



SDHHS

Saskatchewan Deaf and
Hard of Hearing Services

Bridging the Gap

ANNUAL REPORT

2016/2017



Mission Vision Values

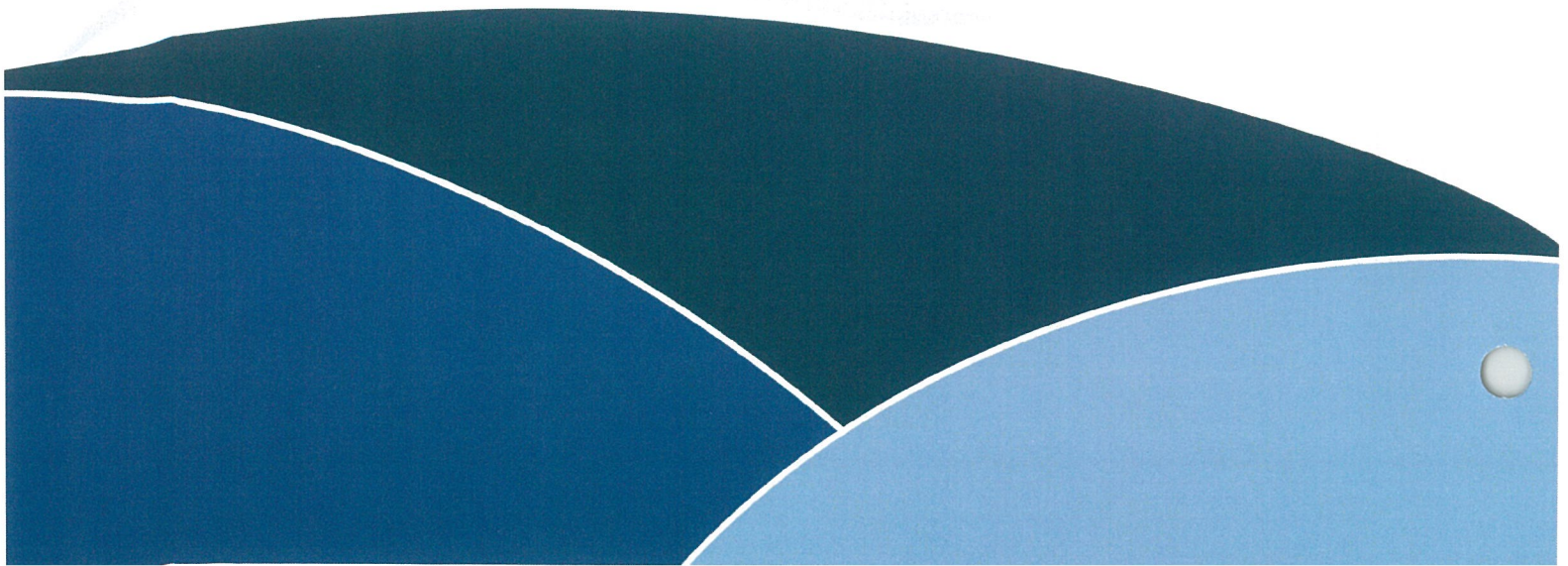
- To support the independence of Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing persons by providing services which enhance their quality of life.
 - A world without barriers for people who are Deaf, Deafened, or Hard of Hearing.
 - Communication with respect, dignity, and cultural sensitivity
 - Collaboration and cooperation among individuals and communities
 - Self determination, empowerment, and choice
 - Operational integrity and accountability that inspires trust
 - Accessibility
- 

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Older Organization

Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Inc. (SDHHS) is a bi-lingual, bi-cultural, non-profit organization whose mission is: to support the independence of Deaf, Deafened, and Hard of Hearing persons by providing services which enhance their quality of life. Hearing loss is considered as an “invisible disability,” as there is very little external manifestation of the disability and the individual usually appears to be able-bodied. Affecting over 100,000 people in Saskatchewan, hearing loss is the fastest growing disability in North-America.

The increase in hearing loss is primarily due to our aging population and the increase in noise pollution, particularly before the understanding of the need to use ear protection. However, hearing loss can occur at any age. There are many causes for hearing loss: congenital conditions, disease, side-effects from medication, excessive noise, accident, or genetic factors. Often it occurs over a long period of time, but it can also happen suddenly.

