

A brief update from The Deaf Christian Fellowship of College Mennonite Church

Summer Activities Program completes 6th year!

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For 5 weeks of the 2016 summer, 15 deaf or hard of hearing children participated in our 6th Summer Activities Program. The formal goal of this day camp is to *enhance the social and linguistic development of deaf and hard of hearing children through a supportive, fun, day-camp environment where sign language is the norm for communication!*

In addition, and most important the children are introduced to stories from the bible. For some this is the only time they will “hear” these stories in a language they can understand.

Many thanks to the many CMCers who make this ministry possible. These include Michele Ramer, SAP Director and Steph Yoder, SAP Man-



ager who lead the day to day camp activities. Many others are drivers who provide the transportation for the children. that come from are far away as Wolcottville and Warsaw. If it were not for our dedicated drivers these children would be sitting home isolated from peers and others who can communicate fully. Special thanks to Doug Friesen, Jay Detweiler, our regular drivers and other who substituted Rex Hooley, Mary Liechty, Jan Landis and Jan Yoder.

Prayer requests:

- Greg Sommers as he looks for a new job.
- Phil and Kathy Harden as they manage Phil’s health issues.
- DCF Leadership team as they determine speakers for Sunday worship.
- LaGrange county Deaf community and Christian presence

Life Transitions



Ultimately Gail decided to move from Greencroft Goshen, to Summit Place in Indianapolis. There she is near to family members. DCF and Gail’s family loaded a moving truck in June and said Goodbye, God Bless you and keep you!

We praise God for the life of Herman Rollins and are saddened by the fact he is no longer living. At the “ripe” age of 92, he was the first of our Deaf Christian Fellowship participants to die. Sheila Yoder, our Coordinator of Deaf Ministries, had the opportunity to lead his memorial service in December. Then in subsequent months DCF participants assisted his widow, Gail, with many tasks that were new to her, including balancing a check book, getting in home health assistance and managing grocery shopping.

Third annual Laurelville Deaf Churches retreat April 2016



Jesus"! Participants rejoiced in the gathering of like minds (and language!), sharing stories of faith, renewing old and new acquaintances, and gaining inspiration to return to their home ministries. A planning committee representing Signs of Life Deaf Fellowship of Staunton, Va.; First Deaf Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa.; and Deaf Christian Fellowship of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., coordinated the event. The event was possible in part because of generous donations from individuals and the supporting congregations used to subsidize costs to attendees.

The weekend of April 8 -10, 48 adults from the East and Midwest gathered at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center to worship, fellowship, and share faith stories all in American Sign Language. Noah Buchholz (deaf) of Bethel College, Mishawka Indiana led the group through thoughtful discussion and sharing on the theme "Deaf Culture and the Parables of

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"Deaf Culture and the Parables of Jesus!" Theme for Laurelville Retreat

Two unique Summer Worship Experiences

The DCF leadership team planned two unique worship services for the 3rd Sundays of June and July. The first of these in June took place in the Goshen College cabin just "down the road" from the CMC church building. Twenty five adults gathered to worship and hear from Rex Brake of Indianapolis. This was followed by a time of fellowship and potluck.

The second, in July, DCF members traveled to Mishawaka to worship with the Deaf Michiana Missionary Church.



“I’ll Never Forget the Fruits of the Spirit!”

Learning Together at Summer Programs for Deaf Children



Summer MIP intern Emily Evans

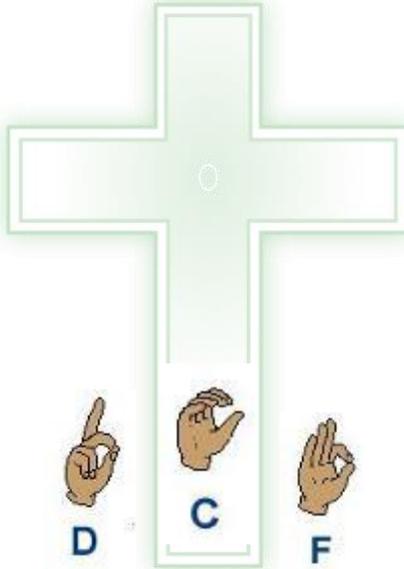
Emily Evans, was here this summer through Goshen College’s Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP). Her home is in Lancaster, Pa. where she lives with her parents, an older brother, sister and a beloved dog, Chester. Emily recently completed her second year at GC as an American Sign Language Interpreting major. Emily says “My interest in ASL started at a young age, with children’s sign language books, and was heightened in high school when my cousin graduated from Goshen College with an interpreting major. I am excited to form new relationships with members of CMC and the Deaf Fellowship as I strengthen my relationship with God. I hope this summer will allow me to discover how my passion for both ASL and the Lord can work together and intersect to help me share the good news with others!”

