

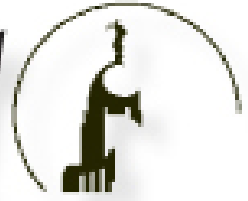
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The Communicator

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Fall 2014

A newsletter surveying health, government and issues affecting Nebraskans.

Nebraska Medicine Point of Contact for Interpreter Services

Any Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual needing communication access at Nebraska Medicine (formerly known as UNMC) is instructed to contact Flower Nunez, the Interpretive Services Coordinator.

Ms. Nunez can be reached by phone/texting at: 402-216-8968 or by email at FNunez@nebraskamed.com

NCDHH Board member, Diane Muelleman, Executive Director John Wyvill, NeAD President, Jonathan Scherling, and NeAD Secretary, Pete Seiler, met with Flower Nunez and other Nebraska Medicine representatives to discuss ways to improve communication access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Any person needing an interpreter at a Nebraska Medicine facility can contact Flower Nunez directly, day or night. Flower is the contact for coordinating these services and has urged us to share her contact information. NCDHH will also be working with Flower in the near future for a training video for Nebraska Medicine staff to assist and support Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals accessing services.

“We applaud Flower Nunez for her efforts to enhance communication access at Nebraska Medicine. We also appreciate Flower’s willingness to be a point of contact for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities” said NCDHH Executive Director John Wyvill.



(From Left) Diane Muelleman, John Wyvill, Jonathan Scherling, and Dr. Peter Seiler

LR 517 Update

by: John Wyvill, Executive Director

This article will provide you with an update on the status of LR 517. By way of review LR 517 is an interim study which asked NCDHH to provide a report and recommendations to address the interpreter shortage and the proficiency and competency issues of existing interpreters in Nebraska. A Steering Committee was created comprised of key stakeholders. This Steering Committee has four work groups under it: Licensure, Interpreter, Community/Medical, and Education. The workgroups have been meeting in the late summer and fall. These four work groups will submit their recommendations to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will then be reviewing those recommendations starting November 21. The plan is to have the Steering Committee finalize their report and recommendations to review at the NCDHH Board Meeting in December.

The Steering Committee will also take into consideration the survey results, taken by interpreters in the state as well as from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Feedback has also been received from town hall meetings in Omaha, Scottsbluff, Kearney, and Lincoln. After review by the Full Board, it will then be transmitted to Senator Haar.

It has been a very exciting process with many ideas and suggestions on ways to improve the competency and proficiency of existing interpreters and to address the interpreter shortage. Stay tuned on our Facebook page, "Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing," for more updates in the near future.

Director's Corner

by: John Wyvill, Executive Director



Our fall newsletter is filled with a number of different stories about advocacy and our agency. We are working hard with our partners NeAD, HLAA, and Hands and Voices in advocating for the rights of Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing. We are moving forward, one step at a time, with articles relating to accessibility at Nebraska Medicine, Creighton University, updates with LR 517, and more. I am fortunate to say I work with a wonderful, dedicated team that is committed to working every single day to make a difference. All of this would not be possible without a great team. As Dr. Frank Turk points out, T.E.A.M.

stands for Together Everyone Achieves More.

Moving Forward: we have come too far to turn around now.

Sincerely,

John Wyvill, NCDHH Executive Director

Accessibility at TD Ameritrade Park

by: Beth Ellsworth, Field Representative



On May 28, 2014 Kristi Anderson, Director of Communications, and Michael Smith, Event Services Manager and staff at TD Ameritrade met with members of the Hearing Loss Association of America –Omaha Area Chapter and the Nebraska Association of the Deaf to explain the accommodations that are available and listen to suggestions to enhance services for people who are hard of hearing or Deaf.

Induction Audio Loop System – This is a terrific assistive listening device that was installed at TD Ameritrade by the Electronic Contracting Company. Certain areas of the stadium are looped.

If you have a telecoil in your hearing aids all you need to do is put your hearing aid on the T- Switch and you will get sound quality as if the person was sitting right next to you with no background noise.

FM System - For those who have hearing aids that do not have a telecoil or if you do not wear hearing aids this assistive listening device may be checked out so you can hear and, most importantly, understand communication.

Captioning is available for public announcements. TD Ameritrade has mobile devices available that will caption announcements. The mobile devices work by transmitting communications through the public address system.