Though hearing protection practices occur regularly in industry, people also need to be aware that damage can be done to our hearing by recreational activities such as mowing the lawn, or listening to loud music. For instance, a car stereo can produce as much sound (140 decibels) as a jet engine on takeoff. SDHHS provides information and education to heighten awareness around hearing safety.

Hearing loss interferes with people's most vital link to their environment, the ability to effectively communicate with others. SDHHS helps to bridge this gap by providing crucial programs and services for those with hearing loss. In addition to its information and resource centre, SDHHS provides interpreting, oral facilitation, computerized note taking, vocational rehabilitation and career counseling, community services assistance, and a discount hearing aid battery program. SDHHS also provides information and accessibility to many technical aids and assistive devices. SDHHS works closely with other community agencies and organizations, as well as various government departments to raise awareness. As the only source of comprehensive specialized services for people living with a hearing loss in the community, SDHHS assists in breaking the sound barrier caused by the lack of awareness in the larger community regarding hearing loss issues. By providing education and awareness of the special needs of Deaf, Deafened, and Hard of Hearing persons, SDHHS supports the rights of all citizens to be full and active participants in their community. SDHHS supports all modes of communication. SDHHS advocates for full and comprehensive access to information regarding options, in order for people to choose the options best suited to their unique and individual needs.

President's report

As president, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors for their time in serving on the board this year. There are so many wonderful people with a passion for DHH issues working together. We have had to say goodbye to a few members of our board this year and I encourage nominations of new members at the upcoming election.

On behalf of the board, I'd like to thank our Executive Director Naim Gillies and Kami and the staff at SDHHS for their commitment and work to the agency and clients we served this past year.

It's continued to be a year of changes not only at SDHHS but also for the DHH community as a whole both provincially and internationally. At last year's AGM, I reported The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC) had completed their inquiry into the systematic oppression of DHH individuals across the province and had released their report and a list of recommendations to improve the services and treatment of DHH individuals. A committee was formed by the SHRC to work toward resolutions for their report in late December. While I'd like to say since the completion of the report the issues faced by the Deaf & Hard of Hearing community have lessened, but I would be lying.

In March, the provincial government announced province wide cut backs due to a \$1.6 billion deficit. This meant cuts to the Hearing Aid Plan, SPARC and education. In Regina, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Preschool will be shutting its doors at the end of the school year; no longer will Regina's DHH 3-4 year old children be given early school intervention and access to American Sign Language; this is truly a shame and will definitely be an area that SDHHS will need to pick up the slack for.

As a community, we need to band together. This past year, I have continued to see a large divide amongst us. It is important to remember that we are not only Deaf, or hard of hearing or hearing parents of Deaf children. We are all facing the same issues of discrimination, lack of access to language and a general misunderstanding of our needs. It is important for all of us to join together, as one large group, with one common goal...equal opportunity for all. Today, I am calling upon every member of SDHHS to work together. There is power in numbers, we cannot allow ourselves to be divided. As a community, it's important for us to continue to put pressure on the government to improve the lives of DHH individuals.

President's report

SDHHS continues to see record numbers for enrollment in ASL classes for both adults and children. We have seen children from the North attending Camp Dragonfly starting with no language, and going home with something. I have seen Deaf Crows from Regina, perform to sold out crowds at Edmonton's SoundOFF Festival; our stories are being told with renewed interest. Change is coming, it may be slow but it will happen when we stick together.

As always, if you have any concerns or issues about SDHHS, please contact the Executive Director or the frontline staff before contacting the Board of Directors. The directors can bring your questions and concerns to the meeting for resolution only if the Executive Director or frontline staff could not resolve it first.

Thank you for taking the time to attend this year's AGM. This year marks the 36th Anniversary of Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. I hope you're able to join us for the games, food, conversation and celebration after today's AGM. Have a safe and happy Summer!

Michelle Grodecki,
President

Management report

**Hope lies in dreams, in imagination and in the courage
of those who dare to make dreams into reality**

- Jonas Salk

In order to flourish, every person, no matter their age or background, needs access to a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment that fosters a sense of belonging. This support allows for the ability to hope, dream, and imagine, as well as provide the necessary courage needed to turn dreams into reality.

The environment a child grows up in shapes everything about their future. The way in which they interact and communicate with others are all learned behaviours that will follow them the rest of their lives. A Deaf child in a classroom with 20 other Deaf children has absolutely no disability. That same child, in a hearing classroom with peers whom they are unable to interact and communicate with, now appears disabled. The question becomes, is this the case? Why is it that the Deaf need an interpreter and not the hearing? It is a matter of perspective.

