

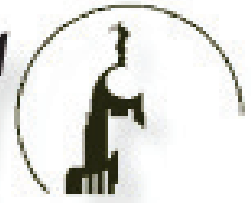
Pete Ricketts
Governor

Margie Propp
Chairperson

John C. Wyvill
Executive Director

The Communicator

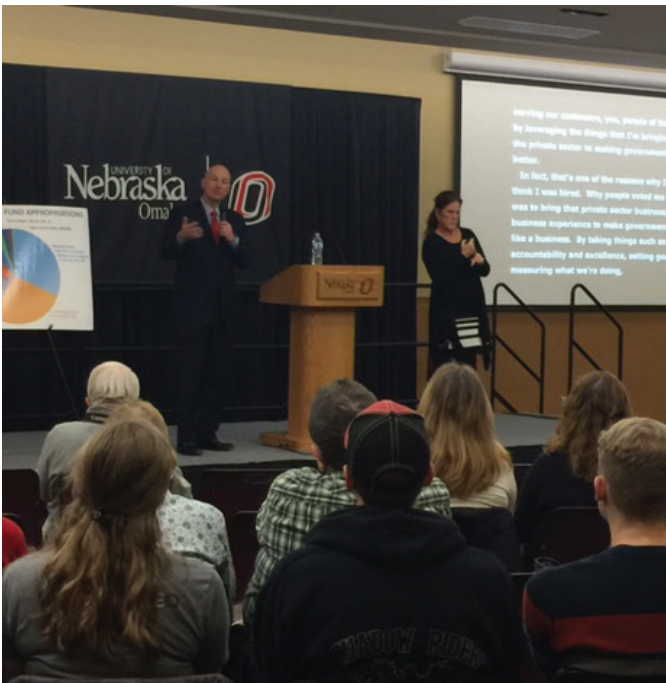
Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



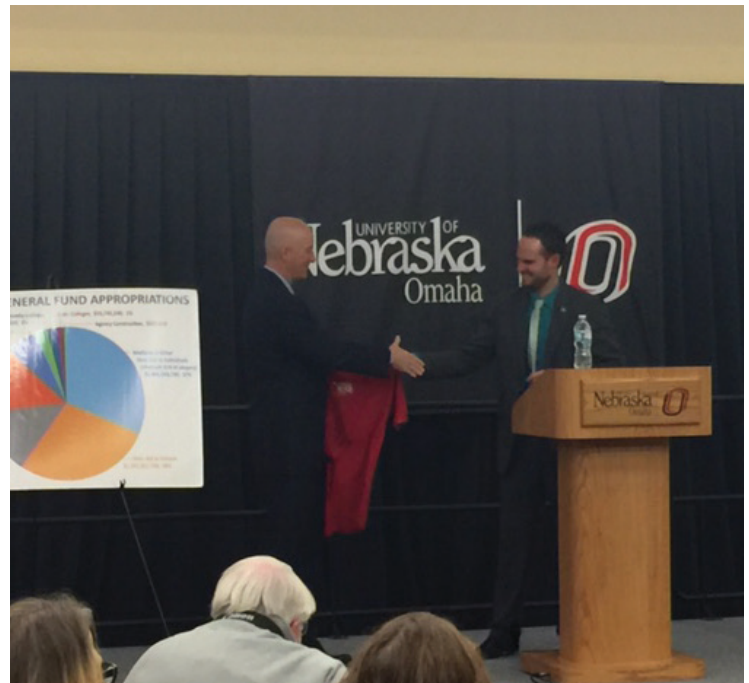
Winter 2017

A newsletter surveying health, government and issues affecting Nebraskans.

Governor hosts Town Hall Meeting for Deaf and Hard of Hearing community



Gov. Ricketts addressing the audience at Town Hall Meeting.



NeAD President Jonathan Scherling giving Gov. Ricketts an honorary NeAD polo shirt.

