

# THE COMMUNICATOR

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



## *Outreach Event: Deaf & Hard of Hearing Day the Omaha Zoo*

NCDHH, Hands and Voices and Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) hosted the fourth annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at the Omaha Zoo on September 22, 2019. This is a fun and enjoyable outreach event for the Commission and other stakeholders and agencies to come together to promote awareness for Deaf and Hard of Hearing as well as provide information and resources. This event continues to grow each year in excitement.

Activities include a Deaf Connect reading done by NCDHH Behavioral Health and Deaf Services Coordinator Carly Weyers and Advocacy Specialist Cody McEvoy. This year we were also able to introduce the new NeAD Board Members, including newly elected President, Mark Andersen. There was also a lizard brought out by Henry Doorly Zoo staff as an animal ambassador. Community interpreters volunteered their time to be throughout the zoo at various animal encounters to ensure that everyone attending the zoo could have the full zoo experience. We also received fabulous door prize donations from businesses including Runza, Raising Canes, Applebees, Starbucks and Texas Roadhouse. There was a fair amount of rain this year, but there was still a great turnout from the community and across the state!



# Communication Access IS Happening

*John Wyvill, Executive Director*



In our newsletters, we often discuss areas in need for better communication access. As we advocate for this, we also must make the time to give a hand wave to those that are doing it well. This time would, I like to share with you how the Omaha Performing Arts is doing it right. On a very rare, non-kid sports-filled afternoon, my wife and I attended Orpheum Theater in Omaha to see the American Musical, Hamilton. While checking out the information online, I was impressed with the variety of

accessibility options found, including this link here:

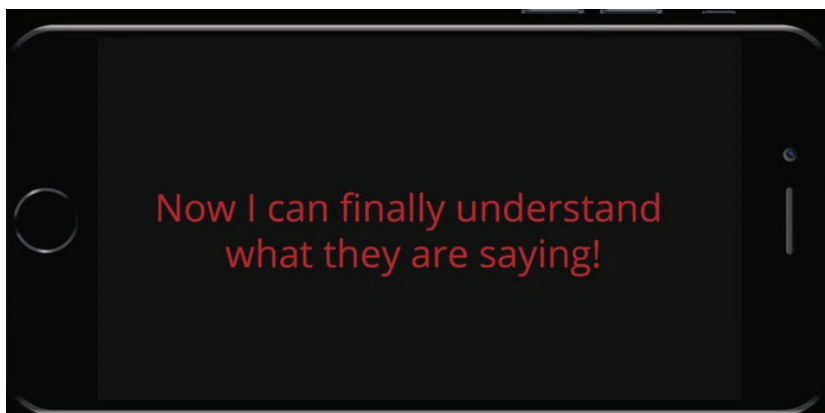
<https://omahaperformingarts.org/our-venues/accessibility><https://omahaperformingarts.org/our-venues/accessibility>

In addition, I reached out to Kevin Nelson, Director of Patron Services, who was very prompt and well versed on the variety of options. He encouraged me to check out the app called Gala Pro. Gala Pro is an app that will enable you to have live captioning on your phone. At first, I was a little leery about using the app until Kevin gave me more insight on how it would work: the captioning would appear in red and there would be enough power on the phone to handle the performance. To my kids amazement, I managed to have the app downloaded on the phone, connect to Wi-Fi in the theater and then to my own amazement, the captioning appeared on my phone. The interesting thing was that several hearing people around me in the theater were very interested in the program; one of them downloaded it for themselves.



It was amazing for the first time to fully follow a Broadway show. As I looked around, I also saw three ASL interpreters providing communication access at the show. Wow, what great inclusion. It was a surreal feeling for a moment. I must tip my hat to Kevin Nelson and everyone at Omaha Performing Arts- as this kind of access doesn't happen overnight.

