



## Client Success story

### Client Name

Ashlei Miller

### Hometown

Ardmore

### Their story

Oklahoma School for the Deaf senior Ashlei Miller from Ardmore was the official spokesperson for Deaf Awareness Week in September.

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services selected Miller, age 17, to represent Oklahoma.

“Back in the past, people weren’t as aware, but now they are becoming more knowledgeable and more interested in Deaf culture, in our community and sign language,” Miller said.

American Sign Language is expressed by movements of the hands and body, and facial expressions. Deaf people in the United States and parts of Canada primarily use ASL. Other countries have developed their own sign languages.

“I think that all people should know that Deaf people are in this world,” Miller added. “Maybe they don’t need to learn sign (language) specifically, but (they should) at least know about us as a community and as a culture. Interpreters too.”



Miller was born in Oklahoma City and moved to Ardmore with her family when she was in 5th grade to benefit from better communication options at Oklahoma School for the Deaf in Sulphur.

“When I was in the public school, I didn’t feel like I had as many opportunities,” Miller said. “But here (at OSD) I felt connected. I was involved in sports. I could work. I could hang out with friends. I could do anything.”

When she is not enjoying her favorite English class or playing basketball and

soccer, Miller proudly represents OSD as the first official bison mascot at sports and community events. The new mascot was selected by a vote of students, staff and alumni in July 2021.

In April, Miller performed as the bison mascot at the Oklahoma City Thunder basketball game, distributed t-shirts and signed the national anthem with other OSD students.

Her favorite role model is Lauren Ridloff, a Deaf actress who portrayed Makkari, the first Deaf superhero in

Marvel Studio's 2021 film "Eternals."

"She's a wonderful role model Deaf character, and everyone knows her," Miller said. "It just shows that if she can do it, we can do it."

After graduation from OSD in May 2023, Miller plans to attend Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. She wants to become a basketball coach and teach sign language at a Deaf school or a public school. She is also interested in teaching about the Deaf community and culture.

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## **DRS staff who helped change a client's life**

### **OSD staff**