

DHHSC Annual Report for the year of 2017  
(prepared December 2017)

## Accomplishments

Our primary funder, the California Department of Social Services-Office for Special Services (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 82% to 618%, with the majority of categories exceeding 100%.

We also successfully completed five grant-funded programs in 2017:

Our **Deaf Thrive** was 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 implemented this program successfully. During spring 2017, we hosted our 2nd Annual Family Day event, with 17 families in attendance, and more than 30 Deaf and Hard of Hearing middle and high students from local schools participated in our 6th Annual YES! Career Awareness Fair.

We successfully met our goals with this program.

United Way of Merced County funded our **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Wellness program (D-Well)** for our Merced Outreach Office. This program provided monthly workshops on health-related topics, which greatly benefited our community. Our community members obtained up-to-date information and resources on current health issues.

We successfully met our goals with this program.

We completed 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, a program we were thrilled to once again offer after a ten-year hiatus. This contract funded one full-time Employment Specialist and one full-time Staff Interpreter.

We successfully met our goals with this program.

**Deaf Access** was a program based in the Central Coast Outreach Office in Salinas, funded by Harden Foundation, providing primarily systems advocacy for our community. Our focus was 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 systems advocacy, we provided a self-advocacy workshop.

We successfully met our goals with this program.

We provided additional **ROCK services in the South Valley** through a grant from the Bank of Sierra. The communication-building sessions during home visits, offered through our ROCK program, are a constant and ongoing need for families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, so we are always appreciative of funding to expand these services whenever possible.

We met some of our goals with this program, but identified a need to provide more outreach to families, emphasizing the importance of continuous practice. Many of the families who joined did not commit to regular appointments that are needed in order for our staff to assist families with developing effective communication skills with their children.

We began six new grant-funded programs this year:

We applied for and successfully received another year of funding from United Way of Merced County for our **D-Well program**. The program began its new year in July and is continuing to be a successful one for our community.

We were thrilled to receive funding for our first year of the **Deaf Youth Program** from United Way of Tulare County for our South Valley Outreach office in Visalia. The Deaf Youth Program provides ROCK services, IEP advocacy, and tutoring to Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. The program began in April and we are predicting we will achieve our goals!

We applied for a second year contract with the Employment Development Department to continue providing employment services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Our first year was successful, and we aim to do even better during our second year. We are thrilled to once again receive the Wagner-Peyser funding, and our community continues to utilize the valuable services at EDD.

We were thoroughly excited to receive \$25,000 in funding from Whitney Foundation to implement, in all four of our DHHSC offices, a version of our **Family Services Program**, which includes at-home American Sign Language instruction (ROCK program), employment preparation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing high school students (YES! program), IEP advocacy, and literacy development. This grant is also making possible for us to bring back a DOR fee-for-service LEAD (Language, Employment, Assessment and Development) program on a trial basis. If this program becomes self-sustaining, we will be able to continue the LEAD program beyond the grant cycle, but we are grateful to Whitney Foundation for this “seed” money.

First Five of Merced County granted funding for a new **ASL 4 Kids program** in Merced County, which provides ASL instruction to any children between the ages of 0 and 5, regardless of whether they are Deaf or hearing. Priority is given to families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, but the program is

also open to hearing kids with the goal of teaching these kids about ASL and their Deaf peers to reduce communication and cultural barriers. Giving these kids a positive perspective on their Deaf peers and exposure to another language is another way to benefit our community.

Central California Women's Conference awarded us funding for our **deSIGN Artists United** program, an art-oriented workshop series we host in Fresno for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. Unlike other local classes, our deSIGN Artists United workshops are facilitated in American Sign Language, providing our clients with a very accessible environment for creating art. This version of the program focuses on women and children, to honor the terms of the grant funding.

