



Black History and Disability

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[Black History Month](#) is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans and a time for recognizing the essential role of African-Americans in United States history. Since 1976, every United States president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month.

In particular, I'd like to honor African Americans you might not know who had/ have rarely been recognized as an

individual with a disability and their contributions. I feel this is important for individuals with disabilities, their families, and everyone to know. It serves as encouragement and as an inspiration to those who think that disability will limit them.

[Harriet Tubman](#) – was born into slavery in Dorchester, Maryland around 1822. In 1849, leaving her family behind, she fled to escape slavery. After freeing herself,

she returned to the South approximately 19 times to lead her family and hundreds of other slaves to freedom through the [Underground Railroad](#).

Disability Fact: “Early in life, she suffered a traumatic head wound when an irate slave owner threw a heavy metal weight intending to hit another slave and hit her instead. The injury caused dizziness, pain, and spells of hypersomnia, which occurred throughout her life. She was a devout Christian and experienced strange visions and vivid dreams, which she ascribed to premonitions from God.”

James Earl Jones – One of the most recognizable voices in the world and a stage and screen actor with a career spanning six-decades-long.

His legendary voice has graced such roles as Darth Vader in the [Star Wars](#) movies, Mufasa in [The Lion King](#), Terence Mann in [Field of Dreams](#), to name a few.

Disability fact: As a child, he developed a severe stutter, which he overcame

during his high school years. “My stutter was so bad I barely spoke to anyone for eight years.” He still struggles with stuttering when speaking spontaneously, but for the most part, he has overcome his disability.

These are just two of the many examples of famous African Americans with disabilities.

You can find more information on this topic at the following links:

<http://www.disabilityhistory.org/people.html>

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/blog/?p=928>

<https://www.accessliving.org/1410ga449>



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