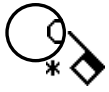


1998 YEAR-END REPORT

CENTER FOR SUTTON MOVEMENT WRITING Deaf Action Committee For SignWriting



Deaf



Action



Committee



Sign



Writing®

1. SignWriting Annual Membership Meeting, La Jolla, February 8, 1998

DAC members Darline Clark and Dave Gunsauls presented children's stories written in ASL to 20 people, with Angela Jones interpreting. Valerie then discussed research projects in Denmark and Nicaragua, introduced the newly established SignWriting Literacy Project, and reported on software development. Board members voted on new officers. It was a great meeting!!

2. SignWriting Literacy Project Established January 16, 1998

The Project was first announced on the internet. There was a flurry of requests for information. Information packets were sent to schools in February. During the spring and summer, donations of SignWriting videos and textbooks were sent to the first five participating groups, which included: the Robarts School for the Deaf in Ontario, Canada; the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin, Texas; the Caldwell Elementary School in Wichita, Kansas; a private tutor with seven native signing students, in Ontario, Canada; and a homeschool with three small children in Florida. The teachers studied the materials over the summer, and then in September each group received three SignWriting books for each student. The teachers were asked to test the materials and to fill out forms describing their opinions. Only two of the five groups completed their paperwork by year's end. The feedback that was received was quite positive. By the end of 1998, there was another flurry of requests for information. New schools are being signed up for the 1999 Spring Semester, starting March 1st, 1999.

3. The SignWriting Email List Becomes "The SignWriting List", May 9, 1998

The SignWriting Email List grew from 50 members to 500 in 1997. Every week messages were posted to the Email List discussing the issues surrounding SignWriting, posted manually by Valerie Sutton. Then in May, 1998, Paul Cowley, an interpreter and teacher of the deaf in Ontario, Canada, offered to donate his time and services to establish "The SignWriting List" with LISTSERVE software. This donation was made possible by Humber College in Ontario, Canada, which donates the computer space for the List. Paul Cowley is the first owner, and Valerie Sutton, the second owner. Because of Paul Cowley's generosity, members of the SignWriting List can now post messages to each other, without waiting for Valerie to do it!! And the List has all the benefits of LISTSERVE, making it possible for members to subscribe on their own. The donation of the SignWriting List in 1998 was a milestone for SignWriting. List members have posted outstanding information, contributing to the spread and further development of the system. All postings are archived on the world wide web.

4. Visitors From Norway, Nicaragua, Brazil, Japan, & New Mexico

Ingvild Roald, who has used SignWriting in Norway since the mid-1980's, came to stay with Valerie in April. At the same time, Janice Gangel-Vasquez, who wrote the thesis "Literacy in Nicaraguan Sign Language", which shows that deaf children can "achieve literacy" in a signed language, drove from Los Angeles to visit. A special DAC meeting was held in Ingvild's and Janice's honor. Ronice Muller de Quadros, from Porto Alegre, Brazil, who is using SignWriting in her linguistic thesis, came in early June. Ronice and other members of the DAC were videotaped discussing their feelings on SignWriting. Mark Penner, an American living in Japan, who is translating the Bible into Japanese Sign Language and is using SignWriting to assist in this task, visited in late July. Cecilia Flood, who will be testing SignWriting through the SignWriting Literacy Project in the Albuquerque, New Mexico School System in 1999, as a part of her doctoral thesis at the University of New Mexico, came at the end of December to study SignWriting with Valerie Sutton and Darline Clark Gunsauls.

The DAC • The Deaf Action Committee For SignWriting®

Center For Sutton Movement Writing, Inc., a tax-exempt, 501c3 educational nonprofit
P.O. Box 517 • La Jolla • CA • 92038-0517 • USA • email: DAC@SignWriting.org
voice: 619-456-0098 • tty: 619-456-0010 • fax: 619-456-0020 • web: www.SignWriting.org

5. Conference in San Diego, April 13-14

SignWriting was presented at "The Impact of Deafness on Cognition" Conference sponsored by AERA, The American Education Research Association. Not only did the DAC present SignWriting, but the system was also a part of another demonstration, by Janice Gangel Vasquez.

6. New Children's Stories Video & Six New SignWriting Books

In June, 1998, Darline Clark, Dave Gunsauls and Kevin Clark "re-told" different children's stories in American Sign Language in front of a video camera. Valerie then edited the video, creating the SignWriting Children's Stories Video, including four classics told by Darline: Goldilocks, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella and Snow White. In August, 1998, Valerie prepared six documents based on the videos. The schools needed the materials for the upcoming Fall semester of the SignWriting Literacy Project. Only three of the six were distributed in the Fall.

7. History of SignWriting Video & Booklet Completed

The interpreter's voices were placed on the video in June, 1998, and the accompanying booklet, which transcribes the entire video with colorful diagrams, was completed in October, 1998.

8. SignWriter 5.0 Written in Java

1998 was a complicated year in regards to software development. DTAI is a software firm in San Diego which specializes in Java applications. Programmers from DTAI worked on SignWriter 5.0 until September, 1998, when DTAI no longer had time to finish the project. But, they were kind enough to arrange for a new programmer, Larry Peranich, who began working on SignWriter 5.0 in November, 1998. Larry works full time elsewhere, and is only able to work a few hours a week on SignWriter, but he is an excellent programmer and we are grateful to have him!!

9. The SignWritingSite

The SignWriting Web Site is a reference library for written Sign Language Literature and free SignWriting Lessons Online. It is designed and managed by webmaster Valerie Sutton. There are over 250 pages. Daily hits range from 10,000 to 15,000. Some important postings in 1998 were:

January 5, 1998 - How SignWriting Has Changed: The Evolution of Writing Styles

February 02, 1998 - Cinderella, Part Two, written in ASL by Darline Clark

February 25, 1998 - Learn to Read ASL in SignWriting: Lesson One

March 19, 1998 - SignWriter Newsletter, Spring, 1998, by Dave Gunsauls

May 06, 1998 - Complete Thesis: Literacy In Nicaraguan Sign Language

May 18, 1998 - SignWriting Teacher's Forum, Home of the SW Literacy Project

June 12, 1998 - Typing Fingerspelling in 14 Countries

July 01, 1998 - "If You Give A Mouse A Cookie" In Nicaraguan Sign Language

October 06, 1998 - Interview with Abdul Aziz Al-Obaid, from Saudi Arabia

October 12, 1998 - "Uma Menina Chamada Kauana" Brazilian Children's Story

October 19, 1998 - Learn to Write SignWriting By Hand, Lessons 1 & 2

November 02, 1998 - Writing ASL Grammar, Lesson Two: Spatial Comparisons

November 02, 1998 - The Importance of Writing Sign Language Down In Columns

November 09, 1998 - Literacy Project Teacher Reports Posted, Akehurst & Lewis

November 17, 1998 - Lessons In SignWriting: Lesson 4: Writing Finger Movements

November 30, 1998 - Three Deaf Opinions: Kevin Clark, Eva & Hans Abildgaard

December 14, 1998 - Lessons In SignWriting: Lesson 5: Straight Movement Arrows

10. With Thanks To Our 1998 Sponsors...

Without them none of the above could have been possible! Many thanks to the R.C. Baker Foundation, the Briggs Foundation, the Edwards Foundation, the Legler Benbough Foundation, Epson America Inc., Viking Office Products, Dr. Seuss Enterprises, the Trizec-Hahn Foundation, and all of the individuals and Board members who generously contributed to our success in 1998!



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