her neighbor, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, to devote his life to educating the deaf and to create the American School for the Deaf. She and six other deaf children were the first students to attend the American School for the Deaf in 1817.
- [Fact 5](#): Laurent Clerc is one of the founders of the first school for the deaf here in America.
- [Fact 6](#): In 1864 Abraham Lincoln approved Gallaudet College to award degrees.
- [Fact 7](#): Thomas H. Gallaudet was a minister, educator, and co-founded the first school for the deaf called the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. Gallaudet University was named in honor of him in 1894.
- [Fact 8](#): American Sign Language was recognized as a true language in 1965.
- [Fact 9](#): There was a famous protest at Gallaudet University in 1988 called Deaf President Now.
- [Fact 10](#): I. King Jordan was the first Deaf President of Gallaudet University.
- [Fact 11](#): The man who invented the TTY was Robert Weitbrecht, he was deaf.
- [Fact 12](#): Chuck Baird was an artist and founder of the De'VIA art movement, which conveys a Deaf world viewpoint through art.

Books to Feature and Display:



El Deafo

By Cece Bell

A humorous and heartfelt graphic memoir about growing up Deaf and navigating childhood with a bulky hearing aid. Perfect for middle grade readers, but resonant for all ages.



True Biz

By Sara Nović

A contemporary novel set in a Deaf school, exploring the complexities of communication, identity, and rebellion. Written by a Deaf author, it weaves ASL and Deaf culture authentically into the narrative. Ideal for teens and adults.



Train Go Sorry: Inside a Deaf World

By Leah Hager Cohen

Part memoir, part cultural commentary, this compelling book offers an insider's look into the Deaf community through the lens of a hearing child growing up in a Deaf school environment.



The Silence Between Us

By Alison Gervais

A YA novel about a Deaf teen navigating mainstream high school for the first time. Written by a hard-of-hearing author, the book challenges assumptions and celebrates Deaf identity.



Finding Zoe: A Deaf Woman's Story of Identity, Love, and Adoption

By Brandi Rarus with Gail Harris

A moving memoir from a Deaf woman who grew up straddling the hearing and Deaf worlds, and later adopted a Deaf child. It explores themes of belonging, language, and family.



Hearing Maud: A Journey for a Voice

By Jessica White

An exploration of the author's experience growing up hard-of-hearing in Australia, woven with the story of Maud Praed, a Deaf woman in the 1800s. A deeply introspective and beautifully written memoir.



Library Programming Ideas:

• ASL Classes

- What is it? Host a guided beginner ASL class that teaches basics including fingerspelling and common signs. We recommend hiring a native ASL user with teaching experience to teach these classes if possible.
- Who is it for? Anyone interested in learning to sign! We've seen libraries run multi-week courses for adults or shorter courses for teens.
- Modifications: Simplify this into a one-off fingerspelling class to learn the 26 letters of the manual alphabet. And for libraries that can't hire a native ASL user, if your library has an ASL resource like Signing Savvy or Transparent Language Online, you could leverage that to have patrons learn together as a group using the e-resource as a guide.

• Silent dinner for ASL learners

- What is it? A public dinner during which participants cannot speak, write, or use phones. It's an opportunity to use ASL and/or practice non-verbal communication skills.
- Who is it for? Deaf and hearing patrons. Typically recommended for adults.
- Modifications: This could also be a "Silent Potluck". Or if you can't have food at the library, it could be a "Silent Craft Night" or similar. Anything that brings people together and challenges them to practice ASL and/or communicate non-verbally.

- **Book club featuring Deaf authors/stories**

- What is it? Choose a story by a Deaf author as your September book club read, in honor of Deaf Awareness month.
- Who is it for? There is a wide array of Deaf stories recommended in this guide that would make appropriate book club picks for clubs of different themes!

DeafBlind Changemakers: Pioneers, Advocates, and Barrier-Breakers

Theme Focus: Promote understanding and visibility of the DeafBlind community, highlight intersectional identities, and celebrate key figures like Helen Keller and Haben Girma.



