



STATE RELAY CUSTOMER CARE

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Catching Up with Scholarship Winner, Michael Barton

Each year, Hamilton Relay awards scholarships to high school seniors in our contracted states who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or have difficulty speaking. We recently talked to Michael Barton, who received the scholarship for Pennsylvania in 2017. We were excited to find out what he's been up to and wanted to share it with you.



Scholarship winner Michael Barton (center) with his counselor Kevin Thompson (left) and Principal John Kreider (right)

How was the transition from high school to college for you?

It was a pretty smooth transition for me. My high school, North Allegheny, prepared me well for a college education and learning environment.

What college are you attending, and what have you liked most?

I'm attending Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). What I like most is how I get to experience the hearing and deaf worlds on a daily basis. I'm currently working at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) Center on Access Technology as a software engineer. Everyone I work with is either deaf or fluent in sign language. I also experience the hearing culture through classes and extracurricular activities.

What is your field of study?

I'm studying Computer Science, and I absolutely love it. I really enjoy how challenging it is, yet how I find a way to figure out the programming assignments and projects by exploring the possibilities that come with it. It's like figuring out a puzzle.

What are your future plans?

This summer, I'll work at Prudential Financial in Newark, New Jersey in the Summer Technology Internship Program within Enterprise Services and Systems. More specifically, I'll be working in the Application and Systems Development Internship Program. It'll be my first professional, full-time work experience in the field.

Do you have any advice for students entering college for the first time?

I would tell them that college is much harder than high school even though I felt very well prepared. It's the next step in your education, so it'll be a step up. However, it's also a rewarding and amazing part of your life — especially if you get involved, make friends and enjoy life while you're here.



CUSTOMER CARE CORNER: **Experts On Call**

Do you have questions or comments about Hamilton Relay services? If so, reach out to our Customer Care Team — they're your experts on call. When you contact Customer Care, your questions will be answered by specially-trained staff.

You can reach Customer Care three ways:

- Call 800-618-4781 (toll-free)
- Visit hamiltonrelay.com and click on the Live Chat button
- Email info@hamiltonrelay.com

Our Customer Care Team knows more than one way to tackle a situation and will guide you through the troubleshooting process until your issue is resolved. Remember, our Customer Care Team is here for you—24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Celebrating Our Scholarship Winners

Every spring as students graduate high school, Hamilton Relay announces the winners of the Hamilton Relay High School Scholarship. Each scholarship is \$500 and is intended for post-secondary education. We award one scholarship to a high school student who is deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or has difficulty speaking within each state where Hamilton Relay is the contracted relay or captioned telephone service provider.

The 2019 winners of the Hamilton Relay High School Scholarship are:

- Marissa Balagtas, California
- Madeline Horak, Idaho
- Sarah Joiner, Kentucky
- Ruiying Gao, Massachusetts
- Nthabeleng MacDonald, New Mexico
- Wyniliana Robinson, Tennessee
- Tayler Hart, Washington
- Jewel McDonald, District of Columbia
- Brady Lukavsky, Iowa
- Jenna Usilton, Maryland
- Brynlee Newton, Montana
- Abigail Stolin, Pennsylvania
- Ankita Gopal, Virginia

We wish our recipients the very best in their future endeavors. Congratulations!



Kudos to Community Leaders



Hamilton Relay announces the recipients of the Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award each year in May. The award is given to acknowledge an individual in each of Hamilton's contracted states who is hard of hearing, late-deafened or has difficulty speaking and who demonstrates strong leadership, volunteerism and involvement within their community. We appreciate what these leaders have done for their communities. Please join us in congratulating and thanking them.

- Michael Struck, Iowa
- David Adams, Louisiana
- Veronica Davila Steele, Maryland
- Larry Herbert, Virginia
- Carlene Ballard, Kentucky
- Adam Braid, Massachusetts
- Jonathan Wales, Tennessee
- Charlene MacKenzie, Washington

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR TRAVELING WITH HEARING LOSS

Traveling can be challenging — especially if you have hearing loss. These tips and tricks are just the ticket to make your adventures go safely and smoothly.

Before You Leave

- Ask about disability discounts for you and a traveling companion. You may discover unadvertised deals on admissions to attractions, travel tickets and accommodations. Look for disability discounts online, too.
- Ask if there are hearing accessible hotel rooms available. Hearing accessible rooms are outfitted with visual or tactile alerts for the door, phone, alarm clock and fire alarm.
- Download the app for the airline or train you are using to receive notifications on your phone about your flight.
- Don't forget to pack extra hearing aid supplies such as batteries in your carry-on. You may also want to pack a waterproof travel case, a cleaning kit and a hearing aid drying kit, especially if you are going to a tropical area.
- Bring chargers with you in case you need to recharge your phone or other devices on the way to your destination. Bring an outlet converter if you are traveling internationally.
- Have your itinerary and confirmation information on hand — both on your phone and on paper.
- Don't forget to carry paper and a pen in case your phone loses power and you need to write a note.

At the Airport

- Tell security staff you are wearing or carrying hearing aids. Some electronics can set off airport security scanners.
- Let the gate agent or driver know that you have hearing loss. Ask him or her to let you know about important announcements and may offer you pre-boarding or priority seating.

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SEE WHAT WE'RE UP TO ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

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TRAVELING WITH HEARING LOSS, *Continued from page 3*

On the Plane

- Let a flight attendant or a seatmate know about your hearing loss and ask them to alert you of any important announcements.
- Don't worry about turning off your hearing aid or cochlear implant while on an airplane. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are not electronic devices that must be turned off during a flight.
- Turn off your personal FM system, if you have one.
- Adjust your hearing aids to reduce background noise during the flight.

At the Hotel

- Let the front desk know you have hearing loss, in case there's an emergency.
- Keep your room key away from your hearing devices and phone to avoid demagnetizing the strip.
- Don't leave your hearing aid(s) behind—always be sure you have them before checking out.

If you no longer wish to receive the Relay Connector newsletter from Hamilton Relay, please call 800-618-4781 V/TTY or email info@hamiltonrelay.com.



Hamilton Relay Service
1006 12th Street
Aurora, NE 68818

Address Service Requested

From Our Kitchen to Yours

What's light, fresh, sweet and cool? Lauren's delicious amaretto dip! Whip up a batch to make any summer meal or get-together feel special.



Lauren Gifford
Senior Relay Outreach & Marketing Manager
Hometown: Baltimore, MD

AMARETTO DIP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup milk
- 16 oz. whipped topping
- 1 pkg. vanilla pudding
- 3 Tbsp amaretto liqueur

DIRECTIONS

Mix milk, whipped topping and pudding mix. Add amaretto then stir. Chill for two hours and serve with sliced fruit and graham crackers.