

# THE COMMUNICATOR

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



## Successful Night at the Ball Park

It was another great evening at the Lincoln Saltdogs baseball game for our annual outreach event for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness baseball game. Former NCDHH intern, Macee Helmick, signed the national anthem while NCDHH Board Member, Norman Weverka, threw out the first pitch! The local ABC News affiliate, Channel 8 Eyewitness news, was present at the game and interviewed NCDHH Board Member Dr. Stacie Ray. We partnered with the Hearing Aid Banks of Nebraska this year in our efforts to spread awareness for Nebraskans who are Hard of Hearing. Audiology students from the University of Nebraska were there hosting a raffle with proceeds to Hear U Nebraska, an organization that provides hearing aids to children in Nebraska ages 0-18. Until next year!



(Left) NCDHH Team and Board Member Dr. Stacie Ray. (Right) Former Intern Macee Helmick and Board Member Norman Weverka with wife Karen.



Kids out to the ballpark visiting with Saltdogs mascot Homer.

# WELLNESS WEEKEND

# SEPT. 8 2018

**with Janna Luksha**

- Certified personal trainer from Rochester, New York
- NTID Graduate
- Teaches ASL fitness classes



## WORKSHOP TOPICS INCLUDE

**NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION**  
**HOME WORKOUTS**  
**MANAGING HEALTH & BUSY LIVES**

**Come prepared to sweat! Each session includes a 45 minute workout led by JANNA!**

**Where: Copple YMCA**  
**8700 Yankee Woods Dr.**  
**Suite B Lincoln, NE 68526**

**8:00-10:00AM**  
**Session #1: Open to Public**  
**10:30-12:30PM**  
**Session #2: STUDENTS**  
**grades 6-12**

**RSVP by Sept. 6 to:**  
**jenny.corum@nebraska.gov OR**  
**carly.weyers@nebraska.gov**



**Southeast Nebraska  
Regional Program**



# A Call to Action: Interpreter Referral Program Adjustments

*John Wyvill, Executive Director*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires our government and private entities such as businesses and health care organizations to provide auxiliary aid services. This is to ensure deaf, deaf-blind and those with hearing loss can understand what is being said or written and can communicate effectively. One of those ways is for entities to provide qualified sign language interpreters in person.



Organizations cannot require an individual to bring someone to interpret for him or her. They cannot rely on an adult accompanying the individual to interpret and facilitate communication, unless it involves an emergency.

In Nebraska, NCDHH administers the Interpreter Referral Program which is voluntary and available to businesses, consumers and interpreters at no charge. Out of 113 licensed interpreters in Nebraska, 46 participate in the program. Of those in the program, only 29 are actively accepting assignment requests to interpret. As a result, only 60% of the requested jobs are being filled within the last fiscal year.

NCDHH has now developed a proposed action plan to address these concerns and make some adjustments in how we send out job requests. Other solutions we are looking at include: recruiting more interpreters to join the referral program and/or hire a full or part time staff interpreter at NCDHH to cover unfilled requests within the community. As we move forward to address this, we welcome any additional ideas and solutions.

More information on the proposed action plan can be found on our website at [www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov](http://www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov).

## New NCDHH Board Executive Committee

The NCDHH Full Commission Board met recently and new officers were elected. The new Full Board Chairperson is Jeremy Fitzpatrick. Mr. Fitzpatrick resides in Omaha and is a parent of a child who is hard of hearing and is also involved in Nebraska Hands and Voices. The Vice Chairperson is Candice Arteaga. Ms. Arteaga resides in Greenwood and is involved in Omaha Association for the Deaf. The Secretary is Dr. Peter Seiler. Dr. Seiler resides in Omaha and is also on the Board for the Nebraska Association of the Deaf.

The outgoing Chairperson is Ms. Margie Propp. Margie is currently in her second term as a Full Board member, and has just finished her second year as Chairperson. Residing in Lincoln, Ms. Propp is a retired teacher of the Deaf and a sign language interpreter.

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established by the State Legislature in 1979. The Commission consists of nine members who are appointed by the Governor subject to approval by the Legislature. Statute 71-4720 requires that a majority of the commission members who are deaf or hard of hearing shall be able to express themselves through sign language. 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. The Commission was created to improve the quality and coordination of existing services for deaf and hard of hearing people and development of new services when necessary.

