

**WomenSport International Task Force on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Girls and Women in Sport  
Update Report  
20 January 2014**

The purpose of this Task Force (TF) is to determine and assess the needs of deaf and hard of hearing girls and women in sport and advocate on their behalf. Following WomenSport International's mission, we seek "to encourage increased opportunities and positive changes" for deaf and hard of hearing females at all involvement of sport.

Goals include:

1. Identify deaf/hard of hearing women leaders in Deaf sport to serve on the TF (representatives from the five major regions of the world)
2. Review of deaf and hard of hearing women participation in Deaf sporting organizations (international, national, regional, etc.) Document analysis and Survey/or Needs Assessment
3. Identify and create a network of deaf and hard of hearing women in sport
4. Create a website for information distribution and social networking
5. Produce a written report detailing results of initial findings
6. Recommendations

The TF was officially established by WSI Executive Board in January, 2013. Initially, six members were appointed by WSI President, Dr. Carol Rodgers to the TF representing three of five major world regions. Dr. Donalda Ammons (USA) and Dr. Becky Clark (USA) were appointed as co-chairs.

TF members: Donalda K. Ammons, Ed.D. – USA (Co-Chair)  
 Becky Clark, Ph.D., LCSW-R, CC-AASP – USA (Co-Chair)  
 Dawn Jani Birley, B.S. – Canada  
 Anne Bremner, M.A. – Australia  
 Mimi Ho, M.Sc. – United Kingdom/Hong Kong  
 Petra Kurkova, Ph.D. – Czech Republic  
 Johanna Mesch, Ph.D. - Sweden

Ms. Ho was appointed to the TF in November for a total of seven members representing four of the five major global regions. We continue to seek qualified candidates for the region of Africa. (Link to the WSI TF website that also includes TF members' biographies:

[http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/taskforces/deaf\\_hard\\_of\\_hearing.htm](http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/taskforces/deaf_hard_of_hearing.htm))

In addition to regular email correspondence over the course of the year, the TF met 2x (14/15 April and 21/22 December) during 2013 via Skype video conferencing with the major language being International Sign (IS) and written English. The co-chairs, Drs. Ammons and Clark also met at least 1x monthly via Skype.

The main focus of the TF during its first year centered on developing a survey to measure current participation of girls and women in 104 deaf national sports federations of the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD), the governing body of Deaf sport. We are pleased to receive full endorsement from ICSD President, Valery Rukhledev.

## **SURVEY**

The survey and cover letter (please see attached documents) will be available in three formats – online software, *Survey Monkey*; International Sign (IS) via YouTube video (with English captions), and email with attachment(s).

Dr. Clark and Ms. Ho will incorporate the survey in Survey Monkey. Ms. Birley will translate the survey in IS and add English captions.

A gmail account was created for the purpose of TF correspondence ([www.wsi.dhh@gmail.com](mailto:www.wsi.dhh@gmail.com)). We would appreciate your approval for this account (no expense involved and will only be used for WSI TF DHH business). Thank you!

We ask for WSI review and approval of the cover letter and survey. We welcome any edits and comments.

## **IWG WORLD CONFERENCE**

The TF is interested in presenting our work re: Deaf/Hard of Hearing Girls and Women in Sport at the IWG World Conference in Helsinki, Finland 12-15 June 2014. We understand that we are responsible for all expenses. We are exploring possible avenues of funding. The deadline for submission is fast approaching (31 January). Should we submit a proposal or is there space for us to present as part of the WSI parallel session? **Please advise as soon as possible.**

## **WSI MEMBERSHIP**

Please confirm the name/address where we can submit our 2014 membership dues. The WSI website shows: **WomenSport International**, P.O. Box 743, Vashon, WA. USA. **A zip code is not provided.**

## **MARSHA WETZEL CASE re: DIBF and 22<sup>nd</sup> Deaflympics**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Deaflympics in Sofia, Bulgaria were a highlight of the summer. WSI TF co-chairs worked closely together with WSI Executive Board in assisting deaf basketball referee, Marsha Wetzel with numerous correspondences and official letters of complaint of possible gender inequality against the Deaf International Basketball Association (DIBF).

The letters of complaints were submitted to DIBF, ICSD and IOC, and centered on DIBF's selection of an all-male official crew for Men and Women's basketball games during the 2013 Sofia Deaflympics. WSI TF did not receive any formal (or informal) responses in regard to these emails and letters. However, Ms. Wetzel informed us that ICSD intervened and "one time agreement" was made between DIBF, ICSD and Ms. Wetzel to have Ms. Wetzel officiate one game during the Deaflympics women's basketball tournament.

Ms. Wetzel became the first deaf woman to officiate a Deaflympics basketball game on 2 August 2013 between Japan and Belarus women's teams.

Furthermore, WSI TF will be called upon to work with DIBF and ICSD to make recommendations to improve gender equality. Check out Ms. Wetzel's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/337173959746678/>

## NEWS/NOTABLE EVENTS

### Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport

- USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF) US Capitol Visitors Center, 28 January 2013**  
 WSI Vice President Dr. Carole Oglesby, WSI TF Co-Chairs Drs. Donalda Ammons and Becky Clark were witnesses/signers of this historical event. The USADSF became the 2<sup>nd</sup> Deaf organization in the world (and the first national deaf organization) with its endorsement.



