

A Message from the Board of Directors:

Dear Durham Deaf Services members, partners, volunteers and family.

It is with a heavy heart that I am officially announcing the retirement of Maggie Doherty- Gilbert. Maggie as Executive Director, has lead Durham Deaf Services (DDS) and will be leaving at the end of June.

Maggie has dedicated her entire career (1981-2023) to supporting and delivering programs and services to the Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing communities. Maggie joined DDS in 2018 as Executive Director. She ensured the sale of 750 King Street was handled with the utmost respect to the Deaf community, knowing they were losing what they called home for many years. Maggie held a farewell reception at 750, allowing many new and old friends the opportunity to say goodbye. The Board is grateful to Maggie for her ability to safely upload nearly 40 years of board reports and files for safekeeping.

Moving to our new location in February 2020 was exciting, only to be dampened by the impact of COVID in March 2020. Maggie guided the community and ensured information etc., was delivered in ASL. Maggie's leadership was instrumental in the way DDS was able to navigate COVID and the numerous services that were halted or those that ceased to exist.

She was successful in obtaining various grants as well as community funding to assist the many Deaf Seniors who were not able to access programs and services. This funding created a bridge for many to understand the new world of service delivery. Throughout the pandemic, Maggie always had an open-door policy, ensuring anyone coming to DDS, who was unsure of how to manage this new reality, was given the tools and or linkage to other services.

Maggie welcomed back the Oshawa Deaf Seniors Club to DDS, keeping them informed and providing much-needed direction. Despite DDS having no funding for seniors, she took it upon herself to ensure that those in our community needing support were able to access services.

Despite COVID, Maggie found ways to safely bring back the children's Saturday special events, ensuring the health and safety of all who participated.

In September 2022, Maggie held a DDS 40th anniversary reception with many political leaders, partners, and the community to join in our celebration.

Maggie's leadership guided DDS through the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that all those receiving programs and services, as well as staff, remained safe while still offering the highest level of support and service to the community. She has worked diligently to establish strong partnerships in the community and connecting with the political leaders to ensure that the needs of the Deaf community are forefront and centre. As well as assisting with the recruitment of new board members, ensuring that there is a good representation of the diversity of our program and services.

We are all thankful for her guidance in creating a strategic plan that will help guide DDS into the future.

Maggie is well respected by her staff, the community, stakeholders and this Board. It is a testament to her leadership, dedication, and passion for serving the community.

The Board is incredibly appreciative of Maggie's contributions, which we know will have a lasting impact in the community. We wish Maggie much happiness and health in all her future endeavours and adventures, particularly those spent with her family, which we know she is very much looking forward to.

Regards,

DDS Board of Directors

May 19, 2023