To try and change these underlying perspectives and barriers which face the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, our focus has come from the Strategic Plan created by the board and staff. This plan set clear goals and objectives on how we can best move forward to eliminate barriers and meet the needs of our community. While not all of these goals have been met, this past year has seen many meetings between government partners, Ministers, the Human Rights Commission, and Children's Advocate to raise awareness of the needs of the Deaf community. The UN Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities clearly outlines the right to access sign language and a public duty to accommodate that access. While our province has yet to appropriate this truth and implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission, I would like to call on all citizens of this great province to continue to advocate for full access for all people regardless of their age or their disability, and move closer to a barrier free

Saskatchewan.

Management report

Our sign language classes have been bursting at the seams and we are expanding our programming for the fall as there may be up to 200 people taking part in these classes. We continue to have many activities for youth and children in Regina and Saskatoon. Planning is also underway for increased youth activities and sign language classes in Regina. This summer will see a number of youth participate in a work experience camp focusing on language development, workplace literacy, numeracy, teamwork, and basic communication skills. Camp Dragonfly was a tremendous success for everyone involved from students, parents, teacher's assistants, speech language pathologists, and resource room teachers. Through this camp and other programs, we were able to see several young people across the province have access to sign language for the first time in their lives thanks to the hard work and dedication of the team of staff and volunteers at SDHHS.

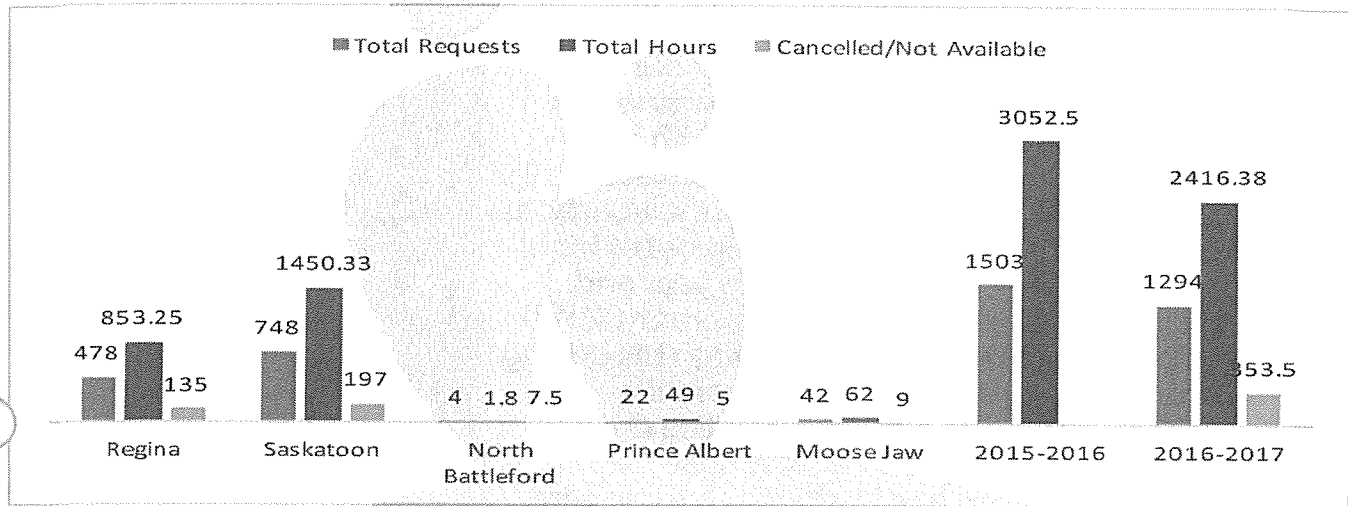
Though this past year saw serious budget cuts across all sectors, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community came out in numbers to support each other. While the full effect of these decisions on the lives of people living with hearing loss is yet unclear, we remain steadfast in the commitment to access for everyone. Solidarity among our community, with respect for differences, and valuing unique perspectives and contributions, is an important step towards providing the supportive and welcoming environment that we all require to flourish.

I would like to thank all of the board, staff, volunteers, supporters, sponsors, and members of our community for the commitment that they provide to this great cause of eliminating barriers for all Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Through your continued courage and dedication, we will see the hopes and dreams of our community realized.

Naim Gillies
Executive Director

Communications report

It is a pleasure to provide an overview of Communication Services for the 2016/2017 fiscal year.



