

Dave Heineman
Governor

Mr. Michael Brummer
Chairperson

John C. Wyvill
Executive Director

The Communicator

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Summer 2014

A newsletter surveying health, government and issues affecting Nebraskans.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Night at Haymarket Park



NCDHH Board Chairman, Michael Brummer, throwing out the first pitch at “Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness night at the Lincoln Saltdogs Game on July 8, 2014. Also pictured, Saltdogs President, Charlie Meyer.

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Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Night cont.

NCDHH worked with President and General Manager of the Lincoln Saltdogs, Charlie Meyer, to host a Deaf and Hard of Hearing outreach event at Haymarket Park for a Saltdogs home game on July 8th. Fans were first welcomed by Field Representatives, Kim Davis and Brenda Chappell, with an informational booth of all of NCDHH services. Brenda also prepared a poster board about the history of Deaf and Hard of Hearing baseball pioneers of the league.



From Left: Peggy Williams, Homer, Kim Davis & Brenda Chappell



Fans were greeted by a welcoming in American Sign Language (ASL) by Charlie Meyer on the ballpark's big screen. The NCDHH Board Chairman, Michael Brummer, threw out the first pitch while Peggy Williams interpreted the National Anthem in ASL. During the game, a "silent inning" took place: no announcements or play by play was given over the announcement system. This "silent inning" was designed to raise awareness for the general public to experience a glimpse of how Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals watch a baseball game. Jonathan Scherling, President of the Nebraska Association of the

Deaf (NeAD), was featured on the big screen to explain the purpose of the "silent inning". At the Seventh Inning Stretch, Gary Theiler, got up on the dugout and lead the crowd in signing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" in ASL.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Night cont.



The evening was about awareness; and what a great night for that it was. Mother Nature cooperated to make for a beautiful evening and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities came together to advocate as well as enjoy America's favorite pastime. Chairman Brummer and Executive Director, John Wyvill, were both busy with interviews from local television stations. In addition to news coverage on the 10 o'clock news, we had over 230 individuals stop by our booth. It was estimated that there were nearly 125 Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals who attended the game. A great time was had by all (except the Saltdogs... they lost their game, 2-0).

Above: Gary Theiler giving a fist pump to the crowd after signing "Take Me out to the Ball Game" on top of the First Base dugout.

"No Turning Back"

by: John Wyvill, NCDHH Executive Director



This was the theme and message at a very powerful and moving opening ceremony at the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Conference at Ebenezer Baptist Church in the Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Atlanta. We have come a long way in our fight for equality and justice for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. However there is much more to do and we must always continue to move forward. We cannot afford to tire, falter or fail. In this newsletter, you will see reports from the NCDHH team as they continue to advocate for awareness, access, and equality over the last six months. To paraphrase the lyrics from the powerful Civil Rights song, 'we have come too far to turn back now'.

I look forward to working with each of you in carrying out our mission to promote and advocate, achieve equality and opportunity in social, education, vocational, and legal aspect of our lives; and to enhance and monitor access to effective communication and telecommunication technology.

Moving Forward!

NCDHH Full Board: New Executive Committee



Michael Brummer, new Chairman of NCDHH Full Board

Michael Brummer is the new Chairman for the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Board of Commissions. Brummer is the Activity Coordinator for the Metro Regional Program for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Omaha. A University of Nebraska-Lincoln Alumni, Michael has 15+ years of experience as an educator. Currently a resident of Omaha, Michael is married and has two children.

Margie Propp, of Lincoln, was elected Vice Chairperson of the Board.

"I have been involved with several NCDHH Board meetings now and have been learning the "ropes". Now I feel like I am really ready to work alongside Mike Brummer, Carol Lomicky, and the other Board members to support John and the NCDHH staff and all of their work with and support to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people of Nebraska. My parents, George and Eleanor Propp, have left very big shoes to fill and I hope I can do them proud." –Margie Propp

Carol Lomicky, of Kearney, was elected Secretary of the Board.

