
The Story of Lenka with Hearing impairment

Deaf Lenka Bosáková Is Fulfilling Her Dream of Becoming a Doctor

Doctors diagnosed **Lenka Bosáková** with hearing loss when she was two years old. Her parents had already noticed that she didn't talk much—she just mumbled to herself—and didn't react to many sounds. Like her younger sister Bianka, Lenka was born with a genetically inherited hearing impairment. Since the family had no experience with sign language, they focused on spoken communication and worked intensively on Lenka's pronunciation at home in Olšovany, a small village near Košice, Slovakia.

Lenka was a top student throughout elementary school. "Sometimes I must've really annoyed my classmates—I always read ahead in the textbook. I just wanted to be the best, a perfectionist. I graduated primary school among hearing kids with all A's," says Lenka with a smile. But things changed when she started attending Šrobárova Gymnázium in Košice. The curriculum became harder, and stress grew—especially because Lenka tried to hide her deafness (by that time, she had more than 99% hearing loss in both ears). She wore her hair down to cover her hearing aid and struggled with self-acceptance. Puberty brought some rebellion—lying to her parents, backtalk, trying alcohol and cigarettes—and a few disciplinary slaps from her folks. After successfully finishing high school, she moved to Prague. "I fell in love with Prague. I'd spend hours wandering the streets and lose all track of time," she recalls. She enrolled at the Faculty of Science at Charles University, but only lasted a year. Then everything changed.

Lenka came across a YouTube interview with Dr. Philip Zazove, a hard-of-hearing physician from the U.S. Finally—proof that even a person with hearing loss could become a doctor! "Until then, everyone told me it would be impossible. I believed them. Yet becoming a doctor was my childhood dream," says Lenka, now a medical student at the Third Faculty of Medicine, Charles University. Before starting her studies, she arranged for a special needs assessment. Based on this, [Centrum Carolina](#) at Charles University provides her with real-time transcription services—during lectures, she follows the spoken words on her tablet as they are converted into text.



Lenka, how are you doing these days?

A few days ago, I finished my hospital internship at the neurology ward of Královské Vinohrady University Hospital, and now I'm fully focused on passing "Cell Biology", the toughest exam of the first year. I failed it last year because I registered for the last exam date and didn't pass. But I've already completed some exams from the next year, so if I pass this one, I might get a few days off before diving into the second year. This internship confirmed for me that medicine was the right choice.

How do you manage living far from your family?

I've been living in Prague with my boyfriend, who's from Bratislava, for five years now. In the beginning, I traveled home every two weeks. Since the trip takes nine hours, I'd only spend about a day in Olšovany before heading back. Now, when we get a few days off, we take turns visiting both sides of Slovakia, smiling as we go.

Does your hearing impairment ever have advantages?

She pauses to think before answering. "For sure—no neighbor banging meat for Sunday schnitzel or drilling through walls has ever bothered me. Same with fireworks. I'm just immune. It also helps when working with elderly patients in hospitals or nursing homes. Many of them wear hearing aids and don't feel like talking much. We often laugh together—we're in the same boat. While nurses struggle to understand them, I just lip-read. And once, when we had a German patient who didn't speak Czech, I used gestures and body language to communicate—we managed somehow!" (laughs) "...And here's something strange."

Tell me about it.

"I once met a deaf woman who thought—until age 26—that she was the only deaf person in the world. I was shocked. But she had grown up in a remote Slovak village, completely isolated from the Deaf community. She had no idea what

the reality was. It made me wonder—how many others are out there, still unaware? And yet, the Deaf are some of the most social and active people I know. Thanks to social media, they organize events, travel, and meet across the globe.”

Do you know what medical field you want to pursue?

“At first, I thought being a doctor in daily contact with patients would be impossible for me. But after these internships, I believe in myself. My hearing may deteriorate further, which is a concern. If you’re asking about specialization—I’m drawn to histology, so I wouldn’t rule out pathology. Since I was a teenager, I’ve devoured books on forensic medicine. I used to love the show *Inspector Rex*—especially how the forensic doctor solved crimes using logic and science. I imagined myself in that role,” (laughs) “Naturally, I’m also deeply interested in genetics research into hearing loss.”

How did the pandemic affect your studies?

“Not much, actually. Aside from Cell Biology, I had most of my coursework done, so I focused on studying and attending internships. Face masks, however, were a big problem. Since I rely on lip-reading, masks became a huge barrier—in public and especially at hospitals. We often had to communicate just with our eyes. When I didn’t understand, my colleagues would pull their mask down for a moment and explain things clearly. I’m very grateful for their patience. On the downside, I didn’t get to go home for nearly half a year.”



How do you treat yourself after a tough exam?

“The best celebration for me is a hike with my boyfriend—especially in the Austrian Alps. I was born just an hour from the High Tatras, and we often hiked there as a family, so it’s in my blood. I’ve also developed a passion for houseplants

—I now have over 70 at home. I keep saying I need to stop” (laughs) “but there’s always room for one more. I love cooking and baking, and I’ll often stop for a good coffee when I feel like it. I’m also addicted to antique shops and thrift stores—I buy books and retro items for the home.

The problem is, I get emotionally attached and struggle to let go. I even cried over a pair of old Vans shoes recently—I couldn’t find the same model again. And I just don’t get why people are obsessed with the latest gadgets. My dream is to one day own a Volkswagen Beetle. I probably can’t afford it while studying—but maybe someday...”

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