

THE COMMUNICATOR

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Save The Date

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Day

Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo
Sunday, September 17, 2017

Animal signs, Deaf Connect readings, prize
give-aways, coloring contest and MORE!



Stay tuned to our Facebook Page for
upcoming details!

“Nothing About Us, Without Us”

John Wyvill, Executive Director



These five words sum up the belief and will of the NCDHH Full Board. It stands for the fundamental belief and principle that no action should be decided by federal, state, local government or other groups without the full and direct participation of the NCDHH Board and staff members, our stakeholders and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. Over 379,000 of Nebraska residents have some degree of hearing loss. Unfortunately when it comes to employment, education, emergency preparedness and communication access, we are not equal before the law with our fellow Nebraska residents.

In the area of employment, we are working with Nebraska VR and NeAD through a workgroup that meets quarterly to discuss ways to collaborate and enhance employment opportunities. In the area of education we have an Education Task Force and a Full Time Education Advocate with NCDHH, Jenny Corum. We are working with NDE, NeAD and other stakeholders to explore ways on how to improve education opportunities on a policy level, and working with families and schools on student by student basis. In the area of emergency preparedness we have a Law Enforcement Task Force that is working with state law enforcement and other stakeholders to increase collaboration and communication access. In terms of communication access we are doing our part to raise awareness with some high profile events at the Omaha Zoo, the Lincoln Saltdogs, and hockey night in Kearney, as well as Scottsbluff Night out to reach Western Nebraska.

Our work is far from over, as we constantly have to advocate to be equal under the law as promised on our own Nebraska State flag. Please contact us when you need advocacy support. You are not alone. In Nebraska, we will become equal before the law if we work together.

Multiple Vacancies in Various Agency Boards & Committees

NCDHH is seeking multiple vacancies for the below agency-related Boards and Committees:

Full Commission Board: a representative who is Hard of Hearing. The Board consists of nine members appointed by the Governor and was created to improve the quality and coordination of existing services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing in Nebraska. You can apply at: <https://governor.nebraska.gov/board-comm-req>

Telecommunication Relay Service Advisory Committee: one representing an individual who is Deaf and a representative for individuals with a speech impediment. The Committee meets to provide guidance for the development, monitoring and promotion of state-wide telecommunications relay and equipment distribution program services in Nebraska.

Interpreter Review Board: an individual representing a sign language interpreter. The Board was created to develop guidelines and regulations for the licensing of sign language interpreters in Nebraska.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in learning more about these boards and committees or would like to apply, please see our website www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov and search under ‘Meet The Team.’

Know Your Commissioners

Dr. Stacie Ray, Board Member

The next upcoming newsletters, NCDHH will be highlighting our Full Board for our readers to get to know them, including some interesting facts you may not know about each Board Member.

Name: Stacie Ray

Occupation: Audiologist/Associate Professor of Practice.

Tell us about your upbringing: I grew up in a small town called Ashton, population approximately 200. I have two siblings. My father was a mechanic, and I attended Loup City High School.

What is your favorite food? Cheesecake.

What is a life motto you like to live by? Work hard and treat people with kindness.

What are you most proud of? My education and my work with students.

What are your hobbies? Going for walks and working on house projects.

If you could change ONE thing in the world, what would it be? Tolerance by all and for all.

Biggest pet peeve? People who don't see the good in others.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be? The power to heal those who are in pain.

What is the best advice you've been given? Be thankful for everything you have and never take it for granted.

If you could go back in time to witness a historical event in person, what event would you want to see? I think it would have been insane to be at Woodstock!

Who is your role model? A professor at UNO by the name of Ann Coyne.

What is your favorite quote? "The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. Whatever your goal, you can get there if you're willing to work." -Oprah Winfrey.

Where is your favorite place in the world? On a quiet beach with an umbrella drink in hand.



Know Your Commissioners

Candice Arteaga, Board Member

The next upcoming newsletters, NCDHH will be highlighting our Full Board for our readers to get to know them, including some interesting facts you may not know about each Board Member.

Name: Candice Arteaga.

Occupation: Nanny to my 15 month old nephew.

Tell us about your upbringing: I was born in Iowa City, and raised in Iowa. I am the only deaf person in my family. I grew up in a rough childhood but was adopted with a beautiful family. I have 7 siblings (5 with my adopted family). I graduated from Iowa School for the Deaf and attended Iowa State University in Ames for two years. I'm blessed that my family knew my needs in the public schools by having interpreters and being in a deaf education program.



