

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- DHHSC's 35th Anniversary Event -

I would like to thank everyone who attended our 35th Anniversary on May 11th at The Falls Event Center. Your presence meant a lot to me, and seeing both old and new faces at the event reminded me the importance of coming together as a community to celebrate significant milestones. I often work behind the scenes, taking pride in my staff's visibility and active involvement with events, but I did enjoy every opportunity I had when greeting and hugging colleagues and community members. I had hoped to be able to socialize more but had to focus on resolving technical difficulties and food challenges that evening.

While dealing with the event challenges, I was grateful to see everyone chatting and having a good time. Many guests said it was like a reunion as some had not seen each other for years, and the joke was that many were shocked at how many children had been born since their last visit, but at the next "reunion," perhaps our 40th Anniversary, instead of counting children, we will be counting our remaining hairs and teeth.

I enjoyed seeing former and current staff and Board of Directors at DHHSC's 35th Anniversary because it shows how all of us have contributed to the agency in various ways. DHHSC has benefited from everyone's talents, skills, abilities, creativity, passions, and goals, and I am grateful for the growth DHHSC has undergone over the years. I am also grateful how we remain connected to the many people who have left over the years; our current logo "Connect" reflects that philosophy because I do believe we are all connected in varying ways no matter where we are in life.

DHHSC's 35th Anniversary was made possible by many generous sponsorships and donations, and we are grateful to our community partners and local businesses that supported our fundraiser. Funds raised from that evening will support DHHSC's many services and programs. Our hard-working staff appreciates community's support because it reaffirms that their work is indeed making a difference in the lives of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and youth.

We enjoyed a hilarious performance by Deafies in Drag, the first of its kind in the Central Valley. We also enjoyed appetizers and desserts provided by Tree of Life and a cash bar for those who wanted to enjoy a glass of wine or beer with their food. Although we had frustrations with the food delays, I would like to share that Tree of Life unfortunately experienced a break-in the night before and the resulting issues caused a delay in food preparations. I would like to thank everyone's patience as we figured out how to speed up food delivery. A side note: the mission of Tree of Life is to change the lives of those who learn to work and serve there, and DHHSC



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shares that mission. When possible, please try the Tree of Life cafe at 6640 N Blackstone Ave #106, Fresno, CA 93710 and experience their delicious food while fresh and hot. They also serve vegetarian and vegan dishes.

In spite of the challenges that evening, I could not be prouder of my staff who worked extremely hard to prepare a fun and entertaining evening for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. They demonstrated excellent teamwork, and I also appreciated Joshua Blanco and Candice Goodie for being emcees that evening. It was fun seeing Joshua dress in drag that night, and Joshua and Candice did an excellent job interacting with the guests. DHHSC staff: Each of you is amazing and I am blessed to work alongside you!

A big thank you to Steve Longo, one of our Board of Directors, who was our DJ that evening and for setting up the lights and equipment to add pizzazz and music to our festivities.

Speaking on behalf of DHHSC and from the bottom of my heart, thank you for being part of DHHSC's 35th Anniversary. It is our joy to serve our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, and it is my hope that DHHSC will be around for years to continue the "Connect. Inspire. Succeed." philosophy. We are all interconnected and we are inspired by your goals and success. See you at our 40th Anniversary!

Best love and wishes,

Michelle L. Bronson