Finally, we were awarded funding for our **Our Deaf Culture, Our Deaf History** program in the Central Coast Area, by the Doolittle Fund of Community Foundation of Monterey County. These funds were donor-advised, which means a local donor in the area learned about our application and wants to sponsor our program. Beginning January 1st, the Our Deaf Culture, Our Deaf History program will provide both group and one-on-one study sessions and art lessons that incorporate Deaf Culture and Deaf History to Deaf and Hard of Hearing high school students. We will showcase works of art created by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at our Central Coast Outreach office in Salinas, to raise awareness of our Deaf Community and its unique history and culture. While teaching our students Deaf identity development, which is instilling pride in oneself as a whole individual who is a member of a language and cultural minority, it is also our goal to instill a deeper appreciation for the contributions of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals throughout history.

### **Other examples of our success in 2017**

We had many successful events in 2017. Three in particular were our Martha's Vineyard in the Valley, 6th Annual YES! Career Awareness Fair, and 28th Annual Valley Deaf Festival, for which the theme was Be Super, Be You.

The purpose of our annual YES! Career 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 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, learning self-advocacy skills, and practicing job interviews.

We had an incredibly large turnout, 972 paid attendees, for our 28th Annual Valley Deaf Festival! Dack Virnig, a Deaf performer, put on two shows at VDF, and Sheena McFeely, founder of ASL Nook, was our emcee. Two of our staff also hosted a fun superheroes versus villains game that was facilitated on stage. With the theme of this year's VDF focused on superheroes and villains, we encouraged people to dress up, comic con-style, and included a contest for best costumes.

DHHSC had two See's Candy Fundraisers, one in the spring and the other in the winter, and both brought in extra funds, more than \$800! A "sweet" thank you to everyone who purchased candies to support DHHSC's services.

Another fundraiser that DHHSC hosted in 2017 was at Adventure Park in Visalia, and our Visalia staff raised \$540. The funds will be used to cover expenses not normally included in our budget.

### **Heartfelt Thanks**

As always, we are grateful to our primary funder, California Department of Social Services-Office for Special Services, for their continued support of our core services. Without CDSS, we would not be able to provide as many services as we do.

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to funders of our grant programs for 2017: Fansler Foundation, United Way of Merced County, First Five of Merced County, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Harden Foundation, Bank of the Sierra, Whitney Foundation, Central California Women's Conference, Levine Foundation, and the Dolittle Fund of Community Foundation of Monterey County. 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 and Educational Employees Credit Union for their continued support of our annual events, such as our 28th Annual Valley Deaf Festival.

A big thank you to Sign & Sew Guild (SSG) for their annual quilt fundraiser for DHHSC. This year, the quilt raised \$1,139.00! SSG will soon decide how they would like DHHSC to use the funds.

We are grateful to Martha Coletti for her continued support and loyalty to DHHSC. She has donated more than \$6,800 for our Raise the Roof campaign.

Mary J. Pigott generously donated a total of \$10,000 to DHHSC to assist Deaf and Hard of Hearing women and their children stuck in unexpected financial straits. The purpose of this funding is to provide these women and children the needed "extra boost" to break the destructive cycle of hopelessness and helplessness.

The Laurence W. Levine Foundation made a \$5,000 donation for our specialized services and programs, to be used for our ROCK, YES, and literacy programs. We are so grateful for their surprise check as funding and donations are hard to come by. These programs, which Levine Foundation funds, are among the most proactive and beneficial services for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth and college students.

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

- United Way California Capital Region - \$794
- Anonymous Donor - \$530
- Dr. Paul Ogden - \$1,000
- North Fresno Lions - \$400
- Fox Interpreting - \$500
- Anonymous Donor - \$350
- Deaf Blind Support Group - \$178
- Lyle Vold - \$300
- Rashad R. & Evelyn Wanis - \$250
- Norseman Elementary School - \$130
- Target Corporation - \$451

Finally, we want to acknowledge each of you who volunteered or donated to DHHSC in 2017. 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, such as for our #GivingTuesday: Dollars for the Deaf and Raise the Roof campaign. Your efforts and financial support make possible for us to achieve as many goals as we can for the community we so passionately serve.

As always, we express our deep gratitude for our Board of Directors for their time serving on the board. We are thankful to have every hour of support you offer through our fundraising efforts and our events! We also appreciate our Board of Directors for donating funds to repair and replace some areas of the sidewalk lining the front of our Fresno Headquarter.

### **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.

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*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!*