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... And more

## No Longer a Stranger in a Strange Land: Saad Al Nassery

Almost every morning for a year, or more, when I arrive at DEAF, Inc. I see a man working diligently outside the building. He is often sweeping the walkway to our front door, attending our meager flower garden and shrubs, and picking up trash that blows down the street and settles outside. It gives me a little boost to see our offices being spruced up.

Who *is* this friendly, hardworking man, who this year was voted DEAF, Inc.'s 2009 Male Consumer of the Year? So I asked if I could interview him, to get to know him myself and introduce him to the wider community.

We talked recently, with the help of a Certified Deaf Interpreter and an American Sign Language / English interpreter.

### Tell me a little about yourself ?

I was born in Iraq and came to America in August, 1997. I moved with a friend of mine, as a refugee. I didn't have good housing or a job in Iraq. No education. And it wasn't safe. I always liked America. I am very happy I came here. Here I have better housing, more food to eat. Here, I was able to find work. It's hard to find work in Iraq. There are books here; there weren't any in Iraq.

### Is your family here with you?

I'm here alone. The friend I came with lives in NYC now. My family stayed in Iraq. They want to be in Iraq. My family is Hearing. I have 5 brothers and sisters, parents, grandparents and relatives.

### When did you first come to DEAF, Inc.?

When I came here, Catholic Charities helped set up my immigration status and got me in touch with DEAF, Inc.

### What kinds of things did you first do at DEAF, Inc.?

When I first came here, I worked with



Independent Living Specialists to start learning American Sign Language. The IL Specialist also helped me learn how to use money. I never had any money in Iraq. She helped me learn about American money and how to use it. She helped me get health insurance and social security, and how to get around using public transportation.

Then, in 2004, [the agency that helped me with my immigration status] lost my paperwork. I lost my immigration status – my status as a refugee. I wasn't legal anymore. And because of the immigration issues, I stopped getting Social Security Income. DEAF, Inc. and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) worked with me to get my status corrected. In spring 2009, I finally was legal again and I got a green card.

DEAF, Inc. helped me get my legal status reinstated and get benefits for food, find a job and other things that I needed to live while getting my legal status reinstated. Now I am working on

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DEAF, Inc. Newsletter

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Comments, questions, articles, photography and artwork are welcome.

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[www.deafinonline.org](http://www.deafinonline.org)

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Dear Friends,

2009 has been a very full year at DEAF, Inc. I am happy to report some exciting new programs and expansions of services. I also want to thank you for your continued support of DEAF, Inc.

As you probably know by now, the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing chose DEAF, Inc. to serve 3 of the 5 newly-defined independent living regions in the state. We are providing Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services (DHILS) in the Northeast, Greater Boston and Southeast, including the Cape and Islands. To ensure the best services are available, we are collaborating with Northeast Independent Living Program (NILP) in Lawrence, the Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled (CORD) in Hyannis, and other familiar Deaf services providers.

We have expanded services to Deaf seniors and to Deaf youth. We are working with the state and other providers to ensure that Deaf people and their families have access to health insurance and health care. We have trained 9 additional providers to work with DeafBlind adults from Boston to Berkshires.

Fiscally, like many nonprofits and others, DEAF, Inc. had to make changes to continue providing quality services. We remain fiscally sound. Funding issues required us to postpone plans to redesign and reopen adult education services but we have expanded our community health education and are introducing general educational and leadership programming for Deaf youths.

On the Internet, we launched new health educational and independent living video logs (*vlogs*) on our website, [www.deafinonline.org](http://www.deafinonline.org). And now you can visit DEAF, Inc.'s new FaceBook page. We encourage you to become a fan!

Our goals for 2010 have been to expand our funding base for Deaf-accessible independent living, health education and support, and DeafBlind services; to redesign and reopen adult education for Deaf adults and expand youth opportunities; to expand health education and support services, including for Deaf seniors and youth; and to ensure that our community has access to emergency interpreting services in hospitals throughout the state. We also want to make it easier for our friends to participate in supporting all these services and keeping Deaf-accessible services available. We added a Donate button to our website and plan to redesign the website to be more interesting, informative, interactive, and attractive.

We are expanding our Board of Directors and are seeking highly motivated people to join the Board. Visit our website for more information.

We look forward with enthusiasm to the opportunities 2010 offers, even with the ongoing impact of the economic challenges. We want to keep in closer contact with our friends, like you.

Best wishes and peace from all of us at DEAF, Inc.

