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### Deafblind communication expert in Albany

An EXPERT in communication with people who are deafblind will be in Albany on December 13 to train health professionals working to improve the lives of people who have vision and hearing impairments.

Wendy-Mae Rapson is a communication specialist with the Senses Foundation Inc, the primary service provider and advocate for people in Western Australia who are deafblind.

She said many more people in regional areas were affected by hearing and vision loss than some might expect. Foundation figures reveal 37,900 people in Western Australia are vision impaired with additional disabilities. Of these 18,456 live in regional or remote areas.

Ms Rapson said many were not accessing help, (despite research which reveals many needed it) and it was important that they knew services like those offered by the Senses Foundation existed. These include specialist physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social worker support and respite care.

The focus of her Albany visit will be on using different forms of sign language, including tactile methods, (that use touch) to help people communicate. She says deafblindness, the loss of hearing and vision, could be one of the loneliest, most isolating disabilities known, that impacted on every facet of life.

She will be in Albany for a one day visit, working with the Lower Great Southern Community Living Association who has a client with special communication needs. She will conduct training with other health professionals and organisations in the afternoon.

Photo shows Wendy-Mae Rapson

To arrange an interview or for further information contact Kerry Faulkner Media Liaison Officer with the Senses Foundation on 0432198878 or Wendy-Mae Rapson on 9473 5400 or her mobile 0408149362 (while in Albany) .

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