# NCDHH Hosts Second Annual Education Summit

*Jenny Corum, Education Advocate*



The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is excited to be hosting our second annual Education Summit on October 26th-27th. Our mission for this Education Summit is to discuss best practices for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the classroom and learn more on how to best prepare Deaf or Hard of Hearing children for a successful future.

We have two presenters for our Education Summit. Our first presenter is Dr. Beth Benedict from Gallaudet University. She is the Executive Director for the Undergraduate Admission and Outreach Enrollment Management Services. Dr. Benedict received her Bachelors in Psychology from Gallaudet University and went on to pursue a master's degree in communications. She is currently finishing her doctoral degree in Education. Her research focuses on early intervention, early acquisition, and family involvement. She will be presenting on Friday, October 26th in the evening.

Our second presenter is Corey Axelrod. Corey is the founder of 2axelrod that was founded in 2017. 2axelrod is a Deaf-owned strategic consulting and training firm guiding business leaders in their efforts to improve communication accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers. 2axelrod also assists organizations in the educational, banking, healthcare, telecommunication, and other sectors in the implementation of policies and selection of services and technologies in providing communication access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

This summit will be beneficial for students, parents, teachers, teacher of the deaf, interpreters, school administrators, audiologists, speech pathologist, and community leaders. We encourage anyone who is interested to attend this event. We are very excited to have these two present at our 2018 NCDHH Education Summit.

## Details

*Where: Milo Student Center  
University of Nebraska-Omaha  
6203 Universty Dr. N, Omaha, NE 68132  
Friday, October 26  
6:00-8:00PM  
Saturday, October 27  
8:30-4:30PM*

*For registration information or any questions,  
please contact Jenny Corum at  
[jenny.corum@nebraska.gov](mailto:jenny.corum@nebraska.gov)*

# Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Day in Omaha

## DEAF & HARD OF HEARING AWARENESS DAY



**SEPT  
30**

**Henry Doorly Zoo  
Wild Kingdom Pavillion  
10:00am**

Join NCDHH & NEaD for fun, games, and animals!  
Sign Language Interpreters available  
Contact Kelsey Cruz at [kelsey.cruz@nebraska.gov](mailto:kelsey.cruz@nebraska.gov)



# What's Happening in the Panhandle

*Britney Isom, Advocacy Specialist*



On Tuesday, August 7, NCDHH attended the National Night Out in downtown Scottsbluff. National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie; enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community. This year, NCDHH had a booth with about 500 people to stop by. It was a great turnout!



Another exciting event coming up is the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at the Riverside Discovery Center in Scottsbluff. NCDHH along with Guide by your Side, NE Regional Programs, NeAD, ESU-13 and the Riverside Discovery Center have been planning a fun day! This event will take place on Saturday, September 8th from 1:00pm-4:00pm. We will meet at The Stage, in between the Discovery Building and the Splash Pad, then go through the Zoo at your own pace. There will be different activities throughout the day. We are very excited for this event and hope you can make it! If you have any questions about the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day, please call or email Brittney Isom at 308-633-3751 or [brittney.isom@nebraska.gov](mailto:brittney.isom@nebraska.gov).

## Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Day

**Saturday, September 8**  
**1:00pm-4:00pm**

**Riverside Discovery Center**

1600 S. Beltline Hwy W, Scottsbluff, NE 69361



Bring the whole family out for a day at the zoo!  
Crafts and activities throughout the day  
Meet at The Stage (in between Discovery building & splash pad) at 1:00pm  
Ticket Information: Tell zoo representative you are here for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness Day



**Contact:**

**Brittney Isom 308-633-3751 [brittney.isom@nebraska.gov](mailto:brittney.isom@nebraska.gov)**

**Sara Peterson 308-641-1402 [speterson@esu13.org](mailto:speterson@esu13.org)**

## *Carly Weyers, Deaf Services/Behavioral Health Coordinator*

Are you one of those who have been stalked in your lifetime? Stalking is defined as unwanted contact or obsessive attention by a person toward another person. Cyberstalking is defined as the use of internet, e-mail, or any social networking to harass or stalk another person. Stalking and cyberstalking are serious issues that people fail to realize how dangerous they can be. Statistics for stalking are very high, and anyone can be a victim of having a stalker or cyber stalker. Cyber stalking does not involve any physical contact, so it may seem like it is not extreme or threatening, but it can hurt a person in more ways than one. With the advancement of technology, stalking and cyber stalking is increasing and becoming more serious.



