



DEAF ACCESS SERVICES  
an affiliate of People Inc.

# Fall 2022 Biannual Newsletter



Deaf Access Services responds to the interests of Deaf and hard of hearing people by promoting communication access, awareness and opportunities in the greater community.

## Community Navigation Services

Deaf Access Services offers a unique service to the Deaf community through our Community Navigation Services. These services are available at no cost and are designed to provide assistance and support to community members by connecting them to trusted, culturally educated service providers and organizations in order to receive necessary services. We work to ensure that you receive direct services from knowledgeable providers and that the services are accessible.

Our experienced staff are able to maintain involvement through every step of the referral process and beyond. Staff are well-versed in the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and New York State Human Rights Law and are able to provide people with the information and tools to self-advocate, while also advocating themselves for change and accessibility across all services and employers.

Our Community Navigation Services Team has expanded to include Teresa Baumgartner, Jeanette Grimaldi, Andrea Russell and Yann Spindler. If you or someone you know would like more information about our services or would like to set up a meeting with one of our staff, call 716.833.1637.



**Pictured L-R: Teresa Baumgartner, Yann Spindler, Jeanette Grimaldi and Andrea Russell.**

## What's Inside

- Message from the Director **pg 2**
- Service Outreach Expanding **pg 2**
- Deaf Access Services Celebrating 40 Years! **pg 3**
- Do you have Deaf patients or clients? **pg 3**
- We Appreciate our Interpreters **pg 4**
- Deaf Advisory Council Spotlight **pg 5**
- Welcome to New Staff Members **pg 5**
- Now Hiring **pg 5**
- In Memoriam **pg 5**
- Understanding Your Rights and How to Advocate for Effective Communication **pg 6**
- Deaf Awareness Week 2022 **pg 7**
- That Deaf Guy **pg 7**
- People Inc. In The News **pg 8**

# Message from the Director

Dear Friends,



As we move into the fall months, I ask you to remember that Deaf Awareness Month is fast approaching (celebrated annually in September). This is an important time to build awareness across the community about our friends, family, colleagues, peers and neighbors who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Hearing loss comes in many forms and impacts people at different life stages – as a community, it is important to ensure we are being inclusive in all aspects – including language access.

Our mission at Deaf Access Services, an affiliate of People Inc., is to [respond to the interests of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals by promoting communication access, awareness and opportunities in the greater community](#). We have allies and advocates in our community, such as our Deaf Access Services staff, who work every day at advocating for language access across all service and information points. It is critical that Deaf and hard of hearing people are provided with accurate information in order to enable them to self-advocate, but also that service providers are prepared to accept and respond to requests and self-advocacy appropriately.

In this newsletter, please take a few minutes to review *Understanding Your Rights and How to Advocate for Effective Communication*. This will benefit those who find themselves needing to advocate and also our service providers needing to understand what the law says about providing interpreters, captioning and the use of other assistive technology. I recommend reaching out to your company's Legal Department to work together and ensure you have policies in place for your business – we are not lawyers, but understand the importance of planning in advance and being prepared to ensure access is available for people coming to you for services.

If you or someone you know is interested in some additional information or have questions, feel free to reach out to us at [communications@wnydas.org](mailto:communications@wnydas.org) or by calling 716.833.1637.

We hope you can join us at the Deaf Awareness Week (DAW) events and look forward to seeing you there. I wish you all a wonderful fall and upcoming holiday season.



Kind regards,  
Jodie Chibi  
Director, Deaf Access Services

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## Service Outreach Expanding: Additional Offices in Niagara Falls and Rochester

Deaf Access Services is excited to announce that its office space has expanded! In addition to its main office, located in the Tri-Main Center at 2495 Main Street in Buffalo, NY, there is now shared office space at Heart Love & Soul, 924 Niagara Avenue in Niagara Falls, NY. Additionally, co-located offices are at the People Inc. Greater Rochester Region Headquarters, 1860 Buffalo Road in Rochester, NY.

The expansion will assist in supporting community needs and allow the team to continue growing the agency's interpreting services to help work towards the goal of creating communities that are fully accessible. To make an appointment for any of the office locations, call 716.833.1637.