What is your favorite food? Authentic Mexican food.

What is a life motto you like to live by? If plan 'A' didn't work, the alphabet has 25 more letters!

What are you most proud of? I'm proud of myself on not giving up when things get hard and challenging throughout my life. I look at myself and I'm amazed how much I have done to get this far.

What are your hobbies? Softball, reading, hiking.

If you could change ONE thing in the world, what would it be? All children to be loved and adopted as they don't deserve to be left behind. They are our future.

Biggest pet peeve? Being late.

Who is your role model? My parents, Doug & Chris.

If you could go back in time to witness a historical event in person, what event would you choose? Harriet Tubman - She was one of the advocates for Women's Suffrage Movement & a part of the Underground Railroad.

What is the best advice you've been given? Keep your head high and be who you are.

Where is your favorite place in the world? Puerto Rico.

What is your favorite quote? "When you are kind to someone, you leave your heartprint on them."

2017 HLA Conference

John Wyvill, Executive Director

At the end of the 2014 fiscal year, more than 933,000 Veterans were receiving disability compensation for hearing loss and nearly 1.3 million received compensation for tinnitus. Furthermore, many Veterans score normally on hearing test but have difficulty understanding speech. This condition, called auditory processing disorder is often associated with blast exposure.



This past June I attended Hearing Loss Association Annual Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. I was privileged to meet Shilo Harris, an inspirational speaker who shared his unforgettable story of triumph over adversity. Shilo was deployed in Iraq with the 10th Mountain Division in 2007. On February 19, 2007 Shilo's armored vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device (IED) which killed three of his fellow soldiers. Shilo survived with severe burns over 35% of his body, hearing loss, the loss of three fingers, his ears, and tip of his nose. The explosion also fractured his left collarbone and C-7 vertebrae. These injuries led Shilo into a medically induced coma for 48 days and he had over 75 surgeries.

Reflecting back on his service to his country, his injuries and his journey in life, Shilo had four points he wanted to share, when life doesn't go as planned for you:

1. Set Smart Goals-specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable/realistic and time limited
2. Tools- use the resources available to you
3. Explore- new options and opportunities with an open mind
4. Positivity- the many positives overrule the few negatives



Watching Shilo's presentation gave me a chance to reflect upon our NCDHH mission and what we do. We should reflect on the blessings we have that we may at times take for granted and remember our men and women in the armed forces who have sacrificed. I leave you with a quote from Shilo:

“Everything in your life is a gift. Sometimes, it may not be the gift you want, but you realize that your challenges are a new beginning”

To learn more about Shilo Harris and his book check out the following website. <http://shiloharris.com/>

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Night at the Lincoln Saltdogs

June 26th was the 4th annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Night at the Lincoln Saltdogs baseball game at Haymarket Park. This has become somewhat of a 'tradition' at the Commission, one in which many members of the deaf and hard of hearing communities look forward to each year. We are thankful the Lincoln Saltdogs collaborates with us to raise awareness about Deaf and Hard of Hearing information, culture, and resources.

The evening was a great success with a large turnout. The evening began with NCDHH Board Member Jeremy Fitzpatrick throwing out the first pitch, followed by a handful of kids from the Southeast Nebraska Regional Program featured as 'Watchdogs', where each child is paired with a Saltdogs player and introduced on the field. There was the signing of the National Anthem by Sarah Tubert, USA Deaf Volleyball player and actress on the jumbotron in the ballpark.



NCDHH had an informational booth with our services and resources throughout the game. There were various games and prize drawings in the evening. During the 4th inning there was a 'Silent Inning' with no music, audio or announcements in an effort to highlight deaf and hard of hearing individuals enjoy baseball just like everyone else. There was also an informational booth from a local audiologist office as well. We look forward to the next Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Night!



NCDHH's newest Advocacy Specialist

Teresa Hevner



Hello, my name is Teresa Hevner and I am pleased to introduce myself as one of the newest members of the NCDHH family. I will be working as an Advocacy Specialist in and around the Omaha area. I am originally from Colorado, where I spent the majority of my childhood on my family's farm. When I wasn't working on the farm, I enjoyed playing various sports and watching the Denver Broncos, faithfully. I love spending the majority of my free time outside hiking, and exploring my surroundings.

