

Aneta Brodski
Lexington School for the Deaf- Jackson Heights,
New York, Senior and 18 years old.

Sarah Marie Pack Writing Award

Who is an outstanding contributor to the Deaf Community and why?

Many deaf people have made a great impact on our Deaf Community and have enhanced our future, support, services, and community. I have been researching and Julian Singleton has caught my eye! I believe Julian Singleton is an outstanding contributor to the Deaf Community because he fought for Deaf Senior Citizens' rights. He believed that Deaf Senior Citizens should have a place to live in a building with Deaf people for comfort and make our Deaf Community stronger, effected by his history of leadership. He is currently our President Deaf Senior Retirement Corporation.

Julian Singleton was born in Los Angeles in 1934 to Deaf parents; he was put in California School for the Deaf, Berkeley from 1942 to 1952. Julian believed in education, he went to Gallaudet College for three years. He married Bernice Hoare in 1955. Mr. Singleton worked as a printer for 12 years at the Oakland Tribune then became a printing teacher at the Oregon School for the Deaf. He decided to go back to California School for the Deaf as a graphic arts teacher in 1975 and he is currently retired. He knew what he wanted to be and he decided to become an activist in local, state and national Deaf organizations. The Deaf community could not live without him because he is such a strong leader and has given outstanding service to Deaf and hard of hearing people.

He made a brochure for the first camp session at Camp Taloali, which means singing bird in the Indian language. It was very successful, he received many grants for the camp, and he worked very hard on the campsite. He was good at recruiting volunteers so people decided to have elect him as the first camp director.

Julian became the president of California Association of the Deaf in 1991-1993. He fought for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Californians' rights, advocated and promoted them for its quality of life and social welfare to fulfill for their demands and needs especially preserving and respecting our Deaf culture and heritage. If Julian did not create Camp Taloali, then Youth Leadership Camp (it is under Camp Taloali campus) would not have existed. YLC is important because it has helped build young Deaf leadership abilities and potential. That is why I think he is an outstanding contributor to the Deaf community, he puts a deep emphasis on Deaf culture and heritage and he has been involved with many deaf organizations.

He is currently 72 years old and he is one of our master warriors because he is fighting for our Deaf Community needs; he is the President Deaf Senior Retirement Corporation. Mr. Singleton is now involved with the Deaf Senior Housing Project Committee. I remember when he came to my classroom at Lexington School for the Deaf and gave a speech about his frustration about Deaf Senior Citizens' needs, such as a place to live together. I remember his facial expression was showed us that he would never give up and would always continue to fight for the needs of the Deaf community.

He has a great attitude for his community and ours too it is his spirit and dedication that inspires me. He is in the process of raising funds for Northern California housing for Deaf seniors. Mr. Singleton requested many different grants in order to support the housing project since the idea for a Deaf senior facility popped up in the 1970s. During the mid-1990s, Deaf community group members tried to keep the idea of the project. Years and Years later, Mr. Singleton's dream came true with an adequate million to cover the apartment building project. Mr. Singleton ensured the project would be built by a Deaf architect. The location was Fremont Oak Gardens on Driscoll Road because it is not far from the California School for the Deaf and near shopping and public transportation- fantastic accessibility for Deaf Seniors.

Mr. Singleton will make sure he empowers everything for Deaf Senior Residents and our community. Such as using a Deaf architect to build the apartment, services residents with keyboard telephones, a computer lab, plenty of video phones/relay, doorbells and alarms with lights, with an emphasis on visual communication, like two elevators that have glass windows so Deaf residents can communicate through them easily, for emergency purposes. If they are stuck in the elevators, staff will have to be fluent in American Sign Language, Singleton will provide programs, such as legal and health services, linked with a grand parenting program from the California School for the Deaf so that Deaf students can work there and have residents as their mentors. "Unable to communicate with staff members or fellow residents, deaf seniors often grow isolated in retirement homes and assisted living centers", Singleton said. Mr. Singleton also expressed, " We want to enjoy our last golden years in a happy way."

Mr. Singleton worked very hard, without pay; he gave up his free time for his community, and ended up it was BOFFO with his endurance attitudes and his people who helped him. We have to consider him as an outstanding contributor to the Deaf community because he got involved in many different non-profit organizations; still he made sure that everything would HAPPEN in which it is HAPPENING! He made it very different and unique so for us to learn from him and we should make it happen to our region like set up a building for Deaf Senior Citizens/Retirements people because we will land to that age. We have to think about our future- Julian Singleton made it happened!

Hence, Julian Singleton is an outstanding contributor to the Deaf Community because he fought many battles for our Deaf Community especially his successfully built Northern California housing for Deaf seniors with services accessible. He made sure that Deaf Seniors would have their service needs. It is not easy to ask for grant money, he did it very well by asking for grants to make his flourishing project come true. We also have to duplicate his idea of the Deaf Seniors Building and establish Deaf Senior Buildings in many regions because there are many Deaf senior citizens that need a place to live in. We have to think about our future, the needs of our Deaf Community. We have to give Julian Singleton a pat on the back for all his hard-working years for our Deaf Community!