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# We Have Come a Long Way

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## ABSTRACT

THIS ARTICLE GIVES AN OVERVIEW of past and present library services to, and policies about, deaf people. The unique properties of the deaf community are discussed. Recent developments in deaf studies, library services for deaf people, and laws affecting library services to deaf people are discussed. The roles librarians and libraries can play in providing library services to, and developing policies for, the deaf community are described.

## INTRODUCTION

In order that libraries and information networks successfully reach out to all Americans, it is necessary for the American Library Association (ALA) and its divisions to develop guidelines or standards to assist library policymakers. The *American Library Association Handbook of Organization and Membership Directory, 1991* (ALA, 1992) has a list of over eighty ALA documents that are concerned with the needs of various interest groups, from children to older adults, to prisoners, to clients at residential mental health facilities, to Hispanics, to the blind and physically handicapped, and to many other interest groups. Recently, a group of ALA members has begun to discuss library policies regarding the deaf community in the United States.

Formal education of deaf people has been practiced in the United States since April 15, 1817, when the first permanent school for deaf children and young adults opened in Hartford, Connecticut. In 1864, Congress voted to authorize the Board of Directors of the Columbia

Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind “to grant and confirm such degrees in the liberal arts and sciences as are usually granted and conferred in colleges.” Five years later, in 1869, the first class of three deaf men received a college degree from this institution, then called the National Deaf-Mute College (later Gallaudet College and presently Gallaudet University). However, it took the American Library Association nearly a century before its members recognized the lack of library and information services for deaf persons (here, “deaf” refers to all people with hearing disability).

At ALA’s Centennial Conference in June 1976, this author, along with the two other librarians from the District of Columbia Public Library, approached the ALA Executive Board about locating an appropriate division to include deaf needs. After a lengthy discussion, the board “decided to accommodate the group in a small ad hoc committee in order to allow it to function immediately as an official unit” (Berry et al., 1976, p. 1704).

In 1978, a separate unit within ALA, focusing on deaf people, was formally established; the Library Services to the Deaf Forum (LSDF) is one of the several forums of the Library Services to Special Populations Section (LSSPS) within the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of ALA.

### *Differences Between Deaf and Blind People*

There have often been comparisons between deaf and blind people whenever issues have arisen about the lack of resources for deaf people. Helen Keller has been quoted by many sources as having said that being deaf is worse than being blind. Many deaf people would not agree with her. However, it is a fact that blind people are kept away from *things* while deaf people are separated from other *people*.

For instance, when comparing library resources for blind persons and those individuals who are deaf, it is noted that there are federal funds available to provide quality library services to blind people but none for deaf people. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) was established by an act of Congress in 1931 to serve blind adults, including those blind people who also have a hearing disability. The program was expanded in 1952 to include individuals with physical impairments that prevent the reading of standard print. ASCLA (1984) has also published *The Revised Standards and Guidelines of Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*.

Because of the ability to hear and speak the same language as the general public and also to use regular telephones, blind people

have little problem gaining knowledge on any subject. They also have successfully convinced Congress of their needs; many blind people are lawyers and judges who know who to contact for information about expanding the rights of blind people to access library and information services.

Blind persons do not face the communication barrier that deaf people do. A blind person can participate in normal face-to-face and group conversations; listen to radio, records and tapes; and use a telephone. Deaf persons, on the other hand, are cut off from all of these.

Blind people tend to arouse the protective instinct in the general public. Deaf people, on the other hand, tend to make the general public uneasy because of the communication barrier. Most people are more comfortable and open toward blind people than toward deaf people. A blind person can be treated essentially as a sighted person, but the general public does not know what to do with a deaf person; it is easier to just ignore them. This social attitude shows in many ways, just one of which is the greater level of social services available to blind people than to deaf people despite the smaller number of blind people compared with deaf people.

#### *Uncertainties Concerning the Size of the Population*

Nobody really knows the exact number of deaf people in the United States. Every number given by national or local deaf organizations is usually an estimate. The last census of the U.S. deaf population took place in the early 1970s, giving the count of 13,362,842 or 6,603 persons per 100,000. Among that number were 410,522 pre-lingually deaf (age of onset of deafness is prior to nineteen years) and 201,626 prelingual deaf (age of onset of deafness is prior to three years). "Deaf persons are estimated to comprise less than one percent of the total population of the United States" (Schein & Delk, 1974, p. 225).

