

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019-2020



### Message from the President

Welcome to the 2019-2020 AGM for Durham Deaf Services.

What an interesting past 6 months we have had! As you know Maggie Doherty-Gilbert successfully relocated us to Trinity Pentecostal Church just east of our old location. The move took tremendous effort from both her and her staff. I want to acknowledge Ken Jackson's contribution to volunteering to paint the offices. As well many members took part in helping clean up our new home. So, a big thank you to all that helped in the relocation of DDS.

As we crossed the finish line of the move, we were all taken aback with COVID-19. No one was prepared for what life would be like. It has been an interesting time for everyone in the world. Something like this puts into perspective just how small some of our own personal problems really are. I hope that everyone is safe and healthy during this time. I want to thank Maggie and her staff for all their efforts during this time in keeping DDS moving forward and offering as much as we can during this pandemic.

Unfortunately, this year the curling event was cancelled. I would like to thank Hans and Rino for their time and effort despite it being cancelled. I know that next years event will be bigger and better with more people/teams involved.

I would like to thank the following board members for all their help over the years and wish them well in their future endeavours as they leave DDS. Randy Vodden, Hans Wilimek, Rino Cipparrone, and Madison Taylor. They will all be missed.

As we move into a new fiscal year, we will undoubtedly be faced with numerous new obstacles to overcome. The board and I have the utmost confidence in Maggie and her team to lead us through the upcoming year. As always, the board is here to support and provide guidance and knowledge to Maggie and her team. Remember that we all have the best of intentions for DDS and everyone that comes through the door.

The on-going success of DDS rests with the board, staff, volunteers and members and each has a defined and unique role to play. The coming year/years will need to see increased participation of all the groups to ensure the continued success of DDS.

Stay Safe! Have a happy, safe and healthy summer!

Rob Lalonde, Board President

#### Staff 2019-2020

Maggie Doherty-Gilbert  
(Executive Director)

Stefanie Gibbons  
(Literacy Coordinator)

Behishta Mushtaq  
(Literacy Instructor)

Ewa Swiecicki  
(ASL Instructor)

Jessica Cano-Jauregui  
(ASL Instructor)

Rebecca Salisbury  
(Administrative Assistant)

#### Board of Directors 2019-2020

Rob Lalonde  
(President)

Ken Jackson  
(Vice President)

Josephine Geraghty  
(Secretary)

Aly Beach  
Rino Cipparrone  
Joan Fillmore  
Ed Hughes  
David Poirier  
Kathryn Ranger  
Madison Taylor  
Shelley Wallace  
Hans Wilimek  
Randy Vodden

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## **Message from the Executive Director**

Looking back over this past year, we have had so many memorable events to capture in this report. In June 2019, the place Durham Deaf Services (DDS) called home for so many years was sold. Although it was a very difficult decision to sell 750 King St E, the cost to bring the building up to code would have created financial hardships.

Following the sale, as we prepared to move our office, came months of sifting through years of files and records. Throughout the summer of 2019, we were fortunate to have so many volunteers and students assisting DDS in backing up documents for safe storage. We organized and scanned hundreds of photographs that brought back so many great memories. In January 2020, we invited the Deaf Community, past employees, community partners, past Board Members, and Executive Directors to an evening celebrating our time at this historical building. It was a tremendously successful evening with over 70 people in attendance.

This past year we continued to strengthen our partnerships. We are truly grateful for our partnerships which have allowed DDS to have a stronger voice when advocating to remove the barriers that unfortunately still exist in our community.

Durham Deaf Services was delighted to be part of the historical passing of Bill C-81, also known as the Accessible Canada Act. In June 2019, the House of Commons approved Bill C-81 and the passing of this bill is a huge step forward for our community. The passing not only underlines Canada's recognition of the rights of individuals with disabilities but also represents a genuine commitment to working towards equity of opportunity. We are grateful to the Canadian Association of the Deaf and to their partner agencies for their tremendous work in getting ASL, LSQ, and ISL into the amendments to the proposed Bill C-81 (Accessible Canada Act). Durham Deaf Services, CAD, ARCH, CHS, BRCD, OAD, DLI, and Silent Voice came together on June 19 to celebrate this momentous occasion! DDS was honoured to be part of this amazing network and we are very proud of all of our accomplishments this year.