On Friday, Dec. 2, 2016 Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts hosted a Town Hall Meeting for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing. The goal for this meeting was for members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities to come together and voice opinions, concerns, and suggestions for how to improve their quality of life in areas such as education, employment, communication access and more.

This meeting was planned with the collaboration of the Governor's office, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH), and Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD). This was the first town hall by a Nebraska governor to serve specifically the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. The meeting was a tremendous success in moving forward to continue to work on equality for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing. It featured articles published in the Lincoln Journal Star as well as the Omaha World Herald, you can find these articles here:

- http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/ricketts-town-hall-a-first-for-nebraska-s-deaf-community/article_45d370d9-031f-58d7-af7d-b16030d42708.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share
- http://www.omaha.com/livewellnebraska/ricketts-meets-with-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-community-at/article_1aafb65b-9180-588f-b42f-f462a3ad60b7.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

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Executive Director's Update

John Wyvill, Executive Director



The NCDHH Full Board priorities in the 2017 year can be summed up in the three E's: employment, education and emergency preparedness.

In the area of education, the NCDHH Executive Committee has appointed an Education Task Force to diagnose and recognize the challenges and opportunities needed to improve education for Deaf or Hard of Hearing students in Nebraska. You will read more about this committee later in the newsletter by NCDHH Education Advocate Jenny Corum. Meetings have started, but is it not too late to become involved, if you are interested, you may reach out to Jenny at jenny.corum@nebraska.gov, 402-560-0183 (V) or 402-325-1068 (VP).

In the area of emergency preparedness, we have created a Law Enforcement Task Force group. Participants of this group include those who work with or for law enforcement and those who are members of the Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing Community. The goal of this task force is to enhance awareness of all parties involved and to promote and foster interaction between the two communities and information sharing among all stakeholders. Kim Davis, NCDHH Advocacy Specialist and Carly Weyers, NCDHH Behavioral Health Coordinator are facilitators for this group. If you are interested in learning more you may contact Kim at 402-261-2657 (VP) or kim.davis@nebraska.gov and Carly at 402-206-2971 (VP) or carly.weyers@nebraska.gov.

In the area of employment, we are working with Nebraska VR to explore ways to increase the number of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals to be employed in Nebraska, as well find better employment opportunities. We work closely with Jessica Nickels and Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, both of Nebraska VR, on collaborative projects including providing internships for trial work experiences with Nebraska VR clients. Stay tuned for a Nebraska VR video that will be coming out soon!

I want to take a moment on behalf of the entire NCDHH team to wish each of you a Happy New Year and to share with you our view that the New Year stands before you like a new book with 365 pages waiting to be written. I hope that each one of you will work with us together as we write the story in 2017 of how we made the difference in the lives of the people of Nebraska one day at a time.

Legislative Update

The Commission's agency mission is to educate and advocate for equal access for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing. In an effort to continue carrying out our mission and direction from the Full Board, NCDHH has been working with Nebraska legislature on two Interim Studies: Legislative Resolution 412 (LR 412), to study communication access issues for movie theaters in Nebraska, and Legislative Resolution 463 (LR 463), to examine ways to improve the coverage of hearing aid costs for Nebraska families.

Introduced by Sen. Watermeier, a workgroup was created including members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. LR 412 was later filed under Legislative Bill 269 and presented to the Legislature on January 26th, 2017. This bill would require motion picture theaters in Nebraska to provide open captioning in movies for two showings a week.

Legislative Update cont.

A workgroup was also created for LR 463 to study issues such as how other states cover hearing aid costs, whether hearing aid coverage should be included as an essential health benefit under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, an examination of health insurance coverage options, and recommendations on how to improve services being provided by the hearing aid banks. Introduced by Sen. Campbell, LR 463 was voted on by the NCDHH Full Board to be tabled for further research and studying on how to best meet the needs of Nebraskans with hearing aids. It is expected that a new interim study will be filed this legislative session to complete the work of LR 463.

