

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

After Years of Silence Deaf Rights Advocate, Kim Churchill, Reveals Deaf Organizations were Defaming her Behind her Back

St. Philips, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada — 04 June 2025

Kim Churchill, a dedicated mother and long-time advocate for equitable education for Deaf children, like her son Carter, is publicly sharing her story after years of silence and suffering. For the first time Churchill is revealing that two Deaf organizations had been falsely accusing her of being an audist and disempowering the Deaf community during her advocacy efforts. Between 2019 and 2020, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf (NLAD) and Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) wrote five defamatory letters to provincial education officials and copied many others who were either influential to her son's education or connected to the Deaf community. These letters were discovered in 2021 during preparation for her son's human rights hearing. The organizations, tasked with advocating for the Deaf community, instead undermined Churchill's credibility and severely harmed her emotionally, mentally, and reputationally.

The false claims centered around an accusation that Churchill failed to involve NLAD in a volunteer school program she had developed, *Gain a Super Power*—a program born out of sheer desperation to combat the social isolation faced by Carter and other similar Deaf children. In reality, NLAD was directly involved. Several of their staff sat on the board of Churchill's non-profit, CLASS (Children's Language Acquisition Support System Inc.), which created the *Gain a Super Power* program. Among them was Renée Phair-Healey, the stepdaughter of NLAD Executive Director Myles Murphy, who serves as NLAD's Wellness Program Case Manager and Psychologist. Not only did NLAD support the program, but they also recorded and distributed a promotional video featuring both Churchill and an NLAD instructor to help recruit volunteers from the Deaf community. That video was filmed by Myles Murphy himself and shared on NLAD's social media platforms.

Despite this clear involvement, Churchill was accused of cultural appropriation excluding NLAD and oppressing the Deaf community. She requested formal apologies and retractions of the painful and damaging statements, but both organizations refused and continued to assert them as fact. Left with no choice, Churchill initiated legal action in 2021 against CAD and NLAD for defamation, in order to defend her name and reputation. Though long overdue, in 2025, both organizations issued formal apologies and retractions. "For years, I fought for my son and other Deaf children to have access to American Sign Language and fair education," says Churchill. "And while I stood in that fire, those letters poured gasoline on me. Over the years, the animosity shown by NLAD toward me extended far beyond these defamatory letters. It manifested in other harmful ways that deeply affected my family—especially Carter. The emotional toll has been immense. For years, I have lived with unbearable anguish and distress, targeted by organizations that should have stood by us, but instead, turned against us when we needed them most."

By going public, Churchill hopes to restore her name and ignite a broader conversation about justice, accountability, and the protection of vulnerable children.

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www.carterchurchill.ca/the-hidden-fight.html#/



Feb 20th, 2025

Dear Kimberly Churchill:

We, Myles Murphy and Renee Phair-Healey, as well as the President and the entire Board of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf ("NLAD"), would like to offer our heartfelt and unqualified apology for the letters dated 03 September 2019, 30 September 2019, 21 November 2019 and 01 June 2020 sent to a wide distribution as written by Executive Director Myles Murphy and Wellness Program Director Renee Phair-Healey.

The statements made were false, including statements that you are discriminating against and oppressive to the Deaf community, an audist and culturally appropriating the Deaf language and disempowering the Deaf community. The letters also falsely claimed that the NLAD was not engaged in your volunteer program, Gain a Super Power, when the NLAD was. These statements are untrue, and do not reflect the opinions of either myself as President or the Board of NLAD.

NLAD acknowledges that the discovery of these letters resulted in considerable distress and anguish. We, as individuals as well as the Board apologize for the harm these statements caused you and your family.

In conclusion, we retract fully and completely the letters of 03 September 2019, 30 September 2019, 21 November 2019 and 01 June 2020 in their entirety without qualification. We apologize for the considerable anguish caused by these false statements.

Sincerely,

Myles Murphy
Myles Murphy

Executive Director

Renee Phair-Healey

Renee Phair-Healey

Wellness Program Director

Jodie Burke

Jodie Burke

President of NLAD

CC: Jen Viguers, Past President

Linda Healey, Vice President

Arthur Butt, Treasurer

Joyce Howell, Secretary

Joy Philpott, Director

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February 21, 2025

Dear Kimberly Churchill,

As the Executive Director and the President of the Canadian Association of the Deaf – Association des Sourds du Canada (“CAD-ASC”), we would like to offer our heartfelt and unqualified apology for the letter dated 25 June 2020 written by the former Executive Director, Jim Roots, on behalf of the Board of Directors and statements made therein, including those referring or alluding to you as an audist, homophobic and racist person.

As we understand, the letter was written at the request of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf (NLAD) Executive Director, Myles Murphy, and the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) was not made aware of the identity of the person whom NLAD was depicting as discriminatory, oppressive and audist. Had we known that the subject of the allegations was you, CAD-ASC would never have written such a letter. You are neither an audist person nor oppressive to the Deaf community. Our belief and appreciation of your efforts to advance the rights of Deaf education was shown when we awarded the Henry Vlug Award to you in August 2023.

To be clear, the board was not aware of your proactive efforts to collaborate with NLAD in promoting a Deaf culture in Carter’s school environment, nor of your efforts to solicit support from the local Deaf community as volunteers for the Gain a Super Power program.

As the mother of a Deaf child who has dedicated her life and who has sacrificed physically, mentally and financially to fighting for the educational rights of her own Deaf son, we fully acknowledge how painful it must have been to read the statements about you in the letter of 25 June 2020.

Given what we now know, CAD-ASC fully and completely retract the letter of 25 June 2020 in its entirety without qualification. We apologize sincerely for the anguish caused by making such statements. We acknowledge that the success of your son’s human rights complaint after 5+ years with the decision of 01 March 2023 is a landmark case that will continue to help all Deaf children have equitable access to education and language. Your efforts have and will go far in providing for an educational setting enriched with sign language and free from social isolation.

Sincerely,

Richard Belzile
Executive Director
Canadian Association of the Deaf

Shawna Joynt
President
Canadian Association of the Deaf

Jim Roots
Former Executive Director
Canadian Association of the Deaf