The National Organization on Disability has estimated that 43 million Americans, from every walk of life, have one or more type of disability affecting different life functions. These functions include seeing, speaking, hearing, and mobility. Of this number, 21 million have a hearing disability as the result of hereditary factors, accidents, illnesses, the aging process, drugs or excess medication, birth complications, or exposure to excessive noise.

#### DEAF PEOPLE AND LIBRARIES—AN OVERVIEW

Traditionally, deaf people do not get involved in political activities that involve library and information issues. This is probably because their different organizations have not kept up with needs

in the information area or have different priorities. Library and information services have never been viewed by such organizations as a separate area to share the same bench with the three other areas—education, vocational rehabilitation, and human health.

Many deaf adults also have bad memories connected with the use of libraries. At schools, libraries were often used as detention halls where children were sent as a punishment. At public libraries, many deaf people encountered frustrations in communicating with the library staff. And, while libraries should be in the unique position of being the sole source of information on all issues, unfortunately many libraries refer parents and other patrons to schools or community agencies that have specialized services for deaf people. According to the National Information Center on Deafness, located at Gallaudet University, there are sixty-two national organizations of, by, and for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. When these organizations were asked to identify up to four descriptors that best encompass the organization's focus, forty-five of them identified information and/or referral.

An important contribution to the problem of libraries not being accessible to deaf people may be due to the fact that hearing impairment is an invisible disability. No one would notice a deaf person unless they wore a hearing aid or used sign language for communicating. The old saying, "out of sight, out of mind" may be true. Library policymakers and program planners tend not to think about deaf people when working on a library agenda, even when deaf people may be around. Libraries also tend to lump the needs of deaf people in with the needs of hearing people and those with other disabilities.

Generally, many deaf people do not know about existing laws that protect their right to participate in the democratic process, to be productive, and to be literate. Libraries have the responsibility to make such information about existing laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, available to them.

Nevertheless, in the past two decades, many public libraries around the nation have started developing services for "the deaf" by using federal monies, such as are provided under the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), to install text telephones (TTY), to establish or expand a collection of books and videotapes about or for deaf people, to provide staff sensitivity training, and to make interpreters or storytellers available for library programs for all ages. When requesting funds, librarians inadvertently refer to "the deaf" as a typical group of signing deaf adults who can see but who read at the fourth grade level or below, when in reality the deaf community is made up of individuals with widely varying

levels of intellectual achievement, information needs, and communication preferences. Actually, there are nine groups within the deaf community with different library needs.

### THE NINE GROUPS WITHIN THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Deaf people are often pictured as a homogeneous group by the general public as well as by private and public service entities. However, there are nine distinct subpopulations of deaf people. Each group has a different set of communication techniques and a different set of library and information needs:

1. *American Sign Language (ASL) users*—persons who communicate fluently in ASL as their primary language
2. *Bilingual users*—persons who communicate fluently in *both* ASL and English
3. *Oralists or hearing-impaired individuals*—persons with a hearing impairment who communicate primarily through speech
4. *Deafened adults*—persons who became deaf after having had the experience of hearing normally, and, particularly, after having acquired speech
5. *Hearing-impaired elderly adults*—persons who have a hearing impairment as a result of the aging process
6. *Minimal language users*—persons who do not know either ASL or English. They may use gestures, homemade signs, and mime for communicating with others
7. *Hard-of-hearing individuals*—persons who have a “defective but functional sense of hearing” (*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1984)
8. *Deaf-blind individuals*—persons from any of the previous seven groups who are legally blind
9. *Family members*—persons from any of the earlier eight groups who have hearing parents, children, siblings, and spouses

Some people from each of the mentioned nine groups have one or more type of disability. Many people who design library services for deaf people are unaware of, and need to understand, the fact that an individual’s self-perception plays an important role in determining which group he or she belongs to. Some hard-of-hearing people think of themselves as deaf and belong to that group. Some oralists are profoundly deaf but think of themselves as hard of hearing because they rely on lip reading and their voices and do not use sign language. The choice made by individuals in each of these groups for using a name to identify themselves must be respected.

