

# Tribune

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## Two faces of deafness



Snohomish actress Trix Bruce, above, signs the word "cat" in American Sign Language, used by the deaf. To help people understand the challenges she and other deaf people face in a hearing world, Bruce, also pictured at right, brings her one-woman show, "The Hearing World Around Me," to the East County Senior Center March 22. See page 3 for the story and ticket information.



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## Deaf actress invites public into her world of silence

**By SOREN VELICE**  
Staff Writer

Snohomish resident Trix Bruce has devoted her career to advocating for deaf people, and she will soon devote an afternoon to showing Monroe-area residents the deaf world.

"I hope to educate the audience about deafness by sharing my true stories of life in the hearing world," she said via e-mail. "My heart is open for everyone to join me on this journey."

To help people understand the challenges she and other deaf people face in a hearing world, she's bringing a show to the East County Senior Center at 824 Village Way in Monroe on March 22 at 2 p.m. Tickets are available by calling 794-6359 and cost \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door.

"The Hearing World Around Me" helps people to understand deafness and answers the question, "what is it like to be a deaf person among the hearing?" she said. "Seniors can certainly relate on the level that they too are capable of anything, but they also face the label of 'seniors' and all that comes with it."

Bruce is well known in the area for her one-woman shows that bring audiences into the world without sound. She lost her hearing to meningitis at age 6, and has done workshops and taught American Sign Language to foster understanding among hearing people.

"I have been deaf all my life," she said. "I grew up that way. When I was young, I was frustrated, but now I am proud to be deaf."

"I faced a lot of challenges in a lot of situations, but I don't feel that I

am handicapped. I am the same as you — the only thing I can't do is hear. We can do anything else as well as a hearing person."

Krysta Gibson, ECSC's executive director, said Bruce's uncommon approach to teaching people about deafness made her a good choice for a senior center fund-raiser.

"I went on her Web site and read about her and asked different people if they knew of her," Gibson said. "Even our audiologist who comes into the senior center knew about her, and said she really helps hearing people understand what it's like to be deaf."

Bruce said what it's like to be deaf, especially newly deaf, is easy to illustrate.

"I encourage anyone to try a game called 'Guesstures,'" she wrote. "This game helps hearing people to better communicate with deaf

people."

Not everyone deals with a deaf person in day-to-day life, and it can be awkward for both parties.

Bruce said it's relatively easy to overcome whatever awkwardness may exist: people just have to broach a subject.

"It depends on the individual," she said. "Some deaf individuals can tell you what is necessary to prevent miscommunication; some are too shy to tell you and just accept the misunderstandings."

Bruce has several shows besides "The Hearing World Around Me" that approach deafness from different angles. She described "Tales of A Mad, Mad, Mad ASL World," another of her more popular shows, as "a roller coaster ride through ASL poetry, storytelling, and folk tales."

"A Story Worth A Thousand Signs" encourages children to learn

hand-shape storytelling and become part of the show and "A Handmade Treasury of Deaf Folk Tales" tells the stories of deaf culture.