When to Share:

- **January:** Braille Literacy Month
- **Last week of June:** DeafBlind Awareness Week
- **June 27:** Helen Keller's Birthday
- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month



Articles You Can Share:

- [The Fascinating Life of Helen Keller](#)
- [12 Facts You Probably Don't Know About Helen Keller](#)
- [The Mysterious Confusion Between Deafness and Blindness](#)
- [Braille Explained](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- [DeafBlind Awareness Week – 5 Signs to Know](#)
Learn key ASL vocabulary that promotes advocacy, accessibility, and awareness of the DeafBlind community. Perfect for pairing with DeafBlind Awareness Week displays, programs, or educational activities.
- [DeafBlind Awareness – ASL Sentences about Advocacy and History](#)
Practice full ASL sentences that address common misconceptions and highlight influential DeafBlind figures like Helen Keller. Great for programs during DeafBlind Awareness Week, classroom enrichment, or accessibility-focused events.



Facts & Trivia:

Spark curiosity with quick, engaging facts about Deaf culture, history, and language. Each fact is linked to a video of the fact signed in ASL, making it both fun and accessible. Use these in library displays, newsletters, social media posts, or trivia nights to encourage learning and start conversations.

- [Fact 1:](#) Sometimes people think the deaf use braille, but that is not true, only blind people use braille.
- [Fact 2:](#) Helen Keller was a famous deaf-blind woman. She was an author, lecturer, and activist.



Books to Feature and Display:



Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law

By Haben Girma

Groundbreaking memoir by the first DeafBlind graduate of Harvard Law School — a powerful story of disability rights, intersectionality, and leadership.



Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller

By Doreen Rappaport

For Young Readers: Beautifully illustrated and includes real quotes — great for storytime.



I Am Helen Keller

By Brad Meltzer

For Young Readers: Fun, accessible, and empowering — from the popular “Ordinary People Change the World” series.



Who Was Helen Keller?

By Gare Thompson

For Middle Grade Readers: Engaging biography from the “Who Was...?” series — a favorite with students.



The Story of My Life

By Helen Keller

For Teens and Adults: Her original memoir. A powerful primary source and still highly readable.



Library Programming Ideas:

- **Film Screening of “The Miracle Worker”**
 - What is it? Host a screening of this popular children’s movie about Helen Keller. (Rated PG, available on Swank)
 - Who is it for? Children and families.

Deaf Women: Artists, Advocates, and Change-Makers

Theme Focus: Celebrate the contributions of Deaf women across history and industries, from the arts and activism to education, politics, athletics, and leadership.



When to Share:

- **March:** Women's History Month
- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month



Articles You Can Share:

- [Marlee Matlin — Academy Award Winning Actress](#)
- [Linda Bove - Actress and Activist](#)
- [Kitty O'Neil – The Fastest Woman in the World, Stuntwoman, and Racer](#)
- [Phyllis Frelich - Actress, Innovator, and Tony Award Winner](#)
- [Ella Mae Lentz - Poet, Educator, and Advocate](#)
- [Juliette Gordon Low - Founder of the Girl Scouts and Philanthropist](#)
- [Heather Whitestone - First Deaf Miss America](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- [Women's History Month – 5 Signs to Know](#)

Learn key ASL vocabulary related to women's contributions, history, activism, and inspiration. Perfect for pairing with Women's History Month displays or events.

- [Deaf Women – ASL Sentences to Celebrate Their Impact](#)

Practice full ASL sentences that highlight Deaf women's achievements, resilience, and influence. Great for ASL clubs, library programs, or classroom enrichment.



Facts & Trivia:

Spark curiosity with quick, engaging facts about Deaf culture, history, and language. Each fact is linked to a video of the fact signed in ASL, making it both fun and accessible. Use these in library displays, newsletters, social media posts, or trivia nights to encourage learning and start conversations.