Here are some questions you might want to ask yourself: Have you ever felt like someone is overly obsessed with you, and they fail to leave you alone? Have you tried to avoid them on your own, but they still follow you? Have you ever had someone who keeps bothering you through social networking? Have you ever felt uncomfortable or threatened around a person? Do you think they might know your schedule? If you answered yes to any of those questions, there are some things to consider regarding stalking and cyber stalking.

Here are some tips that you could do to keep yourself safe from stalkers: live your life in discretion, meaning do not put things out on the internet that would make someone want to pursue you. If you feel like you are being stalked, make sure your family, friends and co-workers know that someone is following you so they can help and you would feel safer. Keep a record of the incident with stalker. Write down everything that happened, including the places where you guys bumped into each other, and what day and times they called you. Make sure everything that is personally related to you is kept in a safe place and/or is password protected. Most importantly, make sure you seek help from others.

Again, if your situation is very serious, you may want to involve local law enforcement. Your safety is the most important in this situation. Stalking is very dangerous, and it is something that can change someone's life dramatically. There are social workers and resources available in the community that can help. Feel free to contact me for more information at [carly.weyers@nebraska.gov](mailto:carly.weyers@nebraska.gov)

## NeAD hosts Recognition Ceremony at Lincoln Grand

The Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) organized a recognition ceremony on August 1, 2018 at the Lincoln Grand Theatre to honor and applaud the efforts of Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler and Lincoln Grand Theatre for their work in contributing to open captioning in movie theatres. Throughout the summer there were a series of open captioned movies available to see, and the reviews were met with great feedback. We are hopeful to see a concrete implementation of open captioned movies in theatres throughout Nebraska so everyone can enjoy going to the movies.



(Left) John Wyvill, Carly Weyers, Mayor Chris Beutler, Margie Propp, Dr. Pete Seiler, Lincoln Grand Manager Lisa Fryda.

# Captions at Movie Theatres

*Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist*



I want to take the opportunity to share my experience using some of the various type of captioning systems at movie theaters. Many larger movie theater chains are providing open or closed movie captioning at their theaters nationwide. Since the revisions and technical corrections of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulation, the definition of open or closed movie captioning is included as a part of auxiliary aids and services. Further information of the final rule made available on November 21, 2016 found through the US Department of Justice's webpage at [www.ada.gov/regs2016/movie\\_captioning\\_rule\\_page.html](http://www.ada.gov/regs2016/movie_captioning_rule_page.html) or the full regulation of Title III at [www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleIII\\_2010/titleIII\\_2010\\_regulations.htm](http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleIII_2010/titleIII_2010_regulations.htm) (see §36.303). Here in Nebraska, many of our AMC Theatres, Regal Entertainment Group and Marcus Theatres

offer a type of movie captioning systems.

## Rear Window Captioning System

<http://ncam.wgbh.org/mopix/>

In the back of the theater, where the movie's projector is running, there is a light-emitting diode (LED) panel that display reversed captions. This in turn reflects to a dark transparent plastic glass panels displaying the captions. This panel's arm is place in the cup holder of the theater's seat and is adjustable. This the first closed movie captioning system I experienced outside of Nebraska.



## Closed Captioning Glasses

<https://www.sony.net>



Captions are displayed through the lens of the glasses. Focus view and font size are adjustable. The glasses are also adjustable at the nose bridge. I experienced this at Regal Omaha Stadium 16.

## CaptiView Closed Captioning Device

[www.dolby.com](http://www.dolby.com)

Captions are display within the display box. Focus view and arm are adjustable. This device is place in the cup holder of the chair. I have experienced this at Marcus Theatres and AMC Theatres.



## Open Captioned Movies



Captions are insert directly on the movie and displayed on the theater's screen for all movie patrons to see.

Currently, at the date of this publication, the only location in Nebraska, is Marcus Theatres' Lincoln Grand Cinema [www.marcustheatres.com/theatre-locations/lincoln-grand-cinema-lincoln](http://www.marcustheatres.com/theatre-locations/lincoln-grand-cinema-lincoln). The last movie I saw was Mission: Impossible – Fallout as an Open Captioned Movie at Lincoln's downtown Marcus Theater! I am thrilled, and extremely grateful, that this movie theater will continue to offer Open Captioned Movies as an option every Saturday at Noon.