Interpreters - There are some signed performances and events but it is important to call or email the guest office for confirmation or to request a sign language interpreter. TD Ameritrade Park Omaha asks that requests be made at least two weeks prior to the event. You may reach them at 402.341.1500 and ask for the Event Services Manager or email guestservices@omahameca.com.

For any questions you may have regarding accessibility at TD Ameritrade please contact Guest Services at 402.546.0888. And remember: each person's hearing loss is different so try it out and see what is best for you!

NCDHH Field Representative Beth Ellsworth can be reached at beth.ellsworth@nebraska.gov or VP: 402.682.7129

Tips for the Holiday Season

by: Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist



By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will be quickly approaching the Holiday Season! To me, it seems like yesterday that we were celebrating New Year 2014 and now we will soon be celebrating New Year 2015. Where does all the time go? Prior to the New Year, we have Thanksgiving and Christmas and all the planning and preparation that keep us very busy during this time of year. I would like to take this time to address some things we can do to take care of ourselves during this busy time of the year.

- 1. Talk about your feelings.** Some of us have experienced a loss of a family member or friend during 2014 and thinking about the upcoming Holidays might be something you don't want to think about. It's OK to feel sad and to take time to cry and talk about your feelings. People that care about you will want to talk about your feelings. All you need to do is take the first step in reaching out!
- 2. Plan ahead.** It's helpful to make a list of things you need to do in preparation of the Holiday Season. Shopping, baking, visiting friends, decorating and planning menus are very time consuming. Waiting until the last minute to get things accomplished will cause you a lot of stress and "zap" your energy level. Set aside time out of your busy day to do a few things and then scratch that off your list. Trying to do everything all at the same time can cause you more stress. Take time to remember what the Holidays mean to you and your family and how does this incorporate into your daily life.
- 3. Plan your budget.** Before you go out shopping for gifts or food, decide how much you will spend. Set up a budget on how much you want to spend for gifts, who you need to buy gifts for and stick to the budget. It's easy to spend over your budget if this is not planned in advance. Before grocery shopping, make a list and stick to this list. Food shopping in preparation of the Holidays is more costly than what we are typically used to. Start cutting out coupons now to help reduce some of the costs. It's helpful to start purchasing things a little at a time so it doesn't seem so overwhelming.
- 4. Take time for yourself.** Set aside time every day to do something you enjoy. Even if it's only 15 minutes you will be amazed at how better you feel. Go for a walk, read a good book or take a nap if this meets with your schedule. When our lives become so busy that we forget to take care of ourselves we lose sight of "self" which therefore, can create stress and hardship in our lives.
- 5. Involve your family.** Don't feel like you are the only one that has the responsibility in making the Holidays special. Ask for help! Family members can share in the decorating, food shopping, gift shopping and baking. As we get older it seems like all of this can be quite difficult to manage and often times it is. Ask your adult children, grandchildren and friends to help; I'm sure you will be surprised at those who are more than willing to provide you with assistance.

Tips for the Holiday Season cont.

As I am writing this article, I can't help but think of those who do not have the resources to bake for the Holidays, shop for their loved ones or participate in the things many people enjoy in carrying out family Holiday traditions. Because of financial hardship, depression can have a serious impact for those who are experiencing financial hardship during the Holiday Season.

Listed below are some, but not all programs in Nebraska that can be of assistance to you and/or a family member during the Holidays.

Lincoln

Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc.
402-466-8170

Neighborhood Food – Matt Talbot Kitchen
402-476-4357

Salvation Army
402-474-6263

Aurora

Hamilton County Food Pantry
402-694-6979

Hastings

Hastings Food Pantry
402-463-2911

Community Action Partnership of Mid Neb.
402-463-7679

Salvation Army
402-463-0529

Catholic Social Services
402-463-2112

North Platte

The Salvation Army
308-532-2038

Beatrice

Community Food Pantry & Emergency Services
402-223-5306

Omaha

Food Bank for the Heartland
402-905-4808

Eastern Neb. Community Partnership
402-457-3035

Grand Island

Salvation Army
308-385-4855

Central City

Merrick County Food Pantry
308-946-3794

Gibbon

Gibbon/Shelton Community Center
308-468-5469

Kearney

Mid Nebraska Food Bank
308-865-5683

Travel Tips and Emergency Preparedness

by: Jill Bird, Southern Nebraska Regional Program Coordinator



Tina Childress is an audiologist who coincidentally lost her hearing at age 29 and then got bilateral cochlear implants. She is an educational audiologist for the public school system in Illinois. She offered the following tips for travel and emergencies:

