I See What You're Saying: A Deaf Culture And American Sign Language Awareness Event

Alexis M. Sejnoha

University of South Dakota

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I SEE WHAT YOU’RE SAYING:
A DEAF CULTURE AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AWARENESS EVENT

By:
Alexis Sejnoha

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the
University Honors Program

Department of Media & Journalism
The University of South Dakota

May 2020
The members of the Honors Thesis Committee appointed to examine the thesis of Alexis Sejnoha find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

____________________________________________________________________________

Dr. Teri James Bellis
Professor of Communications Sciences & Disorders
Director of The Committee

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Dr. Charles Lubbers
Professor of Media & Journalism

____________________________________________________________________________

Dr. Laura Vidler
Associate Dean of The College of Arts & Sciences
ABSTRACT

I See What You’re Saying:
A Deaf Culture & American Sign Language Event

Alexis Sejnoha

Director

Dr. Teri James Bellis, Ph.D., CCC-A, FAAA, F-ASHA

Deaf Culture and American Sign Language are an important part of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community. Most people outside of this community are unaware of these aspects, and remain uneducated about them. This document is an event plan for an educational event about American Sign Language and Deaf Culture, as well as an artist statement explaining the conception and implementation of this plan, and how it was impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Keywords: Event Panning, American Sign Language, Deaf Culture, Deaf, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people
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Introduction

After taking both American Sign Language classes offered at the University of South Dakota, I became very interested in Deaf culture and American Sign Language. I believe that it would benefit the community of Vermillion to host a public event where people can come and learn things that will better help them navigate a situation in which they would encounter a Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing person in their day to day life. Because of the difference in cultural norms and a communication barrier, I believe it is important for Hearing people to know about basic Deaf culture, so that these interactions can be comfortable for all parties involved.

Event Management Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alexis Sejnoha</th>
<th>Hadi Hindieh</th>
<th>Kelly Kroger</th>
<th>Cara McLaughlin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Thesis Scholar</td>
<td>American Sign Language Club President</td>
<td>American Sign Language Club Vice President</td>
<td>American Sign Language Club Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>605-661-8126</td>
<td>605-202-1640</td>
<td>605-987-7316</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cara.mclaughlin@coyotes.usd.edu">cara.mclaughlin@coyotes.usd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:sejnohaalexis@gmail.com">sejnohaalexis@gmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:hadi.hindieh@coyotes.usd.edu">hadi.hindieh@coyotes.usd.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kelly.kroger@coyotes.usd.edu">kelly.kroger@coyotes.usd.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teri Bellis</td>
<td>Charles Lubbers</td>
<td>Laura Vidler</td>
<td>Lori Kober</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Sign Language Club Faculty Advisor</td>
<td>Event Planning and Marketing Professor</td>
<td>Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>American Sign Language II Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:teri.bellis@usd.edu">teri.bellis@usd.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:chuck.lubbers@usd.edu">chuck.lubbers@usd.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:laura.vidler@usd.edu">laura.vidler@usd.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1
Purpose

The purpose of this event is to educate the community of Vermillion on Deaf Culture and the use of American Sign Language.

Vision

I hope to bring awareness to the Vermillion community about Deaf culture and to have people leave the event with a better understanding of the cultural differences between Deaf and Hearing people in the United States.

Mission

The Mission of the American Sign Language Club is to educate and bring awareness to students of the University of South Dakota and the community of Vermillion about American Sign Language and Deaf Culture. This will also be the mission of this event in particular, as well as doing so in a fun and entertaining way for the attendees.