Sharon L. Applegate,  
Executive Director

## New Staff Joins DEAF, Inc.

### *Jill Hatcher*

In April, Jill joined the Project Hope team as the Program Manager, replacing Hannah Lewis who left to continue her studies at Gallaudet University. Jill grew up in Massachusetts and was born Deaf. She graduated from RIT in 2008 with a Master's in public policy. Jill wants Project Hope to be better known in the community of Deaf professionals and among medical organizations. Jill was recently the Mistress of Ceremonies at DEAF Inc.'s Second Annual Fall Fundraiser.



### *Dru Carver-Brown*

Dru is a case manager for Project Hope. She is currently working on her MA in Clinical Psychology at Bridgewater State College. Dru obtained her BA in Psychology at Gallaudet University. In her spare time, Dru loves to cook. She grows some of her ingredients in her own garden. Dru also enjoys practicing yoga, reading, writing, and watching movies.



### *Judy Foley*

Judy is the new Independent Living Assistant Director. She is a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) and before coming to DEAF Inc., Judy, who is an experienced manager in business.



### *Tabitha Patrician*

Tabitha is a part-time Independent Living Specialist. For the past few years, she has worked with Advocates, Inc. Tabitha also has experience working at group homes. She enjoys with new consumers and looking forward to having new experiences at DEAF Inc. She feels that moving to DEAF Inc. will be a great place for her to continue to grow.



### *Gynger Minchew*

Gynger is new Program Admin Assistant; she is working for all IL including regional offices. On Tuesdays she is working with DBCAN as an assistant. She is a graduate of NU, and is interested in becoming an interpreter. She has volunteered for the agency for a while, with DBCAN and DBCC.



## Thanks to Our Generous FY2009 - FY2010 Supporters

We wish to thank the following foundation, corporate and other funders for their generous support of DEAF, Inc.: Allston/Brighton-Boston College Community Fund, The Boston Comm. On Affairs of the Elderly, The Boston Evening Clinic, Bank of NY Mellon Charitable Giving Program, Arthur F. Blanchard Trust, The Boston Foundation, Boston Private Bank, Boston Public Health Commission, Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund, Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, Clipper Ship Foundation, Community Development Block Grant/EDIC, First Literacy Fund, Genzyme Corporation, MAC AIDS Fund, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, McCarthy Family Foundation, Rantoul Foundation, Tufts Health Plan Foundation, and all the generous individuals, friends, and donors of DEAF, Inc. Special thanks to Michael Gardener, Esq. and the law firm of Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C. for their support.

### **Support DEAF, Inc. and Deaf-Accessible Services**

Your gift can empower Deaf youth, adults and seniors. Please consider mailing a check to "DEAF, Inc." 215 Brighton Ave., Allston MA 02134. Do it today!

## DEAF, Inc. Fall Fundraiser and Spring Casino Night: Everyone Wins!

### *2nd Annual Fall Fund-raiser: A Deaf Cultural Event*

DEAF, Inc.'s 2nd Annual Fall Fund-raiser, held on October 16<sup>th</sup> at the Jackson Mann Community Center in Allston, was a great success! People enjoyed socializing, three captivating presentations, a silent auction and raffle, and refreshments.

Harlan Lane, author and professor at Northeastern University, spoke about Deaf culture and made the case that Deaf people meet the definition of a special ethnic group. This idea of ethnic identification could help Deaf people advocate for special accommodation.

Antoinette "Vic" Crosta delighted the audience with her Deaf-identified anecdotes and jokes. Vic finished her performance with her unique brand of "Deaf Rap," titled "It's Cool to be Deaf."

Jagannath "JAG" Einhorn, our featured performer, is a nationally-known DeafBlind humorist and storyteller. JAG began his performance by introducing his sidekick, Zeus, who is also his cane.

The silent auction featured a variety of donated prizes ranging from a week at a time-share in Florida to a gift certificate to Friendly's. This year's event was sponsored, in part, by Sprint, Purple, Sorenson Communications, with additional support from MCDHH and individual interpreters and community members who donated their time and talents. The Annual Fall Fundraiser supports DEAF, Inc.'s Deaf accessible services and programs.

On Saturday, May 1st, Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened players and their friends as-



sembled to try their luck against Lady Luck at DEAF, Inc.'s Spring Casino Night. The fundraiser, organized by DEAF, Inc.'s Board of Directors, was hosted in Boston's South End. Many thanks go out to City Year, for their generous donation of space for our Casino Night. A variety of finger foods and delicious desserts were served, a long with beverages and wine and beer for sale.

The night's biggest winner won a seat at this year's National Deaf Poker Tour in Las Vegas. The runner up won a gift certificate to the Capital Grille, Boston.

