Natalie Feaser

Professor Bass

ASL 1

27 November 2021

2 Hour Social Event

The event I attended was a Game Night at the Oakwood Deaf Community Church which is near Mentor, Ohio. Initially I was going to attend the event on my own, however I invited my boyfriend to come along with me to help me feel more confident. My boyfriend’s name is Zachary. He is a beginner at sign language and often practices with me. We went through a few basic introductions and other signs we would need to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing people. Some of the signs include where the bathroom is?, nice to meet you, boyfriend/girlfriend, I go to \_\_\_\_\_ University. I was nervous since neither of us had a very large vocabulary, but still excited to Attend the event.

Zachary and I arrived at the church and parked. We were the first ones there. While we waited for others to show up. We practiced signing and after about 10 or 15 minutes when other cars had shown up, we decided to go inside. we were greeted by an older lady who was collecting admission. It was $10 per person for anyone 13 and up, $2.50 for ages 6-12, and free for children 5 and under. She greeted me in ASL and asked me a question. I wasn’t sure what she had said, but I could tell it was a question with the way she had furrowed her eyebrows, hunched her shoulders, and her overall body language. With my limited vocabulary I signed that I was hearing and that I was a student at the University of Akron.

She spoke to me in English and said that she was happy we were here and what brought us to the game night. I explained that my boyfriend and I were here for practice and a requirement for My ASL 1 class, but that I was really interested in the culture and excited to try and communicate. She seemed very excited that some new faces showed up to their game night and explained that she was the interpreter for the night. This made me feel a lot better that way if someone was signing to fast, I could hear the interpreter explain what was going on. We thanked the woman and paid and found a seat. A few more people funneled in while Zachary and I got some refreshments. There were some cookies and chips and juice and soda. Most of the other people there were children around 10 years old or so. Zachary and I didn’t talk to many of them other than a few waves and smiles, but it was very interesting to watch them sign to each other.

Two of the children seemed to be brother and sister there with their mother. The older was the brother with short light brown hair and the other was a younger blonde girl with curly bright blonde hair. It was interesting to see the mom sign to the younger girl but call out to the boy when he wandered too far away. So, it seemed that the brother was hearing, and the sister was deaf, but they could both use signs when communicating. The older boy would get his sisters attention by tapping her and saying, “do you want to get a cookie?” while signing what I assume was the sign for cookie. It warmed my heart that despite being so young, the mother taught ASL to both of her children so they can communicate with each other. I don’t know if any of the other family members were deaf or hard of hearing. Perhaps the mother has a partner who is deaf or hard of hearing.  It was very meaningful that the mother made such an effort to help her kids be able to communicate with each other.

The game night was pretty standard. We played many rounds of bingo with prizes. My fear about people signing to fast was valid because I could barely keep up with the signs. Thankfully they repeated them twice and the interpreter called out the letters and numbers as well. The prizes were small toys like stuffed animals and a few gift cards for some restaurants. I met some really nice people, got to practice my ASL and experience the culture. In the end Zachary and I didn’t end up winning anything, however that just means we’ll have to go back and win something next time. Overall It was a great learning experience for me and helped me feel more confident in my ability to sign.