Event Scope

An evening event taking place on Wednesday, April 15th 2020. This is National American Sign Language Day. The event will provide entertainment and education to the community of Vermillion. This event is for cultural awareness of the Deaf community as its own sociolinguistic group. The event will take place for one night for two hours, with attendees being able to come and go as they please throughout the two hour time block. Key stakeholders in this event are the USD American Sign Language Club, the community of Vermillion, the student body and faculty of the University of South Dakota, and the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community.
### Table 2: SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-The event is entertaining and educational</td>
<td>-The organization is not well known on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The event is interesting</td>
<td>-The event has never been done before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Highly motivated team</td>
<td>-No clear budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The event team is open to new ideas and willing to be flexible</td>
<td>-Unable to benchmark against previous events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Could collaborate with the USD campus</td>
<td>-Holding the event during the week may be a conflict of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The event is new to campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities:</th>
<th>Threats:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-The event has never been done before</td>
<td>-Other events may take place on the same day/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Potential for growth of the organization</td>
<td>-Finding sponsors and funding may be challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Increased publicity for the ASL Club</td>
<td>-Lack of interest at USD/in Vermillion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Increased publicity for USD within the Deaf community</td>
<td>-Low turnout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The opportunity to target specific majors is present</td>
<td>-Scope creep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-The opportunity to gain new sponsors for other club activities</td>
<td>-Severe weather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goals & Objectives

The goals of the event are to raise awareness of the Deaf community, Deaf culture, and American Sign Language, and to have the event be educational and fun. The objectives for the event are to get 100 people to attend the event, to have posters on campus and around town one month before the event, and to have attendees go to at least 3 of the education stations at the event.
## Risk Assessment & Planning

### Table 3: Risk Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexis Sejnoha</td>
<td>University Thesis Scholar</td>
<td>605-661-8126, <a href="mailto:sejnohaalexis@gmail.com">sejnohaalexis@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadi Hindieh</td>
<td>American Sign Language Club President</td>
<td>605-202-1640, <a href="mailto:hadi.hindieh@coyotes.usd.edu">hadi.hindieh@coyotes.usd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Kroger</td>
<td>American Sign Language Club Vice President</td>
<td>605-987-7316, <a href="mailto:kelly.kroger@coyotes.usd.edu">kelly.kroger@coyotes.usd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara McLaughlin</td>
<td>American Sign Language Club Secretary</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cara.mclaughlin@coyotes.usd.edu">cara.mclaughlin@coyotes.usd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>Event delays or cancelation, bodily harm, building damage</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe Weather</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>Event delays or cancelation, low attendance</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Shooter</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>Bodily harm, death, building damage</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>Event delay</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Poison or Allergy</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>Event delay, bodily harm</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer No-show</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>Event delay</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Attendance</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>Event continues</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Outage</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>Event delay</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological Failure</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>Event delay</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>Bodily harm, event delay</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>Bodily harm, upset attendees</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>manage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency Response Plan

**Fire:** Before the event be aware of the location of safety exits, fire alarms, and extinguishers, have a designated area for attendees and workers to meet after leaving the building, and make sure all attendees are aware of fire alarms and safety exits. During the event activate the fire alarm to notify all other building occupants of the fire, use a fire extinguisher if applicable, if not applicable and fire is too large, evacuate the attendees safely and calmly to the designated safety area. Also maintain a headcount as people leave the building, and remain in the safety area until emergency services arrive.

**Severe Weather:** Before the event be aware of the forecasted weather. In the case of a tornado, the city of Vermillion will set off a siren for 3-5 minutes. Inform everyone at the event and remind everyone to stay calm while escorting them to the designated shelter area. In the event of a blizzard, inform attendees of the weather concern so that they can leave the event and make it home safely.

**Active Shooter Situation:** Before the event be aware of all entrances and exits. Be aware of the surroundings and identify places to hide. In the case of an active shooter situation, remove yourself and attendees from the shooting area. If you cannot reach an exit safely, get out of the shooter’s view and stay quiet. Silence electronic devices, lock the doors, close the blinds, turn off lights, and try to communicate with police. Try to remain as calm as possible, and call 911 once you have reached safety.
**Medical Emergency:** Before the event take note of if and where there is a AED defibrillator device or first aid kit. Also notify all attendees where the medical officials are located if there are any present at the event. In the case of a medical emergency, locate the injured person and the cause of the injury/illness. Make note of any hazards, alert medical staff, locate the nearest emergency exit and clear the area. Call 911 if the injury is serious enough.

