

Courage & Resilience

Humans of Hear
HEAR FOR THE HOLIDAYS EDITION



**GUESS
WHO?**

After graduating from Cegep, Vanessa Séfriu earned scholarships to pursue her higher education in the United States while representing her schools on the soccer field. After completing her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in business administration/marketing concentration, she spent one year in England where she helped a visually impaired lawyer. She then came back to her hometown because of Covid and pursued her interest for corporate social responsibility by joining Hear Entendre Québec under the Canada Summer Jobs program.



Coming to Canada

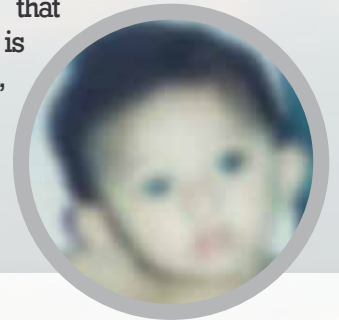
"Never judge a book by its cover" is an expression we often use to remind ourselves that everyone has a different story and to be mindful of those differences when interacting with each other. You never truly understand someone until you take the time to listen to their story with an open heart and an open mind. When you truly pay attention to the storyteller, you get to relive their experiences and their emotions with them. You become them for a brief moment. Today, you'll have the chance to place yourself in the shoes of a very courageous and resilient individual. Are you ready to explore the bottom of this person's iceberg? I think you are!

My parents never really suspected anything particular about me until one day when they found me sleeping in a really noisy environment. They found it odd so they took me to the doctor and that is when my journey began. I was 8 months old when my parents were informed for the first time that I was more than likely born deaf/hard of hearing. Doctors would normally find such a defect earlier in a baby's life based on a variety of specific cues, but since I was an overall healthy baby, my parents never felt the need to take me to the doctor before that day. It is thought that my deafness may have been caused by my mother contracting German measles when she was pregnant with me. This would have then led to my bilateral congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).

Apart from the fact that all I could hear/sense without any hearing support devices were vibrations, I was overall a typical child. I had parents that loved me enormously and spoiled me

just enough. My sister, who was three years younger than me, and I got along very well (if you do not count the times she stole my new toys...). My parents always told me that I was a really happy and playful kid. I apparently loved to talk. I only spoke my native language at the time. There is an expression in English to describe someone like me... a chatterbox! I also had a big heart and I always wanted to help others. I would continually show generosity towards those that seemed in a more difficult financial situation than me. So overall, I was privileged to have never lacked anything in my childhood. What else could I have asked for? Well, maybe there was one thing... my hearing.

You have to understand that I come from the small country of Bangladesh, which is nestled between India and Myanmar (Burma). When I was a child, resources for the hard of hearing community were scarce even in the big cities. I was lucky to live in the highly populated capital, Dhaka, so I did have some resources available to me, but they were limited and not really advanced technologically. My mom knew that she had a big decision to make, and like any mom, she made it in the best interest of her child. So at 5 years old, my mom announced to me that we were moving to Canada! Canada...this cold yet cool place where it snows all year long, where you get to interact with polar bears, and build your own igloo...at least that's what I thought. Let's say that where I come from, snow is as rare as sugar pies. Ya, right, it does not exist. It is way too hot for that.



Dear reader

We hope that you enjoyed this first part of this courageous story of one of our members. This is the first part of a five part series that will be released throughout the month of December. Our goal is to show the impacts of someone living and adapting to hearing loss, and how Hear Québec can support our members through this process.

Please make sure to follow, like, and subscribe to our social media pages to keep up with the rest of our Calendar of Hope. The story will also be featured on our blog, so as the parts are released you can reread them all in one place! With your donation we can continue to provide reliable resources and support to those affected by hearing loss. Together we stand for accessibility... Together we can!