

Some Artists with Disabilities You Can Use As Role Models

Feel free to add to this list and let us know!

Michaelangelo Buonarotti (commonly known as Michaelangelo), born 1475 in Italy. Renaissance sculptor, painter, architect, believed to have had bipolar disorder.

Henri Matisse, born 1869 in France. A collage artist with chronic illness, visual disabilities. Famous for paper cutouts, murals, fabric, stain glass design. Assistants taped paper to the ceiling. Matisse drew shapes with a crayon attached to a long stick. Assistants glued.

Magdalena Carmen "Frida" Kahlo, born 1907 in Mexico. A painter who had back injuries from an accident. Mirror attached to canopy over her bed, painted self-portrait from bed.

Claude Monet, born 1840, in France. A painter who became blind as a result of a cataract, continued to paint using mostly reds. After operation, resumed other colors.

Leonardo da Vinci, born 1452 in Italy. A musician, architect, inventor, believed to have had dyslexia.

Vincent Van Gogh, born 1853 on Holland. A painter with mental illness, painted in and out of institutions. World renowned, sold only one painting in his own lifetime, but work later beloved internationally.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, born 1846, France. A painter who developed rheumatoid arthritis, began using a wheelchair and continued to paint. An assistant strapped brushes to his hands so he could paint.

Joseph Henry Sharp, born in 1859, Ohio. A painter who became deaf as a result of a near drowning. Continued to paint.

Chuck Close, born 1940 in Wisconsin. An artist with learning disabilities, quadriplegic. Straps paintbrush to hand and paints large portraits.

Michael Naranjo, born 1944, South Clara Pueblo, New Mexico. A sculptor injured as soldier in Viet Nam, lost eyesight, continues to sculpt in wood.

Susan Shie. Contemporary quilt maker with very limited vision, works on small areas highly magnified.

Ludwig Van Beethoven, 1770 in Germany. A composer who began losing hearing at age 22, with continued hearing loss over next 25 years. Relied on written "conversation books" for communication with friends. Continued to write music until his death.

Ray Charles, b 1930, Georgia, U.S., A singer, piano player who began losing sight at age 4, learned classical piano at Austine School for the Deaf and Blind, became world renowned musician.

Stevie Wonder, born 1950 in Michigan. A singer who was blind from birth, signed a deal with Motown when he was ten years old, going on to win 17 Grammy awards and an Oscar for Best Song.

Evelyn Glennie, born 1965, Scotland. Musician, percussionist, jewelry designer who became deaf at age 12. Internationally known.

Robin Yu, born 1979. A violinist with a condition that causes muscles to be weak.

Teddy Pendergrass, born 1950 in Philadelphia. A gospel singer who was injured in car accident and became quadriplegic. Returned to stage and continues to perform as singer.

Chris Burke, born 1965. An actor with Down Syndrome. Career began in childhood in movie, *Desperate*. ABC developed tv series for him, "Life Goes On." He has written a book about his life entitled, A Special Kind of Hero.

James Earl Jones, U.S. 1931. An actor with a speech impairment who stutters. Famous Was the voice of Darth Vader in Star Wars.

Marlee Matlin, born 1965 Illinois. An actor who became deaf when she was an infant, received Academy Award and Golden Globe awards for Best Actress in *Children of a Lesser God*, was first deaf person to star in television series, "Reasonable Doubts." Also appeared on "The West Wing."

Jay Leno, born James Leno in 1950, New York. Comic with a learning disability, host of "The Tonight Show."

Alicia Alonso, b. 1921 in Cuba as Alicia Martinez. Premiere ballerina dancing for George Balanchine and in Broadway musicals, with visual disabilities.

Kitty Lunn, a dancer who fell and broke her back, continued to dance using a wheelchair, founded Infinity Dance Theater.

Mary Verdi-Fletcher, a dancer who founded Dancing Wheels, dances in her wheelchair.

Heather Whitestone, crowned Miss American in 1995, ballet performance. First woman with a disability to become Miss America. Deaf.

Lynn Manning, award winning poet, playwright, actor, judo champion. Received gunshot wound and lost sight, uses a talking computer with a print recognition system to read, edit and research his works.

Hans Christian Anderson, born 1805, Denmark. A writer with dyslexia, worked in theater before becoming a writer.