

*Western Institute for*  
**THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

*The* **Wave**  
SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER



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Charitable Registration Number: 10820098RR0001

# President's Musings

*"Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing"*

- Helen Keller

## Our Board of Directors

President: Barbara M. Brown  
Vice President: Nora McKellin  
Treasurer: Dr. Eugene Lechelt  
Secretary: Dr. Graham Bryce  
Director: Chris Tam  
Director: Dr. Dean C. Powers  
Director: Joy Gong  
Director: Muriel Kauffmann  
Appointed Director: Ellen Zheng  
Appointed Director: Kim Wood



**If you have any feedback, questions, or ideas, please contact Barbara M. Brown at:**

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Just a few weeks ago I signed the many documents that were required to close the purchase of our new purpose-built premises at Quebec Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in Vancouver.

This closure completes the search, the negotiations and the purchase of our new Head Office. At last we will have the necessary space to expand our current programs and to introduce new services. A future issue of *The WAVE* will carry all the details about our new and improved amenities.

Your board of directors recognizes that our expanded services will need more support – both financial and physical. To support our expansion the board has approved the development of a communications and marketing program – a first for us. Just a few weeks ago we welcomed new staff; Yat Li and Jodi Birley, who will establish this department.

Shortly, you will notice changes to both our web site and our communications strategies. Be on the look out for weekly vlogs and ASL-supported messaging with all our notices and information releases.

Elsewhere in *The WAVE* you will find information explaining the development of our new name and our re-branding. This has been a nine month process, to date, while your board has devoted seven years to the planning, purchase and construction of our new headquarters. So many exciting and inspiring changes are happening!

Come to our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and become part of the wonderful future we are building.

**Barbara M. Brown, WIDHH President**



# Interim Executive Director Message

I am pleased to tell you we have officially closed on the sale for our new building on March 29<sup>th</sup> and our official move in day is Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (but we will aim to be fully moved out of West 7<sup>th</sup> by Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>). This is a very exciting time for WIDHH!

A lot will take place over the next six months while we continue to provide our services. Work on the interior of the building has begun. We have started to purge, pack and plan. We will be launching a new and improved website, as well as a new look and name for WIDHH later in May.

We continue to work quietly on our Capital Campaign for our new building and we plan to go public later this Spring. Throughout all of this work, our services for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community continue to grow in innovative ways. With our new Communications Department, we hope to practice what we preach and work towards creating communication accessible newsletters and website.

WIDHH is on a journey to even bigger and better sights. Thank you community for all your support!



Grace Shyng, Interim Executive Director

## Learn More about WIDHH's Rebranding

On behalf of our Board and Staff, thank you for attending our recent Information Sessions in November, March and April where we provided updates about the exciting new chapter ahead of us, about our new building project, and our ideas for a new brand name and logo.

Thank you for all your honest feedback. We greatly value your opinions and appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas with us. At these meetings, we discussed how we can honour and celebrate the history and origins of WIDHH – including Deaf Culture and Hard of Hearing heritage, and our rebranding process.

When developing a new name, we first looked again at WIDHH's vision, mission and values. Based on these findings, we are working to develop a new and stronger identity for WIDHH. We have been working hard to develop a new name that is friendly and welcoming for people who want and need to be educated about our unique community of waving hands and waving sounds that are barrier-free.



Watch Jodi, the new Communications Coordinator, as she explains, in ASL with captioning, WIDHH's process of rebranding. You can watch the video on our YouTube Channel at <https://youtu.be/HLFrVLOHczE>.

# Welcome Our Newest Staff Members

Grace Shyng, Interim Executive Director, recently sat down with four new staff members to find out what makes them tick! Here are their compelling stories:

## Jodi Birley, Communications Coordinator:

Jodi was born and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan. Jodi is part of a multi-generational Deaf family and has proud roots in Deaf heritage. When Jodi started public school, there were no services for signers. At that time, public education in the province only supported oral (non-sign language) programs. Jodi's parents advocated strongly for ASL services, rallied their community for support and championed the inclusion of Sign Language interpreting services in the school. As a result of their hard work and determination, the Regina School Board acknowledged the importance of Sign Language. They set up a Total Communication program that include all different approaches in the instructions for deaf and hard of hearing children at the time when Jodi was in preschool. Jodi had positive experience learning both ASL and speech, but she chose ASL as her primary language to thrive.



