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2020

Annual Report



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Mission
 The mission of Deaf Empowerment Awareness Foundation, Inc. is to Empower, raise Awareness, and bridge a sustainable Foundation of communication and equal access to both the deaf/hard of hearing and the hearing communities in the St. Louis metro area.

Vision
 The organization's primary vision is to provide services for deaf/hard of hearing, hearing individuals, and the community in the St. Louis metro area as a whole to ensure effective communication and cultural awareness. This purpose is accomplished through a meaningful unity of community outreach, training, education, advocacy, media, visual arts, and interpreting. The vision reflects a strong sense of community where the deaf/hard of hearing and hearing communities are empowered and aware of the importance of equal access to all.



Welcome to the year of 2020

Dear Friends,

As our community faces unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis, I find hope and inspiration in the outpouring support from friends helping friends through these troubling times. As a community, we all had to take on new roles to keep engaged. At DEAF, Inc., we took seriously the collective responsibility to flatten the curve on accessibility loss and ensure that individuals of all aptitudes and abilities had access to quality communication.

As we prepare for what comes next, we are committed to working together to build a more equitable future for our region by using our signs (voice), influence, programs, and initiatives to help continue to build bridges in communication access and to help end racial disparities. Our goal is not to go back to the way things were before, but to work together to build a new normal where everyone has an equal opportunity to live, work, and thrive.

Despite these challenging times, your generosity and care for our Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind community continues to inspire hope for what we can accomplish together. We found new ways to serve our community and to make a difference. Whether it was repurposing our resources to keep our organization viable or rolling out new virtual programs to keep deaf and hard of hearing youth, families, and adults connected and to continue to ensure that equal and quality access to communication available, we were there to do our part.

In addition to our important community work, we also welcomed three new board members. We restructured our Interpreting Department and opened two new positions to help meet the community's needs. We upgraded our technology and security systems. We participated in GivingTuesday, global generosity movement for the first time.

These are just a few of the highlights featured in our FY2020 Annual Report. You will learn more about our commitment through the stories about our reach and our results.

Thanks to your partnership and support, we can continue to serve our community's needs today, while building a better and strong tomorrow for all who call our community their home.

Sincerely Yours,

Sarah Prechtel, LISW
 Sarah Prechtel
 Executive Director

Daniel Schreiner
 Daniel Schreiner
 President of the Board

Summer Sign Camp



Our Summer Sign Camp mission is to create lasting memories, friendships, connections and opportunities for our campers through community, support and shared experiences in a safe, fun, and unique camp environment. Safe, fun, and unique all proved true as we transitioned our 5th annual Summer Camp to a Virtual setting! Campers (ages 7-12) experienced camp in a new way but with the same fun in 3 days of virtual activities. Camp took place midmorning with 3 hours of online activities. Activity kits were personally delivered to the campers' home to stay connected, active and immersed.

While the campers may have missed fun times under the sun and playing tag, we brought in exciting (or renewed) energy with local artists, a national performer, and introduced STEM activities from home. MADCO, a dance company, entertained and educated through innovative dance experiences. Justin Perez, a renowned deaf performing artist, shared his love and passion for Visual Vernacular, a unique physical theatre technique, with elements of poetry and mime. Meredith Green, who is an artist and also has a hearing loss, demonstrated various drawing and painting techniques while encouraging visual creativity. She was so popular that she was requested to return for a second gig!

Breakfast with Signing Santa

Every year, DEAF, Inc. hosts a Breakfast with Signing Santa event where Deaf and Hard of Hearing families all over St. Louis and surrounding counties can come enjoy pancakes, gifts, and the opportunity to meet Santa. In 2020, this sadly was not a safe or feasible option. Our team was determined to find a safe way to keep our Signing Santa event alive. The DEAF, Inc. staff stepped up to help bring the magic straight to their homes! We successfully recruited volunteers, including Board Members, and staff to bring this dream to life.

The DEAF, Inc. team put together gift baskets of fresh donuts, fruit, and giveaways for each family that registered. Each team member and volunteer dressed up as a popular character (i.e.: Elsa from Frozen, Mario and Luigi, and Black Panther to name a few). We were up early and drove all over the city to each home to personally deliver the gift bags as well as a wrapped present from the North Pole to the children. Some of the kids even dressed up to greet us! We met an Iron Man and Chewbacca, who were SO excited to see us dressed up in character too! Parents were so grateful that we found an alternate way to provide Holiday cheer to the kids that look forward to this event all year. The smiles and cheers from the children when they opened their door to see us made all of the planning worthwhile.



