

Growing Up in Clarkstown

Dana Marlowe grew up in New City and enjoyed being a kid and teen in Clarkstown. She says that living here helped to shape her career helping those who can't hear.



Dana Marlowe has fond memories of growing up in New City and Clarkstown. She says she was five when she got her first library card, where she would read books on disabilities in sign language. That ultimately led to her current career.

Photo courtesy of Dana Marlowe

by Sharon Rosenblatt
Community contributor

When Dana Marlowe was five years old, she signed for her first library card at the New City Library. She would peruse children's books, some of them focused on the topics of disabilities and sign language. While there was no way to predict it then, her literary adventures became an interest that grew into a passion and eventually spawned a career.

Born in Manhattan and raised in New City, she is no stranger to the wonderful areas that give this town its charm. She grew up playing at the Kennedy Dells Park and walking the trails with her family and friends. As a young child, Marlowe attended summer camp at Ramaquois. During one session, she met a fellow camper who was hard of hearing. Marlowe wanted to strike up a conversation with her new friend, but was unable to.

"I remember being frustrated," she said. "Even as a young camper, I felt the

urge that I should be able to communicate with everyone. I guess that passion hasn't left me, even now."

She raced home to ask her aunt, Penny, to teach her some basic sign language. Penny was a pediatric speech pathologist who used American Sign Language. Marlowe returned to the library for books on sign language and Braille. In just a few weeks, she signed the "We are the World" song during the Color War sing competitions. She continued her instruction with her aunt until she was 14, and then signed up for

sign language classes at Rockland Community College.

Even as a busy teenager taking advanced reading and writing classes at Clarkstown Senior High School North, she never let her passion for helping those with disabilities slide. She used her basic ASL skills with customers at the drugstore where she worked. She walked them around by her elbow reading to them the different products on shelves.

After graduation from Clarkstown North, she enrolled at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York, and achieved her Associate's Degree in Sign Language Interpreting. Part of her experience included signing at major events, including a handful of Billy Joel and Rusted Root concerts. She graduated RIT with a B.S. in Technical Communications and moved to Austin, Texas to work towards her Masters..

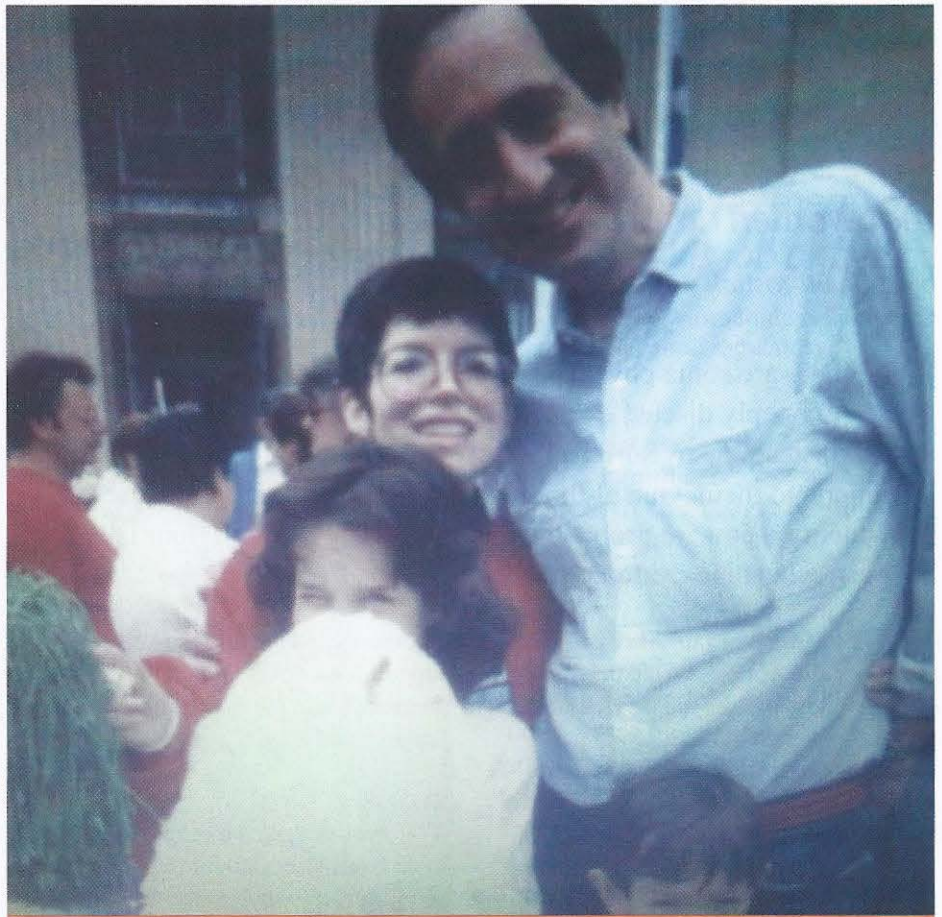
Flash forward a handful of years, and Marlowe now lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, a suburb of Washington,

DC with her husband and two children. She's the principal partner of a consulting company called Accessibility Partners. Working together with a strong team of skilled engineers with and without disabilities, she works to ensure that information technology is accessible for people with disabilities. She works with major IT manufacturers, federal government agencies, schools, universities, and local municipalities to help adjust their technology to allow the best access by users of all disabilities, including blindness, low vision, mobility and dexterity, cognitive, hard of hearing, and deafness.

Dana's work empowers her to provide access and hope through technology for people with disabilities. As she puts it, "My passion for accessibility has placed me at the nexus where 'disability advocacy converges with technology' and that energizes me daily. It's all about equal access and I like to think that technology keeps everyone on a level playing field. It helps people with employment opportunities, tourism, education, recreation, and all improves quality of living in all facets of society..

It all started in New City, which shaped her, and she believes that the amazing diversity in her hometown is truly responsible for her success. Places and people allowed her to propel her interests into a full career working with people with disabilities. "I bring New City with me everywhere—you can't shake the warm associations being from an inclusive community."

For more information on Accessibility Partners, visit their website at accessibilitypartners.com.



Marlowe with her family at New City courthouse.

Photo courtesy of Dana Marlowe

15%

Approximately 26 million of Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud sounds or noise.

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders there is a strong relationship between age and reported hearing loss: 18 percent of American adults 45-64 years old, 30 percent of adults 65-74 years old, and 47 percent of adults 75 years old or older have a hearing loss. About 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the U.S. are born deaf or hard-of-hearing. Nine out of every 10 children are born deaf are born to parents who can hear.

PARK FUN KENNEDY DELLS COUNTY PARK

As a young girl, Dana Marlowe played at Kennedy Dells County Park in New City. According to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, "only a small portion of this 179-acre park is developed for active recreation. Most of the park consists of wooded areas and open fields. Hiking trails loop around the park, and a 2.4-mile circular hike is possible. The western boundary of the park is the scenic Crum Creek, paralleled by a trail, and an old road leads down to ruins of a stone dam, stone arches that once supported a bridge over the creek, and a stone pump house."

—Samantha Brinkley

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Dana Marlowe climbs on a jungle gym as a young girl in New City's Kennedy Dells County Park.

Photo courtesy of Dana Marlowe