



Nation's Largest Deaf Organization Releases Visionary Short Film & Launches #DeconstructDisability Campaign

Non-Profit Celebrates its 40th Anniversary with Launch of Film & Campaign to Inspire Conversation on the Notion of "Disability"

Austin, TX (April 4, 2016) Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD), the nation's largest advocacy organization for the deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing communities, today announces the release of its first short film, *Beyond Inclusion*, and a corresponding #DeconstructDisability campaign, both of which are aimed at inspiring a national conversation on the notion of 'disability.'

Beyond Inclusion is an 8 minute-long fictional film starring Nyle DiMarco, winner of TV's "America's Next Top Model" and current contestant on ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" and Katie Folger best known for her film work in "Grow Up, Tony Phillips," "Zero Charisma" and "Results."

The film is set ten years in the future, at a time when 'disabilities' are celebrated as part of human diversity. And the threat of a "cure" for such disabilities is removed via new legislation. At the same time, technological innovations make it possible for meaningful communication among all people, regardless of their hearing, hard-of-hearing or deaf status.

Ash (who is deaf, played by DiMarco) is romantically involved with Tavi, a non-deaf humanities professor (played by Folger). They meet in a coffeehouse to mull over the passage of landmark legislation that reframes the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into new legislation, called the Human Diversity Rights Act. Their conversation and story serve as a backdrop to a series of events that unfold, triggering the questions: Are certain groups of people destined

to be biologically removed? Or, will our society self-correct, recognizing the critical role that diversity plays in defining our human experience?

“Diversity is being invited to the Party, Inclusion is being asked to Dance.’ We explore these themes in the film, and imagine a society where all people are invited to come as they are and celebrate their uniqueness,” said Nyle DiMarco, Beyond Inclusion co-star.

“The objective of this film is to challenge the notion of ‘disability’ and to question whether or not the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) actually helps the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities,” explains Ryan Commerson, Director. “Especially given that the National Institutes of Health (NIH), another federally-funded program, has been actively working to “cure” disabilities for years. If ADA is designed to protect people with disabilities, then why is the government funding programs designed to remove deaf and hard-of-hearing people from the human gene pool? Our films tackles these kinds of issues.”

The film’s corresponding #DeconstructDisability campaign will include a robust social media campaign, an interactive [website](#) full of resources, and outreach events. In the coming months, the campaign will roll-out a variety of new programs aimed at providing tangible and smart solutions for rectifying chronic unemployment, illiteracy, and the lack of political capital that have stifled the deaf, deaf-blind and hard-of-hearing communities.

“Communication Service for the Deaf fights tirelessly to build a world where the communities that we serve are able to communicate anytime, anyplace, and have access to the same opportunities as the hearing communities for living rewarding, self-actualized lives.” said Christopher Soukup, CEO. “The Beyond Inclusion film represents an exciting new direction for us and an opportunity to reach even more people with our message of inclusion. With the film and #DeconstructDisability campaign, we are looking to challenge viewers’ beliefs and perceptions of people with disabilities, including the notion of whether being deaf or hard-of-hearing is even a handicap. We also want to highlight the fact that many deaf people feel that our language and culture should be preserved and advanced.”

For 40 years, CSD has been at the forefront of technology and innovations serving the deaf and hard of hearing communities. The non-profits works to create jobs, improve access to resources and advocate for

businesses and schools to be more inclusive. Although great strides have been made, there is still much work to be done: 98% of the deaf population does not have access to education in sign language and 72.5% of Deaf and hard of hearing people are unemployed.

“It is imperative that we continue to re-imagine communication and form partnerships with the goal of creating business opportunities, provide essential tools, and education for all people who have been traditionally classified and targeted based on presumed limitations,” Soukup added.

To watch Beyond Inclusion, or for more information on the #DeconstructDisability campaign, please visit www.BeyondInclusionFilm.com.

About Communication Service for the Deaf

Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) is an international not-for-profit organization devoted to elevating the quality of life for people who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing. Since 1975, CSD has endeavored to fulfill its mission through the provision of a broad range of innovative products, programs, and services. CSD is led and managed predominantly by deaf and hard-of-hearing professionals and they operate from numerous locations across the United States and abroad. CSD’s vision is to achieve a condition of being wherein all deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing individuals are able to fully participate in and contribute to the world around them.

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