

# EXPANDED SKILLS SPOTLIGHT: DEAF COMMUNITY

- [SP.PK12.DH.1.1b](#) Explain historical and current attitudes of the Deaf community and the impact on themselves and others.
- [SP.PK12.DH.1.2b](#) Compare and contrast contributions of past and present figures of the Deaf community.

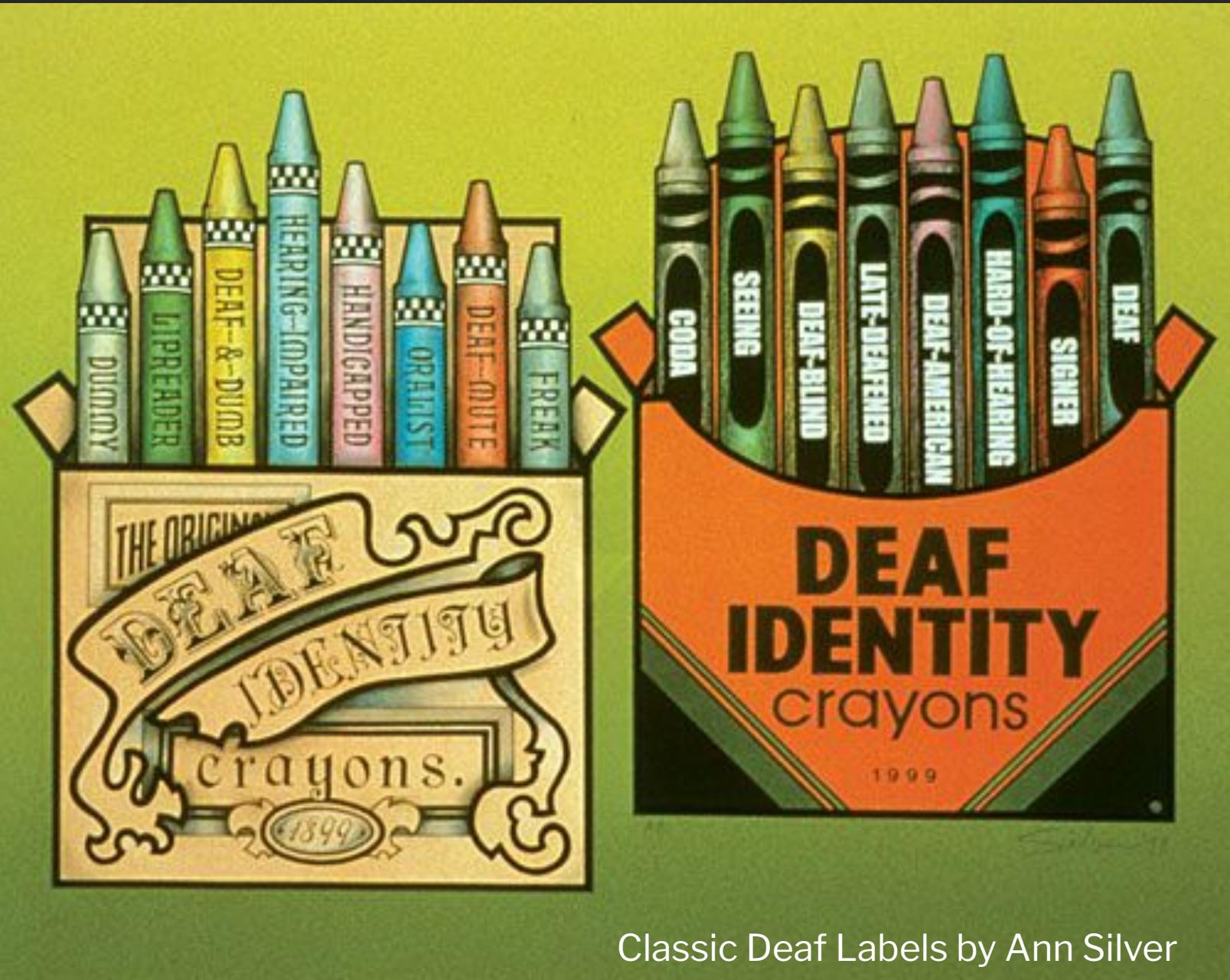
Thanks to Jared Sábado,  
Former Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing (ToDHH).  
Brevard County Public Schools



