



# SDHHS

Saskatchewan Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing Services

Bridging the Gap

## ANNUAL REPORT

2017/2018

# Mission Vision Values

- To support the independence of Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing persons by providing services that enhance 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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# Oldr organization

Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Inc. (SDHHS) is a bi-lingual, bi-cultural, non-profit organization whose mission it is to: support the independence individuals with hearing loss by providing services that enhance quality of life.

Hearing loss is considered “invisible” as there is very little external manifestation. Affecting over 100,000 people in Saskatchewan, hearing loss is the fastest growing chronic condition North-Americans face today.

Hearing loss can occur at any age and has many contributing factors; congenital conditions, disease, side-effects from medication, excessive noise, genetic component. Most often manifesting over a period of time.

Hearing protection requirements in the occupational sector do not protect individuals from recreational activities such as mowing the lawn, or listening to loud music. A car stereo can produce as much sound, and therefore as much damage, as a jet engine (140Db). SDHHS provides information and education to heighten awareness around hearing safety.

Hearing loss can interfere with individual's 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, computerized note taking, vocational rehabilitation and career counseling, community services assistance, early childhood and family services and a discount battery program for hearing aids or cochlear implants. 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 Saskatchewan. SDHHS assists in breaking the “sound barrier” caused by the lack of awareness. By providing education of the 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, promoting choice and options suited to individual need.



# President's report

I would like to begin the President's report for the annual general meeting by thanking the members of S.D.H.H.S. for the opportunity to serve as President of the Board of Directors. I have enjoyed working with the other Directors and the Staff during 2017 and 2018. Volunteering with S.D.H.H.S. has been a wonderful opportunity as it is something that is truly important to me.

On behalf of the S.D.H.H.S. Board of Directors I would like to extend our gratitude to our Executive Director, Naim Gilles and all the Staff for their continuous dedication and hard work for S.D.H.H.S. and the people we have served during the past year.

This year, the government of Saskatchewan announced an early screening program for infants to detect hearing loss. Early detection is needed and then all appropriate services can be implemented for these infants and their families. We anticipate further changes as recommended by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. We will continue to advocate for appropriate and necessary services for citizens who have hearing losses.

S.D.H.H.S. has submitted a proposal for a pre-school program for deaf and hard of hearing children that would provide a bi-lingual program to the children to prepare them for their journey through the education programs in Sask. I would also hope that the Province of Saskatchewan will design and implement an appropriate curriculum for children with hearing losses and ensure training for staff working with these children.

As citizens who share common goals, we will have to find ways to work together to accomplish positive changes in this Province for all citizens whether verbal or non-verbal. "Communication", as defined by Merriam-Webster is: "the act or process of using words, sounds, signs or behaviours to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc, to someone else."

# President's report

Another dictionary describes communication as “the means of connection between people. It is a basic right of all people to connect with other people and have access to appropriate language whether audible or visual.

The mission of Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services is to support the independence of Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing Persons by providing services which enhance their quality of life.

As we move forward I hope that we will all have the goal to promote this mission for the citizens of Saskatchewan. As president, I would encourage feedback from people as how to improve and expand services for all people with hearing loss from cradle to grave.

Once again, thanks to the Board of Directors for volunteering their time and thanks to the Staff of S.D.H.H.S. for the excellent work that they do and to our volunteers as we strive to “Bridge the Gap.”  
President

Gord Hein

Board President



# Management report

Interested parties from across Canada and the world are watching carefully what happens in our province. I believe in Saskatchewan, in our world-renowned innovation and compassion. I believe that in the home of Medicare our human rights, core values will win and transform D/deaf access.

SDHHS began a new project management system that identifies smart goals, and sets timelines for specific activities to be completed. It enhances teamwork, increases accountability, and productivity. Holding our mission statement and core values at the centre, we are able to branch out in a balanced approach towards meeting the needs in the deaf and hard of hearing community. With the recent Disability Strategy, Person Centred Planning, Children First, and Jordan's Principle as our guidelines we have been able to target specific projects to reach our long-term strategic plan.

