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95 ° Scattered Clouds

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## September is Deaf Awareness Month

Share new experiences and learn more about deafness at local community events.

### Deaf Awareness Month

Find out more about  
citywide events online:

- [Events Schedule](#)



SEPTEMBER 09, 2003 -- Did you know that American Sign Language (ASL) is the third-most used language in the United States? That the football huddle originated at Gallaudet University for the Deaf when their football team discovered that opposing teams were reading their signed messages and intercepting plays? That Beethoven was profoundly deaf when he created his Ninth Symphony?

### Relay Colorado

This cool, 24/7 service provides a connection between people with hearing and people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Local calls are free, and either party can reach an operator by calling 711.

Sprint Relay Online is similar, but no text-telephone (TTY) is needed. Learn more about both services, and how to use them:

- [711 Relay Colorado](#)
- [Sprint Relay Online](#)

Nationwide, approximately 8.6 percent of Americans three years of age and older are Deaf, hard of hearing, or late deafened. In Colorado, an estimated 376,412 people are Deaf or hard of hearing, including 39,392 Deaf and 337,017 hard of hearing residents.

[Deaf Awareness Week](#) is celebrated nationally during the third week of September, from the 21st through the 27th. The awareness campaign is sponsored by the World Federation of the Deaf and the National Association of the Deaf. However, [local committee members](#) and the Colorado Association of the Deaf have declared this September as Colorado Deaf Awareness Month to accommodate an overwhelming number of community events.

Throughout this month, anyone interested in exploring and celebrating the lives and language of Deaf people can join in [several community events](#). Activities include watching open-captioned movies at local theatres, panel discussions, technology demonstrations, Deaf Awareness Day fun at Six Flags Elitch Gardens on September 13, informational Open Houses at the Mental Health Corporation of Denver and Dove Advocacy Services, a family-oriented Loco Funk/Deaf Variety Show on September 26, and much more.

Deaf Awareness Month activities give participants an opportunity to become familiar with sign language and other communication means; to learn about the resources that are available to the deaf community; to understand the differences in the perspective of deafness held by hearing people versus that of Deaf people; to differentiate between misconception and fact about Deaf people and Deaf culture; and to recognize that lack of knowledge is the biggest barrier to communication and understanding.

### Prevent Hearing Loss



Deafness or hearing loss may

be caused by genetic factors, noise or trauma, medications and infections.

However, approximately 10 million persons in the U.S have permanent hearing loss that could have been prevented.

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) has launched an awareness campaign called WISE EARS! to prevent noise-induced hearing loss.

Learn more about exposure to hazardous sound levels and what precautions you can take now:

- [What is Noise?](#)
- [WISE EARS!](#)
- [Decibel Chart \(Flash version\)](#)
- [Decibel Chart \(Text version\)](#)
- [Free Publications](#)

If you are a person with hearing and you don't know sign language, don't let that prevent you from attending these activities – interpreters will be available at most events to facilitate communication. Some activities are free, others have entrance/registration fees, and most events are open to the general public.

For more information about the city services that are available for people who are Deaf, or for general information on Deafness, visit the Web site for the Denver Commission for People with Disabilities at [www.DenverGov.org/Disabilities](http://www.DenverGov.org/Disabilities).

Contact Lorrie Kosinski, Deaf Programs Specialist, at (720) 913-8487 or by [e-mail](#) for informational brochures that are available free to the public and to city employees, including the sign language ABC's, numbers, a sheet on basic signs for the work place, facts and myths about deafness, information about hearing loss, details about the American with Disabilities Act, and more.

An introductory American Sign Language class is also available to City and County of Denver employees on Friday, September 26 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Lorrie for information about this class.

### **Related Links**

Colorado Deaf Awareness Month  
[www.coloradodeaf.com/DAM](http://www.coloradodeaf.com/DAM)

World Federation of the Deaf  
[www.wfdnews.org](http://www.wfdnews.org)

National Association of the Deaf  
[www.nad.org/](http://www.nad.org/)

Info to Go  
<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/InfoToGo>

HandSpeak (Info on Visual Languages)  
[www.handspeak.com](http://www.handspeak.com)

Association of Late Deafened Adults  
[www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org)

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Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf & Blind  
[www.HelenKeller.org](http://www.HelenKeller.org)

National Information Clearinghouse On Children Who Are Deaf-Blind  
[www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/index2.htm](http://www.tr.wou.edu/dblink/index2.htm)

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Written by [Lorrie Kosinski](#), Deaf Programs Specialist, Commission for People with Disabilities; and Content Developer [Betsy Kimak](#), Office of Television and Internet Services.

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