



## Deaf, Hearing & Speech, Deaf-Blind Awareness

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People in the United States are familiar with weeks or months in the calendar year being designated as times of “awareness.” For example, April is Autism Awareness Month and October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Similarly, there are times in the calendar year designated for Deaf, Hearing and Speech, and Deaf Blind awareness.

### Deaf Awareness Week

The last full week of September is Deaf Awareness Week, which is also International Week of the Deaf. Deaf Awareness Week celebrates Deaf Culture and Heritage as well as the accomplishments and issues of Deaf Americans. It is celebrated by the National Association of the Deaf ([www.nad.org](http://www.nad.org)) and the World Federation of the Deaf ([www.wfdeaf.org](http://www.wfdeaf.org)) as well as schools, agencies, and Deaf individuals. Theme parks such as Disneyland and Six Flags offer Deaf Awareness Day during that week and at other times of the year as well. Here is the Disney Parks video of what they can offer deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons at their parks: <http://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2010/09/celebrating-international-deaf-awareness-week-at-disneyland-resort>. Even Petfinder celebrates Deaf Awareness Week by showcasing adoptable deaf dogs at [www.petfinder.com/pet-adoption/dog-adoption/deaf-dog-awareness-week](http://www.petfinder.com/pet-adoption/dog-adoption/deaf-dog-awareness-week).

### May is Better Hearing & Speech Month

Since 1927, May has been set aside as “Better Hearing & Speech Month” to bring awareness of hearing loss and speech or communication disorders. Not only is it set aside to encourage people to get their hearing tested, but to become aware of treatment, solutions or technology to facilitate better communication. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has more information at [www.asha.org/bhsm](http://www.asha.org/bhsm). For more information regarding hearing loss, visit the Hearing Loss Association of America’s website at [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org).

### Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

The last week of June is set aside for Deaf-Blind Awareness Week to coincide with Helen Keller’s birthday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. The week is devoted to increase understanding of people who are Deaf-Blind, and educate the public that Deaf-Blindness is rarely the total absence of hearing and vision. Deaf-Blindness or dual-sensory impairment can include varying degrees of hearing loss and vision loss. In addition, Deaf-Blind Awareness Week can also bring awareness of the causes of Deaf-Blindness such as Usher Syndrome, Bardet-Biedl Syndrome, infections and bacterial meningitis.

For more information regarding Deaf-Blindness, visit the Helen Keller National Center’s website at [www.hknc.org](http://www.hknc.org).