- [Fact 1](#): Nellie Zabel Willhite was the world's first licensed deaf pilot.
- [Fact 2](#): Marlee Matlin is a famous Deaf Actress. She won an Academy Award and a Golden Globe for her role in the movie *Children of a Lesser God*.
- [Fact 3](#): Phyllis Frelich was a deaf actress and famous for winning the 1980 Best Actress Tony Award for the play "Children of a Lesser God."
- [Fact 4](#): Heather Whitestone was the first deaf person to be crowned as Miss America in 1995.
- [Fact 5](#): Ashley Fiolek is a Deaf Motocross Racer. She started motorcycling when she was three years old. She won four Women's Motocross Championships in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012. She is now retired.
- [Fact 6](#): Linda Bove is a deaf actress. She played the role of Linda the librarian on Sesame Street for 31 years.
- [Fact 7](#): Christy Smith was the first deaf contestant to appear on the reality TV show *Survivor*.
- [Fact 8](#): Helen Keller was a famous deaf-blind woman. She was an author, lecturer, and activist.
- [Fact 9](#): Betty G. Miller was the first deaf woman to graduate from Gallaudet University with a PhD degree in art. She was a famous artist who focused on the deaf perspective.
- [Fact 10](#): Shelley Beattie was a deaf professional weightlifter who became famous after being on the TV show *American Gladiators*.
- [Fact 11](#): Alice Hagemeyer was a deaf librarian and active leader that established Deaf Awareness Week and Deaf History Month.
- [Fact 12](#): Ella Mae Lentz is a Deaf American teacher, poet, advocate, and author.
- [Fact 13](#): Mandy Harvey became deaf at the age of 18. Interestingly enough, she was a singer on the television show "America's Got Talent."
- [Fact 14](#): Kitty O'Neil was a well-known deaf stuntwoman and race car driver.
- [Fact 15](#): Did you see the movie about the life of Kitty O'Neil, a deaf stuntwoman and racer?
- [Fact 16](#): Juliette Gordon Low was sick often while growing up and lost her hearing in her right ear. On her wedding day, rice went into her left ear and when the doctor tried to take it out, he punctured her eardrum. Then she was deaf in both ears. She founded the Girl Scouts when she was 51 years old because she wanted girls to have the same opportunities as boys.



Books to Feature and Display:



Listen: How Evelyn Glennie, a Deaf Girl, Changed Percussion

By Shannon Stocker

Children's Book: A beautifully illustrated picture book biography of world-famous Deaf percussionist Evelyn Glennie. Focuses on perseverance, music, and redefining how we "hear."



I'll Scream Later

By Marlee Matlin

A candid memoir from the Academy Award-winning actress about navigating Hollywood, Deaf identity, addiction, and advocacy.



Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law

By Haben Girma

Groundbreaking memoir by the first DeafBlind graduate of Harvard Law School — a powerful story of disability rights, intersectionality, and leadership.



Listening with My Heart

By Heather Whitestone

Memoir by the first Deaf Miss America, reflecting on her faith, family, and journey to the national stage.



Library Programming Ideas:

• **Women's History Trivia Night**

- What is it? Host a trivia night featuring all trivia about important female historical figures and their contributions to art, sports, science, and beyond.
- Recommendation: Feature some of these iconic Deaf women in your trivia.

• **Film Club Discussion of "CODA"**

- What is it? Host a film club to discuss the 2021 Apple TV+ show "CODA", which tells the story of a teenage girl who is the only hearing member of her family. It features a mostly deaf cast including Marlee Matlin and Troy Kotsur (the first Deaf actress and actor to win Academy Awards.)
- Recommendation: This show is not available to stream publicly, so have participants watch it on their own time and come together to discuss at the library.

Black Deaf Trailblazers: Educators, Athletes, and Artists

Theme Focus: Celebrate the contributions of Black Deaf leaders across history and disciplines, from education and sports to the arts and community advocacy.



When to Share:

- **February:** Black History Month
- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month



Articles You Can Share:

- [Three Inspiring Black Deaf Leaders Who Made an Impact](#)
- [Andrew Foster – Pioneer Missionary, Educator, Mentor, and Advocate for the Deaf](#)
- [Charles “CJ” Jones – Comedian, Actor, Producer, and Director](#)
- [Curtis Pride - Major League Baseball Player](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- [**Black History Month – 5 Signs to Know**](#)

Learn key ASL vocabulary that celebrates Black heritage, leadership, and the lasting impact of trailblazers in the fight for rights and freedom. Perfect for pairing with Black History Month displays, programs, or educational activities.

