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A Once in a Life Time Experience

Hannah, a young student, is currently attending the University of Louisiana at Monroe. When she first started at ULM, she was a pre-pharmacy major. Throughout the course of her first semester, she changed her major from pharmacy to speech-language pathology. Hannah changed her major because she realized that speech-language pathology was where she needed to be. Throughout her life, she has always loved to help people with whatever problem they have or anything else they need help with. Since she was a very young girl, she has enjoyed being socially interactive with others. Hannah's other academic interests include English, music, and science. So now that you know just a little about Hannah, here is her story about an experience in her life.

One day during church service, Hannah experienced a once in a life time event. A lady that she attended church with did something that Hannah had never seen before and it piqued her interest greatly. The lady used sign language for all of the words to the song "Who am I" by Casting Crowns. The movements were very fluid and beautiful to Hannah. She instantly fell in love with the movements. Right then she decided that she would memorize each and every movement. True to her word, she practiced the signing everyday over and over. After a lot of practice it finally became like second nature to her.

Eventually, Hannah started taking sign language classes to help her learn more signs. Because of the classes, she would become better at the signs that she already knew. After

Hannah had only taken a few lessons, she could sign the basics of the language with ease. Now with the basics thoroughly learned, she was able to hold a decent conversation using her hands only. This was very rewarding and gave her a feeling of accomplishment plus pride in her abilities. With the previous practices and the new lessons, she could sign the song “Who am I” that she had originally heard at church accurately. Hannah loved the song and would sign it to many people at different times in various places. With a little patience and a lot more practice, various other songs were able to be done in sign language.

A family friend worked at a facility for the mentally handicapped. The facility worked with many different levels of mental handicaps including Autism and Down syndrome. Hannah’s friend had seen her practice sign language and had seen her sign the song “Who am I”. This gave her friend had a wonderful idea and asked Hannah to come to the facility. Once at the facility, she was asked if she would mind teaching some of the people with a higher mentally handicapped level sign language. Being a good hearted person, she eagerly agreed to this task. Hannah began teaching the students some of the basic signs in sign language. She liked to call her students “kids” and had a blast teaching them. According to her, no one would easily be able to tell that the “kids” were mentally challenged just by looking at them. The students were a lot fun to be around and they always seemed to have a smile on their face. This in turn made Hannah smile too. The “kids” were very eager and excited to learn what lessons had been prepared for them on any given day. The students loved to acquire new skills and she loved to teach them. More importantly though she just loved working with the “kids”.

When enrolling at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, Hannah chose pharmacy as her major. It was thought that pharmacy would satisfy her love for all the different aspects of life. However, pharmacy did not satisfy this need. Hannah knew at this time that she needed to make

a change, but did not know which major to choose. After agonizing over and looking through a list of majors, she came across speech-language pathology. This major seemed very interesting and exciting. Hannah wanted to learn more about it. She read through the list of course offered under this major and found out what this type of degree would entail. During the research of this major, she realized there were specialty classes that she could take also. To her delight, sign language was one of the specialties offered.

Her previous experiences at the facility for the mentally handicapped had given her a new outlook on life. When Hannah found the specialty classes in sign language, she fell instantly in love with the major. After a lot of research, the big decision was made to switch majors. Hannah made an appointment with the head of the department to officially change the major from pharmacy to speech-language pathology. Upon completion of her bachelor's degree, Hannah looks forward to working with the deaf. Weather the people she works with are young or old, makes no difference to her. She has already gotten off to a good start by being familiar with and able to aptly use sign language. This is just the beginning of Hannah's dream. Just think! It all began one day at church with a song done in sign language.