

Mission Grant Update

Canada: training of Deaf leaders as pastor and deaconess \$13,000



Gregory and Linda Desrosiers

Gregory and Linda Desrosiers from Surrey, British Columbia, are currently second-year students of the Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT) of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. They are members of Trinity Lutheran Church of the Deaf in Vancouver, British Columbia. Gregory and Linda currently teach at the B.C. School for the Deaf.

The Deaf Institute of Theology is a distance education program from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. It is a four-year program to train Gregory to be a pastor and to train Linda to be a deaconess in the Lutheran church.

They study from their home through the seminary's web site and will begin their vicarage and deaconess internships in their home congregation next spring. Rev. David Nielsen, Trinity Lutheran Church of the Deaf, serves as their mentor and supervisor.

The DIT program provides an alternative route to ordination for deaf and hard-of-hearing members of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. It also requires them to attend three residential seminars prior to program completion. Gregory and Linda attended the Urban Leadership Seminar in the spring of 2009 along with another DIT student, Patricia Hyncar from Wisconsin, and Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) for hearing students who study from their home

to be pastors or deaconesses in their immigrant-based churches.

Rev. Alan Rork was the first graduate of DIT in May, 2008. He currently serves as the Missionary-at-Large to the Deaf in Indiana. Gregory and Linda are looking forward to serving God's people on completion of the DIT program in 2012.

Gregory and Linda, who both were born deaf, have been married for thirty years. They have enriched experiences for getting involved in the Deaf Christian community and in the Deaf community.

They get involved in numerous activities for their churches in Nebraska and British Columbia. Gregory just ended his six-year vice-presidency/presidency of the International Lutheran Deaf Association (ILDA). Linda is currently ILDA Mission Project chairperson. They had attended ILDA conventions and regional conferences for years and have learned about concerns regarding an increasing number of churches of the Deaf without pastors. The shortage is due to several reasons including budgetary cuts from the districts, a decreasing number of members and a lack of outreach services for the youth. They decided to do something more during their retirement years to reach Deaf people to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour.