

# DEAF-HEARING COMMUNICATION CENTRE

610 Fairview Road  
Suite 100  
Swarthmore, PA19081  
Phone: 610-604-0450  
www.dhcc.org



# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

## A Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors

Todd Miller, November 2014

The Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre continues to fulfill our mission statement. *“To promote equal communication accessibility and cultural awareness to the deaf, hard of hearing and hearing populations by providing quality communication services, advocacy and educational programs.”*

Under the very capable guidance of our Executive Director, Neil McDevitt, DHCC over the last year has:

- Completed a major overhaul of its computer systems that allow us to provide outstanding service to the Deaf and hard of hearing community while improving customer privacy
- Developed and placed the first-ever TV commercial on broadcast television for Sign Language Interpreting Services
- Added a new space in the office area that can be used as a community room. This space will enable DHCC to provide outstanding programs that add value and knowledge for the communities we serve

We are an agent of accessibility for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community by providing communication access in the medical, educational and employment field. Our interpreting referral department is doing very well financially. Our interpreting hours continue to increase each year. As a result, we continue to attract and retain outstanding interpreters to DHCC.

Our presentations and workshops continue to be a “hit” with the community. There is a great opportunity for partnering with individuals and organizations to share the wonderful wealth of information that each of us possesses.

The DHCC staff continues to meet each challenge with a “can-do” attitude towards fulfilling the mission of DHCC. We recently renovated our office space to better accommodate the needs of our staff, and we believe this will pay dividends in increased ability to continuing to serve the community. I am deeply appreciative of our DHCC office staff for their commitment and dedication to DHCC.

For the 2014/2015 year, I envision DHCC blazing the trail for the community we serve by continuing to provide a setting where we can come together and learn, grow, and develop communal bonds. By providing workshops, family programs and events, and opportunities to enrich knowledge, we will continue to fulfill our mission statement. DHCC will only be as strong as the community we serve is.

The wonderful men and women of the DHCC Board and I want to express our appreciation and gratitude to Neil McDevitt and his team for the excellent leadership he has provided for DHCC this past year, and we look forward to the wonderful things that will happen at DHCC this year.

## Report of the Treasurer

Bill Spingler, November 2014

The Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre (DHCC) has continued in our mission to serve our customers and consumers with services and support. Expanding staff to enable these activities, and improving and upgrading the technology to support increasing volumes has been the key to sustaining our profitability. We are in the process of upgrading our accounting system in order to improve access to our financial information. This has also been a time of increasing Board involvement in support of staff and programs. We have had a very good year financially with a net surplus for the year of \$178,130 from operations, grants & donations, and investment income. Total revenue from all sources amounted to \$4,702,862 with expenses totaling \$4,524,732.

### Interpreter Referral Department and Emergency Interpreting Service

Hours of service for the fiscal year were 66,559, a modest increase of 171 hours over fiscal year 2013, but still a new annual high in service hours for the organization. This provided net income of \$103,942 from total revenue of \$4,535,958 and expenses of \$4,432,016. Budgeted income and expense for the year had been \$3,283,167 and \$3,257,064, a projection of a net surplus for the year of \$26,103. DHCC continues to be very effective in collecting our billed revenue with no bad debt write-offs for the year.

### Education and Outreach Department

An area of concentration in our Business Plan, the Education and Outreach Department has sustained their portfolio of service and outreach activities. Total revenue and grant income for the Department was \$85,985 with expenses for the year of \$92,716. The grants applied to the department for the year and the revenue of the department increased from fiscal year 2013. The result was a net increase in total revenue for this department of \$20,900.

### Other Income

Other Income for this fiscal year included United Way contributions of \$1,185, general contributions and other income of \$3,520, memberships of \$5,195, and investment income of 71,019. DHCC applied funds from Grants in the amount of \$19,902 to the year's programs and activities. DHCC appreciates the contributions and grants that we receive from our members and supporters.

## Comments

The Investment Committee, a sub-committee of the Finance Committee oversees the portfolio and management function. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014 our investment portfolio went up 8.74% after fees and the Committee believes the portfolio is in solid shape.

The financial records and transactions for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014, have been audited by Nawn & Company and have been approved without exception. A copy of the Audit Report is available in the Centre office for examination.

## Report of the Executive Director

Neil McDevitt, November 2014

For our fiscal year of 2013-2014, we have continued to deliver strong results through all parts of our organization. Our financial results continue to be strong but more importantly, we continue to provide outstanding service to the Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind community in the Philadelphia region.

In the fiscal year ending 2013, DHCC embarked on a major upgrade to its information technology resources. A major focus of this upgrade was to improve the database system we use to track interpreter referral requests. However, in doing so, we also committed DHCC to a process of continuous software improvement. We recognize that as our organization continues to grow, the software and the technology we use must grow with it.

DHCC has worked hard to strengthen its established partnerships and outreach efforts within the community. As Executive Director, I've spoken at events for the Philadelphia Chapter of the Black Deaf Advocates, Liberty Resources, Inc., and the Delaware Valley Deaf and Hard of Hearing Senior Citizens Club. But we also recognized that our lack of space made it challenging for us to offer a full slate of programs to the community. In February of 2014, DHCC added a new community room and has since been offering community programs in that space.

We've also partnered with our larger community partners to share dialogues that are important to the community we serve. In September, local Deaf author Mark Drolsbaugh spoke about the detrimental social impacts of mainstreaming, especially when a child is the only Deaf person in a school setting. In Mark, we turned to the lighter side when visiting professor Lorraine Leeson from Swarthmore College spoke about the experience of the Deaf and hard of hearing community in Ireland.

All of this would not be possible without the hard work and dedication many individuals who remain passionate about our organization and what we're trying to achieve:

- DHCC's staff, spending a great deal of time, energy, and effort to provide advocacy, information, education, filling requests for interpreters and captioners, as well as the necessary administrative support to make this organization run smoothly on a daily basis.
- DHCC's subcontracting interpreters, captioners, and ASL Educators. Without their hard work and commitment to the work they do, we would not be the organization we are today.
- DHCC's committed volunteers serving on the Board of Directors, and its various committees such as the Interpreter Services Advisory Committee (ISAC) who give generously of their time to advise, consult, and direct the organization's growth over the past 42 years.

## Report of the Interpreter Referral Department

Jeanne Bonnes, November 2014

The Interpreter Referral Department (IRD) showed an increase in interpreting hours and provided 66,559 interpreting services hours for this fiscal year. IRD interpreting hours were directly affected by the assignment cancellations due to the extreme winter with bad weather and snow during the December, January, February and into March. The weather cancellations impact scheduled hours for the interpreters and the department. Although the number of hours in IRD increased, many hours were lost due to the impact of the bad weather.

IRD had several staff adjustments within the last year. In March 2013 we hired a part-time Intake Assistant, Megan Hodges-Cook. Megan's job duties include answering phones, and inputting interpreting requests from customers into our database system. She also provides our customers with interpreter confirmations for our completed assignments. Another staff change in our department is the relocation of one of our experienced IRD Coordinator, Stephanie Gruber. Stephanie relocated to Princeton, NJ with her partner. Instead of finding a replacement for Stephanie, we offered her an opportunity to work remotely. Although we continue to adjust to working remotely with one of our coordinators, the process is working well within the department.

Improvements continue to be implemented to our FileMaker database to make the use of FileMaker easier for the IRD staff and the subcontracting interpreters. FileMaker upgrades were created for the internal use in IRD and the billing departments, as well as the interpreters scheduling and billing website. Months of planning and preparation went into the development of our unique database system in order to be completely HIPAA compliant. We are committed to keeping all information in our department private and confidential for our Deaf consumers and paying customers.

The annual interpreter meeting was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2013 at The Community College of Philadelphia, CCP. Mary Hesser and Joy Harris co-chaired the meeting. As in the past, our goals of the meeting were to meet staff and interact with the interpreters. We feel it is important to keep our lines of communication open and listen to feedback and ideas from the interpreters. This year the ISAC committee suggested we ask the interpreters to pre-submit their questions prior to the meeting so IRD staff would be readily prepared with responses. The format allowed issues and questions to be addressed in a professional way.

Since it was Neil's first interpreter meeting, he started the meeting by introducing himself, the DHCC Staff and Board. He also reviewed DHCC's mission and emphasized the goals of DHCC programs. In addition, he discussed the community events he had participated in and his desire to reconnect with the Deaf Community through various workshops and community events.