"As I begin my second term on the Board, I am amazed at the personal progress I have made in learning and better understanding the challenges and needs of Nebraskans who are deaf or suffer hearing loss. As a person with hearing loss myself, I am now much more comfortable in advocating for others. And it is indeed a privilege and honor to serve on the executive committee as the Commission strives to maintain and improve programs and services and increase access for individuals with hearing loss throughout this vast state." –Carol Lomicky

Telecommunication Relay Service News

Steven G. Stovall - TRS Administrator/Accountant

At its April 29, 2014 meeting the Commission voted to approve the new contact with Sprint to provide Telecommunications Relay Services for the State of Nebraska beginning July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019.

In other related business, the Commission also ordered the relay surcharge to be reduced from three-cents (\$.03) to two-cents (\$.02) effective July 1, 2014. The reduction will allow the reserve balance to decline yet not to the detriment of providing a reasonable reserve to sustain the program.

Significant Highlights

NCDHH Field Representatives

"What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal." - Albert Pike

The Mission of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is to promote and advocate for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing; to achieve equality and opportunity in social, educational, vocational, and legal aspects impacting their daily lives; and to enhance and monitor access to effective communication and telecommunication technology.

Listed below are some of the highlights over the past six months from the NCDHH Field Representatives:

Brenda Chappell, Field Representative:



- I like to see the light in the faces of the audience when I give presentations and equipment demos. It is like I answered their prayer.
- The more presentations I give the more networking relationships I make. I could use their alliance in helping individuals with hearing loss.
- I challenge myself to make NCDHH more aware. When I go to a fair or an event, I look for booths of professionals who might work with hearing loss. I meet them, explain what we do at NCDHH, and hand out posters, etc.

Beth Ellsworth, Field Representative:



- Trying phones and assistive listening devices with people who are Hard of Hearing and seeing their faces light up as they experience hearing clarity... often for the first time!
- Advocating for someone who has a hearing loss or is deaf and working with them on ways to become a self-advocate.
- Working with Field Representatives and staff on projects that will serve our clients and community as a whole.
- Reaching out to newly Hard of Hearing/Deaf and guiding them towards acceptance through the use of ALDs, support groups and education.
- Working with Hard of Hearing/Deaf and their loved ones to enhance their lives through understanding and support and new communication skills to meet their challenges.

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Significant Highlights cont.

NCDHH Field Representatives

Kim Davis, Field Representative:



- Enhancing and empowering the community through education and advocacy.
- Maintaining collaborations with our stakeholders to create an empowering, supportive and resourceful community.
- Enhancing and maintaining collaborations with our work colleagues through communication transparency, being team players and being positive.
- Enhancing independent living and self-empowerment among the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans.

Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist:



- Monitoring Mental Health/Substance Abuse programs to ensure they are meeting the cultural needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
- Advocating for rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
- Providing training/awareness to Mental Health/Substance Abuse providers related to Deafness and Hearing Loss.
- Providing training/awareness to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities on topics related to Behavioral Health.
- Working with the NCDHH team to promote and develop programs and services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.

Ben Sparks, Interpreter Program Assistant:



- Advocating for equal access to communication.
- Fighting Audism.
- Being a part of a team that I have looked up to since I was a kid.
- Improving ASL fluency.
- Encouraging interpreters to challenge themselves.

Dr. Frank Turk Inducted into Gallaudet University Hall of Fame

Newly appointed NCDHH Board Member, Dr. Frank Turk, was honored by Gallaudet University. The Gallaudet University Board of Trustees unanimously voted to induct 14 esteemed individuals into the Hall of Fame Class of 2014. Since its origin and until 1980, the Hall of Fame memorialized 40 individuals who made significant contributions to deaf education, the deaf community, or to Gallaudet. This group represents the first class of inductees to be honored in more than 34 years. Among the 14 new inductees is Dr. Frank Turk, for his work as an educator, an administrator, a coach and alumnus. The induction took place at Gallaudet on July 12, 2014.



Gallaudet President, Alan Hurwitz said of Dr. Turk, “Dr. Frank Turk embodies the Gallaudet University spirit of service and community. While he was national director of the Junior National Association of the Deaf (NAD), he and Gary Olsen established of the popular NAD Youth Leadership Camp, which helps create the deaf leaders of today and tomorrow. Dr. Turk was also the second deaf superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf. Dr. Turk is a true role model and I am pleased that he was inducted into the Hall of Fame.”