Illuminating barriers in the healthcare system that hinder children from early access to sign language. The challenge is how to reach out to all of these children with the best possible access to ASL support. Collaborating with Dr. Juliet Soper we have started to provide access for children with a Down Syndrome diagnoses to early sign language materials. Her presentation at the Prevention Conference at our SDHHS booth was nothing short of breath taking. She explained that two out of three children born with Down Syndrome are born profoundly deaf and acquire their hearing usually in 3 to 5 years. Early access to sign language materials can have huge linguistic outcomes.

Illuminating barriers in the education system remain to be a major targeted area. Every parent wants to see their child receive full and equal education and for many deaf children in the province of Saskatchewan that continues to be unreachable. Funding dollars have targeted auditory verbal therapy solutions and while those solutions work for some, they do not work for all. It seems the child with the most profound hearing loss, is the one that is having the least access to resources. The United Nations charter of rights for persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) guarantees



# Management report

guarantees D/deaf children access to sign language. The policies and standard practice in the province are unconstitutional and create further disability for children struggling to find access.

Our focus this last year came largely from the Strategic Plan our board and staff created. It set clear goals and objectives to eliminate barriers, and meet needs, while not all of our goals were met, we have a clear path forward. This last year has had many meetings with government partners and ministers, the Humans 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. Our province has not yet appropriated this truth. While we have seen no increase in funding for new initiatives and the recommendations of the HRC are still just that, recommendations. I would like to call all citizens of the great province to continue to advocate for full access for all people regardless of age or their disability and move close to a barrier free Saskatchewan.

Camp dragonfly a tremendous success, for students their parents, teachers assistants, Speech Language Pathologists, and resource room teachers. I would like to thank all of the board, the staff, and the volunteers and supporters, sponsors, for making that possible. I know that families will never be the same and children's lives are better, because of your work, thank you all.

The last year saw several young people across the province have access to language for the first time in their lives thanks to the hard work and dedication of the team of staff and volunteers at SDHHS. Their dedication to this great cause, of eliminating barriers for all deaf and hard of hearing will be realised in Saskatchewan. We provided language assessments and made recommendations to help several young people.

Naim

Naim Gillies  
Executive Director



# Communications report

2017/2018 was a very busy year and flew by very quickly! We had changes in the interpreting staff in both offices. Erika Ball left the Regina office and is now the proud mother of a baby girl, Nora. Krissy Haines opted not to return to the agency after her maternity leave. We wish them the very best in their future endeavors. Dean Wiebe was hired into the vacant position at the Saskatoon office. The Staff interpreting complement includes:

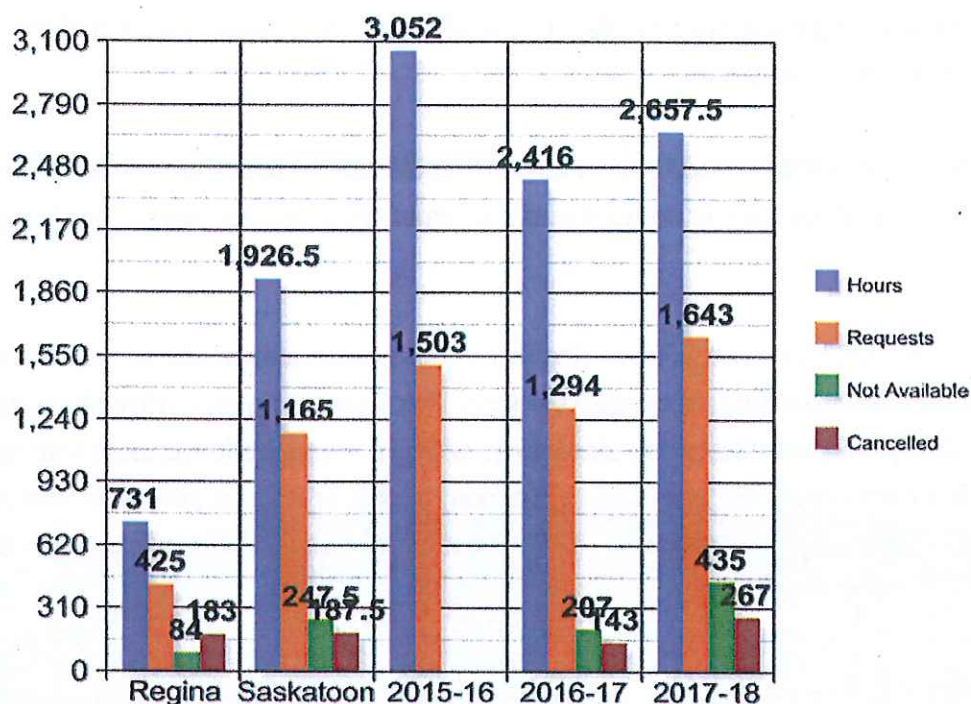
Sue Schmid, Senior Interpreter - Saskatoon