Deaf Teen Club

Excitement abounds as we build a movement of young people by young people. Since 2013, Deaf Teen Club (DTC) and DEAF, Inc. have partnered together to ensure our local deaf and hard of hearing teens, age 13-19, had a safe place to meet and build lifelong friendships, along with developing leadership and advocacy skills. It is also a place where they can be themselves without feeling the pressure of being judged by their hearing loss and how they communicate. In June 2020, DEAF, Inc. added Deaf Teen Club as a new service under our Community Program. This ensures that DTC remains a viable program with available resources. Sarah Prechtel, Executive Director of DEAF, Inc., adds, "As DEAF, Inc. moves to expand our Youth services, we believe it is crucial we focus on today's teens. We are aware we need to be more hands-on in assisting the teens reach their fullest potential, as they move into young adulthood and navigate in a predominately hearing society."



ASL Classes

“ The attentiveness of the instructor made me feel part of the class, while providing one-on-one attention at the same time. ”

126
Classes Offered

Learning ASL by interacting with people in a one-on-one environment is ideal. However, with weeks turned into months of self-isolation and social distancing means people are finding ways to pass the time while staying at home. Though we had a temporary hiatus in the early part of the year, we were still able to offer 126 classes, with a total of 241 individuals registered! In 2019, we had 254. This success was made possible by our amazing team of instructors, who did a phenomenal job adapting and making the virtual experience as close as possible to an in-person course. Many of our students will tell you that learning American Sign Language (ASL) takes time, patience, practice, and a sense of humor. This year was no exception. While we have refined our technical skills and continue to offer three classes a week through 2021, we hope to bring back our in-person classes to the DEAF, Inc. Community Room as soon as we're able to!

241
Registered

“ I loved the class! I had no knowledge of ASL before and now I do have the ability to communicate basic ideas. It is great! ”

Direct Services

During an appearance in court, a client was informed that he owed a significant amount in which he could not afford. It was also during this court hearing when he learned he could complete a required number of community service hours in lieu of paying his fine. He went on to complete his community service, gained hands-on work experience at the same time, and eventually his court case closed in good standing. Through this situation and experience, this client learned and developed several valuable skills: self-advocacy, understanding his rights, and what strong communication looks like. This successful outcome would have not been possible without the collaboration and support of his Community Advocate.

A client with moderate hearing loss contacted DEAF, Inc. requesting assistance in finding ways she can effectively communicate at work. This person works in Customer Service and had difficulty understanding customers over the phone. Her Community Advocate presented various Captioned Telephones (CapTel), with which she could experiment, provided education on her rights to workplace accommodations and offered strategies for workplace self-advocacy conversations. This person successfully acquired a CapTel, which was paid for by her Employer, and is "very happy" with the outcome.

Community Education

Individuals enhance their lives and communities through Community Education, which provides opportunities for learning and collaboration. It impacts everyone from local community members, schools, government, families, neighbors, and the individual. Though we had placed a pause on much of our traditional Community Education work, we were able to address communication access during the COVID-19 pandemic in various capacities. A few examples include several local media interviews and presenting to specific audiences at the Missouri Historical Society and Webster University. During Black History Month, alongside with several other prominent BIPOC Deaf and Hard of Hearing figures, we spoke to a group of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students at Hazelwood Central High School.

Pink Wings of Hope



Pink Wings of Hope constantly adapts as the demand for our free direct and indirect care support continues, locally and nationally. As we transitioned to virtual services, we quickly learned that there are in fact opportunities for greater outreach that we would have otherwise not embraced sooner. Pink Wings of Hope (PWOH) continues to garner national attention.

ZVRS, one of the nation's leading providers of video relay services to the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing communities, and Good Sir Tea Company, an east-coast small business run by two deaf individuals that support social causes while creating healthy and delicious products, spotlighted Pink Wings of Hope.

Greater St. Louis Association of the Deaf presented PWOH the Joseph & Vivian Carrico Community Service Award. In lieu of in-person events, we held our very first virtual 5k Walk for Hope event and Wine & Cheese fundraisers. Both events together brought in over 50 individuals from more than 10 different states and raised over \$1,500. If we have learned anything from our cancer clients and survivors, it is the value of resilience and perseverance, two characteristics that we will carry with us as we begin a new year.

