

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – April 30-May4, 2012
Bill Newell, Principal Washington School for the Deaf

Which organization below has shown that oral deaf people and deaf people who use ASL can work cooperatively to accomplish very positive outcomes for all Deaf and hard-of-hearing people?

- a) Oral Deaf Adults Section of the Alexander Graham Bell Association (ODAS)
- b) Association for the Advancement of All Deaf (AAAD)
- c) Hearing Loss Association of America (formerly Self Help for the Hard of Hearing (SHHH))
- d) Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc (TDI) (formerly Teletypewriters for the Deaf, Inc.)

Answer “d” – Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI) was founded in 1968 when H. Latham Breunig of the Oral Section of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, his wife Nancy, and Jess Smith of the National Association of the Deaf, created the Teletypewriters for the Deaf Distribution Committee (TDDC) to handle acquisition, repair and distribution of used teletype machines. Later in that year they dissolved TDDC and incorporated in Indiana a non-profit organization with the legal name of “Teletypewriters for the Deaf, Inc.” This organization quickly became known simply as “TDI.” (Quoted from the Then and Now section of the TDI website at:
<http://www.tdiforaccess.org/index.aspx>)

While many organizations of, by and for deaf people can claim collaboration and cooperation between deaf adults who were raised and educated via oral communication methods and deaf adults who primarily use sign language, none are

a more successful example of this cooperation than TDI. All deaf people have benefitted from this grassroots effort taken up by deaf people of all communication modes and language preferences. TDI as an organization continues as strong as ever today to advocate for communication access. As technology has changed TDI has changed read about this change at the TDI website here:
<http://www.tdiforaccess.org/index.aspx>.

Deaf Culture Questions of the Week are archived at: <http://www.wsd.wa.gov>