

**June 15, 2022**

**Community Conversation-**

***Understanding Accessibility Through a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Lens***

The VPAG is looking forward to our upcoming community conversation on June 28th.

Did you know that over 50% of Canadians over the age of 40 have at least a mild degree of hearing loss, although only 6% of people actually identify themselves as having hearing loss (Stats Canada, 2019)?

Hearing loss is not just a condition that happens as we age; 1/400 babies born in BC are identified with hearing loss each year (Provincial Health Services Authority, 2022). Hearing loss is an invisible disability/condition, yet prevalent in the community. Culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing people face systemic barriers to communication and information every day. Join us on June 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Vernon Public Art Gallery for a community conversation in conjunction with our exhibition *What does hearing loss look like for you?*

*“This is another example of how the Vernon Public Art Gallery uses visual art to create dialogue around relevant issues in our community. We encourage people to come and interact with our panelists and learn more about hearing loss and accessibility.”*

*-Dauna Kennedy Executive Director of the Vernon Public Art Gallery*

This community conversation will touch on the themes of hearing loss, accessibility, and misperceptions all through the lens of professionals who work in the field and have lived experience with hearing loss. Bring your questions and come to learn more about what accessibility looks like and how you as an individual or business can support our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

Moderator: Ed Woolley, VPAG Director

Panelists:

**Jessica Niemela**

Pediatric Audiologist, Vernon, BC

**Hart Plommer**

Past President of Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Young Adults Network

**Magdalena Szelezin**

Family Navigator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Provincial Family Services

**Melanie Thomas**

Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing SD73

**Felicia D’Amato**

Mental Health Social Worker for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind Well-Being Program



**Vernon Public Art Gallery**

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