# LESSON FORMAT

- Each week Jared highlights a leader who is deaf/hard of hearing. For each presentation, he focuses on students exploring questions related to the Expanded Skills Standards.
  - Derrick Coleman – What is needed for equal access in sports?
  - Stephen Colbert – How have you responded to questions about your hearing differences?
  - Raymond Antrobus – How do you relate to his poetry?
- 10 minutes: Have students work in small groups to research who the person is using a [graphic organizer](#).
- 10 minutes: Come back together as a full class and share what was learned. Teacher shares their information on a slide. Students compare with their notes and add key information in their notebooks.
- 5 minutes: Watch a video about the person or look at their artwork.
- 10 minutes: Discuss historical and current attitudes of the Deaf community and the impact on themselves and others. Compare and contrast contributions of past and present figures of the Deaf community.

# FAMOUS ARTISTS, INVENTORS, & ATHLETES WITH HEARING LOSS



# JANE LYNCH

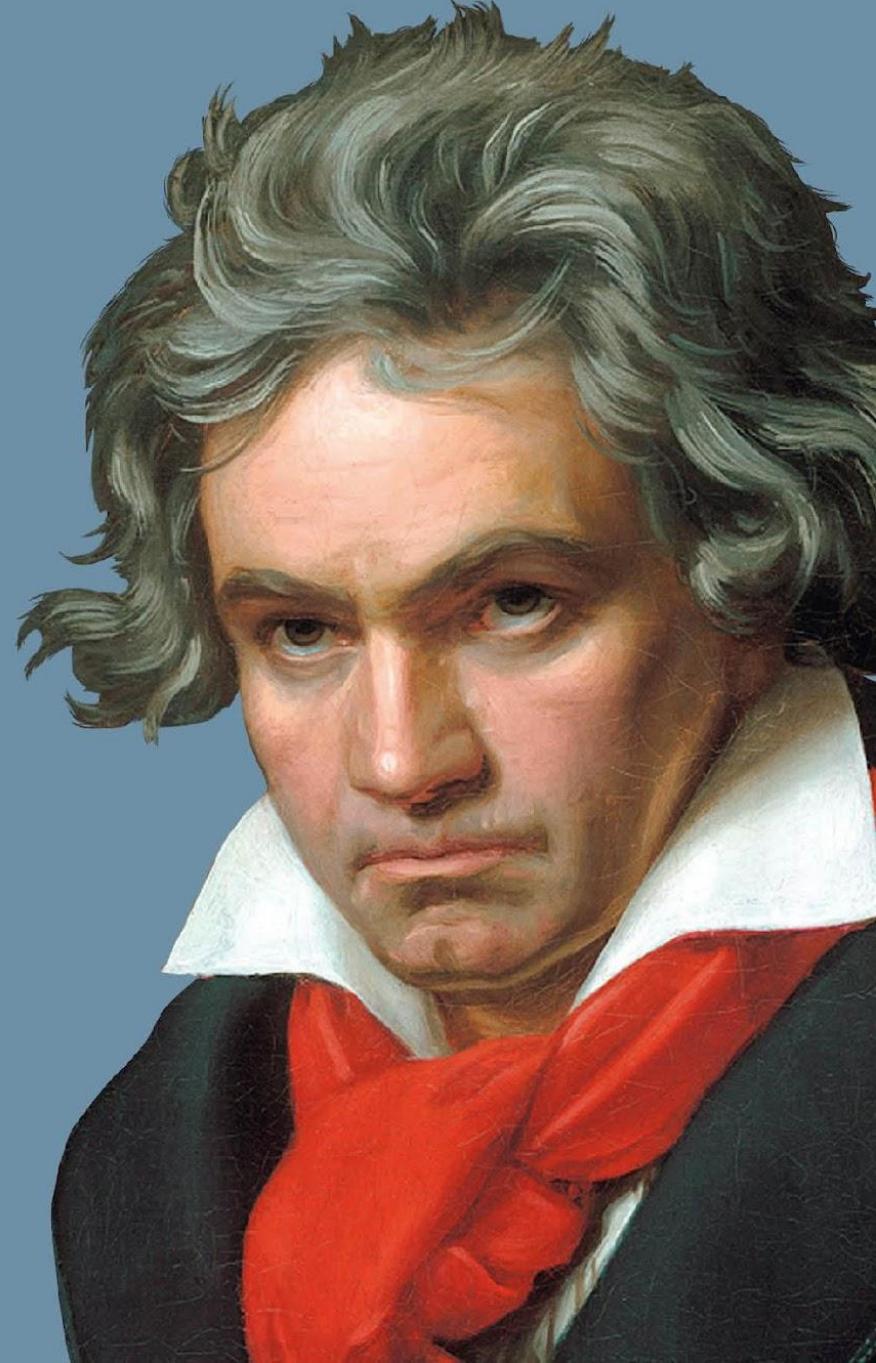
- **Who is she:** Jane Lynch is an American actress who is most famously known for the award-winning TV series Glee. Born in 1960, she is completely deaf in one ear.
- **Deafness:** Lynch found out she was deaf in one ear when she was seven years old whilst playing a hearing game with her brother. Jane's hearing loss was caused by nerve deafness suspected from a very high temperature when she was a baby. Jane's ear is stone deaf meaning hearing aids were not an option. She was determined to overcome her disability and made an exceptional career for herself in film and television.
- **Biggest achievements:** Lynch has starred in some of America's most popular shows and movies, including Friends, Glee, Desperate Housewives, West Wing, the Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, and Wreck it Ralph.



# LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

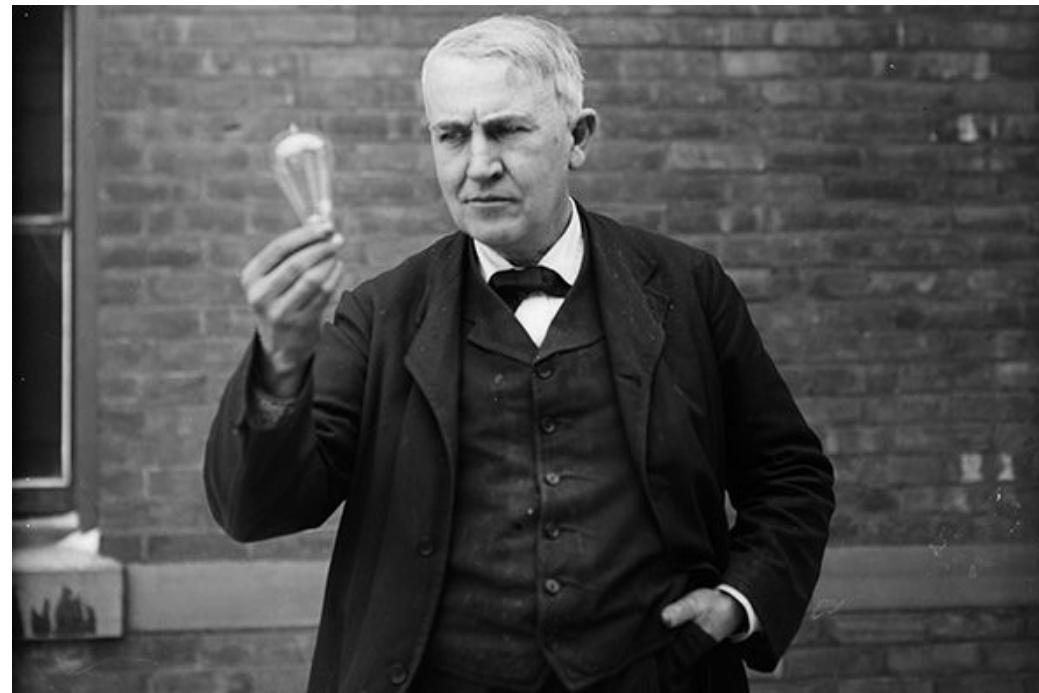
- **Who is he:** Arguably, Beethoven is the most famous Deaf person on our list. He was a German pianist born in 1770 and is regarded as the greatest classical composer ever.
- **Deafness:** Beethoven started to lose his hearing at the age of 26, with a suspected disease called typhus (lead poisoning). And by the age of 52 he was presumed to be completely deaf. However, this is when he produced some of his most important works. As his hearing got worse Beethoven struggled to communicate with people. The biggest challenge for him was conducting and performing in concerts as he couldn't hear when the music stopped and the audience applauded.
- **Biggest achievements:** Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, composed after he'd lost his hearing, is considered one of the greatest classical pieces of all time. Other notable pieces include Fur Elise, the Fifth Symphony and the Moonlight Sonata.

