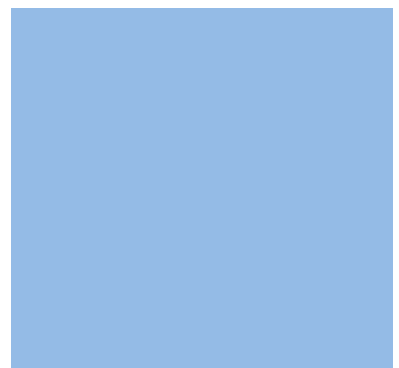
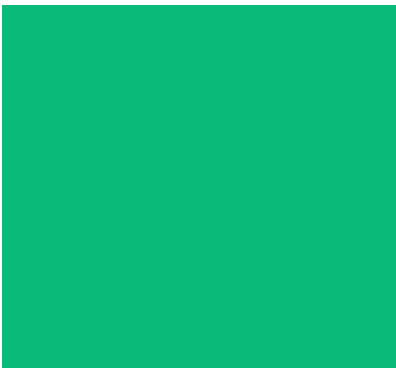




# Annual Report



2024 / 2025





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# Contact Us & Follow Social Media



Website: [www.sdhhs.com](http://www.sdhhs.com)



Instagram: @sdhhsinc



Facebook: SDHHS

## PHONE

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1-800-667-6575

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# Vision & Values

## OUR MISSION

TO SUPPORT THE INDEPENDENCE OF DEAF, DEAFENED AND HARD OF HEARING PERSONS BY PROVIDING SERVICES WHICH ENHANCE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.

## OUR VISION

A WORLD WITHOUT BARRIERS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFENED, OR HARD OF HEARING.

## OUR VALUES

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.

**SDHHS HAS BEEN PROUDLY SERVING SASKATCHEWAN SINCE 1981**



# Who We Are

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ALLARD THOMAS..... PRESIDENT  
DAVID FOURNEY..... VICE PRESIDENT  
ART HILLCOX..... TREASURER  
MICHELLE GRODECKI..... SECRETARY  
GORD HEIN..... DIRECTOR  
MUSTAFA ALABSSI..... DIRECTOR  
FATIMA NAFISA..... DIRECTOR  
PATTI TROFIMENKOFF..... DIRECTOR  
BRENNAN ESTELL ..... DIRECTOR  
ALISON DECK ..... DIRECTOR  
PAULETTE SMITH..... DIRECTOR



## SASKATOON OFFICE

NAIRN GILLIES .....EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
KAMI HARBIDGE ..... EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
REN PERRA ..... OFFICE COORDINATOR  
BRANDIE RADCLIFFE .... INTERPRETER  
JODY THOMPSON ..... VOCATIONAL WORKER & YOUTH WORKER  
KRISSEY HAINES ..... SIGN SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL  
ROBYN HOLMES ..... ECFS WORKER  
ALANDA MCLEOD ..... SIGN SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL  
TYLER BURGESS ..... MENTAL HEALTH WORKER

## 4C PRESCHOOL IN SASKATOON

NICOLE MUSEY ..... 4C PRESCHOOL TEACHER  
ASHLEY BUCKNALL..... 4C PRESCHOOL EA  
DENNY MAURICE..... 4C PRESCHOOL EA

## REGINA OFFICE

KAREN NURKOWSKI..... INTERPRETER  
SHAYNA HOGGARTH ..... INTERPRETER  
PATTI SPICER..... VOCATIONAL WORKER & ECFS WORKER

## SASKATCHEWAN NORTH

SUE SCHMID ..... INTERPRETER  
RAE-MAIRI RICHARDSON..... SIGN SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL

## SASKATCHEWAN SOUTH

BARB FROESE ..... INTERPRETER



# Freelancers & Contractors

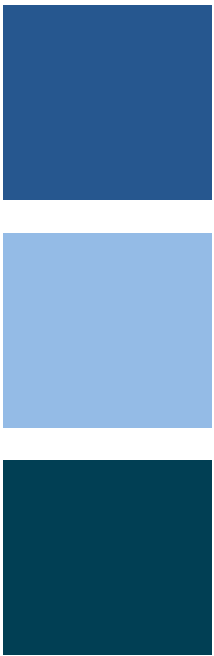
## FREELANCERS

JANET DITTRICK ..... DEAF INTERPRETER  
RHONDA LEIER ..... COMPUTERIZED NOTE-TAKER  
CARLA KLASSEN ..... INTERPRETER  
RACHEL JANZEN ..... INTERPRETER  
TYLER BURGESS ..... INTERPRETER  
ANNE WEBSDALE ..... INTERPRETER



## CONTRACT WORKERS

ADAM STRATYCHUK ..... VIDEO EDITING  
LESLIE DUNN ..... SSP  
DENNY MAURICE ..... YOUTH PROGRAMMING / EA / OFFICE CLEANER  
FATIMA NAFISA ..... YOUTH PROGRAMMING  
ERIN SCHNEIDER ..... YOUTH PROGRAMMING  
AMNA WAHID ..... REGINA OFFICE CLEANER  
ELLA TOMTENE ..... SASKATOON SUMMER STUDENT  
JENNY BEARSS..... SASKATOON SUMMER STUDENT  
MUSTAFA SEEFAN ..... REGINA SUMMER STUDENT



# Volunteers

Thank you for bringing your incredible energy  
and unwavering support – you are truly  
the heart of what we do!

Cameron Auser  
Nova Rittinger  
Kylie Cross  
Bethanie Nicholas  
Amy McGugon  
Adam Stratyчук  
Nicole Musey  
Denny Maurice  
Ashley Bucknall  
Lana Jazen  
Ren Perra  
Bron Nurkowski  
Jackie Maffenbeier  
Jenny Bearss  
Anna Robinson  
Mustafa Seefan  
Amna Wahid  
Mustafa Alabssi  
Monique Bowman  
Leslie Dunn  
Fatima Nafisa

Andrew Knorr  
Richard Pangman  
Isaac Marsden  
Quentin Bucheler  
Shayla Rae Tanner  
Keith Bird  
Jaylynn Kasakan  
Adyson Senger  
Trulaine Campbell  
Alyx Paulson  
Keith Fisher  
Jody Thompson  
Paulette Smith  
Marjolaine Tremblay  
Kiara Riou  
Rob McGettigan  
Marni McGettigan  
Kami Harbidge  
Lisa Alynx  
Brandie Radcliffe  
Bob Hutchinson  
Ray Smith



# President's Report

I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report for SDHHS. This past year has been marked by significant achievements, innovation, and a strengthened commitment to our mission of increasing and providing services and support to D/deaf and Hard of Hearing clients — especially newcomers and marginalized Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals in Northern Saskatchewan — to enhance their quality of life and eliminate communication barriers.

Our accomplishments this year highlight our dedication to service and accessibility. SDHHS has successfully expanded its range of programs and services to ensure that our community receives the support it needs to thrive. From enhancing assistive technology initiatives to improving our community outreach programs, we have continued to make strides in bridging communication gaps, fostering a more inclusive and accessible environment, and promoting optimal sign language acquisition.

The Board is also proud of our engagement with the communities we serve and our collaboration with the broader D/deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. We continue our advocacy efforts to ensure that quality of life and accessibility remain priorities in all areas of life.