Karen Nurkowski - Regina

Anne Websdale - Saskatoon

Tyler Burgess - Saskatoon

Dean Wiebe - Saskatoon



Freelance interpreters provided a total of 175 hours of service, 84 % of the freelance hours in Saskatoon and 16% of them in Regina. This year our CNS freelancers provided 66 hours of service throughout the province. There were 32 CNS requests that we were unable to fill.





# Communications report

The chart shows that the number of requests has increased 27% compared to the previous year and the total number of interpreting hours increased by 10%. In the 2017/18 year, a total of 702 requests were not completed. 371 of these requests were cancelled. Of the 331 requests we were unable to fill, 25% were in Regina and the remaining 75% in Saskatoon.

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From February 26th to March 30th, Anne Websdale was the practicum supervisor for Joy Emerson. Joy was a fabulous addition to our team over her 4 week placement from the Douglas College Interpreting program, Vancouver, BC.

A big THANK YOU goes to Travis Kerr for his hard work to keep us all in line and for his work in juggling the schedule to accommodate as many requests as we can. Thank you also goes out to staff and freelance interpreters along with the CNS providers for their commitment in providing communication access to our Saskatchewan community! We are fortunate to work with an amazing Deaf community. To help us grow as professionals, we look forward to your continued feedback and support. Feedback can be shared via email to [sue@sdhhs.com](mailto:sue@sdhhs.com) or by calling the Saskatoon office and asking to speak with me.

Respectfully submitted,

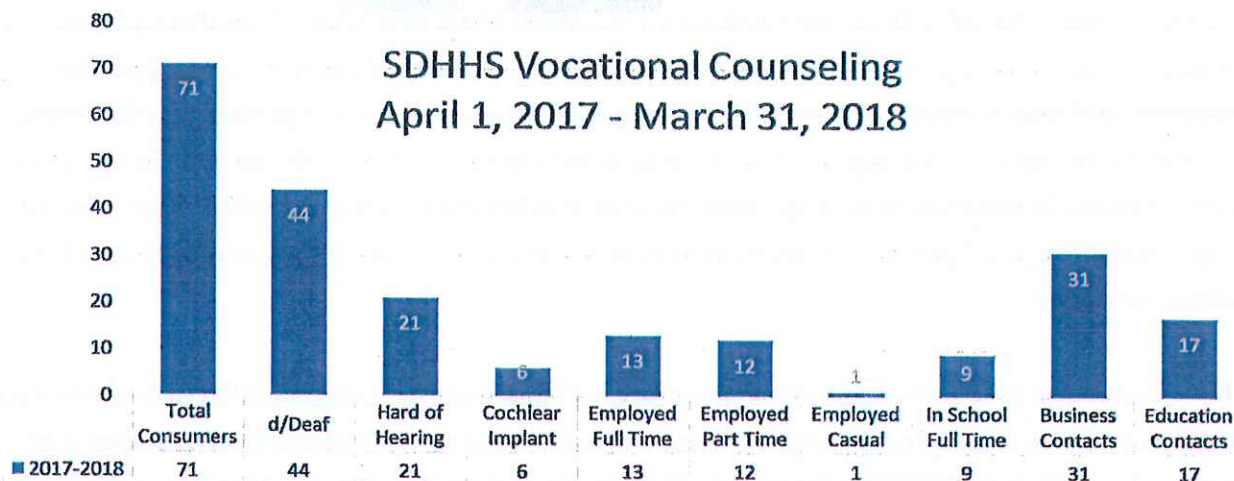
Sue Schmid, COI  
Senior Interpreter



# Vocational Counselling program

Vocational Report: April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018

We have had numerous Vocational Counseling meetings and interactions with d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers here at SDHHS, in Regina and in Saskatoon this year. We hope everyone feels supported and optimistic in their educational and employment goals! Please see the chart for the 2017 – 2018 Vocational Counseling statistics:



In July 2017, the Vocational department set up Work Experience Training at the Deaf Family Camp, which was held at Glen Harbour. Consumers from all across the province participated in running the kitchen, providing janitorial services, running the concession, and facilitating the children's activities while we were at camp. The Work Experience Training participants worked hard to make Deaf Family Camp an enjoyable experience for all the attendees. They benefited from their work experience by learning new work skills and in providing for the campers. It is great to see how they have grown in their understanding of how important working and learning can be.