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## Interpreters Welcome

If you are an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter interested in joining the Deaf Access Services roster to expand access to independent interpreting work, visit our website at [wnydas.org](http://wnydas.org) for an Independent Contractor Application. For service providers interested in learning more about onsite and remote interpreting services, as well as CART services, call 716.833.1637.

# Deaf Access Services Celebrating 40 Years!

We're pleased to share that Deaf Access Services, an affiliate of People Inc., will celebrate our **40th Anniversary in April 2023!** Our team has been working hard planning the big milestone that will capture the essence of celebrating not only our agencies, but also Deaf and hard of hearing communities!

**The event will be held on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo, NY.**

More information will be announced soon, including a time, presenters and entertainment planned. **Updates will be shared on our website and the Deaf Access Services Facebook page:** [wnydas.org](http://wnydas.org) and [facebook.com/WNYDAS](https://facebook.com/WNYDAS)

Another teaser we have to share about our big celebration is the anniversary graphic. As a celebration of all that Deaf Access Services represents, it was important that the anniversary symbol concept be designed by a Deaf person. This concept was designed by Ben Wenzel and incorporates visual representations of American Sign Language (ASL) and our community.

American Sign Language is one of the most important aspects of Deaf culture – our language. The hands are

ASL signs for the number forty. Ben incorporated the number 40 behind the hands to remain inclusive to those who do not use American Sign Language.

The semi-circle represents a sunrise – a new beginning.

The skyline is of our beloved Buffalo, which is one of the many communities where Deaf Access Services and People Inc. provides supports. Buffalo is also home to one of the biggest Deaf communities.

As we celebrate 40 years of serving Deaf and hard of hearing communities, we look forward to even more decades of supporting and continuing to expand our services.

Various anniversary event sponsorship opportunities will be available. For more information, contact David Wantuck at [dwantuck@wnydas.org](mailto:dwantuck@wnydas.org) or Jodie Chibi at [jchibi@wnydas.org](mailto:jchibi@wnydas.org).



## Do you have Deaf patients or clients?

Did you know that under Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and New York State Human Rights Law, your business is responsible for providing effective communication, including interpreting services?

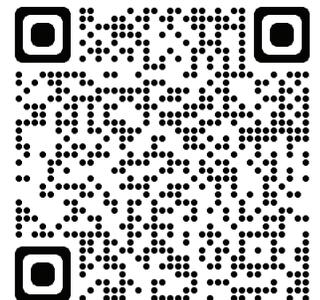
Deaf Access Services, an affiliate of People Inc. provides certified and qualified sign language interpreters for onsite and remote interpreting needs.

### Why Choose Deaf Access Services?

- We are the ONLY nonprofit in the region focused on services for Deaf and hard of hearing people.
- We are language and cultural experts, focused only on the language and variations used by Deaf and hard of hearing people.
- Our experts can help provide resolutions for assistive technology.
- We have an extensive roster of certified and qualified interpreters.
- We offer unique CART Services for accommodations for the hard of hearing.
- We are the ONLY local VRI provider, able to work with you and provide ongoing, onsite support.

**For more information and to request interpreting services, call 716.833.1637.**

**For more information on our programs and services, go to [wnydas.org](http://wnydas.org).**



# We Appreciate our Interpreters

On behalf of the staff at Deaf Access Services and People Inc., along with the Deaf and hard of hearing community, we would like to pass along our sincerest thanks to all of the American Sign Language interpreters. You all work so hard and take risks to ensure that communication access is available to all community members and service providers, even during a global pandemic when your own health and the health of your families are a priority.

Thank you to each of our interpreters for their dedication!



