



Alone we can do so little;
together
we can do so much.
- Helen Keller



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Deaf Iowans Against Abuse standing on its own as a nonprofit organization

[Cedar Rapids, IA – July 1, 2016] – Deaf Iowans Against Abuse (DIAA) is now an independent nonprofit organization. DIAA provides support to and empowers the Deaf community and Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing individuals, families, and children who are or have been victims / survivors of domestic violence and / or sexual abuse. These support services will continue to be provided to the Deaf communities across the state. For the past five years, DIAA has operated as a program of Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD).

"We are proud to share in the celebration of DIAA's newly recognized status as an independent 501c3 organization, said Chris Soukup, Chief Executive Officer of CSD. Over the past five years, DIAA has been a valued part of our national network of community-based programs. DIAA has been a model program that provides domestic violence and sexual assault support services for deaf and hard of hearing

individuals and their families. The organization also is a key resource for local community organizations in Iowa. Together with CSD and under the leadership of Jennifer Upah-Kyes, DIAA has grown into a statewide organization with a continuum of service offerings, from direct advocacy services to prevention education to first responders training. We remain ardent supporters of the mission and objectives of DIAA. We anticipate continued partnership opportunities in the years to come, particularly as it relates to collaboration on nationally-scaled initiatives. Domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, awareness, and support services are vital to ensuring the safety and well-being of our national deaf and hard of hearing community. We wish DIAA great success in continuing to develop and deliver services to and throughout the State of Iowa and beyond".

DIAA will celebrate this new chapter with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m., Friday, July 8, in front of DIAA's Cedar Rapids office, 1652 42nd St NE, Suite D. Jennifer Upah-Kyes, Executive Director of DIAA, will speak briefly about the organization and this new chapter in its story of service.

The community is invited to join city leaders, members of law enforcement, victims' rights advocates, crime victims, survivors, and their families as they remember those who have been victimized, honor those working in the field, and focus on the need for justice and support for those impacted by crime.

Sign language interpreters will be present during the ceremony. Light snacks and drinks will be provided.

Over the past 15 years, DIAA has helped more than 2,000 Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing individuals. We want Iowans to know that DIAA staff and the Board of Directors are still working to support the people we serve. For more information and to learn about other events, visit www.diaaiowa.org.

In 1999, four local Deaf women attended Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS) national training in Seattle, WA. The women established their own chapter, Iowa Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (IDWAS), to provide support, information, and peer counseling services to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind women. After 2004, the organization changed its name to Deaf Iowans Against Abuse to indicate its mission and cause toward full inclusion and support for all.

Our organization today includes:

- 24/7 crisis hotline
- 24/7 advocacy services
 - legal
 - medical
 - youth prevention
 - housing support
- one on one peer counseling
- prevention education
- community awareness
- information and referrals
- first responders training

For additional information about the ribbon-cutting ceremony and how to assist victims / survivors in the Deaf community and people we serve, please contact our main office in Cedar Rapids at 319.382.3078 or visit www.diaaiowa.org.

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