![Figure 1: Communication List](image)

**Implementation**

The event team will have copies of the event plan, and Alexis Sejnoha will be the incident commander who will oversee implementing the risk plan in case those things occur.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits:</th>
<th>Diamond ($50)</th>
<th>Platinum ($40)</th>
<th>Gold ($30)</th>
<th>Silver ($20)</th>
<th>Bronze ($10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational station named for company</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition during the event (verbal and visual)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company name and logo listed on event program passed out at event</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Promotion (mentioned on press release, newspaper, radio)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo featured on all event marketing posters &amp; flyers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sponsor Analysis**

**Old Lumber Company**

605-658-9663

Old Lumber Company has donated the space for us to use.

**Badlands Precision**

Badlands Precision has donated all of the gloves, stuffing, and markers for the arts and crafts table.

**USD Pre-med society**

premed@coyotes.usd.edu

Pre-Med Society has offered volunteers
American Sign Language Club
aslclub@coyotes.usd.edu
ASL Club has offered support and volunteers

University Honors Program
honors@usd.edu
USD Honors Program has offered support, volunteers, and marketing to their students.

Cortrust Bank Vermillion - Gold
605-624-4461
Cortrust Bank pledged $30 to the event funding to pay for food.

The Bean - Platinum
605-659-1041
The Bean pledged $40 to the event funding to pay for food.

Charlie’s - Gold
605-658-3800
Charlie’s pledged $30
Coyote Twin Theatre - Silver
605-624-3331
They Coyote Twin pledged $20

Chad Smidt American Family Insurance - Gold
605-624-2025
Chad pledged $30

Vermillion Chamber & Development Company - Silver
605-624-5571
VCDC pledged $20

Kober Funeral Home - Gold
605-624-4466
The Kobers pledged $30

Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
rob.turner@usd.edu
The MLL alluded to being able to allocate funds for sign language interpreters. The cost of this is approximately $550 plus the two interpreter’s mileage from Sioux Falls.
**Event Mission & Direction**

The mission of this event is to educate the attendees on Deaf culture and the use of American Sign Language. The event will be an open floor plan where attendees can float from one station to the other, checking each stop off of their “passport” as they go. At each stop, attendees will learn something new about each of the chosen aspects of Deaf culture or American Sign Language.

**Event Program & Agenda**

4 weeks before the event:

Send out press release for the event, put flyers and posters around campus, and create an “event” on social media

1 week before the event:

Send out final scripts to all volunteers

On the day of the event:

Take over the USouthDakota SnapChat account - introduce yourself and the event

Set up the event venue

Distribute schedule of event to volunteers

Pass out paper scripts and schedules to volunteers

Run the event, manage any risks that arise during event

Tear down event

On the day after the event:

Look over the feedback survey completed by attendees

Post to the facebook event page thanking attendees and sponsors
Event and programming

5:30 pm - volunteers begin set up & training on their stations

6:00 pm - doors open to guests - interactive stations will be available before and after the speech and performance

6:30 pm - “Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World” talk by Teri J. Bellis

7:00 pm - “This Is Me” performance

8:00 pm - event ends

8:30 pm - volunteers begin clean up and tear down

Figure 2: Event Passport
Stations:

**Alphabet Table:** ASL Club will teach attendees how to sign their name in ASL. They will also hand out alphabet cards.

**Arts & Crafts Table:** attendees will receive a glove stuffed with stuffing and will be able to decorate that white cotton glove with permanent markers and form the hand into any ASL hand shape.

**Song Table:** there will be a computer playing videos of sign language interpretations of songs for attendees to view - before and after the musical performance, members of the performing group will be at this table to teach attendees the chorus of the song if they wish to learn. The song list can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdsc51tIC8V1LjoH12Twiwr6qZaPLHRmg

**Deaf Education Table:** Attendees will learn about the two methods of teaching Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children: ASL or the Oral Method. They will also get to try a little of each. *(Through Deaf Eyes, 2007)*

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing in South Dakota Law Table:** Attendees will learn about SD House bill 1122 2019 and how laws are passed at the state level using the interactive flow chart in Figure 2.