IRD hosted a financial training workshop for all interpreters last fall, which was held at Swarthmore Players Club. Lee Kramer, our financial advisor, provided the workshop. Although DHCC interpreters had requested this type of workshop for many years, the attendance was extremely low, which was disappointing for everyone involved. Future workshops may need to be considered before planning and scheduling presenters.

In November 2013 the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce held their Annual Dinner honoring local businesses and individuals for their work throughout the County. Neil and I attended the dinner, along with two interpreters, to show our support for the Chamber and provide exposure of our services to the members.

In December of 2013 I hosted an Open House at DHCC for interpreting students from Camden County Community College. During the two-hour session, the students learned about DHCC services and the interpreting application process. Guest interpreters were also invited to discuss their personal experiences working in the interpreting profession. In the spring of 2014 I attended an information session at the Community College of Philadelphia, CCP, to provide interpreting students information about our screening process and give them an understanding of the requirements needed for DHCC recruitment.

In the beginning of the New Year, I was contacted by the Interpreting Department at Goshen College in Indiana, regarding an opportunity to sponsor a college intern. Due to the lack of agency sponsors in their area, I agreed to sponsor one student from Goshen College for the spring semester. Her required curriculum was complex and involved 210 hours of interpreting preparation activities, including observations, hands up interpreting, socialization, professional development and mentor feedback. The student worked steadily with three interpreters to successfully complete her internship.

A "TerpExpo" event was held at the Marriott Courtyard in Philadelphia during the last week in February 2014. The TERPEXPO offered a variety of workshops for interpreters to obtain continuing education credits through professional development. DHCC set up an exhibit table throughout the Expo to offer information about our interpreting department and other services. Approximately two hundred sixty-five interpreters attended the four-day Expo while ten businesses and agencies exhibited various information and company items.

Fifteen new interpreters have been added to our subcontractor list in the past year including certified, pre-certified and one Deaf interpreter. All screening candidates were provided with evaluation feedback information so they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They were also given feedback regarding areas that need additional concentration. Eight pre-certified interpreters completed screenings, of which, three candidates passed the screening and were added to our interpreter availability list. For those candidates that did not pass the screening, the evaluators recommend strategies to build and improve their skills. Candidates who do not pass the screening will have an opportunity to re-screen within six months of the original screening date.

The Interpreter Services Advisory Committee (ISAC), met in September, February & May to discuss various DHCC policies and procedures. Recently new members were invited to join the committee. New members were advised of their role as committee members and the goals of the committee were discussed among the group. ISAC's goal is to provide advice, discuss issues, generate ideas, and bring concerns to the committee while working together with the Interpreter Referral Department, IRD, to achieve its goals. ISAC is not for personal agendas. The committee exists to work with DHCC. ISAC is a committee that requires confidentiality of its members; therefore, all members must sign confidentially forms.

During the last year, I started to research various marketing ideas to showcase DHCC services. Learning about advertisement opportunities through the local Comcast stations, I reached out to the Regional Account Executive with Comcast Spotlight-Philadelphia, Tracy Smurlo-Vesce. Working with Tracy and her staff, I completed surveys and questionnaires about who our target audience should be.

This approach, know as a Direct Response, DR campaign, determines which audience we should directly focus toward. Working in IRD for over 11 years, I felt it was important for DHCC and IRD to target the executives who make decisions about the reputation and liability of their businesses. Therefore, I choose to target high-level professionals. Knowing the audience, the study established specific channels those individuals most often watch.

After determining our target audience and the recommended stations to advertise commercial spots, we needed to create a commercial. For several months we looked for "on-screen talent", Deaf actors, to play the roles. However, in the end I felt that PJ Mattiacci and Neil McDevitt were best to represent DHCC in our commercial. With guidance from Comcast we began working with Aardvark Video Works, a production company in Jenkintown. Together with the producers at Aardvark, we established a script and settings we wanted to include in the commercial. In March we went on sight to shoot the commercial. During the shoot, Neil, PJ and I experienced the excitement of working in a production studio with a green screen background to create our final product.

Once the commercial was finalized we reconnected with Comcast and began our marketing advertising campaign through our television commercial. The advertisement aired on six different channels and focused on our Direct Response, DR, and target audience, totally seventy-seven time slots in one month. In the future, we plan to increase the campaign in the hopes of spreading our services and information to different audiences and additional viewing on TV and the Internet.

