

Allies in Caring

Building Upon the Strengths of the Deaf Community

Ivette Guillermo-McGahee

Our work is to create change by understanding more about what are the assets of Deaf people and Hard of Hearing people and what are the assets that already exist in the community that we can mobilize so that we can support ourselves and rather than relying for another organization or institution to come and help us.

Octavio Maldonado

Many Deaf people in the community tend to struggle. They can't find jobs because there is not enough education, or they don't get opportunities to gain experience. And then also English is not our first language. ASL is our first language.

Channing Brown

The biggest challenge really is the communications barrier plus the resources and accessibility that impacts all Deaf people.

Ivette Guillermo-McGahee

Many Deaf individuals are passionate about helping others, and they have a lived experience that could be very beneficial to other Deaf people and experience that many other providers don't have. And that's empowering to really mobilize our talents and our knowledge and experience.

What we have created is an apprenticeship program to become a community health worker. And so they can get certified and then provide services like kind of becoming a mentor but also an educator for another Deaf person and a peer who can facilitate interactions with other professionals.

Octavio Maldonado

If we share the same culture and the same language and an identity, it's easier to understand each other. It is easier to build a relationship. We can build a stronger collaboration, and the person can trust that we are going to be strong advocates for them.

Ivette Guillermo-McGahee

Inclusive Healthy Communities is inviting the community to take a part in making life much easier for the people with disabilities, but I think all of us will benefit as a community. We're not only helping others. We really are helping ourselves when we are thinking about creating more inclusive communities.