- [**Black History Month – ASL Sentences about Leadership and Impact**](#)

Practice full ASL sentences that highlight the achievements of Black Deaf trailblazers in education, sports, the arts, and advocacy. Perfect for Black History Month programming, cultural events, or classroom enrichment.



Facts & Trivia:

Spark curiosity with quick, engaging facts about Deaf culture, history, and language. Each fact is linked to a video of the fact signed in ASL, making it both fun and accessible. Use these in library displays, newsletters, social media posts, or trivia nights to encourage learning and start conversations.

- [Fact 1](#): Andrew Foster was a famous Deaf African American who was a reverend, educator, and missionary. He established the first school for the deaf in Africa.
- [Fact 2](#): CJ Jones is a famous Deaf actor and comedian. He says “Anything is possible. Success has nothing to do with being deaf or black or any disability. It has to do with your passion to do greater things in life!”
- [Fact 3](#): Curtis Pride is deaf and was a baseball player. He played for many teams, such as the Detroit Tigers, Atlanta Braves, and New York Yankees. He is currently the coach for the Gallaudet University baseball team.
- [Fact 4](#): Ernest Hairston was one of the six founding members of the Black Deaf Advocates (BDA).



Books to Feature and Display:



Sounds Like Home: Growing Up Black and Deaf in the South

By Mary Herring Wright

A powerful memoir of growing up Black and Deaf in segregated North Carolina. Wright shares stories of her family, education at a segregated school for the Deaf, and working life — an important historical perspective.



Deaf Lives in History: Portraits of Black Deaf People

By Ernest Hairston and Linwood Smith

A collection of biographical sketches of prominent Black Deaf figures, including educators, artists, and community leaders. Educational and inspirational, great for Black History Month displays.



Can You Hear a Rainbow? The Story of a Deaf Boy Named Chris

By Jamee Riggio Heelan, illustrated by Nicola Simmonds

Based on the true story of Chris, a young Black Deaf boy. Aimed at early readers, it introduces hearing loss and ASL with clarity and positivity. Includes a teacher's guide.



Black Deaf Lives Matter: A Toolkit for Teaching & Learning

(Educational Resource, Various Contributors)

While not a narrative book, this toolkit contains short stories, resources, and profiles useful for creating inclusive educational programming around Black Deaf identity.

LGBTQ+ Deaf Voices: Creators, Activists, and Cultural Icons

Theme Focus: Uplift Deaf individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ and celebrate the power of intersectional identity through advocacy, art, and visibility.



When to Share:

- **July:** LGBTQ+ Pride Month and Disability Pride Month
- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month



Articles You Can Share:

- [The Meaning Behind Champion Nyle DiMarco's Freestyle Dance on the Dancing with the Stars Finale](#)
- [America's Next Top Model Winner "Just Happens To Be Deaf"](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- [Pride Month – 5 Signs to Know](#)

Learn key ASL vocabulary that celebrates LGBTQ+ pride, love, equality, and allyship. Perfect for pairing with Pride Month displays, programs, or community celebrations.



Books to Feature and Display:



Deaf Utopia: A Memoir—and a Love Letter to a Way of Life

By Nyle DiMarco

This best-selling memoir by Deaf, queer activist and model Nyle DiMarco celebrates Deaf culture, bilingualism, and identity. Funny, intimate, and powerful.



A Quiet Foghorn: More Notes from a Deaf Gay Life

By Raymond Luczak

A candid and poetic collection of essays by Deaf, gay author Raymond Luczak. He reflects on language, identity, Deaf culture, and queer experience with sharp insight and emotional depth.

Deaf Sports Legends: From the Huddle to the Hall of Fame

Theme Focus: Highlight Deaf figures in sports, physical achievement, and teamwork, from the baseball diamond to the Olympic pool and beyond.



