

Interviewee: Samantha Vayo
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Abstract: Samantha Vayo was born on March 23, 1990 in Worcester, Massachusetts where she also grew up. She attends The Learning Center for deaf students in Framingham. While she claims not to like going to school, she does like math and being with her friends. In this interview she talks about the excitement of being chosen one of five young women out of 250 by Seventeen Magazine for a modeling session in New York and how she now works as a model in Boston. She has also participated in the Special Olympics for over ten years and her favorite sports are bowling and gymnastics although she also competes in soccer, basketball, and softball. Samantha also discusses being deaf since infancy and having cerebral palsy. She is proud of proving the doctors wrong when they claimed she would never be able to walk. Today she is a good athlete.

Kimberly Powell: We're meeting with Samantha Vayo for the Woman's Worcester History Project in the year 2008. Okay, what's your full name?

Samantha Vayo: My full name is Samantha Ashley Vayo.

KP: Your name sign?

SV: This is my name sign.

KP: Where were you born?

SV: I was born in Worcester.

KP: When?

SV: I was born on March 23, 1990.

KP: Tell me about your parents.

SV: Hmm, my parents? They both helped me a lot.

KP: What's your dad name?

SV: My fathers name is Brian? I'm sorry I always confuse the names Brian and brain because they are signed similarly.

KP: What's your mom's name?

SV: My mother's name is Renada.

KP: So you have good words from, about your parents?

SV: They've really supported me a lot.

KP: That's good. Do you have brothers or sisters?

SV: I have one sister.

KP: Her name, what's her name?

SV: Her name is Erica.

KP: How old is she?

SV: She is 22.

KP: Is she in school now?

SV: Who?

KP: Your sister...

SV: Yes. She goes to Worcester State College.

KP: Worcester?

SV: Yes.

KP: Did you grow up in Worcester?

SV: Yes I did.

KP: Your whole life?

SV: Yes, I've lived here all my life.

KP: Have you always lived here?

SV: Well, I've lived here in this house for six, almost 16 years.

KP: Oh wow. Do you have other family that lives in Worcester?

SV: Yes I do.

KP: A lot?

SV: Yeah, most of my family. My grandparents do live up North.

KP: Where are they?

SV: They live in Maine, and they live with my aunt and my uncle.

KP: Wow. So you must have a close family?

SV: Yes absolutely.

KP: Do they know sign language?

SV: Well some of them do, and some of them don't. It's kind of half and half.

KP: What's your favorite place in Worcester?

SV: Hmm, [long pause] well I do go to a deaf program.

KP: At Holy Cross right? [laughter]

SV: Yeah, at Holy Cross. [laughter]

KP: Are you involved with the deaf community in Worcester?

SV: Hmm, [pause] there isn't really one, there's not many deaf people.

KP: Do you think there will be more in the future?

SV: Yeah maybe there will be.

KP: Would you like to see Worcester make some changes?

SV: Hmm.

KP: It's a hard question.

SV: Well, I don't really know...

KP: That's fine...

SV: Okay [laughter]

KP: Do you like Worcester?

SV: Yeah it's okay.

KP: Okay, so where do you go to school?

SV: I go to The Learning Center.

KP: The Learning Center?

SV: Yes, it is a school for deaf kids.

KP: Where's that?

SV: In Massachusetts...

KP: Oh, Framingham.

SV: Right, yes, it's in Framingham.

KP: What year in your school...your grade?

SV: I am in 11th grade.

KP: Oh, wow. Did you go to other schools before?

SV: Yes I did. I went to two other schools before. I went to McGrath Elementary School, and then I went to the ALL School and ALL stands for Accredited, uh something or other. [laughter]

KP: Do you like school?

SV: Uh, [laughter]

KP: You don't? What do you like about school? What's good?

SV: Well, uh, I like my friends.

KP: Okay. What do you not like?

SV: I don't like, hmm, learning in general [laughter].

KP: [Laughing] what's your favorite class?

SV: My favorite class would have to be math.

KP: Math? Really? Why?

SV: I really love solving problems.

KP: Do you think you're a good student?

SV: Umm, well yes of course.

KP: Tell me about the school ghost Max.

SV: The school ghost Max...well I don't really know a lot about him. Some people have told me things but I don't really know a lot about him.

KP: No stories?

SV: No, sorry.

KP: When you graduate do you want to go to another school?

SV: Umm, m-maybe.

KP: You're not sure? In the future what do you want to do? Work, do what?

SV: Hmm, I'm not sure.

KP: Ha, okay I see. Oh! Tell me about modeling for Seventeen Magazine.

SV: Yes, modeling. Well, my mom first told me about it. She asked me if I wanted to go and be in Seventeen Magazine and I was like "Of course I do!" So I filled out the application, I sent it in with my picture and they wrote me back, and they said yes, they wanted me to go. They picked five girls out of 250 girls in the United States, but they only chose five girls. So of course I was so excited, I couldn't wait to go. So I went to New York and I was there for two days and it was so much fun! When I first got there they dyed my hair, I got to get all dressed up, they took before and after pictures, they took group photos, everything.

KP: Do you want to do more?

SV: Yes, definitely.

KP: Yeah?

SV: Right now I actually work in Boston as a model.

KP: Wow.

SV: Uh huh.

KP: Tell me about Special Olympics.

SV: Well I've been involved in the Special Olympics since 1997, and well I started competing in '98 [1998]. I do gymnastics, I do soccer, bowling, baseball, and basketball.

KP: What's your favorite?

SV: Well I have two favorites; the first is bowling and the second's gymnastics.

KP: I know you're busy, what do you do with your free time?

SV: I like to go out with my friends.

KP: And do what? Go to restaurants?

SV: You know, maybe we'll go bowling or we go to the movies. Things like that.

KP: What's your favorite movie?

SV: My favorite movie...

KP: It's hard.

SV: It would defiantly have to be the Parent Trap.

KP: That's a good movie, I love it.

SV: Yes.

KP: How did you become deaf?

SV: Well, let's see.

KP: Were you born deaf?

SV: Yes. My mom didn't find out I was deaf um I think I was around 10 months old when my parents found out, so you know they don't know if I was born deaf or if right after I became really sick.

KP: Tell me about your Cerebral Palsy.

SV: CP, well I was born with CP, my parents told me I was born with CP and I went to

the doctors and physical therapy and they told me that I would probably never walk. So, I proved them all wrong because I can walk, I like to play. I can do everything.

KP: You're a good athlete?

SV: Yes, yes.

KP: What challenges have you had being deaf?

SV: Hmm, Challenges?

KP: It's hard...

SV: Yes it is. Communicating with hearing people is always hard.

KP: You have a lot of patience...

SV: Yes, I'm very patient.

KP: Is there any information you want to tell me about yourself?

SV: Hmm, let me see... [Long pause] I have a cat.

KP: What?

SV: One cat. She'll be somewhere around here.

KP: What's your cat's name?

SV: Her name is Ashes.

KP: Do you have any other pets?

SV: No, not currently.

KP: No?

SV: But in the past I did have two hamsters but unfortunately they both died.

KP: Awe, sorry I mourn for you. Thank you for interviewing with me.

SV: Thank you, good job.