Without the support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, partner agencies, and donors, these accomplishments would not have been possible. Your commitment and generosity have been the cornerstone of our success. Together, we have faced challenges, embraced opportunities, and made a lasting impact.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission. The coming year promises continued advancements as we innovate and adapt to the evolving needs of our D/deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. We will keep exploring new opportunities for growth, ensuring that SDHHS continues to play a vital role in enhancing services and programs.

On behalf of the SDHHS Board, thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to our mission. Together, we are making a meaningful difference and building a more inclusive society.

Once again, thank you—one and all.



Allard Thomas, President  
SDHHS Board of Directors



Alone we can do so  
little. Together we  
can do so much”  
- Helen Keller -

# Report from the SDHHS Executive Director

Another year has come and gone, and I have had the privilege to work with some of the finest people on the planet. Together we have seen children gain access to language, families bond and celebrate

relationships. We have built bridges between children, parents, and grandparents as well as with the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) community and our Government.

SDHHS works with a vast and diverse spectrum of DHH people. One model of support doesn't fit all DHH people. Some are D/deaf, some are Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and many are DeafPlus. DeafPlus individuals are people who have a hearing loss plus additional disabilities such as autism, cognitive delays, intellectual disabilities, limited mobility, etc.

The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program in SK began on May 1, 2019. The program screens in all 18 hospitals in SK that regularly deliver babies. Early identification of DHH children is key in eliminating debilitating linguistic delays. Early access to support, which includes language acquisition and instruction, is vital to children in developing their foundation of identity and their relationships in life. Support for families in acquiring sign language allows for open communication in the home and empowers the caregivers to advocate for the child.

SDHHS' client base is growing. We have been able to form an excellent relationship with the new SLP at SPARC. She supports sign language use and understands why it is critical in a child's development. Because of this, she is referring more young clients to the SDHHS ECFS program. Most recently, we have been getting referrals for non-verbal children to access sign language programming.

Continued access to support in primary education, post-secondary education, employment, mental health services, medical services, government services, et. al, is imperative to being able to grow, thrive, and achieve goals throughout life. There is an abundance of research proving that early and continued access to sign language (for all DHH and hearing children) improves language acquisition, cognitive development, communication skills, social interaction, overall literacy skills, emotional well-being, increases a person's IQ, lessens frustrations, and can positively impact the development of spoken language for DHH individuals when used alongside language training.

ASL recognition across Canada happened in 2018. Bill C-81, the Accessible Canada Act, aims to make Canada barrier-free by addressing communication barriers, including American Sign Language (ASL). The Saskatchewan Accessibility Act came into force on December 3rd, 2023. The Act recognizes that deaf people use sign languages, including ASL and Indigenous sign languages (ISL), as their main way to communicate.

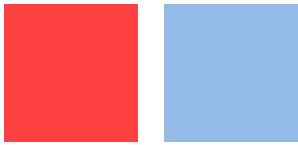
More people are aware of us because of our social media presence. They are contacting us and seeking out support for various life situations. This is also contributing to the increase in the number of DHH people who are seeking mental health support.

It is hard to put into words the year at a glance, but as you look at this report and see all the smiling faces, please recognize the thousands of hours and the hundreds of clients all over the province that have received services. This is entirely due to the staff and volunteers, as well as other organizations and government agencies that support this great work.

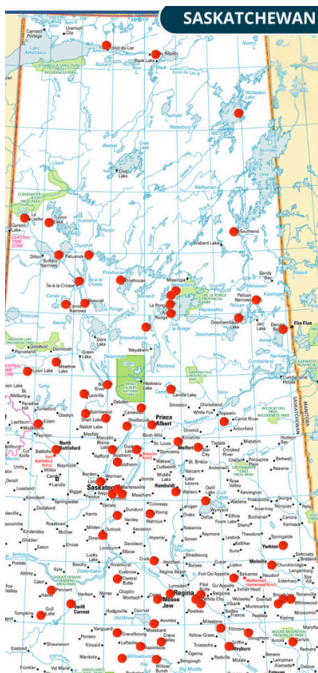
~Nairn Gillies



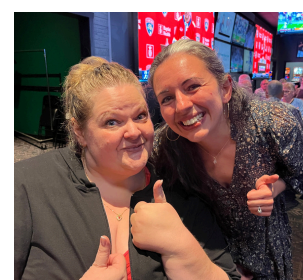




# 2024 / 2025 Year in Review









# From the SDHHS Office Coordinator

Hello from the Front Desk!

What a year it's been from 2024 to 2025!

It's truly a privilege to be part of such an amazing team and to contribute to work that's both meaningful and rewarding. I had the pleasure of helping organize many of our annual events, including the Fall Fundraiser, online auction, quilt raffles, and summer BBQ—just to name a few!

I was also fortunate to host two brand-new events this year: the Holiday Craft Market and the Bingo Meet-Up.

The Holiday Craft Market was a great success, drawing over 250 attendees and showcasing the talents of 12 incredible craft makers from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. It was a wonderful opportunity for people to share their skills, explore new hobbies, and even earn a little extra cash for the holidays. We're already planning the next one and hope to make it a long-standing tradition.



The Bingo Meet-Up was another fun addition; offering a chance to shake off the winter blues, connect with friends, and win some fun prizes. Both events were hosted at The Spot in Market Mall, a fantastic free space available to non-profits like SDHHS. A big thank you to Market Mall for their generous support!



This past summer, I had the joy of working with a team of enthusiastic Summer Students. They brought great energy and helped us gather a generous collection of items for our fall auctions—we couldn't have done it without them!

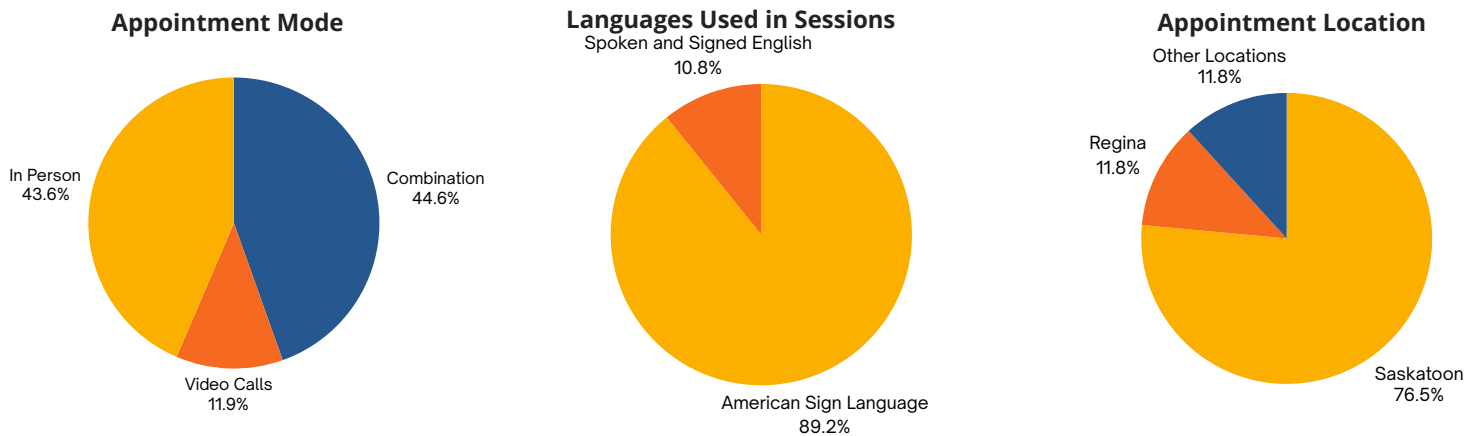
In day-to-day operations, the demand for interpreting services continues to grow, with around 1,900 assignments completed this year. Just when it seems we've reached our limit, our interpreters rise to the occasion and find a way to make it work. Their dedication inspires me to always do my best.

