

DeafBlind Awareness Week

June 25 - July 1, 2024

This week is marked annually in honor of leading humanitarian Helen Keller's birthday on June 27. Being deaf and blind herself, Keller's work made a big difference in the lives of DeafBlind people.

What is DeafBlindness?

DeafBlindness is a combination of visual and auditory impairments. It is a dual sensory loss.

A person who is DeafBlind has a unique experience of the world. For people who can see and hear, the world extends outward as far as their eyes and ears can reach. For the person who is deafblind, the world is much narrower.

If the person is profoundly deaf and blind, their experience of the world extends only as far as their fingertips can reach. Their concepts of the world depend upon what or whom they have had the opportunity to physically contact.

If the person has some usable vision and/or hearing, as many do, their world will be enlarged. Many people who are deafblind have enough vision to be able to move about in their environments, recognize familiar people, see sign language at close distances, and perhaps read large print. Others have sufficient hearing to recognize familiar sounds, understand some speech, or develop speech themselves.

The range of sensory impairments included in the term "deafblindness" is great.



About Helen Keller:

She was born on June 27, 1880. At 19 months old, she lost both her sight and hearing due to an illness. At the age of 7, she started learning to communicate through fingerspelling. She attended the Cambridge School for Young Ladies and then also attended and graduated cum laude from Radcliffe College. She mastered touch-lip reading, Braille, speech, typing, and fingerspelling.

She took part in numerous campaigns to raise awareness, money, and support for blind people. She was a well-known lecturer, sharing her experiences and working on behalf of people with disabilities.

It is much more common than many people realize.

Over 15 million people worldwide are estimated to be living with severe DeafBlindness.

	Normal Hearing	Hard of Hearing (mild to moderate)	Deaf (severe to profound)	Progressive Loss
Normal Vision		Hearing Loss	Hearing Loss	Hearing Loss
Low Vision	Visually Impaired	DeafBlind	DeafBlind	DeafBlind
Legally Blind	Visually Impaired	DeafBlind	DeafBlind	DeafBlind
Progressive Loss	Visually Impaired	DeafBlind	DeafBlind	DeafBlind



This week is a chance for us to raise awareness of deafblindness and make Pennsylvania a more DeafBlind-friendly place.