From Left:

Gallaudet President, Alan Hurwitz, Dr. Frank Turk, and Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Benjamin Soukup

NCDHH Board Member Honored at Kansas City Royals Game



Gina's Husband, Eric, and daughters Lauren, Reagan and Adelyn

NCDHH Board Member Gina Frerichs was honored at the Kansas City Royals Baseball game on Friday, June 27th as part of the "Our Heroes Program." Gina was nominated by her husband, Eric, for bettering the lives of people around her and reflecting the spirit of the U.S. Military.

Gina served her enlistment as a military police officer in the U.S. Army Reserves 530th MP Unit in Columbus. Due to range fire exposure, she endured a bilateral hearing loss and tinnitus. She now wears hearing aids in both ears.

"My hearing loss affected me initially after I started wearing my hearing aides in public a little over 2 years ago, especially at work. My co-workers had a certain belief on how hearing aides should work. I initially became frustrated with having to educate co-workers on certain hearing loss myths. I now realize how much of an impact I am making with educating and promoting hearing loss awareness, not only at work but within our community as well."

Currently Gina works as a nurse at East Central District Health Department and is a coach for competition gymnastics at Heartland Gymnastics.

NCDHH Board Raises Bar for Quality Interpreting

Ben Sparks, Interpreter Program Assistant

QAST

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) will cease to offer the Nebraska Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) at the end of December, 2015. NCDHH has relied on Midwest Quality Assurance Screening Test as a measure of interpreter's qualifications since the early 1980s. The increased demand for high quality interpreting services requires NCDHH to use tests that are scientifically proven to be valid and reliable.

The QAST was developed by pioneers in the field of interpreting who saw the need for a user friendly and affordable assessment process. In the early 1980s, Gallaudet University Regional Center at Johnson County College in Overland Park, Kansas, sponsored a stakeholder's meeting. After the meeting, a team of professionals gathered to create the Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test with two objectives; to develop a certification system that would test skills and ethics of interpreters and establish standards at various skill levels. The finished product was shared with each state involved in the process: Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

The decision to establish a task force to review how NCDHH evaluates and licenses sign language interpreters was made at the June 10, 2011, Full Board meeting. After several meetings, the task force made four recommendations to the Full Board. The first three were; to recognize RID Certification as a valid and reliable testing instrument, to "grandfather" in those interpreters who have a QAST level IV or V, and consider a formal mentoring program to assist interpreters with national certification.

The final recommendation was "In the absence of a cost effective and reliable alternate evaluation system, NCDHH is to continue to offer the QAST through December 31, 2014, using the last purchase set of stimuli." The ending date was changed to December 31, 2015, to provide interpreters more time to improve their skills before taking the QAST. This recommendation also gives NCDHH the ability to find a "cost effective and reliable evaluation system", if one is available.

How does this affect you?

Interpreters interested in pursuing a career in the field are encouraged to contact NCDHH to find out how we can help develop a plan to enhance their skills, locate resources and apply to take the QAST. Interpreters who have or receive a level IV or V rating will be able to maintain their rating beyond the discontinuation of the QAST by earning approved continuing education units, per QAST policy.

The Nebraska Interpreter Review Board has made recommendations for changes to the Rules and Regulations Relating to Sign Language Interpreters. One of biggest changes relates to interpreters holding a QAST level III rating. On January 1, 2016, a QAST level III rating will no longer be considered qualified for a Nebraska Interpreter/Transliterator license.

QAST cont.

Ben Sparks

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, state agencies, courts, law enforcement agencies and others who contract with licensed interpreters can be more assured that the information they are conveying and receiving is accurate.

Please keep in mind, Nebraska's interpreter license law applies to interpreters working for state agencies, courts or law enforcement. Other service providers such as most hospitals, private attorneys and doctor's offices are strongly encouraged to use licensed interpreters.

Executive Director, John Wyvill, and state Senator Ken Haar have authorized an interim study, Legislative Resolution 517 (LR517), to evaluate and better understand the statewide shortage of qualified sign language interpreters. LR 517 also authorizes NCDHH to examine complaints regarding the proficiency of interpreters in educational and community settings. NCDHH will share and address competency and proficiency issues of interpreters with stakeholders including the Nebraska educational community, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, interpreters and healthcare providers. Information gathered during the interim study will be also shared with the Health and Human Services Committee of the Nebraska Legislature.

