

# Celebrating All Abilities Virginia



**SUMMER 2022**

## *The Bee in My Bonnet is Exhausted . . . .*



Since I was a little girl, I’ve usually had a bee in my bonnet buzzing about one thing or another. But for the past few months, I’ve just been trying hard not to feel broken. I didn’t even have the energy to put out a Spring newsletter...

In the quest for some inspiration to fend off my despair, I spent some time reading back through my previous editor’s letters. I’ve written about growing up as the big sister of my brother who was born in 1958 with profound cerebral palsy and about forcefully standing up to people who used derogatory language to describe my brother.

I’ve written about the determination of my parents to advocate for people like my brother to be home; in an era when the prevailing wisdom was to institutionalize my brother and others like him.

I attended—and subsequently gratefully wrote about—a Sibshops presentation where I realized I wasn’t alone as the adult sibling of a person with disabilities.

I’ve documented my journeys in education and the need to reach students at the level where they are and scaffold them to greater success.

I’ve commented relentlessly about the need to stay active in the political arena to whatever extent possible to keep advocating for our family members.

I had been trying to tell myself that the world has been making slow... slow... slow... progress....but then, on top of everything else, I remembered a recent Supreme Court decision that may weaken disability rights.

I couldn’t even find any facebook postings to cheer me up. I expressed my dejection on a friend’s Facebook page and her reply gave me a bit of hope. She said;

*“First, we grieve, then we fight.”*

So, today, I’m taking a step back and catching my breath for the fight ahead.

*Laura Nelson*, Editor

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~ FOUND ON FACEBOOK ~



## Seen on The Today Show

Posted April 5, 2022, 8:18 AM EDT  
By Scott Stump



### *Deaf Engineers At Snapchat Unveil New Tech To Translate, Teach ASL*

A team of deaf engineers known as the "Deafengers" has spear-headed a new Snapchat feature called ASL Alphabet that aims to bridge the divide between the deaf and hearing worlds by helping people learn American Sign Language.

As Hollywood celebrates "Coda," the Oscar-winning best picture that depicts the struggles of a mostly deaf family, Snapchat is working to



eradicate some of the communication barriers portrayed in the film.

The new augmented reality-enabled Lens, which was released on Tuesday and made in partnership with the technology company SignAll, teaches you how to fingerspell your name and practice the ASL alphabet. It also has a game to track your progress and tell you what you are getting right and wrong.

The new ASL Alphabet Lens is essentially a more advanced and educational version of the three augmented reality Lenses made in partnership with

SignAll that Snapchat debuted in September during the International Week of the Deaf.

Austin Vaday, 25, is one of the deaf engineers known as the "Deafengers" who helped develop the new Lens for Snapchat's 319 million users.

"We want the world to understand that sign language is important, and that everyone signing is important," Vaday told NBC News correspondent Erin McLaughlin on TODAY Tuesday through ASL interpreter Jonathan Webb.



Look for the next issue of Celebrating All Abilities to be posted during the Fall of 2022. Send story ideas, interesting links, and events to *Laura Nelson, Editor* at [CelebratingAllAbilities@gmail.com](mailto:CelebratingAllAbilities@gmail.com)

*I do not solicit advertising or accept donations. I also do not accept stories/articles that have advertising links.  
Thank you!*

**THANK YOU FOR FOLLOWING US ON FACEBOOK.**

## Supreme Court Decision Weakens Disability Rights, Advocates Say

by Michelle Diamant | May 9, 2022

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision chips away at disability rights, advocates say, by making it harder to bring claims under some of the nation's anti-discrimination laws.

The high court ruled late last month 6-3 against Jane Cummings, who is deaf and legally blind, determining that emotional distress from discrimination is insufficient harm to warrant a lawsuit under four federal civil rights laws.

Cummings sued after Premier Rehab Keller in Texas declined to provide her a sign language interpreter at her physical therapy appointments. The therapy provider said that Cummings could use notes, lip reading and gestures to communicate instead.

Cummings argued that Premier Rehab Keller discriminated against her on the basis of disability, violating the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Affordable Care Act, which apply to facilities that receive federal funds like the therapy provider does.

However, a federal judge determined that Cummings' only injuries were "humiliation, frustration and emotional distress" and indicated that the laws in question did not allow for the recovery of damages in such cases. A federal appeals court affirmed the ruling and a majority of the Supreme Court agreed.