### *Fun Facts about Jodi...*

*Favourite Movie: Jodi doesn't have a favourite, but loves thrillers.*

*Favourite Book: Loves true stories but Celestine Prophecy is one of few fiction books that stuck with her.*

*Favourite Food: She loves to cook and enjoys all types of food, especially Thai food.*

*Jodi's Dream Job: Jodi's older sister Dawn is in theatre. They hope to advance opportunities for the signing community in the arts by integrating digital media and theatre into a hub centre that aims to educate and inspire the public about the beauty of the sign language community, and its rich Deaf Culture and heritage. Go for it, Jodi!*

After high school in 1998, Jodi attended Gallaudet University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies. Following graduation, Jodi moved to Vancouver and worked as a child care counsellor in the dormitories under the Ministry of Children and Families for almost five years, and then moved to become a Youth and Child Care Worker at the British Columbia School for the Deaf for almost 11 years.

Advocacy for the Deaf has always been the forefront of Jodi's passions. Starting in 2011, Jodi became actively involved in a national movement that successfully advocated for Video Relay Services in Canada, which was launched in September 2016. As a result of her and her colleagues work, Video Relay Services are now a free service for everyone

(including the hearing population) in Canada, who needs a Sign Language interpreter to communicate on the phone between signers and non-signers. Anyone can make a phone call with an ASL interpreter readily available.

Jodi was recently hired as the first Communications Coordinator for WIDHH in February 2019. In her role, Jodi will utilize her extensive experience in videography to ensure all of WIDHH's communications will be accessible by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This includes having vlogs throughout our website and on our social media messages. With Jodi's help, WIDHH is going to change the landscape and impact of communication accessibility.

## Barrington Harrison, Community Interpreting Services (CIS) Booking Coordinator:

Barrington was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario. As a teen, he was always interested in drama and acting, and enjoyed studying literature. He was also very interested in Sign Language as well.

During high school and after graduation, Barry joined a few talent agencies, and worked as an extra on some very interesting TV shows, including Degrassi: The Next Generation! Barry pursued his interest for Sign Language by enrolling in the ASL and Deaf Studies Program at George Brown College and completed the program in 2011.

# Welcome Our Newest Staff Members *con't*

In 2013, Barrington moved to Winnipeg and lived there for two years. He pursued Deaf Studies at Red River College and worked as an intervenor. After completing the Deaf Studies program, he worked for Deaf Centre Manitoba as a building attendant and for New Directions as a support worker. He worked with people from a variety of different backgrounds, and was able to use Sign Language regularly.

In 2015, Barrington moved to BC and enrolled in the Sign Language Interpretation program at Douglas College. Later in 2017, he decided to take some time off to gain more experiencing using Sign Language and working with the Deaf community.

Barrington has now joined WIDHH as our Community Interpreting Services Booking Coordinator, to cover for a one year maternity leave. He also works part-time as a barista and jack-of-all-trades at Starbucks. He regularly spoils the WIDHH staff with Starbucks treats!

Barrington is friendly, lively and has a big personality. He owns 13 pairs of colourful prescription glasses. He has been a wonderful addition to our Interpreting team!



*Fun Facts about Barrington...*

*Favourite Movie: Freedom Writers, starring Hilary Swank.*

*Favourite Book: The Outsiders, by S.E. Hinton.*

*Favourite Food: He loves all kinds of food, but his absolute favourite is really good Fried Chicken, as well as BBQ and Jerk Chicken!*

*Barrington's Dream Job: Barry is a self-proclaimed dreamer. He loves all kinds of music (indie, underground, chill music, R&B, soul, gospel, etc.); loves to write songs and poetry. He would love to be an ASL interpreter one day in the future and work closely with the Deaf community!*

## Joy Borgonia, Employment Case Manager:

Joy was born and raised in Manila, Philippines. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Polytechnic University of the Philippines. She moved here 20 years ago as an immigrant and is grateful for the life she has today in Canada. She has two “kids” – her daughter is 30 years old, lives in California and works as a nurse. Her son is 23 years old, lives with momma Joy at home and works as a landscaper.



*Fun Facts about Joy...*

*Favourite Movie: Horror (!), thrillers, and all the super hero Marvel movies.*

*Favourite Book: Any type of biography—she particularly enjoyed reading about the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*Favourite Food: An adventurous eater, Joy especially loves Thai food and anything with coconuts.*

*Joy's Dream Job: Working at WIDHH! She is passionate to learn more ASL and continuing to help support our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.*

Prior to joining WIDHH, Joy worked for 15 years in Disability Management. She found her work meaningful, supporting vulnerable persons who have mental and physical challenges. She is so appreciative of her life and good health in Canada, that she wants to give back by helping those less fortunate than her.

We are so fortunate to have Joy as part of our Counselling team. She first joined our team in as a Disability Supports Specialist in September 2018 and then became our permanent Employment Case Manager in February 2019.

Joy has a warm, friendly personality and is a hard-working, dedicated counselor for our clients. In her spare time, Joy loves spending time outdoors,

# Welcome Our Newest Staff Members *con't*

running and hiking. She has completed seven half marathons, including ones in Maui and Washington State. She loves to do fundraising runs that support a variety of causes. Run Joy Run!

