

DEAFinitely Deep

Matt Maxey Visits Palatine High School



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After taking on the Super Bowl halftime show with Kendrick Lamar this year, providing deaf students education on American Sign Language (ASL) and creating new accessibility standards with his organization DEAFinitely Dope, Matt Maxey found himself back in the auditorium of Palatine High School.

“I love it here,” Maxey said. “I’ve always been big on relationships. There’s just always been that desire to spread ASL here at Palatine...It’s just that constant family environment.”

His performances – in which he uses ASL to interpret hit music by popular musicians – have been a Palatine staple since 2019, profoundly impacting students. His work for hip-hop artists and others like Chance the Rapper and Gwen Stefani have showcased his talent and the beauty of sign language.

Students once again were impressed by Maxey, who offered unparalleled insight into the intricacies of ASL interpretation and the vital roles it plays in fostering accessibility and awareness within the deaf community.



Elena Lyons (left) and Callum Riley (right) from PHS ASL Club join Maxey on stage.

“He created that access where it wasn’t there before,” Elena Lyons, ASL club member, said. “Because of that, now there’s so many interpreters doing all sorts of music and interpreting every way. I think he really has improved access for a lot of people that hadn’t really had it before.”

Maxey gave students insight on the importance of overcoming barriers in communication and supporting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, placing emphasis on what students can do to become better advocates.

His performances “show the diversity and inclusion that Palatine is known for,” Callum Riley, ASL club member, said. “It’s why I moved here when I was little.”

Even as the applause faded and the auditorium lights dimmed, Maxey’s message endured. His teachings on Deaf and Hard of Hearing culture underscored the ongoing need for awareness and advocacy, leaving a lasting impact on those in attendance.

