

## **The Hidden Fight: Untold Facts of Kim Churchill's Story - Truth Exposed (English)**

Deaf interpreter: The background you are viewing is blue. I am a white woman signing. I have long hair—blonde, brown, and grey in color—pushed back away from my face and falling past my shoulders. I'm wearing brown-framed glasses and a dark navy, high-neck shirt with elbow-length sleeves.

### **KIM'S STORY**

My name is Kimberly Churchill; I am the mother of Carter Churchill. Starting in 2017, I was engaged in a five-year human rights fight for equitable education for my Deaf son Carter against the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD). In 2023 we received a judicial ruling that found NLESD discriminated against my son for four years. In 2024 NLESD was incorporated into the Department of Education. What people do not know was that behind the scenes I was fighting another fight since May 2021. I was fighting defamation of my character by two organizations and individuals that really should have been in my corner but were not. Behind my back a number of letters were written about me containing numerous false vile statements which has turned my life upside down causing my family and I a great deal of anguish. My understanding is that the defamation goes further than these letters, so it is for this reason that I feel I have no other choice than to make this public statement in a desperate attempt to clear my reputation.

In 2021, during preparation of our son's upcoming Human Rights Board of Inquiry, my husband and I were doing dozens of access to information requests to gather information from governmental sources to support our case. In the results of one request, we received a letter written by the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) referring to me as audist (discrimination or prejudice against individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing) and making comparisons of me to a racist white person and a homophobic person. This letter had been sent to an associate director of NLESD and CCed to many other people who were either influential to my son's education or connected to the Deaf community. I was completely devastated. This came at time when we were under tremendous strain fighting a human rights battle against one of the largest public entities in the province, an entity that was leveraging huge amounts of financial and legal resources to induce me to quit fighting for my son. There would be worse to come. The letter referenced a presentation by the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf (NLAD) on 11 February 2020 with government officials. Subsequent access to information requests on NLAD's interactions with the provincial government would reveal at least four letters starting in 2019 making claims that I was audist, oppressive and discriminatory to Deaf people, culturally

appropriating and disempowering the Deaf community. These catastrophic statements were made to various individuals within provincial government, senior officials at the School District, including the Principal at Beachy Cove Elementary where Carter was being discriminated against, influential individuals and members of the Deaf community on a national level. Many of the individuals who received these correspondences were directly responsible for Carter's education and whom my husband and I were actively attempting to mediate a settlement within Carters' Human Rights case. For the second time, I felt re-victimized by another organization that I believed was in my corner. I requested apologies and retractions of these painful statements, but both organizations refused and continued to assert them as true.

In light of this, I was unfortunately forced to defend my reputation through litigation and commenced defamation lawsuits against both organizations. The basis of the claims by NLAD was that they were not engaged with the delivery of a volunteer program called Gain a Super Power which I created to help reduce the social isolation of my Deaf son, the only Deaf child in a school of 750 children. I did this out of a desperate attempt to do something for my son when no other programs or supports were available almost a decade after the Newfoundland School for the Deaf had closed. Some staff from NLAD were on the Board of the non-profit I started called CLASS (Children's Language Acquisition Support System Inc.) which created the Gain a Super Power program as was Renee Phair-Healey, the step-daughter of NLAD Executive Director Myles Murphy, who was working as the Wellness Program Case Manager/Psychologist at NLAD. NLAD in fact supported the program by recording a video that featured me and an NLAD Instructor to help recruit volunteers from the Deaf community. This video was recorded by Myles Murphy then posted to their social channels. However, in 2019 they changed their opinion of me for reasons not completely understood and engaged in this campaign to destroy my reputation and character. When their own efforts failed to produce the desired results, they hoped for, they even went so far as to engage CAD to further bolster their repulsive claims.

Since 2019 NLAD have been relentless in spreading horrific lies about me and since they are in a position of power and trust, the community does not question the validity of what is told to them. The animosity of NLAD toward me have also manifested itself in many other ways besides defamation, indirectly targeting me through harming my son. NLAD Children's Deaf Choir would not allow Carter to join in 2019 when a Deaf Member of the Choir specifically asked Renee Phair-Healey. In March 2022, Myles Murphy contacted the founder of the Canada Deaf Grassroot Movement (CDGM) to request that CDGM remove a post CDGM shared on their social media promoting a GoFundMe account we had created to help fundraise to offset the enormous legal costs associated with fighting my son's human rights complaint. The reason provided was that I was suing him and NLAD; they were even prepared to jeopardize my son's human rights case by attempting to hinder our fundraising efforts. It is important to state that we were fighting because Carter was being discriminated against due to him being Deaf and the one organization who should have been protecting him was undermining us and deliberately

inflicting injury upon him. In April 2023, their Family Communications Program (FCP), was initially denied from my son because of NLAD's animosity toward me as his mother and was only eventually offered after the intervention of our legal counsel. These actions truly broke my heart. To target to hurt my son is tremendously upsetting especially since their mission is to protect Deaf people.

As the mother of a Deaf child who has dedicated her life to fighting for his human rights, the statements made by both NLAD and CAD, particularly to some of the very same people sitting across a mediation table for my son's human rights case, was and continues to be absolutely devastating. I feel that within large segments of the Deaf community my reputation has been damaged irreparably and while both NLAD and CAD have now finally apologized and admitted in writing that the statements were false and have fully retracted them, there will always be some members of the Deaf community who will continue to believe these horrible false statements about me. I have read statements online such as I am "an insult to my son" and some of the Deaf community that did support me were labelled as "hypocrites" by others. To see these posts shattered me emotionally. I feel like neither my son nor my family will ever be fully accepted or welcomed into the larger Deaf community because of the false narratives by NLAD over so many years. My hope is that releasing the apology letters will undo some of the harm that has been done to me.

Deaf interpreter: I am an ASL interpreter with a brown skin tone. My hair and beard are a mix of black, white, and grey. I'm wearing gold-framed glasses, and a black, long-sleeved, collared dress shirt buttoned up to the top.

**APOLOGY LETTER FROM NLAD** (Next page)

**APOLOGY LETTER FROM CAD** (Following letter from NLAD)