NCDHH wants your opinion! For any input and information regarding the availability of licensed interpreters please contact NCDHH at ncdhh@nebraska.gov

Videophone App for Hearing People

Ben Sparks

Historically, a videophone (VP) consumer had to self-certify that they are deaf or hard of hearing to receive VP technology. This left hearing American Sign Language (ASL) users unable to call deaf and hard of hearing friends, family and coworkers without using the Video Relay Service. ZVRS has developed a product for these types of situations. The product is an app called Z5H, "A videophone for hearing people to communicate directly with a deaf person".

The Z5H app requires hearing individuals to create a profile and receive a phone number through their website, www.zvrs.com, just as deaf or hard of hearing clients would. Similar to Apple's FaceTime product, Z5H users are only able to call other Z videophones. This is because the Z5H product cannot access the national videophone database which is necessary to make VP calls to other types of VPs. The FCC has a strict requirement that only deaf or hard of hearing individuals can have full access to the national VP database. This would be a great product for hearing parents of deaf children, children of deaf adults, siblings, educators and students.

The Z5H app is not able to make calls to 911. ZVRS strongly encourages their hearing customers to use their existing telephone.

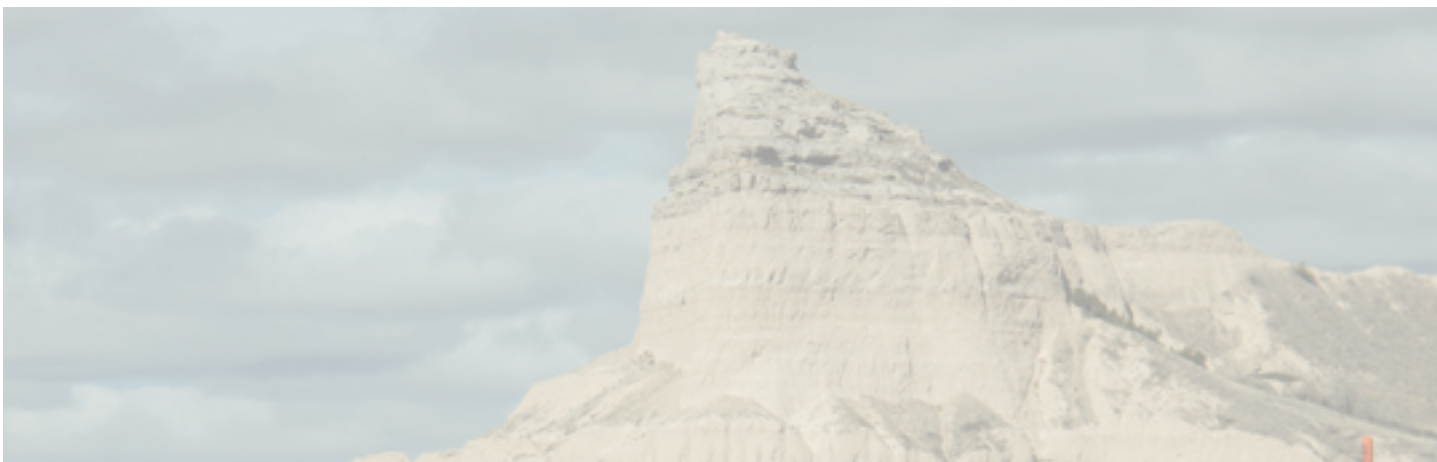
Scottsbluff “Office for the Week” Re-Cap

The week of Tuesday, June 10th, NCDHH board of commissioners and staff members traveled from Eastern Nebraska to Scottsbluff. The week was filled with workshops, support groups, meetings and media visits as well as the NCDHH Town Hall Meeting. Field Representative, Heather Pucket, of the North Platte area had great turn outs at her Hearing Loss Support Group, the Scottsbluff Senior Center, and a presentation at the Platte Valley Bank. Mental Health Specialist, Peggy Williams, had two presentations with the Scottsbluff Fire Department and the Scottsbluff Police Department on improving communication skills with individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in emergency situations. Executive Director, John Wyvill, made appearances at the local radio station, with KNEB news director, Kevin Mooney, and the local TV station, KDUB.



