

## Sophie Stern profile

Sophie Stern goes to Glendale Community College with a focus on Dance and she loves to go shopping with her friends. She grew up in Tempe, Arizona, and graduated from McClintock High School in 2022. Since 2012, Sophie has been performing with the Detour Company Theatre, a Scottsdale-based theatre company whose shows are performed entirely by casts of individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. She also works part-time at The Bee's Knees (which specializes in high-quality resale clothing), where she helps sell clothing and jewelry.

Sophie was born with Down syndrome and says that one of the biggest barriers in the disability community is that some people in society still use the R-word. Sophie recalls a situation where the R-word was used in a high school production of *Hairspray*, in which Sophie was performing, and after some discussion, she was able to get the R-word removed from the script. She mentions that an interesting thing to her was that the Tempe Union High School District initially thought that the script was good with the R-word in it. Sophie describes herself as a sassy "badass" woman and a social butterfly.

*Editor's note: If the situation involving the removal of the R-word is any indication of what type of self-advocate Sophie will be, then the editor would have to agree that was a badass move that gives him confidence in the younger generation of self-advocates.*

If Sophie had unlimited funds, that would allow her to attend more Taylor Swift concerts and she would be able to meet Taylor Swift backstage. Sophie's favorite Taylor Swift songs are "Cool Summer" and "Tim McGraw." She also likes the idea of having an unlimited shopping budget; her favorite stores are Forever 21, H&M, and Marshalls, and with her bottomless budget she would buy a lot more sweatpants and baggy T-shirts. Sophie loves cranberry juice, as well, therefore she would always make sure she had an unlimited supply of cranberry juice.

Sophie is currently a client of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and she really likes her VR counselor. Sophie hopes one day to work in the dance profession like her sister, who is a choreographer in Portland, Oregon. She mentions that her grandmother, who operates a dance studio, inspired both her and her sister to become interested in dance. Sophie adds that the dancing bug skipped a generation because both her mom and her dad are journalists. If all goes well, Sophie may open her own dance studio one day.

Sophie hopes to encourage more individuals with disabilities to stand up for their rights and ensure that their voices are heard. She also wishes to encourage the Council to have free cranberry juice at their full Council meetings (staff member Jason Snead will make sure that there is plenty of it available at the next in-person meeting). As a final note, Sophie would like to encourage everyone to come out and see her perform in one of her shows.