To learn more about Gala pro please visit: <https://www.galapro.com/#what-we-do>



# Full Board Votes to Cease Interpreter Referral Program

*Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator*

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) launched a sign language interpreter referral service program many years ago to establish a way for all Nebraskans to access professional, qualified, sign language interpreters. NCDHH would receive requests for interpreters through the referral program and attempt to fill those requests with qualified, licensed interpreters who agreed to abide by our referral program policies and procedures. This model of filling interpreter requests has worked well over the years and served an important purpose in Nebraska; but as we all know, times change, technology changes, and sometimes adjustments need to be made.



In the past year, there have been several healthy discussions within the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing and sign language interpreter communities about the seemingly small number of qualified, licensed sign language interpreters that we have, not only here in Nebraska, but nationwide. We have also heard this concern expressed by service providers who utilize the referral program. Numerous ideas were shared about what Nebraska could do to remedy this apparent shortage.

The NCDHH Interpreter Referral Service has not experienced the same degree of robust participation in the program from licensed interpreters as it did in the past. This could be due to a variety of reasons. Most licensed sign language interpreters in Nebraska are independent contractors and therefore have the capability to develop their own relationships with consumers of interpreting services. Business entities who once used our service exclusively to locate licensed interpreters have developed their own contracts or lists of interpreters that they or their consumers prefer to utilize. Some licensed interpreters have elected to work in areas such as education or video relay service. These are just a few of the possible reasons participation in the NCDHH interpreter referral program has been dwindling.

Based on information garnered from the community, feedback we received about the Interpreter Referral Service Program, and low participation by licensed interpreters in the program, we created a proposal to cease operation of this program. On September 13, 2019, the NCDHH Full Board reviewed our proposal and voted to cease our operation of the Interpreter Referral Service Program effective December 31, 2019.

In preparation for this transition, we have updated the following information on our website:

- National and State certified, licensed interpreters and their approved contact information, and;
- Privately owned and operated sign language Interpreter Referral Agencies and their contact information, and;
- Licensed Video Remote Interpreter (VRI) agencies and their contact information.

We will still offer referral services until December 31, 2019 and will also be educating all current stakeholders, businesses, and consumers of the NCDHH Interpreter Referral Service Program about our plan to transition out of providing this service. During this transition period, please feel free to contact any certified, licensed interpreter or privately owned interpreter referral agency by going to [www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov](http://www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov), under "Referral Service" tab, then "Find an Interpreter." There you will find both national and state certified licensed sign language interpreters and companies that provide interpreter referral services.

We are confident that interpreting requests and services will continue in Nebraska; just in a different way. Times change, technology changes, and adjustments are made. The only thing constant is change. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov](mailto:sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov) or (402) 471-3593.



# NCDHH Board Member Questionnaire

*Diane Schutt, Fairbury*

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1. What is your name? Diane Elizabeth Schutt
2. What is your occupation? I was a secondary Journalism/English teacher at Fairbury High School for 35 years before retiring in May 2014. Now I work part-time as a copywriter for Lambert Vet Supply in Fairbury, so I am still utilizing my skill set.
3. Tell us about your upbringing. I was born in Manhattan, Kansas and raised by a single mom with much support from my maternal grandmother and great-grandmother. I moved to Fremont, Nebraska at age 10 when my mom married my step-dad, who then adopted me. I graduated from Fremont High School in 1975 and then headed off to Kearney State College. After graduation from there in 1979, I took my first and forever teaching job in Fairbury, Nebraska. I earned a Master's in Journalism from UNL in 1986 and then went on to earn additional graduate hours in English and other courses.
5. What is a life motto you like to live by? Do unto others, as you would have others do to you.
6. What are you most proud of? I value the relationships I build in my teaching career with my students, many whom I still have contact with to this day. I hope I make a difference in people's lives.
7. What are your hobbies? Shopping. I excel at that! I am do a huge amount of volunteering and fundraising for the groups I am involved with locally.
9. What is your biggest pet peeve? I believe this goes back to teaching, but I really struggle with lazy, unmotivated people.
10. If you could have one superpower, what would it be? I would like to be able to predict the future.
11. Who is your role model? On a celebrity level, it would be Oprah Winfrey. On a personal level, it would be my great-grandmother and the mother of a friend of mine. They were both strong, amazing women.
12. If you could go back in time to witness a historical event in person, what event would you want to see? The protest marches by Susan B. Anthony and others of her era as they pursued the right to vote for women. I would also like to sit in on the process of writing the Declaration of Independence.