More than were expected Scottsbluff area residents came to the Town Hall Meeting to meet NCDHH Board members and staff as well as to participate in the discussion for ideas on expanding NCDHH services. Demonstrations of amplified telephones and other assistive technology were available to those that were interested. There was also discussion and suggestions for Interim Study regarding Legislative Resolution 517, to improve the interpreter shortage in

Nebraska. The week was a great opportunity to share information about our services. NCDHH is looking forward to the future in helping to improve the lives of Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing.



Mental Health Update

Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist



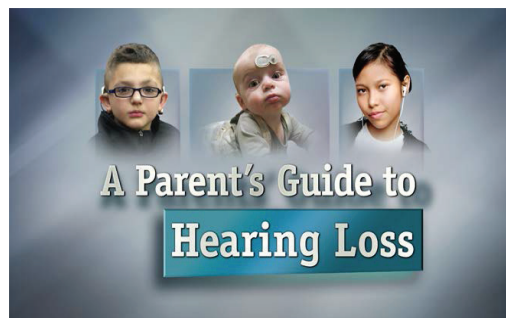
Happy Summer to everyone! I hope all of you are enjoying your summer and taking time out of your busy schedule to have some fun!

As many of you know, the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing co-produced a program with the Nebraska Education Television (NET) on “A Parent’s Guide to Hearing Loss”.

The program provided resources to parents who have children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Nebraska. Several professionals in the field of deafness and hearing loss discussed the diagnostic process, approaches and resources available, technology, support groups, causes and prevention in hearing loss with teens, resources and advocacy for ensuring effective community for children who experience deafness or hearing loss and early newborn infant hearing screening.

I would like to thank the following people for their time and expertise with the planning, taping and panel while producing “A Parent’s Guide to Hearing Loss”: Kathryn Beauchaine, Jeff Simmons, Dr. Marc Brennan and Ashley Halbach from Boystown National Research Hospital, Todd and Stacy Luther and Mr. & Mrs. Kris Luther, Parents, Dr. Pete Seiler, Beth Ellsworth, Jonathan Scherling, Kris Flott, Library Reading Program for Children who Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Rhonda

Fleischer, member of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Advisory committee, Kris Flott, Neb. Hands and Voices, Laura Moody, University of Nebraska – Kearney, Patti Neal, Assistive Technology Partnership, Dr. Stacie Ray, UNL-Barkley Memorial Center, Jill Bird, Southeast Nebraska Regional Program, Shari Slater and Jan Gradoville, Iowa School for the Deaf. A special thanks to Penny Costello, NET Producer who shared her wisdom and experience in helping us develop this program.



If you did not have an opportunity to watch “A Parent’s Guide to Hearing Loss” please visit, netnebraska.org/hearingloss. I hope you enjoy the program!

I am excited to announce that I have just completed a one-hour DVD on “Providing Mental Health Services to People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing” presented by Dr. James Haley. DVD’s will be sent to Nebraska Mental Health providers in an effort to provide education and awareness on treating people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Thanks to the Lied Learning and Technology Center in Omaha for a great job in pulling everything together and making this DVD an excellent finished project.

Improving Interpreting Services in the Mental Health Environments

Peggy Williams

On May 30th and 31st, Steve Hamerdinger and Brian McKenny presented to 34 interpreters from Nebraska, Illinois and South Dakota at the Immanuel Medical Center-Conference Center in Omaha on “Improving Interpreting Services in the Mental Health Environments”.

Steve Hamerdinger, Director of the Office of Deaf Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health has been involved with the deaf rights since the early 1980’s and has been a leader in the field of mental health and deafness since the early 90’s. He has been the Director of the Office of Deaf Services since its inception. Before coming to Alabama in January 2003, he was Director of the Office of Deaf and Linguistic Support Services at the Missouri Department of Mental Health for ten years.

After receiving his Master’s Degree in Counseling at Gallaudet University in 1989, Steve moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico to work as a mental health counselor at the New Mexico School for the Deaf. His practice was focused toward deaf children and their families. While living in New Mexico, he was instrumental in helping to establish the New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and was elected as the first Chair of the Commission. He is a Past President of the New Mexico Association of the Deaf and remains a member of Cerrillos Lodge #19, AF&AM.