Joy's ultimate goal is to complete a full marathon one day, and she's currently in training for it. She hopes to complete a marathon in Canada, US or internationally!

## Grace Straw, Job Developer:

Grace's family is from Terrace, but when her mother was about to give birth, she travelled to Vancouver to deliver at BC Women's Hospital (formerly called Grace Hospital). Grace and her twin brother Jeff were in the spotlight when they were born. A TV station did a feature story of the birth of the twins from Terrace who had travelled all the way to Vancouver to be born. Grace's mother still has the news clip on VHS!

Grace was born profoundly deaf and during her early years in public school, her parents worked hard to seek support for Grace. Terrace did not have a lot of support services for children with hearing loss. Her parents set out to learn ASL, obtained closed captioning for the TV and they were able to find a CODA (Child of a Deaf Adult) fluent in Sign Language to work with Grace when she was in school, since registered interpreters were not available in Terrace at that time. When Grace was 9 years old, she received a Cochlear Implant from BC Children's Hospital and over the years, worked with a speech-language pathologist to strengthen her oral and listening skills.

Growing up, Grace was an accomplished athlete in many sports. She even had the honour playing for Team Canada's basketball team for the Canadian Deaf Sports Association at the Pan American Games held at Gallaudet University 2006. After high school, Grace studied at Coast Mountain College in Terrace and later relocated to Vancouver where she finished her studies at Simon Fraser University (SFU). In December 2018, she graduated from SFU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. She is now currently working towards completing SFU's Human Resources Management Certificate.

Given her strong parental role models, Grace has also become a tireless advocate for communication accessibility in all aspects of her life. As a student at Coast Mountain College, Grace wrote letters and met with the College President, to successfully advocate for an increase in the College's accessibility services, which benefited all students with disabilities attending Coast Mountain College.



*Fun Facts about Grace...*

*Grace lives with her twin brother in Vancouver. She is older than him by several minutes.*

*Favourite Book is Viktor Frankl's "Man's Search for Meaning".*

*Favorite Snack: Peanut M&Ms.*

*Grace's Dream Job: To continue her advocacy work for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and to provide them with the opportunities she did not have growing up.*

Grace has also written letters to government and various organizations asking them to consider improving their contact access to more than just a voice phone number. She has also encouraged the provision of email, text and the use of interpreters or CART services for appointments and meetings.

In April 2019, Grace joined the WIDHH Counselling department as a Job Developer. Grace's personal experiences with hearing loss and successful self-advocacy have been another amazing addition to our team.



# Tax Night Success and Appreciation

On Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the WIDHH Interpreting Department organized and provided the annual free Income Tax Night for Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing individuals and families who are on a low or fixed income. We were able to help 62 individuals and families file their taxes with a qualified accountant and ASL Interpreter.

This service would not have been a success without the volunteer accountants Maggie, Pamela, Navneet, Yuki, Alnoor, Tetiana and Vivean; along with WIDHH staff who helped make this annual event happen Barrington, Jacky, Vanessa, Michelle, Tim and Ruth.

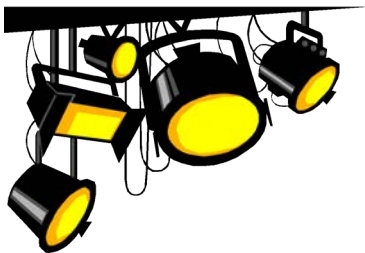
Clients were able to fully access tax information with the assistance of seven ASL Interpreters and two Deaf Interpreters. The clients were so happy to be here; so many of them are grateful for this wonderful service that WIDHH provides.

After speaking with some of the accountants and interpreters, many expressed their pleasure in being able to give back to the community. Staff from the CRA were also here helping the accountants, and they were so impressed by the community spirit throughout the evening.

We would like to extend a big thank you to the volunteer accountants the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), for giving their time and expertise at our annual event.



## Call for Videography Volunteers!



The Communications & Marketing Department at WIDHH is planning several exciting film productions this year.

We're looking for brave Deaf and Hard of Hearing volunteers who are willing to be in front of a camera! We need actors/models to work with us in producing several video clips and photographs.

If acting is not your thing but you would still like to share your own success stories that WIDHH has been a part of, please do let us know! We love happy endings!

We **WELCOME** everyone of all ages, genders, races, religions, abilities, etc.

E-mail your interest with the subject "Videography Interest" to [communications@widhh.com](mailto:communications@widhh.com).

