

May 4, 2022

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## **RE: Your Neighbors Who Speak ASL & Other Languages Need Your Help!**

Dear XXX,

**Because of communication barriers, people who speak ASL and other languages have accepted the fact of doing with less than. BUT they don't have to live in a different world than you and I. With YOUR financial help, they can live with the abundance of communication and understanding!**

Recall the last time you needed help with something – big or small. What did you do? Did you pick up the phone to call a family member? A friend? A doctor? A local professional?

While it's not always easy to do, **you possess the ability to ask for help.** You live in a community that primarily communicates using the English language. Your request for help is easily received and, with luck, responded to in kind. Though it may seem a simple act, this small act of asking for help, is a privilege that's not afforded to all. **People in our community need YOUR HELP.**

**IMAGINE.** You've arrived in United States to begin your life over again after experiencing trauma, war, poverty, and/or other horrific experiences. To escape further trauma, you left your entire life behind, perhaps even loved ones and pets. As you get settled into your new Wisconsin community, symptoms of PTSD and depression start to negatively affect your daily life, including your ability to socialize, complete errands, or go to work. Intrusive thoughts and guilt about leaving your life behind haunt you all day and night. Every day, you grow more desperate to receive help from a professional therapist.

The problem? You don't speak English, and you don't have access to the resources to learn the language. You came into this country with only one backpack and hopes of safe living. Without the ability to speak English, you're afraid to call the office to set an appointment, much less handle insurance – if you have it. There are so few offices that offer interpretation services or in-house native speakers with cultural competence to provide holistic help and understanding; the waitlists are extremely long. But the pressure of poor mental health builds inside of you. Unsure what to do, you feel forced bear your emotional turmoil alone.

**IMAGINE.** You're a member of the hearing-impaired community who is experiencing grief due to the recent loss of a loved one. Not only are you completely deaf, but you also are unable to speak. When you're out in the community or trying to complete tasks, you do your best to read lips because ASL (American Sign Language) is not commonly used in public.

The inability to communicate with others is not only frustrating – it's lonely. In a world built for able-bodied and hearing-able people, you feel excluded and isolated. You're unsure where to find hearing-impaired resources or support groups that could help. As your grief grows heavy, you feel increasingly concerned about your mental well-being. You know you need help from a counselor. Feeling helpless and out of options, you fear you're going to have to face your grief alone.

**Communication should NOT be a barrier to getting mental health care.**

The Green Bay area is home to speakers of many different languages who come from diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, there are people with hearing-impairments who also need and deserve support. Communication barriers prevent ASL and non-native English speakers from obtaining coping skills for depression, healing their trauma, or handling their grief.

Additionally, the **need for language interpretation services** (Spanish, Hmong, ASL) for mental health counseling **has grown ten-fold** in the last couple of years. This problem is critical, affecting so many people in our community. Hiring language interpreters at Foundations Health & Wholeness bridges the communications gap between clients and therapists.

**With a total of \$21,000, a year of interpretation services can be provided for our neighbors who need them. YOU can help bridge the communication gap with financial gift.**

Please don't let our neighbors who speak Spanish, Hmong, or ASL feel like they must accept less than and live in a different world than we do. Your financial gift means communication, understanding, and abundance.

Your gift can change the course of someone's life – and that's a big deal!

**Thank you! ¡Gracias! Ua Tsaug!** 🙌👉👈👉👈🙌🙌🙌

**Wishing you health and wholeness,**



**Julie Feld, LCSW, CSAC**  
**Director of Counseling**



**Lana Cheslock, LCSW**  
**Director of Resident Training Program**

**PS – Every gift breaks down a communication barrier to mental health care!**  
**Please give generously by returning the enclosed donation envelope, or you can text LANGUAGE to 44-321. Gifts support counseling generally unless designated.**