NCDHH is seeking members for the Full Commission Board. Below is more information:



Pete Ricketts
Governor

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH MEMBERS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

Michael R. Brummer,
Chairperson

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING IS SEEKING MEMBERS FOR THE FULL COMMISSION BOARD.

Commission
Members

Steven M. Manning
Omaha

Regina Frerichs
Columbus

John Hogue,
Arlington

Dr. Carol Lomicky,
Kearney

Dr. Jan Moore,
Kearney

Diane Muelleman,
Omaha

Margie Propp,
Lincoln

Dr. Frank R. Turk
Omaha

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) is seeking individuals that are interested in serving on the Board. Our legislation requires the commission members shall include three deaf persons; three hard of hearing persons and three persons who have an interest in and knowledge of deafness and hearing loss issues. A majority of the commission members who are deaf or hard of hearing shall be able to express themselves through sign language. **Effective January 31, 2017, there are two vacancies:** a deaf representative and a hard of hearing representative.

The Commission conducts quarterly meetings, generally with the meeting occurring on a Friday. Normally, the meeting times are 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In addition, the Commission members must serve on a subcommittee, which generally meets during the board meeting or possibly an additional four times a year. Members are reimbursed for their travel expenses.

Anyone interested in becoming a Full Commission Member needs to submit an application to the Governor's Board and Commission Office, attention Ms. Kathleen Dolezal, PO Box 94848, Lincoln, NE 68509-4848. Contact Ms. Dolezal at (402) 471-1971 (voice) or (402) 471-2414 (tty) or apply online at <http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/contact/exe-appt.php>

John C. Wyvill
Executive Director

NCDHH is now on Facebook!



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Education Task Force

By: Jenny Corum, NCDHH Education Advocate



Hello, my name is Jenny Corum and I am the NCDHH Education Advocate. This is a brand new position at NCDHH. My role is to educate not only the parents and students on their rights to effective communication in schools but to provide support and resources to get access to communication in schools for all ages. I am very excited for the opportunity to work closely with schools, parents, and students to help them receive the assistance they need. I am a licensed sign language interpreter and have been interpreting for 7 years. I am a Child of Deaf Adults (CODA) and grew up in a deaf family. I am thrilled to be a part of the Commission and look forward to making a difference this year.

NCDHH established an Education Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to diagnose and recognize the challenges and opportunities needed to improve education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in Nebraska. The Task Force Steering Committee had their first meeting on November 1st. During that meeting, the members had collective conversation focusing on how the quality and outcomes in education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in our state can be improved and developed four sub-committees. The four sub-committees are: Employment/Transition, Best Practices Inside/Outside of the Classroom, IEP/MDT, and Social/Emotional Development/Cultural Identity. Each of the sub-committees have met and developed goals they will be working on throughout the 2017 year. Here are some of the goals the sub-committees will be focusing on.

Goals the **Employment/Transition Sub-Committee** will be focusing on is defining transition, whether Deaf or Hard of Hearing students are transitioning in school, vocational rehabilitation, or work. The committee defined five different areas of transition. Those areas are Employment, Adult/Student Living, Daily Living, Community Experiences, Functional Vocational Evaluation, and Use of Interpreters/Communication Access. The next goal is to determine the different stages and applying them to each area of transition and what needs to be done for each of those areas at each stage. **Best Practices Inside/Outside of the Classroom** discussed methods of communication, standardized testing and how support can be given for schools. Another area discussed was to review teacher trainings and opportunities for teachers to receive additional endorsements or a variety of trainings and how incentives can be provided for teachers to utilize and take advantage of trainings that are available to them. This committee also discussed how there needs to be less of a medical approach to deaf and hard of hearing individuals and providing more resources to focus more on the culture and language education.