# Support Groups & Services

## Head Office (at Arbutus)

2125 West 7th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6K 1X9  
604-736-7391 .....phone  
604-736-2527 .....tty  
604-736-4381 .....fax  
[info@widhh.com](mailto:info@widhh.com) .....e-mail

## Willow Office (at Broadway)

#514 - 2525 Willow Street  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 3N8  
778-329-0870 .....phone  
778-329-0874 .....tty  
778-329-0875 .....fax  
[willowinfo@widhh.com](mailto:willowinfo@widhh.com) .....e-mail

## Tri-Cities Office (at Westwood)

#210 - 2755 Lougheed Highway  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3B 5Y9  
604-942-7397 .....phone  
604-942-7380 .....tty  
604-942-7395 .....fax  
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to submit an article.*

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Charitable Registration Number:  
108200098RR0001

### Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) - Vancouver Branch

A consumer-based organization formed by and for hard of hearing Canadians. CHHA's goal is to increase public awareness of hearing loss and to help Canadians with hearing loss fully integrate into Canadian society.

[chhavancouver@gmail.com](mailto:chhavancouver@gmail.com)      [www.chhavancouver.ca](http://www.chhavancouver.ca)

### Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf (GVAD)

A consumer-advocate group on behalf of the Deaf Community.

[gvadoffice@gmail.com](mailto:gvadoffice@gmail.com)      [www.deafbc.ca](http://www.deafbc.ca)

### Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) - BC Chapter

A consumers' organization for the hard of hearing, with national, regional and provincial structures dedicated to the assistance of hard of hearing Canadians.

[info@chha-bc.org](mailto:info@chha-bc.org)      [www.chha-bc.org](http://www.chha-bc.org)

### Family Network for Deaf Children (FNDC)

A parent run, non-profit, charitable organization supporting families with deaf and hard of hearing children & youth that use sign language or are interested in learning Sign Language.

[fndc@fndc.ca](mailto:fndc@fndc.ca)      [www.fndc.ca](http://www.fndc.ca)

### BC Balance and Dizziness Disorders Society (BADD)

To support, inspire and educate those affected by balance and dizziness disorders.

[info@balanceanddizziness.org](mailto:info@balanceanddizziness.org)      [www.balanceanddizziness.org](http://www.balanceanddizziness.org)



*We proudly acknowledge financial assistance from the Province of British Columbia.*





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www.widhh.com

Make a Difference in Your Community!

Since 1956, the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH) has been passionately committed to addressing concerns about accessibility and quality of life for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in BC.

Make a one-time donation or a monthly donation to support vital programs in our community. Your gift will allow Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals to access WIDHH's services in Audiology, Counselling, Interpreting, and Communication Devices.

YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT WIDHH!

- Donation options: \$50 per month, \$20 per month, \$10 per month, Other monthly amount, One-Time Donation of \$100, \$50, \$20, or Other one-time amount.

All donations over \$20 will automatically receive a charitable tax receipt.

Individual Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Donor Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/TTY: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer: [ ] A printed newsletter mailed to my address above [ ] An e-newsletter sent to my email inbox above

Payment Method

[ ] My cheque is enclosed (payable to "WIDHH")

[ ] Credit Card: [ ] Visa [ ] MasterCard

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVD: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card (if different than above): \_\_\_\_\_

What day of the month should we process your donation? \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I am giving my consent for WIDHH to make pre-authorized withdrawals (if I am a monthly donor) from my account or credit card. I may revoke my authorization at any time, subject to providing notice of 30 days.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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Become a Member Today!

Since 1956, the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH) has been passionately committed to addressing concerns about accessibility and quality of life for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in BC. WIDHH was created by community members to address their needs. Become a Member today and help us grow! Benefits of membership include our quarterly newsletter, member prices for workshops, voting privileges at our annual meetings, and more.

YES! I WANT TO BECOME A WIDHH MEMBER.

Input fields for \$100 Lifetime Membership and \$15 Annual Membership\* with checkboxes.

Individual Name: [input field]

Address: [input field] City: [input field] Postal Code: [input field]

Phone/TTY: [input field] E-mail: [input field]

I prefer: [checkbox] A printed newsletter mailed to my address above [checkbox] An e-newsletter sent to my email inbox above

Payment Method

My cheque is enclosed (payable to "WIDHH") [checkbox] Visa [checkbox] MasterCard [checkbox]

Credit Card #: [input field] Expiry Date: [input field] / [input field] CVD: [input field]

Name on Card (if different than above): [input field]

Signature: [input field] Date: [input field]

Membership Eligibility

In accordance with the requirements of the Bylaws and the Society Act a person may be eligible to be accepted as a Member if they are:

- 1. nineteen (19) years of age or older [checkbox] Yes [checkbox] No
2. is ordinarily a resident in British Columbia; and [checkbox] Yes [checkbox] No
3. is interested in advancing the purposes and supporting the activities of the Society. [checkbox] Yes [checkbox] No

\* Annual Members can join anytime (except 30 days prior to an AGM) and will expire 31 days after the next Annual General Meeting (AGM).