Looking back, it's been a fulfilling and memorable year. I've truly enjoyed the journey and can't wait to see what the coming year brings. Here's to continued growth, new experiences, and another great year ahead!

# Mental Health

SDHHS was lucky to receive pilot project funding from the Cameco Step Up for Mental Health grant through the Saskatoon Community Foundation. We were able to hire Tyler Burgess as a Mental Health Worker for 10 months of 2024. Unfortunately that funding was not able to be renewed, so when his contract ended in December, he was unable to stay on as the Mental Health Worker into the new year.

During Tyler's time as our Mental Health Worker, he had a case load of 83 individuals, far surpassing the anticipated number of people we had initially thought would request services. Mental Health services were offered in American Sign Language (ASL), and English, depending on the need of the individual client.



Appointments were conducted both in-person and over video calls, and were across the province in places such as Pelican Narrows, Prince Albert, Warman, Saskatoon, Outlook, Regina, - just to name a few - there were many other locations as well.

Tyler did one-to-one sessions, group activities, and helped a lot of people feel less isolated, and more involved.

SDHHS would like to thank Tyler for his tireless efforts last year in making mental health supports accessible for D/deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in Saskatchewan.



## Deaf Mental Health Awareness

### Exclusion

- ✗ Say "never mind, I'll tell you later" or ignore
- ✗ Make assumptions or stereotypes
- ✗ Create content that is inaccessible
- ✗ Deny interpreter accommodations requests
- ✗ Mock sign language users or speech ability

### Inclusion

- ✓ Repeat information when asked and be patient
- ✓ Ask about communication preferences
- ✓ Use captions and subtitles in videos
- ✓ Plan and budget to welcome requests
- ✓ Learn basic sign language from Deaf Teachers

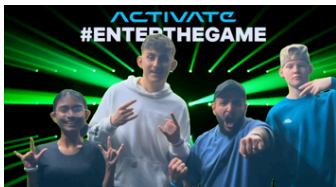
{ Graphic from: inclusiveasl.com }



# Regina Youth Programming



This year there was an increase in numbers at our Youth Programming. Our main focus was to provide activities that will help the participants get motivated to come outside and get involved to benefit their mental health. There were a few activities that were cancelled due to various issues like weather, less people, etc. Our targeted audience was between ages 6 - 29. The activities helped the participants to find common ground and talk about topics that were relevant to them so they could engage and enjoy together.



The activities focused mainly on developing their social/communication skills and boosting their confidence. It helped them learn life skills from their experiences. There were participants who were shy at first and some who weren't acquainted with sign language. But, through the help of our program and activities, they were able to overcome those hurdles and showed significant improvement in being confident, optimistic and open to new learning opportunities. They felt safe opening up through those activities, which helped them shape their mindset and increase their sense of identity.



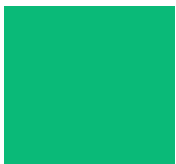
We did experience some challenges due to individuals' finances and transportation. Suggestion of the participants, for the new year, would like to add more fun activities such as: Paintball, Horse Riding, Go Karting on a bigger road, Pickleball, Kahoot with prizes, etc. I would also like to add some workshops like, Pumpkin carving, help with job search and financial planning, different kinds of art projects, etc.

The activities included:  
BBQ and Game Night  
Movie & Popcorn Night  
Queen City Ex  
Water Park Kayak Regina Beach  
Build Kite  
Shock House  
Paint Pumpkins & Scarecrows  
Cookies Art Time  
Skypark  
Activate Game 2x  
Laser Tag Game  
Mini Golf Game  
Kite Making



Overall, it was a success and it is a great program to have in place for future development for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

Thank you!  
Fatima Tun Nafisa





# Saskatoon Youth Programming

SDHHS received funding from the Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation to fund the Saskatoon Youth Programming this year. Thank you to Dakota Dunes CDC for helping us to be able to offer fun, safe experiences for the youth in our DHH community!

There are many things that the SDHHS Youth Programming accomplished this year, with the top priorities of providing a sense of belonging and lessening isolation for D & HH youth ages 6 all the way through to 26! The youth that joined us were D/deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafPlus, and Hearing CODAs, & nieces of a Deaf adult.

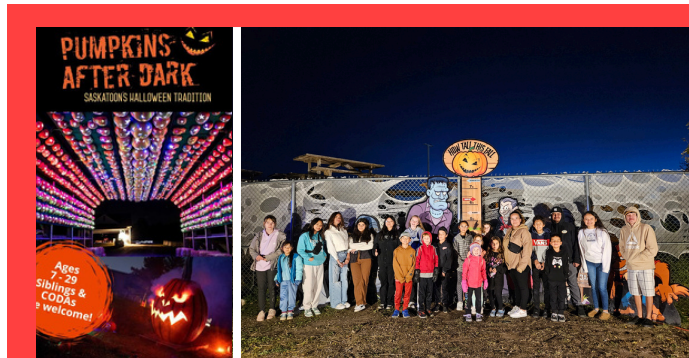
SDHHS will be looking for funding to continue to offer the Youth Programming to encourage the participants to continue to take part in recreational activities that help them with both positive physical and positive mental health.



I feel like it is hard to choose what event or activity I enjoyed with the youth the most this year. It was great when some of the older youth from Regina drove up to Saskatoon to join us for the Pumpkins After Dark! The Young Turtle play was awesome to watch and to watch all the younger youths' expressions and understanding when having a play interpreted for them! The Escape rooms were fun and full of problem solving! Apex trampolining is always a good time! I can't pick just one event or activity as my favourite.

My favourite thing is Youth Programming! I love getting all the youth together to try new experiences and listening to their stories from their lives, all while getting to watch them learn and grow!

Denny Maurice



# Vocational Education & Employment

We had a wonderful and productive year supporting our Vocational Clients in a variety of ways to help meet their individual needs. From developing resumes and practicing job interviews to participating in training sessions and more, it's been a year full of growth and opportunity.

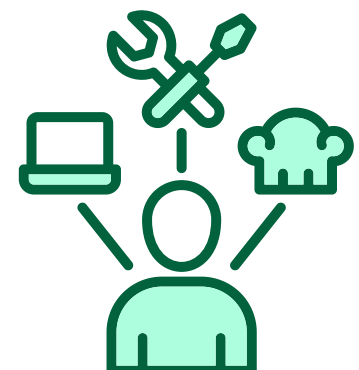
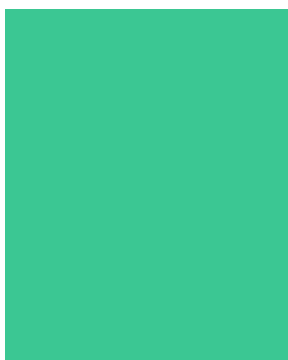
In June, we hosted the Let's Get Growing workshop, which was a great success! The workshop focused on growing plants and food. Participants learned about greenhouses gardening, landscaping work, growing plants indoors, starting food from seeds, and even regrowing food from kitchen scraps. We discussed job opportunities working with landscaping equipment, in greenhouses, and how skills they already have can transfer to different jobs.