IEP/MDT Sub-Committee developed three goals to focus on. The first goal is to focus on providing information to the parents and students on roles, responsibilities and rights under IDEA and Rule 51. The second goal is to gather information on resources and support available across the State to support IEP goals. The last goal is to determine training and support for professionals who evaluate students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The main focus of the **Social Emotional Development/Cultural Identity** will be working on is 'What does social/emotional development mean and how do they advocate for that?' The committee established eight objectives to work on for 2017. These objectives are: defining the meaning of Social/Emotional Wellness and how do we approach each of those, access to social interaction, denying identity, role models, self-advocacy, information given to new parents, language acquisition, and counseling.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at the Zoo

The second annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at the Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo was held on Sunday, September 25, 2016. It was again, a tremendous success. Hundreds of children and parents who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or community members joined for door prizes, coloring contests, and a Deaf Connect reading by Jr. NAD President, Isabella Graves. There was also an animal signs class for spectators to learn different animal signs, as well as a visitor from a zoo resident, a porcupine!

NCDHH and the Nebraska Association of the Deaf would like to thank everyone who came out to support and enjoy the celebration. It is our hope to continue this event in years to come.



Isabella Graves during Deaf Connect Reading



Interpreter Lorelei Waldron during Porcupine animal encounter



A great turnout during Deaf Connect reading and animal encounter



NeAD and Hands and Voices representatives

Behavioral Health Update

By: Carly Weyers, Behavioral Health Coordinator



We are welcoming the New Year, so that means it is time to set up new goals!!! I will be talking about my goals as I begin filling my new shoes here at NCDHH! One of my goals other than improve the communication accessibility with Behavioral Health Services in Nebraska is to open up the dialogue by providing Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals with some kind of social medial videos and ASL videos that interest to us all. Speaking of new goals, most people's New Year's resolution are often focus on weight, general health and finances. They tend to forget that mental health is just as important as your physical health.

Some of you may find yourself questioning why do I want to do this? During my college years, I had the opportunity to work at Moores Cancer Center at San Diego, California for my internship and that is where I started work in the Behavioral Health field and that where is my desire to work in the Behavioral Health field happened. Moores Cancer Center works with many different outreach communities, with the goal to reach out to minorities and make sure they have access to increase their knowledge about health. For my part, I work with the deaf community and our project includes American Sign Language videos, webcasts related to cancer issues, community outreach and ongoing research about health. When I was doing that research program at Moores, I can see the big turnout out with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to understand better by how to coping with cancer by watching the American Sign Language videos along with subtitles.

People who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing face many different kind of behavioral health challenges every day, and one of biggest problem with their health issues is that they have no access to communication and technologies at most mental health services, so they are not able to understand their health conditions entirely. By providing ASL videos with subtitles, we can improve our knowledge and further our own, individual goals about our health and how we can take care of ourselves or where to find the resources when we need any kind of mental health services in our own language. Please feel free to contact me to share some of your concerns about mental health services here in Nebraska, or any ideas that you would like to see in ASL videos! This is how we make Nebraska a better place for us all! Otherwise, keep an eye out for more ASL videos on our Facebook page!

If you have topics for ASL videos you would like produced, or have any questions, I can be reached via email at carly.weyers@nebraska.gov or Video Phone 402-206-2971. Happy New Year!

Social Media Update

NCDHH has worked in collaboration with Nebraska Egov to design and update our website, www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov. It was our vision to create a website that still provided communication access for all, while making the navigation and search pages much easier. If you have any questions or comments regarding the new features of our website, please direct them via email to Kelsey Cruz at Kelsey.cruz@nebraska.gov.

In an effort to reduce costs, our newsletter will be transitioning to electronic publication, leaving two newsletters per year to be published through print. If you would like to be included on our electronic database, please fill out our 'Keep In Touch' tab on our website at: <https://ncdhh.nebraska.gov/keep-in-touch>.

New Year, New Improvements **by: Beth Ellsworth, Advocacy Specialist**



It is so hard to believe it is 2017! This is the time of year I reflect on what I would like to focus on in the New Year. I used to call them resolutions but I would break them early in the year. So now I call them “dreams and wishes”. Somehow just changing the wording has helped me work on my selections throughout the year. This year I’d like to reach out to more people who either have a hearing loss or those who would like to know more about what it means to experience hearing loss.

