

Tide Trekkers
Gallaudet University
July 20 - 24, 2026

Dear Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:

Gallaudet University, through its Youth Programs office, hosts several programs for deaf and hard of hearing youth every summer. This year, we are excited to offer a summer program in partnership with Loggerhead Marinelife Center that will happen during July 20 - 24, 2026. Our summer programs are designed to provide stimulating summer learning and experiential opportunities that blend excitement and enjoyment in a bilingual environment.

Gallaudet University is the world's only university designed to be barrier-free for deaf and hard of hearing students. For more than 150 years, it has led advances in education for deaf and hard of hearing students and advocated for deaf rights worldwide. Today, students from across the United States and around the globe—diverse in perspectives, backgrounds, interests, and communication styles—form an exciting learning community as they prepare for dynamic careers and a lifetime of growth. As part of this mission, Gallaudet maintains a long-standing partnership with Loggerhead Marinelife Center, a nonprofit sea turtle research, rehabilitation, and education facility in Juno Beach, Florida. Through this partnership, Gallaudet students gain hands-on experience in marine conservation, research, and public education by participating in internships that connect their academic studies to real-world environmental impact.

Tide Trekkers is designed for college-bound deaf and hard of hearing students entering grades 9-12 that are interested in marine biology or STEM. The program is designed to spark students' interest in biology while giving them the opportunity to explore a wide range of careers in marine biology. The following activities have been developed to support our goal in preparing our participant both personally and professionally:

- Enhance knowledge in marine biology and meet with peers that share the same passion.
- Explore diverse careers in marine biology, including roles such as marine science researcher, veterinarian, naturalist, and park ranger.
- Meet with successful professionals during seminars and learn how they prepared for their career successes.
- Discover postsecondary and career opportunities in marine biology.
- Gain hands-on experience with exciting field experiences such as Ecosystems Terrace Tour, Sea Turtle 101: how to rescue a sea turtle, biodiversity & abundance study, and water preservation.
- Participate in outdoor activities to develop leadership, teamwork, self-confidence, and communication skills.

- Attend fun and educational field trips to the coastal habitats of Florida!

Tide Trekkers meets the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS/PETS) program in the following areas:

- Participants participate in career exploration and receive career guidance.
- Participants understand the importance of self-advocacy through leadership seminars, educational field trips, team-building activities, workshops, and group discussions.
- Participants develop workplace readiness skills and gain independent living skills, while also cultivating social and interpersonal skills through interactions with peers and faculty members.

Vocational Rehabilitation counselors can request for a written report that obtains a student's summary of their experience.

Tide Trekkers is the result of a partnership between Gallaudet University and Loggerhead Marinelife Center. There is no program fee. **However, participants are responsible for their own housing and transportation costs to and from Juno Beach, Florida.** We kindly ask VR to consider working with interested students and to assist with the housing and transportation costs.

This program includes activities on Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 4 pm and lunch/snacks during the day program. Though not required, participants are encouraged to bring their own spending money, providing an opportunity to strengthen their money management skills.

We look forward to collaborating with you to support deaf and hard of hearing youth with their transition plans and to start early in preparing for their future. For more information about our summer programs, please see <http://www.gallaudet.edu/youth-programs/summer-youth-camps>. Also, feel free to contact me at chanel.bonheyo@gallaudet.edu if you have any questions about the program or application process.

For additional questions on supporting students to attend Gallaudet University's **Tide Trekkers** Program or how our youth programs fit into the Pre-ETS categories, please contact Gallaudet's VR Outreach Manager, Amanda Gerson (amanda.gerson@gallaudet.edu). Thank you.

Sincerely,



Chanel Bonheyo
Youth Programs, Manager