Brittney Best



Kara Bieniak



Dylan Bieniak de Grecia



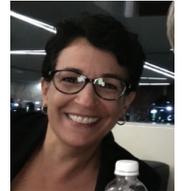
Joan Blum



Jim Brown



Anne Campbell-Thomeer



Dina Capizzi



Amy Crockford



Terry Daniele



Vicki DeMarco



Tracy Dzaibo



Karen Gambino



Cat Hardesty



Wes Ion



Ryan Kraft



Eva Kubiak



Miriam Lerner



Tiffany Marble



Alan McAllister



Susan McGroarty



Barbara Meyer



Kelly Morgan



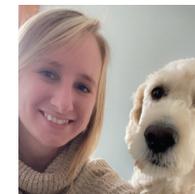
Shannon Patterson



Ron Rood



Liana Reamsnyder



Amy Saskowski



Kendra Schmidt



Denise Speight



Patty Tadak



Rachel Violanti



Valerie Ward



Jennifer Weisel



Jess Whitehouse



Charnell Williams

## Deaf Advisory Council Spotlight

Deaf Access Services is fortunate to have a great team of community supporters, who are actively involved with our Deaf Advisory Council. We have a great team of people with a genuine interest in the work of Deaf Access Services; People Inc., our parent agency; and a desire to make a positive impact through our community work. We have grown and want to welcome our newest members of the Deaf Advisory Council:



**Jacob Leffler**



**Patricia Meyer**



**Jose Ruiz, Jr.**

We also want to recognize and thank **Robert Cagle** and **Nanette Harmon**.



**Robert Cagle**

**Robert** has served as a member of the Deaf Access Services Board for many years and continued on with us after the affiliation as a member of the Deaf Advisory Group. He also served as a member of the People Inc. Board, post

affiliation. Robert is moving on and he will be missed. We're confident there will be opportunities to work together on future endeavors.

**Nanette** also served as a member of the Deaf Access Services Board since 2010, and continued on with us after the affiliation as a member of the Deaf Advisory Group. We wish Nanette the best on her next adventure and look forward to our next opportunity to work together.



**Nanette Harmon**

Nanette and Robert, thank you for all of your years of service and support to Deaf Access Services, People Inc. and the Deaf community.



**Shannon Patterson**  
Interpreting Services Scheduler

## Welcome to New Staff Members

**Jeanette Grimaldi**  
AmeriCorps Member



## Now Hiring

Deaf Access Services is hiring an Interpreting Services scheduler to join the Deaf Access Services Interpreting Department. All applicants must be fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). Visit [people-inc.org/careers](http://people-inc.org/careers) > Jobs > Available Jobs and search for Interpreting Services Scheduler. Various employment opportunities are also available through People Inc. – all posted on the same website.

## In Memoriam

Lisa Belk passed away suddenly on May 1, 2022. She was a graduate of St. Mary's School for the Deaf in Buffalo, a teacher, a long-time board member for Deaf Access Services and a beloved advocate in the Jamestown, NY area.

We send our condolences to her husband, Dennis, and to her family and friends. Lisa will be missed by many. The impact Lisa made on the lives of those she touched will be forever remembered.



# Understanding Your Rights and How to Advocate for Effective Communication

Advocating for yourself or for others can be a difficult task. There is the uncertainty about whether you will be “heard,” the frustration of needing to explain your rights “again,” and the unspoken expectation that you will be met with resistance and anger.

At times, if there is resistance to provide accommodations, it may be simply due to being uninformed. While there are instances when service providers do refuse to provide accommodations, at Deaf Access Services, we have had the benefit of observing more positive outcomes and a lower frequency of resistance.

What may be unknown is that New York State was the first state (est. 1945) to enact legislation prohibiting legislation through the New York State Human Rights Law. These laws helped influence the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There are laws at the Federal and State level that both address effective communication, which puts the legal obligation on service providers and employers to ensure that their services are accessible.

The accommodations most often requested by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing are directly cited in the portion of the law explaining the service provider’s obligation to provide “Effective Communication.”