I attended the University of Northern Colorado, in Greeley. There, I earned my Bachelor of Science degrees in Human Services and Audiology/Speech Language Sciences. After learning about the advocacy specialist position, I was very interested in becoming a part of the Commission. Once I had met all of the staff members at NCDHH I knew I wanted to join the team. Everyone is very passionate about the work they do, and I am thrilled to get the chance learn from each of them.

There are so many amazing services that we offer to Nebraskans, and I am delighted to be one of the Advocacy Specialists providing these wonderful resources to individuals and communities around the Omaha area. My contact information is (402) 595-1019 or by email teresa.hevner@nebraska.gov.

Introducing Pamela Duncan, NCDHH Interpreter Program Assistant



Pamela Duncan has been involved with the Deaf community for over 40 years, as a member of a Deaf family and later (since 2000) provided interpreting services. She is a well-respected member of the Deaf community as well as the Sign Language Interpreting community. As of 2006, Pamela has been a certified, licensed interpreter in the state of Nebraska working in a variety of settings which include, legal (courts, penal and parole systems); religious (church, temples, funerals, weddings, etc.; performance (concerts, plays, musicals); educational (k-12 as well as post-secondary and graduate school); corporate (meetings, conferences); conference interpreting (for presenters); medical (clinician appointments, procedure, emergency room); mental health (in-patient, outpatient, Alcoholics Anonymous). Pamela has served as a mentor to half a dozen current students in the Interpreting Training Program at University of Nebraska-Omaha. She has also written a proposal to establish a state-funded mentoring

program which was in place in the 1990s but has since been abandoned. It is her goal to get the program and running again to service those recent graduates.

Pamela works with several youth in the Omaha metropolitan area. These youth are children of Deaf adults (CoDA) and offers guidance and mentoring services. Prior to becoming an interpreter, Pamela worked in corporate America for 18 years as an administrative assistant, supervisor, manager and team lead. The final career she held was as a sales manager for a direct marketing company. Her territory covered the West Coast as well as Canada and involved approximately 4-8 weeks per year of traveling.

Pamela comes from a family with one Deaf sibling, both Deaf parents and 5 generations of Deaf cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents and great-grandparents. She is married with two adult children, residing in Omaha, Nebraska for over 40 years. She and her husband of 20 years enjoy traveling, our two grandchildren, and staying connected with extended family whom reside throughout the United States.

EDUCATION SUMMIT

October 21, 2017

OCTOBER

21

UNO Milo Bail
Student Center

EDUCATION SUMMIT



SAVE THE DATE

TOPICS

- *Best Practices for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the classroom*
- *Learn more on how best to prepare your child for a successful future*

AGENDA

- *Presentations by professionals in the education field*
- *Break-out sessions for educators and parents*
- *Panel Q&A on all subjects related to education and learning in the classroom*

More Information To Follow



Education Advocate Update

Jenny Corum, Education Advocate



Nebraska Department of Education will be conducting a state wide Deaf and Hard of Hearing SPOT Analysis. This will be an opportunity to provide input about the quality of education for children birth to age 21 who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. SPOT analysis is a statewide gathering of information which addresses the potential Strengths, Problems, Opportunities, and Threats relevant to educational services to students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. NDE will be looking at the outcomes and provide appropriate support at any regions who may require them. The SPOT analysis will be working in parallel to the Education Task Force facilitated by the Commission.

Nebraska Department of Education will host a meeting in 8 different locations starting in September. They will be in Norfolk, Scottsbluff, North Platte, Lincoln, Auburn, Hastings, Omaha Metro, and South Sioux City. The meetings will be held from 4-7 p.m. and interpreters will be provided. To ensure that an interpreter will be provided, Nebraska Department of Education is recommending individuals to RSVP to Rhonda Fleischer at rhonda.fleischer@esu9.us. More specific information to follow in August.

Nebraska Department of Education conducted its first SPOT analysis meeting at the NeAD conference in June. The outcome was wonderful. There was a lot of good information and ideas shared and showed good collaboration. It is very crucial to attend these meetings to provide input, comments and feedback so we can assure that Nebraska Department of Education is getting all of the information. The more input, feedback and comments provided, the better Nebraska Department of Education can analyze and determine what recommendations need to be made to improve education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in Nebraska. If you have any questions about the SPOT analysis, please contact Rhonda Fleischer at rhonda.fleischer@esu9.us or myself at jenny.corum@nebraska.gov.

All meetings – 4:00 to 7:00 PM

Interpreters available at all locations.