# Vocational Counselling program

We started a Job Group in March 2018. Job Group meets two times a month using video conferencing in both offices at the same time so our consumers can connect with each other for peer networking and support. We will take a break in July and August for summer holidays, and will resume the Job Group in September. The Job Group requires intensive communication supports so we are utilizing our Interpreters and Computerized Notetaking Services through technology. It has been a good experience for all involved. We have assisted consumers in updating their resumes and cover letters, job searching, interview skills, and how to prepare for job fairs. We have seen consumers sharing their past employment experiences with the Job Group and it allows consumers to express how they have dealt with different situations in their lives. Participants are networking well with each other and benefit from all the conversations that stem from their unique situations.

There have been many assistive listening devices and visual alerts purchased for our consumers to support them in their work endeavours. These devices and alerts include alarm clocks that allow consumers more independence and gets them awake on time for work and for other appointments.

We look forward to another great year!

Twyla Chartrand

Jody Thompson



# ASL program

It is almost two years since I started coordinating ASL programs in Saskatoon and in Regina. In the second year there were six instructors teaching ASL. In the early winter of 2018 the numbers of registrations decreased to 4 classes. Prior to 2016 there was only one class. The following year it increased to six classes in one term (Fall 2017).

This fall term I do not know how many instructors will continue to teach. Hopefully the instructors are willing to teach so ASL classes can be offered again.

I am moving back to Vancouver this August and hopefully someone who has a similar to my skills in coordinating, teaching, filming, and editing, will take my place to continue.

Hope you all have a wonderful summer!

John Warren



# ECFS report

Last summer, the Deaf Family Camp Committee hosted a Deaf Family Camp from July 24 – 30, at Glen Harbour Kids Camp. The children and families enjoyed the social time, food, and activities. SDHHS provided volunteers to run children's programming and activities at the Deaf Family Camp.

We received a grant from the PostMedia Group Raise-A-Reader campaign through the Saskatchewan Literacy Network to purchase a variety of children's books and other learning resource materials. We are happy to announce that those books and resources are now in our Libraries in both Regina and Saskatoon offices.

In closing, the ECFS Staff look forward to continuing to meet new families and see all of our children and families grow and prosper.

Sincerely,

Robyn Holmes  
Twyla Chartrand  
Patricia Spicer  
Lisa Hale



# ECF report

In the past year, the Early Childhood and Family Services (ECFS) program in Regina and Saskatoon has provided teaching of American Sign Language (ASL) to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Cochlear Implanted (D/HH/CI) children and their families, and basic English and ASL to Deaf Immigrant families. While teaching English and ASL, we make sure that our consumers are enjoying their learning experiences and remaining motivated through use of objects, materials, games and videos. We provide home visits, and during some of these we teach children and parents to sign together instead of on their own. Also, new this year, we have been teaching ASL online through video-calls to people living in smaller, rural parts of the province. We try to take the opportunity to see them in person once a month.

When we meet new clients who are raising a child with hearing loss, we give them a special gift - a Baby Signing Time! package from SDHHS. We explain how ASL can be used, give information on how to raise Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing children, and introduce family supports through networking and counselling. We also include play groups and encourage parents of D/HH/CI children to register for ASL classes when available. In Regina there are three new families that have children with Down Syndrome and we are teaching parents and siblings in those families to communicate through ASL; this program is very new and we look forward to seeing it grow and develop.

Regina SDHHS hosted fun activities including the Christmas Party on Dec 9 2017, with 78 people in attendance, and a Bowling Night on January 24 2018, with 25 people involved. Both events were a great success.

