

Marvel Actress Lauren Ridloff Visits Clerc Center Students



When Lauren Ridloff chose to become a teacher after graduating from college, she had no idea that the world would be her classroom!

Ridloff has been finding enormous success through her work as an actress. Her first professional movie role was in 2011; however, her acting career really began taking off in 2017. Since then, she has acted in notable roles such as Sarah Norman in Broadway's 2018 revival of *Children of a Lesser God*, for which she received a Tony nomination for Best Actress in a Play, and Connie in the AMC television series "The Walking Dead" among other productions and films. She is also breaking barriers in the Marvel Cinematic Universe—an American media franchise centered on a series of superheroes—having taken on the role of Makkari, its first deaf superhero, in 2021's *Eternals*.

On May 13, 2022, Ridloff was on campus for Gallaudet University's commencement ceremony, for which she was the honorary degree guest speaker. She was also presented with an honorary Doctor of Humane

Letters for her work, along with pioneering deaf linguists Dorothy Casterline and Carl Cronenberg, who wrote and edited the first dictionary of American Sign Language with William Stokoe in 1960. On this day, Ridloff also made sure to stop by the Clerc Center's Kendall Demonstration Elementary School

(KDES) and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) to give presentations to the students. Ridloff is a 1995 alumna of MSSD.

During her presentation at KDES, Ridloff emphasized to the young students the importance of pursuing what they like in life, of letting their interests lead the way. She

explained that she has always loved to read and write, to imagine being other people in interesting stories. This naturally transferred over to acting, and it helped her become confident when initially she was painfully shy.

During her presentation at MSSD, Ridloff reminisced about her journey to MSSD. She arrived at the school at age 13, initially hesitant to come. She shared that she came to realize her parents' decision to send her to MSSD was one of the best things they ever did for her. During her years there, she was actively involved in the Performing Arts Program, playing the lead role of Dorothy in *The Wiz* and participating in the internationally known MSSD Road Show; she was also on the cheerleading squad. After graduation, Ridloff attended California State University, Northridge, where she majored in English with an

emphasis on writing. She also joined a local deaf performing group. Ridloff participated in the 2000 Miss Deaf America pageant and won the crown, representing the National Association of the Deaf from 2000-2002. She then became a teacher and writer before finding success in front of the camera

and on stage.

Ridloff continues to advocate for representation of the Deaf community in the world of entertainment and beyond, and she continues to inspire our Clerc Center community.

Congratulations, Lauren!





Clerc Center Announces New Formats Available for 15 Principles for Reading to Deaf Children Training

The Clerc Center is pleased to announce that 15 Principles for Reading to Deaf Children is now available as both an in-person training and an online, self-paced training!

The 15 principles are part of the Clerc Center's Shared Reading Project (SRP), which provides tutoring and support to families who want to learn how to effectively share stories in American Sign Language (ASL) with their young deaf or hard of hearing children. They are based on information gleaned from videotaping culturally Deaf parents reading to their Deaf children. Those videos were analyzed to determine what specific approaches Deaf parents used during their



story sharing. The principles were then developed to give parents, caregivers, and teachers of deaf and hard of hearing children strategies in learning how to read aloud in ASL. When families effectively share stories with their children, there is a greater likelihood of an improvement in the reading ability of those children. The use of these principles can lead to literacy and language skills that will impact all areas of a child's learning.

The in-person 15 Principles

training—the first format—can be tailored to audience needs, is offered as a six-hour training, and is available for a fee. The online, self-paced 15 Principles learning course—the second format—focuses on learning about what the principles entail, includes several independent activities, and is available to families, deaf education teachers, early intervention professionals, and anyone else who has or works with deaf or hard of hearing children. The free online training will be available on the Clerc Center's new portal (registration required). In addition to these new training formats, all videos for the 15 Principles have been updated.

We look forward to supporting families and professionals in learning more about the 15 Principles and the SRP. Please visit our website (<https://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>) or email training.clerccenter@gallaudet.edu for more information.



Clerc Center Hosts 2021 and 2022 Education & Advocacy Virtual Summits



during which participants had the opportunity to ask questions.

2022 Virtual Summit February 23, 2022

The 2022 professional summit, which was open only to administrators in deaf education and special education and for which 154 individuals registered, focused on Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative

The Clerc Center, in collaboration with the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, Gallaudet University's Undergraduate Office of Admissions and Outreach, Gallaudet's Government Department, and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), hosted its fourth and fifth Education & Advocacy Summit: Deaf Education. Both summits were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 Virtual Summit February 24, 2021

The 2021 professional summit, designed for administrators and professionals in deaf education and special education, had 393 registered individuals. It focused on social justice and equity issues and the impact of the

coronavirus pandemic on K-12 deaf education in the United States.