(terptree, 2023)



# THOMAS EDISON

- **Who is he:** Thomas Edison is considered the most famous American Inventor of all time. Born in 1847, Edison is best known for inventing the light bulb, phonograph and motion picture.
- **Deafness:** Thomas Edison had hearing problems from childhood and was thought to be completely deaf by his early teenage years. The cause of his deafness is unknown; although it did run in Edison's family. Edison saw advantages of being deaf and enjoyed that it helped him concentrate on his work.
- **Biggest achievements:** One of Edison's most remarkable achievements is the invention of the light bulb, which he ensured would light a home for hours. Secondly, he designed and developed the system of electric power to generate electricity to homes, businesses and factories – a crucial advancement in the modern Industrialized world. Edison also produced the phonograph, which was used to created motion pictures. Edison worked on it for 52 years and it's said that this was his favorite invention.



# RAYMOND ANTROBUS

- **Who is he:** Raymond Antrobus is an award-winning Poet known for his collection *The Perseverance*. He is also the author of the children's book *Can Bears Ski?*
- **Deafness:** Antrobus was born in East London to a Jamaican father and British mother. And he was deaf, but no one realized it for the first seven years of his life.
- **Biggest achievements:** In 2019 he became the first ever poet to be awarded the Rathbone Folio Prize for best work of literature in any genre. Other accolades include the Ted Hughes award, PBS Winter Choice, A Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year award, Somerset Maugham award and The Guardian Poetry Book Of The Year 2018. In 2018 he was awarded 'The Geoffrey Dearmer Prize', for his poem 'Sound Machine'. He is the recipient of a fellowship from the Royal Society of Literature. He is also one of the world's first recipients of an MA in Spoken Word education from Goldsmiths University.

(Antrobus, n.d.; Cain, 2021)



## TAMIKA CATCHINGS

- **Who is she:** Basketball superstar Tamika Catchings is one of the greatest WNBA players of all time.
- **Deafness:** Catchings was hard-of-hearing from birth, as was her brother. “[Hearing loss] has shaped me as a person; I feel like it has been my sixth sense.”
- **Biggest achievements:** She is a ten-time WNBA All-Star, a five-time All-WNBA selection, and is famous for recording the first ever quintuple-double (25 points, 18 rebounds, 11 assists, 10 steals and 10 blocks in 1997). She has also won a league record of five Defensive Player of the Year awards and is a three-time Olympic gold medalist.

(ai media, n.d.)



## SHELLEY BEATTIE

- **Who is she:** Professional bodybuilder Shelley Beattie has been recognized for her graceful and artistic presentation.
- **Deafness:** Beattie lost her hearing at age three after accidentally swallowing a bottle of aspirin. She learned sign language and had several operations, as well as speech therapy. “The only thing I can’t do is hear.”
- **Biggest achievements:** Throughout the late 1980s, Beattie competed regularly and won regularly. At 22, she earned her pro card in bodybuilding when she won the title at the 1990 NPC USA Championship. After the 1993 Ms. Olympia contest, Beattie retired from bodybuilding. She then served as a grinder on the the first all-women’s America’s Cup team and went on to become a TV celebrity on American Gladiator, where she was known as ‘Siren’.