You will notice the number of requests and total interpreting hours have decreased in the last fiscal year. North Battleford and Prince Albert also have a decrease in the number of requests compared to the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Moose Jaw has the same number of requests but a decrease in the amount of interpreting hours in the same time period.

Requests that were cancelled or no interpreter available include:

- cancellations by the DHH consumer or business,
- multiple requests booked for the same time slot,
- not enough interpreters to cover the length of the appointment or
- arranging assignments by priority such as a medical emergency.

We want to congratulate Krissy Haines on the birth of her baby boy Teddy on November 1st 2016. She is now on maternity leave. We hosted an interpreter practicum student from Winnipeg Red River College, Alana Iftody. It was a pleasure having her here, we wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

SDHHS is lucky to have such a wonderful staff of Interpreters and Freelancers and would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community has been amazing to work with and we acknowledge and appreciate their feedback, advice and support. We look forward to our continued partnership.

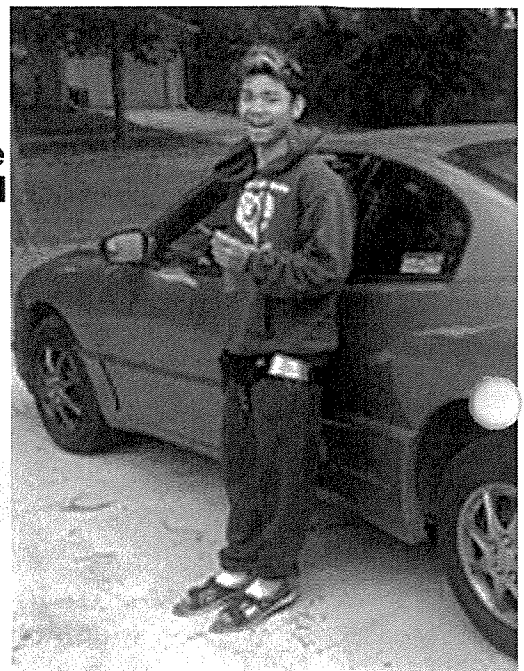
Respectfully Submitted,

Communications Department

Anne Websdale, Sue Schmid, Karen Nurkowski, Erika Hummelt, Tyler Burgess, Krissy Haines

Vocational Counselling program

We have had many Vocational Department successes this year and look forward to continuing to diversify our programming. One of the successes we had was with a young man from Regina who had connected with our organization almost 4 years ago. Nay first participated in the youth programming and then registered with the Vocational Department at SDHHS as he was transitioning out of high school to look for work. Nay studied hard this year and successfully passed his driver's license in February, 2017! How we helped, was by supporting him through his driving lessons with an Interpreter, and a volunteer from the community stepped-forward to help him practice driving and help with studying. Nay went on to purchase his first vehicle this year, which allows him more freedom and the ability to transport himself to and from his job. Way to go Nay!!



Pictured here: Nay Htoo
with his car.

We have had many clients who needed assistive listening devices such as FM Receivers for hearing aids, specialized stethoscopes, and visual alert alarm clocks. There was also an inquiry for a hearing dog, and much research was done for this request as well. We have attended Job Fairs, and set up the agency display at the Diversity Day. We continue to help with transition support, resume development, job searching, counselling, and coaching, when our consumers are seeking educational and employment opportunities. The SDHHS Vocational Department also works closely with Partners In Employment offices throughout the province, referring consumers to their work experience placement program, providing Interpreter supports, and working with their Employment Specialists. As you can see, we create awareness and provide supports in various ways.

Vocational Counselling program

From April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 the Vocational Department at SDHHS had:
43 registered consumers

38 consumers seeking employment counselling

8 consumers seeking educational counselling

30 Deaf consumers

13 Hard of Hearing consumers

Continuing education:

2 in University

2 in College

Consumers successfully employed:

4 Part-time

6 Full-time

Short training courses completed by consumers:

2 Work training courses

1 Driver's Training

1 Food Safe

Respectfully submitted by,
Twyla Chartrand &
Jody Thompson

ASL program

Let me introduce myself to you all. My name is John Warren. I have been working at SDHHS since August 1st, 2016. I moved here from Vancouver, BC where I was employed as an ASL Instructor, Instructional Assistant, and Media Technician for 25+ years in the department of ASL and Deaf Studies at Vancouver Community College.

