## Straddling the Line Between the Deaf and Hearing Communities

## in a Hearing Dominated World

Shayna Svihovec Class of 2014 Human Biology and Society, Disability Studies

## Abstract:

The intent of this research is to explore the relationship between the Deaf and hearing communities and the impacts that this relationship has on those individuals who are a part of both worlds in attempt to eliminate stigma and move towards equality. The Deaf community has grown from being marginalized and discriminated against to being active and culturally strong. There are stark differences between the Deaf and hearing communities, including language and cultural norms, that set them apart from each other and sometimes put them at odds. The Deaf community is its own culture, akin to Indian or Chinese culture, but those in the Deaf community find themselves living in the middle of a very different culture; the hearing culture. This creates a divide that has led to misunderstanding and negative perceptions that come from both sides. There are some who find themselves a part of both cultures; hearing children born to deaf parents (children of deaf adults or CODAs), deaf children born to hearing parents, those who become deaf later in life, and interpreters. There is little research done on this population and the relationship between the communities effects these individuals. With which community do they identify or do they identify with both? Has straddling the line between communities ever created a struggle with how they identify or has it been easy to assimilate into both?