



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION NORTH FLORIDA FIELD CHAPTER

September is International Deaf Awareness Month

While September is generally designated as International Deaf Awareness Month, International Week of the Deaf events are celebrated by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and its national associations and their affiliates globally during the last full week of September (Monday through Sunday), culminating with International Day of the Deaf on the last Sunday of the week.



The WFD is an international organization composed of 130 national associations of the deaf that, in collaboration with the United Nations, serves all countries with focus on improving human rights of deaf persons, the status of national sign languages, access to education, and access to information technology and services. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) represents the United States as an affiliate member of the

WFD. In the United States, celebration of International Week of the Deaf is held throughout the year, not only during the last full week of September.

The Objectives of these events serve to:

- Gain greater understanding of the American deaf and hard of hearing community and its culture and heritage.
- Learn about sign language as an essential human right and how it is growing in popularity across the United States.
- Find out about resources within your community, e.g., sign language classes.
- Discover ways to promote the human rights of deaf people and access to education and technologies.

Local Spotlight: Florida School for the Deaf & Blind

In recognition of Deaf Awareness Month, we wanted to share information about an important institution right in our own Florida backyard.

The historic city of St. Augustine is the proud home of The Florida School for the Deaf and Blind (FSDB), an **accredited, tuition-free state public school** for eligible pre-K and K-12 students who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, or deafblind.

Established in 1885, FSDB is now the largest school of its type in the United States with 47 buildings on 82 acres. The school serves approximately 1,000+ students each year through statewide parent-infant/family programs as well as a Montessori Pre-K early learning center and K-12 elementary, middle, and high schools on its campus.



Career and technical education courses are offered on campus and through partnerships with post-secondary schools and businesses. Students learn, live and play on a safe and secure campus, and can participate in extracurricular, recreational, and performing arts activities, including statewide and national academic and athletic competitions.

FSDB students discover ways to **do more, be more, and achieve more**, fulfilling the school's vision of preparing them for a lifetime of success. Learn more about this respected Florida institution from the [FSDB website](#).

Local Spotlight: T-Mobile Employee Mando Jimenez

Mando is a Mobile Expert at the Altamonte Mall #2 location

Growing up with deaf parents has been the biggest blessing I could ask for. Without them, I would not be the person I am today. I had to mature much faster than any of my friends because my parents needed my support in many different day-to-day tasks.

Everywhere we went, I was the designated translator amongst my three brothers, and I had to step up to the plate to be a voice for my parents. I remember the day I came in with my mother to sign up for T-Mobile. The infamous Sidekicks device had just come out and the deaf community was raving about this phone. It was one of the best phones with a keyboard, making communication so much easier for them.

I'll never forget the joy and freedom T-Mobile gave my family. We never know how much a device or an interaction can affect somebody. We really work for an amazing company and I'm so glad to be a part of it.



Be Aware, Get Involved

The Accessibility Community at T-Mobile (ACT) supports our T-Mobile employees and their families, while giving employees an opportunity to broaden their understanding of the unique needs & talents of individuals with disabilities. There has NEVER been a better time to dig in as we strive to create a strong community of learners and allies for ALL! #UnstoppableTogether #MobilizeForAccessibility

- [Accessibility Resource Center \(ARC\)](#): ARC offers accessibility guidance, best practices, technical and design coaching, and access to tools to help product teams build accessible products in every step of the software development life cycle from concept to production.
- These [Deaf/Hard of Hearing Communication & Interaction Tips](#) may seem like common knowledge to some but not to all! They are a wonderful way to begin learning!
- Our [Accessibility Communications Guide](#) is a great place to start to guarantee accessibility.
- Learn how you can quickly begin [Accounting for Hearing Loss in Documents](#).
- Start learning ASL [here](#)!
- Check out the [DE&I Learning Podcast](#) page this month which will feature an exciting interview with Claudia Gordon, Accessibility Strategist on the DE&I Team, and member of the Deaf community!
- Set aside time to watch [CODA](#) (Child of Deaf Adults), a memorable film that highlights the vibrancy of ASL as a form of communication and walks you through truly soul-filling moments.