

ADVOCACY

People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter



People First of Toledo

Disabled Figures: Helen Keller

By Quinn Thomas

Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Alabama. When she was two, she got sick, probably with scarlet fever. This illness left her permanently blind and deaf.

In her early years, Helen couldn't talk. She communicated with her family by feeling their facial expressions with her hands. Her mother was a strong advocate for her and had her seen by many experts. Alexander Graham Bell eventually recommended Anne Sullivan as a teacher to her.

Anne moved in with the Kellers to teach Helen full time. Anne would finger-spell words onto Helen's palm. She taught her to read words raised on cardboard and to spell by rearranging letters in a tray.

UPCOMING EVENTS

INCLUSIVE STORYTIME

September 5, 10:00-11:00, at King Road Library.

FAMILY & ADVOCATE FORUM

September 10, 9:30-11:00, 1155 Larc Lane.

COMMON GROUND SOCIAL GROUP

September 10, 5:30-7:30, at 1155 Larc Lane. Ages 18+.

SENSORY FRIENDLY HOUR

September 21, 9:00-10:00, National Museum of the Great Lakes.

PHOENIX RESIDENTIAL TALENT SHOW

September 24, 5:30, at Maumee Indoor Theater.

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE

November 8, 9:00-5:15, at the University of Toledo Lancelot Thompson Student Union.

Helen spent two years learning Braille at the Perkins Institute for the Blind before moving on to learning to speak at the Horace Mann School for the Deaf. She even learned to lipread by putting her hand over someone's mouth while they spoke. She attended the Cambridge School for Young Ladies as a teenager. And then Helen Keller went to Radcliffe College and graduated cum laude.



She did not stop there. Helen was an outspoken self-advocate and activist. She began to write about her life experiences, and was quickly published in a number of major magazines and newspapers. She went on from writing articles to writing complete books.

Helen Keller was also an accomplished speaker. She went on lecture tours all around the world. She was given honorary doctorates from Harvard, Glasgow, and Temple Universities.

Helen's activism was broad and wide-ranging. She advocated for socialism, disability rights, workers' rights, women's suffrage, birth control, and against lynchings. She co-founded the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), along with Jane Addams, Crystal Eastman, and Roger Baldwin. She protested against WWI but also made a point to visit veterans in hospitals.

Helen Keller is truly an inspiration to everyone, disabled or not.

OUR NEXT MEETING

September 19th, 6:00-7:30, virtually on Zoom or in-person at the Holland Library in Community Room B. Meeting dues are \$5 or \$50 for twelve months.

This is our annual voting event. Members will learn the candidates, learn the issues, get registered, and find our polling locations.