# NCDHH Board Member Questionnaire

*Sandra Shaw, Seward*

1. What is your name? Sandy Shaw

2. What is your occupation? Administrative Assistant

3. Tell us about your upbringing. Mom and dad had 4 girls. We lived in Lincoln until I was 12. They then bought an acreage in Bradshaw. I played volleyball, basketball and was a cheerleader in high school. I married my high school sweetheart. I was homecoming queen and he was athletic king! Our fame to royalty stopped there. Both furthered our education and then got married. We have 3 married children and 3 grandchildren; two grandsons and a granddaughter.



4. What is your favorite food? My favorite food is probably Italian but I enjoy a nice salad when it's made by Texas Roadhouse.

5. What is a life motto you like to live by? My life motto would be COMMUNICATE! In any relationship if you don't communicate you will not be successful in that relationship.

6. What are you most proud of? I'm most proud of my husband and three kids.

7. What are your hobbies? I enjoy photography and scrapbooking and walking with my husband.

8. If you could change ONE thing about the world, what would it be? If I could change something in the world it would be, of course, to have peace.

11. Who is your role model? My role model would be my parents and the Blessed Mother... she pondered things in her heart.

13. What is the best advice you've ever been given? Best advice given is to take one day at a time.

14. Where is your favorite place in the world? My favorite place in the world is where my family is.

15. What is your favorite quote: "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary use words." Or "Coach me and I will learn. Challenge me and I will grow. Believe in me and I will win."

# 2019 INTERPRETER WORKSHOP

*UNO: College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPAS) Rm. 132  
6001 Dodge Street Omaha, NE 68182  
Parking Lots D, E, F available*

**Presenter Biography:** Sabrina Smith, PhD, has been involved in the interpreting field for over 20 years. Nationally certified through RID: CI and CT, as well as NIC Master and Ed:K-12, she currently works as an educational interpreter. She has also been employed as a video relay service provider through Sorenson Communications for over 12 years. She has presented various workshops across the country as well as abroad in Peru helping to empower the Deaf community to seek interpreters for their children in schools.



**November 22 / 6:00-9:00pm**

***“Ethically Speaking: A Discussion of Ethics in Interpreting” / 0.3 CEUs: PS***

This workshop is designed to take a deeper look into how ethics are used in the interpreting profession. The structure of this workshop is based on the need for interpreters to have a safe environment to discuss the Code of Professional Conduct and apply various approaches and responses to ethical dilemmas. Participants will draw conclusions based on support found through their own research and peer discussion. This is an interactive workshop that employs group work as a tool for learning. Participants will be given scenarios to analyze and construct responses that support their ethical decisions. The target audience is interpreters of all levels.

**Educational Objectives:**

- Identify ethical dilemmas while interpreting
- Analyze various approaches to determine solutions to ethical issues
- Distinguish between most effective and least effective decisions in the interpreting field
- Integrate appropriate responses once the ethical dilemma has been resolved

NCDHH is an approved RID CMP Sponsor for continuing education activities. This professional studies program is offered at the Little / None Content Knowledge Level.

**November 23 / 9:00am-4:00pm (1 hr lunch, on your own)**

***“Mentoring 101: The Basics of Mentoring” / 0.6 CEUs: PS***

This workshop is for seasoned interpreters who are ready to take the plunge and start mentoring other interpreters who want to improve their product. The workshop teaches participants to analyze interpreters' products, based on their skill levels, and how to identify areas which need improvement. Whether the interpreter is novice and in need of foundational skills or is seasoned preparing for the NIC, this workshop will demonstrate ways to improve the overall interpreting product. The presenter has been mentoring for over 12 years and has worked with over 80 mentees. This workshop will share the techniques used in her own mentoring process. The day consists of going through several activities that have been helpful in improving the interpreter process. It will start with basics such as how to keep records of mentees, skill improving activities, and analysis of diagnostics. Participants will be able to use these techniques to analyze the interpreting products in their current and future mentees. The target audience is interpreters of all levels.