In September, Christine Roschaert (Coco) was the presenter for our Human Services: Introduction to Working with Deafblind Individuals workshop. Coco guided us in enhancing our skills through effective touch-based communication methods, learning to provide safe and respectful guidance, and gaining essential tools to support individuals who are Deafblind.



We also hosted Soapstone Carving workshops in both Regina and Warman. Participants had the opportunity to express their creativity by carving their own soapstone pieces, guided by instructors, Nairn and Tyler.





December 2024 in Regina, and February 2025 in Saskatoon, we hired training companies to teach the First Aid/AED/CPR course for participants who needed to complete that specific training required for their resumes or job applications, or as a part of their job maintenance plan. This initiative was designed to help individuals meet employment goals. And some of our SDHHS Staff took the opportunity to renew their certificates at the same time.



On January 31 and February 1, we hosted the American Sign Language Parent-Child Mother Goose workshop with presenters from the Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf. This highly successful workshop taught us how to better support parents and their Deaf or Hard of Hearing children. Participants gained valuable skills in becoming more effective ASL instructors for families with babies and toddlers.

During the months of February and March, we were busy planning for the next fiscal year while still having our regular client appointments and performing our other duties. We have had a great time brainstorming ideas and facilitating our training pieces and workshops, to make sure our clients have a variety of options for training, education, and employment opportunities. As always, we look forward to another year of supporting the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens of Saskatchewan!

Sincerely,  
Patricia Spicer & Jody Thompson



### Want to be a Kids ASL Instructor?

Learn how to teach Mother Goose ASL to kids!  
Deaf, Hard of Hearing, & CODA who are first language ASL users are welcome to come and learn how to teach the Mother Goose curriculum.

January 31 & February 1, 2025  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm



Want to become a parent-child  
Mother Goose Instructor?  
email [patti@sdhhs](mailto:patti@sdhhs) to register and pay  
\$5.00 before Friday, January 24, 2025



This workshop is non-certification.

Participants will receive the ASL Parent-Child Mother Goose package, which includes one guidebook and two DVDs.

Lunch and snacks will be provided.

# Interpreting

The interpreting team staff has remained consistent with the 5 Staff Interpreters in Saskatchewan. Karen Nurkowski and Shayna Hoggarth work in the Regina office, Brandie Radcliffe works in the Saskatoon office, Barb Froese and Sue Schmid primarily work remotely out of their home offices, Swift Current and Prince Albert respectively. In January, 2025, Shayna celebrated her 1<sup>st</sup> year anniversary with SDHHS. SDHHS is actively trying to recruit one more staff Interpreter.



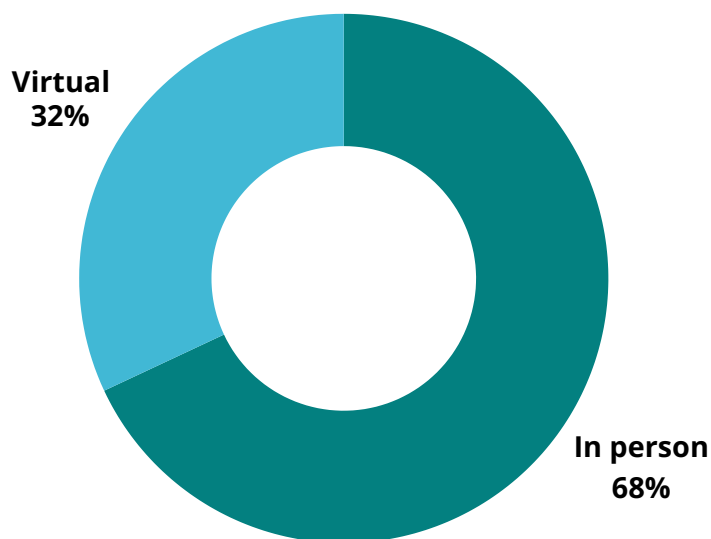
SDHHS has added Anne Websdale and Tyler Burgess to the freelance roster in addition to our current freelance interpreters, Carla Klassen and Rachel Janzen.

The 2024-2025 fiscal year has proven to be a busy one. The total number of requests for the year came in at 1,889. This is a 7% increase over the previous year. SDHHS continues to provide virtual interpreting. The number of virtual requests increased by 15%. As in previous years, SDHHS continues to contract with companies to provide translation services to make documents accessible in ASL.





Total number of assignments for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is 1,889.



SDHHS has supplied the following hospitals with iPads to enhance accessibility to ASL Interpreters:

City Hospital, Saskatoon  
Dr. FH Wigmore Regional Hospital, Moose Jaw  
La Ronge Medical Centre  
Pasqua Hospital, Regina  
Regina General Hospital, Regina  
Royal University Hospital, Saskatoon  
St. Paul's Hospital, Saskatoon  
Victoria Hospital, Prince Albert

If there is an emergency is during regular office hours, a call can be made to SDHHS to arrange an Interpreter  
8 am – 4 pm, Monday to Friday.  
The phone number is: 1-306-665-6575 or  
Toll free, 1-800-667-6575.

When an Interpreter is required for a legal or medical emergency before or after SDHHS business hours, an Interpreter can be contacted via:  
Phone, Text or FaceTime – 306-514-7644  
Skype – sdhhs911

Emergency Interpreting is limited to:

- Being questioned, arrested, or charged by the police
- 911 calls
- Emergency health issues at the hospital
- Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre



# Sign Support Professionals

- Providing access to opportunities for my clients in remote and isolated regions in Northern communities and making plans to accommodate events that need to happen for our DHH communities in Northern Sask in 2024 – 2025 was a top priority. This included the Northern youth participating in youth activities, vocational workshops, and events in Saskatoon and Regina.
- There were many visits in-person and through Zoom sessions that spanned from Onion Lake to Flin Flon and Black Lake to Saskatoon. Continuing to support most Indigenous communities and diverse clients including Infants and Families, from Students to Elders. Most of the visits I had were at elementary and high school facilities on Reserves, or in Urban and Rural locations.
- We received many new referrals to provide ASL support for families. Thanks to ECFS and SPARC's senior SLP for their referrals and support for those DHH Children & Youth.
- I am hoping to have a future Expo in Prince Albert for Northern communities to participate.
- Gaps in services were needed: providing a lot of mental health support, and through making educational and employment accommodations. There is a lot of need for translation from ASL/PISL, and ASL/English. It is not limited to only DHH it includes DeafBlind and Non-verbal clients.
- 2024 Camp Dragonfly; I attended as an ASL instructor for EAs, Support Staff and their students.
- At Prairie Camp Deaf Fest we were introduced to new attendees, and were supporting everyone who was able to join. And I brought the kayaks that we borrowed from SDHHS for a bit of fun!
- Alanda and I continue our online ASL tutoring and teaching to school-aged Youth every Wednesday from October to May.
- The SK DHH Youth continued to need support in attending important events: Canada Deaf Youth Leadership Camp and National Indigenous Deaf Culture Gathering Camp. Turned out almost all of youth participated in both camps. They came back home with very happy faces.
- I attended workshops and professional development such as ASL structures, ASL literacy, ASL instructors, ISLs/ASL Trainer and more.
- Also, trade shows and conferences I worked include: The Saskatoon Family Expo, the Metis & FN Language Keepers, Sask Fashion Week for Indigenous Artists, Deaf Interpreters in Medical & Health care, and more.