Plane Travel: You CAN walk through the detectors with one/two hearing aids or CIs. But never put anything directly on a conveyor belt because belts can destroy mapping. You might get a distorted sound when walking through scanners so carry an id card and turn down your volume if necessary. You can always ask for a wand inspection or a “pat-down” instead. When you check in let airline staff know you have a hearing loss and put it in your traveler profile. Do sign up for traveler alerts on your mobile/smartphone. “You” are responsible for informing gate staff you have a hearing loss so sit close by! Your CIs will not interfere with any flight navigational instruments so you do not have to turn them off. If flying alone, consider informing your seat partner that you have a hearing loss in the event of an emergency announcement. When you fly, pack as you should “assume” your luggage will be lost so carry on your extra CI/hearing aid equipment.

Train Travel: Choose alerts when checking in. Inform staff about your hearing loss and ask them to help ensure you know about changes, delays or cancellations. Be hyper-vigilant about train track environments.

Travel by Automobile: Consider purchasing extra wide rearview mirrors as this helps with blind spots as well. There are a lot of ALDs (assistive listening devices) for cars. Tina uses a lapel microphone with her children and she noted it is much easier to hear her children when they sit behind her in the car because the sound waves project forward.

Lodging: Make sure the hotel is aware you have a hearing loss and if you are traveling with someone else, get an extra key to give to them in case of an emergency and do not use the dead bolt lock on the door. Remember the room key will de-magnetize if the strip is close to your headpiece magnet.

Tina suggested always having a printed copy of your hearing aid settings or your CI “map” if you are going to be gone for a long time. She takes a picture of her map on her phone so in the event her map is wiped out she does not have to start from scratch on the settings and it can be re-programmed easily. Have the phone number to your manufacturer’s customer service with you at all times. This was helpful when she traveled abroad for a long period of time.

New Interpreter Program Assistant

by: Crystal Pierce



Hello my name is Crystal Pierce. I am the new Interpreter Program Assistant at the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little about myself. People are always asking me how I got into interpreting. It all started when my father's job transferred him here to Nebraska when I was young. I grew up in a small town south of Lincoln. During my senior year of high school I met the school staff interpreter, DJ Hawke. He was such a wonderful person. He was willing to take the time after school to teach my friend and me American Sign Language. Still to this day I am very grateful for what he did for me. Following graduation I decided I would like to have a career in Marine Biology or do something involving sign language. I completed one year in college and discovered I was not

destined to do *anything* science related, so I transferred schools and started my journey on becoming an interpreter.

I have been interpreting for over ten years. In those ten years I have interpreted everything from K- 12 to post-secondary education, freelance/community, and Video Relay Services. I have loved parts of each and every one of them. I think I have most enjoyed freelance/community interpreting that I have been doing the last three years. During these past three years, I have worked mostly in Lincoln, but I have also gone to Omaha and Western Nebraska on occasion.

I am married to my wonderful husband Aaron, and we have two boys, Max, who is five, and Wesley, who is 3. We recently moved just north of Lincoln to the town of Raymond. Moving back out to the country has been wonderful. We have a small acreage outside of town, and we are loving the quiet, country living.

Here in Nebraska I feel the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and the interpreters are like a small town within a bigger town. I am able to get to know people better compared to the bigger cities around the United States. One thing I love about interpreting and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community is I may only see a person from time to time, but we can pick up right where we left off the last time we saw each other. It is the small community that can be very close knit. On the other hand, I feel like I am still meeting new people all the time.

I am really looking forward to my new position here at NCDHH. I am excited to start working with others with interpreter licensure, testing, community education, and developing workshops. It is my goal to participate in growing the comradery within the interpreting community and also between the interpreting and Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. My dream is that one day we could turn back time and have a Deaf Club more like the old days; where everyone was excited to get together and see each other, so we could catch up with one another, tell each other about what has been happening in our lives and how our families have been doing. Maybe someday the older generation and the younger generation can be found sitting side by side enjoying the same activities. Unfortunately, I never had the privilege to experience what the Deaf Clubs were like back in the day, but listening to people who did describe how it used to be, makes me dream of the possibilities of bringing that back some day. Hopefully, that some day will happen sooner than later.