A Past President of American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) an organization of professionals networking together for excellence in service delivery to individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, Steve has served on numerous appointive boards and task forces. Appointed to the Alabama Licensure Board for Interpreters and Transliterators in 2009, he has also served on the Alabama Governor’s Council on Disability. He has chaired the Olathe (Kansas) Disabled Person’s Advisory Board and served on the Kansas Mental Health and Deafness Task Force, the Missouri State Task Force on Deaf Education, the Missouri Board of Certification of Interpreters, and the Missouri Supreme Court Commission on Courts and the Disabled. He was named “Deaf Person of the Month” in November, 2008 by Deaf Life Magazine.

Steve’s work has been recognized by advocates around the country. He has received awards from the State Associations of the Deaf in Alabama, Missouri, New Mexico and Wisconsin. He was also named a Kentucky Colonel, all in recognition of his efforts in bettering mental health care for deaf people. In 2009, he was named a *Hero in the Fight* by Mental Health America. He was awarded the Alice Cogswell by the Gallaudet Alumni Association award for lifetime achievement in service to deaf people in 2010.

A sought after teacher and lecturer, Steve was the first Reba Hill Memorial Lecturer on Pediatrics at the Baylor University Medical School. He has been a frequent speaker at the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri, an adjunct faculty member of the Kansas City Kansas Community College, where he taught sign language and Deaf Culture and William Woods University where he taught social work with people who are deaf. An engaging and enthusiastic speaker, Steve is in national demand as a trainer and consultant on deafness and Deaf Culture as well as child development, counseling and other mental health and deafness and hearing loss related topics. He is also in demand as a motivational speaker and entertainer.

Improving Interpreting Services in the Mental Health Environments cont.

Peggy Williams

Brian McKenny is the Region V Interpreter Coordinator for the Office of Deaf Services and is based in Montgomery, Alabama. Mr. McKenny has worked as an interpreter for over 20 years, with a particular emphasis on mental health situations. He holds the Certificates of Interpretation and Transliteration, as well as the National Interpreter Certification, from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. He was a contributing author to the Interpreting in Mental Health Settings standard practice paper for RID.

Mr. Hamerdinger and Mr. Kinney provided interpreters with valuable information in a variety of topics such as the Cultural Mediator Model, Realities of Interpreting Work, Ethics and the Practicing Model, Decision Making, Mental Illness, Common Settings and a variety of other interpreting responsibilities of the professional interpreter. The Commission was very pleased with all the positive comments made on the evaluation of the workshop from the participating interpreters.

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing would like to thank Alegent Creighton Health for providing the conference center, snacks and lunch as well as all their help in the coordination of the workshop. A special thanks to the Nebraska Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf for their monetary contribution, the Iowa Registry of the Deaf for their monetary contribution and the Lincoln Association of Sign Language Professionals for contributing a continental breakfast on Saturday for the interpreters. Without assistance from these organizations this workshop would have not been possible.

Finding Captioned Movies

Brenda Chappell, Field Representative

There are a few resources you can use to find which theaters offer captioned movies. There is a website called 'CaptionFish' which has a list of theaters and schedules of captioned movies across the country. I would consider it to be very resourceful if you travel. More information on CaptionFish can be found at <http://www.captionfish.com/>



I would recommend Marcus and Regal theaters as very reliable information about their captioned movies listed on their websites. Marcus offers CV and Regal offers Access Glasses. They are worth the trip to check out. More information can be found at <http://marcustheatres.com> and <http://www.regmovies.com/>

Both CaptionFish and Marcus Theatres can be downloaded on an Apple or Android smartphone. If you are an avid movie watcher like I am, then it is worth effort to find a movie with captions and get out of house to be entertained.

The Evolution of Making 9-1-1 Calls

Kim Davis, Field Representative



Before 1990, it wasn't even possible for many of deaf individuals to directly communicate with emergency 9-1-1 call handlers on the telephone. Many of my deaf friends and I had to go through a third party that may be a neighbor, an available hearing family member or even a complete stranger to make the emergency 9-1-1 call for us. Some had children that were old enough to be able to communicate and understand situations, as young as five years old, to act as communication facilitators or to solely handle the emergency 9-1-1 calls. Later

on, when these landline 9-1-1 calls were able to display our call's physical location, we then simply dialed 9-1-1, placed the receiver down and just waited for a law enforcement officer to show up at our doorstep. It wasn't always effective or fast, but it usually worked! Additionally, when teletypewriters (TTYs) came out in 1964, they were ineffective to use with those who didn't have one. It wasn't until 1990 when the nationwide requirement for each state to establish the landline Telecommunication Relay Service (now known as the Traditional Telecommunication Relay Service) and for public and direct TTY access was activated due to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act by the US Congress. This led to the passage and establishment of the Nebraska's Telecommunications Relay System statute by the Nebraska Legislature.

