

October is Disability Awareness Month

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Steven Spielberg (Dyslexia)

Can you believe that the man behind such films as Indiana Jones, Jurassic Park, and E.T. has a learning disability? It's true. Visionary director and producer Steven Spielberg grew up struggling with schoolwork. It took him two years longer than his peers to learn to read, a fact for which he was often bullied. Finally officially diagnosed with dyslexia at age 60, Spielberg has managed to find some inspiration in his diagnosis. He often encourages young artists with their own learning disabilities, telling them, "You are not alone, and while you will have dyslexia for the rest of your life, you can dart between the raindrops to get where you want to go. It will not hold you back."



Haben Girma (Deafblindness)

Haben Girma has been advocating for herself since she attended elementary school in Oakland. She became the first Deafblind person to graduate from law school when she earned her degree from Harvard Law School in 2013. She is a civil rights attorney who advocates for disability rights, a public speaker who travels the country changing people's perceptions of the disability community in the media and has been featured in Forbes "30 Under 30" and on NBC and NPR.



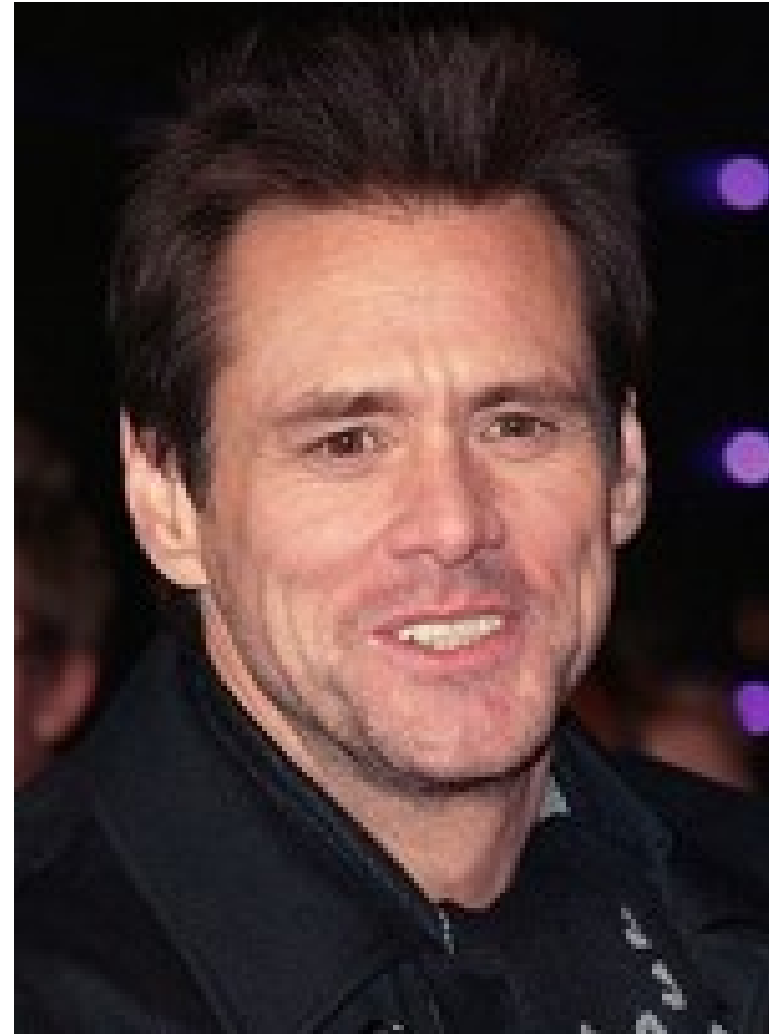
Dr. Temple Grandin (Autism)

Dr. Temple Grandin is well known to many for her trailblazing work as a spokesperson for people with autism and her lifelong work with animal behavior. Dr. Grandin has been with Colorado State University (CSU) for over 25 years. Grandin has been referred to as the "most famous person working at CSU" by her peers.



Jim Carrey (Dyslexia & ADHD)

Maybe this one is not so surprising. But in all seriousness, legendary comedian Jim Carrey has long been honest about his struggles with various learning disabilities and the ways in which those differences have affected his mental health. Diagnosed with both dyslexia and ADHD as a child, Carrey recalls experiencing myriad behavioral issues while growing up in school. Treatment such as medication has helped Carrey immensely, as has focusing his energy into his very physical comedy and being a spokesman for those with ADHD.



Andrea Bocelli (Blind)

Famed Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli is known for his beautiful voice, but what many may not know is that he was diagnosed with congenital glaucoma not long after birth and had limited vision. At the age of 12, he lost his sight completely. "Growing up, every day they told me 'this is too dangerous' but I don't care," he told The Independent. "Everything is dangerous. To take the car and go out on the highway is also very dangerous or to fly in a helicopter. I like very much to ride horses. I like soccer, I have had a passion for boxing since I was a child although it would be stupid for me to box." Check out the incredible health benefits of music.



Frida Kahlo (Polio)

Frida Kahlo, one of the most influential artists of our time, contracted polio at the age of six. This resulted in one of her legs being thinner than the other, according to Disability Horizons. Then, at age 18, she was involved in a horrific trolley accident that left her with a broken spine and pelvis, as well as a pierced abdomen. It was during the year that she was essentially sequestered from the outside world while in a body cast that she took up painting as a way to express her creativity.



Keira Knightley (Dyslexia)

When you consider how many scripts an actor must read, it might seem like the profession would be a turn-off for a person with dyslexia. For film star Keira Knightley, who was diagnosed with dyslexia at age six, she actually used her love of acting to overcome the condition. “Dyslexia is like a wall... it’s very difficult to see over it,” she told the BBC. “I was really lucky because I had acting... it was like a carrot that was being dangled in front of me because I had to be able to read those lines in order to do it.” Make sure you don’t fall for these myths about dyslexia.



FARIDA BEDWEI (Cerebral Palsy)

Software engineer, Farida Bedwei, has been hailed as one of South Africa's most important figures in financial technology, pioneering cloud platforms that have helped make small loan decisions available to consumers across the world immediately. Bedwei was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of one and has made continued strides to educate both parents and sufferers that the condition doesn't have to prevent anyone from achieving their goals.

