



Marcus Clemens, CEID Alum Reflections, now a High Schooler

Hello! I am Marcus Clemens, a student at Berkeley High School. I am diagnosed with Usher's syndrome, so basically I have eyesight and hearing problems.



Currently, I am classed as being "Hard of Hearing/Hearing impaired" and "Severely Visually impaired"(basically legally blind), and yet, I have found that despite these severe handicaps, at least from the perspective of a person with more normal hearing/eyesight, don't really affect my day-to-day life much at all, in fact I live so normally that often many people, both friends and family, forget about how I either can't hear or see things as well as they could.

Now, as a High Schooler who is doing pretty well for themselves in classes and the like, I can look back and see just how I was able to get to this point. Starting right from CEID, I was surrounded by great, supportive people who always helped me do better in life.

When I first came to CEID, I was still very very young. Both my parents were very worried about my future, since they had just learned that I was diagnosed with hard of hearing, and since I am the first child, they had no idea what it meant. So, we came to CEID. At CEID, we found a supportive, kind, understanding community that helped us figure out what to do and how to do it. From learning sign language to understanding the terminology and function of hearing aids, as well as figuring out where and how to get hearing aids and hearing tests, we learned it all from CEID. I would like to say, there are many resources at CEID for worried parents, and also, Thank You, to all the CEID staff and community members who were able to help me and my family through the first years of figuring out what to do about my hearing loss.

Once I graduated from CEID, I went on into the Berkeley Public School system. There were some worries about how I would hold up, and what supports there were, but those worries were pointless. At my school, John Muir, there was an extensive Hard of Hearing support program with FMs, or mics that directly connect to hearing aids to allow the carrier of the hearing aid to hear the speaker's voice clearer, sign language translators, and hearing supporters and coordinators.

In middle school, I temporarily left the Berkeley public school system, but I was able to apply the lessons learned in CEID and John Muir to talk with my teachers, and obtain the support of teachers in learning.

And then now, in High School, back in the BUSD school system, I am still using lessons learned from previous years in talking with teachers, talking with the blind/hard of hearing support counselors, and getting the support needed. Now, even with this crazy pandemic situation making everything harder, I am still trucking along just fine.



Essentially, what I am saying is this - For all those parents who may be worried about their children's future now that the pandemic hit, or for those who are worried about how being hard of hearing might affect their children's lives, don't worry. Those in CEID and in other places are very good, and very helpful, and there are supportive communities all over the place. And for those kids who may be anxious about how they can keep up in school - Don't worry, talk with your teachers, get accommodations, and keep trucking along. **Everything ends when you give up, but nothing ends if you don't.**