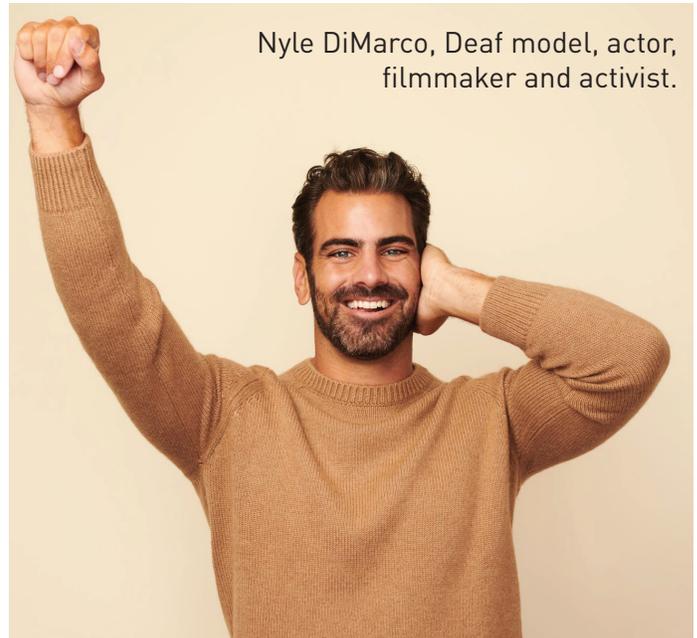
## **From our staff experience, the most common misconceptions by service providers tend to be that:**

- The Deaf person is responsible for providing their own accommodations,
- The cost is too much compared to what the service fees are and
- A family or friend or pen and paper are good enough.

## **Requests for accommodations are to be based on the preference of the Deaf or hard of hearing person and providers are required to make best efforts to provide those accommodations.**

**Additionally, the use of friends and family are not advised** because they may not be able to participate as a non-bias third party, nor as a supportive confidant and they may not have the language skill-set required for the type of communication necessary (consider the vocabulary required to communicate a medical diagnosis).

**Finally, it is critical for service providers and organizations to budget annually for providing accommodations.** While it seems that the common perception is to allocate the cost of interpreting services to a single Deaf person/patient – it should be



Nyle DiMarco, Deaf model, actor, filmmaker and activist.

Deaf Power promotes the history, languages and values of Deaf communities all over the world. As both sign and symbol, it spreads our cultural pride. Deaf identity is widely diverse and Deaf Power can be used by you to reflect this diversity.

allocated across the business as a “cost of doing business” in the similar way that a ramp and automatic door opener are.

## **When advocating for effective communication, it is key to understand a few things:**

- You need to request accommodation. For example, you may arrive at an emergency department where they are using Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) when you triage prior to seeing the doctor; however unless you request an onsite interpreter, they may continue using VRI.
- When requesting accommodation, you can explain what you need, but the service provider does not have an obligation to provide a specific interpreter. Interpreters are typically independent contractors, who make their own schedules and may not be available. The service provider may ask if you have any preferred interpreters and pass that information along to the vendor, but they cannot guarantee the preferred interpreter will be scheduled.
- Similarly, a request for accommodation cannot include a demand that the service provider obtain services from a specific vendor. For example, you cannot request that the doctor’s office order toilet

## Understanding Your Rights cont'd from page 6

paper from a preferred vendor because it is softer. Service providers have established relationships with vendors for all of their services. However, should they not yet have a vendor for interpreting services, you can certainly provide them with contact information to Deaf Access Services and we are happy to work with them.

- If you arrive at an appointment or meeting and you still struggle with communication being effective, you should let the provider know and request a different interpreter. If you do not notify them of an issue, it may go unnoticed. This is also true for VRI – if you agree to use VRI as your accommodation, but the device is freezing and making communication difficult, then you need to notify the provider and request alternative accommodation.

**While it can be intimidating and frustrating at times to advocate for accommodations, it is crucial to communicate with your service provider about what you require in order to effectively communicate with staff.** If they have questions or

are hesitant, provide them with the information you have and guide them to refer to the ADA website ([ada.gov](http://ada.gov)) and the NYS Division of Human Rights ([dhr.ny.gov](http://dhr.ny.gov)). You can also feel free to reach out to our staff for additional support advocating for accommodation or if you are a service provider with questions. Our staff can be reached by calling 716.833.1637.