Crystal can be reached at crystal.pierce@nebraska.gov or phone 402-471-3581 or Video Phone 402-325-1068.

Accessible Wireless Telephone Devices

by: Kim Davis, Field Representative



Telephone access for the deaf and hard of hearing has truly advanced with multiple choices of specialized telephone devices, and even telecommunication app and software programs for cellular, tablets and computers. With wireless or cellular telephones gaining popularity, many folks are dropping their landline or digital telephone services like a row of dominoes falling down. Numerous wireless telephone devices have become more accessible for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. To select the most effective type of wireless telephone, such options can be narrowed down by determining the type of hearing challenges you have and relay service to use based on your preferred mode of communication. It is also important to note the type of wireless service plans you need to use the particular relay service's app, such as limited or unlimited use of talk/voice minutes and/or data plans and the mobile devices' technical features.

Here are some trendy Telecommunications Relay Service apps available to make your mobile device more accessible. Check them out to learn more on how it functions and which mobile wireless devices have the available app of interest that may benefit you. They can be found in the App Store (for iOS users) or Google Play Store (for android users).

Mobile Captioned Telephone Service (CTS) Apps

Search keyword on mobile store: CapTel

Basic Function: *Users verbally communicate on their mobile device's cellular using their own voice and, at the same time, hear and read the callers' response through captions displayed on the viewing screen. A captioner serves as a communication assistant operator using a voice recognition software or stenography machine.*

Mobile CTS Providers: Hamilton, InnoCaption, Purple and Sprint

Video Relay Service (VRS) Apps

Search keyword on mobile store: VRS

Basic Function: *Users communicate using sign language through the mobile device's front-facing camera and see the caller's response back in sign language on the viewing screen. A sign language interpreter serves as communication assistant operator.*

Mobile VRS Providers: CAAG, Convo, Purple, Sorenson and ZVRS

Mobile Internet Protocol (IP) Relay Service Apps

Search keyword on mobile store: IP-Relay Deaf

Basic Function: *Users communicate by typing their message on the touchscreen keyboard and read the callers' response in text on a viewing screen. A typist serves as a communication assistant operator.*

Mobile IP Relay Providers: Sprint

IP Relay for AOL Instant Messenger (AIM)

Search keyword on mobile store: AIM

Basic Function: *Users communicate by typing their message on the touchscreen keyboard and read the callers' response in text on a viewing screen. A typist serves as a communication assistant operator.*

IP IM Relay Providers: Purple and Sprint Relay

Kool Aid Day

by: Brenda Chappell, Field Representative

Kool Aid Day was August 9, 2014, in Hastings, Nebraska. The weather was perfect; the street was full of children running with tie-dyed tongues, parents carrying plastic mugs of rainbows, babies with the Kool Aid smile on their T-shirts, and a little girl walking around with a shiny crown and a strip across her torso "Miss Cutie." There was a long line of Kool Aid stands and people came to sample different flavors. At one corner there was a table with contestants to compete drinking numbers of mugs of Kool-Aid.



I was in Hastings for a week prior to Kool Aid Day. I learned that Hastings was the city where Kool Aid was invented, that's why Hastings is the host. During the week, I noticed a line of pastel-colored flags by McDonald's, cars with Kool Aid stickers, and Kool Aid smile painted on the streets. I also noticed my motel was filling up as the day was imminent. I thought to myself, "Kool Aid Day must be very special to the residents."

I gave a few presentations and made appointments for equipment demonstration. I learned the best way to conceive conversations was about Kool Aids. Many elders remembered the beginning of this invention. One woman told me a story, in her youth when soda was considered expensive; Kool Aid was the cheap invention of flavored homemade drinks. There were very few flavors – cherry, grape, and lemon.

