

THE DEAF BULLETIN

Restoring Dignity to the Deaf and Hard of hearing!



Issue Number 6 of 2016

Hope for Deaf Education

By Precious Nkomo

These are the happy faces of Deaf young adults after their interviews at United College of Education (UCE) in Bulawayo on the 27th of May 2016. This was a life changing experience as this will be the first group of Deaf people to be trained as teachers at UCE.



From left Barbra Nyangairi (DZT Director), Tendai Dondofema, Precious Nkomo (DZT Interpreter), Felix Mubonderi, Trymore Manyuchi, Alois Tarehwa, Vimbiso Mupambwa, Gwendolyn Goredema, Dr Nyasha (United Bulawayo Hospital) and Lydia Tutani

her support Deaf learners as well as earn a living and fend for her family. She anticipates an improvement in the educational outcome for Deaf learners once Deaf teachers start teaching Deaf learners. Recalling her own experience at school, Gwendolyn noted that understanding concepts was very hard because there was no Sign Language. Her hope is that once these Deaf teachers who are proficient in Sign Language are in the classrooms, understanding concepts will become much easier for Deaf students.

Research conducted by Deaf Zimbabwe Trust on the Educational experiences of Deaf people in Harare showed that Deaf students prefer being taught by a teacher who is Deaf. As such this group of Deaf teachers will be the pace setters for a brighter future for Deaf students. They will be role models and source of motivation for the Deaf Community. Deaf students will look up to them and students will be motivated to become teachers as well.

This year more than 2 500 applicants attended the interviews for admission into UCE's teacher training programme. Among them were 7 Deaf people who hope to be the pioneers of a cohort of Deaf teachers who will ensure that Deaf children receive quality education in Sign Language.

Being part of this group was very exciting for the Deaf interviewees. Gwendolyn Goredema said that she was happy that she was selected for the interviews and this was a dream come true for her. Training as a teacher will help

World Blood Donor Day – 14 June 2016

By Rosemary Mundhluli



According to World Health Organisation (WHO), **World Blood Donor Day** aims to improve the safety national blood supplies. People donate blood in every part of the world to save lives. All the blood donated goes through a process of testing and screening so that we have clean and safe blood to transfuse to different people in need of blood.

Giving blood is voluntary, but for the sake of those in need we are encouraged to do so. Everyone needs to donate blood regardless of colour, creed or disability. People with Disabilities are encouraged to take part in donating blood so that we help patients whose lives depend on it. The demand of blood is high during public holidays due to the road carnage and mostly in cancer patients after they undergo chemotherapy (a process of treating cancer), which reduces blood in their system. You never know what happens tomorrow, one day you might wake up in need of this precious liquid.

Share life, give blood. Blood Connects us all – WHO

The Deaf and the Justice System

By Barbra Nyangairi

Being in court is a stressful experience for many people I am sure, except those that work there. Imagine how stressful it is for a Deaf person in a system that caters only for hearing people. As I stood in the line waiting to go to the court rooms, a man bellowed at the top of his voice the rules of the court. Among them remove your hat if you are man, phones are not allowed, do not make noise and respect the rules of the court. These are some of the few rules he bellowed and thought he had communicated with everyone in the queue.

That day was different because in that queue were two Deaf men waiting to go to court. I thought to myself, if he had known would that have acted differently? Would he have tried to find ways of communicating with them? These questions remained unanswered. It got me thinking again, if one of the Deaf men in my company had been wearing a hat and had kept it on after these instructions, or had disobeyed any of the instructions given, would he have thought that the young man was being rude and what would have happened to the Deaf young man? I dread to imagine.

We were informed into which court we were going to and when we got there, their names were called for their session to start but when there was no response, I said softly that the people are Deaf. The prosecutor looked at me and said “...aaaa pakaipa” (that is so bad). After a few consultations, the session resumed, the magistrate was informed that the people are Deaf and said, “... so what do we do?” She was told that there has to be an application for a Sign Language interpreter and that takes three weeks. After being at court in the cold for the whole day, I dreaded to think of yet another ordeal. I looked on as the hearing people easily did their business,



Harare Magistrates Court

understood each other and life was good and “normal.” While the constitution is very progressive in its recognition of Sign Language, the language remains inaccessible to the Deaf and hard of hearing. Sign Language interpreters must be availed to ensure that Deaf people are not denied access to justice in the courts.

My Story: Martin Rinoona

I was born at Chitungwiza Central Hospital on the 30th of December 1985. I am the third in a family of seven. When I was 9 years old, I fell ill and spent almost 6 months at Mutoko Hospital. Doctors could not find the cause of my illness. My life was at a standstill. During that period, my mother stayed by my side throughout this period.

A few days before I was discharged, the doctor noticed that something was very wrong. He told my mother that I had lost my ability to hear. I had become Deaf. I had lost part of my memory too. This was a very difficult time for my family.

Before all this, I had been the best student in my class. When I went back to school after becoming Deaf, everything changed. I could no longer hear when the teacher taught. Learning became difficult and I often found myself on the teacher's bad side because I could not follow instructions. The teachers could not understand why I could no longer remember things that I had been taught before. They could not understand my memory loss and my deafness.

In 1995, my father sent me to Nyadire Mission school where they had a special class for Deaf and hard of hearing children. I had always thought that being Deaf meant I could no longer communicate with other people. I was very surprised to see Deaf children at Nyadire communicating in Sign Language. I started learning Sign Language with the help of other students at the school. Our teachers were not very good in Sign Language so they used a lot of pictures to help understand when they taught us.

Although my Sign Language was improving, I did not do well in school. I wrote my grade 7 exams in 2000 and failed. This frustrated my parents. My father came up with the idea to teach me how to lip read. It was difficult at first but it helped me communicate with hearing people. My father encouraged me to spend time with hearing people so that I could improve my lip reading skills. He thought that this would help me learn in school. With time, my lip reading skills improved but I never abandoned my Sign Language. It is my way of communicating.

Secondary school was very challenging for me. None of the teachers knew Sign Language. I sat for the O'level exams 4 times before passing the required 5 subjects. I am currently working as an education facilitator for Deaf children. I hope to go to a teachers' college and become a fully trained teacher of Deaf children.

People do not always understand me but I find comfort in knowing that my family appreciates me for who I am and they always support me. I know I can achieve anything if I work hard.



The Deaf Bulletin is an initiative by Deaf Zimbabwe Trust to raise awareness about Deaf issues and to disseminate information to the Deaf Community in Zimbabwe. For more information contact

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