ASL Interpreting Services

Obviously, 2020 brought a myriad of challenges. Many struggled to keep or find employment, had to move, overcame health issues, or even lost beloved family and friends. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities – in addition to other obstacles, of course – dealt with their own experiences of discrimination in the form of the mask mandates. Saint Louis is a highly oral area, and the covering of all mouths/lips severely impacted the ability to communicate.

DEAF, Inc. took this issue to heart and collaborated to find a solution. Our interpreting department reached out to a contact that was able to quickly and efficiently make hundreds of clear masks for us to distribute to our interpreters. By the beginning of May, we had already provided clear masks to a majority of our interpreters that continued to work out in the community. Their safety is of our utmost concern, along with the ability to perform their job without sacrificing quality.

After the first round of masks was distributed, our contact was even able to take feedback into consideration. She started making different sizes and colors, as well as offered answers and solutions to questions that our interpreters had. When DEAF, Inc. interpreters arrived at jobs with clear masks on, it was always a wonderful surprise to the Deaf or Hard of Hearing client and very appreciated. The interpreting department received lots of positive feedback from clients, customers, and interpreters, both about the masks themselves and our effort to solve an important problem quickly. We are so proud to have stepped up and offered a free solution for those in need!



97%

In 2020, DEAF, Inc.'s interpreting department had a 97% success rate of filling all job requests. This is reflected in our work ethic and outstanding Customer Service.

Deaf Visual Arts Festival

At the start of the pandemic, with one month remaining, it became very clear that the Deaf Visual Arts Festival needed to be either postponed or cancelled. With the blessings of our amazing grant funders, including Missouri Arts Council, St. Louis Regional Arts Commission, and Sponsors, our Media team scrambled to transition the festival to online. We held four virtual workshops, each averaging over 40 participants. We developed an online exhibition "hall" for 20 talented deaf artists, held a four-day virtual film festival which featured over 17 films. In closing, we held a "Wrap-up Party" online, featuring well-known Deaf and Hard of Hearing performers from all across the United States, and presented nine awards. This event, by far, has been the most successful with over 15,000 individuals in attendance.



"(T)hey worked hard and did well with the festival going virtual for the first time, not only the exhibition hall, but the workshops, film festivals and Wrap Up party," commented an emerging Deaf artist.

Community partnership builds resilient, healthy and strong communities through collaborative programming and resources, which in turn promotes widespread changes for the betterment of those we serve. DEAF, Inc. values the relationship we have built and maintained with local community organizations. We would like highlight a few of our partnerships in 2020.



Our membership and collaboration with St. Louis Regional Health Commission's Community Advisory Board led to greater alliances with professionals and healthcare organizations in the St. Louis Metro area. Our contribution to the advisory board brings increased awareness to the challenges of using Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) in medical/healthcare settings. VRI is an internet-based service that may be used when a qualified sign language interpreter cannot be physically present in a medical setting. This service uses a high-speed Internet-based video connection to provide visual access to an interpreter who is in a different physical location.

Our contribution also brings increased awareness to healthcare programs that produce health literacy. With health literacy best practices considered, the advisory board works to increase understanding of health information by making it more accessible for all with the use of sign language in addition to images, animation, and text.

As a member organization of FestAbility, a local event that celebrates all disabilities, we participated in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act with a variety show that featured more than 3,000 allies of the disability community.



The owner and founder of Saint Louis Closet Co. and her team have been giving back to the St. Louis community since their opening in 1991, naming their monthly charity program, "Closet for a Cause." In November, DEAF, Inc. was given the amazing opportunity to be spotlighted, to help us raise awareness through blog posts, social media and emails, and to inspire others about Deaf culture and DEAF, Inc.'s services.



Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) is the principal agency in the State of Missouri on behalf of people of all ages who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Their mission is to ensure that programs, services, and opportunities throughout the State are fully accessible to all persons with hearing loss. With MCDHH and DEAF, Inc.'s steadfast support for the people of Missouri, we are able to deliver results for the same people we serve. In addition, without their continuous support, many of our programs and services would not be as successful as they are today.

The passage of House Bill 1682 establishes September as Deaf Awareness Month, and its last week as Deaf Awareness Week in the State of Missouri. MCDHH and DEAF, Inc. partnered to put together a month-long lineup of content that highlights Deaf and Hard of Hearing history and culture in Missouri. Our media team developed and distributed four Show-Me Deaf Spotlight videos, four DeafThat videos and 12 Deaf awareness infographics. In addition, we hosted a live Show-Me Deaf Spotlight panel, titled Deaf Missourian Business Owners, with Yantern, a deaf business consulting firm.

