



Jan 30, 2012

On behalf of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that we have new Asia representatives. Monica Punjabi of India and Etsuko Umemoto of Japan will manage the workload. This is a very large region, with a great deal of linguistic and cultural diversity, so we see this as a wonderful opportunity to serve the region in exciting ways. At the 2011 WASLI General Assembly in Durban, we had feedback that such an arrangement might be the preference of the region. Our bylaws allow for this appointment by the Board and we will have a chance to evaluate the co-representation over the next three years of the current term. Please join me in welcoming Etsuko and Monica to the Board and we wish them well as they continue to build on the work of the former representative, Emiko Ichikawa.

A bit about our new reps:

Monica is a pioneer in the interpreting profession in India. She was the first trained interpreter to complete the best available one-year diploma programme in India and become a certified interpreter. Monica is born to Deaf parents and is a fluent user of Indian Sign Language as well as four other spoken languages. She has been an interpreter freelancing in India and abroad for years. She is the *Director of the Indian Sign Language Department at Indore Bilingual Academy for the Deaf*. Through the position she holds at the Bilingual Academy she has been conducting various training programme on sign language and interpreting for more than 5 years. She is also the *President of the Indian Sign Language Interpreters Association – ISLIA*.

Etsuko Umemoto is an exceptional leader. She lives in Otsu City in Shiga Prefecture. In 1983, she registered as a Japanese Sign Language (JSL) interpreter of Mitaka City in Tokyo, then passed the certification exam of JSL of Tokyo after that, and began working as a JSL interpreter. In 1989, she certified as an inaugural national-level JSL interpreter. In 2000, registered as JSL interpreter of both Shiga Prefecture and Otsu City. In 2001, became a member of the steering committee of Shiga Chapter of National Research Association for Sign Language Interpretation (NRASLI) and then chapter vice-president. She is an active Board member of NRASLI and Manager of the International Division since 2010. She is also a teacher of categorized nursing care (including skill practice of JSL) at welfare technical colleges.

Please join me in wishing the representatives productive meetings, and all the best in reaching the collaborative goals they have set out.

Debra Russell

WASLI President