The Community Interpreting Program, CIP, is a program that offers DHCC members discounted interpreting services for situations not covered under the ADA, such as wedding, funerals, baby showers, family events, etc. This service has also received funding through grants and personal donations. This year CIP service was requested for 53 events, equaling 161.5 hours.

Another important communication access service is CART (real-time captioning service). This service is for hard of hearing or deaf people who use English as their language of communication. The total real-time captioning hours were, 223.5 including 122.5 onsite events.

Our on-call Emergency Interpreting Service (EIS) continues to be in high demand for after hour medical and police emergencies. EIS provided 3586.25 hours of interpreting over the course of the year, which included 688 emergency calls. Three shifts were scheduled every night with Deaf/hearing interpreting teams. This scheduling tactic allows the on-call coordinator additional interpreter availability in the case of multiply emergency calls, giving DHCC the ability to cover as many interpreting requests as possible.

The IRD staff work extremely hard to fill all requested interpreter assignments: such as schools and universities, businesses, legal and courts jobs, doctor's offices and various hospitals and mental health facilities. The IRD staff works long hours in order to complete their work. The coordinators often take work home after hours and keep in touch with interpreters throughout the night to fill open assignments outside of office hours.

The IRD staff are committed to the DHCC mission to provide communication access for Deaf and hard of hearing consumers. The staff works hard to advocate for consumers and educate new or interested customers about the ADA and the legal obligation to provide communication services. IRD staff is dedicated to their work and provides the day-to-day scheduling needed to ensure service for Deaf and hard of hearing consumers and our paying customers.

We also rely on our independent interpreters and appreciate the hours of service they make available to DHCC. Furthermore, our customers and consumers demonstrate their support for DHCC by using our services on a regular basis. Our staff, interpreters, customers and consumers are essential elements of the IRD department service delivery system and we thank everyone for their ongoing commitment to DHCC.

## Report of the Education Department

Janine Nolan, November 2014

Once again, we are happy to report that the American Sign Language program has continued to grow during the 2013-2014 fiscal year. DHCC offered 25 community adult classes, with a total of 275 students attending. We offered classes in four locations: Center City (Drexel University's Goodwin College of Professional Studies), Morton (Delaware County Intermediate Unit) and Germantown (Pennsylvania School for the Deaf), and Glenside (PAHrtners).

The Education Department started 3 new programs this year. A Parent/Child Sign class welcomed 6 families with 11 members. The Teen ASL class was offered at 2 different locations at Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (10 students) and in DHCC's new community room (13 students). DHCC is also now offering Adult Saturday classes and we've had 12 students during the fiscal year. Looking forward, we are continuing the Teen and Saturday classes and with a new "level 2 program" for each.

DHCC also provided a private ASL class for 20 staff from the Philadelphia Prison System. Along with our community classes, DHCC also offered private ASL tutoring for 8 students, totaling 58 hours of private instruction.

In total, the Education Department has instructed over 349 students of all ages! This is an increase of over 22%.

DHCC provided formal sensitivity trainings to a wide variety of organizations. We provided trainings to three hospitals including, Nazareth, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, and Chestnut Hill Hospital. Trainings were also provided to the West Norriton Police Department (2) and Vanguard. Our presenters trained over 90 individuals. Trainings ranged from one to two hours in length, and all received positive feedback. On the feedback forms, DHCC presenters received an average score of 4.9/5.0.

For the sensitivity trainings, DHCC is still using the pre- and post-test consisting of five true/false questions during our trainings. Participants were given the same set of questions before and after the training; the questions covered common myths about hearing loss. On average, participants answer 45% more questions correct on the post-test than the pre-test. These tests provide DHCC with a concrete diagnostic to monitor the effectiveness of our presentations.

Our Staff also did informal sessions with The Drexel Hill Moms Club to discuss and promote our Parent/Child Sign class. Also we talked with The Urban Tech Project on how to make your meetings successful and accessible for all members.

DHCC has also offered three interpreter workshops. In the Fall 2013, titled “Financial Planning”. “Intro to Deaf Jewish Culture” was offered in December and “Sexuality 101” in the spring was offered here at DHCC. All three were well attended with 40 participants in total. The workshops were well received, with the presenters receiving an average of 4.7/5.0 on the feedback forms.

DHCC continued to process Continuing Education Activities (CEUs) as an Approved Sponsor for RID’s Certification Maintenance Program. Over the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year, DHCC processed 20 activities for 43 participants.

