

DHHSC Annual Report for the year of 2016
(prepared January 2017)

Accomplishments

Our primary funder, the California Department of Social Services-Office of Deaf Access (CDSS), funds our seven core services, which include Communication Assistance, Counseling, Advocacy, Independent Living Skills Instruction, Job Development and Placement, Information and Referral, and Community Education. As part of our contract with CDSS, we set goals for each of the seven service categories regarding the number of clients we will serve. At the end of each fiscal year, we then provide CDSS with an End-of-Year Report. We are pleased to report that we either met or exceeded the goals for the seven categories for the most recent year, with percentages ranging from 93% to 211%, with the majority of categories exceeding 100%.

We also successfully completed five grant-funded programs in 2016:

Our **Resources and Early intervention Assistance for Deaf Youth (READY)** program, funded by Monterey Peninsula Foundation, had four components: ASL instruction for families, including at home or in classes (ROCK services); early intervention services for these families; employment-related education for Deaf youth (YES! services); and outreach to organizations for the purpose of providing community education on how to meet the communication needs of Deaf youth seeking their services.

We successfully met our goals with this program.

Our **Youth Employment Services - Merced (YES-Merced)** program, funded by United Way of Merced County, provided Deaf and Hard of Hearing high school students with the opportunity to develop more employment preparation skills and learn more about higher education.

This particular program was a challenge due to not having enough students participate in our program, despite considerable outreach efforts to local schools with Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs. However, we were glad to have had the opportunity to offer the program. This program has been a success in our other office locations.

Our **Learning signs, Empowering parents, and Advocating for Deaf and hard of hearing children (LEAD)**, funded by First 5 of Merced County, provided crucial services to families. This program finished its 7th and final year of providing American Sign Language classes, early intervention services, and ASL storytelling to families in the Merced area with children ages 0 to 5.

We successfully met our goals with this program.

We began five new grant-funded programs this year:

We began a one-year contract with Employment Development Department to offer expanded employment assistance services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at an EDD location in Fresno. This contract funds one full-time Employment Specialist and one full-time Staff Interpreter. We were thrilled to be able to again offer EDD services after a 10-year hiatus so our community has more options. This program has been very successful so far.

Deaf Access is a program based in the Central Coast Outreach Office in Salinas, funded by Harden Foundation, providing primarily systems advocacy for our community. Our focus is on improving accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing community members at various organizations and businesses, such as hospitals, law centers, police departments, and more. In addition to the systems advocacy, we are providing a self-advocacy workshop. The program has already been successful at reaching its goals, and will continue to surpass these goals.

Deaf Thrive is a program funded by Fansler Foundation to provide ASL communication-building sessions (ROCK program), employment preparation classes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth (YES! program), and literacy services. Our Fresno, South Valley Outreach, and Merced Outreach offices are currently implementing this program successfully. We will also be hosting a Family Day event and a Career Awareness Fair during spring 2017.

United Way of Merced County funded our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Wellness program (D-Well) for our Merced Outreach Office. This program provides monthly workshops on health-related topics, which our community always appreciates.

We now provide additional ROCK services in the South Valley through a grant from the Bank of Sierra. ROCK's communication-building sessions during home visits has always been an ongoing need for families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, so we are always appreciative of funding to expand these services whenever possible.

Other examples of our success in 2016

We had many fantastic events in 2016 that we consider to be great successes. Two in particular were our 5th Annual Job Awareness Fair and our 27th Annual Valley Deaf Festival: Deaf Renaissance Faire.

The purpose of our annual Job Awareness Fair is to introduce Deaf and Hard of Hearing middle and high school students to different Deaf and Hard of Hearing professionals while exposing them to the employment search process, available career paths, and the importance of pursuing higher education. This year we tested out a new format in which we set up hands-on training stations on the different stages of the employment search, including but not limited to: filling out job application forms, creating a cover letter, identifying appropriate work attire, practicing job interviews, and learning self-advocacy skills.

We had an incredibly large turnout, approximately 1000 attendees, for our 27th Annual Valley Deaf Festival! We had Sammy Ruiz Jr., a Deaf Magician, perform at VDF, in addition to belly dancers performing to the beat of drums and presentations by sword fighters, all of which highlighted the

Renaissance Era. One popular attraction was a large, hand-carved rocking wooden unicorn that guests could actually ride, which also served as a popular photo spot.

Heartfelt Thanks

As always, we are grateful to our primary funder, California Department of Social Services-Office of Deaf Access, for their continued support of our core services. Without them, we would not be able to provide the quantity of services we do.

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to funders of our grant programs for 2016: Fansler Foundation, United Way of Merced County, First Five of Merced County, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Harden Foundation, and Bank of the Sierra. Your support of our programs has been such a blessing for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community!

We were also blessed to receive continued support from United Way Combined Federal Campaign, which paid for materials and curriculum for staff to use for DHHSC's many programs. We are fortunate to receive such support from all of you!

Furthermore, we would like to thank Sorenson Communications, Purple Communications, and Educational Employees Credit Union for their continued support of our annual events, such as our Valley Deaf Festival.

A big thank you to Sign & Sew Guild for their annual quilt fundraiser for DHHSC. The monies they raised allow us to purchase needed items for the building, such as chairs for our heavily-used community room.

We are grateful to Martha Coletti for her continued support and loyalty to DHHSC. She has donated more than \$3,000, much of which was used to update the lobby appearance of the Headquarters, such as a fresh coat of paint and new chairs.

Other donors that we want to acknowledge and publicly appreciate for their contributions are:

- United Way of Fresno - \$1,200
- United Way California Capital - \$440
- Kym King - \$500
- Jonathan Silva - \$650
- Deaf Blind Support Group - \$140
- Stephens and Bean Chapel - \$150 towards funeral expenses for a community member

Finally, we want to acknowledge each of you who donated time or money to DHHSC in 2016. We are so appreciative of every hour of volunteer work you do for us and for every donated dollar that supports DHHSC's services and programs. Your efforts and financial support make possible for us to achieve as many goals as we can for the community we so passionately serve.

We would also like to thank the Rines Family for choosing DHHSC as their designated charity in honor of Shawn Rines' memory.

Last, but not least, we would like to express our truly heartfelt appreciation for each and every member of our past and present Board of Directors for their time serving on the board. We are thankful to have your support!

Your continued support is needed

Every day, each DHHSC service provider shows commitment to providing quality services to our community. We believe in providing the best services possible, and we know that our efforts do make a difference. We deeply care about the community we serve, including each Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Blind, and Late-Deafened supporter and caring individuals, like you, who well understand the vast needs of our community.

Your support is welcome, whether it is a donation of your time or money. If you would like to donate your time in volunteering, please visit your local DHHSC office today and ask how you can contribute.

If you would like to donate money online for DHHSC's services, you can easily do so at this link:

<http://www.dhhsc.org/donations-page>

We also welcome donations in person at any of our four offices, and of course, your donations are tax-deductible!