Hearing professionals working with deaf persons are not included in this list, as they do not live with deaf communication issues twenty-

four hours a day. They can be friends, supporters, or advocates but are not themselves members of the deaf community.

The national consumer organization within the deaf community that would have the most contact with all nine groups mentioned is Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI). TDI may be the closest thing to a consumer-related organization, because it has the most members from all walks of life who use one or more communication techniques. The only group that TDI may not have reached is the group of "minimal language users" who have no use for telephoning or television captioning.

## DEAF CULTURE

Deaf culture has existed for a long time, although hearing people in America were not aware of it. Deaf people called it the "Deaf World." Melvia Miller-Nomeland, American Sign Language Resource Teacher at the Kendall Demonstration Elementary School in Washington, D.C., has been giving workshops to educators around the country about deaf culture. She says it was "in the 1970's [that] researchers discovered that the 'Deaf World' was an actual culture of deaf people" (Miller-Nomeland, 1991, p. 11).

Deaf culture is like any other culture; it has its own language, rules of behavior, values, and traditions. *Language* includes signs, face and body movement, finger spelling, and gestures. *Rules of behavior* encompasses eye contact, touching to get attention, and ways of applauding. *Values* includes visual communication, communication techniques, vibration, and light signals. And *Traditions* are the jokes/humor, folklore, ASL poetry, storytelling, dance, and drama of the culture. There has been a growing public interest in deaf culture. More books are being written about it, and libraries are experiencing an increasing demand for materials related to deaf culture from both deaf and hearing patrons.

*Deaf Life*, the most popular magazine about the deaf community, has many exciting and thought-provoking articles on various subjects related to the deaf culture. The magazine also appeals to hearing people new to the "deaf world." Another popular magazine, *Hearing Health*, also includes many good articles about deaf heroes and deaf history, although the name of the magazine may be misleading, as readers may think that the magazine focuses on only hearing loss and hearing health care.

### *Recent Developments in Deaf Studies*

On October 24-25, 1991, 575 participants from all parts of the United States and Canada attended a mini-conference, "Deaf Studies: What's Up?" that was held at Gallaudet University. Jackie Mann,

coordinator of Extension Programs in the Continuing and Summer Studies Office of Gallaudet University and who planned the event, told this author that people around the world are now starving for materials on deaf studies.

Don Bangs, a noted research scholar in the field of deaf studies who held Gallaudet's Powrie V. Doctor Chair of Deaf Studies for the 1991-92 academic year, made the following statements in *Gallaudet Today*:

Although large numbers of hearing students in public schools and academic institutions have found their educational horizons broadened by classes in ASL and deaf culture, their deaf counterparts have had very little access to classes in which they can learn more about their own language and culture. ("New Doctor Chair Reviews Deaf Studies," 1991/92, p. 35)

### *Significance of Deaf Culture and Deaf Studies*

Ultimately, "[k]nowledge of the history of the deaf community is very important in that it gives the members of the community a sense of how past achievements and experiences have affected them and affords the public a chance to improve their understanding and appreciation of the different communities that together make up our society" (Hagemeyer, 1991, p. 3).

Yet many deaf Americans, young and old, are uninformed about their own history and heritage. In addition, people who become deaf later in life are often unaware of the rich and varied nature of deaf culture and life as a deaf person, the various technological devices, and the different communication options available to them.

How many deaf Americans of all ages know about Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, who sailed to Europe in 1816 seeking a method for teaching deaf children in America; about his meeting Laurent Clerc, a deaf Frenchman who taught at the school for deaf students in Paris; about both returning to America to start the first permanent American school for the deaf? Many deaf people, especially young children, may also not know why the use of ASL was forbidden in the classroom for so many years, or why artificial sign language systems—such as Signed English, Seeing Essential English, and others—have been used in the classroom since the 1970s.