Writing for the majority, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said that damages for emotional distress are not available in most breach of contract cases, so it's unreasonable to think that business receiving federal dollars should be held to a different standard.

"After all, when considering whether to accept federal funds, a prospective recipient would surely wonder not only what rules it must follow, but also what sort of penalties might be on the table," Roberts wrote.

In addition to the Rehabilitation Act and the Affordable Care Act, the ruling applies to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

In dissent, Justice Stephen G. Breyer noted that discrimination often harms in ways that are purely emotional.

"It is difficult to square the court's holding with the basic purposes that antidiscrimination laws seek to serve," Breyer wrote.

"The court's decision today allows victims of discrimination to recover damages only if they can prove that they have suffered economic harm, even though the primary harm inflicted by discrimination is rarely economic. ... The court's decision today will leave those victims with no remedy at all."

The ruling puts people with disabilities in a precarious position, advocates say.

"These civil rights statutes are intended to protect the rights of people with disabilities and other historically disenfranchised groups. In foreclosing relief for the emotional distress that may ensue from discrimination, this holding diminishes the dignity and respect that people with disabilities deserve and are entitled to as full members of our society," said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

The ruling will effectively "weaken the protections for people with disabilities in the Rehabilitation Act and the Affordable Care Act," according to Ira Burnim, legal director at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

"Nearly 50 years since the passage of the Rehabilitation Act, too many people with disabilities continue to face isolation and humiliation as a result of discrimination," Burnim said. "By limiting their ability to seek and obtain money damages for the emotional distress they experience when their rights are violated — in many cases, the only cognizable harms such plaintiffs experience — today's decision has significantly limited their access to justice."

*Founded in 2008, Disability Scoop is the nation's largest news organization devoted to covering developmental disabilities. With daily coverage of autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and more, no other news source offers a more timely and comprehensive take on the issues that matter to the developmental disability community.*

*Readers include teachers, special educators, school administrators, therapists and other disability professionals in addition to parents and caregivers. What's more, lawmakers and the nation's most influential disability advocates rely on Disability Scoop to stay in the know.*

*For regular news updates, sign up for free e-newsletter and be sure to follow on Facebook and Twitter. To search job openings for professionals serving those with disabilities, visit Disability Scoop Jobs.*  
— <https://www.disabilityscoop.com>

# Travel Accessibility and Tips for Travelers with Disabilities

Written by Bonnie Gringer

[www.titlemax.com/author/bgringer/](http://www.titlemax.com/author/bgringer/)



## Editor's note:

Thanks to Margaret Bowan whose newly formed Special Needs Ministry group at St Paul's Church Community found this article on a commercial site and forwarded to us. Reprinted here with thanks.

<https://faithmaps.org/service.html> • <http://www.abilityministry.com>

Disabled travelers may need special services and accommodations to travel safely and successfully, and they have a right to these services by law. Depending on the destination, accessibility may be a challenge, especially when traveling internationally. Because everyone has unique needs, providing accessibility will require different things from person to person. However, with advance planning, it's often possible to travel where you want to go with a disability.

## Travel Tips

- **Plan in Advance:** Research your destination so you know what accommodations are available for you. Book hotels in advance, and plan travel routes carefully. Service providers in the tourist industry must provide accommodations for disabled travelers, but this might take time in some cases. Always call a provider at least 24 hours prior to your arrival to ensure that the destination is ready for you.
- **Create a Backup Plan:** Even after careful planning, issues can arise. Create backup options in case plans fall through. If the weather interferes with your schedule, your wheelchair breaks, or your flight is delayed, you'll have a "plan B."
- **Communicate Clearly:** Describe your limitations and completely and explain exactly what you can and cannot do to ensure you get the assistance you need.
- **Get Physician Recommendations:** Get your doctor's input as you plan travel. Your physician may be able to provide suggestions for flying or for traveling by car. Request a statement from your doctor that outlines your condition, medications, possible complications, and other special needs. Include the physician's phone number in the statement.
- **Travel with Extra Medication:** Bring an extra set of your medications with you in case of emergency. Travel with all of your medication in a carry-on bag.
- **Explore Physician Availability:** Check out doctors at your destination prior to traveling.