I received a tour at the Kool Aid museum and met the museum director. I learned that one of her ancestors was a graduate from the Nebraska School for the Deaf. She bragged proudly about how well he built the frames in this very museum. I went to the Kool Aid section and learned a great deal about the history. Kool aid was invented by Edwin E Perkins, he admired how Jell-O was made and thought he could make a fruit-flavored drink. By 1927 he made 6 flavors and the name, Kool Aid, became trademarked in 1934. Later it was selling nationally. (For more information, go to <http://kool-aiddays.com/history/>)



On Kool Aid Day, according to history, there are 20,000 attendees. I had about 400 people coming to the NCDHH booth before noon; most of them children. After lunch the number of attendance dropped dramatically to 150 between 1 PM and 4 PM. In my break time I went to sample Kool Aid. I tried a few flavors, including Mango and Jamaica Punch. I would have loved to sample more, but I had enough sugar for a day. It was a good day and very entertaining. I stood beside Mr. Kool Aid.

For those who are interested in attending Kool Aid Day next year, keep an eye on its website, <http://kool-aiddays.com/> and NCDHH might be there also.

NCDHH Hires Two New Field Representatives



April Guthrie (pictured on the left) is the new Field Representative for the Tri-City area; serving Kearney, Grand Island, and Hastings. Originally from Indianola, Neb., April graduated from the University of Nebraska-Kearney with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Psychology. Currently, April resides in Kearney and has now begun the Master's degree program in Social Work through the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Jenna Johnson (pictured on the right) is the new Field Representative for the North Platte area. Raised in the Gothenburg, Neb. area, Jenna went to college in Minnesota with a degree in American Sign Language. After graduation, Jenna was an interpreter for two years.

"We are very excited to add these two new members to our team here at NCDHH. Jenna and April will be great additions to Central and Western Nebraska to continue our agency mission in improving the lives of Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing," NCDHH Executive Director, John Wyvill, said.

Jenna Johnson can be reached by e-mail at jenna.johnson@nebraska.gov or 308-535-6600

April Guthrie can be reached by e-mail at april.guthrie@nebraska.gov or 800-545-6244

NCDHH Goes Muddin' at Husker Harvest Days

by: April Guthrie

The Commission participated in Husker Harvest Days, located near Wood River, NE, on September 9th and 11th. The event usually runs three days, but this year, was cancelled on Wednesday the 10th due to wet and very muddy conditions. An event dedicated to the agriculture industry, Husker Harvest Days provides a chance for the Commission to reach out to the farming community to increase awareness about hearing loss and to distribute information about NCDHH services. Commission staff Lori Burrage, April Guthrie, and Kelsey Cruz took part in the festivities, as did Executive Director, John Wyvill. Although the event was wet and muddy, approximately 6,500 people of all ages stopped by the informational booth. A good time was had by all!



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Registry of Persons with Hearing Loss

Section 71.4728(5) of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska requires the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) to conduct and maintain a voluntary census of Nebraska citizens who have a hearing loss. **All information provided to the Commission on this form will be held strictly confidential.** Please return this completed form to the address given above. If you have any questions about this form, please contact our office between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday (*closed on state holidays*).

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____ **Year of Birth:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____ **County:** _____

E-Mail: _____ **Home Phone:** (_____) _____

Video Phone: (_____) _____ **Cell Phone:** (_____) _____ **Texting** Y / N

Do you consider yourself?

- Hard of Hearing Late Deafened Deaf Hearing Deaf/Low Vision
 Hard of Hearing / Low Vision Speech Impaired Other (Specify): _____

Yes **No**

Do you have a Cochlear Implant?

Do you use a Hearing Aid?

Would you like to receive the NCDHH newsletter and announcements Yes No

Would you like more information on:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NE Specialized Telephone Equipment Program (NSTEP) | <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Loan Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sertoma Hearing Aid Bank Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Media Loan Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lions Hearing Aid Bank Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter Referral Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Presentations or Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

How did you hear about our program?

- Friend Health Clinic Internet Referred by another State Agency
 TV/Radio Newspaper Other: _____

Registering with NCDHH helps the Commission make better planning decisions and improve services.

Thank You!

Date: _____

Staff Member: _____



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please let NCDHH know.
Thank you for your help.

Submit an Article Idea!

NCDHH welcomes ideas and articles for consideration and insertion into future issues of the newsletter.

Please submit articles to:

NCDHH Newsletter Ideas
4600 Valley Road, Suite 420
Lincoln, NE 68510-4844

or e-mail them to:
ncdhh@nebraska.gov

Articles submitted are not necessarily the views of NCDHH. The NCDHH newsletter is published four times annually.

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