Personally, I like the Open Captioned Movies. I simply feel the open movie captioning are more accurate, more pleasurable to watch and I do not have to worry about reserving a portable closed captioning movie device. The CaptiView and Rear Window closed captioning devices are more cumbersome to deal with as I am constantly adjusting these portable devices in the cup holder every time I move in my seat or someone walks through my aisle and bumps the device, and I have no available cup holder to place my beverage. The Closed Captioning Glasses are also cumbersome on top of my own personal prescription glasses. Interested movie buffs desiring to know if any and what type of captioning movie service is available at their local movie theater may wish to either contact the theater directly or check the website. Captionfish at [www.captionfish.com/theaters](http://www.captionfish.com/theaters) is another alternative resource for a list of possible movie theaters near you that that provide captioning movies. Our agency and Nebraska Association of the Deaf will be happy to assist or provide guidance in advocating for open and closed captioning movie systems in your local community.



# Live Captioning Apps

*Teresa Hevner, Lead Advocacy Specialist*

Technology is nothing short of amazing; it continues to improve, making new resources available more and more frequently. Whether its GPS maps, Uber or ordering your favorite dinner from Grub hub, smartphone apps have given us power of technology at our fingertips. Literally! With the majority of Americans owning a smartphone, it only makes sense that innovative apps are being created to assist users during phone conversations.



Live captioning apps have shown up, and may be useful to many individuals in a variety of situations.

**Innocaption** is a free app that both iPhone and Android users can utilize. With stenograph, technology made available to them, this app boasts that the app provides captioning with little delay. This allows the user to make a receive phone calls with less hassle. A free 10-digit phone number is assigned to the user after registering with Innocaption. Features such as Caller ID, syncing the user's contact list, 911 calling with captions, captioned voicemails and speed dial provides a variety of resources for users.

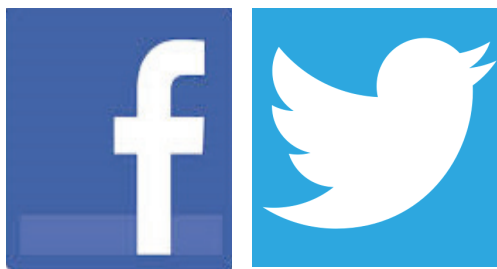
**ClearCaptions** also provides an app to users, looking for captioning. This app allows users "near real-time" accuracy. With the option to save their conversations, change display features and listen to conversations while reading captions at the same time. Available for both iPhone and Android users. **The Hamilton app by CapTel** also allows users to utilize word-for-word captioning while having phone conversations on their smartphones, registration is required before downloading this app.

**CaptionCall Mobile** allows individuals to make calls from their iPad, rather than their phone. Available to registered costumers, calls can be made or received using wireless internet or cellular connection from anywhere. Similarly, to other apps, the user can save conversations. Captioned voicemails are also a feature of this app. Notifications of recent call history is available also. Smartphones have become an asset to users in a variety of areas. Apps that use captioning technology to assist individuals during phone conversations gives users one more resource to utilize, all form the palms of their hands.

#### Source:

<https://hearingassociatesofnova.com/2018/01/29/top-captioning-apps-for-your-phone/>  
<https://hamiltoncaptel.com/mobile-apps-for-smartphones-and-tablets.html>  
<https://captioncall.com/products/captioncall-mobile/>  
<https://www.innocaption.com/>  
<https://clearcaptions.com/products/mobile-phone>

## *Let's Connect!*



*Find NCDHH on  
Facebook & Twitter*

*Visit us on the Web!  
[www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov](http://www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov)*

# Do You Need a Hearing Test?

*Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist*



If you are 18 to 64 years old, the following questions will help you determine if you need to have your hearing tested by a health professional. Answer YES or NO.

1. Do you sometimes feel embarrassed when you meet new people because you struggle to hear?
2. Do you feel frustrated when talking to members of your family because you have difficulty hearing them?
3. Do you have difficulty hearing or understanding co-workers, clients, or customers?
4. Do you feel restricted or limited by a hearing problem?
5. Do you have difficulty hearing when visiting friends, relatives, or neighbors?
6. Do you have trouble hearing in the movies or in the theater?
7. Does a hearing problem cause you to argue with family members?
8. Do you have trouble hearing the TV or radio at levels that are loud enough for others?
9. Do you feel that any difficulty with your hearing limits your personal life or social life?
10. Do you have trouble hearing family or friends when you are together in a restaurant?

