



Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept 18, 2017

International Week of the Deaf- Full Inclusion with Sign Language! September 18 – 24, 2017

The Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC), the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD), Association québécoise des interprètes en langues des signes (AQILS) and the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) are jointly pleased to endorse activities promoting the **International Week of the Deaf, September 18 – 24, 2017** for these events across Canada that will strive to promote the rights of Deaf people and highlight human rights issues on Sign languages and accessibility.

The International Week of the Deaf is an initiative of the World Federation of the Deaf, and it has been celebrated since 1958. More than 130 countries around the world will organize events, marches, debates, and campaigns to highlight the concerns of the Deaf community and draws the attention of the general public to the achievements of Deaf people. This year's theme is **"Full Inclusion with Sign Language!"**

The World Federation of the Deaf has identified key messages to raise awareness about the Deaf Community on different levels around the world including Birth Right; Deaf Identity; Accessibility; Equal Language; Equal Employment Opportunities; Bilingual Education; Equal Participation and Life Long Learning. These key messages reflect human rights for Deaf people as documented throughout the United Nations 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which mentions Sign language seven times in five different articles of the Convention.

For a full account of the key messages from the World Federation of the Deaf, please visit:
<https://wfdeaf.org/iwd2017-full-inclusion-with-sign-language/>

In response to this year's theme, the Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) has identified Campaign Key Messages that will promote human rights of Deaf people in Canada. CAD-ASC appeals to the Government of Canada to introduce federal accessibility legislation to recognize our two national Sign languages -- American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ), which corresponds to the Article 21 of the CRPD that ensures the rights to Sign language recognition. It will demonstrate values of the cultural and linguistic identity of Deaf Canadians as we integrate into both English and French societies. Such recognition ensures the removal of barriers and ensuring equal access, which is an important step towards to become an inclusive and accessible Canada for all Deaf people. These goals are to advocate for:

- **Birth Right:** Deaf children to access and acquire ASL and LSQ as their first language;
- **Deaf Identity:** Deaf people are a cultural and linguistic minority who use ASL and LSQ as their primary languages;



Canadian
Association of the Deaf

Association
des Sourds du Canada



CANADIAN
CULTURAL
SOCIETY
OF THE DEAF



Association québécoise
des interprètes en langues des signes



Association of
Visual Language Interpreters
of Canada

- **Accessibility:** Deaf people need access to public information and services via ASL and LSQ videos, and qualified Sign language interpreters through public and private sectors; government services, and profit and not-for-profit organizations on education, employment, health care, transportation, immigration, emergency, court, prisons, telecommunications and broadcasting, and others;
- **Equal Language:** Recognizing ASL and LSQ as an equal language as other spoken/written languages;
- **Bilingual Education:** is the key to linguistic and cultural identity that provides Deaf students with the opportunities to achieve full citizenship, education and employment;
- **Equal Employment Opportunities:** removing barriers to allow Deaf people to participate fully in the labour force, including training opportunities, is a requirement to promote greater inclusion for Deaf people to realize their dreams;
- **Equal Participation:** Deaf people to participate fully in personal, public and political areas along with everyone else, to allow full and equal access to the democratic and electoral system during all levels of government's election campaign activities and election polls; and
- **Lifelong Learning:** Deaf people to access education, training and ongoing professional development as a key to gaining, retaining a job, and to be able to make a living.

The Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC), the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD), Association québécoise des interprètes en langues des signes (AQILS) and the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) collectively encourage Deaf people, their allies and members of the public to attend events and to work in solidarity through Twitter campaign platform, in particular to promote visibility in Canada and around the world with the following hashtags: #AccessibleCanada; #ASLandLSQCanada; #InternationalWeekoftheDeaf; and #FullInclusionwithSignLanguage! to recognize that “**Full Inclusion With Sign Language!**”



About CAD-ASC

The Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1940 that provides consultation and information on Deaf issues to the public, business, media, educators, governments and others; conduct research and collects data; and community action organization of the Deaf people in Canada. CAD-ASC promote and protect the rights, needs, and concerns of Deaf people who uses American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ). The CAD-ASC is affiliated with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) as an Ordinary Member and CAD-ASC is a United Nations-accredited Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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About CCSD

The Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD) is a non-profit charitable organization aiming to preserve, encourage and advance the arts and culture of Canada's Deaf population of all ages. CCSD opened the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE that is located at the Distillery District in Toronto. It features an art gallery, teas and gift shop.

Visitors to the Centre learn about: Deaf leaders and Deaf people's contributions to society throughout history; Deaf cultural values including the importance of signed languages and Deaf arts; A cross-cultural perspective between Deaf and hearing people.

Today, the CCSD is alive and growing and serves many more with its programming, outreach, cultural activities, and award-winning Deaf heritage resources such as www.deafplanet.com, www.aslphabet.com and Canadian Dictionary of ASL.

CCSD's position is that with ASL/LSQ acquisition as their starting point, Deaf and hard of hearing babies, toddlers and children across Canada gain incalculable opportunities to be active participants in their society. With full language acquisition, they can be truly ALIVE in every sense of the word. The mandate of the Sign Language Rights for Deaf Children (SLRDC) - Le droit à la langue des signes pour les enfants sourds (DLSES) Coalition is to advocate as a community coalition for all Deaf children to have the human right to ASL/ LSQ at home, school and in their social environment as a foundation for life.

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About AQILS

AQILS (Association québécoise des interprètes en langues des signes) is a non-profit organization of sign language interpreting professionals in Quebec. AQILS was founded in 2015 and is the only association whose members are mostly French-LSQ interpreters. In addition to defending the interests of members, AQILS's mission is to promote the profession so that it may achieve full and complete recognition. For its first year, AQILS adopted its Code of ethics, of which members are honour-bound to adhere to. The website will be accessible to the public in the Fall of 2016. For more information, visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/aqilsq



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About AVLIC

The Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC) is a non-profit, professional association for interpreters whose working languages include a sign language. AVLIC was incorporated in 1979 and has eight Affiliate Chapters across the Canada. AVLIC is the only certifying body for ASL-English interpreters in Canada through the means of our Canadian Evaluation System. Among a variety of services, our members adhere to the AVLIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct to maintain quality and accountability to the field of interpreting.

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