**Educational Objectives:**

- Interpreters will demonstrate knowledge of the mentoring process through activities such as analyzing ASL to English and English to ASL products
- Interpreters will develop a plan to help set up their own mentoring approaches as well as how to maintain records
- Interpreters will demonstrate skills needed to mentor other novice interpreters in the field

NCDHH is an approved RID CMP sponsor for continuing education activities. This professional studies program is offered at the Some Content Knowledge level.



*Workshop cost is \$10.00. There are no refunds available. NCDHH promotes an environment of mutual respect free of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or any other protected class. If you need reasonable accommodations, please contact Sharon Sinkler at [sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov](mailto:sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov)*

# REGISTRATION FORM

Friday, November 22 - 6:00-9:00pm  
“Ethically Speaking: A Discussion of Ethics in Interpreting”  
0.3 CEUs

Saturday, November 23 - 9:00am-4:00pm  
(1 hour lunch break, on your own)  
“Mentoring 101: The Basics of Mentoring”  
0.6 CEUs

**Please submit your completed registration form by  
Friday, November 15 with a check made payable to  
NCDHH in the amount of \$10.00 to:**

NCDHH  
4600 Valley Road, Suite 420  
Lincoln, NE 68510  
Attn: November Workshop

*\*Students May Attend Free of Charge with Student ID\**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Please contact Traci Cooney, Interpreter Licensing Specialist at [traci.cooney@nebraska.gov](mailto:traci.cooney@nebraska.gov) or Sharon Sinkler, Interpreter Program Coordinator at [sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov](mailto:sharon.sinkler@nebraska.gov)

# NCDHH's Commitment to the Fourth "R" of Education

*Dr. Frank Turk, NCDHH Board Member*

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"I have worked in public education for over 25 years, and I have never seen anything connect a community like this. It has brought joy and enthusiasm to our new and veteran teachers. Our community leaders are inspired to collaborate with us on this initiative, and our students are seeing the greatness in themselves as leaders, some of them for the very first time."

--Candace Singh, Superintendent, Fallbrook Union School District, California



Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) originated in 1979 to preserve, protect and promote the civil, human and educational rights of all deaf and hard of hearing Nebraskans. Since then, one of its foremost commitments has always been and always will be to collaborate, integrate, partner and reciprocate with all of the state's educators and educational organizations. NCDHH strives to demonstrate how schools and programs for the children can foster critical character traits they need to reach their potential and achieve the American dream through participation in extracurricular activities, aka the "Fourth R of Education," resourcefulness.

The concept here is that there is more to school than academic development alone. It's just as important to develop personal competency as it's to develop intellectual competency. Our children need to compensate for the loss of sound experiences so as to compete on equal terms with hearing peers. The traditional three Rs teach how to read, write and do arithmetic, but they do not teach how to live. Hence, in order to be competitive in the predominantly hearing world, our deaf children are encouraged to master and utilize social skills in the areas of leadership, empowerment, attitude, discipline, empathy, respect, struggle, humility, initiative and perseverance (LEADERSHIP as an acronym). These ten social skills represent the backbone of self-esteem.

The Fourth R of Education's ten social skills aspire to achieve the inspiring results, including reduced discipline problems, greater parent satisfaction, soaring student confidence, improved student achievement, cooperative culture and optimistic focus on life after school.

The Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) in Stayton, Oregon, a program of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Its annual 4-week summer-time program emphasizes the "Fourth R of Education," encouraging campers to develop social skills conducive to acquainting themselves with who they are as the total persons or to become the "others-before-self" leaders that they can be or are meant to be. They learn that powerful leadership comes from knowing themselves and that their ability to lead others resides within them. YLC activities are especially designed to draw leadership from within. Individually and collectively, through innovative activities, campers are encouraged to develop and prosper in three essential areas of life – autonomy, interpersonal relations, and purpose.