After the 1990 statutes and regulations started rolling, 9-1-1 emergency call centers or handlers were required to have a TTY available. During that initial period, for direct emergency calls coming from TTY users, we had to memorize the 7-digit local numbers. It was exciting among me and many members of the Deaf community to have the opportunity to make direct emergency calls! However, frustration still ensued as these 7-digit emergency calls weren't often treated as emergency calls when the phone rang on their end, and even worse, sometimes the emergency responder or call handler were not familiar with how to use the TTY or had placed their TTY somewhere unbeknownst to them, and if we traveled, our local community's emergency number was ineffective and we didn't have the other community's 7-digit number handy. Eventually we were able to use the 3-digit emergency calls in locations available for the general public. However, it took years of awareness and understandings of what a TTY is and how it functions for emergency call handlers, especially with emergency call centers that had constant rollovers on emergency call handlers. When these direct TTY emergency calls were

The Evolution of Making 9-1-1 Calls cont.

Kim Davis, Field Representative

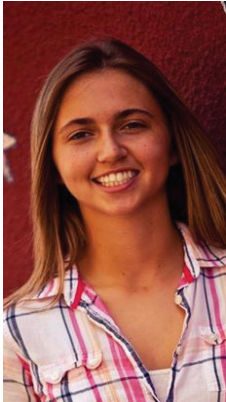
unsuccessful, we would continue to dial 9-1-1 and place the receiver down until a law enforcement office showed up at our door or call through the state's traditional telecommunication relay service center that assisted in facilitating local and long distance calls between TTY users and non-TTY users.

Today, the ability to communicate with 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) or emergency call centers has been greatly enhanced. Various forms of 9-1-1 calls can take place with those among the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing population. There are several different choices of telecommunication devices other than just a TTY; such as captioned telephones, videophones or Internet Protocol software program or application through computer, tablet or cellular (Android or iOS) devices. There are still some challenges where one may not be familiar with the procedures of making or responding to 9-1-1 calls either due to lack of awareness or obligations that these telecommunication devices exists; aren't able to demonstrate the ability to use any available telecommunication devices; lack training on how to operate outgoing or incoming 9-1-1 emergency calls with these available telecommunication devices; or the procedures and awareness of incoming or outgoing 'silent calls' coming directly from a TTY, direct landline or wireless emergency call. Emergency call centers should be prepared for incoming emergency calls coming directly from these telecommunication devices or through a third-party, which can be any one of the available Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) operated through landline, internet or wireless services. Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing individuals who access the telecommunications relay services, especially through the internet or wireless service providers, share equal responsibilities on updating either their profile with their telecommunication relay service provider when they move to a new residential place, be prepared to notify their exact physical location and address when on travel status with their portable device. It is also critical to be aware of procedural necessities in order to be connected to the nearest 9-1-1 PSAP or emergency call center, and understand how your telecommunication device or telecommunication network and relay service functions, especially when immediate emergency attention becomes of paramount importance.

We have come a very long way since the 3-digit emergency call number rolled out in 1937 that was inaccessible for those who have challenges hearing on a regular or non-adaptive telephone. For those who have accessibility challenges with emergency calls in your community, whether you are a Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing individual or an agency that employs emergency responders may contact me or my field representative colleague that serves your region. Contact us through email, telephone or in person! Lastly, what will tomorrow bring? Nationwide talk is about having the capability to use text-to-911 with the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1).

University of Nebraska-Kearney Student Profile Series: Part I

This is Part I of a Three Part series highlighting three Hard of Hearing students at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Meet Justine:



Justine Boucher didn't receive hearing aids until she was three. She didn't talk until she was four. Now 20-years-old, Justine is a sophomore Elementary Education major at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

With goals to become a teacher in rural Nebraska, because she likes smaller classrooms with more individual attention, Justine has a moderate-to-severe hearing loss. Growing up in Lincoln, she was predicted early to be grades behind her classmates; Justine graduated in the Top 25 of her class at Lincoln East High School. Initially, Justine had hopes of becoming a P.E. teacher, but the echo is too loud in the gymnasiums. These obstacles do not stop her from receiving an education with an end goal to be in a classroom.