When to Share:

- School sports seasons (fall, winter, spring)
- **January–February:** Super Bowl season (Paul Hubbard article)
- **March–September:** Baseball season (Hoy and Pride articles)
- **July–August:** Olympic and Paralympic tie-ins (Terence Parkin, Kitty O’Neil)
- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month



Articles You Can Share:

- [Paul Hubbard - Inventor of the Football Huddle](#)
- [William Ellsworth “Dummy” Hoy – Major League Baseball Player Credited with Originating the Use of Baseball Signals](#)
- [Curtis Pride - Major League Baseball Player](#)
- [Terence Parkin - Olympic Swimmer](#)
- [LeRoy Colombo – First Deaf Lifeguard and Life Saving Record Holder](#)
- [Kitty O’Neil – The Fastest Woman in the World, Stuntwoman, and Racer](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- **[Deaf Sports Legends – 5 Signs to Know](#)**
Learn key ASL vocabulary that celebrates sports, achievement, and perseverance. Perfect for pairing with sports-themed displays, Super Bowl tie-ins, or Olympic programs.
- **[Deaf Sports Legends – ASL Sentences about Athletes and Achievement](#)**
Practice full ASL sentences that share the stories of Deaf athletes who have made history in football, baseball, swimming, wrestling, racing, and more. Perfect for library programs tied to the Super Bowl, Olympics, or sports-themed displays and events.



Facts & Trivia:

Spark curiosity with quick, engaging facts about Deaf culture, history, and language. Each fact is linked to a video of the fact signed in ASL, making it both fun and accessible. Use these in library displays, newsletters, social media posts, or trivia nights to encourage learning and start conversations.

- [Fact 1](#): Paul Hubbard was the quarterback for Gallaudet University in 1894 and he realized they needed a way to discuss plays in secret so he invented the football huddle.
- [Fact 2](#): William “Dummy” Hoy was a Deaf Major League Baseball player and some say he helped establish the baseball signals for safe and out calls.
- [Fact 3](#): Kenny Walker is deaf and played football in the NFL for the Denver Broncos.
- [Fact 4](#): Terence Parkin is a deaf swimmer from South Africa. He won the silver medal in the Olympics in 2000.
- [Fact 5](#): Jeff Float is a deaf American swimmer who won a gold medal at the 1984 Olympics.
- [Fact 6](#): Matt Hamill is a Deaf wrestler. He won three NCAA National Championships, a silver and gold medal in the Deaflympics, and there is a movie about his life called “The Hammer.”
- [Fact 7](#): Ashley Fiolek is a Deaf Motocross Racer. She started motorcycling when she was three years old. She won four Women’s Motocross Championships in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012. She is now retired.
- [Fact 8](#): Curtis Pride is deaf and was a baseball player. He played for many teams, such as the Detroit Tigers, Atlanta Braves, and New York Yankees. He is currently the coach for the Gallaudet University baseball team.
- [Fact 9](#): Shelley Beattie was a deaf professional weightlifter who became famous after being on the TV show American Gladiators.
- [Fact 10](#): Martin Belsky was a deaf man from Michigan who was a leader of deaf sports at the local and national level.
- [Fact 11](#): Derrick Coleman was the first deaf football player to participate in the Super Bowl in 2014.
- [Fact 12](#): Kitty O’Neil was a well-known deaf stuntwoman and race car driver.
- [Fact 13](#): LeRoy Colombo was the first Deaf lifeguard. He saved 907 people



Books to Feature and Display:



The William Hoy Story: How a Deaf Baseball Player Changed the Game

By Nancy Churnin, illustrated by Jez Tuya

For Young Readers: A beautifully illustrated picture book introducing children to William “Dummy” Hoy, a Deaf baseball legend whose use of hand signals helped shape the modern game.



Silent Star: The Story of Deaf Major Leaguer William Hoy

By Bill Wise, illustrated by Adam Gustavson

For Elementary and Middle Grade Readers: A compelling biography that brings William Hoy’s baseball career and impact to life for young readers.



High Tides, Low Tides: The Story of Leroy Colombo

By Jean F. Andrews

For Middle Grade and Up: Tells the story of the first Deaf lifeguard, Leroy Colombo, who saved more than 900 lives. Inspiring and action-filled.