On February 28, 2020, Durham Deaf Services moved to our new location at 900 King St E, a place we now call home. DDS was truly fortunate that we moved just before the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of COVID, we have designed a plan to have staff work from home and to continue to offer programs and services to the best of our ability.

DDS is grateful for our strong partnership with the Durham Deaf Club (DDC) and the Oshawa Deaf Senior Citizens (ODSC). Both groups are great supporters of DDS and offer financial support as well as volunteering to assist the agency in so many ways.

We are also grateful to Jennine Agnew-Kata from the Literacy Network of Durham Region (LiNDR) for her support and assistance in the promotion of literacy and basic skills within the Durham Region. DDS is proud to be a part of LiNDR and this amazing group of professional leaders in our community who work collectively to provide the best literacy services in the Durham Region.

We would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to the Oshawa Senior Citizen Centre for providing space to the Deaf Seniors to meet for social gatherings.

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## Message from the Executive Director - Continued

We are truly grateful to the following donors. Their financial support of DDS is appreciated.

- Elan Planning & Wealth Management - Vince Della Pia
- Durham Community Foundation
- Colleen Fund
- The Rotary Club of Ajax
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch #322
- William F. Hayball Foundation

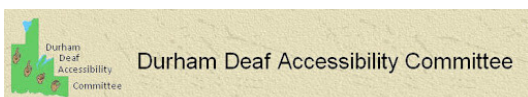
We are grateful to have participated in the following events:

- GivingTuesday
- Walk for a Cause
- Bingo at the Red Barn (Oshawa)

It was a great year, and we have lots of folks to thank for our success. To our Board of Directors, our staff (Rebecca, Behishta, Stefanie, Ewa, and Jessica), DDS members, donors, students, and volunteers - we thank you. We could not have done this without your ongoing support and commitment.

Maggie Doherty-Gilbert

## Community Partners



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## Thank You's and Acknowledgements

This year we were blessed with the support and generosity of many in our community.

Thank you to the many dedicated volunteers, donors, community members and agencies who go above and beyond to help and support Durham Deaf Services.



### To our Funders:

- Canadian Summer Jobs 2019
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

### To our Donors:

- Colleen Fund
- Diane Douglas
- Durham Community Foundation
- Elan Planning & Wealth Management - Vince Della Pia
- Rotary Club of Ajax
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch #322
- William F. Hayball Foundation

### To our Community Partners:

- Bobbie McBride
- Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children
- City of Oshawa Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Durham Elder Abuse Network
- Durham Regional Police Services
- TGFG Ventures 2016 Inc.
- Trinity Pentecostal Church



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## Deaf Adult Upgrading Program (DAUP)

Our 2019-2020 year was busy and successful, and a uniquely different year than we have had in the past. We moved into our new location at the end of February and before we knew it COVID-19 hit. We closed our office for the safety of our staff, learners, and community members. Despite being closed at the moment, we are still working hard to deliver services.

This year we offered a partnership with George Brown College for resumes and cover letters. We also conducted workshops such as fraud and scams with the Durham Regional Police and brought in other Deaf individuals such as Tristan Kong, a Deaf realtor, to educate our Deaf learners and the community at large about the real estate market.

The learner's Social Enterprise project was a success at the Harmony Creek Market this past November which gave the learners an authentic location to sell their beautiful artwork. The learners even took on DIY renovation projects for our new office. We saw such pride and teamwork from our literacy program with volunteers coming daily to make our new office home. So much was gained in terms of community and learning. A pragmatic approach to learning is what we always try to achieve and this year we were more than successful.

We are still accepting new registrations for our upcoming year. New Deaf, hard of hearing, and oral deaf learners are welcome, at any time, to enroll in our literacy program. Come by and see for yourself our new office and the classes that we are offering when we reopen to the public.

We look forward to meeting you,

Stefanie Gibbons, Literacy Coordinator

Behishta Mushtaq, Literacy Instructor



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