“ I want to personally thank you and your entire team for working assiduously in pulling off what many people have attested to, as a very enlightening Deaf Awareness Month in Missouri. All factor considered, including time constraints -- You guys are simply phenomenon. ”

- Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Executive Director of MCDHH

We must say a huge 'Thank You' to each and every organization, business, and partner who have provided us with their expertise, time, resources, and support in keeping our mission going. They played no small role in the success of our programs and events. We look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with our partners.



What a Year! Families and friends, your generous contributions have helped our programs continue through COVID-19. Without your support some of our most popular programming would have not been made possible: Virtual Deaf Visual Art Festival, Virtual Summer Sign Day Camp, Virtual Walk for Hope 2020, Virtual 9th Annual Wine & Cheese, Breakfast with Signing Santa and educational videos. As we enter a new year, we embrace the changes that have been brought upon us and look forward to continuing to serve you through 2021.

Foundation Partners

Jefferson Memorial
Missouri Arts Council
Regional Arts Commission of STL

Corporations (\$2000+)

STL Closet Co.

Corporations (\$1000+)

MCDHH
RIT/NTID
Roc That!

Sorenson VRS
Western PA School for the Deaf

Corporations (\$500+)

Gallaudet University
HLAA Greater STL Chapter
Mackey Mitchell Architects
Missouri Association of the Deaf

Corporations (\$499 and under)

Amazon Smile
Bingham Center Bible Church
CrossFit Xtra Mile
Givable
Google
PayPal Giving Fund
St. Thomas Deaf Episcopal Church
YourCause, LLC Trustee

Individuals (\$1000+)

Anonymous
Tim Brandau
Debbie Crowell
Gerald Nicolaus
Ante Colic

Individuals (\$500+)

Anonymous
Anonymous

Individuals (\$100 - \$499)

Anonymous

Debbie Alexander
Authur Altwater
Daniel Beck
Dr. Gerard Buckley
Thelma Claxton
J. Eric Driskill
Eric Gjerdingen
Wendy Jensen
Robert & Melissa Johnson
Paul Kaufman
Robert Lograsso
Lanette Meister
Tia J. Morris
Anthony Nitko, Jr.
Anthony & Veronica Nitko, Sr.
Karen Nolan
Stephen Oder
Michelle Otto-Bruc
Thomas Otto-Bruc
Christine Phelps
Anand Raj
William B. Sheldon
David Smith
Janice Stark
Barbara Steimle
Susan Steimle
Virginia Tanakatsubo
Stephanie Vega
Amanda Votrian
Jennifer Weiser
Megan Wetzel
Cynthia Zhang

Individuals (Under \$100)

Anonymous
Ky Bashaw
Mitchell Berger
Jennifer Bevell
Jennifer Blizzard
Eric Boersma
Bruce Bucci
Shawn Catlow-Sidler
Robin Chickering
Ashley Crawford
Colleen Curry
Jeffrey Dallos
Brandon Decker
Alexandra Dunek
Lori Dunsmore
Patti Durr
Erin Eichelberger
Derek Eichelberger
Brian Eisenmann
Carol Ellison
Susan Eshbaugh
Allie Fowee & Dylan Panarra
Jamie Gilliam
Linda Hall
Steven & Sue Hebel
Sandra Hornsby
Howard Hsu
John Hsu
David Imme
Susan Jaworski

Toni Jodlowski
Patricia Johnson
James Jones
Monica Keller
Kayla Kmetz
David & Marcella Kramer
Jenny Kwoh
Bethany Levin
Joyce Maravich
Guinevere McCausland
Donald Moore
Carol A. Morris
Alan Myklebust
Marya Nitko
Robert Nitko
Shane Rapp
Amy Reusch
Catherine Sansone
Jennie Savage
Sandra Shannon
Laura Shapiro
Elena Shapiro-Berger
Geneva Shearburn
Lisa Shelley
Karen Shrake
PJ Simpson-Haidaris
Michele Steele
Lynn K. Stroud
Kevin Symons
Carlisa Thompson
Eric Vaughn

Joseph & Sandra Ward
Robert Wells
Michael E. Wenger, Sr.
Lisa Zala



Over \$5,130 were donated through Facebook in 2020.

Simple – by doing these three things.