**Deaf Culture Table:** attendees will play fact or fiction with table volunteers to see how many fun “facts” about Deaf Culture they can guess correctly. Topics will include hearing tools such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, Deaf history, and Deafness in the media. The Fact or Fiction information is listed in Table 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACT</th>
<th>FICTION----------------&gt; Why it’s Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition from silent film into talkies in the 1920s eliminated many roles in media for Deaf actors (Through Deaf Eyes, 2007)</td>
<td>The lead actress in the horror movie HUSH is Deaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The horror genre has embraced Deaf actors and has used their skills and strengths to create great pieces of art such as A Quiet Place and Unfriended: The Dark Web (IMDb, 2018)</td>
<td>Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people can only enjoy music when there is an interpreter signing the song for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The winner of America’s Next Top Model Season 22 is Deaf True! His name is Nyle DiMarco and he is a Deaf model and advocate! (Nyle DiMarco)</td>
<td>American Sign language is a direct translation of the English language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf children can attend regular schools They CAN attend regular schools, if they do or not is a decision that should be made by taking all aspects of the individual child and their needs into account. (A&amp;E, 2018)</td>
<td>All Deaf children should go to a School for the Deaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2019, the state of South Dakota passed a bill banning the use of “hearing impaired” in written law and replace it with “Deaf or Hard of Hearing” (SDHB 1122, 2019)</td>
<td>All schools for the Deaf teach using sign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a cultural difference between spelling “Deaf” with a capital D and a lower case d</td>
<td>Deaf culture is the same as American culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Fact Or Fiction Information
Lower case d represents talking about the medical condition of deafness, and capital D represents Deafness as an identity and culture (Through Deaf Eyes, 2007)

| Hearing aids can help in amplifying sound, and are not a “cure” for Deafness (Mayo Clinic, 2019) | Cochlear Implants are a “cure” for Deafness | False! When the person takes off their cochlear implant, they are still Deaf! (A&E, 2018) |
| There are different types of hearing aids, such as behind the ear, in the ear, in the canal, and others (Mayo Clinic, 2019) | Any Deaf person can put on a set of Cochlear Implants and hear just fine | Fiction! Cochlear Implants actually require surgery to use, as the device connects to the Auditory nerve. (A&E, 2018) |
| South Dakota School for the Deaf is located in Sioux Falls (SDSD, 2019) | Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people can’t use ipods or MP3 players because they can’t use headphones | Actually, if a person has an FM system as part of their hearing aid or cochlear implant, they can directly connect to an ipod or MP3 player and wouldn’t NEED to use headphones. (Mayo Clinic, 2019) |

Figure 3: How a Bill Becomes A Law

(AAP, 2009)
The facility is The Old Lumber Company, in the 2nd floor event room. This facility was chosen because of the ability to cater food, and it’s accessibility due to a newly installed elevator.

**Interpreters**

Two American Sign Language Interpreters from Interpreter Services Inc. were quoted for this event as costing $550 plus mileage. This is for the 2 hour event. Their phone number is 605-553-9234. The contact’s email address is cory@interpreterservicesinc.com

**Event site/venue layout and design**

Figure 4: Event Layout

![Event Layout Diagram]

**Catering**
Chad from OLC (605-280-3520) quoted us $200 for catering of appetizers for 100 people buffet style. This provides us a variety of appetizers for our attendees to snack on, and water to drink.

