



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS in 2020 the National Association of the Deaf designated the month of April as Deaf History Month, highlighting the critical importance of inclusivity and equal access for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and

WHEREAS the Deaf population includes individuals born Deaf who use Sign Language as a primary means of communication and have a shared culture and history; individuals who become deaf, and individuals who have hearing loss and use assistive listening devices; and

WHEREAS the purpose of Deaf History Month is to increase public awareness of the Deaf culture all around us and to provide equal access to opportunities, information, and services for all individuals who are Deaf; and

WHEREAS last year's attendance by the Lakeland High School Deaf Program Students (designed to bring necessary awareness of this month) included student Evelyn Jade Sophia Thompson, a sophomore who lived dressing up, relished stories, and adored cats who then passed away unexpectedly just four weeks after attending that Commission Meeting; and

WHEREAS the City of Lakeland recognizes that all people, regardless of ability, should have the same rights to live, work, play, and communicate, appreciating that each day is precious, and Ms. Thompson's brief life underscores the ongoing need for perseverance in providing citizen life enrichment; and

WHEREAS Deaf History Month focuses on improving the rights of individuals who are Deaf, expanding the use of international sign languages, and improving access to education, technology, and all areas of community life.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, H. William Mutz, City of Lakeland Mayor, and on behalf of the Lakeland Commission, do hereby proclaim April 1st through April 30, 2024, as

DEAF HISTORY MONTH

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of the City of Lakeland to be affixed this 1st day of April 2024.

H. William Mutz, Mayor
Lakeland, Florida