Thanks go out to the many fine local businesses and individuals who provided food, support, and gifts for the nights big winners: City Year, for donating the space; Trader Joe's, National Deaf Poker Tour, Capital Grille, Ellen Brudnick-Gross, Happy Knights, and the members of DEAF, Inc.'s Board of Directors.

**Watch for Information on DEAF, Inc.'s Upcoming, All NEW! 3rd Annual Fall Fundraiser in October.** Plans for the 3rd Annual Fall Fundraiser are underway — a film event. Details will be announced soon!

### **Announcing Youth Training and Leadership at DEAF, Inc. Boston**

In January, 2010, DEAF, Inc. began offering a new program providing academic and job-readiness skills for Deaf and Hard of Hearing teens and young adults (14 to 21). Young men and women living in the City of Boston will develop reading, math, and other academic skills, as well as job and independent living skills to help them prepare for real work and real life in the real world.

Afternoons from 4-6, students at DEAF, Inc.

For information on this program, contact DEAF, Inc. at [jfoley@deafinonline.org](mailto:jfoley@deafinonline.org).

This program is funded in part by stimulus funding from the City of Boston EDIC and JCS.

## Healthy Cooking Class Makes Homemade Pizza



While preparing pizza crusts for the cooking class, Albert demonstrates safe cooking habits by using pot-holders for hot pans.



Ricardo takes a turn cooking the chicken until it is crisp for the Crispy Chicken Pizza recipe.

For the recipes, contact Bethany Bertrand, [bbertrand@deafinonline.org](mailto:bbertrand@deafinonline.org). For future classes, go to our website, [www.deafinonline.org](http://www.deafinonline.org), and select Calendar.

**Visit DEAF, Inc. on FaceBook!**

### Learn CPR at DEAF, Inc. and Save a Life

Do you know what to do if someone has a heart attack? Or chokes on a piece of food? or gets a serious cut?

**You can learn to save a life!**

**ASL CPR/First Aid certification class**  
*Certification good for 1 year*

To learn more or to register, contact Project HOPE Program Manager, Jill Hatcher at [jhatcher@deafinonline.org](mailto:jhatcher@deafinonline.org).



Project HOPE's Bethany Bertrand shows Dru Carver-Brown the correct hand position for CPR.

### Deaf Diabetes Support Group

Do you have Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes and want to learn more about your Diabetes?

Want to meet other people with Diabetes?

Join DEAF, Inc.'s Deaf Diabetes Group  
2 Tuesdays a month at DEAF, Inc.

Contact Bethany Bertrand at  
[bbertrand@deafinonline.org](mailto:bbertrand@deafinonline.org)  
617-254-4041(TTY/V) or  
617-254-7091(fax)

## 21st Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner

In November, DEAF, Inc. hosted its 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Deaf Community Thanksgiving Dinner at Sacred Heart Parish Church in Newton, MA. Roughly 175 people attended and enjoyed a delicious and healthy Thanksgiving dinner presented with nutritional information. DEAF, Inc.'s consumer chefs, Kevin Wilson (Head Chef), Angel Pinero (Chef) and Frank Zavaglia (Chef), with help from DEAF, Inc. staff and volunteers.

A traditional part of DEAF, Inc.'s Thanksgiving event is the annual awards for Consumer of the Year, Staff of the Year, and Volunteer of the Year. This year, Saad Al-Nassery was honored as Male Consumer of the Year, Damaris Ortega was honored as Female Consumer of the Year, and Amber Campbell was awarded our first Honorary Mention Consumer of the Year for the energy she devoted to educating the community about the need for Deaf-accessible Adult Education in Greater Boston. Bethany Bertrand was honored as Employee of the Year for all her hard work on consumer health education, including workshops, exercise classes, cooking classes, and outreach to the Deaf senior community. Andrew (Drew) Pidkameny was honored as Volunteer of the Year. Congratulations to the 2009 award winners!

This year's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Deaf Community Thanksgiving Dinner was sponsored by the Stop & Shop Corporation and the Massachusetts Association of the Deaf (MSAD). DEAF, Inc. consumers, staff, volunteers and Board of Directors extend a special thank-you to the sponsors and to all the volunteers, SSPs and interpreters and staff who worked tirelessly to make this annual event an annual success.



Left to right: Chef Frank Zavaglia, Head Chef Kevin Wilson; Sharon Applegate, Executive Director, and Chef Angel Pinero take a break for the camera .



