

July 21, 2011

BAHRAIN VISITS NCDHR



On Thursday, July 21st, a group of guests from a small country in the Middle East (Bahrain) met with NCDHR. The visitors from Bahrain included four Deaf students learning about health professions. Not fluent in American Sign Language or English, the communication among the visitors and NCDHR was interesting! The guests used Arabic Sign Language. There was a team of ASL/Voice interpreters for the Deaf Americans and English/Arabic interpreter for the Bahrain visitors. An Arabic Sign Language interpreter translated the signs into Arabic, which was then translated by a different interpreter into English, while yet another interpreter translated the English into ASL. Due to the complicated translation process, communication was a very long process, yet very interesting. Once, during the translation process, the interpreters became lost, and there was a moment when the interpreters were discussing among themselves how to interpret what was being said. Meanwhile, the Deaf Bahrain visitors and the Deaf NCDHR staff used sign language and gestures to communicate.



By the time the interpreting had solved the confusion, the Deaf visitors and NCDHR had already come to an understanding.

At the meeting, the Deaf students met with Dr. Michael McKee, a doctor at the University of Rochester and a member of Team USA for the Deaflympics.



The students were interested about eligibility, requirements, etc. for the Deaflympics. The Bahrain visitors wanted to form a team to represent Bahrain. They were also interested in cochlear implants, especially when playing sports.

Among the challenge of communication, there were also a couple of cultural differences between the Arabic Deaf Community and the American Deaf Community. The first one was that the Arabic Sign Language interpreter was the president of Bahrain's Deaf Society. The second one was when Matt Starr extended his hand to shake the women's hands, the women declined and placed their right hand on their chest and bowed slightly. This was how they said farewell. Overall, this was a very culturally enriching experience and an exciting event to participate in.