

This 2-Year-Old Deaf Girl Loves People, So Her Whole Neighborhood is Learning Sign Language

Source: [KOLR10 News](#)

Newton, Massachusetts – At the far end of Islington Road in Newton, Massachusetts, lives a little girl near and dear to the neighborhood. Two-year-old Samantha Savitz is deaf, but she loves to talk to anyone who knows sign language.

“She’s super engaging. She wants to chat-up with anybody.” said her father, Raphael. “Yea, her whole personality changes when it’s someone who can communicate with her,” said her mother, Glenda.

On the other hand, if someone can’t, that makes Sam just a little sad. Her desire for engagement has been painfully obvious to everyone in the neighborhood. Whenever they see her on a walk or in her yard – and Sam tries to be neighborly – they find themselves at frustrating loss for words.

“I didn’t know what to say back. Wouldn’t you like to talk to her?” said one neighbor. “Basic conversation that one would have with a child,” said another. “Asking her about her day,” said a third. “And make her feel that she is part of the neighborhood,” said another neighbor. “Just be her friend,” another neighbor added.

Unfortunately, this isn’t something you can solve with a

casserole. You'd need the whole community to learn sign language – just for a little 2-year-old girl – can't expect neighbors to do that. You can only appreciate them when they do.

On their own, Sam's neighbors got together, hired an instructor, and are now fully immersed in an American Sign Language class. The teacher, Rhys McGovern, says this is remarkable because a lot of times even the parents of deaf children don't bother to learn sign language. "But here Sam has a full community that's signing and communicating with her and her family, and it is a beautiful story," Rhys said. And he says this level of inclusion will almost certainly guarantee a happier, more well-adjusted Sam.

Which is why her parents say there aren't words in any language to express their gratitude."Yea, it's really shocking and beautiful," Glenda said. "We are so fortunate," Raphael said. In fact, they said they're already seeing a difference in their daughter.

"You should see her when she comes in at the end of class," said one neighbor. "The first thing she says to us is 'friend,'" said another neighbor. "I think your heart would melt just as mine did," said another neighbor.

Sometimes it feels like America is losing its sense of community – but then you hear about a place like this – where the village it takes to raise a child is alive and well and here to remind us – that what makes a "good neighborhood" is nothing more than good neighbors.