"My hearing doesn't define me, I go through life like any other person," she said.

Unlike in high school, Justine has a transcriber for her classes at UNK to ensure she doesn't miss a beat from any professors.

"You don't realize how much you miss until you have someone typing everything out."

In Justine's free time when she's not with friends or family she enjoys fishing, running, or exercising.

Social Media and Technology



*Coping with
Hearing Loss*

*Sign Language
Hearing
Health*

**Like NCDHH on
Facebook!**



The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) has recently launched a new online service!

Nebraskans can browse and submit requests to check out books, videos, teaching materials related to hearing loss, deafness, sign language and sign language interpreting.

www.ncdhh.ne.gov

Keyword: Media

Visit us on the Web!
www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov

Give Hearing Aids a Second Life... Donate!

Heather Pucket, Field Representative

Throughout my travels across Nebraska, it has come to my attention that many of you are unaware that donating your used hearing aids is an option. In addition to this, the Commission received information that many funeral home directors and those who have lost loved ones did not know what to do with the decedent's old hearing aids. Because of this, it became apparent that I needed to revisit the topic of donations to the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks.

In May, I had the opportunity to attend the Nebraska Funeral Directors Association Conference in Kearney. Although my attendance seemed to be a rather odd fit at the conference, I received great feedback from many funeral home directors, as most were entirely unaware of the donation process and literally had boxes of used hearing aids that they agreed to donate. Throughout the summer, it is my hope to continue contacting funeral home directors and to focus on the donation of hearing aids at my various booths and events across Nebraska. If successful, the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks will be overflowing with donations to further assist hard of hearing individuals all across the state.

For those of you who are unaware of the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks, today's average out-of-pocket cost for hearing aids is approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000, which can make the purchase of hearing aids cost prohibitive to many hard of hearing Nebraskans. Due to the efforts of the Sertoma Clubs and Lion Clubs of Nebraska and the individuals at the Barkley Memorial Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the donated and refurbished hearing aids can be provided to Nebraskans in need at a fraction of the cost.

Both the Sertoma Club and the Lions Club accept hearing aid donations for the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks. Please consider donating your new or old hearing aids (regardless of function, style or age of instrument) that are not being used to help us continue the mission of assisting those in need. Hearing aids can be donated through local clubs, individual members or sent to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Speech and Hearing Clinic. A tax deduction letter will be mailed to the donor upon request. You can donate your hearing aids to:

UNL – Speech and Hearing Clinic
301 Barkley Memorial Center
PO Box 830731
Lincoln NE 68583-0731

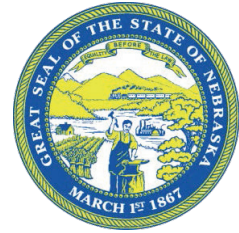
If you would like more information about the Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks, please visit us online at: www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov.

Editorial Note: Heather Pucket is now working at the Mid-Plains Community College. We wish her the best of luck at her new career opportunity!

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



4600 Valley Rd Ste 420
Lincoln NE 68510
Toll Free – 800-545-6244
Video Phone – 402-261-2670
E-Mail – ncdhh@nebraska.gov



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?

- | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard of Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Late Deafened | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf/Low Vision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard of Hearing / Low Vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech Impaired <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): _____ | | | |

Yes No

Do you have a Cochlear Implant? Yes No

Do you use a Hearing Aid? Yes No

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?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Clinic | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred by another State Agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV/Radio | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

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

Thank You!

Date: _____

Staff Member: _____



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NEBRASKA

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Is this address correct? If not,
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.

NCDHH Street & Electronic Address

Lincoln Office

4600 Valley Road
Suite 420
Lincoln, NE 68510-4844

Omaha Office

1313 Farnam-on-the-Mall
Omaha, NE 68102-1836

North Platte Office

200 S. Silber Avenue
Room 207

North Platte, NE
69101-4298

Kearney Office

(800) 545-6244

V/TTY: (402) 471-3593

VP: (402) 261-2670

V/TTY TOLL FREE:
(800) 545-6244

E-mail:
ncdhh@nebraska.gov