



Sarah's in her happy place.



# Signing on for diversity YOU'RE HEARD

*McDonald's is proud to support the Deaf community as they celebrate New Zealand Sign Language Week 2024*

**T**he theme for New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Week 2024 is "an Aotearoa where anyone can sign anywhere". Family favourite brand McDonald's is a proud supporter of the Deaf community as it celebrates this week.

McDonald's crew trainer Sarah Loe, who is fluent in NZSL, enjoys celebrating her community. She explains, "Sign language is beautiful. I am so proud to be a part of the Deaf community – it's who I am."

NZSL, an official language in New Zealand since 2006, is closely related to British Sign Language (BSL) and Australian Sign Language (Auslan), but is unique to Aotearoa in that speakers can express concepts from both English and te reo Māori.

Sarah started her career

at McDonald's in Hamilton six years ago, working her way up from cleaning tables and delivering food to customers, to crew training. In her current role, she works with both crew and customers,

wearing a badge to let people know she's deaf and using written signs to communicate when necessary.

When she joined the team, Sarah was hoping to make new friends. And she

did. A highlight of her day is "greeting the staff with fist bumps when I come into work".

McDonald's promotes a bias-aware and inclusive work environment. These values are the driving force behind every decision and every experience it creates, explains Managing Director of McDonald's New Zealand and Pacific Islands, Kylie Freeland.

"To really serve, it's important that Macca's serves everyone," she says. "Living the brand's values means delivering on them every day and building trust by showing the millions of people who visit McDonald's restaurants daily – as well as each individual working in a McDonald's restaurant or the corporate offices – that we care about what they care about."



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## Tips for communicating in sign language

- In conversation, every contact is very important and people who are deaf need sufficient personal space for arm movements.
- Face the person who is deaf and get their attention before speaking. Remember to maintain eye contact. Don't turn away when watching them sign to you.
- People who are deaf ask for attention by waving, stamping, touching or tapping one another.
- People who are deaf need to see what is being said, so they can only pay attention to one person at a time. Wait for the person who is signing to stop before the next person signs.
- Keep lips and face clear of obstruction (eg hands, cups etc). Dim light can also make it hard to see facial expressions and sign language.
- Speak clearly and a little more slowly, and rephrase rather than repeat. Avoid background noise when communicating with someone with a hearing aid.