

For Deaf Children from ASL Rose

There is one strong commonality between parents of Deaf children and ASL Rose.

Both care deeply about Deaf children's education and socialization. ASL Rose was founded in 2004 by two Deaf women, Dr. E. Lynn Jacobowitz and Dr. Adonia K. Smith, who grew up in hearing households in New York and Georgia respectively.

Throughout their K-12 school experiences, they were never given opportunities to learn, through formal instruction, about American Sign Language (ASL) and the Deaf world. At Gallaudet, they were exposed to a variety of courses that helped them gain working knowledge of ASL and the Deaf world. Both women feel strongly that Deaf studies should be introduced to Deaf children as early as infancy. They also firmly believe that the earlier Deaf children know about ASL and the Deaf heritage, the quicker the children accept themselves and become highly functional Deaf persons. They become more motivated in their educational and social undertakings.

Determined not to allow the continuance of missed opportunities for Deaf children as they experienced during their school years, Jacobowitz and Smith established ASL Rose. The first item on their agenda was to create ASL-English bilingual materials geared to Deaf children. Ever since the development of ASL Rose, they have never lost sight of this main goal.

Have You Ever Seen...? An ASL Handshape DVD/Book by ASL Rose was the result of a timely connection between the two women who agreed on the lack of first-language materials for Deaf children. With Adonia's teaching experience and Lynn's experience as the president of American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA), they completed the DVD/book in six years. *Have You Ever Seen...?* is a whimsical rhyme book with animated illustrations of 44 commonly used ASL handshapes in a collage-like fashion. The colorful illustrations also incorporate information about the Deaf community and its culture and language. The accompanying DVD includes an ASL version of the book as signed by native ASL users, many of whom are Deaf children. The product has received positive reviews.

Coming soon is another product called *Waving Hands!!! The ABCs of Deaf Role Models in America*, a DVD/book com-



**Dr. Lynn
Jacobowitz**



**Dr. Adonia
Smith**

ination that features some of America's most accomplished Deaf individuals. They are portrayed via the American alphabet. Deaf children will be inspired by learning about the 42 individuals and 3 animals, including William E. "Dummy" Hoy, Laurene Simms, Robert Davila, Heidi Zimmer, Chuck Baird, Poorna Kushalnagar, and Patsy Ann (dog). *Waving Hands!!!* serves as a valuable resource of information, and Deaf children will gain appreciation of these individuals' accomplishments firmly etched in Deaf history. ASL Rose hopes that Deaf children, as a result of exposure

to *Waving Hands!!!*, will develop a sense of hope for the future and will aspire to become role models for the next generation of Deaf people.

There are more products available from ASL Rose. At www.aslrose.com are e-newsletters, noteworthy links, the ASL Rose store, and other resources. Deaf children can enjoy activities at the website, such as "Color Your Favorite Deaf Hero," "Pair-a-Handshape," and "Puzzle Funshapes." The website also offers ASL and English poetry, and visitors can even create poems of their own in either language.

Also available at the ASL Rose website is an archive of e-newsletters dating back to December 2006. In some issues, ASL Rose shoots straight in order to give readers some perspectives of Deaf-centric views that are rarely expressed elsewhere.

Lastly, the name of ASL Rose has deep significance for founders and owners Jacobowitz and Smith. The flattened O or open O handshape is used in the sign for *flower*, which, once planted, is fed and nourished by the sun. This flower grows into a beautiful and fragrant vision that is passed on to Deaf children who ASL Rose loves. The name of ASL Rose is, in itself, the spirit of ASL-English bilingualism --the word "ASL" belonging to ASL and the word "Rose" belonging to English.

Every Deaf child richly deserves to be nourished in the environment of ASL-English bilingualism. Ultimately, they can become competent bilingual-bicultural individuals who truly appreciate not only the languages of ASL and English, but also living in both the Deaf and Hearing Worlds.

The ASL Rose website is at www.aslrose.com.