

Deaf Heritage and Library Cultural Center

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2012

Caralee Crye, a Deaf member of the Deaf Heritage and Library Cultural Center (DHLCC) explains in the March 2003 issue of the UAD Bulletin that the DHLCC “started out as a dream” in 1993 alongside the twin goal of establishing a Deaf Center in Utah County. An initial group of five Utah County residents met in October 1995 at the home of Lee Shepherd to form a board. In those early planning stages, the only thing the group was certain of was their intention to preserve Deaf Heritage through the founding of these two community resources. The specifics would come later (Crye 2003).

The people present at that first meeting were Reid Simonsen, Jim Harper, Gregg Scott, Lee Shepherd, Julio Diaz, and Tom Osmond. At the second meeting at Gregg's home, a board was created and officers were selected. Reid Simonsen would be chairperson; Jim Harper, vice chairperson; and Gregg Scott, treasurer. Board members would be Minnie Mae Wilding-Diaz, Lee Shepherd, Bobby Giles, and Julio Diaz (DHLCC Paper).

Several meetings were held in various places such as homes, public libraries, and college classrooms. The group considered names for the new organization and how to set it up. They were aware it would be a rough road to create an Article of Incorporation, obtain 501(c) 3 status, and write bylaws. Many talented and knowledgeable people from the board and from allied organizations worked together to make the DHLCC a reality (DHLCC Paper).

After months of meetings, an article of incorporation was developed, and a tax status of 501(c) 3 was obtained. The Deaf Heritage Library and Cultural Center became official on May 29, 1997. Its mission and purposes were to provide:

1. A Museum of Deaf Heritage
2. A Library of Deafness
3. Deaf Professional Services
4. A Preschool for Deaf Children
5. Social Activities
6. A Deaf Community Bookstore

Committees were set up to meet the above goals. Eventually, the DHLCC was recognized by the state government. At that time, the officers and board members were: Caralee

Crye, president; Dale Link, vice president; Jill Laing, secretary; Chris Wakeland, correspondence secretary; Gregg Scott, treasurer; Bobby Giles, assistant treasurer; and members-at-large Jim Harper, Nanette Hix, Lee Shepherd, Herb Royce and Patty Kitchen. Committees were set up for each plan, plus two more for fundraising and media services. Heads of the committees were: Chris Wakeland, Library; Jim Harper, Kristi Mortensen and Virginia Powers, Museum; Jill Laing and Kelli Illi, Preschool; Caralee Crye, Services; Gregg Scott, Bookstore; Nanette Hix and Patty Kitchen, Activities; Chris Wakeland and Brad Houck, Fundraising; and Doug Stringham, Media Services (DHLCC Paper).

Since its inception, the DHLCC accomplished the following:

1. Sent DHLCC representatives to UCCD leadership seminars.
2. Participated in Deaf Festival 1997 in SLC and UCCD bazaars.
3. Helped lobby in 1996/1997 for the old Brigham Young Academy not to be condemned but renovated into a new library.
4. Staged several successful yard sales to raise funds.
5. Made a strong alliance with the Utah Association for the Deaf (UAD) and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Agency (DHAA).
6. Rented a building for one year (1999) in American Fork with a loan from UAD and funds from their fundraising efforts.
7. Helped set up an email chat group, Deaf Users, in 1997.
8. Set up several workshops and activities (some jointly with DHAA) in their American Fork building.
9. Partnered with DHAA to bring open-captioned movies into Utah County theaters April 1999. The first open-captioned movie shown was "October Sky."
10. Gathered some deaf-related books and artifacts (Crye 2003).

In the years after the establishment of DHLCC, progress toward their goals was steady. Eventually, however, there were changes in the makeup of the board and committees due to death, illness, and life challenges. Time commitment was another issue because many members

were also involved with other organizations or had personal issues to resolve. Priorities changed and resignations were submitted for various reasons. Unfortunately, the resignations came faster than replacements could be made. Morale dropped dramatically with the loss of two beloved board members, Dale Link and Herb Royce who passed away (Crye 2003; DHLCC Paper).

Eventually, the DHLCC could not continue without a functioning board and committed members. No meetings were held during 2002, and the DHLCC officially dissolved. The bank accounts were closed and the remaining balance turned over to Utah Association for the Deaf. Since that time, the UAD has been committed to respecting the wishes of the DHLCC to honor the memory and contributions of Dale Link and Herb Royce (Crye 2003; DHLCC Paper).

Bibliography

A 1993 draft was made on paper listing goals for a future Deaf Center in Utah County.

Crye, Caralee. "DHLCC Closure. "*UAD Bulletin*." 26.10. (March 2003): 5.