



# News Release

36600 SCHOOLCRAFT ROAD • LIVONIA, MICHIGAN 48150 • WWW.MADONNA.EDU • 734-432-5740

Contact: Karen Sanborn  
Director of Marketing  
734-432-5843  
e-mail: ksanborn@madonna.edu

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## **Madonna to Offer Sign Language Degree in Gaylord** *Information Forum May 10*

LIVONIA, Mich. – Nearly 25 percent of certified interpreters in the nation will retire in the next 10 years. At the same time, the demand for interpreters is increasing, especially in Michigan where the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act requires schools to provide interpreters for deaf and hard of hearing students, according to a report by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

In addition, by June 30, 2012, all hearing interpreters must possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree to take the national certification exam, according to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

“The interpreter supply and demand gap means members of the Deaf community can't fully participate in society,” said Dan McDougall, director of Madonna University's Sign Language Studies (SLS) bachelor's degree program – the only four-year program in the state.

“There are a lot of wonderful, caring people in Northern Michigan who want to fill this need,” McDougall said. Therefore Madonna University is making plans to begin offering its SLS degree program in Gaylord, soon.

As Madonna prepares to deliver its SLS program in Gaylord, a forum and information session has been scheduled for **Saturday, May 10, from 10 a.m.-Noon**, in the University Center at Gaylord. Guests at the event will learn about Michigan's pressing need for interpreters, hear results from state and national studies, and explore and enroll in Madonna's SLS bachelor's degree program planned for Gaylord. “Most importantly, we'd like interested individuals to come to the forum, to help shape the program that we ultimately will offer.”

McDougall explained that Madonna is working to compliment the classes already being offered at community colleges in the area. The SLS program is an addition to the social work program Madonna University has been offering in Gaylord since 1996. Criminal justice classes and addiction studies courses also are offered in Gaylord. “So bringing sign language studies to the north is a natural extension of our mission to making higher education accessible to all,” said Madonna University President, Sr. Rose Marie Kujawa.

For more information about the Madonna sign language studies program please call 800-852-4951 ext. 5616, or join an online discussion at <http://groups.google.com/group/slsupnorth>.

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Celebrating 70 years of academic excellence, Madonna is Michigan's most affordable, private, Catholic, liberal arts university. Through undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programs, Madonna University combines career preparation, with a liberal arts education and community service to prepare graduates for careers and for life. To learn more about Madonna University and its sign language studies program, visit [www.madonna.edu](http://www.madonna.edu).

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