While the crises of America's schools are regularly in the news, nothing is heard about the plight of deaf children and young adults now attending public schools. Deaf children, who are the future of our deaf culture, have the right to be bilingual in both their natural language—ASL—and in English, and they are entitled to their birthright to gain information and knowledge about their own deaf culture.

### *Trends in Deaf Awareness and Services to Deaf People*

Deaf people have been, until recently, when communication technologies have become increasingly available, denied access to the

telephone, television programs, and public services, including access to information in the library. In addition, many deaf awareness and cultural heritage activities have taken place around the country in the past few years. Deaf people have taken this opportunity to learn more about various communication techniques and also about American Sign Language, the supposed natural language of people who are deaf since birth or from an early age.

The following is a list of the techniques that help deaf people communicate among themselves and with the general public:

#### Communication Techniques\*

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Signed English
- Finger spelling
- Note writing
- Speech and lipreading, Tadoma for deaf-blind
- Cued speech
- Gestures, home signs, mime
- Taction (touch) and kinesthesia (body movement)
- Interpreters (sign language or oral)
- Computer assisted notetaking (CAN)
- Real time captioning
- Communication access systems: devices used to enhance listening in rooms, lecture halls, and other large group facilities—e.g., audio loop systems, AM systems, FM systems, infrared systems, personal listening devices, etc.
- Alerting devices and systems: devices that alert persons by using a flashing light, amplified sound, or vibrating signal, e.g., baby-cry alarms, doorbell alerting systems, vibrating paging devices that can be worn on the wrist or felt through clothing, telephone signaling systems, smoke alarm systems, security alarms, and wake-up alarms.
- Telecaption adapters: devices which are attached to television sets and which allow viewers to read captioned dialogue on their television screens. By July 1993, all televisions on the American market with 13-inch or larger screens are required to have built-in decoder circuitry, thanks to the Television Decoder Circuitry Act of 1990.
- Text telephone (TTY): the term “TTY” now comes back. It was first used before “TDD” replaced it. TDD stood for Telecommunication Device for the Deaf. “TTY” previously stood for Teletypewriter.

- Computer Bulletin Board Systems (BBS)
- Telecommunication Relay Service: This relay service, which presently exists in a number of states and which is expected to be operational in the rest of the United States by July 1993, gives users who have hearing and speech disabilities full access to the telephone twenty-four hours a day. It also serves the needs of hearing people who do not have TTYs to call people with hearing and speech disabilities. A relay communication assistant acts as a telephone interpreter, conveying the conversation between TTY and TTY nonusers.
- Hearing-ear dogs

\*For cataloging purposes, most libraries use "Deaf—Means of Communication" for the subject heading. The ADA uses the term "auxiliary aids and services."

Most deaf people, especially those who live in rural areas, may not know about the availability of these communication techniques. To the surprise of many people, most deaf Americans do not own text telephones or telecaption adapters. The reasons have to do not only with high costs, but also with the low reading abilities of many deaf adults. Many libraries have thought, erroneously, that deaf adults have waited all their lives for the library to acquire a text telephone. Thus, when libraries have acquired TTYs, librarians are often disappointed that so few deaf persons call them. Reasons for not taking advantage of the new TTY capabilities of libraries are varied. Many deaf persons simply do not know about library services and are unfamiliar with the hearing culture. Many also have successfully survived for years without any form of telephone and do not see the need to change their lifestyle. Many deaf adults, especially the elderly, may not know how to type and may be afraid to use modern technologies, and also many may be uncomfortable in exposing to strangers their "weak" English language skills.

Also, not all programs and public announcements on television have open or closed captions for the benefit of deaf viewers. Producers of videotapes and films should be aware that, in the future, libraries may not be able to buy their products unless they have either closed or open captions.

Authorities on the education of deaf children and youth continue to struggle with the controversies and conflicts regarding teaching methods and communication modes used in the classroom in both public and private schools. Very often, parents and guardians are unaware of this issue because they themselves have not been exposed to deaf culture at the library or to the reality that deaf children can be productive and literate if they learn both ASL and English at an early age.

