



## Lake Avenue Baptist Church

Michael Ford  
Sr. Pastor

150  
YEARS

72 Ambrose Street, Rochester, NY 14608

Laura Tubbs  
Moderator

Diana Pryntz, Executive Director  
Deaf Refugee Advocacy Inc  
POB 10335  
Rochester, NY 14610

Dear Ms. Pryntz:

Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church is pleased to provide this letter of support in support of Deaf Refugee Advocacy (DRA)'s response to the Monroe County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Opportunities RFP. Since its formation, DRA has offered essential on-going community support for extremely at-risk citizens within the Monroe County area: deaf refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers (RIAs).

DRA's project, if funded through the ARPA Funding Opportunity, will have a significant impact on reducing barriers faced by deaf, deafblind and hard-of-hearing RIAs that were made evident and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These systemic barriers, which include but are not limited to language, culture, and accessibility, can be overcome through DRA's efforts to provide programming on language and cultural competency, health, safety, and employment to individuals and their families. As a result of these sign language-centric services, deaf RIAs' skills, support networks, and sense of belonging will increase, engaging them as equitable and contributing members of the Monroe County community.

Full funding of DRA's ARPA submission will significantly meet the needs of a population that has been historically underserved, due to their unique intersectionalities of people who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers. Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church believes in the importance of DRA's work and the ultimate impact it aims to achieve. By addressing these inequities, DRA's transformational approach will ultimately benefit deaf RIAs, their families, and the community members, employers, and service providers they engage with, strengthening Monroe County for all.

For the past two years we have had the privilege of working closely with you as you have served the community. You have been located at Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church, and we have been able to bear witness to the ways that you have worked diligently throughout the Covid pandemic to adjust to the needs of the community that you serve and continue to offer high quality, need-specific services. We have seen the impact that your work has had on the community, through individuals who access the services and are able to develop in their abilities over a set period of time. In a purely anecdotal observation, I have seen the individuals under your support come into the building with a sense of concern or trepidation and leave with a sense of greater capacity about them. Smiles say a lot about the way that you care for those receiving your services. While we would be disappointed to see you leave our building, I truly believe that this is the time in the life of the organization to go out "on it's own" and grow to meet the needs of the community, which I have no doubt will be enhanced through your continued efforts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Michael Ford  
Senior Minister,  
Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church

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Claimed by Christ

Committed to Community

Called to Serve