



Kansas Association of the Deaf, Inc.
PO Box 10085
Olathe, KS 66051-1385
www.kskad.org

P R E S S R E L E A S E

--Wichita, KS. For immediate release.

Kansas Association of the Deaf (KAD) is joining the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) in observance of "Celebrate ASL!" a nationwide public observance of American Sign Language (ASL) on September 28, 2007. Three Kansas cities: Olathe, Topeka and Wichita, with Kansas Association of the Deaf, are observing "Celebrate ASL!" It's the very first of many annual "Celebrate ASL!" national observances.

Attached with this press release is the Official Press Release of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) which explains and outlines the purpose of "Celebrate ASL!" NAD is responding to the World Federation of the Deaf call to the international day of observance of sign language to be on September 28, 2007. It's the global movement to obtain full human rights through sign language.

American Sign Language is a visual language that is used among the deaf community in America and Canada. It is a full fledged language that separate from English and other languages. ASL has been officially used since 1817 when the first Deaf School was established.

North American Indian Sign Language (NAISL) being the oldest signed language in North America and possibly in the world, NAISL had greatly influenced the development of American Sign Language and had been carried generations by generations.

American Sign Language is one of the three most commonly used languages in America (besides English and Spanish).

It is the first time in history of Deaf communities to band together world-wide on such an event/observance. Many communities wear black shirts as a symbol of preserving ASL and Deaf Culture.

--In Olathe, KS, there will be observance of "Celebrate ASL!" at the Kansas School for the Deaf located on 450 E. Park Street, Olathe, KS 66061. The school children will have some performances and activities. During the week of September 24th, third through sixth graders will view the World Federation of the Deaf animation "Deaf World" during their Deaf studies classes.

Contact person in Olathe: Chuck Theel at ctheel@ksd.state.ks.us.

--In Topeka, KS, there will be observance of "Celebrate ASL!" with Melanie McKay-Cody. She is a KAD Youth Liaison Officer. She is an expert on American Sign Language (ASL) and North American Indian Sign Language (NAISL). McKay-Cody is pursuing Doctorate in American Indian Studies and Sign Language Linguistics. For details about ASL and NAISL, contact Melanie McKay-Cody. Contact person: Melanie McKay-Cody at mmckaycody@tmail.com.

--In Wichita, KS, there will be an observance of "Celebrate ASL!" at the Warren Plaza in Old Town Wichita located at 300 block Mead. There will be ASL storytelling, skits, poetry, etc. It will begin at 6:00pm to 8:00pm. There will be a Mayoral Proclamation on the Wichita's observance of "Celebrate ASL!" (TBA)

Contact person: Shane Dundas at WichitaDeafGuy@gmail.com.

American Sign Language is a true native language of the Deaf and hard of hearing. It is a true language in a sense, with it's own grammatical structure, syntax, concept and it even ties with a legitimate culture.

Ann Cooper is the current President of the Kansas Association of the Deaf. She resides in Gardner, Kansas. "As KAD President, I am very excited about celebrating ASL which we preserve the way Deaf and hard of hearing people are able to communicate with each other," Cooper said. "With wonderful communication getting through among these people, we are able to continue to be successful in their communities. It's the first time to observe ASL and we continue using for many years to come. Therefore, KAD recognizes "Celebrate ASL!" events in Kansas."

Shane Dundas is the current Vice-president of the Kansas Association of the Deaf who is the Wichita's Liaison of KAD's response to NAD's call to "Celebrate ASL!" "It's a great honor for Wichita to locally host the very first of 'Celebrate ASL!' in KAD's state wide celebration of American Sign Language," said Dundas. "I get goose- bumps knowing that we are making history right here in Wichita along with many thousands of communities in the entire world in observance of human rights through sign language."

It is estimated that combined Deaf and hard of hearing people is made up of 10% of the population nation-wide. And about 5% uses American Sign Language which is an official language of the Deaf and hard of hearing.

About the Kansas Association of the Deaf:

Kansas Association of the Deaf was established in 1909 in Wichita, KS, in response to the national movement of defending the civil rights of deaf and hard of hearing people. It was incorporated in 1910, affiliated with the National Association of the Deaf since 1911. www.kskad.org. KAD currently has over 430 members state-wide.



8630 Fenton Street, Suite 820
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3819
301-587-1788 (Voice) 301-587-1791 (FAX)
www.nad.org

<http://www.nad.org/CelebrateASLpressrelease>

Silver Spring, MD. Posted September 14, 2007.

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) will host “Celebrate ASL!” in observance of World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) International Day of Sign Languages on Friday, September 28, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, on the front steps of Chapel Hall at Gallaudet University. This event, supported by the ASL and Deaf Studies Department at Gallaudet, will also reaffirm the long-standing position of the NAD that American Sign Language (ASL) is the natural language of the American deaf community.

At the July 2007 World Congress of the WFD in Madrid, Spain, delegates overwhelmingly supported the creation of an International Day of Sign Languages, as a celebratory event to be observed annually during the last full week of September (International Week of the Deaf, a WFD-sanctioned annual activity, is observed during this same time period). The year 2007 marks the initial observance of this annual celebration of sign languages.

The “Celebrate ASL!” program on Friday afternoon September 28th is open to the public. Planned speakers include Yerker Andersson, former WFD president and current NAD Board of Directors member on behalf of Region I (northeastern United States); Nancy J. Bloch, chief executive officer of the NAD; Stephen Weiner, Provost, Gallaudet University; MJ Bienvenu, chair, ASL and Deaf Studies Department, Gallaudet University; Melissa Malzkuhn, graduate student at Gallaudet University and secretary of the WFD Youth Section (supported by the NAD); and others to be announced.

“Celebrate ASL!” supports the global objectives of WFD, one of which specifically focuses on advancement of human rights through sign languages. In furtherance of that objective, the NAD Board of Directors is developing a position statement to reaffirm the historic stance of the NAD on ASL. “We value ASL,” said Dr. Bobbie Beth Scoggins, president of the NAD, “as much or more today as we have in the past. We advocate for the acquisition, learning, and use of ASL by everyone, and we recognize ASL as the heart of the American deaf community.”

At 7:00 pm on the same day, September 28, noted deaf artist Bernard Bragg will present his new “Theatre in the Sky” performance at Elstad Auditorium, hosted by Gallaudet University’s Theater Arts Department (to purchase tickets, go to <http://depts.gallaudet.edu/theatre>).

The NAD encourages local communities to become part of the “Celebrate ASL!” effort in observance of WFD International Day of Sign Languages during the last week of September (WFD International Week of the Deaf is observed during the same time period). The NAD website will feature a listing of celebrations across the nation (to submit your local event plans, go to <http://www.nad.org/CelebrateASL>).