Employee Spotlight

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What is your role at Johns Hopkins and how long have you been at the institution?
I am a third-year resident in the Osler Internal Medicine Residency Program. I have been working at Johns Hopkins for a little more than two years, but I know Johns Hopkins well as I did my undergraduate education here as a biomedical engineering major before I went to medical school.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing must overcome significant professional barriers, particularly in the health care professions. Please describe your own experience seeing patients at Johns Hopkins.
I have actually felt very welcome here at Johns Hopkins. I am very upfront with my deafness to all my colleagues and patients. I almost never have any problems with my patients—as long as I explain that I may take some time to understand them and may ask them to repeat themselves occasionally. I find that patients are very understanding and willing to work with me.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing make up the second-largest disability subgroup in the United States. What do you want your colleagues to know about employees who are deaf or hard of hearing?
It would help employees who are deaf or hard of hearing a lot if their colleagues had a little bit more time and patience with them, and whenever they can, look straight at them and enunciate as clearly as they can. In addition, I want to make the point that just because we are living with a disability doesn’t mean we are less abled.

Individuals who live with a disability are largely untapped in the workforce. What recommendations do you have to increase the number and percent of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in medical professions?
There is a lot of stigma surrounding disabilities in medicine, in general. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing frequently struggle with whether to disclose a hearing disability when applying to medical school. I disclosed my deafness and actually made it the center of my application, as it is the foundation of my personality and a key part of who I am as a person. I was accepted to Yale Medical School and, during my education, had an amazing amount of support from Yale’s faculty, who always checked in with me to see if I needed any help or just to see how I was doing. Not only would I encourage people to see past people’s disabilities to see their uniqueness as a person, I would also encourage individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to be confident in their own abilities.

What are some fun facts about yourself that you want readers to know?
Despite my deafness, I used to be an amateur concert pianist to help raise funds for deafness advocacy. I enjoy listening to music and have some pretty rockin’ Spotify playlists.

What else would you like to tell us about yourself?
I love working with my fellow residents in the internal medicine residency program. They have all been very welcoming and are like my second family, so it has been very enjoyable going to work every day.