* Norfolk - Tuesday, September 19, 2017
Norfolk Public Schools Admin Building
512 Philip Ave. -- Room 302

* Scottsbluff - Wednesday, September 20, 2017
ESU#13 -- 4215 Ave I – Conference Room C

* North Platte - Thursday, September 21, 2017
ESU#16 -- 1221 W 17th St --- Front room

* Lincoln - Monday, September 25, 2017
Sheridan Lutheran Church
6955 Old Cheney Rd. -- South Great Room (Door 4)

* Auburn - Tuesday, September 26, 2017
The Learning Center – 1109 R St.

* Hastings - Wednesday, September 27, 2017
ESU#9 -- 1117 E South St. – JVV room

* Omaha Metro - Tuesday, October 3, 2017
ESU#3 -- 6949 South 110th St., La Vista
Cass/Douglas rooms

* South Sioux City - Wednesday, October 4, 2017 -- South Sioux City Admin Building
210 W 39th Street

National, State & Local Organizations

Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist

Being a part of a group can sure provide personal benefits for oneself, as well as for members as a whole. There are several national, state and local organizations that composes of Nebraska members who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing. Check out their missions and visions to see what fits your personal preferences. Also explore the available wealth of resources that each organizations may have available for those who are deaf, late-deafened, deaf-blind and hard of hearing.



National Organizations

American Tinnitus Association (ATA)

www.ata.org

ADARA

www.adara.org

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AGB)

www.agbell.org

American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB)

www.aadb.org

American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC)

www.deafchildren.org

Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA)

www.alda.org

Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Losses

www.amphl.org

Deaf Anti-Violence Coalition

www.deafantiviolencecoalition.com

Deaf Women United

www.dwu.org

Deaf Seniors of America

www.deafseniorsofamerica.org

Hands & Voices

www.handsandvoices.org

Hearing Loss Association of America

www.hearingloss.org

Junior National Association of the Deaf (Jr NAD)

www.nad.org/youth-leadership-programs/JuniorNAD

National Asian Deaf Congress (NADC)

www.nadcusa.org

National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

www.nad.org

National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA)

www.nbda.org

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB)

www.nfadb.org

Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDI)

www.tdiforaccess.org

Vestibular Disorders Association

www.vestibular.org

USA Deaf Sports Federation

<https://usdeafsports.org>

State Organizations

Junior National Association of the Deaf Nebraska and Iowa

www.facebook.com/Jr-NAD-Nebraska-and-Iowa

Deaf Grassroots Movement of Nebraska

www.facebook.com/groups/DGMofNebraska

Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD)

www.nead1902.com

Nebraska Hands & Voices

www.handsandvoicesne.org

Nebraska School for the Deaf Alumni Association (NSDAA)

www.nsdAA1901.org

Local Organizations

Lincoln Association of the Deaf (LAD)

www.facebook.com/Lincoln-Association-of-the-Deaf

Lincoln Deaf Club (LDC)

www.facebook.com/groups/837805092918153

Hearing Loss Association of America – Omaha Chapter (HLAA-Omaha)

www.facebook.com/HLAAOmaha

Omaha Association of the Deaf (OAD)

www.facebook.com/groups/61806777852

Midwest Athletic Association of the Deaf (MAAD)

www.maad.org

[LAD and OAD are affiliated clubs with this regional organization, please contact LAD or OAD for information]

Omaha Deaf Senior Citizens

[Affiliated with OAD, please contact OAD for information]

Behavioral Health Coordinator Update

Carly Weyers, Behavioral Health Coordinator



As I look back on all the works I have done, I am happy to report that my first year was a good year! I would like to give a special thanks to a grant NCDHH received from the Omaha Enrichment Foundation. Because of that grant, I was able to host a Domestic Violence in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community Workshop. The purpose of this workshop is for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in an effort to educate about domestic violence and what they can do if they are victims of domestic violence. While Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in Nebraska is relatively small, the risk of domestic violence and sexual assault is high, and the support system for Deaf and Hard of Hearing is lacking. There was a good number of people attended to this workshop, and I am hoping to host more workshops in the future!

Kim Davis, our advocacy specialist and I work together to develop the Law Enforcement task-force and the purpose of this task force is to develop the best method for Law Enforcement and Deaf and Hard of Hearing community to communicate with each other and to promote and foster interaction between the two communities and information sharing among all stakeholders. There are a lot of concerns and needs that we need to look at and fill in the gaps to find the best method for both communities to communicate and interaction with each other. I look forward to see what we will come up with in the future!