**Volunteers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Duties</th>
<th>Volunteer name and connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrance/Exit:</td>
<td>Ashley Skinner (honors student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greet attendees</td>
<td>Jaycie Foster (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand out Passport Cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain the event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank attendees for attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand out pens for attendees to use to complete feedback survey on back of passport cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect passport cards &amp; pens as attendees leave the event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Crafts:</td>
<td>Breezy Sejnoha (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise the completion of the arts and crafts</td>
<td>Ben Jacobs (pre-med society member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABCs:</td>
<td>Krisztian Fasi (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach attendees how to sign their names</td>
<td>Ellie Swanson (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand out alphabet cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the use of the ASL alphabet snap chat filter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact or Fiction:</td>
<td>Kelly Kroger (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the game of fact or fiction</td>
<td>Veronica Steinhoff (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Interpretation:</td>
<td>Hadi Hindieh (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the playlist of song interpretations continues to play</td>
<td>Chase Howe (pre-med society member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how interpreting is not translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf &amp; Hard of Hearing in SD Law:</td>
<td>Matt Yetter (honors student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain SD house bill 1122</td>
<td>Ashley Brage (ASL club member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the interactive flow chart to explain how state laws are passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Describe target market

The target market is involved members of the Vermillion community. This may include but is not limited to: members of the VCDC, families with children in the Vermillion School District, Students at the University of South Dakota, members of the Vermillion Public Library, etc.

Key messages

Entertainment: This event will be entertaining with a live musical performance.

Education: This event will be educational and include topics like cultural awareness.

Hands On: This event will be interactive and focus on inclusion.

Attendee Surveys

Attendees would complete this survey at the end of the event. They will be collected at the exit of the event and later evaluated by the event team to see what improvements could be made to future events. This Survey would be attached as part of the “passport” card that attendees are given upon entering the event.

Figure 5: The attendee survey would be part of the event passport
Marketing and promotions tactics

Figure 6: A poster to be hung in sponsor businesses and on campus at USD
I SEE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING

An interactive, educational, and entertaining event on Deaf culture and American Sign Language

Wednesday, April 15th
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World
Speech by Dr. Teri James Bellis

Followed by a live musical performance in American Sign Language

This event also features a variety of interactive activities.

The Old Lumber Company
2nd floor event room
FREE

Presented in partnership with:

This Fact Sheet would be sent out to news and media outlets for press releases.

Table 8: I See What You’re Saying Fact Sheet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>I See What You’re Saying: an entertaining, interactive, and educational event about American Sign Language and Deaf Culture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>Open to anyone! This event is free to attend.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| When? | Wednesday, April 15th from 6 - 8 PM  
April 15th is National American Sign Language Day!                                               |
| Where?| The Old Lumber Company (OLC) 2nd floor event room                                               |
| Why should I go? | • It's free to attend  
• There will be food  
• A variety of interactive stations will teach you some fun facts about American Sign Language & Deaf Culture  
• You can learn some sign language  
• Dr. Bellis will be speaking on what it was like for her “Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World”  
• See a live sign language interpretation of a song  
• It's open to all ages |
| For More Information Contact | Alexis Sejnoha: Event Host  
sejnohaalexis@gmail.com  
605-661-8126 | Visit the USD American Sign Language Club Facebook page, Instagram page, or Twitter account  
@usd_asl_club |
| | Dr. Teri James Bellis: Speaker  
teri.bellis@usd.edu | Search for the “I See What You’re Saying” event on Facebook |

Figure 7: A flyer to be handed out at sponsoring businesses and around campus
I See What You're Saying

Wednesday, April 15th
6:00 pm - 8:00pm
The Old Lumber Company
Upstairs Event Room

Schedule:
6 pm - doors open - a variety of interactive activities will begin
6:30 pm - "Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World" speech by Dr. Teri James Bellis
7:00 pm - "This Is Me" musical performance by USD students and American Sign Language Club Advisor
8 pm - event ends

Learn about Deaf Culture!
Musical Performance!
Fun Activities!
Learn some Sign Language!
Free Food!
Make an art project and take it home!

An Interactive, educational, and entertaining event on Deaf Culture and American Sign Language.

I See What You're Saying is presented in partnership with these sponsors:

[Logos of various sponsors]
I See What You're Saying

Join us for an interactive and educational evening on Deaf culture and American Sign Language

Featuring:

"Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World"
A speech by Dr. Teri James Bellis

Followed by a live musical performance in American Sign Language by USD Students and American Sign Language Club Advisor

This event will also include a variety of interactive activities.

