

## ADA 20 Year Anniversary Article

**Kathy Earp, L.S.W., CI/CT**  
Student Advisor Specialist  
Program for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Students  
Camden County College  
Blackwood, NJ 08012  
[kearp@camdencc.edu](mailto:kearp@camdencc.edu)

*“The rickettsal disease canine monocytic ehrlichiosis is caused by Ehrlichia canis, whose vector tick Rhipicephalus sanguineus, the brown dog tick.”* For most of us veterinary technology would be a challenging course of study. Let’s make it more challenging. Imagine you are deaf and you must learn and understand this highly technical terminology via a sign language interpreter. That is what Samantha Wallin, recent graduate of Camden County College’s Veterinary Technology Program, was able to do because of the support of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

English is a second language for Samantha and for many deaf individuals whose first language is American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is a visual and gestural language with no written form. Deaf and hard of hearing students such as Samantha, require support services to be able to compete in college. Prior to WWII, there were no postsecondary programs for deaf or hard of hearing students outside of Gallaudet College.

Today, the ADA has made it possible for Samantha and thousands of other deaf and hard of hearing individuals to attend college with support services that allow them to participate on an equal level with their hearing peers. Many students have successfully completed their programs of study and moved into careers that are rewarding and productive.

The Americans with Disabilities Act on Higher Education of 1990 impacts the whole institution including activities, programs, and employment. In regards to academics, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on Higher Education 1990 required higher education institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students.

Reasonable accommodations for Samantha included sign language interpreting and notetaking services. According to Samantha, “Without interpreters or notetakers, I would be lost.” Samantha attended a special pinning ceremony at Camden County College on May, 18 and officially graduated on Saturday, May, 22, 2010. What happens for Samantha after college?

Once again we can look to the ADA. The Title I employment provisions have done much to improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The ADA prohibits discrimination in all employment practices. Samantha was able to complete her required 120 clinical practicum hours with her college support services in place. Upon successful completion of her program of study, Samantha was hired as a veterinary technician with The Delaware Valley Animal Hospital in Mullica Hill, NJ, where she completed her clinical hours.

The ADA played a significant role in Samantha’s success story. It gives us reason to hope for the continued success of individuals with disabilities to be able to participate equally in education and employment. ADA makes it possible for our society to benefit from the skills and expertise of qualified individuals with different abilities. Best wishes for continued success to Samantha Wallin in her career as a veterinary technician. Kudos to The Delaware Valley Animal Hospital, and congratulations to the Americans with Disabilities Act on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

Submitted to Camden County Senior & Disabled Citizens Advisory Council  
by Kathy Earp  
May 26, 2010