(ai media, n.d.)



# STEPHEN COLBERT

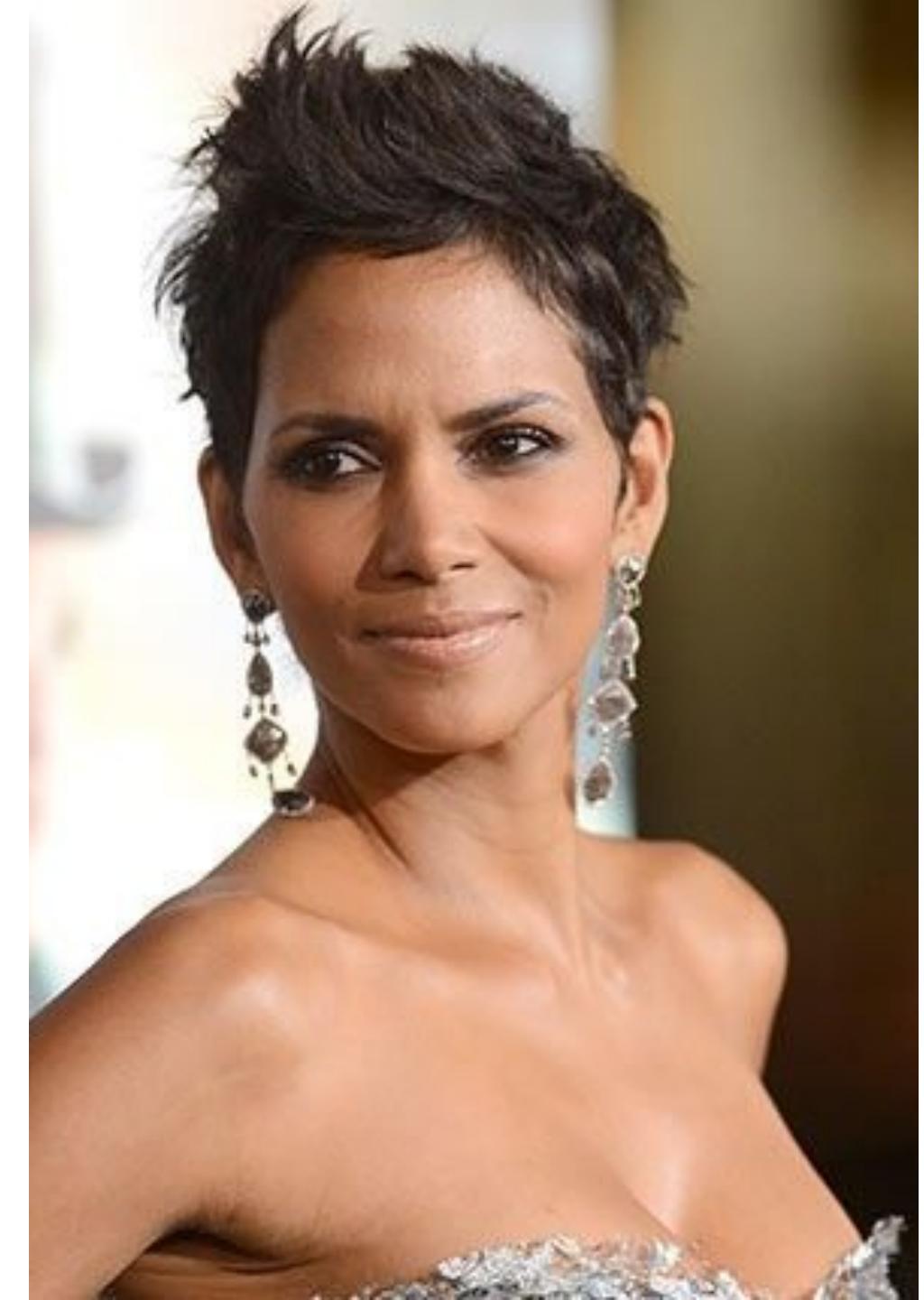
- **Who is he:** American comedian, writer, producer, political commentator, actor, and television host. He is best known for hosting the satirical Comedy Central program *The Colbert Report* from 2005 to 2014 and the CBS talk program *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* beginning in September 2015.
- **Deafness:** Colbert is deaf in one ear after developing “this weird tumor as a kid, and they scooped it out with a melon baller,” he told *The New Yorker* in 2005. In order to safely remove the tumor, doctors had to remove Colbert’s eardrum — so he is completely deaf in his right ear.
- **Biggest achievements:** Colbert has won nine Primetime Emmy Awards, two Grammy Awards, and two Peabody Awards. Colbert was named one of Time's 100 Most Influential People in 2006 and 2012. Colbert's book, *I Am America (And So Can You!)*, was listed No. 1 on *The New York Times* Best Seller list in 2007.