## Deaf Awareness Week 2022

Deaf Awareness Week is coming up in September. Here's a calendar of events that you can take part in:

### Deaf Awareness Week

#### Everyday from September 19th to 23rd

**ASL Story Telling-Will be posted everyday at 10am**

Deaf Schools all round the county will do story telling in American Sign Language

#### Friday, September 16th

**Deaf Flag-Raising Ceremony Kickoff**-coordinated by Deaf Access Services

Rath Building Address: **95 Franklin St, Buffalo, NY 14202**

#### Friday, September 16th at 5pm

**Buffalo Club of the Deaf Social Night**-coordinated by Buffalo Club for the Deaf

Buffalo Club of the Deaf Address: **2275 Clinton St, Buffalo, NY 14206**

#### Saturday, September 17th at 3pm

**Silo City Tour**-coordinated by Buffalo Civil Association of the Deaf

Silo City Address: **85 Silo City Row, Buffalo, NY 14203**

#### Saturday, September 17th/18th-See Flyer for more info, 20th TBD

**Niagara Aquarium Tours-Interpreted**-coordinated by Deaf Access Services

Aquarium of Niagara Address: **701 Whirlpool St, Niagara Falls, NY 14301**

#### Sunday, September 18th at 10am

**ASL Coffee Chat**-coordinated by ASL Buffalo and Deaf Access Services

Starbucks Address: **933 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222**

#### Monday, September 19th

**SMSD Kickoff and Ice Cream Social**-coordinated by St. Mary's School for the Deaf

St Mary's School for the Deaf Address: **2253 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214**

#### Tuesday, September 20th 5pm-8pm

**Food Truck Tuesday**-coordinated by ASL Buffalo, Buffalo Implant Group, and DAS

Larkin Square address: **745 Seneca St, Buffalo, NY 14210**

#### Thursday, September 22nd (Grade Soccer at 2pm, Volleyball/Soccer at 3:30pm)

**SMSD Grade Soccer/Soccer and Volleyball and Family Fun Bingo**-coordinated by SMSD

St Mary's School for the Deaf Address: **2253 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214**

#### Thursday, September 22nd

**Woman King- Open Captioned Drive-in Movie**-coordinated by B.I.G. and DAS

Transit Drive-In Theatre Address: **6655 South Transit Road, Lockport, New York 14094**

#### Friday, September 23rd

**Thin Man Brewery Happy Hour**-coordinated by ASL Buffalo

Thin Man Brewery Address: **492 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222**

#### Saturday, September 24th

**Walk for DAS**-coordinated by Deaf Access Services

Botanical Gardens Address: **2655 South Park Ave, Buffalo, NY 14218**

#### Saturday, September 24th-See Flyer for more info

**Buffalo Bisons**-coordinated by Deaf Access Services

Buffalo Bisons Address: **Griffin Plaza, One James Drive, Buffalo, NY 14203**

#### Sunday, September 25th at 5-8pm

**PJ Cools Ice Cream Shoppe Social**-coordinated by Deaf Access Services

PJ Cools Ice Cream Shoppe Address: **6160 Transit Road, Depew, NY 14043**

## That Deaf Guy, by Matt and Kay Daigle



**TRI-MAIN CENTER**  
2495 Main St., Ste. 446  
Buffalo, NY 14214

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## People Inc. News: **People Home Health Accepting Patients**

### Referrals Welcome from Care Coordinators and Healthcare Professionals



Injury, surgery and illness are all difficult to endure, but perhaps one of the most challenging parts is the recovery. People Home Health, an affiliate of People Inc., can help patients regain independence, focusing on providing high quality and individualized patient care for people with and without developmental disabilities. Physical, occupational and speech therapies are brought right to your home. Referrals from care coordinators and healthcare professionals are now being accepted.

There are many times that someone may benefit from People Home Health, including: After an injury, surgery or hospital stay; treatment for new medical diagnoses, such as diabetes, cardiac and lung diseases; age-related conditions; wound care and skin breakdown; frequent hospital emergency room visits and for medication management.

Medicaid, Medicare and most private insurances are accepted. For more information or to make a referral, call 716.874.5600.

Presentations are available for care coordinators, discharge planners and medical offices by contacting Jake Wilkins, RN, at [jwilkins@people-inc.org](mailto:jwilkins@people-inc.org) or 716.566.4814.

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