

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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Mill Neck Family of Organizations Welcomes New International Programs Director

The Mill Neck Family of Organizations is pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Amy Wilson, Ph.D. as its new Director of International Programs. In this role, Dr. Wilson will be coordinating efforts between Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf and education professionals from other countries in order to facilitate training and development with Deaf schools in these countries.

As a child, Dr. Wilson knew that she had an innate passion for American Sign Language when a three-year-old Deaf girl moved in across the street from her. “My brother and I checked out a sign language book from the library so we could communicate with her,” she says. They began to bond and learn from each other for years. “As she grew and learned from her teachers, she taught me more signs, too.”

When it came time for her to pick a major at Illinois State University, Dr. Wilson did not hesitate to choose Deaf Education. “It was an easy choice since I wanted to teach and already knew some sign,” she says. “I took a few courses and absolutely loved my three student teaching experiences.”

Dr. Wilson began her career in 1979, teaching the sciences to Deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstreamed public high school in suburban Chicago. After 12 years, she spent four years as a volunteer with the Mennonite Central Committee in northeast Brazil where she participated in teacher training and community development work with Deaf communities in rural areas. “It was great!” she says of her experience in Brazil. “I feel a special connection to Deaf people when I travel abroad and meet members of their community as we are able to communicate immediately with signs.”

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Inspired by her work in Brazil, Dr. Wilson returned to the U.S. where she earned her Ph.D. at Gallaudet University in the Department of Education, focusing on curriculum development with an added specialization of International Development. In the areas of disability and development, she is most interested in researching how to empower Deaf people and those with disabilities in developing African, Caribbean, Asian and South American countries.

“I studied international development so I could return to the U.S. and figure out how to best offer humanitarian and development assistance to Deaf people overseas,” she explains. “I finally think I have a better idea of how to do that.”

Dr. Wilson began teaching research and evaluation at Gallaudet in 2001 in the Department of Educational Foundations and Research. In her early years of teaching, she taught education courses such as Multicultural Education and Research for Educators. Aside from her full-time position as a professor, Dr. Wilson served as Program Director for International Development from 2003 until 2015. It was during this time that she developed a certificate program and eventually, a graduate degree in International Development.

Dr. Wilson recently met with the principal of Mill Neck’s Deaf Education Center, the School’s Superintendent and several teachers to discuss plans for the International Program. Initial plans include surveying the Mill Neck school staff to determine those interested in mentoring a professional from an economically poor country with regard to services for Deaf schoolchildren. Ideally, the international visitor would live and learn on the Mill Neck campus for a period of time, then return to his or her home country to disseminate the information to professionals in their schools.

“The Mill Neck staff has a passionate vision to empower Deaf people overseas,” Dr. Wilson emphasizes. “Before you begin an endeavor like this, there needs to be a top-notch school with knowledgeable professionals who model best practices. Secondly, those professionals must be willing to share their knowledge and expertise in a culturally sensitive manner with those from other countries who will return home to train others. And thirdly, there must be a solid commitment of resources and time. All three exist at Mill Neck,” she concludes.

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The Mill Neck Family of Organizations, which includes Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf, founded in 1947 by Lutheran Friends of the Deaf, Mill Neck Manor Early Childhood Center, Mill Neck Services, Inc., Mill Neck Services Center for Hearing Health, Mill Neck Interpreter Service and Lutheran Friends of the Deaf. For more information, please call 516-922-4100 or visit millneck.org. “Like” Mill Neck on Facebook at facebook.com/millneck.



*Dr. Amy Wilson, Mill Neck Family's new
Director of International Programs.*

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