



# WASLI Newsletter

WASLI is committed to the advancement of sign language interpreting world wide

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### JAPAN – WASLI VISIT

The WASLI Secretary visited Japan in February and was welcomed by Emiko Ichikawa (WASLI Regional Representative for Asia) and Ito Tadashi (Former WASLI Working Group member and now co-optee on the Board).

The National Research Association for Sign Language Interpretation organised a morning for a presentation on WASLI with a focus on what Japan could do to assist WASLI. This took place in their building at Saga-Arashiyama near Kyoto. Then there was a lunch followed by a meeting and interview with the Japanese Deaf Federation. The interview was published in their quarterly magazine.

The WASLI Secretary would like to thank NRASLI for their kind hospitality.

### MALAYSIA – WASLI VISIT

Thursday March 23, 2006

Speaking up for the deaf - By ANTHONY THANASAYAN

A few of you have written in to enquire about sign language recently. You were fascinated with this powerful means that the deaf use to communicate with each other.

Last week, I spoke to Lucy Lim, Assistant Manager of Majudiri Y Foundation for the Deaf in Kuala Lumpur, and asked her to tell me more about the special language used by the hearing impaired. "When we think about the deaf, we sometimes forget about their indispensable partners like Sign Language Interpreters (SLI) who play an important role in enhancing the quality of their lives and speaking up for them," says Lim, who is a professional SLI with more than 20 years of experience.

"Just like the physically disabled or the blind, the deaf also need a special 'companion' to help them lead independent lives. For the deaf community, the SLI's empower them to access information and give them the freedom to participate in the hearing world.

Lim relates a historic conference she attended last year – the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) that was held in Worcester, South Africa. "It was the first-ever conference for SLI's and it was held from Oct 31 to Nov 2," says Lim. "The conference, which took years in the making, is a significant development for all SLI's as it underscores the integral role that we play in the lives of the deaf."

Lim said as many as 250 SLI's from 40 countries had converged at Worcester. The highlight of the conference was the WASLI Worcester Declaration, which the members adopted. Among other things, the declaration (dated Nov 2, 2005) was drawn up to ratify the existence of WASLI and to work towards the establishment of SLI associations in countries where currently none exist.

The Worcester Declaration aims to foster partnerships with associations of deaf people, encourage the development of Sign Language Interpreting as a profession, and collaborate with developing nations to provide training for interpreters.

Another goal of the declaration is to get SLI's worldwide to exchange ideas and experiences with one another through conferences.

Malaysia was represented by the Majudiri Y Foundation, and SLIs from the Society of Interpreters for the Deaf, Selangor & the Federal Territory, and the Malaysian Federation of the Deaf.

"Following the conference, Zane Hema (a British Sign Language/English Sign Language Interpreter and the newly-elected Secretary of WASLI) visited Majudiri Y Foundation last week as part of his Asian tour," says Lim. "Hema touched base with our local SLI's and got a first-hand look at their work." During Hema's four-day visit, he conducted a workshop on skills development for SLI's which was attended by 30 interpreters & sign language students.

Lim describes the WASLI conference as an eye-opening experience.

"Not only were the presenters all very skilled in their delivery, it was uplifting for me to see a number of deaf interpreters in the profession. Many of the experiences faced by deaf interpreters were also similar to the ones faced by other SLI's. "Although Malaysia has yet to establish a national body of SLIs, we hope that this will be possible in the near future," Lim adds.

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The WASLI Secretary would like to thank Lucy, Rose and Agnes for their kind hospitality.

## **KOSOVO – INTERPRETER TRAINING**

Susan Emerson writes from Kosovo to tell us that she and Selman Hoti are starting to teach an 'advanced' interpreter training programme, which will consist of 7 modules taught over weekends over a 7 month period. The Kosovo Association of Sign Language Interpreters (KASLI) is in the process of being established. WASLI wishes them well.

## **TRANSCAUCASIA & CENTRAL ASIA – INTERPRETER TRAINING**

In December 2005, Anna Komarova, (WASLI Board member and regional representative for Transcaucasia and Central Asia), was joined by WASLI President Liz Scott Gibson, and former working group member Raili Ojala, to provide an intensive course of training for interpreter trainers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Colleagues from Lithuania, Ukraine and Moscow also joined the group. This work is supported by the Finnish Association of the Deaf and has been in progress for some years.