One of my goal that I wanted to do when I start filling my new shoes here at NCDHH last year was to open up the dialogue by providing Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals with some kind of social media videos and ASL videos that are interest to us all. One of vlog that received most responds was “13 Reasons Why” where I was discussing about the new Netflix series 13 Reasons Why and the series talked about 17 years old girl, Hannah Baker who takes her own life. She leaves behind 13 tapes and each of tapes addressed to specific person in her life who makes an impact on her decision to end her own life. This series made a huge impact on many people, and not everyone are on the same page about this show. Check out our facebook page to see more vlogs that I’ve done, and keep an eye for more in the future! It was definitely a good year, and I look forward for more events to come!

What’s Happening Out West

Brittney Isom, Advocacy Specialist



Helping Hands Independent Living Center (HHILC), previously known as the Panhandle Independent Living Services (PILS), has been in the Panhandle of Nebraska for a little over 20 years now. If you haven’t heard of them before, their mission is to provide services, support and advocacy for people with disabilities and other disadvantages, hoping to live as independently as possible in their community. I had the opportunity to sit down with the previous Executive Director Jean Wilkinson, who retired in the middle of July, to go over what Helping Hands really does for people. She started off by explaining their “Core Services”; Advocacy, Independent Living Skills, Information & Referral, Peer Support and Transition. The two that caught my attention was Peer Support and Transition. HHILC offers different activities to bring people together to socialize and share thoughts, hence Peer Support. Various Independent Life skills classes include, but not limited to, nutrition and learning to cook healthy meals for 1-2people, Diabetes Education and History of the area. HHILC also makes sure to bring together their clients for the Thanksgiving/Christmas holidays. They also help with the youth transitioning in school to adult life and the elderly and the disabled divert from nursing homes. The new Executive Director, Carol Ackerman, aspires to getting more involved with the youth transitioning into the adult world and hopes to have more life skill classes to help them live as independently as possible. I have had the pleasure of working with the Helping Hands Independent Living Center through our Hearing Loss Support Groups and various referrals. They have been nothing but helpful in my experience. I am excited to continue working with them in the panhandle of Nebraska. If you or someone you know could benefit from their services, they are located at 1455 11th St. Gering, NE, 69341 or you can call them at 308-635-7901.

NSTEP: Making it Work

Beth Ellsworth, Advocacy Specialist

Summer is here and with the warm weather travel has increased. In the past few months there have been more questions brought up about the Nebraska Specialized Equipment Program. Below are some points to consider when applying.

When you order through a local vendor it is important to remember that not all listed vendors set up equipment. Contact them to make sure they will come and setup.

If they do set up the vendor will order the equipment and contact you to make an appointment to come to your home and set up.

Once the Vendor has met and set up your equipment it is your responsibility and any repairs must go through the manufacturer. After you register your warranty you may want to consider extending the warranty. Keep all paperwork and boxes in case something happens

If you are getting a caption phone here are 2 questions that will determine what phone you get:

-Do you have internet?

-Do you have an analogue phone line?

If you do not have internet you will need to get the Captel 840. You also need to have an analogue phone line. If you have a digital phone line the captel 840 will not work.

If you have internet you may go through the caption phone representative to order a phone instead of NSTEP.

If you are ordering a TTY, you will need to have a phone line.

If you have any questions contact me or the Advocacy Specialist covering your area! Have a safe and fun summer!

Beth.ellsworth@nebraska.gov Video Phone 402-682-7129 or call our toll free number and leave a message. I'll call you back. 1-800-5456244.



CAPTEL
Captel@captel.com
1-888-269-7477

CAPTIONCALL
Marin Puzey
801-388-5545
mpuzey@captioncall.com
www.captioncall.com

CLEAR CAPTIONS
Annette Newman
Title IV ADA Specialist
Cell: (402) 430-2319
Referral Fax: (877) 868-8695
Annette.Newman@clearcaptions.com

Sounds of Summer: How Your Hearing Can Be At Risk

Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist



Summer is a fun and exciting time for outdoor activities. Many of these activities include sounds that are harmful to your hearing. This doesn't mean you can't enjoy your summer. It just means that you need to take precautions to protect your hearing. Noise is the second leading cause of hearing loss. Repetitive loud noise can cause irreversible inner ear damage over time. It's actually very easy to know when loud gets too loud. From any smart phone or tablet you can download a free application of a decibel meter. Once downloaded you can know instantly what the decibel level is of any activity. The louder the sound, the shorter the amount of time it takes to damage hearing. According to the Hear the World Foundation, a sound above 85dB can cause hearing loss after approximately eight hours of continuous exposure. If the noise level is 100dB, your hearing could be damaged in as little as 15 minutes.