Living here in Saskatoon is really interesting... It is about sunshine and the city is a full of beautiful trees along the river. After my graduation from Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in 1978 I moved back home and then 40 years later I am back to work for SDHHS on a contract basis.

Becoming ASL Coordinator has been a very challenging experience for me. Before I started working here there was one class with about 15 students so I introduced SDHHS to a unique teaching curriculum called Signing Naturally Level One and Two, the accredited approach. To my astonishment the number of registrations has been unexpectedly rocketing to 70 students with four classes – two here in Saskatoon and the other two in Regina. I predict that the registration will continue to increase every year because most hearing parents of Deaf children are realizing that language deprivation has been in practice in all school settings in this province. SDHHS continues to offer educational and social support to them by the means of learning ASL. Hopefully, soon there will be a class in Prince Albert for Indigenous children and adults.

Removing communication barriers between a Deaf student and a teacher is of vital importance for educational and social development among the Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. It also promotes children to comprehend what's happening around them fully. Communication using ASL is a universally awesome for everyone, even in different-spoken language countries.

John Warren
Saskatoon

ASL program

For the past 2 semesters, in Regina, Caroline Bergbusch and I have embraced the new teaching materials, Signing Naturally for our ASL classes. I have seen so much improvement in teaching ASL students.

- In the Fall 2016 class we had 18 students in the Level 1 class and 4 students in the Level 2 class.

- In the Winter 2017 class we had 11 students in the Level 1 class and 15 students in the Level 2 class.

For this coming Fall 2017, we will be adding another ASL instructor. We are welcoming Patricia Spicer to the Regina ASL Program. We are looking forward to working with her! Thank you John Warren for all of the hard work he has provided for us in the past year.

Respectfully submitted by,
Twyla Chartrand
Regina

ECFS report

I joined SDHHS in the Regina office April 1st, 2016 when I left my permanent position with the government. I have learned so much and my experiences have been greatly enriched in the one-year working here compared to all of my previous jobs. I found that working at SDHHS has made me look a little deeper to help customers find what they need, as they have so much to offer. Wonderful staff in Regina and Saskatoon have helped to support and lead me through many challenges. I really like working here because of the accessibility of language. Working here has made me become a better person because of all the resources I have access to.

For the past year, I have been working with many Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and their parents, as well as helping to teach immigrant families here in Regina. Through ECFS, I have been teaching ASL using many different methods, such as playing games, learning to read English letters using letter words through fingerspelling, and using pictures in ASL. We have also read numerous stories by converting them into ASL, along with showing them classifiers, facial expressions, and where the eyes are supposed to aim, etc. I strongly believe in empowering people and helping them to learn independently and the improvement has really started to show.

One Hard of Hearing child in particular has shown a lot of interest in learning more ASL because her parents also took in ASL a few years ago. She is so eager to learn more ASL and her mom went the extra mile to provide more opportunity by introducing Signing Time for Babies in their home. The improvement that she has shown in a short time is wonderful and she is getting very good at integrating my stories into her stories. I can see a lot of potential in her, as with many other D/HH children from Henry Janzen School. I have been actively involved at Henry Janzen Elementary school and Thom Collegiate working with teachers and D/HH students trying to get school interpreters to develop more in classifiers and ASL. I wanted to develop good rapport with the students, as they are the future leaders for our Deaf community. I have also been going to Wascana Rehab Centre to do one-on-one ECFS/ASL with a long-term Hard of Hearing resident and have seen some improvement, as she is very interested in learning more ASL. I was heavily involved in doing the drama: Deaf Crows. I travelled to Edmonton with Thom Collegiate students last February. I have developed a good rapport with these students and saw amazing transformations in each of them. Remarkable memories!

Thank you to everyone, so much, for all of your encouragement and support. It is very much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted by,
Twyla Chartrand
Regina

ECFS report

I have been working at SDHHS' as an Early Childhood and Family Services Worker for a little over a year now. It has been a rich and rewarding experience for me to work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and their parents. I have been helping them develop their language and literacy to enhance and increase their communication skills. The families are able to choose American Sign Language as a way to enrich their life and communication abilities, and they are acquiring communication skills quickly!

SDHHS hosted Camp Dragonfly as the first professional development camp for Deaf Indigenous youths, parents, and support workers at the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation Hannin Creek, in Candle Lake. On the first day, we noticed that their language and social skills were underdeveloped, that they had been deprived, and that the adults did not have the communication skills needed to interact with the youth. SDHHS provided ASL classes for the adults and educational activities for the youth. At the end of the week, we could see that their communication skills were improving. It was amazing!