Wednesday, April 15th
6:00 - 8:00 pm
The Old Lumber Company
2nd Floor Event Room
Social media content

Figure 9: An example Instagram post

I See What You're Saying

Join us for an interactive and educational evening on Deaf culture and American Sign Language

Featuring:

“Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World”
A speech by Dr. Teri James Bellis

Followed by a live musical performance in American Sign Language by USD Students and American Sign Language Club Advisor

This event will also include a variety of interactive activities.

Wednesday, April 15th
6:00 - 8:00 pm
The Old Lumber Company
2nd Floor Event Room
Figure 10: An example Facebook Post

USD American Sign Language Club

Posted by Lauren Pfaffle

I See What You're Saying

Join us for an interactive and educational evening on Deaf culture and American Sign Language

Featuring:

"Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World"
A speech by Dr. Teri James Bellis

Followed by a live musical performance in American Sign Language by USD Students and American Sign Language Club Advisor

This event will also include a variety of interactive activities.

Wednesday, April 15th
6:00 - 8:00 pm
The Old Lumber Company
2nd Floor Event Room

Write a comment...
Conclusion

This event will be open to the public, friendly to children and families, and a great way for Vermillion community members to learn about a world that is all around them, but that they may be unaware of. This event will take place on National American Sign Language Day, and be a great way to raise awareness of this interesting topic. It is also a great way to get the community together in an entertaining and interactive way.
ARTIST STATEMENT

Audience:
My chosen audience started as the student body of the University of South Dakota, and eventually changed to the community of Vermillion, SD. The community of Vermillion has Deaf students in its school system, and a Deaf business owner in the community. The Vermillion community also includes USD students who are training for their future careers, and may very well encounter a Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing person in those careers. It is important for them to understand Deafness from a cultural perspective when interacting with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing individuals in the future. By attending this educational event, guests will have a better understanding of Deaf culture, history, and language.

Influences:
My nephew is Deaf, so I decided to take American Sign Language classes here at the University of South Dakota. In doing so, I fell in love with ASL and Deaf culture and history. It is something that I feel passionately about, and have witnessed some of the tough things first hand through my nephew. I was greatly impacted by my nephew and the rest of my family, as well as by Dr. Teri Bellis and Professor Lori Kober, who are the professors who taught my Sign Language classes. They have all taught me so much about seeing the world through the eyes of a Deaf individual, and committing to accessibility.
and visibility for the community. As a Social Work major, I have learned to advocate for my clients, and I am doing that now with my client being the Deaf community.

Process:

I started by reaching out to Dr. Bellis, who put me into contact with Dr. Lubbers and Dr. Vidler. Together with Professor Kober, they formed my thesis committee. Dr. Lubbers geared the focus of his events planning class towards my event, and came back at the end of 2019 Spring semester with many ideas that his class had come up with. Dr. Vidler provided me with a campus event practices document with all of the resources on press releases, room reservations, and other information I would need to make my event successful. Professor Kober oversaw everything from the perspective of a Deaf individual, and made sure that everything we did was culturally respectful and relevant. Dr. Bellis was the director of the committee, and oversaw all aspects of the work that I put into the event.

I truly started my work in the Fall 2018 semester, by choosing to resurrect the American Sign Language Club on the USD campus. Heading up the organization as the president, I found other individuals on campus who were also passionate, and we were able to attract the attention of future audiologists, educators, and health service workers who were excited to learn ASL and interact with each other using sign. The club began holding monthly silent dinners and bi-weekly meetings where we would learn new signs, get to know each other, and have now begun to volunteer and reach out to the community of Vermillion.
In the Spring of 2019, I reached out to James Cooper in the Center for Diversity and Community. The CDC was extremely excited, and stated that they have been trying to involve more diversity in ability as well as race and ethnicity, which had been their previous focus. The CDC stated their willingness to partner with me on the event and provide help with marketing and set up and tear down of the event. They also offered to host the event in their space, but I felt that the space would not be large enough for the event.

