

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

DURHAM

Deaf Services



Message from the President

Welcome to the 2022-2023 AGM for Durham Deaf Services (DDS). I hope that everyone is happy, safe, and healthy!

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 post-pandemic. Financially DDS is struggling a little but no different than every other not-for-profit or for-profit business. We need to stay the course and we will eventually come out the other side in a better position to service the Deaf community at large.

The ongoing 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.

Part of our success in fundraising is due to the efforts that are put into events like Bingo and DDS' 1st Car Rally. These are the types of events that we need everyone to get behind either by coming out to volunteer or by participating. I want to thank everyone involved in putting an event like the car rally together and for the tireless commitment of Rebecca to running the bingo events.

I want to thank Josephine Geraghty, Ed Hughes and David Poirier for all their efforts over the many years that they served on the board. Their dedication and insight will be greatly missed. We are all so thankful for everything that they have done for DDS and wish them all the best!

Staff 2022-2023

Maggie Doherty-Gilbert
(Executive Director)

Stefanie Gibbons
(Literacy Coordinator)

Behishta Mushtaq
(Literacy Practitioner)

Rebecca Salisbury
(Admin Assistant)

Kathy Da Silva Gendron
(ASL Instructor)

Julio Luna
(ASL Instructor)

Kim Reid
(ASL Instructor)

Sonja Johnson
(ASL Instructor)

Amber Morley
(Summer Student)

Aylssa James
(Summer Student)

Teanna Dyer
(Summer Student)

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Message from the President - Continued

I would also like to acknowledge some of the generous donations that we have received this past year from Vince Della Pia from Elan Planning and Wealth Management and the Durham Region Association of Realtors. Thanks to everyone that has supported DDS in the year!

I would like to announce that DDS has hired a new executive director – Sarah Colbeck. Sarah has been working with Maggie since mid-May and is poised to lead DDS once Maggie retires at the end of June. Please welcome Sarah to DDS and provide her with the same level of support that you provided to Maggie.

Lastly, I want to thank Maggie for leading DDS for the last 5 years. Maggie has been instrumental in guiding us through many obstacles – reduced funding, developing a strategic plan, sale of the building, COVID-19, Board turnover and many more. Through her and her staff's tireless efforts, they have done an amazing job at keeping DDS pushing forward. There are no words to express everything that Maggie has done for DDS. DDS is well positioned to carry forward thanks to all of Maggie's hard work. Happy retirement Maggie!

Stay Safe!

Have a happy, safe, and healthy summer!

Rob Lalonde
Board President

Board of Directors

Rob Lalonde
(President)

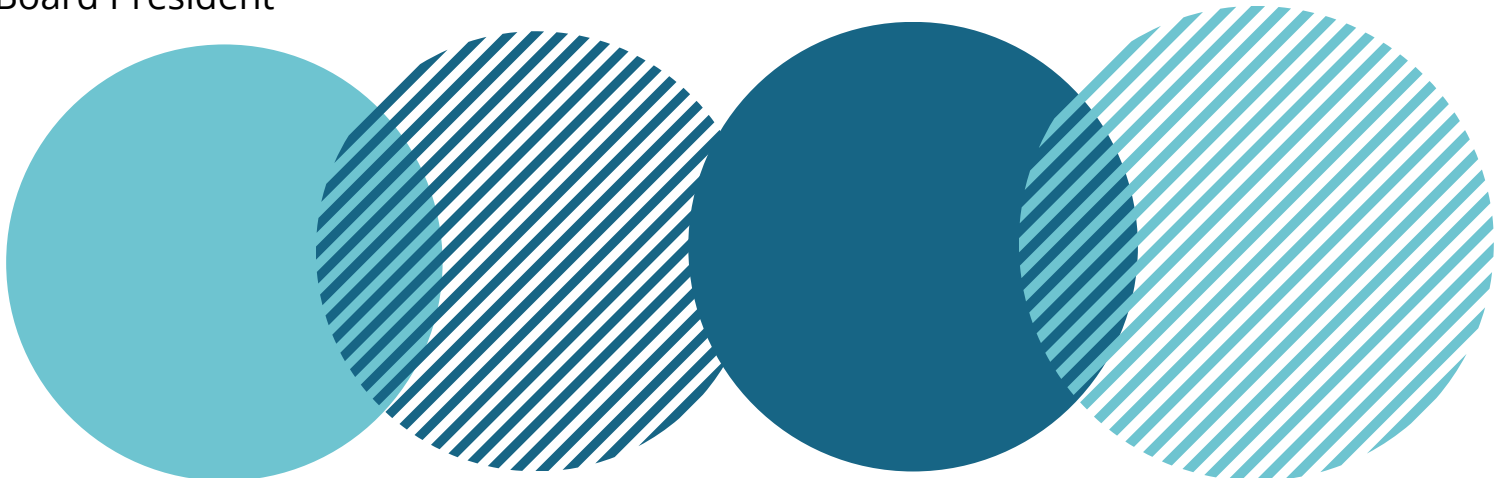
Ken Jackson
(Vice President)