I also like to review the year. 2016 was full of many different activities. With the population aging I found myself meeting more clients living in assisted living facilities. Working with their families and the staff to provide the many resources that are available has been very rewarding. I am so grateful that I am able to work one on one with people who have a hearing loss or are deaf. One of the joys of working at NCDHH is working with those who are facing the challenge of coming to terms with a hearing loss. It doesn’t matter if it’s a recent or long standing, having a hearing loss means finding a new way of communicating and that requires effort and persistence. Growing up with a hearing loss myself, I enjoy working to find solutions.

I’ve noticed an increase in consumers who have a dual loss. This is a combination hearing & vision loss. It could be a hearing loss or deafness and blind or low vision. With the improvements in technology, there are many more options to explore!

One of my favorite things to do is giving presentations to hearing people that want to experience a hearing loss and learn what it sounds like. NCDHH has a CD called an Unfair Hearing test (Garlic Press- Sound Hearing). This is a spelling test that simulates a high frequency hearing loss. Severe, moderate & mild.

I’ve been reading to deaf and hard of hearing children at the Connect program at Hands and Voices. I love being able to share my love of reading! We meet at a different library once a month. Let me know if you are interested in learning more about H & V or go to www.handsandvoices.com

Here’s a good website to check out! <http://www.hearinglikeme.com/>

Beth Ellsworth - Advocacy Specialist
Nebraska Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
1313 Farnam on the Mall
Omaha NE 68102-1836
Email: beth.ellsworth@nebraska.gov
Videophone: 402-682-7129
Voice: 1-800-545-6244
<http://www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov>

2016 in North Platte

by: Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist



Reflecting back on 2016 my first thought is: “WOW! 2016 has gone by so fast!” But then as I slow down to take a closer look, I can see why! This has been a very busy year with me on the go, go, go. My North Platte territory covers 25 counties with 27,956 square miles, 151 cities & towns, and housing 131,161 residents. Throughout the second half of 2016 I have been covering 7 counties of the Kearney territory. This gives me an additional 4,285 square miles, 44 cities & towns and 175,412 residents!

I have been out meeting with and presenting to anyone who will listen to me! I have given 36 presentations to 1,810 listeners. Some of my presentations include: 24 Senior Centers, two Elementary Schools, four Assisted Living Facilities, one Veteran’s Service Officer’s

Regional Meeting, one VFW & Auxiliary Regional Meeting, and one state agency training for the Aging and Disabled Resource Center (ADRC). You may have seen me at one of my 19 booth appearances as I was handing out earplugs as hearing protection to at least 5,016 visitors. My booths were at a wide variety of events, so you never know where I’ll turn up next. Booths in 2016 included: two Assisted Living Facilities, one Home Show, seven Community & Hospital Health Fairs, one Salvation Army Community Event, one Bluegrass Festival, two Senior Festivals, three Community Festivals or Celebrations, one High School Health Fair, Senior Day at the State Fair, Husker Harvest Days, Nebraska Sheriff’s Association (NSA)/Police Officers Association of Nebraska (POAN) and the Kearney Open House for the new NCDHH office.

Yes, this sounds like a crazy busy schedule, but I can honestly say this has been an amazing year for me. I have grown both personally and professionally. The knowledge I have acquired is priceless. I learn something new from every person that I talk to and every group I meet with. Thank you to everyone who I have met and been in contact with. What does 2017 have in store for me? Hopefully more, more, more! With all of the towns and people in my area I know there are still a lot of people who need our agency’s assistance. I am on the lookout for new groups to reach out for presentation opportunities and new events to set up a booth. Please give me a call if you are a member of an organization or know of any opportunity for me to speak or set up an information booth. I can be reached by phone in North Platte at (308) 535-6600 or toll free (800) 545-6244. My email is: kathy.scusa@nebraska.gov. Happy New Year! Together I know we can make 2017 amazing!