## Sask Fashion Week: Indigenous Design Legacies Summit

Quote from Rae Mairi: "So when I came here and watched all of the stories, from all the presenters sharing their dreams and their goals, it was so inspirational and the benefit for me is that knowledge that I have taken from all of their stories and inspirations, their trials and tribulations; I can take that to the Indigenous Youth in Northern communities who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing and show to them as proof that their dreams can become realities too."



*Rae-Mairi Richardson*





## Principles of Accessible Design:

### PROUD

**P**erceivable: Information presented in a way that can be perceived by users with sensory impairments.

**R**obust: Content robust enough that it can be interpreted by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

**O**perable: User interface components and navigation must be operable.

**U**nderstandable: Information and the user interface must be understandable- Plain language.

**D**iversity: Accommodate the individual, not the disability



We are seeing a huge gap in programming for our ageing population. By setting up a Pilot Program for DHH Seniors, with funding from the Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation, we are focusing on reducing isolation, promoting physical activity, encouraging social interaction, and enhancing cognitive function by providing accessible programming in ASL.

This will boost emotional health and give our community the ability to participate in programs they might not otherwise be able to sign up for due to a lack of accommodations in ASL.



Research shows lack of programming for seniors who are unable to attend community events disconnects them from society and relationships. The case is more true for DHH Seniors. This pilot program plans to foster healthy aging by providing isolated individuals with meaningful connections to others and offer a sense of belonging. SDHHS will continue to look for funding to try to turn this into permanent programming that can reach all DHH Seniors across Saskatchewan.



## EMPOWERING THROUGH CREATIVE EXPRESSION

For my work, this means creating barrier free access to programs for DHH, including those with developmental and physical challenges that are designed to help foster creativity and personal self-expression.

Using a variety of artistic media to promote skill and language building through creative expression. In this case, we have been using textiles to create art to display, wear as fashion, or wear for function.



**Thinking outside the box to Create programming that allows learning in their own language for DHH.**

### Why is it important?

- ☐ Ethical responsibility to include everyone
- ☐ Bill 103: The Accessible Saskatchewan Act came into force December 2023
- ☐ Enhanced user experience for all
- ☐ These are key to not only persons with disabilities, but our ageing populations, Elders, the growing number of physical and mental disabilities within our population

When we engage in creative pursuits, we are constantly faced with unique challenges that require us to think outside the box and find unconventional solutions.

- ☐ Challenges: Physical limitations (e.g., fine motor skills, vision impairments)
- ☐ Cognitive challenges (e.g., understanding instructions, following patterns)
- ☐ Sensory sensitivities (e.g., tactile, auditory)

Equitable assistance allows individuals to build on strengths & interests to become involved in recreational programs. Providing support according to the unique needs & goals of each individual builds a relationship of trust.

Developing pro-social relationships & building self-esteem is a powerful way to cope with stress and promote self-care. It can help people express their emotions, discover new aspects of themselves, & connect with others who share the same passions.



### Strategies:

- Adaptive tools and techniques: Modified tools, alternative materials, assistive technology
- Clear and concise instructions: Simple language, visual aids, step-by-step guides
- Inclusive workshops and classes: Consider diverse needs, accommodations, flexible formats
- Community and collaboration: Connect with disability organizations, create inclusive spaces

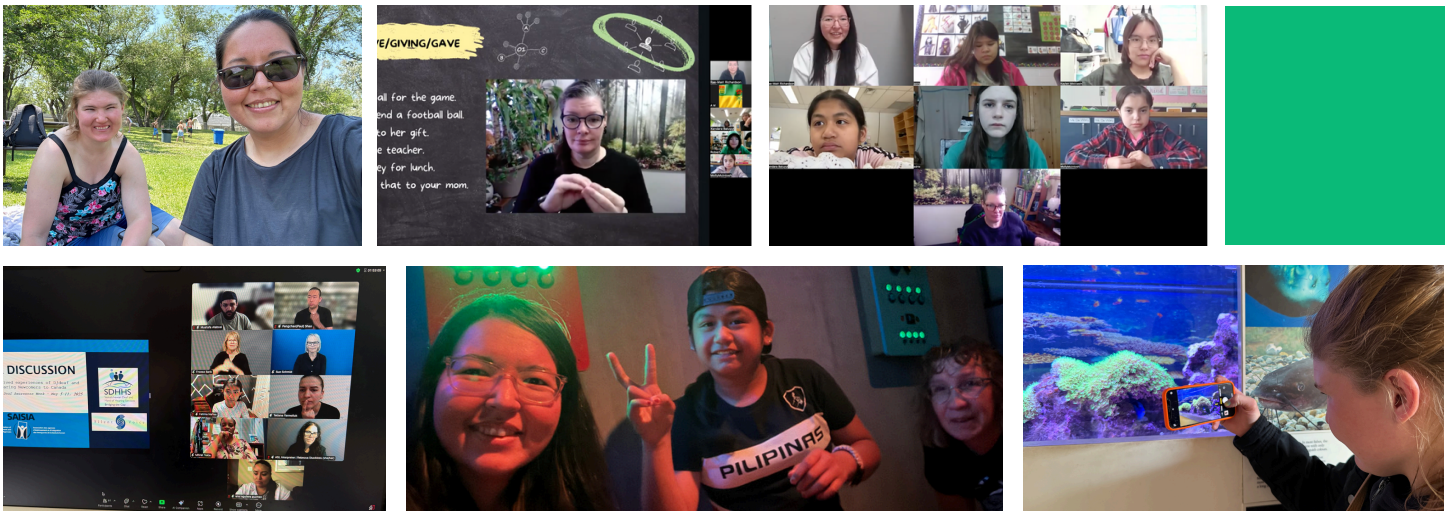
*Krissy Haines*

I've been actively involved in a variety of programs, workshops, and events that supported both my professional development and the communities in which I work.

From October to May, Rae-Mairi and I led and participated in many Zoom sessions focused on teaching ASL to youth. It felt like a school environment in some ways with classmates learning together, but it was also a unique and supportive space. We enjoyed seeing the youth connect with one another while learning and growing through ASL.

From April to June, support was provided to an out-of-town client who participated in our in-person spring programming in Saskatoon. This was a wonderful experience. The client benefited from increased exposure to new environments and people, which helped improve their social skills and confidence. Rae-Mairi and I worked with the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA) for Zoom Webinars. We participated in two different webinars. One was where we spoke about our experiences. The other featured a panel of Deaf immigrants, sharing their stories and raising awareness about their unique challenges and perspectives.

I enjoyed being involved in several family and community events throughout the year by going to: Nutrien Children's Festival (June), Teddy Bear Bash (September), Bump, Babe & Beyond Expo (October), Saskatoon Family Expo (February). These events gave me the chance to engage with many children and families who were excited to learn ASL. It was very rewarding to see their curiosity and interest.