In the summer, I organized weekly activities for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children to stay connected to others and their language development. Every week, about 4 to 6 Deaf and Hard of hearing children went on adventures and visited the museum at the U of S, River Landing Spray Park, the Red Bus for ice cream, and more! In December, SDHHS hosted a Christmas Party at the RJD School where about 20 kids and their families participated. It was a great success. The kids enjoyed socializing, playing in the gym, and receiving presents from Santa.

There were many other activities such as visits to St. Philip Elementary School for ASL stories for kids and a workshop for the teacher, educational assistant, and Interpreter. In February, we had a Deaf Children's Winter Fun Day at the WinterShines festival where they saw the beautiful ice carvings and went to the petting zoo. I have also done home visits with families and ASL sessions for parents. In March, we hosted over 20 kids at the Fun Factory to connect and make new friends.

SDHHS provided a Mentorship Training workshop for staff for one week. The purpose of this workshop was to help us understand mentoring and our job roles better and how to teach Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth to become mentors in the future.

I would like to thank the SDHHS staff for their encouragement and support and I am excited to continue to work with them. The work we are doing is very important to Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and their parents to continue their communication and social success.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Hale - Saskatoon

Treasurer's report

SDHHS contracted services of Mintz and Wallace Chartered Accountants to complete the 2016-2017 Financial Audit.

The Auditors Financial Statement is included in the Annual General Meeting Package for your review.

Currently, SDHHS is in a surplus position. Funds from the surplus will be used to increase our reserve as well as help offset costs.

I would like to thank Mintz and Wallace chartered Accountants for their thorough work and expertise. I look forward to having them back as our auditors next year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elrner Olson,
Treasurer

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Chartered Professional
Accountants

Board, Staff & Contractors

Michelle Grodecki	President	Naim Gillies	Executive Director SK
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Jason Hale	Director		
Chad Turner	Director	Lisa Hale	ECFS/ ASL Instructor SK
Ashley Corriveau	Director	Twyla Chartrand	CSW/VC RG
		Earl Trofimenkoff	CSW SK
Caroline Bergbusch	Instructor RG	Meagan Hein	Office Coordinator SK
Twyla Chartrand	Instructor RG	John Warren	VC/ ASL Instructor SK
Janet Dittrick	Instructor SK		
Dianne St. Pierre	Janitorial SK	Freelance Interpreters	
Isaiah Gbingle	Janitorial RG	Carla Klassen	
		Annette Jasper	
		Dawn Marie Wilson	
		Shelly Carver	
		Maureen Stuart	
		Rosalie Wishlow	
		Computerised Note takers	
		Rohonda Leier	
		Heather Reynoldson	

Camp Dragonfly

SDHHS in collaboration with the Prince Albert Grand Council arranged our first ever Camp Dragonfly week. It ran from May 30th to June 3rd, 2016. The rationale behind this it was to provide an opportunity for deaf students to learn American Sign Language and to create friendships. This camp is unique in that we also provided ASL classes for the Educational Assistants who work with the deaf students. The camp was at Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation's camp at Hannin Creek by Candle Lake. Camp Dragonfly was a great success and we were able to learn so much from it!! We had 7 adults and 7 students, for a total of 14 campers registered for the 2016 Spring Camp session. The deaf students aged from 7 to 13. To hear the laughter and see the new friendships developed was such a great outcome.

Our team was awesome! Members of our team included:

Alanda McLeod	Burton Bird	John Warren
Lisa Hale	Naim Gillies	Nancy McLeod
Sue Schmid	Twyla Chartrand	

The week flew by with lots of activities such as hoop dancing, canoeing, fishing, hiking, bug watching, campfire stories and other games. We had a slide presentation on Thursday night. In addition to that, a video of the week was created and posted to SDHHS's Facebook page by John Warren. Thank you!!

A smaller family Camp Dragonfly was held from August 2nd – August 5th, 2016 at Missinipe. The community is north of La Ronge and set on a beautiful lake. Once again, we provided some American Sign Language instruction to family members as well as fun events for the kids.

Our team consisted of:

John Warren	Josh Websdale
Lisa Hale	Naim Gillies
Shyla Kakakaway	Sue Schmid
Twyla Chartrand	

Once again, thanks goes to PAGC, Prince Albert Grand Council and SDHHS for making this opportunity available to Deaf youth and their families

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