Library Programming Ideas:

• **Children’s Story Time featuring the William Hoy Story**

- What is it? Host a storytime on MLB Opening Day featuring “The William Hoy Story: How a Deaf Baseball Player Changed the Game”, which is a beautifully illustrated picture book introducing William “Dummy” Hoy, a Deaf baseball legend whose use of hand signals shaped modern baseball.
- Who is it for? Children and families

Deaf Poets: ASL Expression, Rhythm, and Visual Voice

Theme Focus: Celebrate the creativity and cultural richness of Deaf poets and ASL poetry through performance, visual storytelling, and self-expression.



When to Share:

- **April:** National Poetry Month
- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month



Articles You Can Share:

- [Clayton Valli – ASL Linguist, Poet, Scholar, Teacher, and Author](#)
- [Ella Mae Lentz - Poet, Educator, and Advocate](#)
- [Robert Panara – Pioneer of Deaf Studies, Author, Historian, Poet, and Teacher](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- [National Poetry Month – 5 Signs to Know](#)
Learn key ASL vocabulary that celebrates the creativity, beauty, and emotion of ASL poetry. Perfect for pairing with National Poetry Month displays, performances, or creative workshops.
- [National Poetry Month – ASL Sentences about Poets and Expression](#)
Practice full ASL sentences that introduce influential Deaf poets and their contributions to literature, education, and advocacy. Perfect for National Poetry Month programming, classroom enrichment, or creative workshops celebrating ASL expression.



Facts & Trivia:

Spark curiosity with quick, engaging facts about Deaf culture, history, and language. Each fact is linked to a video of the fact signed in ASL, making it both fun and accessible. Use these in library displays, newsletters, social media posts, or trivia nights to encourage learning and start conversations.

- [Fact 1:](#) Ella Mae Lentz is a Deaf American teacher, poet, advocate, and author.
- [Fact 2:](#) Clayton Valli was deaf and was the first person to receive a PhD in Linguistics and ASL Poetics.
- [Fact 3:](#) Robert Panera was the first deaf professor at the NTID (National Technical Institute for the Deaf). He was a successful author, historian, poet, and teacher.

Books to Feature and Display:



The Perseverance

By Raymond Antrobus

Winner of the Ted Hughes Award and Rathbones Folio Prize

A powerful poetry collection exploring Deaf identity, Black British heritage, and language. Antrobus, who is Deaf, uses poetry to question assumptions about communication, access, and belonging.



Deaf Republic

By Ilya Kaminsky

National Book Award Finalist and New York Times Notable Book

A lyrical narrative poem that imagines a fictional town where, after a tragedy, the citizens collectively go Deaf in protest. Kaminsky is hard of hearing and writes with haunting beauty about silence, resistance, and the human spirit.



Teaching from the Heart and Soul: The Robert F. Panara Story

By Harry G. Lang

This biography chronicles the life and legacy of Robert F. Panara: Deaf poet, teacher, and co-founder of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID). Through his teaching and poetry, Panara inspired generations and helped shape Deaf education in America.

Deaf Stories for Kids: Heroes, Friends, and Everyday Adventures

Theme Focus: Celebrate Deaf characters and children's stories that promote identity, belonging, language, and representation.



When to Share:

- **March:** National Reading Month
- **April:** Deaf History Month
- **September:** Deaf Awareness Month
- **October:** Disability Awareness Month
- **Year-round** in inclusive storytime or classroom displays



Articles You Can Share:

- [The Importance of Early Exposure to American Sign Language with Deaf Children](#)
- [Use Sign Language to Communicate With Your Hearing Baby Before They Can Talk – An Overview of Why to Use American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#)
- [When and How to Start Using Sign Language With Your Hearing Baby](#)
- [Tips for Reading with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children](#)



Interactive ASL Learning:

- [National Reading Month – 5 Signs to Know](#)
Learn key ASL vocabulary that celebrates books, friendship, and heroes. Perfect for pairing with inclusive storytimes, reading month displays, or family programs.