In the area of autonomy, for instance, YLC offers activities that are especially designed to reduce dependence on parents and encourage a capacity for self-sufficiency. For the area of interpersonal relationships, the activities serve to develop respect for different backgrounds, values and interests, and relationships of trust, independence and individuality.

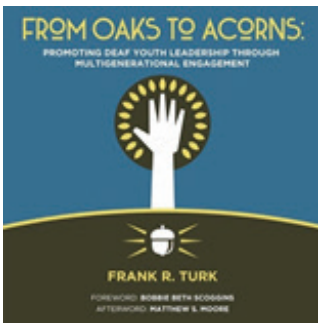


# NCDHH's Commitment to the Fourth "R" of Education cont.

*Dr. Frank Turk, NCDHH Board Member*

Activities in the area of purpose emphasize the ability to see a relationship between study and other aspects of life and understanding of abilities, values and interest applicable to occupations.

As of today, a total of fifty-seven (57) of the 4,518 campers who participated in the YLC program possess doctorates (Ph.Ds) in their respective areas of concentration. Currently, they assume prominent occupational positions all over America to the tune of legendary Frederick C. Schreiber's world-famous "Deaf people can do anything except hear." Additional information about this only deaf youth leadership program of its kind in the world may be obtained by contacting me through the NCDHH headquarters or Ms. Chanel Gleicher-Bonheyo, Youth Program Director, National Association of the Deaf, Suite 820, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.



My recently-published 545-page book, "From Oaks to Acorns: Promoting Deaf Youth Leadership Through Multigenerational Engagement," features two informative chapters about the YLC program and costs \$39.95, plus postage and handling.



Photo: YLC's 2018 Congregation of Future-focused Leaders of our Deaf America

# Education SPOT Analysis Update

*Jessica Larrison, Education Advocate*



At the beginning of September we received an updated version of the SPOT analysis from Nebraska Department of Education. SPOT stands for Strength, Problems, Opportunities, and Threats- this helps Nebraska identify areas we need to improve on, areas we are strong and ahead, and what could hinder us moving forward.

The process is not a short one but rather long to make sure everything gets covered and all areas are looked at and reviewed. The SPOT meetings start internally at NDE where they host meetings with all regional coordinators of Nebraska Regional Programs for children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Next, Teresa Coonts conducted a SPOT analysis session at Nebraska Association for the Deaf state conference. The last step is the hosted meetings in 8 locations throughout Nebraska over a two month span. These meetings are open to school staff, parents, students, the community, and agencies to attend to give their input. After all of the input was gathered they then sat down and decided the next steps to help our deaf and hard of hearing students through the state.

In 2019-2020 school year they will continue and add

- Training school districts

Best practices; Outreach to individual schools; Attend conferences to help educate and build connections; Presented to the superintendents; In services about IEP and MDT for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students; Clarify roles of staff who work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students; Audiologist made a series of training videos about how to use equipment; Email distribution of training/awareness for school staff

- Teachers of the Deaf (TOD)

Hosting quarterly, if not more frequent training for TOD and interpreters; TOD attended ASL immersion workshops; TOD have a google community they can share resources with each other; Increase opportunity to collaborate between TOD and audiologist; Hire more TOD

- Interpreters

Pay change to reflect EIPA scores and years of experience; Created and updated IEP input form by educational interpreters; Attended NeRID conference, NAIE, and Boystown Video Conference; Started an internal mentoring program with the support of freelance interpreters (this has 8 interpreters this year)

- Student and Families

Offer mental health counseling; Give family and students the resources they need; Continue sending out emails and Facebook updates for families to be aware; More local activities are scheduled; Found colleges that teach ASL for students who are interested; Family and community sign classes expanded; Hire Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults to work at the activities or present; Start connecting students

- Goals for the next 1-3 years

Connect older students with younger students to give support; Continue the interpreting mentor program; Continue to work to reach out to families and school district to offer guidance; Continue to train staff and update the trainings; Open meetings for parents of ESU areas; Survey educators to find out topics they need/want more training in; Create a toolkit for TODs; Train staff on social emotional needs of the students; Recruit more students to join the regional programs; Distribute tip sheets to staff working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students

As you can see there is a lot that Nebraska will continue to provide for our students and staff as well as making sure every area is getting attention so our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students are successful.