Saskatoon SDHHS hosted different activities: A Deaf Family Fun Day, SDHHS BBQ with summer students helping, SDHHS Christmas Party, Babies Morning Out, which ran for 4 months, and a series of Expos where SDHHS set up a booth to bring more awareness and information to the public. We made an ASL Video from the book called "You Deaf?" by Linda McLaughlin. With this, SDHHS Staff and staff from St.Philips School Deaf Program encourage children and families to analyze their true identity and boost their self-esteem to create ASL Story telling in the future.



# Treasurer's report

SDHHS contracted the services of MWC Chartered Professional Accountants to complete the 2017-2018 Financial Audit.

The Auditors Financial Statement is included in the Annual General Meeting package for you review.

Currently, SDHHS is in a surplus position. Funds from the surplus will be used to help offset the costs not funded for through core funding.

I would like to thank Clint and Tiffany from MCW Chartered Accountants for their thorough work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elmer Olson  
Treasurer



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Chartered Professional  
Accountants



# Board, Staff & Contractors

Gord Hein	President
Michelle Gordecki	Past President
Allard Thomas	Vice President
Elmer Olson	Treasurer
Caroline Caul	Secretary
Gale Estell	Director
Art Hillcox	Director
Paulette Smith	Director
Jason Hale	Director
Ashley Corriveau	Dierector

Caroline Bergbusch	Instructor RG
Twyla Chartrand	Instructor RG
Patti Spicer	Instructor RG
Barry Jenkins	Instructor SK
Lezli Jo Trofimenkoff	Instructor SK
Patti Trofimenkoff	Insructor SK

Dianne St. Pierre	Janitorial SK
Rochelle Klassen	Janitorial SK
Isaiah Gbingle	Janitorial RG
Christine Kostiuk	Janitorial RG

Naim Gillies	Executive Director SK
Kami Harbidge	Exec Asst/Finance/ HR SK
Sue Schmid	Senior Interpreter SK
Tyler Burgess	Interpreter SK
Dean Wiebe	Interpreter SK
Anne Websdale	Interpreter SK
Krissy Haines	Interpreter SK
Karen Nurkowski	Interpreter RG
Erika Ball	Interpreter RG

Jody Thompson	Vocational Employment
Robin Holmes	ECFS SK
Lisa Hale	ECFS/ASL Instructor SK
Twyla Chartrand	CSW/VC RG
Patti Spicer	ECFS RG
Earl Trofimenkoff	CSW SK
Travis Kerr	Office Coordinator SK
John Warren	VC/ASL Instructor SK

## Freelance Interpreters

Carla Klassen  
Annette Jasper  
Dawn Marie Wilson  
Shelly Carver  
Maureen Stuart  
Rosalie Wishlow  
Akane Ricard  
Janet Dettrick

## Computerised Note takers

Rhonda Leier  
Heather Reynoldson



# Camp Dragonfly

## CAMP DRAGONFLY 2017 – SPRING

Submitted by Sue Schmid

After many weeks of planning, the week arrived for our SDHHS team to head out to Hannin Creek at Candle Lake. The camp ran from May 15 – 19th 2017 and the weather was much better than we anticipated. Camp Dragonfly was a great success!!

We had 17 adults and 12 students, for a total of 29 campers registered for the 2017 Spring Camp session. The deaf students ranged in age from 7 to 21. It is always amazing to see how much the students and adults benefit from the 5 days at camp. The returning students were very excited to re-connect with their friends again. Their energy was contagious!

Our team was awesome!

Members of our team included:

Adam Stradychuk	Alanda McLeod
Burton Bird	John Warren
Lisa Hale	Naim Gillies
Sue Schmid	Twyla Chartrand
Gord Hein (volunteer)	



The week flew by with lots of activities such as treasure hunts, making dream catchers, painting twigs and stones, hoop dancing, axe throwing, archery, Bingo, fishing, relay races and watching a fantastic magic show put on by the three older students. A slide presentation was shown to the campers on Thursday night.

The adult campers consisted of educational assistants, parents, speech pathologists and teachers. They had such a good time learning and laughing. It was a good opportunity for them to see the potential in the students they work with. The week of making new memories flew by quickly.

This year we have been very fortunate to have the support of Prince Albert Grand Council and Northern Lights School Division to make this camp such a success. Thank you!!