

kids with character

ACCEPTANCE BRAVERY CARING CITIZENSHIP
COOPERATION COURAGE EXCELLENCE FAIRNESS
GENEROSITY HELPFULNESS HONESTY KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY SELF-CONTROL SENSITIVITY THOUGHTFULNESS TRUSTWORTHINESS

Celebrating the spirit and determination of mainstream students everywhere!



Sara Jo AGE 9
Massachusetts

Nominated by
Barbara Mulligan,
Classroom Aide

Acceptance means to receive something willingly or gladly. Having had no choice in being born profoundly deaf, we are sure that Sara's acceptance of her cochlear implants has been difficult for her; but accept it, she has. Sara handles her implants with a degree of maturity that astounds anyone who has had the pleasure of working with her. Her impish personality and her sense of humor give her the ability to navigate through her day and to endear herself to peers, as well as adults.

One of the sweetest sounds heard on a daily basis is that of Sara and her classmates giggling. She puts her peers at ease with her philosophy that "it is what it is." Further, when asked to explain her condition and/or technology to others, she does so with enthusiasm and expects absolutely no special treatment. She is a precocious nine-year-old, and she has the ability to be able to keep a straight face as she teases me, everyday, about various aspects of her technology.

Sara is such a positive role model for both children with cochlear implants and, in fact, all children. She accepts who she is and she is a terrific little person. Simply put—she rocks! I am most positive that she will be featured in the *Mainstream News*, someday, as a woman to be admired!



Noah AGE 13
New York

Nominated by
Francine Fecteau,
Teacher of the
Deaf

At first blush, **equanimity** does not sound like a character trait, but in my interaction with Noah, I have been repeatedly impressed with his ability to handle school, home, and community tasks with equanimity.

Noah was born with a profound sensorineural hearing loss. He is currently in eighth grade in his local school. He began school in a school for the deaf but transferred in second grade. Two years ago he received a cochlear implant. He handled all of this with characteristic composure and has blossomed ever since.

Noah pursues excellence in all areas of his life. He is responsible in assignments, attends in class, and participates in Scouts. He completed a PowerPoint presentation covering his hearing loss, CI, educational needs and strengths, and now makes presentations about his hearing loss and CI to his teachers and classmates. He has been a volunteer at a nationally recognized museum. He has very close bonds with immediate and extended family members.

In all areas, he is serious about his responsibilities. He is ambitious and has a quiet drive for excellence. He is liked, accepted, and respected by peers and staff alike. He accepts all this with a smile and the aforementioned equanimity.



Javon AGE 14
Connecticut

Nominated by
Paula Bell,
Itinerant Teacher
of the Deaf/HOH

Javon exemplifies the word **compassionate**. He sees and 'hears' with his heart. If someone is having a bad day, Javon is the person one hopes to see. His ready smile, calm demeanor, and willingness to assist will quickly ease the doldrums. (He will also check on you later to make sure things are still improving!) His smile reflects his joy of life. His warm heart coupled with his belief that people are basically good shines through from the moment you meet him. Javon isn't defined by his hearing loss and kindly shares his knowledge and experience with younger deaf and hard of hearing students. His compassionate and caring nature reaches all ages and makes the recipients feel safe, welcomed, and heard. As an individual who uses listening and spoken communication, Javon is truly an ambassador to the 'world of mainstreaming.' He is a 'kid with character' who is on his way to becoming a man of character and integrity.

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Meet our 2011 Kids with Character honorees:



Gillian AGE 9
 New York

Nominated by
 Mary Alibrandi,
 Teacher of the Deaf

The character trait that most exemplifies Gillian is that of **acceptance**. Gillian is a fourth-grade student who uses bilateral cochlear implants. She has difficulty hearing in noise as most people with cochlear implants often do. Unfortunately, after much effort, troubleshooting, and research was conducted, Gillian is unable to use an FM in her classroom due to compatibility issues. This has created challenges for Gillian. She needed to become an advocate for herself at a very young age in order to manage noise in her school environment.

In kindergarten and first grade she assisted in reading books related to deafness to her class and answered questions from her teachers and classmates related to her cochlear implants. In second grade and third grade she spoke to classmates about her hearing loss and its challenges, explaining and demonstrating how she needs to read their lips so she can understand all of what they are saying.

Now in fourth grade, Gillian has written letters to older students struggling with acceptance of their deafness. She loves music and singing and plays the trumpet. As one of the "big kids" in her elementary school, Gillian helps younger students with disabilities on the bus and at school. Recently, she helped organize a breakfast meeting for another student with hearing loss and a first grader who is blind. She is working on a PowerPoint presentation, explaining the technology behind cochlear implants, which she will present to staff in May.

Gillian is a young role model to other children with disabilities, both older and younger. I hope she continues to accept her deafness as only one part of the wonderful person she is.



Christopher
 AGE 18
 Massachusetts

Nominated by
 Mary Lou Accetta,
 Director of Student
 Services & faculty

Chris is one of the most **genuine** young men that you'll ever meet. Shortly after he entered our school as a freshman, we realized that though he could appear quiet, even shy, when you first met him, he was busy taking in everything in his environment and making friends with everyone. He has a great sense of humor and enjoys a good joke, though never at anyone's expense.

A senior in the automotive technology shop, he has a strong work ethic, and sticks with the job until he gets it done. This seems to be how Chris handles any obstacle or tough situation in his life; he quietly and calmly perseveres until he succeeds. He is an excellent student, a member of the varsity soccer team and Skills USA, and runs a lawnmower service in the summer. When you compliment Chris, he'll dip his head, give you a shy half-smile, and quietly say, "Thanks."

Chris has learned to be a good self-advocate. Every September, with Clarke consultant Deb Bak's assistance, he has provided his teachers with professional development, demonstrating increased comfort and independence. Recently, he was asked to talk with a group of future teachers at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. He talked about techniques teachers used that were helpful to him, and what was not so helpful. The college students were impressed, and as one man put it, "As you talk with Chris, you realize that the least significant thing about that kid is his hearing loss! He's so sincerely honest—I'd take a dozen kids like him in my class."



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