2009 Annual Award Winners with Sharon Applegate: (left to right) Saad Al-Nassery, Damaris Ortega, each Consumer of the Year, and Bethany Bertrand, Employee of the Year. Not shown: Drew Pidkameny (Volunteer of the Year) and Amber Campbell, who recently moved out of town (Consumer of the Year -- Honorable Mention).

## MCDHH Awards DEAF, Inc. 3 of 5 DHILS Areas

DEAF, Inc is honored to announce that the MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing awarded us 3 of the 5 DHILS Regions: Metro Boston, Northeast; Southeast, Cape and the Islands. New services include emergency preparedness trainings, youth leadership, and youth transition. DEAF, Inc. is proud to include regional independent living centers, including the Northeast Independent Living Program (NILP) and Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled (CORD), to ensure the best quality services are available throughout eastern Massachusetts. Contact DEAF, Inc. for information.

*Continued from page 1. Saad Al Nassery*  
getting my US citizenship. Soon I will fill out an application for citizenship; an IL Specialist from DEAF, Inc. is helping me with that, and will help me fill in the forms.

In 2005, I started looking for a dentist. A DEAF, Inc. IL Specialist helped me get an appointment with a dentist. I needed to see a dentist, and I'd tried for a long time, but it was difficult getting an interpreter. At the dentists office, I'd sit and wait for an interpreter, but there never was any. DEAF, Inc. helped me get to the dentist and get care. They helped with communication access and explained what I needed to know about the work with the dentist.

Then in May of this year (2009), I got sick and lost a lot of weight. I had to go to the hospital. I was there for many weeks -- a few months. People from [DEAF, Inc.'s] Project HOPE and IL helped me. The IL Specialists have helped me get Mass Health and advocated for me for interpreters. [Project HOPE Health Specialists] came to the hospital and helped me understand what was happening with my health. They explained to me about the tests that the hospital was giving me, and they helped me understand the information from the doctors. Now my health is back on track.

Project HOPE Health Specialists help me understand letters that I receive from the hospital and insurance. I have trouble reading. They help me understand what is going on and they advocate for me for communication access when I need to go to the doctor. With an advocate, the process is much easier.

I don't have any family here. So, when I went to the hospital, I had no one to turn to. DEAF, Inc. is my family here. When I was in the hospital, DEAF, Inc. helped me get through the hospital experience and they made sure I didn't lose my apartment or my job or anything. Everything was still in place when I got out.

#### **What is your job?**

I have two jobs. I work at DEAF, Inc. in the mornings, cleaning up outside. I pick up the trash, sweep outside, keep the shrub and the flowers looking nice, in bad weather I shovel the snow away and put salt down. In the afternoons, I work at Work, Inc. in Quincy. I pack things for different kinds of shipping.

#### **What goals are you working on now at DEAF, Inc.?**

I want to save money from my two jobs so I can

go back and visit Iraq. I want to see my family. And I want to marry my girlfriend. She still lives in Iraq.

I want to get my US Citizenship and then go back to Iraq and marry my girlfriend and bring her back to the US with me. And now with the war, it is very difficult. She is a seamstress, so she can have a good job. When she comes here, I'll bring her here, to DEAF, Inc.

#### **You were voted DEAF, Inc.'s Male Consumer of the Year, 2009. How does that feel?**

I am very proud. Very happy and very proud. I have been coming to DEAF, Inc. for a long time, getting the services I need. I've been working a lot with DEAF, Inc. to get the things I need, to make phone calls, read and understand mail, to learn how to use the money I earn now to buy things I need. I come almost every day.

IL helped me learn so I could buy better clothes. I didn't have a jacket or a hat. I was very cold and uncomfortable. Now I have a good jacket and a hat. I wore dirty old clothes. Now I have good clothes to wear. I've learned how to cook for myself. I have enough money to ride the T -- at first, I didn't even have enough money to ride public transportation to work.

Project HOPE helps me understand my medicines and helps me with medical needs, dental and doctor visits, communication access, so I can understand what I need to stay healthy.

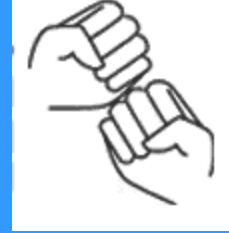
#### **Do you have any advice for other consumers or other Deaf people?**

They should come here, to DEAF, Inc. It will help them to gain independent living skills and understand life in America. They could understand what's really happening and what's going on so they can be more independent.

### **New Bedford Offers ASL Classes**

For information on classes and  
registration, contact  
Judy Foley [jfoley@deafinonline.org](mailto:jfoley@deafinonline.org)

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DEAF, Inc.  
&  
Deaf-accessible  
services  
available**



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