*Developments in Library Services for Deaf People Guidelines*

John Michael Day, librarian at Gallaudet University who also serves as the elected secretary of the Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), has worked on library guidelines for deaf people for many years. For two years prior to preparation of the final draft, comments for modifying the guidelines were made by members of the Library Services to the Deaf Forum (LSDF) of the American Library Association and by participants at the Deaf Way Conference and Celebration that met in Washington, D.C., in July 1989. At the 1990 IFLA General Conference, Day received formal adoption of the final draft of these guidelines, which had also received the endorsement of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). "These guidelines are international in scope and consist of statements of general principles. The various national library associations may modify or alter certain expressions which have definitions different to those assumed in the publication" (Day, 1991, p. vii). In early 1992, a group of librarians, with the support of LSDF and using the international guidelines as a model, began working on the ALA guidelines.

*Potential Impact of New ALA Guidelines*

The guidelines may eventually promote the use of "the deaf community" as an appropriate term to encompass all groups of deaf people. Libraries should consistently use this term in cataloging publications and in public service work, while simultaneously acknowledging and accepting that other organizations may use different terms such as "hard of hearing" or "hearing impaired." Similarly, some deaf individuals may choose to use different terms to identify themselves. Their choice is to be respected.

When the ALA guidelines become available, they should be very helpful to libraries seeking to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Complying with the ADA needs to be neither expensive nor difficult. Much of the compliance is dependent on an open attitude to library services for *all* people.

*Library Services for Deaf Children and Young Adults and the Elderly*

How many deaf children and young adults are there in the United States? According to the Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies at Gallaudet University, the number reported to the center's annual survey in 1990/91 was 47,973. The large majority of these children and young adults are receiving special education services for their hearing impairment, though there are a few thousand in

regular education only. The question becomes How representative are these 47,973 of all deaf students in special education programs? If the numbers of children and young adults that the individual states report to the federal government are correct, then the survey represents approximately 60 percent of all deaf students who receive special education services across the country.

As America enters the twenty-first century, there will be a greatly increased number of elderly people, which also means a larger number will have hearing impairment due to the aging process. According to the Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies at Gallaudet University, the National Health Interview Survey for 1989, administered by the National Center for Health Statistics, finds 28.6 percent of the population aged 65 and older has some form of hearing impairment. This figure represents approximately 8,372,000 persons. In the age group 45 to 64, approximately 12.8 percent of the population (or 5,891,000 persons) has a hearing impairment.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

Close to 700 delegates attended the White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS) held in Washington, D.C., from July 9 to 13, 1991. The WHCLIS was conducted under the auspices of the National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS), a permanent federal agency charged with advising the President and the Congress on policy matters relating to library and information services. At the 1991 WHCLIS, about forty delegates with disabilities witnessed the tremendous commitment and enthusiasm of the conference members as they voted unanimously for the recommendation "that the President and the Congress establish a National Library Service for Persons with Disabilities to emphasize the use of alternative media and the elimination of barriers to serve a significant portion of the United States population. All barriers to library and information services should be eliminated to achieve full and complete access, as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990" (*Information 2000*, 1991, p. 34). The above recommendation and the other ninety-six recommendations were adopted; fifteen of these were earmarked for priority action by an early vote of the conference delegates.

There was also another triumph for delegates with disabilities, especially for deaf delegates, when they voted unanimously that the President and the Congress enact legislation to authorize and fund a program which

Provides financial and technical assistance for library and information services for multicultural, multilingual (including deaf culture and American Sign Language) populations.

Creates a national database of multicultural, multilingual materials for use by libraries and information services, including research and demonstration projects for model library programs, serving our multicultural and multilingual populations.

Reauthorizes the Higher Education Act and expands provisions to encourage the recruitment of people of multicultural, multilingual heritage, including those with disabilities, to the library and information services professions, and to support the training and retraining of library and information science professionals to serve the needs of multicultural, multilingual populations (*Information 2000*, 1991, pp. 19, 37)

This recommendation ranks eighth in the top fifteen recommendations.