(Rev, 2021; Wikipedia, n.d.a)



# HALLE BERRY

- **Who is she:** American actress, producer, and activist.
- **Deafness:** The Oscar-winning actress lost 80% of her hearing in her left ear after being physically assaulted by an abusive boyfriend. “It was only when I was in an abusive relationship and I lost 80 percent of my hearing in my ear that I realized, I have to break the cycle.”
- **Biggest achievements:** Berry won the Academy Award for Best Actress for her performance in the romantic drama film *Monster's Ball* (2001), becoming the only woman of color to have won the award. She took on high-profile roles for much of the 2000s, such as *Storm* in *X-Men* and *Bond girl Jinx* in *Die Another Day*. Berry was one of the highest-paid actresses in Hollywood during the 2000s, Berry is also a Revlon spokesmodel.



# NYLE DIMARCO

- **Who is he:** American model, actor and deaf activist.
- **Deafness:** Born into a multigenerational Deaf family and deaf himself at birth.
- **Biggest achievements:** DiMarco was the winner of The CW's reality television series America's Next Top Model in season 22, becoming the second male winner and the first deaf winner. In the following year, he and professional dance partner Peta Murgatroyd were the winners of the ABC televised dance competition Dancing with the Stars in season 22. He was also honored as DEAF LIFE Magazine's "Deaf Person of the Year" (January 2017 issue).

(Wikipedia, n.d.b)



# DERRICK COLEMAN



(Duracell, 2014)