# Suicide Prevention

*Carly Weyers, Behavioral Health Coordinator*

World Mental Health Day is on October 10th every year. It is an opportunity to raise awareness about mental health, for us to talk about mental health issues and what needs to be done to make mental health care better for everyone. This year's theme is suicide prevention. Let's talk a little about suicide prevention...



Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States, and it is a serious public health problem. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 1.3 million adults attempt suicide each year, and more than one in five people who died by suicide had expressed their suicidal. We can help prevent suicide by knowing the risk factors and recognizing the warning signs.

### **Risk factors:**

- A history of suicide in the family
- Substance misuse
- Mood disorders
- Losses and other events
- History of trauma or abuse

### **Warning signs:**

- Often talking or writing about death/suicide
- Making comments about being hopeless
- Increased alcohol/drug misuse
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Dramatic mood changes



If you need help for yourself or someone else, you can contact the suicide prevention lifeline call 1-800-273-8255.

On October 10th a movement called "40 seconds of action" will be occurring. It is a simple action to show that you care. It can be a private or a public action. Here are some examples or ideas: if you are struggling, you can take 40 seconds to talk with someone you trust about your feelings, if you know someone is struggling, take 40 seconds to check in with them. On social media, record a

40 seconds video taking about suicide prevention. Please feel free to contact me if you have more questions/concerns about suicide prevention or need some ideas for 40 seconds of action on October 10th!



## Fun in the Panhandle

*Brittney Isom, Advocacy Specialist*



On Saturday, September 7, NCDHH, Nebraska Regional Programs and Hands and Voices of Nebraska hosted a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness day at the Riverside Discovery Center in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. We had a great turnout with almost 70 people in attendance.

We jumped right into a meet and greet with 3

animals; an opossum, a ferret and a python. We had informational booths set up for people to learn about different resources in the area. We also had a few activities that everyone could enjoy; bingo, which allowed people to explore the Zoo and informational booths. It was such a beautiful day for families and friends to hang out at the zoo, we look forward to doing it again next year!



## Motorcycle Earplugs

*Aaron Rothenberger, Advocacy Specialist*



I have been a motorcycle rider for a few years now. Wind noise has become something that bothers my ears during our longer rides. After some research on my part, I decided to get some molded earplugs. Because of the success of my earplugs, I wanted to share with our readers my entire experience. My first stop was to a local ENT clinic here in Kearney. To make the earplugs, they have to take molds of your inner ear. This is very similar to the process of getting molds made for hearing aids. The gel they put into my ears was a little cold, but not something unbearable. It took about five minutes for the

gel to harden. My earplugs were designed for motorsports and made out of material with no electronics involved. After it was all said and done, the plugs cost me \$80.

Using them has been a night and day difference while I am out riding. If you have never ridden a motorcycle before, the wind noise can get very loud. An OSHA study found that a motorcycle going 37 miles an hour with an open helmet can reach wind noise levels from 75 to 90 dB. OSHA recommends you only ride with this amount of noise for 15 minutes before you experience permanent hearing damage.

Now when I ride, the wind noise feels very similar to riding in a car with the windows rolled down. The sound is still there, but it is significantly reduced and a lot more tolerable while I am on longer rides. I hope that anybody who is having issues with wind noise will consider trying this option. It has undoubtedly made my riding a lot more comfortable. It has also helps me protect my hearing while I am out on the road.