I gave presentations focused on raising awareness and educating others about ASL and Deaf culture. In my personal time, I completed Sign Language Institute Canada training, which has been very helpful and directly supports my work as a Sign Support Professional. I helped out at CCCC Preschool, making sure we could keep the school going while supporting the health and well-being of the staff. I also traveled with Rae-Mairi in November, February, and April to visit and work with clients in person.

One of the things I really enjoyed was doing crafts with clients — it's a fun and creative way to connect. It's always satisfying to see things come together and to watch others benefit from the experience.

This year has been full of meaningful moments, growth, and connection. I'm proud of the work I've done and the impact I've made. Whether teaching, traveling, presenting, or crafting, every experience has helped me grow and continue supporting my clients and community.





# SDHHS Fundraising!

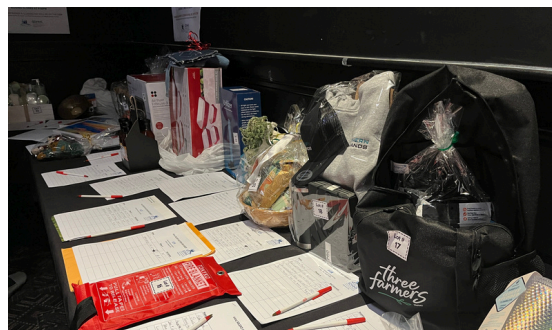


◆◆◆ SDHHS ◆◆◆  
**2024 QUILT RAFFLE**  
QUILTS HANDMADE BY DEAF SENIORS IN SASKATOON!

**Enter to Win**  
THIS OR THAT

ONE DRAW WILL BE MADE AT THE SASKATOON HOLIDAY CHEER PARTY ON NOVEMBER 30, 2024!  
WINNER WILL BE CONTACTED BY SDHHS.  
ONLY ONE QUILT WILL BE WON - WINNER'S CHOICE!

**BUY TICKETS NOW!** 1 FOR \$5 3 FOR \$10  
SDHHS SASKATOON OFFICE  
#3 - 511 1ST AVE N  
Call: 306-665-6675 Text: 306-229-2010



**Fall Fundraiser**  
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

**Tickets \$40 ea**

DRINKS | 5:30PM  
GREETINGS | 6:00PM  
SUPPER | 6:30PM

**Includes:**  
• LIVE AUCTION  
• DESSERT AUCTION  
• SILENT AUCTION  
• 50/50

**SPORTS ON TAP**  
2606 LORNE AVE.  
SASKATOON, SK

**SDHHS**  
Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services  
Bridging the Gap

Please Note: Minors are not allowed.  
Sports On Tap is a licensed 19+ facility.



**Fall Fundraiser** 

The 2024 SDHHS online auction is on until Sunday, October 6th, until 7pm!

Get your bid in on the awesome auction items listed on the **Klass A Auctions** Facebook page!

**THANK YOU TO OUR AWESOME DONORS!!**





# Camp Dragonfly



Thank you to the organizations and companies that provided SDHHS with donations. Without the extra financial assistance, we would not be able to host Camp Dragonfly. Some of the funds go directly to covering registration costs. In 2024, there were 5 youth, ages 7 – 15. and 7 adults (EAs, CFS worker and parents/guardians) in attendance. The team consisted of 6 members, two interpreters and 4 deaf adults. Originally 8 youth and 12 adults registered for the 2024 Camp with another 4 other deaf youth hoping an escort could be arranged.

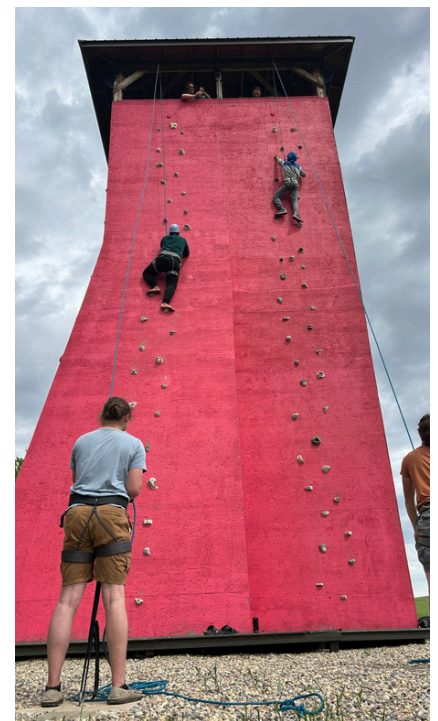
Programming offered in ASL allows for inclusion and accessibility to all components of camp. The overall goal of camp is to create peer support via D/deaf and Hard of Hearing role models of all ages.

## The team focused on:

- ASL literacy
- Cooperation games
- Activities on site
- Sense of community
- Access to communication
- Fostered problem solving techniques
- Organization of day/schedules

## Positive outcomes:

- Many connections made between students from different communities
- Connections between adults to offer support beyond camp
- ASL expressive and receptive literacy provided in a non-threatening environment
- Adults learning ASL techniques to encourage involvement of the students, getting attention of the student, extracting more information from students, cooperative play, fun environment for learning, and an opportunity to see natural communication and turn taking
- A positive environment that places the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing students on a level playing field with their peers and the team
- Socialization skills, learning to lose gracefully, supporting their teams, listening and understanding their peers
- Increased vocabulary and involvement as all campers attended the ASL classes
- Opportunity for youth to be leaders in a group
- Ability to predict the days by use of the schedule posted each day with an ASL explanation and drawings of the activities
- The language rich environment allowed students to embrace signing in front of others (no embarrassment of being the only one signing)
- Adults felt supported and shared similar issues; were able to problem solve; encouraged by the natural transition of the student to engage in a community; shared ideas they employ with D/deaf and Hard of Hearing students; created connections to keep in touch after camp; planned get-togethers post camp





### Adult comments included:

- It is such a relief to know that the deaf child can communicate with everyone
- I have never heard the child laugh so much
- I am surprised at how involved/interactive the student was
- We are failing the students by not using an accessible language
- The student is “reading” the schedule and understands what will happen during the day without having to explain it
- I WILL become the student’s advocate
- The student has expressed so much more at camp than in the classroom
- I get it!! This makes so much sense.
- I probably would not have understood the benefits of a camp like this, if I didn’t attend
- The student is able to follow the directions in ASL
- The variety in the games and activities was great
- Could there be an advance level provided to those who are more fluent in ASL?
- Great memories

The benefits of the camp are not limited to the 5 days. Information learned will continue to be used in the future. Connections were made and resources are available for follow up. People left feeling hopeful for the future of the student they work with. They were able to see positive D/deaf and Hard of Hearing role models who are functioning well in society, holding down jobs, intelligent, humorous, and very authentic.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Schmid, CDF Coordinator

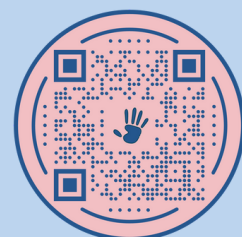


“I have never heard  
the child laugh so  
much!”

-Adult who attended  
to the camp



Scan here for a  
Camp Dragonfly video:



<https://youtu.be/tG8ipdyMUEA>

# Early Childhood & Family Services

This year has been filled with meaningful engagement, education, and advocacy within our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

**ASL with Parents** We hosted an 8-week ASL with Parents series every Wednesday, providing a valuable space for families to connect, learn, and strengthen communication at home. It was inspiring to witness parents supporting each other while deepening their understanding of ASL.