According to the National Institutes of Health, just one minute of exposure to noises between 110-140 decibels can result in permanent hearing loss. Instant damage can occur during activities that include extreme levels of sound, including gunshots, fireworks, and a balloon popping! "When exposed to recreational "loud/very loud" noise, only 11.4 percent report they always used hearing protection, whereas 62.3 percent, or 6.3 million people never used any protection," (Study published in "The Laryngoscope," a medical journal.) To protect your hearing while mowing the lawn, or at the gun range, it's a good idea to use some form of hearing protection. It is recommended to take acoustic breaks and switch off all sources of noise after being in loud environments or using loud machinery. This period of total silence gives your ears a chance at recovery so permanent hearing damage is less likely to occur. "It is not only our hearing that suffers from noise," according to Hear the World. "Even low noise levels can trigger the release of stress hormones, leading to increased blood pressure. This in turn can lead to aggressive behavior and tensions in interactions with other people, as well as an increased risk of stroke, heart attack and tinnitus. Unwanted sources of noise also prevent relaxation, recovery and sleep and impair concentration and performance, particularly in children."

Five Sounds of Summer that can damage your hearing without your realizing:

MP3 player/mobile devices at maximum volume: Many mobile devices can reach 105 decibels. Many MP3 players, cell phones, and tablets have volume limiting controls, which enable the user to set the maximum volume to a safe level.

- Lower the volume.
- If your mobile device has a volume control limit, a setting of 75dB is recommended as a safe listening level.

Music festival or concert: Sounds get louder the closer you are to the source. If you are at a concert or music festival, the nearer you are to the speakers, the greater the risk of damaging your hearing. Musicians are particularly at risk of noise-induced hearing loss and should wear ear protection while rehearsing and performing.

- Do not stand close to the speakers.
- Wear earplugs.
- If you are a musician, use custom-made ear monitors.

Home Improvement Equipment: If you are using equipment such as chainsaws, nail guns and power tools – or you are in close proximity to someone using these devices, you should be aware that they can reach 110-140dB.

- Wear hearing protectors/ear defenders.
- If you are not using the equipment yourself and do not have hearing protection, move away from the noise.

Technology for Noise Induced Hearing Loss

Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist

Balloons: A recent study published in *Canadian Audiologist*, showed that the noise generated by bursting balloons, at its highest level, was comparable to a high-powered shotgun going off next to someone's ear. "It's amazing how loud the balloons are," says researcher and hearing expert Dylan Scott, according to the study. "Nobody would let their child shoot something that loud without hearing protection, but balloons don't cross people's minds." "It's amazing how loud the balloons are." The loudest bang was made by the ruptured balloon at almost 168 decibels, four decibels louder than a 12-gauge shotgun, which means that even one exposure could be considered potentially unsafe to hearing for both children and adults.

- If children are playing with balloons, make sure they are supervised and that the play does not involve popping the balloons.

Gardening equipment: Mowers and leaf-blowers, in particular, can be very noisy devices, reaching 85-100dB. Lawnmowers produce a sound level of around 90dB, but are often used over a longer period of time. A shotgun can measure in at over 160dB in a quick burst of deafening sound.

- Use hearing protectors, such as earplugs or ear defenders.
- If you are not the one using the device, move indoors, away from the noise.
- Protect the hearing of any children near the device while it is in use.
- If you find yourself without hearing protection, cover your ears with your hands.

There are a large number of summer activities with associated noise levels that can damage your hearing. Other activities to be aware of include: car races, demolition derbies, tractor pulls, boating, jet skiing, four wheeling, and motorcycling. The most important thing is to always be aware of the sound level at your activity. Have fun, but be prepared to protect your hearing. There are many different ways to protect your ears, including ear plugs, ear plugs with frames, ear molds, headphones and ear muffs. Check out the wide variety, and always have an option on hand, especially when you know you're heading to a loud place. If we want to enjoy the sounds of life it's time we be more active to protect our ears. If you've been exposed to loud noises and you're wondering, "Is my hearing damaged?" it's important to see a hearing care professional as soon as possible.

Social Media and Technology



**Like NCDHH on
Facebook!**

**Visit our newly designed
website**

www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov