

**Rachel Hernandez
Sierra High School
Manteca, Ca
San Joaquin County Office of Education-Special Education
Programs**



Books are different worlds. You choose what world you want to be in from what you read. Reading allows the opportunity to escape, learn, discover, and grow. I have always loved to read. My parents love to read. I am proud to pass this love to my students. However, it is not as simple as that. My students are deaf and hard of hearing and not all feel so confident with English vocabulary and reading.

I applied to the Book Love foundation to start a new library and opportunity. I have been a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing for 20 years. I have taught all age groups at some point in my career but have been teaching High school for the last 10 years. With this grant I will build a Deaf and hard of Hearing library.

I want to use this library to serve my students and General Education students on my site-Sierra High School (Manteca, Ca) with books with deaf characters. I feel this will allow access for my students to see themselves in literature and educate their hearing peers to see deafness as a commonality.

The library will be open to all Deaf and Hard of Hearing program students and their teachers from preschool through high school grades. I plan to support the entire deaf and hard of hearing program for the San Joaquin county office of education-special education department. My goal for this Deaf and Hard of Hearing library would be to have books at all levels for students who are Deaf

and Hard of Hearing, General education students and teachers to check-out and utilize.

Books I plan to collect for the library include picture books all the way through adult novels, fiction, non-fiction, as well as a multitude of genres. The library will contain books that are of high interest for low readers as well as tools to teach with. My vision is to have a library for all with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing emphasis to provide access. All books in this library will have deaf characters of all modalities of communication as well as representation of all amplification approaches.

On my campus I am the advisor for the American Sign Language Club. Through club meetings we teach sign language to offer more communication access as well as educate about Deaf culture and incorporate everyone together. I think this Library is another great resource to include Deaf and Hard of Hearing students into the hearing world to be one group and not to feel different. With access to the library for the entire campus it could inspire more inclusion and build a connection within the student and staff body.

Through time my goal is to continue to expand that library and not be a focus on just deaf characters in literature but Authors that are deaf as well.