In the Summer of 2019, I began researching much of what I planned to talk about, as well as deciding on a format for the event. With the help of Dr. Lubbers’s class, I decided on an open room with different stations where attendees can float around the room and learn about different aspects of the Deaf community, culture, and history. Stations will include information on schooling for Deaf children, recently passed legislation in South Dakota involving the use of the term “hearing impaired”, an arts and crafts table, conversation about Deafness as an identity as opposed to a medical condition, information about the difference between Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants, videos of Sign Language interpretations of songs, conversations about events in Deaf history, the portrayal of Deaf people in the media, and an area where attendees can learn some sign language for themselves.

In the Fall of 2019 I contacted my Thesis board, and we decided that the event would have a better chance of being a success if we moved it to the spring semester. We chose a new date of April 15th 2020, which is National American Sign Language Day. I began writing my event plan, and filling out all the details of who would do what at what
time to make sure that the plan was executed well. I also began reaching out to potential sponsors. Dr. Bellis and I also decided that the event needed an anchoring moment, so we decided that the rotations would take place before and after a speech given by her on “Growing Up Hearing In A Deaf World”. We also plan on providing a live musical performance in ASL featuring ASL I class students.

In the Spring, it was go time. I booked the location. We had chosen The Old Lumber Company because of the location, size, and integration within the community. I also reached out to recruit some volunteers to help run the event. I also continued to reach out to potential sponsors. Badlands Precision bought and donated the supplies for the arts and crafts table, which was extremely helpful. I began putting the finishing touches on the advertising materials as well. Then, the COVID-19 Pandemic hit.

The Coronavirus put an end to all of my event planning, and we had to go a different way to still meet all of my thesis requirements. I had to complete my full event plan in great detail as if the event was still happening. I also would no longer have feedback from event attendees on how the event was run and what was done well. I also would not have any photos or videos of the event to include in my thesis documentation.

Result:

We had to cancel the event in March, so we never sent out advertising. There was little recovery to be done, because the Viral outbreak hit right at the 4 week out mark, which is when the event plan would begin taking place, as 4 weeks out is when we were to start advertising. I did have to contact Chad of The Old Lumber Company, and let him
know that we would be canceling the event. Dr. Bellis and I also spoke of what needed to be turned in for all of the work that I had put in to qualify for my thesis.

Analysis

Overall, there were many mistakes I made during my thesis that I learned from, but there were many things that I believe I did well. My SWOT analysis was well thought out and put together. My event plan was always well organized. My marketing and promotional materials were always eye catching. I struggled with finding sponsorship, especially with so many changes in the event. I think the reason that this was so difficult is because the event is brand new and had never been done before. Another part that was difficult in recent times is communication with the event team. The reason the event was originally planned for fall of 2019 is because I was in a full time internship in the spring semester of 2020, and would not be on campus, nor would I have much time during the day to interact with volunteers, sponsors, and members of the event team. This proved to be difficult, and really put in perspective for me what event planning is like long distance.

My final big mistake that I made was trying to take on everything on my own, instead of delegating tasks. That is a fatal flaw for me as a person, and it was really a learning experience. I have always been a severely independent person, and there have been other times where it has gotten me into trouble. I believe that I tried to do too much on my own instead of asking for help from my team.
Final thoughts:

I am sad that we had to cancel the event. I put so much work into planning this event and coordinating everything. My plan for the event planning document is to turn it over to the American Sign Language Club and hope that they can use some of the ideas for their own events, as I will no longer be involved in the club and campus much after graduation in May. I don’t see myself rescheduling the event, as I will no longer be in Vermillion.

Although my risk assessment and planning was well done, I had no policies or procedures for a national pandemic in my event plan. I experienced what I’m sure so many event planners in the industry are experiencing right now. I’m sure many of them will be putting policies in place for the future. The Covid-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact on event planning for years to come.
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