**Little Buttons** Our Little Buttons program on Wednesdays in November brought great enthusiasm from both parents and children. The weekly themed “blue bin” activities — such as exploring winter or naming animals — sparked curiosity and joy, fostering language development in a fun and engaging way.

**Preschool Support** The ECFS team provided support to Saskatoon 4C Preschool programming as needed. It was a joy to see children thriving in their learning environment. A special thank you to Nicole for her outstanding dedication as a teacher.

**ASL Outreach in Schools** We continued teaching ASL in various schools across Saskatchewan. This initiative is increasing awareness and understanding of Deaf culture, helping children communicate with their Deaf and Hard of Hearing peers, and empowering future allies.

**Referrals to our ECFS program** SDHHS’ ECFS programming saw a steady rise in referrals through SPARC and from word of mouth, leading to more family visits and expanding supports. The growth reflects a positive step toward a stronger, more connected Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.





**Government Relations** The ECFS Workers met with several MLAs, Ministers of Health and Social Services to advocate for the importance of our services and the need for a dedicated Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community Centre. It has been encouraging to see interest from MLAs who recognize the value of our programs.

**Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Webinars** In partnership with Deaf Children Society of BC and Silent Voice, we hosted monthly webinars on various parenting themes. These sessions support families, connect parents and caregivers with each other, and foster knowledge sharing across Canada.

**Community Outreach and Events** Many families and organizations connected with our team by participating in events such as the Teddy Bear Bash, Nutrien Festival, Baby Bump and Beyond Expo, and the Saskatoon Family Expo. We also noticed increased appreciation from families as we expanded our reach through more travel.

**Summer Programming**  
**Saskatoon Kids Day Camp (August 13–16, 2024)**  
**Regina Summer Recharge (July 3/17/24 & August 21/28)**

Our summer day camps brought together Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, as well as hearing children from Deaf families. One camper said, “This was the best summer camp ever!” – a testament to the inclusive and memorable experience we strive to provide.

As we reflect on the past year, we are incredibly grateful for the families, partners, and community members who continue to walk alongside us. Your involvement, passion, and support have made all the difference in creating inclusive spaces where Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and their families can thrive. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected future—one where language, culture, and community are celebrated every day.

We look forward to another year of growth, learning, and connection. Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Robyn & Patricia





It has been another incredible year at 4C Preschool! We welcomed seven students, each showing remarkable growth in language and communication. Their expanding vocabularies and sentence complexity reflect just how far they've come. While we're proud, it's always bittersweet as some graduate to their primary school years.

Our program continues to follow a **Bilingual-Bimodal (Bi-Bi)** approach, supporting D/deaf, Hard of Hearing, and CODA children in developing both ASL and English. Unlike Total Communication, Bi-Bi emphasizes one language at a time, helping students build strong, balanced skills without over-relying on a dominant language.

#### Strategies we use include:

- Sandwiching (Sign-Speak-Sign or Speak-Sign-Speak)
- Visual supports and modeling
- Pauses to encourage expression
- Individualized support based on each child's needs

We also emphasize family involvement, recognizing parents and caregivers as vital partners in language development.

The preschool runs Monday–Thursday at St. Augustine School, with Family Days on Fridays at local venues like the Wonderhub, Corn Maze, Saskatoon Zoo, and more. These outings help foster language, identity, and social connections in fun, engaging settings.





We collaborate with SDHHS's Early Childhood Family Services (ECFS), with support from Robyn Holmes, who connects with families across programs.

**Our team includes:**

- Miss Nicole, lead teacher, using tools like VCSL and MacArthur CDI to track progress
- Ashley Bucknall, Deaf EA fluent in ASL and spoken English
- Denny Maurice, Deaf EA and Youth Leader fluent in ASL
- Kinley Winter, SLP supporting both languages

Our classroom blends structured teaching with play-based learning, influenced by Montessori principles. Aligned with Saskatchewan's early years framework, our program supports language, motor skills, creativity, and social-emotional growth.

Themes this year included All About Me, Food, Winter, Dinosaurs, and more, alongside seasonal celebrations.



This year marks my fifth and final year teaching at 4C Preschool. It's been a rich and fulfilling experience. I'm grateful to all the students, families, and colleagues who've made these years unforgettable. I hope to see the program continue growing and reaching more D/deaf and Hard of Hearing children in the years ahead.

With gratitude,

Nicole Musey  
Lead Teacher, 4C Preschool



# ASL Classes



**Alanda McLeod:** After previously serving as a substitute, I returned in Spring 2025 as an ASL teacher. It was great to reconnect with the ASL student community and witness their continued growth and support for one another.

Although the Signing Naturally curriculum remains the same, each group brings different learning styles. Some students grasp ASL quickly, while others take more time—but all make progress in both language skills and their understanding of Deaf culture. It's a privilege to be part of their journey.

**Nicole Musey:** During the 2024–2025 reporting period, Nicole Musey taught three American Sign Language courses through SDHHS:

ASL 101 – Fall 2024

ASL 102 – Winter 2025

ASL 101 – Spring 2025

Classes were held in person at the SDHHS Saskatoon office in the fall and winter terms, and at the Cliff Wright Library for the spring session. All classes ran on Tuesdays and Thursdays, originally from 7:00–9:00 p.m., later adjusted to 6:45–8:45 p.m.

Ms. Musey brought a strong focus on Deaf culture, social justice, and community awareness, which deeply resonated with students. One of the highlights for participants was the Deaf Panel—a chance to engage with members of the Deaf community and gain meaningful insight beyond the classroom experience.

Students came from diverse backgrounds, including educational assistants, family members of non-verbal individuals, high school students, and others with a personal or professional interest in ASL. Their enthusiasm and dedication to learning the language made each session dynamic and rewarding.

Ms. Musey wishes all of her students continued success on their ASL journey and thanks SDHHS for the opportunity to share her passion for language and culture.

**Rae-Mairi Richardson:** This year of ASL 2023–24 with all Levels of: 101, 102, 201 and 202 were champ! It has been nice to stay involved with ASL community from when I first taught ASL in 2021. It was great to see them improve their skills in signing. Some of them return for more.

I have been sharing my education as ASL Instructor in regards to Deaf Culture, ASL Structures with SLIC and CHS on ZOOM to use them as resources along with our students. Since 2021 to now, it has been the best way to teach for both of us – the ASL student community and ASL Instructors. Most of the ASL students I work with are students in High Schools, Educational Assistants, Outreach Teachers, and then of course, the general public who are interested in ASL.

I have encouraged ASL students to get involvement with the DHH community events as much as they can to enhance their learning and to be able to practice what they have learned. And I will continue on this part of my journey to the next level of ASL students, both old and new!



**Twyla Chartrand:** Has taught 4 ASL online classes between Spring 2024 to Spring 2025, one class per session two times a week Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9 pm for 10 weeks and get one week break during half way of each ASL session.

Last year in April 2024, Twyla taught ASL 102 Class and 10 students registered, 7 students completed their class. Last Fall in September 2024, Twyla taught ASL 102 to 15 students registered and 12 students completed their ASL class. In the new year, during the Winter session from Jan to March 2025, Twyla taught ASL 101 with 14 students and 7 students completed their ASL class. Several of the students emailed me how much they enjoyed learning ASL. Generally they developed their confidence by using ASL through practising on one on one partners during class.