- **Bring Medical Alert Information:** Travel with a necklace, bracelet, or wallet card to identify your medical issues.
  - **Use a Special Travel Agent:** Find a travel agent who specializes in assisting travelers with additional needs.
  - **Special Tours:** Consider a special tour guide to help you manage your vacation. Make sure your tour guide is experienced, and research what to expect on the tour.
  - **Travel Direct:** Whenever possible, avoid flights with connections. Flying direct is usually less complicated.
  - **Check in Early:** Always arrive at the airport early enough to get through security and find your gate.
  - **Know Your Rights:** Travelers with disabilities may have specific rights regarding airport security.
  - **Communicate with Flight Attendants:** Make a plan for disembarking with the flight attendants before you land.
  - **Arrange Transportation:** The transportation you arrange to and from the airport needs to have the necessary accessibility options.
- Be Flexible**
- Barriers can be frustrating, but a can-do attitude does wonders for handling challenges. While being flexible is important, expect and demand equal access during your travel, but have a positive attitude about it.
- Devise methods for the greatest independence so you can manage things yourself. For example, using a lightweight wheelchair when traveling may help you manage without having assistance.
- Be prepared to handle needing to use the bathroom when the bathrooms aren't accessible.
- Learn a few key phrases in the local language if you're traveling internationally.

For complete article, visit

[www.titlemax.com/travel-accessibility-and-tips-for-travelers-with-disabilities/](http://www.titlemax.com/travel-accessibility-and-tips-for-travelers-with-disabilities/)

# Accessible Playgrounds

Let Kids Play is the home of accessible and inclusive playgrounds

Here you will find great resources on how to develop an accessible playground from A to Z. You will also find hundreds of examples of what other people have done. In addition, if you are heading out on vacation and want to ensure you have an accessible place to play, the site can point you in the right direction.

The Accessible Playground directory and learning lab is a project of Let Kids Play. There are two goals of the project:

- To help families find a place where all of their children will be able to play.
- To provide you with all of the information you need to develop your own accessible playground. Let Kids Play is a consulting business that assists communities to create new accessible playgrounds or enhance their existing playspaces. Mara Kaplan is the founder of Let Kids Play. Mara is an educator, a seasoned advocate for inclusive play and a mom of a child with a disabilities.

Let Kids Play can provide you with guidance on how to create an accessible playground; everything from fundraising to design to community builds. Mara also can inspire your community or organization with exciting workshops and speeches.

Join [accessibleplayground.net](https://www.accessibleplayground.net) today! It is free and will provide you with ongoing information about accessible playgrounds.

## Find a Playground

<https://www.accessibleplayground.net/playground-directory/>

## Build a Playground

<https://www.accessibleplayground.net/projects-1/>

## Playground Resources

<https://www.accessibleplayground.net/playground-resources/>



**Let Kids Play!**  
*Because every child deserves to play*

<https://www.accessibleplayground.net/>  
[www.accessibleplayground.net/united-states/virginia/](https://www.accessibleplayground.net/united-states/virginia/)

## Recreation Resources ~

*These sites and others are available at <https://celebratingabilities.com/community-resources/>*

*Be aware that most camps below were not operating or operated virtually during Covid. As of June, 2022, several camp websites have not been updated. Contact individual camp to verify.*

### ~ **American Association of Adapted Sports Programs**

*Works in partnership with education agencies in the U.S. to establish programs, policies, procedures, and regulations in interscholastic adapted sports for students with physical disabilities to enhance educational outcomes.*

**[www.adaptedsports.org](http://www.adaptedsports.org)**

### ~ **ArtStream**

*Believes that through collaborative performance and lifelong learning opportunities, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities gain the skills and confidence to engage in the world. Artstream offer arts centered classes, workshops, socials, theatre companies, and cabarets to individuals with IDD's and Autism virtually as well as LIVE in Virginia, D.C., and Maryland.*

**<https://www.art-stream.org>**

### ~ **Move United**

*The merger of Disabled Sports USA and Adaptive Sports USA unifies community-based adaptive sports under one national organization, bringing recreational and competitive adaptive sports together for the first time.*

**[www.moveunitedsport.org/we-move-united](http://www.moveunitedsport.org/we-move-united)**

### ~ **Increasing Physical Activity among Adults with Disabilities**

*Page on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.*

**[www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/pa.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/pa.html)**

### ~ **Miracle League of Richmond**

*Offers accessible recreational opportunities for children with special needs so that they can participate in a team sport as a member of an organized baseball league.*

**[www.ymcarichmond.org/community-programs/community-events/miracle-league/](http://www.ymcarichmond.org/community-programs/community-events/miracle-league/)**

