

Dear Mum and Dad

Why a letter instead of a card saying “Thanks for being the world’s greatest parents?!?” I wanted to express my gratitude to you both for raising me the way you both did. You both would fight all the obstacles for me and made sure I had no blocks nor struggles in life. I don’t think anyone could have a better life than I did.

Having two great deaf parents couldn’t be better for a deaf child. I happen to be the child and I couldn’t help feeling so lucky. I didn’t have any communication barriers at home with you both, I was able to express myself freely. You both would make sure I was doing what I wanted to do. Remember when I was forced into going to speech classes and wear telex, and how so much I would complain about it. You fought all the way for my rights. Surely enough, I wasn’t forced to do so anymore. Even when I was curious about speech and using hearing aids when I was younger, you didn’t stop me from exploring my horizons. You respected me for who I was and for what I wanted to be. You both wouldn’t stop exposing me about ASL and deaf culture which I really benefitted so much from. Not only about the deaf world but the reality in the real world out there. You made sure I was aware of the oppressions, the war between manualism and oralism, the barriers that would occur to deaf people. Being aware of those important issues inspired me to be who I am today, a proud deaf person. You made sure that I didn’t believe that I was disabled of doing ANYTHING. Of course, parents’re always right. If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have that strong self-esteem being a deaf person.

I couldn’t be happier with your decision of placing me into the deaf school’s preschool program. I loved going to school and I learned so much throughout the years at the deaf school. I gained so much attending there. All lessons that I didn’t learn at home, learned there. Nothing could be better than having deaf peers, classmates, teammates, staff and role models all in one place. I had the privilege to understand and being able to communicate with everyone at one place. I know I was fortunate to be placed there. Sure, I had some problems at the deaf school, but that didn’t stop you from providing what was the best for me. You would try anything to promote my education in higher places including placing me in a public school next to the deaf school for half-day. A new environment was fun at first but it got tiresome and frustrating. Especially when I was the only one mainstreamed with 30 hearing peers who wanted to learn sign language. I felt like they were trying to be my friends because they sympathized me. The teachers and the faculty would make a big deal about having a deaf student. Everyone knew I was deaf and they would treat me differently. I was screaming inside when I had to tolerate the special treatment there. Despite how much you both wanted me to stay there, you respected my decision of wanting to return to the deaf school as a full-time student. However, I don’t think placing me in a half-day mainstreaming program is entirely wrong. I was able to experience what most other deaf students experience. Despite the special treatment, I did eventually make some friends and taught them some sign language. Even to this day, I know some of them are taking classes to become interpreters or teachers for the deaf. I could see and feel what it was like to be the only deaf student in a whole hearing environment. I must admit, it did become lonely at times. Not everyone could understand me fluently nor communicate with me on my level with sign language. I would have to sign slower or use my interpreter to help the students understand me. At the deaf school, I didn’t have to

worry about anything like that. Everyone could understand me and I had friends that I didn't have to slow down for.

The opportunity and access at the deaf school is unbelievable. I didn't have to worry about making my friends understand what I was saying nor trying to understand what they were saying. The access to communication was no problem growing up at the deaf school. I grew up feeling there were no problems and couldn't think life could be better. I was able to play sports, run some organizations, be on the yearbook staff, and be on various committees. I was not restricted at all. Academically, I had the greatest teachers. You both made sure I was on track. All of my teachers could sign and it was much easier than trying to catch what hearing teachers were saying or watching interpreters. You both never once gave up making sure I was getting good grades and being involved with my academics.

Thanks for making my life GRAND! Thanks for fighting all the way to see that I got the education, the access, the opportunities and the happiness. No one could have done it better than you both! I love you!

With tons of love.

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