On March 10, 1992, Roslyn Rosen, president of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), joined with twenty-six other people representing organizations for libraries, information services, education, and public and human services in addressing the NCLIS forum on recommendations from the 1991 WHCLIS. She mentioned two important recommendations that were not among the top fifteen that she wanted to bring to the attention of the NCLIS—the National Library Services for Americans with Disabilities and the Statistical Model for Determining Impact/Needs. Rosen emphasized that the effective accomplishment of these two recommendations will contribute significantly toward the successful implementation of all other recommendations, especially for people with all types of disabilities and for those representing cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversities. Rosen also encouraged the NCLIS to create a task force “to actualize these two recommendations with the goals of establishing and implementing a Model Center and statistical models and policies for assessing needs, determining quality delivery systems, and evaluating services.”

The two recommendations that rank at the top of the fifteen recommendations for priority action address the vitally important focus on: (1) children and youth through support of the Omnibus Children and Youth Initiative, and (2) the funding of the National Research and Education Network (NREN) that would serve as an information “superhighway” allowing educational institutions, including *all* libraries, to capitalize on the advantages of technology for resource sharing and the creation and exchange of information.

On February 4, 1988, the Commission on Education of the Deaf (COED) presented its report, *Toward Equality*, to the President and Congress. “The 52 recommendations included 25 calling for action by the Congress, 26 for action by the U.S. Department of Education, and one for action by federally supported postsecondary programs” (Bowe, 1991, p. vii). Most of the fifty-two recommendations are partially accomplished. Will the WHCLIS recommendations, especially the first two priorities, help all COED recommendations?

They should because the two actual problems of our deaf children and youth at schools around the country are: (1) communication barriers to information and knowledge on any subject, including deaf history, and (2) the lack of deaf role models as librarians or other related professionals in the library.

*Future Library and Information Services for the Deaf Community*

Soon after the 1991 WHCLIS, a group of Washington, D.C., area librarians and library supporters formed a task force on future library and information services for the deaf community. The task force is charged to respond to the resolution that was adopted in April 1991 by the delegation to the D.C. Mayor's Pre-White House Conference to establish a center serving all types of libraries and the deaf community in the District of Columbia. The task force intends to follow up on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and on the WHCLIS recommendations which are expected to receive the full support of Congress.

Involvement of the deaf community is evident from the membership of the task force, which is chaired by Thomas R. Harrington, media librarian at Gallaudet University. Cheryl Heppner (deaf delegate at the 1991 WHCLIS representing the general public in Virginia) is the secretary of the task force. Susan Cohen (deaf delegate to the Maryland Governor's Pre-White House Conference) and Phil Burns, John Pitts, and Janice Rosen (three deaf delegates to the D.C. Mayor's Pre-White House Conference) also serve on the task force. Members of the Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action (FOLDA) of both the D.C. Association of Deaf Citizens (DCADC) and the Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) are also involved in the task force. Carol Harter of the MDAD/FOLDA is chair of the subcommittee to focus on a deaf cultural center, and Phillip Germany of the DCADC/FOLDA is chair of the subcommittee to focus on communication techniques. Both subcommittees have additional people who are working with the chair on the goals.

A proposed plan for implementing library and information services to the deaf community in the District of Columbia is still in its early stage; however, this author would like to share her tentative outlines of techniques as possible alternatives for providing the deaf community with full access to the nation's libraries and information networks. The goal of the following proposed centers would be to enable participation of deaf people in the democratic process so that they can be productive and literate:

1. *National Library and Deaf Outreach Center (NLDOC)*. The NLDOC will be located at the National Library Service to the

Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) in Washington, D.C. Through designated regional and subregional libraries around the nation, NLDOC will provide materials and consulting services to libraries and information networks on the use of communication technologies, training of staff, and developing a resource collection on the deaf community—i.e., hearing aids, cochlear implants, self-support services, legislation and laws, etc.

It would be expected that the American Library Association have its guidelines ready to assist future library policymakers with this set up.

2. *The National Deaf Cultural Center (NDCC)*. The NDCC will be located at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. With the cooperation of future regional and subregional deaf culture centers in all parts of the United States, the center will provide assistance to libraries and information networks in areas of materials and information on the language, culture, art, and history of deaf people.

