

# Discovering Deaf Worlds Benefit Celebrates Grant from USAID

*April 9, 2015*



**Rochester, N.Y.** — The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded Rochester 501c3 nonprofit Discovering Deaf Worlds (DDW) a cooperative EXPAND grant to strengthen the capacity of deaf leaders in the Philippines to advocate for their civil rights to language, education and employment.

DDW will host its fifth annual benefit from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday, April 17, at the Harro East Ballroom in Rochester, N.Y., to share up-to-date accomplishments of the EXPAND program, which has included a series of 10 trainings, 15 community presentations and will later include a national forum on deaf leadership in the Philippines in October 2015. To date, nearly 1,000 Deaf Filipinos have received training under this program.

The event is expected to draw a crowd of 320-350 attendees. DDW will also deliver a Service Provider of the Year Award to the President of Gallaudet University's Board of Trustees, Heather Harker, for her contributions to DDW's organizational, strategic and leadership development.

DDW is working closely with professionals from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester School for the Deaf, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and the National Association of the Deaf to implement the EXPAND program in partnership with the president, vice president and other officers of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD).

DDW is providing training and consultation to PFD on organizational management topics, including strategic planning, disability law, finance, fund development, program evaluation and public relations.

In its startup years, the core team behind DDW volunteered more than 30,000 hours to connect with more than 300 deaf schools and organizations from more than 50 countries, creating one of the largest international deaf advocacy networks in the world. All proceeds from this benefit will go toward DDW's capacity-building partnerships with deaf leadership teams in the Philippines, who are working to improve education, employment opportunities and human rights circumstances for deaf people in the island nation.

The benefit is sponsored by Wegmans, the National Technical Institute of the Deaf Center on Access Technology, the University of Rochester American Sign Language Department, Gallaudet University, New York State Relay and Nixon Peabody, LLP, among others. Special guest PUSH Physical Theatre will perform, and Harro East will cater an array of signature hors d'oeuvres.

American Sign Language interpreting, support service providers for deaf-blind guests, real-time captioning services, and a hearing loop system will be provided for full accessibility to the public.

USAID administers the U.S. foreign assistance program providing economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide.

For more information, please contact DDW International Programs Director David Justice at [djustice@discoveringdeafworlds.org](mailto:djustice@discoveringdeafworlds.org) or 585-690-6737, or visit [www.discoveringdeafworlds.org](http://www.discoveringdeafworlds.org).

*Discovering Deaf Worlds is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the self-determination of signing deaf communities through local capacity building in developing countries.*

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