### ~ **National Center on Accessibility**

*Promotes access and inclusion for people with disabilities in parks, recreation and tourism.*

**[www.ncaonline.org](http://www.ncaonline.org)**

### ~ **The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability**

*Information about adaptive sports, adaptive exercise programs, videos and equipment, and recreational activities.*

**[www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org)**

## Camps

*This information was gathered from various websites and lists already in existence. Although every effort was made to verify the information in these listings, we urge you to contact the camps directly to discuss the programs, fees, and availability of camper-ships and sliding fee scales. It's also extremely useful to visit each facility you are considering for your child. There are certainly programs that we have missed. Contact your local Parks and Rec Department to see what opportunities are available.*

### ~ **Camp Ability**

*Provides summer activities such as computer software games, art and crafts projects, daily field trips to museums, bowling and the movies.*

**[www.abilitycenterva.org/camp-ability.html](http://www.abilitycenterva.org/camp-ability.html)**

### ~ **Camp Easterseals UCP in Virginia**

*Camping activities for people with physical and cognitive disabilities, designed to offer the opportunity to enjoy fun and challenging activities in a supportive and cooperative atmosphere.*

**[www.easterseals.com/NCVA/our-programs/camping-recreation/camp-easter-seals-ucp.html](http://www.easterseals.com/NCVA/our-programs/camping-recreation/camp-easter-seals-ucp.html)**



### **~ Camp Holiday Trails**

Charlottesville

*Provides ages 7-17, with special medical needs and/or chronic health problems an opportunity to enjoy the summer camp experience.*

[www.campholidaytrails.org](http://www.campholidaytrails.org)

### **~ Little League Challenger Baseball Inc.,**

*Baseball/ tee ball program offers youths who have mental and physical disabilities a chance to play in a league. Each player is assigned a "buddy" who stays with them through the entire practice and weekend game. Contact your local little league division.*

[www.littleleague.org/learn/about/divisions/challenger.htm](http://www.littleleague.org/learn/about/divisions/challenger.htm)

### **~ Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia Summer Camp**

*Provides summer programming for children with special needs, including high-functioning autism, Asperger's syndrome, and ADD/ADHD.*

<https://www.thej.org/camps/jccnv-summer-camps/>

### **~ Muscular Dystrophy Assoc. Summer Camp**

*Each camp provides a wide range of activities especially designed for young people who have limited mobility or use wheelchairs. Accessible activities range from outdoor sports such as swimming, boating, baseball, football and horseback riding, to less physically demanding programs like arts and crafts and talent shows.*

[www.mda.org/services/mda-summer-camp](http://www.mda.org/services/mda-summer-camp)

### **~ Path International**

*Organization that promotes the benefit of the horse for individuals with physical, emotional and learning disabilities. Call or click to locate a participating riding program near you.*

[www.pathintl.org](http://www.pathintl.org)

### **~ Social Beginnings**

*Offers Social Thinking® based therapy groups and summer camps for children ages 4-18. Rather than teaching the social skills, we teach the "why" behind the skill which helps motivate children to self-assess and self-monitor their social behaviors in generalized settings.*

[www.verbalbeginnings.com/aba-programs/social-skills-for-kids/](http://www.verbalbeginnings.com/aba-programs/social-skills-for-kids/)

### **~ Special Olympics Virginia**

*Year-round program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Website has listings of local offices/locations.*

[www.specialolympicsva.com](http://www.specialolympicsva.com)

### **~ Sportable**

*Organization focused on providing recreation and sports opportunities for individuals with physical disabilities in the Richmond area.*

<https://sportable.org>

### **~ Virginia Youth Soccer Association**

*The Outreach Program (TOPSoccer) under the auspices of United States Youth Soccer (USYS), is designed to enrich the lives of children with mental and/or physical disabilities through the game of soccer. Local programs can be found on website.*

[www.vysa.com/Default.aspx?tabid=2519886](http://www.vysa.com/Default.aspx?tabid=2519886)

### **~ Voices Together Camp**

*Structured, integrated recreational day camp for children and teens with autism.*  
Richmond

[www.weinsteinjcc.org/summer-camps/voices-together](http://www.weinsteinjcc.org/summer-camps/voices-together)





★ VIRGINIA ★  
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS



Everything you need to know about accessible voting in Virginia  
[www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/accessible-voting/](http://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/accessible-voting/)

### **ACCESSIBLE VOTER REGISTRATION**

1. Any person, regardless of their disability status, has the right to register to vote at any office or agency that provides such a service.
2. A person with cognitive disabilities can be eligible to register and vote if not adjudicated mentally incapacitated by a court of law.

