

whatQGA

The whatQGA was established in 2004 by Sarah and Preston Gudmunson in Provo, Utah. The purpose of this organization is to empower deaf and hard of hearing youth. Many deaf and hard of hearing youth have challenges to overcome that hearing youth do not have. These challenges stem mainly from difficulties in communication, which in turn affect a multitude of other areas of life. When we say ‘empower deaf and hard of hearing youth’ we mean that we work to help them overcome the difficulties caused by the circumstances of their life that relate to their hearing abilities by providing workshops and activities for both the youth and the whole family.

whatQGA comes from code used on a teletypewriter (TTY). It means, ‘What did you say?’ Since Sarah is hard of hearing and this question symbolizes the all too common misunderstandings that come because of barriers to communication between deaf, hard of hearing and hearing people. whatQGA believes that the learning and use of American Sign Language is an important step in overcoming these barriers.



Sarah and Preston Gudmunson

Since its founding in 2004, whatQGA has accomplished a couple of things. The first step whatQGA was to begin working with the Association for Deaf Children piloting programs for youth & families in 2004-2006. In 2007, whatQGA hosted the 1st Annual 5k/1mile Race for the Association for Deaf Children on May 12, 2007 in Park City. During that year, SYHO-'Signing Youth Hanging Out' successfully began September 21, 2007 at the Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and is held every 1st & 3rd Friday of the month. In 2008,

whatQGA hosted the 2nd Annual 5K/1mile Race for ADC in Draper, Utah on May 17, 2008. The 3rd Annual race was held May 16, 2009 in Draper, Utah. Signing Youth Hanging Out and Sego Lily Center for the Abused Deaf began working together on September 19, 2008 to provide counseling services for the youth each month.

whatQGA works closely with another organization called the Association for Deaf Children. It was established in 1998 founded by Deborah & Joe Zeidner, parents of a Deaf daughter, Jessica in Springville, Utah. Because of Jean Massieu School of the Deaf being located in the Salt Lake area, the ADC has since moved to Draper. ADC's goal is to support programs that will help educate and enrich the lives of people who are deaf and their families.

Association for Deaf Children was originally established mainly to support the education and development of deaf children since ADC's inception its goals have widened to include older deaf people and their families as well.

Over the past decade ADC has served the needs of many Deaf and hard of hearing people throughout Utah by supporting and establishing programs such as deaf education (including tutoring), deaf sports, deaf student foreign-exchange, ASL teaching workshops, deaf youth groups, counseling programs, support programs for families of deaf children, and deaf/hearing community awareness events.

Credit given to Sarah Gudmunson – 2009