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MEDIA RELEASE

Maddi given the opportunity of a lifetime!

Profoundly deaf 16 year old Maddi Callaghan from Daisy Hill in QLD is the lucky recipient of an intercultural exchange program, thanks to a generous scholarship provided by Deaf Children Australia and AFS Intercultural Exchange.

The program will allow one lucky student the opportunity of a lifetime to experience an 11 month intellectual learning experience to Norway, fully funded by Deaf Children Australia and AFS international. The full scholarship is worth \$12 000 and will cover return international travel, orientation and support.

Each year, approximately 13 000 youths from over 50 countries participate in an AFS exchange program. Opportunities for cultural immersion, work and life skills and personal growth are at the core of this program.

The winner of the 2006 scholarship was Natasha Ravlich who said: "I applied for the program because of what a great opportunity it would be for me. I knew it would open my eyes to new adventures, people and experiences and that I would be a more open, confident person when I returned."

Deaf youths would usually not be able to participate in a program such as this one but the new 'Deaf Children Australia/AFS International Diversity Scholarship Program for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired' provides them with this amazing chance.

The AFS/DCA scholarship program is in line with Deaf Children Australia's mission statement that deafness is no barrier and that all youths should have the opportunity to do anything they desire.

Deaf Children Australia has been providing information, advocacy, support services and educational resources to enrich the lives of deaf and hearing impaired children and young adults for 144 years. Deaf Children Australia represents the needs of 16,000 deaf and hearing impaired children throughout Australia. As a not-for-profit organisation, their service is made possible with the support of volunteers, the community, businesses and government financial grants.

For more information on Deaf Children Australia, please call 1800 645 916 or log on to www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au. For more information about this press release or to request an interview, please call Julie Postance on 9539 5362 or jpostance@deafchildren.org.au.

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