

Hello one and all... and Merry Christmas!



As 2012 draws to a close (and as interpreters around the country continue to frantically finger-flap in colleges, hospitals and courts), we thought it would be worthwhile to have a look at some of our achievements in Cork over the past few years. It's been a busy and productive period for us. There is obviously a lot more to do in terms of improving access and awareness of interpreting services, but we feel that we can be proud of what we've accomplished to date, and face confidently into 2013.

There has been close collaboration among interpreters in Cork and the wider Munster area for many years, and especially since 2009 when SLIM (Sign Language Interpreters in Munster) was active before the SLIS Accreditation of that year. SLIM organised workshops to prepare for that Accreditation, and we are happy to say that Cork uses the services of 6 SLIS-accredited interpreters. We are very proud to have contributed and indeed, to have benefitted from the energies of that time – and strive to continue this work in Cork.

CorkInterpreter.com is a loose affiliation of ISL / English interpreters working in the Cork area. We're not an agency or a representative body; just a group of working interpreters with a common goal – the increased provision of access through interpretation in the Cork and wider Munster area. We have a fantastic working relationship with each other and are dedicated to both our own professional development and the development of the profession. We work both freelance and for reputable interpreting agencies. We are in touch with each other as a way to inform ourselves about best practice and developments in the area.

Given the profile of the kind of interpreting work and arrangements for services existing here, we have felt for a long time that it was important for us to assist in getting the message out there. **Deaf people have a right to interpretation in many settings; they are entitled to qualified and quality interpretation; and there are bodies that can help in achieving provision of same.** We are **not** paid or funded for this voluntary awareness work that we do.

So let's look at our achievements since 2009, both individually and collectively...

- ✓ With the support of the Cork Deaf Association and Cork City Council, we designed and printed an **information leaflet** about ISL / English interpreting for service providers, listing our names and details, highlighting our role and considerations when booking an interpreter, etc. We have placed this leaflet in the Cork Deaf Centre, UCC, Cork Institute of Technology, Cork Deaf Enterprises, and other centres around the city,
- ✓ We began a **public awareness campaign**, posting the leaflet and an appropriate cover letter to dozens of courts, hospitals, employers, service providers, civil service departments etc. The cover letter specifically addressed the area of service that the recipient was a provider of, and mentioned appropriate legislation to be followed in this regard.
- ✓ We have had a **website** up and running for 2 years now (www.corkinterpreter.com) where we list individual biographies, contact details, a detailed description of our role, relevant legislation, funding schemes for interpreters, and information about health and safety. Some of this information we have translated to ISL on the site.



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- ✓ We have worked for many months now alongside the Cork Deaf Association and the Cork Deaf Club on **ensuring that Cork's hospitals provide only qualified and/or accredited interpreters for Deaf patients.** This was and continues to be a serious issue in Cork, due to existing service level agreements with spoken-language interpreter agencies, and a continuing issue of untrained, unqualified and unaccredited 'interpreters' working in Cork and the wider Munster area. This has recently borne fruit in the form of a definite undertaking from the top levels of one major Cork hospital to contact SLIS for Deaf patients' interpreting needs in the future. We are continuing to monitor the situation.
- ✓ We have **presented on interpreting issues** to both the Cork Deaf Club and staff of the Cork Deaf Association on the importance of trained interpreters, legislation, agencies, the Code of Ethics and so on.
- ✓ We continue to collaborate very closely with each other and access/disability officers in higher and further education colleges in Cork in order to provide the most comprehensive and flexible interpreter cover for Deaf students.
- ✓ We are working alongside the Cork Deaf Club and the Cork Deaf Association in organizing interpretation for VEC courses and training for Deaf people.
- ✓ We have also **attended training events** over the years on areas such as medical interpreting, mental health, religious interpreting etc.
- ✓ We have **attended international conferences** such as the World Federation of the Deaf in Madrid in 2007, World Association of Sign Language Interpreters the same year, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters in England (ASLI), "Looking Back, Going Forward" in April 2008, and the European Federation of Sign Language Interpreters in Vienna this year. We brought back news, advice, and best practice information which we gladly share with our colleagues.
- ✓ Individually we have also achieved much. Ray, Suzanne and Cormac have all worked in their free time with the Spirit of Sign Deaf drama group and found the experience hugely beneficial, both personally and professionally. Suzanne has contributed a video piece to CDS' 'Medisigns' video project and other Cork interpreters have contributed to the Medisigns forum. Suzanne is also currently a board member of the Kerry Deaf Resource Centre. Cormac Leonard recently spent a year as a Committee member of the Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (CISLI).



We are very grateful for the support and collaboration we have experienced with the **Cork Deaf Association**, the **Cork Deaf Club**, **Cork Institute of Technology**, **Spirit of Sign**, and above all **the Cork Deaf community** who we have the great privilege of working with.

We hope we can continue to work together with the Deaf community and achieve even more in the years ahead!

Please visit www.corkinterpreter.com for an **ISL translation of this update.**