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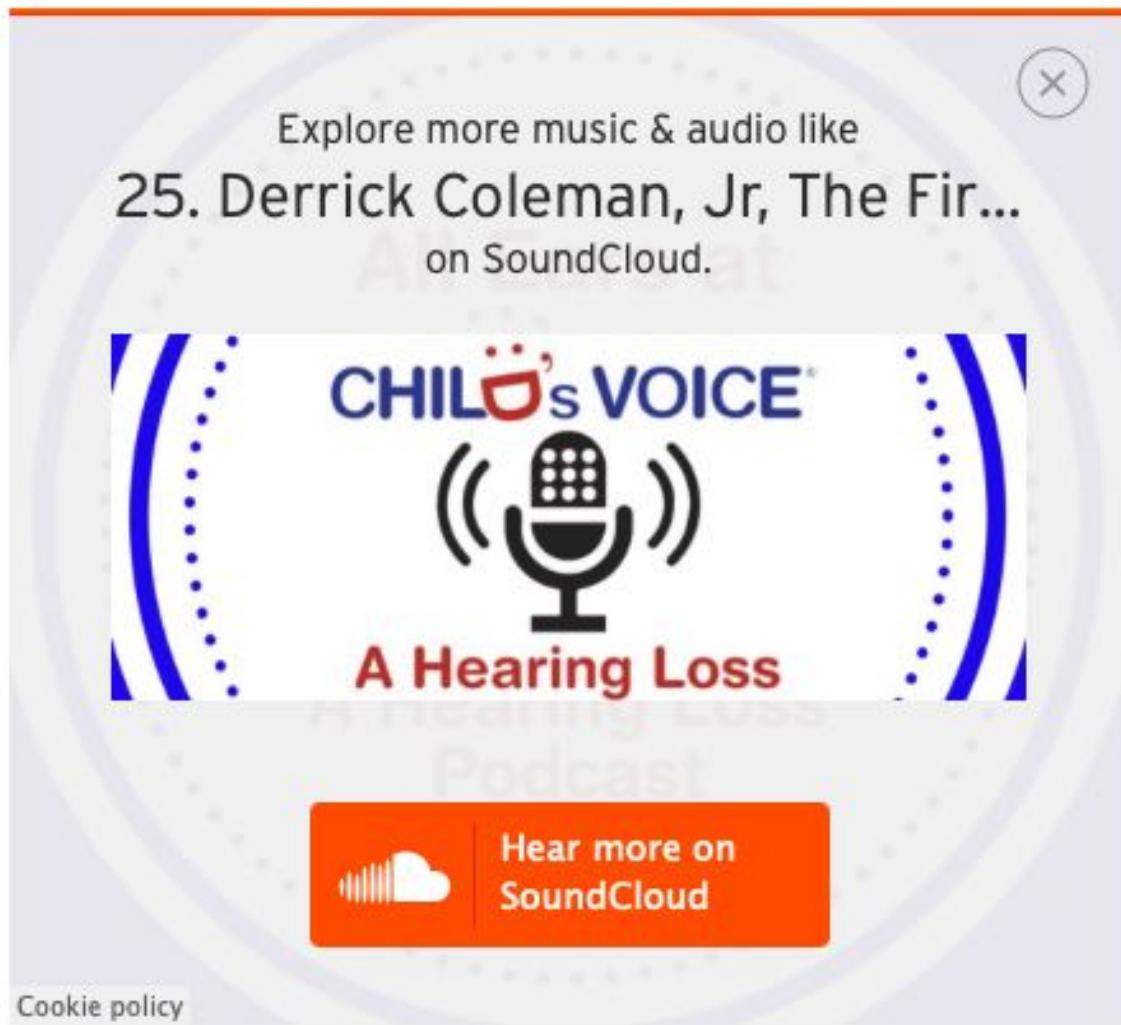
Seattle Seahawks fullback Derrick Coleman is an inspiration to both deaf and hearing individuals. An incredibly moving depiction of Derrick's personal struggle with profound hearing loss is the subject of a recent Duracell advertisement. Derrick has made history for being the first deaf NFL player to play in the Super Bowl. Coleman is a tireless advocate for children with hearing loss, sharing his stories of having to tape his hearing aids to his head inside of his helmet playing football as a child.

Riley Kovalcik, a 9-year-old girl with hearing loss from New Jersey, wrote Coleman to tell him, "Just try your best. I have faith in you," Coleman replied with a handwritten letter of his own, telling her he had faith in her as well. "Even though we wear hearing aids, we can still accomplish our goals and dreams," wrote Coleman, who later surprised Riley and her twin sister Erin with Super Bowl tickets.

Leading up to the big game, #40 also surprised deaf 10-year-old fan Jack Coleman with an in-person appearance, a jersey and a signed football at a sporting goods store, and also handed out hearing aids at Yankee Stadium. Coleman has raised money to help design football helmets that can accommodate cochlear implants as well.

# A HEARING LOSS PODCAST: SEASON 3, EPISODE 25, DERRICK COLEMAN, JR, THE FIRST DEAF NFL OFFENSIVE PLAYER

[HTTPS://CHILDSVOICE.ORG/A-HEARING-L  
OSS-PODCAST-SEASON-3-EPISODE-25-NO  
TES-AND-TRANSCRIPT/](https://childsvoice.org/a-hearing-loss-podcast-season-3-episode-25-notes-and-transcript/)



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