# Is Obtaining a Driver's License Possible?

*Kim Davis, Advocacy Specialist*

I occasionally receive telephone calls concerning the capability of individuals who either cannot hear anything at all or have very limited ability to hear certain sounds. Various questions ranged from their ability to drive; make emergency calls; knowing when disaster strikes within the home or the environment; when the baby cries; and the list goes on. I really, really love the occasional question on the ability to drive.



The answer to this question isn't a direct one; rather, it gives thoughts to ponder. First of all, for any Nebraskans who have the desire to drive will need to meet the Nebraska licensing standards and requirement to obtain a driver's license. The plus side of this too is that sign language interpreters may be provided upon request prior to exams for a Nebraska Operator's License (Class O).

The above answer do not always provide assurance. Most of the time the questions continue, "But what if they are able to obtain an Operator's License to drive a car? How will they hear their surroundings or any incidents that may occur on the road?"

Additional thoughts to ponder... A driver who may be able to hear well usually will play music, talk on their mobile or speak with other passengers in the vehicle. When they do, they are normally distracted from listening to surroundings. Additionally, it should not be about whether the driver has the ability to hear or not. There are side- and rear-view mirrors that serve as accommodations for visual surroundings; mastery of skills on constant use of hand-eye coordination; and knowing the rules of the road. Visual cues are of critical value: When seeing vehicles ahead of them slowing down that may signal an incident occurred. Pulling off to the side of the road when an emergency or public safety responder's vehicle is approaching. Seeing a driver in front of them using hand signals to notify they are getting ready to slow down, stop or change directions when their vehicle's indicator signal lights are out of commission.

And to top it off, there are even deaf and hard of hearing individuals who have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) license and drive across state lines in vehicles that weigh over 26,000 pounds. However, they had to obtain an exemption from the physical qualification standard concerning auditory requirement through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (49 CFR 391.41(b)(11)). And, the code of federal regulation prohibits the use of interpreters during the administration of knowledge and skills tests (49 CFR §383.133(c)(5)). Hitch a ride from a Deaf family member, friend, a taxi, Lyft or Uber driver, or better, from me! Carry a conversation with the Deaf driver too! \*Comic below by Matt and Kay Daigle, [www.thatdeafguy.com](http://www.thatdeafguy.com).



# Are You and Your Car Ready for Winter?

*Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist*



It's not winter yet! Nevertheless, the snow will be flying before we know it! We all know that the best way to weather a snowstorm is by being curled up in a blanket on the couch from indoors with all your loved ones safe, watching the snow coming down outdoors. But, if the unlikely occurs and you do find yourself trapped in your car during a blizzard, it's important to know what to do. Do you call for help right away? Do you get out of the car? What supplies should you have on hand... for, just in case? Be prepared! The first thing to do is remain calm. If you're

prepared, there's nothing to worry about while waiting for help to come.

There are a few things you can do to prepare yourself for a "stuck in the car in the snow" situation. First, make sure your car is stocked with supplies in winter if you live in an at-risk area. Keep an emergency kit in your car, and keep your gas tank above three quarters. The fuel adds weight to your car, which keeps the vehicle centered on the road while allowing for better handling in icy situations.

Keep the following things in your Emergency Kit in your vehicle during winter:

- warm, dry clothing layers, socks & boots
- blankets or sleeping bags
- jumper cables
- flashlight
- emergency radio
- batteries or solar battery charger
- signal devices like flares to let rescuers know of your location
- food that is easily digestible and easily stored, like granola bars
- a small shovel
- jar candles and lighter
- metal cup or pan
- first aid kit

In case you find yourself stuck, it's essential to have enough water. (The general rule is three gallons per person per day.) I know that's a lot of water to carry, so as long as you have some you should be fine. You should keep a water container or metal jug to collect snow in. In an emergency situation, potable water can be retrieved from snow by melting it on your dashboard. If you have a stove/candle, melt the snow in small quantities in a metal cup or pan. Always let it melt first because you burn up extra energy if you're just eating the snow.

