

President's Report

A New Year

We wrapped up 2020 and came out running in 2021 with two new Board members: Our new Public Relations Coordinator, Christopher Samp, and our new Secretary, Rachel Schulbaum! These incredibly talented and motivated individuals have already begun to leave their mark on the Michigan Deaf Association and our community, and we are excited to see what's in store.

This year we are also having our elections. As dictated by the MDA Bylaws, the Michigan Deaf Association must hold elections for the Board of Directors every odd year. In addition, the MDA must (and shall) provide full accommodations for our community members. We must also adhere to whatever coronavirus procedures are in place at the time of the elections. **In order to accommodate all members, while keeping everyone as safe as possible, we will be holding elections both online and in person (in limited capacity). Persons who may require in-person voting and/or accommodations, such as the DeafBlind, will be given priority for seating reservations.** If you do not require in-person voting and/or accommodations, please try to attend this event virtually. Sign-Ups will be available starting March 1st.

Voting shall also take place regarding proposed amendments to the MDA Bylaws. Proposed amendments shall be posted on the website by March 1st.

A Statement Regarding Black History Month

This is a time where a focus is drawn upon the Black Lives Matter movement, to reflect on Black History, and gather support for the BIPOC community. As Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Allies part of our duty is to ensure that February is not the only time we uplift the Black Deaf community; that we are aware of how much we still have to learn and grow as allies. Now, and always, we can always do more to improve ourselves and our communities.

In addition to our Deaf community, our interpreters need our support. Only 13% of Sign Language interpreters in the United States identify as people of color. These interpreters provide unique accommodations, including subtle cultural nuances that increase the effectiveness of the interpreter. By recruiting and supporting BIPOC Interpreters and ITP students we are supporting elevated accommodations and industry standards that benefit us all.

Let's all do our part to better our community. Not temporarily, but invariably,
#BlackLivesMatter.