Books to Feature and Display:



El Deafo by Cece Bell

Ages 8–12 (middle grade, graphic memoir)

A humorous and heartfelt graphic memoir about growing up Deaf and navigating childhood with a bulky hearing aid. Perfect for middle grade readers, but resonant for all ages.



Can Bears Ski? by Raymond Antrobus

Ages 3–7 (picture book)

Written by a Deaf author, this gentle picture book explores what it's like to grow up Deaf through a metaphor-rich story about a bear who keeps hearing the question, "Can bears ski?" A touching introduction to hearing loss and language confusion.



Butterfly on the Wind by Adam Pottle

Ages 4–8 (poetic picture book)

A lyrical picture book by a Deaf author that celebrates imagination, creativity, and the unique way Deaf children experience the world. A poetic journey through self-expression and visual language.



The Silent Sunset by Mike Dorsey

Ages 3–7 (picture book)

A quiet, reflective story featuring a Deaf protagonist who experiences the beauty of a sunset in her own way. A thoughtful introduction to nonverbal communication and sensory awareness.



My Deaf Friend Can Do Anything You Can Do by Tanesha Forman Hill

Ages 3–7 (illustrated book for young children)

Written by a Deaf author, this bold and empowering picture book challenges stereotypes and shows that Deaf children can achieve anything. A great choice for classrooms and inclusive read-alouds.



Show Me a Sign by Ann Clare LeZotte

Ages 8–12 (middle grade historical fiction)

Written by Deaf author and librarian Ann Clare LeZotte, this Own Voices story is inspired by the true history of the thriving deaf community on Martha's Vineyard in the early 19th century. This is book one of a three-part series.

Library Programming Ideas:

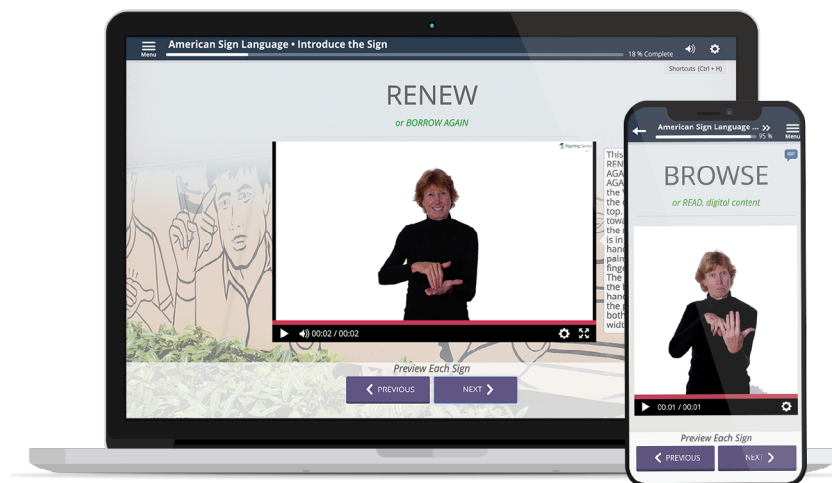
Children's Story Time featuring the William Hoy Story

- What is it? Host a storytime on MLB Opening Day featuring "The William Hoy Story: How a Deaf Baseball Player Changed the Game", which is a beautifully illustrated picture book introducing William "Dummy" Hoy, a Deaf baseball legend whose use of hand signals shaped modern baseball.
- Who is it for? Children and families

Resources for Librarians

[Survival ASL for Librarians Course](#) – A free, self-guided ASL course in Transparent Language Online, created by Signing Savvy. **In 15 hours, you'll be able to:**

- Fingerspell your name and unknown signs using the manual alphabet
- Sign common library services like books, digital materials, and internet
- Greet patrons and show them around the library
- Communicate about finding, checking out, and returning materials



[Fingerspelling Course](#) – Don't have enough time for the full ASL for Librarians course? Start with the fingerspelling course by Signing Savvy! (Membership required.)



[Free Handouts/Posters](#) – This page includes posters, coloring pages, and more that you can print and use at your library.