DHCC continues to receive requests for advocacy from Deaf and hard of hearing consumers, largely in the medical setting. In addition, DHCC continues to receive information and referral requests for outside services, and staff refer these individuals to other agencies that can best meet their needs.

## Report of the Community Outreach Department

PJ Mattiacci, November 2014

DHCC is excited to report that the Community Development and Outreach program has been working hard toward the goal of reconnecting” the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community with DHCC through more workshops, town meetings, and community partnerships between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

### Community Development:

DHCC provided workshops, presentations, or community events from July 2013 to June 2014 following:

- Hosted a workshop on Special Education Laws featuring David Berney and Jennifer Sang (September 2013)
- Hosted a Town Hall meeting with Philadelphia Police Advisory Commission (September 2013)
- Town Hall meeting with the Philadelphia Chapter of Black Deaf Advocates at Elwyn (September 2013)
- Hosted an Employment Rights workshop featuring Laura Mattiacci for HLAA members (October 2013)
- DHCC hosted the first ever Breakfast Legislative Briefing Event at the City Hall (January 2014)
- Hosted two fundraisers at Taquiera del Sol restaurants (January 2014)
- Hosted a workshop on Jewish Signs for Interpreters at Hebrew Association for the Deaf (December 2013)
- Co-Hosted a town meeting on accessibility with SEPTA in December 2014 and followed up with another town hall in May 2014
- Workshops for self advocacy on requesting for interpreting services at:
  1. Four workshops at PA School for the Deaf’s High School (November 2013, January 2013 March 2013, and April 2013)
  2. Two workshops at Lincoln High School in November 2012, January 2014 and April 2014).
- Co-hosted the History of Deaf in Ireland and Irish Sign Language Event featuring Dr. Lorraine Leeson with Swarthmore College (March 2014).
- Facilitated the VRIs in Prison Meeting with Community leaders and ODHH representatives (March 2014)
- Co-hosted the Employment Rights workshop with New Jersey’s Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing featuring Laura Mattiacci and Kurt Jung (April 2014)
- Co-hosted the E-Book in ASL Event, featuring Dr. Gene Mirus, with Swarthmore College (April 2014)
- Hosted its first ever town hall meeting in Wilmington, Delaware (May 2014)

### Collazo Scholarship:

- In March 2014, ZVRS agreed to provide 3 iPads to three top winners of the 2014 Collazo Scholarship Essay Contest.
- DHCC received 8 outstanding applications.
- DHCC's Scholarship committee had selected Samantha Vengels of South Jersey as the winner for the \$1,000 scholarship and a new iPad provided by ZVRS.
- The other two winners (Jackie Ware and Kurt Vader) received iPads

### Community Partners:

DHCC has continued its efforts to reach out to organizations that were not previously community partners with us in the past year:

- Adventure Aquarium
- Art -Reach, Inc.
- HLAA of Bucks County
- Philadelphia City Councilman Dennis O'Brien's staff (Dr. Katy Kaplan)
- Philadelphia City Commissioners (Commissioner Stephanie Singer)
- New Jersey Association for the Deaf
- Philadelphia Fire Department
- New Jersey's Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (partnered with them to a workshop in New Jersey)
- Southeast PA Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (this organization was restarted in 2014 after 7 years being absent from the community).
- Automobiles Dealers Association of Greater Philadelphia

## Membership Annual Report

Janine Nolan & Sue Mooney, November 2014

The Grant and Membership Statistics from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 are as follows:

Total grant amount received this fiscal year from Foundations, Corporations, and Service Clubs was \$23,441 June 30, 2014 for the year 2014)

The money received has been designated for Community Interpreting Program, (CIP) Education Program, Hospital Sensitivity Training Program, Community Development and Outreach Program and general operating.

Please be aware that DHCC is always grateful for any leads for possible grant funding. If anyone knows of a Foundation that might provide funds to non-profit organizations, please contact Janine Nolan at 610-604-0450 or send her the name of the Foundation with its address and a contact person to [jnolan@dhcc.org](mailto:jnolan@dhcc.org)

### Membership:

Membership Type	2014	2013
Individuals	113	148
Family	41	62
Organization	1	5
Friends Circle (\$50-\$249)	19	22
Patrons Circle (\$250-\$499)	0	0
Select Circle (\$500 or more)	0	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>215</b>