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## Why I created - "SIGN LANGUAGE FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS"

Guest Post by Louise Sattler of Signing Families

On September 11, 2001 a lot of our lives changed- forever. I know that it is a day that my immediate family will never forget as we are native New Yorkers and many of us still live and work in metropolitan New York. Alongside the hearing population on 9/11 were thousands of deaf and hard of hearing people, too. It is because of them that I created SIGN LANGUAGE FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.

I first became aware of how the deaf had difficulty accessing information and not understanding the gravity of the situation through a documentary I had viewed. 9/11 Fear in Silence- The Forgotten Underdogs. I also had read articles and found out from my deaf friends about the difficulties they experienced on 9/11.

It took me some time to wrap my head around the concept that deaf people could not have the same emergency information as hearing people. How could that be? So, I started putting away information I found and lists of vocabulary words I thought first responders, healthcare professionals, the RED CROSS and others might need to know during an emergency to help the deaf community.

But, "life" got in the way. My business seemed to steer itself towards another path. Now I am not saying that I forgot about what I wanted to create, but I certainly was overwhelmed and did not have the financial resources or time.

In 2009, I once again revisited the idea of making a DVD to help people during an emergency. I teamed with Shara Lawrence-Weiss of PersonalChildStories.com to create a language chart titled, "SIGN EXPRESSIONS for I WANT, I NEED". We had a great response to this chart and I was delighted that we were able to create a product to help children with learning challenges as well as augment my sign language DVDs. I pitched the idea of SIGN LANGUAGE FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS as a DVD with a companion chart. She immediately was enthusiastic and away we went. Shara enlisted her husband, Rick Weiss from Design Media Pros to help create the chart from photography that I had snapped. We also were delighted to have friend and translator, Karina Prizont Cowan help us with the Spanish. Yes, I said Spanish. Because nearly nine years after 9/11 I realized that the deaf and the Hispanic communities could both be served by one set of products. So, here we are in the Winter of 2010 with a finished product. SIGN LANGUAGE FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS DVD with companion SIGN EXPRESSIONS MINI-CHART (as a DVD insert) will be available by April 2010.

What I need now is people who want to learn to sign and speak basic Spanish in an emergency. I would love to hear from people who are First Responders, Hospital and other health care professionals. School personnel should also learn how to safely evacuate or keep safe their students. (Think how many deaf children are now mainstreamed in public schools!) Camp counselors also could benefit from learning the basics of sign language. And of course, if individuals from the Red Cross person could learn the basics I would be so happy.

So, please I invite people who wish to learn common words and phrases to use during emergency or medical situations to view the YouTube trailer and contact me. I will look for comments here or email me at Louise@SigningFamilies

