

Free Event

Meet Haben Girma: The First Deafblind Harvard Graduate

Date: Monday 20 April

Time: 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Location: Roundhouse, UNSW Sydney, ANZAC Parade,
Kensington

Price: Free

Tickets: [Click here to book tickets online](#)

Event Description

Haben Girma would prefer not to be called inspiring. But, as the first Deafblind woman to make Harvard history and living in defiance of great social and physical barriers, it is a term often used to describe her achievements.

Girma developed a powerful path to success despite facing many social and physical barriers. Overcoming all with an insatiable appetite for social justice as well as a wicked sense of humour, she's become a leading advocate for people living with disabilities. Girma has been named one of the Forbes 30 Under 30 and was awarded the White House Champion of Change, presented by former President of the United States, Barack Obama.

In her memoir, *Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*, Girma shares how her parents' harrowing stories of refuge from Eritrea during its 30-year war with Ethiopia inspired her to embark on a quest for knowledge; traveling the world in search of the secret to belonging.

Girma in conversation with ABC's Nas Campanella, retells some of these adventures and explains how they led her from feelings of isolation to conquering Harvard Law.

Haben's story is a testament to one woman's determination to show the world the benefits of choosing inclusion.

This event is presented by the UNSW Centre for Ideas and the UNSW Disability Innovation Institute.

How to Arrive & Access Information

Wheelchair Accessible

The Roundhouse is located at UNSW Sydney's Kensington Campus, E6 on this map (PDF). You can be dropped off close to the Roundhouse north entrance (D5 on map). Vehicles need to arrive via High Street, Gate 2, follow the road to Third Avenue and turn onto 1st Ave West. The closest accessible parking is available in the Western Campus Car Park on Anzac Parade (G2 on map).

Hearing Loop / Assisted Listening

A hearing loop is accessible in the venue. Please note this in your booking process if you would like to utilise the hearing loop. Please turn your hearing aid to T for reception when you arrive.

Auslan / Confirmed

This talk will be Auslan interpreted. Please select an Auslan interpreted ticket when you book your tickets. Front of house staff can assist in identifying interpreted seats on arrival at the venue.

Open Captions / Live Remote Captioning Service

This talk will be open captioned. Open captions will be visible on a screen in the venue. Please note in your booking process if you would like to utilise the open captioning.

Closed Captions / Live Remote Captioning Service

Closed captions will also be available on your mobile device. This service can be accessed by entering the specific URL and code on the evening. Please see staff for more information.

Contact

To discuss your access requirements and to book selected access services, please call the Centre for Ideas on 02 9385 9844 or email centreforideas@unsw.edu.au

The Centre for Ideas is happy to receive phone calls via the National Relay Service. TTY users, phone 133 677, then ask for 02 9385 9844. Speak and Listen users, phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 02 9385 9844. Internet relay users, visit relayservice.gov.au to make a call, and ask for 02 9385 9844.

Speaker Biographies

Haben Girma

Haben Girma is the first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School. Believing disability is an opportunity for innovation, Haben advocates for equal opportunities for people living with disabilities, and travels the world teaching the benefits of inclusion. Former US President Barack Obama named her a White House Champion of Change. She received the Helen Keller Achievement Award, and a spot on the enviable Forbes 30 Under 30 list. Her work has also been honoured by former President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Nas Campanella

Nas Campanella is a journalist and newsreader with the ABC and triple J. Nas is totally blind and has a neurological condition called Charcot-Marie-Tooth which means she can't read Braille. After humble beginnings as an ABC cadet, to experience as a regional reporter in Bega, NSW, in 2013 she became the first blind newsreader in the world to read and operate the studio for herself live to air. Nas travels the world advocating for inclusive education, adaptive technology, accessible travel and the importance of empowerment and leadership for women. Nas has a Bachelor of Communications from the University of Technology Sydney, is an ambassador for the Motivation Australia and the Royal Institute For Deaf and Blind Children, and is a board member for disability NGO, Fighting Chance.