--
(Treasurer)

--
(Secretary)

Aly Beach
Akhila Jeyatheesan
Tristan Kong
Stephanie Ozorio
Kathryn Ranger
Angela Ryall

THANK YOU!



Message from the Executive Director

Writing this AGM report is bittersweet. Reporting on the 2022-2023 activity, I am truly proud of the work that was accomplished every day by the Board of Directors, volunteers, students, and phenomenal staff. **I am pleased to say we are now back to our new normal.** Programs and services are up and running and many are coming to DDS for support. We continue to work with our community partners to ensure community supports are in place.

We are truly grateful to our funder for the literacy program, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development (MLITSD), for their flexibility and support as DDS found solutions to deliver a hybrid literacy service delivery.

We are delighted with the support from our many donors, funders and supporters of DDS - thank you for your ongoing financial support.

Durham Deaf Services (DDS) is grateful to the many volunteers who come out twice a month to support the DDS bingo. A special note of thanks to Pat Salisbury who has been volunteering twice a month to ensure the bingo runs smoothly. If you would like to volunteer at bingo, please contact info@durhamdeaf.org.

ASL classes are running both online as well as in-person at our office. DDS can also set up private classes for your business/work or family. For more information, please check our website.

This year the Children's Special Events program returned. Many families came to DDS for various children's holiday parties (Easter, Halloween, Christmas/Holiday) which warmed my heart every time the children ran to the office to celebrate with their friends. The Children's Special Event parties are not funded, and DDS is grateful to Vince Della Pia from Elan Planning and Wealth Management and Companies Who Care for their financial support to allow DDS to deliver these programs to the community.

The Oshawa Deaf Seniors Citizens (ODSC) is back every Wednesday afternoon. Folks gather each week at DDS for socializing and games. Anyone 55+ and **a member of DDS** can join the group on Wednesdays from 12-3 pm. If you are not a member of DDS, please just follow this link <https://durhamdeaf.org/get-involved/>.

The Durham Deaf Club (DDC) hosts many events in our community. You can check out their Facebook Group. In the year to come, we hope to welcome back the DDC to host their functions and events at DDS.

Message from the Executive Director

The literacy program has been revitalized with great enthusiasm and creativity. Thank you to our dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment to making a difference every day.