## **WALES – FUNDING FOR INTERPRETER TRAINING**

£2.7 million pounds is being made by the European Union and the Welsh Assembly Government to train 36 'apprentice' interpreters, and to help develop a postgraduate BSL/English interpreter-training course.

## **UGANDA**

The Uganda National Association for the Deaf (UNAD) has protested the failure by the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation TV to provide for a sign language interpreter during its news bulletins.

UNAD director Alex Ndeezi yesterday said since its inception, UBC-TV had denied the deaf important information in news that used to be provided by the defunct Uganda Television (UTV). Ndeezi said the absence of sign interpreters at UBC-TV and other public places such as courts, hospitals and

schools was a gross violation of their human rights. Ndeezi was yesterday addressing a press conference at the UNAD offices in Kamwokya, Kampala.

Information state minister Dr. Nsaba Buturo yesterday said he had written to the UBC-TV managing director to rectify the problem. "I met Ndeezi last week over that matter. I have written to the MD of UBC-TV. I also told Ndeezi to continue monitoring and report back to me if the problem persists," Buturo said on phone.

Ndeezi said some deaf people were languishing in jail without knowing why they were there. "They are sentenced without being availed sign interpreters to tell them about their purported crimes. They are not given a chance to defend themselves," Ndeezi said.

He cited an incident where UNAD offered a sign language interpreter to a suspect who was committed to the High Court on defilement charges but the offer was ignored. Ndeezi appealed to the government to operationalise the constitutional provisions on sign language.

**By Charles Ariko**

## THE PHILIPPINES – 11 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS GET THE FIRST GOLDEN HANDS AWARDS

If not for sign language interpreters, who are few and far between, people with hearing impairment would not have been able to have a voice.

"Sign language uses hands (but) it touches the heart," was how 43-year old May Gasataya-Andrada of Park Avenue, Pasay City described her vocation as an interpreter. "We bridge the world of silence and the world of sound. We are able to help the deaf people express themselves and to fight for their rights," she told **The STAR**.

Andrada, cannot explain the happiness and satisfaction she feels every time she uses sign language to give voice to a hearing-impaired person. "It was very heart-warming to see the deaf being understood because of us. We give them voice but they give us their heart," she said.

Andrada explained that that the deaf are not necessarily mute. But because of their hearing-impairment, they are not able to learn how to talk. Andrada is one of the 11 interpreters given the "First Golden Hands Award" by the non-government organization Philippine Association of Interpreters for Deaf Empowerment (PAIDE) Saturday night at the Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan.

Andrada has been a sign language interpreter for over 15 years. She currently serves as head of the Student Services Administration and college accreditation program registrar of the College Foundation, Inc.

Other awardees are Teresita Diaz-Almayda, Antonia Benlayo-Blanca, Ma. Teresa Balido Buenaventura, Joy Lanon Cristal, Dolores Vince Cruz-dela Cruz, Beatriz Osorio-Go, Carmen Villilon-Rieza, Rebecca Martinez-Santos and PAIDE chief executive officer, Alfredo Celada, Jr., a surprise awardee.

According to Celada, PAIDE decided to give recognition to interpreters "who have given the prime of their lives to the service of the deaf." "Without them, nobody would give voice to the deaf. They relay the messages of these people to the hearing world," he said.

Celada added that to become an interpreter, "one must have a keen interest in sign language, having in mind the goal to serve the deaf with much patience, dedication, commitment and open-mindedness."

Celada has interpreted for various prominent people, including the late Pope John Paul II when the World Youth Day celebration was held in the Philippines in January 1995.

As for Almayda, it was a fifth-grade female student at the Bicol School of Good Samaritan for the Deaf in Camarines Sur who brought her into the world of the deaf. "She became a challenge to me. She motivated me to study sign language and if not for her, I wouldn't be able to discover this tough but noble profession," she said.