Another way to be prepared for blizzard driving is to keep your car well-maintained. Regular maintenance and recommended oil changes are important. In wintertime, make sure you have good tires -- snow tires with good tread. Be sure that your windshield washer fluid is filled. Weigh down your car by keeping a sandbag or a bag of kitty litter in the back. By doing this, you're increasing stopping time and traction while decreasing potential swerving. Kitty litter is also handy to have to traction if you get stuck! If you do find yourself driving in the midst of a blizzard, it's important to remain calm and take inventory of your situation. Where are you? Are you stuck? Are you on the road or off? If you are stuck, make sure the exhaust pipe is clear, If your tailpipe is blocked, and your car is running, you could get backup exhaust gases. That's a deadly mistake to make! Put up roadside flares in front of and behind your vehicle -- especially if you're located on a curve. Make yourself visible! Then, call 911 if a phone is available, or check beforehand with the Public Service Commission if Text-to-911 is available in your area.

# Are You and Your Car Ready for Winter?

*Kathy Scusa, Advocacy Specialist*

Should you stay or should you go? The golden rule is to stay in your stranded vehicle, unless you're in sight of a building. In that case, seek alternative shelter. The difficulty comes if you're in a white-out blizzard because leaving your car could leave you disoriented. The car is a safe place to be in a storm. Once you've assessed your situation, shovel out a trench in front of your tires. Then, put down sand or kitty litter, and use that as traction to get back on the road. Once you're mobile, find a more suitable spot, like a parking lot or a clearing, to pull over and find safety. If you're going to be inside your vehicle for a long period of time, warmth is key. Circulation will drop and so will body temperature. Do some workouts and keep moving. Get in the back seat so you can stretch your legs. Keep the blood flowing. Run your car for 10 minutes every hour after making sure the exhaust is clear. While your car is on, you can charge your phone and put a container of snow on the dashboard to melt for water. Finally, the best thing you can do to avoid getting stuck in a blizzard is to not drive during one.

Prevention is worth everything in cases like this. If you must brave the elements, be sure to dress the part. A lot of city-dwelling people commute to work and are not dressed for winter. Keep extra layers in your car. Avoid cotton clothing since it absorbs water (sweat) and will cause you to be colder. Moisture wicking and synthetic fabrics work better. Wool is the best textile for staying warm in the cold. Extra socks, shoes or snowboots are a must in any emergency kit. It doesn't take much to throw those items in a tote in the trunk or the back. If you would like to discuss this article, anything hearing related or NCDHH's programs and services, 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). I look forward to serving you.

## Captioning at NFL Games

*Cody McEvoy, Advocacy Specialist*

With football season upon us, we have fans cheering our favorite teams on their quest to the glorious Super Bowl in February. While many of us enjoy watching the games on television or at Buffalo Wild Wings, some of us try to have that authentic experience of attending a game and having a tailgate in the parking lot of the stadium. Live events display important information such as penalty flags being thrown, players who make big plays, and other events that Deaf/Hard of Hearing people may miss due to the large noises of cheering fans. The average NFL club has 1.5 different ways in which Closed Captioning is displayed and it can be through the main boards throughout the stadium, ancillary screens, concourse TVs, Ribbon Boards, through an app, and captioning services. Ribbon boards are LED screens that display rolling captions across the screen.



Based on advocacy efforts from NCDHH and the broader deaf and hard of hearing communities, the Nebraska Athletic Department has just recently implemented captioning services on the ribbon boards inside Memorial Stadium.

In the image you can see which teams displays a particular display of captioning at their games and through this, know where to find critical information that are occurring during the games.



### CLOSED CAPTIONING AT 2019 NFL GAMES

The average NFL Club has 1.5 different ways in which Closed Captioning is displayed

MAIN BOARDS	ANCILLARY SCREENS	CONCOURSE TVS	RIBBON BOARDS	CLUB MOBILE APP	CAPTIONING SERVICES
8	7	6	9	10	7

Cincinnati Bengals use a Captioning Service, viewed through its gameday mobile app

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