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CSD of Minnesota Becomes ThinkSelf

Programs, Services Will Remain the Same

June 20, 2017 [ST. PAUL, MN] — ThinkSelf announced its new name today as part of its transition from CSD of MN, effective July 1. “This new name reflects not only continuity of services, but also new opportunities and services,” ThinkSelf Executive Director Aaron Gutzke said. “By keeping our services firmly Minnesota-based, ThinkSelf can locally make decisions on behalf of the community we work with. It’s an exciting milestone.”

Previously, ThinkSelf was a community-based office with Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD); it is now an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit. “We are deeply grateful to CSD for its support, program guidance, and belief in our services and community since 1997,” Gutzke said. “Also, the people who have been involved with CSD of MN since 1989 have shown an incredible amount of dedication and commitment which has helped our organization be what it is today.”

ThinkSelf will continue its popular adult basic education classes with the support of hundreds of volunteers who provide tutoring and learning support. “We continue to be the go-to place for Deaf adults who wish to increase their knowledge, whether it be English, math, driver’s education, college readiness or job skills,” Gutzke explained. “Minnesota has always been a state that is incredibly supportive of immigrants, and our ABE program is a very important piece of that puzzle for them. More often than not, this is the first time in their lives they receive formal instruction in sign language.”

Another crucial component will continue at ThinkSelf: the domestic violence and sexual assault program. “When we had no funding to support the program in 2013, CSD provided much-needed support. In 2015, this program served 35 people, and in 2016, that number grew to 118,” Gutzke said. “We now have secure funding in place for a broad range of services, including a 24-hour crisis line, dedicated staff, and support for people who are rebuilding their lives after experiencing violence.”

The name “ThinkSelf,” which loosely translated in American Sign Language means, “It’s up to you,” emphasizes self-advocacy and independent decision-making, Gutzke said. “More often than not, Deaf people have not made decisions for themselves during their upbringing – and now that they’re adults, they often ask us, ‘What should I do?’ We do not want to be the ones to tell them how to live their lives. Instead, we provide tools for them to make their own decisions that fit their goals and needs in a safe and nurturing environment.”

ThinkSelf is primarily funded by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Office of Justice Programs. For more information, visit www.thinkself.org.

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