Almayda recalled that sometime in 1984, she met the student when she substituted for another teacher. As a school nutritionist then, it was her duty to prepare a meal plan for the school. "She tried to communicate with me. But because my knowledge of sign language was very limited then, I could not understand her. I was just smiling at her." She said.

The girl signaled to her classmates and left. Almayda learned that the student said she was “stupid.” Hurt and challenged, Almayda enrolled in the free training being offered by the Philippine registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and became a registered interpreter in 1987.

She now teaches at the Legaspi City Division Special Education Center in Albay and acts as legal , religious and medical interpreter. Almayda’s most unforgettable experience as a legal interpreter was when she interpreted for a 15-year old girl who was raped by her stepfather in Bicol.

“The girl was unschooled. She didn’t know how to (use) sign language so I really (had) a difficult time interpreting for her,” she said. Instead, the girl was made to draw the ordeal she went through at the hands of her stepfather during court hearings. It came to a point when the victim had to re-enact the rape, with Almayda acting as her attacker. “So we lay down on the floor and re-enacted the rape. I was wearing white pants then so when I got home, I was so dirty... But it was all worth it. The girl was given justice and I was very happy for her,” she said.

Almayd said that being an interpreter is not easy and comes with its share of responsibility. “We are not allowed to counsel or advise and we cannot interject our personal opinion. We are there only to make the deaf people heard,” she said.

*FROM THE PHILIPPINE STAR - VOL. XX NO. 256 \* MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006, By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO*

## USA - DEAF PATIENTS HAVE RIGHTS DURING DOCTOR VISITS

The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates a health care professional to provide and pay for a sign language interpreter for Deaf patients

[http://www.tcpalm.com/tcp/health/article/0,2821,TCP\\_24452\\_4627974,00.html](http://www.tcpalm.com/tcp/health/article/0,2821,TCP_24452_4627974,00.html)

## SUPPORTING DEAF PEOPLE ON LINE CONFERENCE 2006 – ‘DEAFHOOD/ DEAFNICITY AND INTERPRETING’

Registration for the fourth in the highly successful series of Supporting Deaf People online conferences is now open. The conference will take place on 6th - 9th November 2006.

Speakers confirmed to date are:

- Paddy Ladd on “Deafhood”
- Richard Brumberg on Giving Voice: “Sign to Voice Interpreting for Deaf Students in Public School Settings”
- Sue Adams on “Hearing children of Deaf Adults (Codas) - A Question of Identity”
- Ruth Campbell on “Imaging the Deaf Brain”
- Maartje De Meulder on “Deaf professionals and the Deaf community - the refinement of the subaltern concept”
- Jules Dickinson on “Interpreting in the workplace - a collaborative approach?”
- Nigel Howard and Liz Scully on “An Exploration of Deaf and non-Deaf Sign Language Interpreters within the Concepts of non-Deaf and Deaf Space”
- Maria Mertzani on “Deaf in Cyberspace”
- Jemina Napier, Andy Carmichael & Andrew Wiltshire on “Mutual support between deaf professionals and interpreters: A case study”
- Jemina Napier on “I like it/him/her because...”: An exploration of practitioner and consumer attitudes towards signed language interpreting in the community”

•Hend Al-Showaier on “The Social Life of Saudi Deaf People”

We are committed to providing high quality staff development opportunities that freelancers and sessional staff can afford. Places are available at the early bird price UK £45 until the 31st of August. After

this time, the conference price will be £55.

Online conferences are easy to use, people can participate flexibly and the information is available to delegates for a month after the end of the conference. To see more information, abstracts, presenter bios, register, etc. please see <http://www.online-conference.net/sdp2006/introduction.htm>

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<http://www.online-conference.net> : online conferencing

<http://www.directlearn.co.uk/> : general information

## NEXT EDITION: More news and information from WASLI

If you have any news or information that you would like to include then please send your contribution to the WASLI Secretary at the email address below.

### The WASLI Executive Board & Co-optees (2005)

[secretary@wasli.org](mailto:secretary@wasli.org)

**Officers:** President: Liz Scott Gibson (Scotland) - Vice President - Philemon Akach (South Africa) - Secretary - Zane Hema (England) - Treasurer - Liz Scully (Canada)

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