November, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Usually, we try to entice you to contribute to the Thomas Samuels Scholarship fund by offering glimpses of the accomplishments of former student scholarship winners. This year, however, we feel compelled to tell you about a woman who made the Program for Deaf Adults (PDA) at LaGuardia Community College possible, and who, very unfortunately, passed away this past spring.

In the early 1970s, soon after LaGuardia was created, Dorothy Pakula, a Deaf resident of Queens in her late 40s, returned to school to pursue her dream of earning a GED. After achieving this goal, Dorothy was the first Deaf person to enroll in the Academic Division and graduate with an Associate in Arts degree. It was this experience as a Deaf student in a school for hearing students that made Dorothy realize the importance of note takers, interpreters and tutors for students who learn primarily through their eyes. Upon her graduation, she began working at LaGuardia as its Coordinator of Tutorial Services for Deaf Students until her retirement. Word began to spread throughout the New York City area that the Program for Deaf Adults at LaGuardia was the place for Deaf students to achieve their own dreams because of the academic support services it offered. PDA Director Tony Allicino has said of her, “Dorothy was a trail-blazer and a gracious but firm advocate for accessibility and accommodation rights for Deaf people right up to her last years alive.”

The Thomas Samuels Scholarship, named for a treasured former staff member of our PDA family, has been awarded to nine students in as many years to help each achieve his/her own dreams by assisting with basic school expenses such as tuition and books. For 2011, please help us present this scholarship in honor of Dorothy with a tax deductible contribution that will do so much to aid our students in bridging financial gaps and giving them the confidence they need to be successful in their studies and careers.

A donation form is enclosed for your convenience. For more information about the Thomas Samuels Scholarship, visit

http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/pda/adss/Thomas_Samuels_Scholarship.aspx

Thank you for your generosity. We could not provide this scholarship without you!

Sincerely,
The Thomas Samuels Scholarship Committee
Sue Livingston, Chair Tomonori Nagano
Jane Rizzuto Kim Lucas