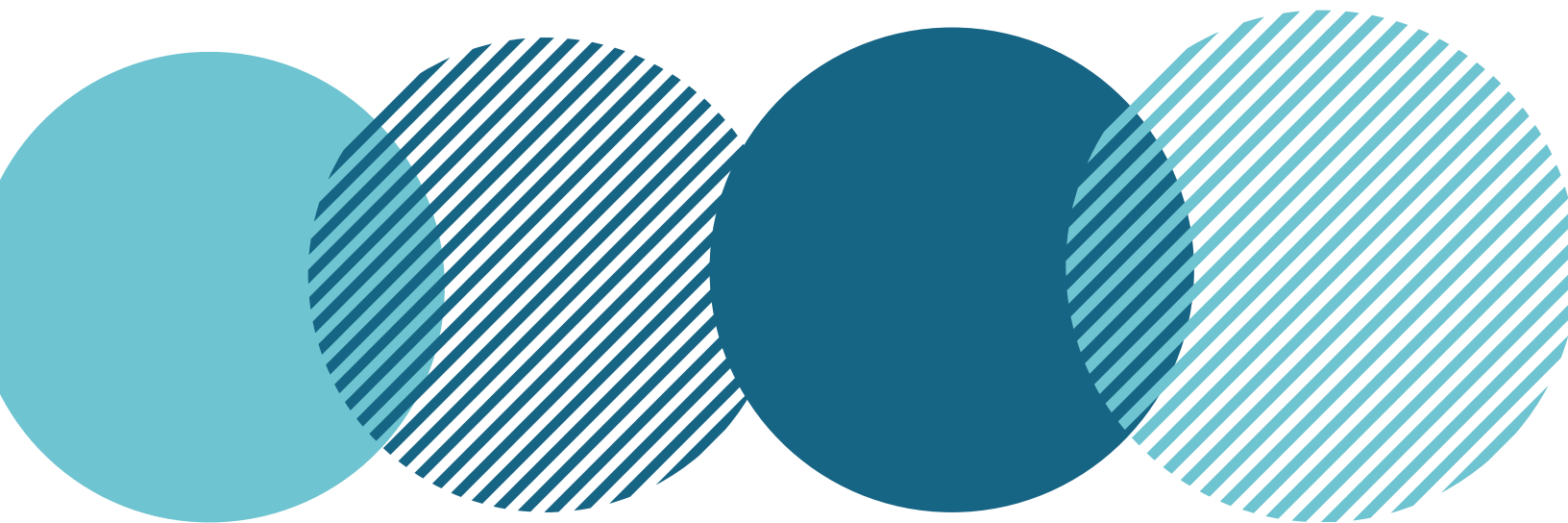
We are also delighted with the talents of the many creative artists who have their art on display in the hallways of DDS. If you are interested in learning more about our literacy program, do not hesitate to visit <https://durhamdeaf.org/daup/>.

As I embark on my retirement journey, I will take with me great memories, wonderful partnerships and enormous success in delivering our programs and services.

Thank you for being so supportive and making my journey here so pleasant.

Sincerely,

Maggie Doherty-Gilbert
Executive Director



Deaf Adult Upgrading Program (DAUP)

Our 2022-2023 year for literacy was a successful year for maintaining hybrid literacy options. We hope to continue to upgrade our virtual hybrid learning options in the coming year. We are becoming more digital than ever before. Literacy learners are keeping up with the new ways of digital navigation for employment, independence, and post-secondary goal paths.

We have had great feedback with our De'VIA art exploration classes. We followed the De'VIA curriculum produced by Surdits United. The De'VIA Curriculum project began after 40 Deaf artists gathered to examine the past, present, and posterity of De'VIA at a retreat in Kansas. The lessons were impactful. Our De'VIA classes saw amazing transformations in learners' confidence, personal identity and ASL communication with each other. The talent that emerged from our own local Deaf artists was wonderful to watch over the past year. We plan to continue to offer De'VIA exploration on Tuesdays.

We had Andrea Kenny come back to volunteer with wood projects that were culturally related to ASL handshapes. We are very grateful for her time and creativity in supporting the growth of emergent-level ASL and English learners who are focused on life skills and independence.

The health and safety of learners continue to be a priority this past year. We focused on referrals to those needing mental health support. We have made new connections with community partners this year and more accessible accommodations for learners are being seen across the region. Mental health services and municipal connections are becoming more inclusive making referrals more beneficial. We are also seeing learners showcase their self-advocacy knowledge by booking interpreters independently. We continue to reach out to community partners to provide wrap-around services needed to support the Deaf community we serve.

We have had great success expanding our program with summer students and additional literacy practitioners. This upcoming fiscal will have Patrizio Presenza conducting virtual and in-person sessions. We are currently developing a new roster of courses and taking the summer months off to revamp programming for the fall. We have our community garden again for a second year. The DDS literacy program will focus on more Deaf culture exposure, employment soft skills, self-advocacy skills, community projects, as well as reading/writing strategies to continue to align with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) curriculum and the community we serve.

We hope to have another successful literacy year for 2023-2024.

Stefanie Gibbons, Literacy Coordinator

Behishta Mushtaq, Literacy Instructor

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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, funders, donors, community networks and agencies who go above and beyond to help and support Durham Deaf Services.



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