You can register to vote:

#### **Online at the citizen portal**

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/citizen-portal/>

#### **By mail. Download forms**

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/voter-forms/>

#### **At your local voter registration office, which can accommodate special needs:**

<https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/PublicContactLookup>

At public libraries, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, and certain state/local offices such as the Department of Health (VDH), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (DBHDS), Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH), and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)

If links don't load properly,  
use search engine.

### **ACCESSIBLE VOTING OPTIONS**

#### **Vote absentee by mail**

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/early-absentee/>

#### **Vote absentee in person**

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/early-absentee/>

#### **Curbside voting**

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/accessible-voting/#curbside>

### **ACCESSIBLE ABSENTEE VOTING**

If you are print disabled, you may request to receive an absentee ballot electronically to mark your ballot using an electronic ballot-marking tool. (See Code of Virginia § 24.2-103.2). If you choose this option for voting absentee, your ballot will be delivered by email and can be marked using screen reader assistive technology.

If you are interested in using this service to vote absentee, select the “print disabled” option under section 7c of your absentee ballot application. If you would prefer, you may apply to vote absentee online using our citizen portal website. Click on “Apply to Vote Absentee by Mail” then follow the prompts and indicate that you are print disabled and wish to use the electronic ballot-marking tool.

If you are print disabled and want more information on how to receive your ballot electronically, please contact your general registrar's office. You can find their contact information using our online lookup tool.



The Department of Elections has designated employees who voters with print disabilities and election officials can contact to resolve issues encountered while using the electronic ballot-marking tool.

If you have questions about using the ballot-marking tool, please contact the ADA Ombudsman, Garry E. Ellis, Garry.Ellis@elections.virginia.gov, Senior Registrar Liaison, Tanya Pruett, Tanya.Pruett@elections.virginia.gov or call 1-800-552-9745 or TTY 711.

### **ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES**

There is at least one voting machine accessible to voters with disabilities at each polling place. Voters with a disability should be able to vote in the same private and independent manner as a voter without a disability.

Virginia polling places, including early voting locations, meet state and federal accessibility standards. You can find:

- Accessible parking spaces
- Curbside - where needed
- Signs showing an accessible entrance and route in building
- Accessible voting booth with chair
- Seating available for voters waiting to vote
- Sufficient space for voters in wheelchairs
- Notepads available to communicate in writing
- Magnifier for election material and the ballot

### **CURBSIDE VOTING AND OTHER ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE**

If you require assistance in reading or completing forms, please ask an election official to provide help. You may also bring your own assistant. If you have a disability, help is available. Please ask an election officer for assistance you may need at any stage of the voting process.

If you are 65 or older, or have a disability, you may vote on Election Day without leaving your vehicle. This is called curbside voting. If you would like to use curbside voting, make sure to use the designated parking space at the polling location and follow the instructions on any signage. Some voters find it helpful to bring an assistant who can enter the polling place to ask an election officer for curbside assistance. You may also find it helpful to call ahead to alert the officers of election of the time you plan to arrive.

Remember, if you have questions, ask an election officer to explain your rights.

### **QUESTIONS?**

Contact your local voter registration office:  
<https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/PublicContactLookup>

Contact the Virginia Department of Elections at (800) 552-9745 or [info@elections.virginia.gov](mailto:info@elections.virginia.gov)  
TTY Phone Access for Hearing Impaired: Contact Virginia Relay Service at 711 and ask them to call the Virginia Department of Elections at (800) 552-9745 or your local voter registration office:  
<https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/PublicContactLookup>

### **CONCERNED THAT YOUR RIGHTS TO ACCESSIBLE VOTING/REGISTRATION HAVE BEEN VIOLATED?**

Submit your complaint here: [Voter Complaints](#) or Contact your local voter registration office or electoral board: [elections.virginia.gov/LocalGR](https://elections.virginia.gov/LocalGR) or

Contact the Accessibility Coordinator at the Department of Elections:  
Email: [info@elections.virginia.gov](mailto:info@elections.virginia.gov)  
Telephone: (800) 552-9745 or TTY 711

Everything you need to know about accessible voting in Virginia  
[www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/accessible-voting/](http://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/accessible-voting/)

