

# Floridians with Disabilities



**Sara Romine** was among the first students with a significant disability to be included in general education classes in Florida. As a member of the Florida Youth Council, she helped write the Disability History and Awareness Bill, which was passed and signed by Governor Crist on June 13, 2008.

To support the bill, Sara founded Awareness and Action Partners. Her first project is a DVD highlighting famous people with disabilities along with interviews of students with disabilities.

In 1994, **Salim Nasser's** dreams of becoming a mechanical engineer were put on hold when he was injured in a car accident, leaving him with quadriplegia. Fourteen years later, with the help of Florida's Vocational Rehabilitation, Salim's dream has come true—he's a mechanical engineer for NASA. At NASA, Salim works on the new Constellation program, the next generation of rockets and space craft that will be traveling to the moon and Mars.





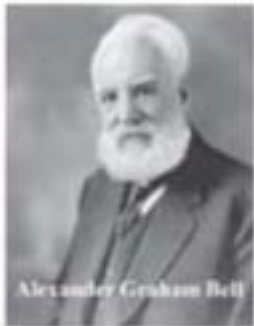
**Tracy Rackensperger** is a faculty member at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), University of Georgia. After getting a Masters in Communication from the University of Central Florida, she moved to Georgia in 2005. Tracy oversees the coordination of the Institute's outreach activities. She promotes IHDD programs and principles through publications and materials. Tracy relies on a power wheelchair for mobility and a speech-generating device to communicate.

**Casey O'Halloran** was the first student with his disability in his school district to be fully included in typical classrooms, and he participated in activities, clubs, and sports. He also served as a class representative his junior and senior years. He works as a permanent part-time clerical assistant at the County Courthouse, where he has worked for the past eight years. Casey started his own company, Casey Enterprises, to inspire, educate, and motivate other individuals with disabilities to become more independent. He was twice appointed by former President Bush to serve on the 21-member President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.



As an infant, **Laurel Elliott** suffered profound hearing loss after a high fever. Thanks to her excellent grades in high school, Laurel received a scholarship to Mississippi State University. Laurel is now a veterinarian at the Banfield Pet Hospital in Panama City. Today, Laurel can hear and even talk on a phone thanks to a cochlear implant, and she uses a modified stethoscope at work.

Without the contributions of people with disabilities, what would this world be?



Alexander Graham Bell



Harriet Tubman



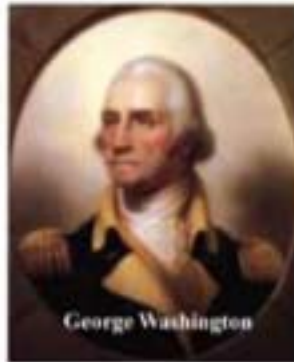
Annie Sullivan



John Milton



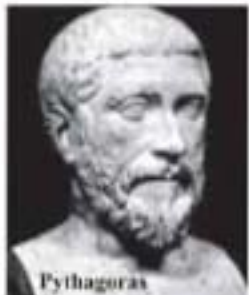
Itzhak Perlman



George Washington



Henry Ford



Pythagoras

**YOU**  
can make a difference, too!



Vincent van Gogh



Sir Winston Churchill



Stephen Hawking



Virginia Woolf



Emily Dickinson



Axl Rose



Eleanor Roosevelt



James Earl Jones

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# Without the contributions of people with disabilities, what would this world be?



The inventor of the telephone had a learning disability and slight hearing loss.

**Alexander Graham Bell**

The woman who was called "the Moses of her people" led many slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad. At the age of 12 she was seriously injured by a blow to the head for refusing to assist in tying up a man who had attempted escape. The injury caused her to have seizures throughout her life.

**Harriet Tubman**

Helen Keller's teacher and lifelong friend was herself nearly blind due to a childhood illness.

**Annie Sullivan**

The author of "Paradise Lost" and other epic poems dictated his poetry to an assistant after glaucoma caused him to lose his sight.

**John Milton**

The world's greatest living violinist walks with the help of crutches and leg braces. He contracted polio when he was 4 years old.

**Itzhak Perlman**

The first U.S. president had very poor grammar skills and could barely write because of a learning disability.

**George Washington**

Attention deficit disorder had not yet been named when Henry Ford's ideas about mass production revolutionized American industry, but he exhibited all the classic symptoms.

**Henry Ford**

Various biographies describe the artist as suffering with epilepsy, depression, psychotic attacks, delusions, and bipolar disorder.

**Vincent van Gogh**

The Greek who is often called "the first pure mathematician" had epileptic seizures.

**Pythagoras**

**YOU**  
can make a difference, too!

The eloquent scholar who led Great Britain through World War II worked hard all his life to overcome a speech impediment.

**Sir Winston Churchill**

Perhaps the world's most accomplished astrophysicist, whose theories draw upon both relativity theory and quantum mechanics, much of his work has been done since he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also called "Lou Gehrig's Disease."

**Stephen Hawking**

This British writer and editor contributed much to modern literature and social reform in spite of severe bipolar disorder.

**Virginia Woolf**

One of America's greatest poets, an extreme mood disorder caused her to become a recluse and she rarely left her home after her mid-20s.

**Emily Dickinson**

The raw n' raucous lead singer of Guns N' Roses has been diagnosed and treated for bipolar disorder.

**Axl Rose**

The wife of America's 32nd president was a tireless social reformer and activist with what we now call attention deficit disorder.

**Eleanor Roosevelt**

One of America's best-known actors, his resonant voice once stuttered badly.

**James Earl Jones**

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