



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEAF UNITY BOARD APPOINTS DEBRA GORRA BARASH AS CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER & CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Madison, WI – February 4, 2019 -- [Deaf Unity](#), Inc., a statewide non-profit organization, dedicated to helping Deaf persons affected by domestic violence and/or sexual assault in Wisconsin, is pleased to announce the appointment of Debra Gorra Barash as Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer (COO/CFO).

In liaison with the Deaf Unity board of directors, as COO/CFO, Ms. Barash will assist in organizational structure and development; manage HR tasks such as recruitment, retention, and employee handbook revisions; and will coordinate with the Deaf Unity staff, particularly regarding financial issues and employment matters. In this role, she will report to and collaborate with the Executive Director. She will direct and communicate all pertinent financial issues and matters related to Deaf Unity and will support the development of policies and governance as appropriate. Additionally she will guide and support grant writing, fundraising, donations, the seeking of additional revenue sources, and will develop, monitor and report Deaf Unity's budget. She also will lead fund allocation and monitoring with Deaf Unity's external accountant and accounting firm.

Deaf Unity Board President [Jim Powell](#) stated "We believe that the combination of Debra's solid knowledge of financial, HR and business operational systems, along with her broad range of non-profit organization management, will provide significant value to Deaf Unity's 14 years of the progressive delivery of successful prevention, education, and advocacy services to the Deaf Communities throughout Wisconsin". He continued, "With our COO/CFO in place, this affords Deaf Unity the opportunity to meet both the current and future needs of our clients." "By adding Debra to our team, our advocacy and counselor teams can provide a broader and deeper array of services to move our clients' needs better forward, and help Deaf Unity to expand our scope of needed services for the Deaf Community," added [Carla Ernst](#), Deaf Unity Board Vice-President. "I am looking forward to serving Deaf Unity. Assessing and continuing to build the current and future operational and financial health of Deaf Unity will lead to the best possible services critical to the community we serve far into its flourishing future," remarked Ms. Barash. Mr. Powell emphasizes that Ms. Barash will mentor and assist the new Executive Director.

About Debra Gorra Barash

Ms. Barash has worked in the Deaf Community for over 33 years and is a seasoned business executive with deep expertise in finance and human resource management. Known for building and reinvigorating organizations, she has considerable experience in analyzing and directing finances, developing business plans, and designing strategies to address a wide range of business and organizational challenges. She is also an educator/trainer, and sign language interpreter, in addition to co-founding

“Professional Interpreting Enterprise” (P.I.E.), the first interpreting company in Wisconsin. She earned her degree in Business Administration and has credentials in HR management, non-profit management, mediation, and specialty legal and mental health interpreting. For over 25 years, Ms. Barash has worked with the WI court system improving all legal interpreting services throughout the state. Ms. Barash also volunteers her time with several organizations. Debra can be reached at debra@deafunity.org

With this reorganization, we are looking forward to the positive, growing and expanding future of Deaf Unity in serving our community.

About Deaf Unity

Established in September 2005 in Madison, Wisconsin, Deaf Unity, Inc., is a statewide non-profit organization that provides prevention, education, and advocacy services for all victims – women, children, and men – in the Deaf Community affected by domestic violence and/or sexual assault in Wisconsin. It was formed by Deaf Community professionals, grassroots leaders, and supporters from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Disability Rights Wisconsin, and the then-Department of Health and Family Services, and the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Deaf Unity has grown to become a 501c(3) organization with paid staff and volunteers to provide direct and advocacy services for Deaf victims. For more information, visit our website at www.deafunitywi.org.

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