Claudia Giordano, graduate and program assistant in Gallaudet's Department of ASL and Deaf Studies; and **Marianne Belsky**, chief academic officer, **Nicole Sutcliffe**, chief administrative officer, and **Debbie Trapani**, director of Bilingual Education and interim co-director of Planning, Development, and Dissemination, from the Clerc Center, all gave welcome remarks.

Ashanti Monts-Trévicka, co-owner of Cascadia Deaf Nation, presented on "Transformative Action in Deaf Education." Their presentation highlighted critical action tools to guide educators and administrators in the education system to recognize the need to

transform and empower the transpersonal worldview of deaf education.

Zainab Alkebsi, Esq., policy counsel at the NAD, and **Tawny Holmes Hlibok**, Esq., Gallaudet faculty member and education policy consultant for the NAD, co-presented on "The Impact of COVID-19 on K-12 Deaf Education," sharing legal guidance, technology resources, and social justice challenges and considerations that schools have been facing in figuring out remote learning as well as with how to bring students, teachers, and staff back safely on site. **Dr. Nancy Hlibok Amann**, superintendent of the California School for the Deaf-Riverside, also brought invaluable reflections and perspectives as a school leader to this presentation.

After the presentations concluded, the presenters participated in a live Q&A,

Services (OSERS) resources, the Clerc Center's new portal, and ways to support equity in schools from an administrative viewpoint.

Marianne Belsky, chief academic officer, and **Debbie Trapani**, director of National Programs and Outreach, Early Intervention, both of the Clerc Center, welcomed the participants to the summit.

Brianne Burger, director/liaison for the Special Institutions inside the U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, gave a presentation on "OSERS' Investments in Deaf Education" that included information on the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) investments in technical assistance and dissemination; information on the National Center on Deaf-Blindness; and OSEP investments in personnel preparation, professional development, and leadership

development to address state-identified needs for qualified personnel, including teachers and providers serving deaf and hard of hearing children, to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge via OSERS' various grants focusing on personnel preparation.

Trapani presented on the Clerc Center's new, soon-to-be-released portal that will serve professionals, early interventionists, and families. She "walked" the audience through the portal, showing various sections and what is contained in them (e.g., Online Learning; Learning Communities; Networking; Resources to Go, including media such as video content, *Odyssey* articles, links to websites, and training modules), explaining in depth how the portal will benefit users. Trapani mentioned that the portal is still in the building phase, and that the Clerc Center will be reaching out periodically to programs and individuals to gather more resources and information that can be added to the portal.

Dr. Joseph Santini, director of instruction at the Clerc Center, presented on "How to Support Equity in Schools: An Administrative View," focusing on core values and vision in equity, setting goals and exploring a school with equity in mind, building an "equity freeway," and developing an equity plan using a whole school approach. He also discussed

identifying needed training, acknowledging that change can be difficult, and celebrating growth.

After these three presentations concluded, the presenters participated in a live Q&A, during which participants had the opportunity to ask questions.

Finally, **Stacy Abrams**, project manager for early intervention at the Clerc Center, discussed current resources available to professionals and families on the Clerc Center's website. She spotlighted a few, including: the "Focusing on Early Accessible Language" webcast, the "Setting Language in Motion" modules, the Early Intervention Network, the 15 Principles for Reading to Deaf Children, the Parent Advocacy app, various other

webcasts on which the Clerc Center has collaborated, and *Odyssey* magazine.

As the summit concluded, Belsky and Trapani encouraged people to sign up for the Clerc Center's new portal as soon as it is released and to answer a five-question, summit-related survey so that organizers can better prepare for the next summit in 2023

Presented by Joseph Santini, PhD

HOW TO SUPPORT EQUITY IN SCHOOLS: An Administrative View



For Administrators

2022 EDUCATION & ADVOCACY VIRTUAL SUMMIT: DEAF EDUCATION

February 23, 2-4 PM (EST)

based on viewer feedback.

Prior to this summit, a virtual Youth Workshop on legislative advocacy, sponsored by Gallaudet's Deaf Studies Department, Gallaudet's Government Department, and the NAD, was held on February 22, 2022.

Come join us at next year's events!

HELP ODYSSEY IN GOING GREEN ...



Have you moved?
Have you changed jobs?
Do you want to receive a digital copy of *Odyssey* instead of a printed one?

Please help us reduce issue bounce-back and waste by updating your subscription preferences. Contact us at Odyssey@gallaudet.edu.
Thank you!



LAURENT CLERC
NATIONAL DEAF EDUCATION CENTER

clerccenter.gallaudet.edu

