



Education, Advocacy & Leadership News

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Wow! It is hard to believe that 2015 has gone by so fast. To close the year, and on behalf of IDEAL, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your support and generosity and briefly share with you where we are at this time and what we have accomplished so far.

Isidore Niyongabo, Executive Director

Achievements of 2015

- After a few years of working on this process, on July 9th 2015 the IRS officially granted us a Tax exemption status. We were able to achieve this status thanks to the dedication of our new board of directors and in partnership with University of San Diego's Legal Clinic and their Law Student interns.



This summer our Community Outreach Officer, Brandon Scates, volunteered two months in Rwanda where he partnered with Rwanda National Union for the Deaf in developing a new edition of Rwanda Sign Language Dictionary. During his two month stay in Rwanda, Brandon also had the opportunity to travel around and reach out to

many deaf youth and families in multiple villages. Additionally, he has developed multiple projects that we will be building upon in the coming years. More specifically, Brandon has started working in the areas of HIV/AIDS Deaf education project to help the Rwanda deaf community gain access to HIV/AIDS related health information and a Micro-finance project to help deaf families and youth reach financial independence.

Currently our Project Development Officer, Sonia Holzman, is in Uganda.



Sonia has been serving in Uganda since November 2015 and works with local schools for Deaf children, creating collaboration opportunities with local organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) and local deaf youth. Her major focus is to examine the current services for deaf children in both schools and community organizations in order to identify gaps and opportunities for future programing. Based on her experiences, she aims to further develop IDEAL programs and implement a leadership camp for deaf primary school students in 2016 and beyond.



Our Founder and Executive Director, Isidore Niyongabo, has continued promoting the organization through speaking engagements and community partnership opportunities. Although he missed out on the opportunity to address the issue of Deaf Refugees at the World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in Istanbul this past July, Isidore delivered over 10 presentations nationwide. In addition to regular educational presentations at San Diego State

University, he traveled to Santa Barbara Community College, California State University Northridge, and had video presentations with students at Rochester Institute of Technology and St. Catherine University. Isidore also volunteered to talk to youth through San Diego's Black American Political Association Conference and participated in the National Black Deaf Advocacy Conference. NBDA has featured him this year and invited him to continue volunteering with them as the Director of Advocacy and Public Engagement.

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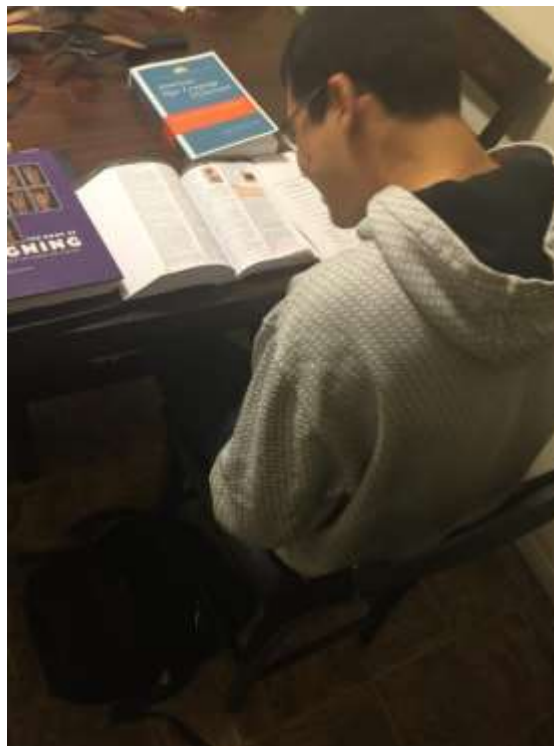
Death of IDEAL Team Member

Our East African Community IDEAL deaf youth recently lost one of our trained team members, a young Burundian soul named Gaudiose Mukeshimana.

Unfortunately, she fell ill and no one could assist her with the cost of the necessary surgery. Sadly information and services are not readily available for deaf individuals in East Africa. With your continued support we will be able to further assist deaf youth and work with them to advocate for improved access to community resources.

Success Stories of 2015

In terms of our local family advocacy, one youth recently graduated from High School and is now receiving training toward maximizing his



independence and employment opportunities. In addition, IDEAL officially established a new partnership with Dr. Melissa Smith who will be the Project Coordinator for the Step Up for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth initiative. The project focuses on training interpreters and other professionals who work with Deaf youth to make decisions that will improve their school experiences and lead to better educational outcomes.

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Our first scholarship was awarded to Bernadette Ndayisenga in August 2015 , who just became the first Burundian Deaf woman to graduate from



University in Burundi. Her goal is to empower other deaf women through education and sensitize on the prevention of sexual violence toward deaf women and aspiration to a better education.

Editor: Bethany Souza
bethany.souza@realideal.org

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