U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC -(28 January 2013) USA Deaf Sports Federation President Jack Lamberton (front center, seated) endorses the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport as (L-R front) WSI DHH GWIS Task Force Co-Chair, Dr. Donalda Ammons, WSI Vice President, Dr. Carole Oglesby, & WSI DHH GWIS Task Force Co-Chair, Dr. Becky Clark, (L-R back row) Youth athletes, Hannah Johnston-Shaw, and Crystal Salit, USADSF Vice President, Jeff Salit, USADB Commissioner, Shirley Platt, and former Harvard University and Deaflympic 20x gold medalist swimmer, Dr. Caroline Solomon.



WSI Vice President and signatory witness, Dr. Carole Oglesby (back row far left- right), Shirley Platt, Dr. Donalda Ammons, Dr. Caroline Solomon, Dr. Becky Clark, (front row L-R) Crystal Salit and Hannah Johnston-Shaw celebrate USA Deaf Sports Federation endorsement of the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport, US Capitol, Washington, DC, 28 January, 2013.

**USA Deaf Basketball, Inc. (USADB) USA National Deaf Basketball Tournament, King of Prussia, PA 06 April 2013**

USADB Commissioner Shirley Platt (who was also a witness to USADSF Brighton Declaration ceremony), Former Deaflympian/2013 Deaflympic USA Women's Basketball Head Coach, Laura Edwards and former Deaflympian and WSI Co-chair, Dr. Becky Clark endorsed/signed the Brighton Declaration.



(L-R: USA Deaf Women's Basketball Head Coach & former Deaflympian Gold Medalist , Laura Edwards, USADB Commissioner, Shirley Platt, and WSI Co-Chair, Dr. Becky Clark signs/witnesses USADB endorsement of the Brighton Declaration, USADB National Tournament, King of Prussia, PA, 2013)

### **Dr. Donalda Ammons – WSI Co-Chair**

- Appointed as co-coordinator of World Federation of the Deaf Expert Group on Women and Children. The objectives of this group is to reaffirm the importance of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) monitoring report, making comments, to prepare and submit any statements when needed and to write the WFD Policy of Deaf Children and/or Women.

### **Dr. Becky Clark – WSI Co-Chair**

- US Sport Envoy - Disabilities, Inclusion and Equality - Guangzhou, China
- American Cultural Ambassador in the area of Deaf Sports – Caracas/Merida, Venezuela (Included presentations on Deaf girls and women in sport, gender equality and inclusion and sports clinics in basketball and volleyball).
- Sports Visitors Programs (In Washington, D.C. and New York) Discussions on Deaf Sport, Inclusion, Equality and Sport Psychology: Deaf Youth Track and Field – Pacific Islands; Wheelchair Basketball (men/women) – Turkey; Futsal (men) – Libya; Volleyball Coaches-China.
- Global Sports Mentoring Program (GSMP) - Discussion on Deaf Sport, Inclusion and Equality (sixteen women from 15 countries). Sponsored by U.S. Department of State/SportsUnited and espnW. Program administered by the University of Tennessee Center for Sport, Peace and Society.
- Represented WSI TF at the GSMP Emerging Leaders Luncheon at the Meridian International Center in Washington, D.C.
- Represented USADSF and WSI TF on Capitol Hill in advocacy meetings with members of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Invited guest at the “Women as Key Players in the World of Athletics, Sports Diplomacy & Global Peacebuilding” panel discussion, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Institute of Peace and the U.S. Olympic Committee, Washington, D.C.
- Co-presenter-U.S. Sports Envoy Disabilities, Inclusion and Equality at the IV Consultation on People to People Exchange – USA-CHINA, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.
- Invited guest-Former Lady Vol Basketball Players Private Reception, Pat Summitt Plaza Dedication and Statue unveiling, Knoxville, Tennessee.
- Keynote speech, “Breaking Barriers, Opening Doors”, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, New York, New York.

### **Dr. Johanna Mesch**

- Co-authored and published a book celebrating Swedish Deaf athlete Johan Alfred Selenius Dahlström. Mesch, Urban & Johanna Mesch. (2013). *Den framstående idrottsmannen Johan Alfred Selenius Dahlström*. Eget förlag, Stockholm.

## SUMMARY

The major goals of the TF in 2013 was creating this TF and developing a survey to determine and assess the needs of deaf and hard of hearing girls and women in sport. Due to the lack of accessibility and opportunities for deaf females in deaf sport (and sport and physical activities in general), identifying qualified candidates for the TF took longer than expected. There are seven members - all deaf women who are leaders in their field, played sports at various levels and/or served in sports leadership positions. The TF represents four of the five major regions of the world.

The cover letter and survey are attached for your review and feedback. As soon as we receive WSI approval, we will make any edits and send to 104 National Deaf Sports Federations. We expect to have a full report of the data with recommendations by the end of April 2014 and ready for presentation at the IWG World Conference. We also plan to create a Facebook page as an avenue of information distribution and social networking which will also assist us in creating a network for deaf and hard of hearing girls and women in sport.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve and work closely under the auspices of WomenSport International. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted:



Dr. Becky Clark, Co- Chair



Dr. Donalda Ammons, Co-Chair