I find that teaching ASL virtually can be challenging once in a while and I have to find creative ways to make them understand better. It is fun and it makes me happy to see students committed to their learning in ASL and I always try to tell them to use their Signing Naturally workbook for their assignments. I can tell how much improvement they use their ASL if they did their homework seriously. Overall, I always have great experiences teaching to all kinds of people in my class and I look forward to teaching again.

**Caroline Bergbusch:** taught ASL 101 classes online via Zoom and in-person. I returned to the in-person ASL class for the first time since teaching at the Regina Public Library about three years ago. It was challenging for me to change an in-person class to online during the extreme cold weather became terrible because the icy roads were not safe for me to drive on. I continue to enjoy teaching ASL classes so far on Zoom. Number of students completed the ASL classes with Caroline:

Spring 2024: Apr – June 2024	Fall 2024: Sept- Nov 2024	Winter 2025: Jan – Mar 2025
ASL 101 A = 12	In person ASL 101 = 6	Online ASL 101 = 11
ASL 101 B = 11	Online ASL 101 = 11	

## 2024-2025 ASL Class Enrollment Totals:

Spring 2024

68

Fall 2024

73

Winter 2025

71

# Treasurer's Report

SDHHS contracted the services of MWC Chartered Professional Accountants to complete the 2024-2025 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 MCW Chartered Accountants for their thorough work.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Art Hillcox  
SDHHS Treasurer





# Funder Recognition



## SASKATOON COLLABORATIVE FUNDING PARTNERSHIP



to our Donors:

# Thank you!!

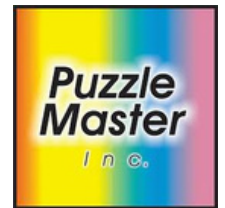
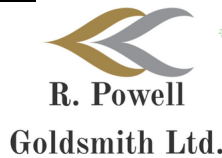
Please take a moment to look at the donor logos & names to see which ones you recognize.

When you can, please shop local!

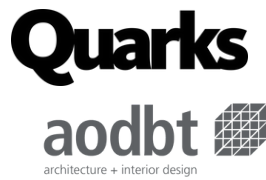
Our fundraising would not be possible without the support we get from businesses across the province!



K.Harbridge







K.Haines



B. Radcliffe



CULTURE CRAZE



Sask milk



Very Prairie Art



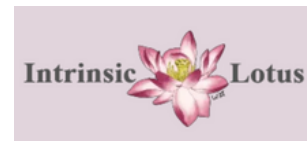
N.Rittinger



Outter Limits



NFUSION



J.Thompson



REGINA ACURA



S.Schmid



# What's coming up?



**Watch for Fundraising Raffles!**  
(advertised online)

**SAVE THE DATES!**

KIDS SUMMER DAY CAMP  
(saskatoon)  
JULY 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

email [robyn@sdhhs.com](mailto:robyn@sdhhs.com)  
to be put on the list for information



Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard Of Hearing Services

**Holiday Craft Market**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**NOVEMBER 15**  
SOUTHLAND MALL  
REGINA

**NOVEMBER 23**  
MARKET MALL  
SASKATOON

NOW ACCEPTING REGISTRATIONS FOR  
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING VENDORS!  
CONTACT [SASKATOON@SDHHS.COM](mailto:SASKATOON@SDHHS.COM)

 **SDHHS**  
Saskatchewan Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing Services  
Bridging the Gap

**AUCTION**

Online Auction  
Hosted on KLAS A Auctions  
facebook page

Friday, September 26, 2025 -  
Friday, October 10, 2025



You can always check the SDHHS  
Community Calendar for information  
about DHH Events in your area!



Scan this QR  
code for the  
Community  
Calendar!

**SAVE THE DATE!!**

 **SDHHS**  
Saskatchewan Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing Services  
Bridging the Gap

**TICKETS \$40**

**Fall Fundraiser!**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?  
EMAIL US TO LET US KNOW!  
[SASKATOON@SDHHS.COM](mailto:SASKATOON@SDHHS.COM)

**TICKETS ON SALE IN JULY!**

DEADLINE TO PURCHASE TICKETS:  
4:00PM MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

SILENT, LIVE, AND DESSERT AUCTIONS  
50/50 DRAW  
CASH BAR





**SDHHS**

Saskatchewan Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing Services  
Bridging the Gap

# Accessibility Badges

## Did you know about SDHHS Accessibility Badges?

These badges include a quick explanation of Deaf/Hard of Hearing accessibility needs and a pocket for SDHHS business cards. They come in a clear pouch with a lanyard.

We have some pre-made badges, but can make a custom badge with your personal accessibility requirements.

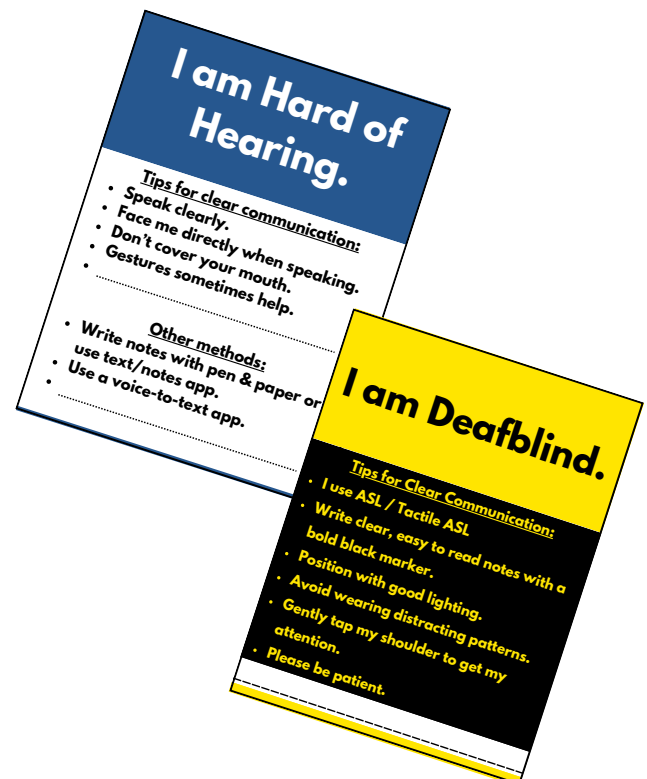
Contact the SDHHS Office Coordinator for more info!

**Prefer digital? We can help with that too!**

<b>I am Deaf.</b>	<b>How to book a Sign Language Interpreter:</b>
<u>I use these communication methods:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• American Sign Language (ASL).</li><li>• Write notes with pen &amp; paper.</li><li>• Use text/notes app.</li><li>• Use a voice-to-text app.</li><li>• Face me directly when speaking.</li><li>• Speak clearly. Don't cover your mouth.</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li></ul>	<b>Contact Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.</b> Phone: 306.665.6575 Text: 306.229.2010 Email: saskatoon@sdhhs.com <div><b>I need an interpreter for my next appointment.</b></div> <div><b>I need an emergency interpreter.</b></div> <div><b>SDHHS</b> Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Bridging the Gap</div>

FRONT

BACK





**SDHHS**

Saskatchewan Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing Services

Bridging the Gap

**From the Staff and Board at SDHHS:  
Thank you for your continued support of the  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing community! ♥**