Guide By Your Side in the Panhandle

by: Brittney Graham, Advocacy Specialist



There comes a time when people start to feel overwhelmed. Whether that be because you’re moving across the country, bills are starting to pile up or missing strict deadlines at work, everyone has their moment of feeling completely overwhelmed. Hands & Voices is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This parent driven, international organization has a chapter in Nebraska helping families across the state. What makes this group so special is the Parent-to-Parent Support or “Guide by Your Side”. The Parent Guide is a parent of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing child who has been trained to provide support and advocacy for other families. The Panhandle is fortunate enough to have not one, but two Parent Guides; Kiowa Rogers, who lives in Scottsbluff and Allison Liras, who lives in Bridgeport. We are excited to have this opportunity out in the Panhandle, for both women are great sources of information and

support for families who need their assistance. If you wish to contact them, their information is; Kiowa Rogers at 308-765-2640 or kiowaguide@gmail.com and Allison Liras at 308-249-2457 or allison.v.liras@gmail.com.

Summer Camps

by: Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist



Looking for some fun under the sun? Here are some miscellaneous nationwide camping events organized for those who are deaf and hard of hearing and/or may have members in the family who are deaf or hard of hearing. NCDHH does not provide endorsement of these camp activities. You may wish to explore further on the credibility the camp, its host, location, accurate and registration deadline dates. Some of these registration deadline may be as early as March.

YOUTH CAMPING

Aspen Camp (Colorado)
See website for four optional Summer 2017 dates available based on ages.
<https://aspencamp.org/experience>

Camp Anderson (Nebraska)
July 9 – 14, 2017
Contact your child's Nebraska Regional Program service provider for additional information.
<http://nrpdhh.site.esu9.org>

CNI Cochlear Kids Camp (Colorado)
June 22 – 25, 2017 or August 3 – 6, 2017
www.thecni.org/cochlear-kids-camp

Deaf Film Camp (New York)
Please check website for 2017 event date, if available.
www.deaffilmcamp.com

Gallaudet University Youth Programs (Washington D.C.)

- Immerse Into ASL!**
June 24 – July 2, 2017 or July 5 – 13, 2017
- Exploring the Sciences**
June 24 – July 2, 2017
- Got Skills?**
June 24 – July 2, 2017
- Discover Your Future**
July 5 – 13, 2017
- Blackbox Theatre Camp**
July 5 – 13, 2017

www.gallaudet.edu/outreach-programs/youth-programs/summer-youth-camps.html

National Technical Institute for the Deaf Youth Programs (New York)

- Health Care Careers Exploration Camp**
July 22 – 27, 2017
- Explore Your Future Program**
July 8 – 13, 2017 or July 15 – 20, 2017
- TechBoyz Camp**
July 22 – 27, 2017
- TechGirlz Camp**
July 22 – 27, 2017

www.rit.edu/ntid/outreach

NAD Youth Leadership Camp (Oregon)
July 17 – August 12, 2017
<http://nad.org/ylc>

Teen Institute Camp (Missouri)
Please check website for 2017 event date, if available
www.deaflead.com/teen

ADULT / FAMILY CAMPING

Aspen Camp of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Colorado)
August 4 – 8, 2017
For hearing parents & deaf children only
<https://aspencamp.org/product/family-camp-hpdc>

DeafBlind Retreat (Washington)
Please check website for 2017 event date, if available.
For DeafBlind adults, volunteer interpreters/guides.
www.deafblindhh.org/seabeck

National Campers of the Deaf (Missouri)
June 17 – 23, 2018
www.facebook.com/groups/316746238476767

Outdoor Family Camp (Nebraska)
May 6 – 7, 2017
For ages 8+ and family members who are a part of the K-12 Nebraska Regional Programs.
Contact your child's Nebraska Regional Program service provider for additional information
<http://nrpdhh.site.esu9.org>

CHILDREN OF DEAF ADULTS CAMPING

KODA Camp – Midwest (Wisconsin)
See website for three optional Summer 2017 dates available based on ages.
<https://kodacamp.wordpress.com/registration-information>