If you answered "yes" to three or more of these questions, you may want to see an otolaryngologist (an ear, nose, and throat specialist) or an audiologist for a hearing evaluation. This questionnaire is from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing-loss-older-adults#2>

Studies have shown a range of estimates for the number of children & adults with hearing loss. These facts are from an article found on the Center for Hearing and Communication website: <http://chcheating.org/facts-about-hearing-loss/>

- 48 million Americans have a significant hearing loss.
- Hearing loss occurs in 5 out of every 1,000 newborns.
- 15% of children between the ages of 6-19 have a measurable hearing loss in at least one ear.
- A mild hearing loss can cause a child to miss as much as 50% of classroom discussion.
- 14% of those ages 45-64 have some type of hearing loss
- 1 out of 3 people over age 65 have some degree of hearing loss.
- 2 out of 3 people over 75 have a hearing loss.
- People with hearing loss wait an average of 7 years before seeking help.
- 15 million people in the United States with hearing loss avoid seeking help.

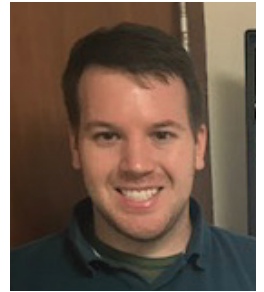
Diagnosing a hearing loss is more important than I can begin to tell you. If you even suspect you have hearing loss you should see an ENT (Ear, Nose & Throat Doctor) or Audiologist (Hearing Specialist) for a baseline audiogram test. That way even if you don't need hearing aids at this time, there is a basis for comparison later down the road. If I can be of service to you, please contact me at my North Platte office phone number (308) 535-6600 or you can email me at [kathy.scusa@nebraska.gov](mailto:kathy.scusa@nebraska.gov).

# The Curious Phenomenon of Hidden Hearing Loss

## *Aaron Rothenberger, Advocacy Specialist*

So, you have taken an audiogram, the gold standard of hearing testing. You heard all the beeps and other noises and passed with perfect hearing. Your ears are just fine. Right... Right?

As most of you know, hearing loss is most often attributed to damage to our hair cells inside of the snail-shaped organ of the cochlea inside our inner ear. An audiogram has patients listen to sounds at different frequencies and volumes to determine their levels of sound detection. People with damaged hair cells tend to have trouble hearing low volume sounds.



But there are people who pass their audiograms and still complain about having trouble hearing when they are in noisy situations, like a restaurant, supermarket or sporting event. In 2009 researchers discovered a phenomenon that would end up being called Hidden Hearing Loss. It was found that damage to our hearing actually starts long before our hair cells are affected. The damage first starts at the fibers of the auditory nerve that connects to the hair cells. These nerve cells help us hear in noisy environments.

Hidden hearing loss remained obscure for so long because audiograms are administered in a soundproof room that doesn't activate these auditory nerve fibers. In other words, patients can pass a hearing test even when their auditory fibers have been damaged.

Researchers have been finding evidence that forms of loud noise are worse for you than originally thought, even if the effects are not immediately noticeable. Loud events like rock concerts that leave your ears ringing after are part of what researchers believe to be a cause of hidden hearing loss. The ringing in your ears dissipates after some time, but the damage to the auditory fibers has already been done.

Researchers say that loud noise damages the delicate connections between hair cells and the auditory nerves that carry the hearing signal to the brain. These connections are called synapses, and hair cells have many of them.

Animal studies suggest that you could lose a large amount, over half, of your synapses without experiencing any effect on your audiogram score. But losing enough of the nerve synapses erodes the message that the nerves deliver to the brain. This effect wipes out details that are crucial for separating conversation from background noise. It is similar to a scoreboard. The more lights that burn out, the harder it is to tell what information is on the board.

### Can Hidden Hearing Loss Be Cured?

As of right now, there is no cure for either hidden hearing loss or regular hearing loss. A lot of progress has been made toward different kinds of medications that could prove useful, but there is a wealth of testing that needs to be done before researchers can be sure of the safety and efficiency of those drugs.

Your best bet is to take care of your hearing by wearing ear protection while you are in noisy situations, such as mowing the lawn, riding motorcycles, attending air shows, concerts and sporting events. You only have so many hair cells and synapses. It is better to keep them safe than hope that they didn't get damaged.

Source:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/can-you-hear-me-now-detecting-hidden-hearing-loss-in-young-people/>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/loud-noise-hearing-loss-hidden-cause/>