



Advocacy Does Work!

Durham Deaf Accessibility Committee (DDAC)

2007-2012

DDAC Committee

Agenda

- 12:30 – 1:00 – Guided Tour of the Abilities Centre
- 1:00 – 2:00 – DDAC Presentation & Groupwork
- 2:00 – 2:15 – BREAK
- 2:15 – 3:15 – DDAC Groupwork
- 3:15 – 4:00 – Presentation on OIS Changes – Bev Dooley, CHS.

DDAC Mandate

What does DDAC do?

- Advocate
- Promote issues about accessibility
- Help the public to take action to improve accessibility
- Work with local municipalities, all levels of government, public and private agencies to improve accessibility
- Our goal is to improve the quality of life for Deaf and hard of hearing people

Who Are We?

- Committee members are from the Durham Region: Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Bowmanville (Clarington), Port Perry etc.
- Committee members are:
 - Mike Finnegan (Chair - Whitby)
 - Don Kinsley (Oshawa)
 - Gordon Ryall (Oshawa)
 - Bev Dooley (Whitby)
 - Bryan Meany (Courtice)
 - Kim Reid (Oshawa)
 - Mirek Swiecicki (Newcastle)
 - Robert Lang (Bowmanville)
 - Veronica Bickle (Ajax)
 - Behishta Mushtaq (Whitby)
 - Maggie Doherty-Gilbert (CHS)
 - Kim Nicholson (CHS)



How did we get started?

- New law in Ontario requiring all homeowners to have smoke alarms in their homes in 2007.
- Oshawa Fire Department was starting to visit people's home to check if they had smoke alarms in their homes. A lot of Deaf people were concerned about this because visual smoke alarms are expensive.
- It was decided to set up a committee to advocate for affordable visual smoke detectors.
- The first meeting was in June 2007.

DDAC's Priorities

- In the beginning, we focused only on advocating for better fire safety but we started to focus on other topics.
- Our priorities for 2013:
 - Visual smoke alarms
 - Information Event for the Deaf Community
 - School Boards
 - Hospitals

DDAC vs. Local Accessibility Advisory Committees

- AODA requiring to have local Accessibility Advisory Committee in each town/city. In Durham, there is 8 of them.
- Not enough interpreters.
- Do better with our own group due to common language used; strong network and better focus of identifying issues and solutions.
- More flexibility to decide our priorities and more time to focus on Deaf issues.
- DDAC advises and lobbies its needs.

We Received an Award!



**CHS Peterborough/Durham Accessibility
Award – June 2012**

Our Accomplishments!

- Recognition from Local Accessibility Committees
- Bowmanville Lions Club donated \$2,000 in 2008.
- Meeting with the Fire Marshal of Ontario and participated in the Public Fire Safety Council. Participated in various fire safety events i.e. Fire Prevention Officers Trade Show.



Newspaper article in January 2008 about the Bowmanville Lions Club donation of \$2,000 for visual smoke alarms in *Oshawa This Week*.

At the Fire Prevention
Officers Trade Show in Ajax,
March 2012.



More Accomplishments!

- Better communication with hospitals in Ajax and Oshawa about accessibility.
- Better communication with the Durham Region Police about using interpreters.
- Durham Region Transit is in the process of installing real-time LED signage on their buses now.
- Still advocating for better fire safety and captioning for town hall meetings!

Why Were We Successful?

- We had the passion to improve accessibility in the Durham Region.
- We chose our priorities and focus on them.
- We provided good support, resources and mentoring for each other.
- The Canadian Hearing Society, Peterborough & Durham Region made resources available for us to succeed.
 - Meeting room
 - Staff to assist with writing letters

And we had fun!

- Annual Christmas and BBQ summer party at various DDAC members' homes.
- Inside jokes and sense of humour!



Christmas Party
December 2011



What we hope for the future!

- We just had our 5th Anniversary event on September 26, 2012!
- We would like to see more Accessibility Committees set up across the province to focus on advocating for our accessibility needs!
- We have a new website! Visit us at:

www.dhhcanada.ca/durhamdeafaccess/index.htm



The End!

- Questions?
- Comments?