Growing up, I participated in Bible school at my home church every year. I sang silly songs, did lots of fun crafts, learned about the Bible, and made new friends. It was something I looked forward to every summer. This summer, I got the opportunity to relive my childhood by participating in Bible school here at CMC! However, this time I served as an interpreter for eight Deaf children in attendance. For many of these kids, this was their first experience with Bible school. It felt like a lot of pressure to be their interpreter. I was the one who had to make a clear translation of everything going on. My goal was for these kids to have access to Jesus and the Bible stories. This included access to songs! If nothing else, I know for sure they learned the nine fruits of the Spirit. After interpreting that song into sign language at top speed every single day, it’s ingrained in **my** head forever. Bible school may have ended, but our fun did not. The week after Bible school, eight more children joined us for the Summer Activities Program day camp on Tuesdays and Thursdays. One boy

I’ve built a relationship with is named Cameron. Cameron lives with his hearing grandmother. She doesn’t sign nor does his babysitter. He is five years old, but he is unable to tell me that. At five years old, Cameron can’t communicate his age. He can’t tell me his name. He can’t tell me his favorite color. Is it because he doesn’t know those things? No, of course not. Any five-year-old will excitedly tell you their age, or that they like pink better than green, but Cameron doesn’t have that luxury. He has not had the opportunity to develop language (either sign or spoken). So my challenge has been relating to him despite that, and all the while teaching and modeling good language skills and communication.

So far I’ve learned that Cameron loves stripes. If we are painting or coloring or drawing, his always turns out to have a stripe pattern. For better or worse, I’ve also noticed his love for frogs. One day I found a dead frog in his backpack that he had picked up off the street. Later, that same day, I watched him draw a picture of a frog during craft time.

My growing relationship with Cameron shows me that God is working in both of our lives. I am excited to continue building relationships and watching God work in these kids’ lives as they learn about God and experience the church as a positive place where they are loved and understood. —Emily Evans, Goshen College MIP, American Sign Language



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Coffee House in partnership with GC ASL program

The evening of September 16th the youth room at College Mennonite Church was filled to the “brim” for a coffee house event hosted by the Deaf Christian Fellowship and Goshen College American Sign Language program.

Approximately 60 people attended to hear from Chad Entinger, Executive Director of Deaf Missions in Council Bluffs Iowa. Chad shared his life experiences of growing up Deaf. Attendees heard about the challenges and blessings of growing up with a loving hearing Christian family yet feeling like a “fish out of water”, until arriving at Deaf school as a young teen. Here he found a community that shared a language, life experiences and culture.

This part of his story is common to many Deaf people. Yet Chad is unique in that he also is a Deaf *Christian*. Attendees also heard how he came to know God, eventually serve in cross-cultural mission and become the director of Deaf Missions.

Attendees include GC students, HS students from Angola, Deaf community members and parents of visiting GC students.



Deaf Christian Fellowship calendar!

- September 4th, resumed every Sunday Bible Study and 3rd Sunday worship services
- September 16th (Friday), DCF hosted partners with GC ASL Program to host Coffee house—speaker Chad Entinger, Executive Director, Deaf Missions, IA
- September 18th, Michiana Deaf Churches picnic South Bend
- October 19—22, Deaf Christian Leaders Conference Omaha Nebraska
- November 17th, Deaf Festival in Fort Wayne
- December 10th, DCF Christmas banquet College Church
- April 7—9th, Laurelville Deaf Christian Retreat, PA
- May 19-21th, Deaf Christian Women’s Retreat, College Mennonite