



## Letter to Members

Dear DHHIG members and stakeholders,

I am honored and delighted to be serving as your President for the second and final term. I would like to introduce you to your new Vice President, Michelle Koplitz. I know we both share the same passion for current and prospective Deaf and Hard of Hearing Federal employees. We all are looking forward to seeing all the exciting things she will bring to the organization with her new tenure in the upcoming months.

Last year's National Training Conference was a great success, but also at a great cost to DHHIG. To ensure that we remain a premier organization for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Federal employees for years to come, difficult decisions and changes have to be made. The challenges we've faced from the continued sequestration, potential furloughs, and "conference" spending scrutiny has forced us to re-think how we conduct our conference and seminars. Based upon these circumstances, the Board has decided to put both the One Day Seminar and National Training Conference on hold till further notice and we will instead deliver training through various means- webinars, educational videos, virtual online training, and traditional classroom settings. Scholarship funds for training and continuing education has been established and we are seeking donations. Once the fund has reached a balance of \$10,000 DHHIG will start awarding scholarships to qualified applicants.

The DHHIG and its Board members remain committed to overcome communication barriers, resolve accessibility issues, and promote a fully inclusive work environment. The people who serve DHHIG are purely volunteers and we have a sacred number of them who are willing to contribute their time to the organization. With limited time and resources, we have restructured internally to focus on 4 core areas:

- 1) Rebranding DHHIG;
- 2) Networking;
- 3) Public Policy and Advocacy; and
- 4) Training.

This restructuring will enable us to provide services to our members.

Based on the new mission statement that the Board and our members recently approved, our rebranding committee will focus on creating a new "DHHIG". Michelle Koplitz will be leading

this committee that will conduct activities such as the development of a new logo and website and reevaluate and expand membership benefits. The new DHHIG will be unveiled at the National Association of the Deaf's 2014 Biennial Conference at Atlanta, GA. We hope you all can join us for this exciting milestone!

DHHIG also promotes the importance of networking as it is the best strategy to use for creating several career opportunities and Ryan Maliszewski will work on setting up networking events. We hope you all can attend our events when they become available.

We have built a strong partnership with the Federal Employees with Disabilities (FEDs), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN) to overcome your communication barriers and resolve accessibility issues. Jon Mitchiner, Board Member-at-Large, has been actively engaged in discussion and representing all of us in meetings with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and Congress to advocate for your issues.

Without you, DHHIG would not exist and we need your support, so please renew your membership or join us today! As always, DHHIG needs more volunteers and if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to us at [Info@dhhig.org](mailto:Info@dhhig.org).

Last but not least, I would like to take the time to thank our corporate level sponsors for their support to this organization. They are TCS Associates, Gallaudet University Interpreter Services (GIS), and Deaf Access Solutions (DAS).

Thank you for your continued support,

Steven Gagnon- DHHIG President