The center would have access to the world's largest collections on hearing disability and the deaf culture located in Gallaudet University Library. The Gallaudet University Archives, a department of the Gallaudet University Library, also has collections on written, visual, and audio records created by individuals, groups, and organizations, past and present, as well as diaries, letters, scrapbooks, and other records such as photographs and films, which represent the heritage of the deaf community. Additionally, the collection of newspapers published by state schools for the deaf and private individuals, commonly known as the "Little Paper Family," document the people, events, and places that make up the American deaf community.

Recently, a task force on American Sign Language and Deaf Studies was formed at Gallaudet University to make recommendations regarding the establishment of an academic department focusing on ASL and deaf studies. This future department would be a valuable asset to the future Deaf Cultural Center.

Currently, the Kansas Educational Foundation, the Kansas Association of the Deaf, the Kansas School for the Deaf Alumni Association, and the Kansas School for the Deaf have started a project to raise funds for establishing a Deaf Cultural Center in Olathe, Kansas. The president of the Kansas Association of the Deaf, Terry Hostin, has indicated that, when the center is completed, it may also serve other states in the Middle West.

3. *Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action Center*. This center will be located at the National Association of the Deaf in Silver Spring, Maryland. With the cooperation of the state-level Association of

the Deaf in the District of Columbia, in each of the fifty states, and in the U.S. territories, the FOLDA Center will establish a network with members of the deaf community through libraries.

In January 1986, the Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action was formed as a service and volunteer nonprofit organization. There are no dues. FOLDA income is earned from the sales of used books and acrylic items and also from the advertisement fees received from businesses and nonprofit organizations for including their flyers in *The Red Notebook* or for distributing flyers at library programs. Many individuals have also donated their time and money to support the FOLDA effort to reach out to both deaf and library communities.

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD), established in 1880, is the world's oldest advocacy and consumer organization of, for, and by deaf people. The NAD is a federation of fifty-one cooperating state associations in each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia, with a total membership of 22,000 persons. NAD programs include the Junior NAD, Youth Leadership Camp, biennial convention, Miss Deaf America Pageant, the Legal Defense Fund, and various programs and contract projects such as captioned videos, phone relay consumer evaluation, interpreter certification, sign instructor's certification, and the National Commission on Equal Educational Opportunities for Deaf Children. In addition to the NAD staff, there are approximately thirty committees and sections composed of volunteers.

NAD has recently been restructured and reorganized and stands ready for the future. On July 3, 1992, the NAD formally created a new section to be called the NAD/FOLDA-USA. Included in NAD's future agenda will be a long-range plan for NAD/FOLDA-USA to take over FOLDA's responsibility for *The Red Notebook*.

*The Red Notebook* was originated in 1979 by the D.C. Public Library, which recognized a need for each branch library to have a "first stop" information resource that would provide information to local people about hearing health care, communication method, deaf culture, and sign language classes. Generally, *The Red Notebook*, also known as "Communicating With Hearing People," is an information service in loose-leaf form, divided into fifteen sections that cover the following topics: library, quick guide, folklore, deafness, laws, academic, older adults, children, young adults, people with disabilities, diverse populations, state associations of the deaf, *CROSSROADS* (newsletter), action, and personal.

When people outside the D.C. area learned about this publication, it was suggested that *The Red Notebook* be available for anyone

wanting a copy. Each year approximately 3,000 registered owners of *The Red Notebook* in all parts of the United States, Canada, and other countries receive an annual supplement from the FOLDA. The only requirement for being on the mailing list is for owners of *The Red Notebook* to register with FOLDA.

## CONCLUSION

All types of libraries and information networks need to continue to improve services to the deaf community. Library personnel should realize that the deaf community is a heterogeneous, not homogeneous, population. There are nine distinct subpopulations, each with its own unique information and communication needs. Libraries have a responsibility to inform both the deaf community and the general public about aspects of deaf culture, hearing health care, and communication methods and technologies. Information services to and about the deaf community is a rapidly evolving field, and many of the changes are tied to newly formulated laws and regulations. The deaf community itself, through participation in major conferences and the involvement of NAD and FOLDA, is playing an increasingly larger role in designing solutions to the problems associated with providing library and information services to and about deaf people.

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