Spread the Word!

Our ability to bridge the communication gap depends on you. If you know someone who will benefit from our mission, contact us. If you know someone who wants to support our mission, encourage them!



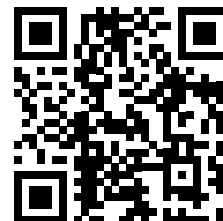
Volunteer!

DEAF, Inc. plants the seeds. Volunteers help us grow. Contact us to Volunteer.

Donate Today!

One time and reoccurring gifts will support our mission in bridging the gap in communication for the deaf and hard of hearing. You can use the Donate Now feature at our website – donate.deafinc.org or use the QR Code to the right.

Use the QR code for direct link to our Donation section online.



Statement of Activities

For the year ended December 31, 2020

Public Support and Revenue

Contributions	\$714,885.00
Grants	\$107,586.00
Special Events (Gross)	\$4,334.00
Program Service Fees and Misc. Revenue	\$526,943.00
Investment Income	\$ 826.00
Total Support and Revenue	\$1,354,574.00

Expenses

Program Services	\$857,345.00
Administration	\$193,254.00
Fundraising	\$22,718.00
Total Expenses	\$1,073,317.00

Change in Net Assets \$281,257.00

Net Assets, Beginning of the Year \$717,329.00

Net Assets, End of the Year \$998,586.00

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended December 31, 2020

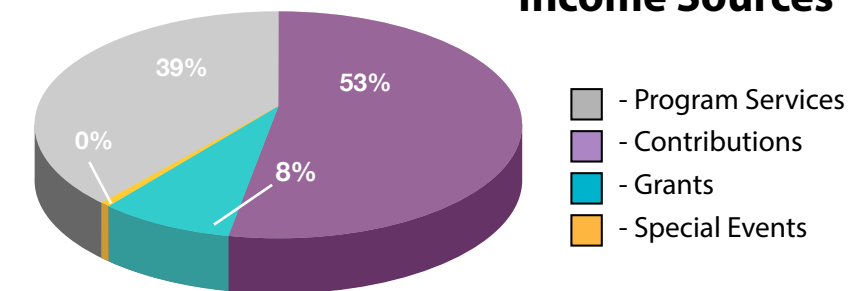
Assets

Current Assets	\$1,078,817.00
Property and Equipment, net	\$33,527.00
Artwork and Memorabilia	\$21,700.00
Organizational Costs, net	\$818.00
Total Assets	\$1,134,862.00

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities	\$136,276.00
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$889,438.00
Temporarily Restricted	\$109,148.00
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,134,862.00

Income Sources



Board of Directors

The Board is comprised of eight members, of which six are deaf or hard of hearing, and two are hearing. Their backgrounds vary considerably, and each has a very specific connection to the Deaf World. The common link is their passion for improving access to communication as well as education and resources for the deaf community.


One creates accommodations and access for individuals with disabilities within the government sector. Another is a dentist, specializing in family dentistry. One is a coordinator for the Deaf Communication Studies program at St. Louis Community College, and another teaches Sign Language at the post-secondary level. One works with young children as a speech and language pathologist and another is a Senior Art Director at KU Endowment. Two are retired and very involved as advocates within the community.



Daniel Schreiner
President
Since 2015



Anand Raj
Vice President
Since 2014




Amy Reusch
Secretary
Since 2014




Eric Driskill
Treasurer
Since 2015



Dr. Jessica Whitehead
Since 2015



Sheryl Kalman
Since 2020



Sarah Meiers
Since 2020



William Sheldon
Since 2020

Dedicated Staff

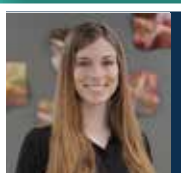
Over 50 percent of the DEAF, Inc. Family are deaf or hard of hearing, and all are fluent in sign language. The team brings in diversity with experience in advocacy, community outreach, interpreting, youth, financial management, marketing, media, fundraising, and program management.



Sarah Prechtel
Executive Director



De Linda Brite
Director of Community Programs



Guinevere McCausland
Interpreting Department Manager



Tony Nitko
Marketing Director




Michele Steele
Director of Finance




Leslie Brown
Interpreter Coordinator




Jennifer Helton
Interpreter Coordinator



Shannon Rapp
Interpreter Coordinator



Katie Roberts
Staff Interpreter



Hope Shrake
Multimedia Specialist



Devon Whitmore
Community Advocate