Title: The Silent Side of Deafhood

Abstract: Culture and language are deeply intertwined, with each influencing each other. I will be giving you a snapshot of how societal norms between hearing culture and deaf culture are different; and introduce the basic concepts of American Sign Language (ASL). In particular, my talk will give you a deeper insight on how deaf people perceive the world, how far we came to be recognized as a culture, with our own societal norms, beliefs and traditions. I will examine the issue of how we are still striving to prove that ASL has its own form of grammatical rules, pragmatics and structure as in any other language. I will also discuss the historical change of America’s recognition of ASL as a language. ASL only came to be recognized as a true language in 1965 despite the fact that sign language has been around for centuries. Over the last 53 years, ASL has been developing into the dynamic and expressive language with its own unique visual vernacular and is continuing to evolve to this day.