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**DEAF PROJECT, CSUN INSTRUCTOR HONORED BY
LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL DURING DEAF AWARENESS MONTH**

Northridge, CA (Sept. 22, 2014) – The Deaf Education And Families Project (DEAF Project) at California State University, Northridge today announced that Stephanie Johnson was one of 10 individuals honored by Los Angeles City Council in conjunction with Deaf Awareness Month. Johnson teaches DEAF Project’s San Fernando Valley Family ASL Class, and is a part-time faculty member in CSUN’s Department of Special Education.

The honorees were recognized by Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell during Friday’s City Council meeting. Ten individuals and four organizations were acknowledged for their exemplary contributions to the deaf community throughout Los Angeles. Among the honorees was deaf actor Ryan Lane, who stars in the ABC Family show, “Switched At Birth.”

Johnson, who also teaches preschool and kindergarten at Marlton School, the deaf school within the Los Angeles Unified School District, has taught the DEAF Project family American Sign Language class for three years. The classes are specifically designed for hearing parents raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. More than 90 percent of deaf babies are born to hearing parents. Every Wednesday evening Johnson, who is deaf, helps parents begin to tackle the often-intimidating challenge of learning another language – one that focuses on sight versus sound.

“Stephanie’s warm and engaging personality instantly welcomes parents to class and puts them at ease,” said Rachel Friedman Narr, Ph.D., a CSUN professor of special education and DEAF Project’s coordinator. “DEAF Project is grateful for the support and dedication she provides for our families. She is a tireless supporter of the deaf community and deaf education. It’s easy to see why she was selected to receive this honor.”

Parents echo Friedman Narr’s words of appreciation.

“Stephanie is an amazing woman and a wonderful teacher,” said Maria Herrera, whose 7-year-old daughter is deaf. “She has taught me so much about deaf culture, and about how to communicate with my daughter. She makes learning ASL fun. I wouldn’t trade her for the world. She is not only our teacher, she is family.”

Johnson is involved with numerous projects that promote bilingual English/American Sign Language literacy skills, serves on the board of directors of California Educators of the Deaf, and hosts several fundraisers each year to further support deaf education at Marlton School and beyond.

“I am passionate about deaf education, and my lifelong goal is to see deaf education excel,” said Johnson. “It’s an honor to know that my efforts are appreciated and valued by others.”

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ABOUT DEAF PROJECT:

The Deaf Education And Families Project (DEAF Project) supports and empowers families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. To date, the organization has positively impacted more than 1,000 families throughout Southern California. DEAF Project aims to help parents realize the positive lifetime journey of bonding with and raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, rather than struggling with how to “fix” a “disabled” child. DEAF Project uses parent mentors, who themselves are raising deaf or hard-of-hearing children, to offer invaluable first-hand experience and emotional support to fellow parents and families. DEAF Project also offers free, family-focused American Sign Language classes (in Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley and San Diego) and monthly Family Fun Days aimed at connecting families with others like themselves. For more information, visit www.csun.edu/deafproject, email deafproject@csun.edu or call (818) 677-6854.

ABOUT DEAF AWARENESS MONTH:

Deaf Awareness Month in Los Angeles was established in 1998 by the mayor and City Hall as a way to formally recognize and raise awareness of the local deaf community. Los Angeles County is home to an estimated 400,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing residents. September’s Deaf Awareness Month in Los Angeles concludes with the annual Deafestival celebration, scheduled for Sept. 27, on the south lawn of City Hall. The festival provides a venue for the deaf community to come together and network, while educating the city’s hearing population about its unique culture and native language. Deafestival is said to be the largest festival of its kind in the United States to honor the deaf community.