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The Communicator

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



A newsletter surveying health, government and issues affecting Nebraskans.

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: How Do We Serve You? by Peter J. Seiler, Ed.D. Executive Director

It is not well known that the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was founded because several Deaf and Hard of Hearing leaders led by Dr. George Propp saw a need for a state agency to advocate for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing people. After several years of going to the Nebraska Legislature and arguing for this agency, the senators finally agreed that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people needed a special agency to support them. In 1979, the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing started with one office in Lincoln. That office at 4600 Valley Road, Lincoln, is still the main office for the Commission.

Over the years, the Commission has changed and added offices. There are three offices now: Lincoln which is the home office, Omaha, and North Platte. Staff who actually work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients are called Field Representatives. These people provide one or more of the five services identified as most needed for the clients. One of the services is Mental Health and we have a person whose only job is in that field. The other four services are Public Policy and Advocacy, Telecommunications and Technical Assistance, Communication Access and Development, and Information and Clearinghouse. These five services provided by the Commission hopefully targets major issues that affect you. For example, many Deaf and many Hard of Hearing people cannot get jobs and come to the Commission for help. That is just one of many important and life changing issues.

The Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is an important state agency but it can only fight for issues that are important to you. That is why it is important for you and your friends to serve on the Commission's Board of Directors. The Board of Directors have 9 positions. Three are for Deaf people, three are for Hard of Hearing people and three are for other people who share the same concerns that you have for yourselves. Each person from each group brings issues to the meetings and, together, the three groups agree on issues to resolve. That is what leadership means and why it is important for people to speak up.

The Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (most people call it NCD-HH) is a much needed state agency and needs your support and encouragement. My job is to make sure that we are listening to you and then explaining to people in state government, business, medical fields, schools, legislators at the state, county, and city levels, and law enforcement agencies what will help you enjoy the good life of Nebraska. It is your right to have the same privileges as people who can hear. Don't be afraid to make your needs known.

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NCDHH Welcomes New Employees

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has some new faces in all of our offices. You may have met some of them already at various events and presentations throughout Nebraska.

Kim Davis is the new Field Representative II, working from the Lincoln office. She is a graduate of the Iowa School for the Deaf. She comes to NCDHH with 10 years of experience working with the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing where she provided training, mentoring and advocacy. She was also a member of several local, regional and state committees, councils and associations. “My collaborative desires are most likely a result of being a proud deaf individual, enabling me to become involved in the employment, education and community arenas.”

Kim Davis can be reached at (402) 261-2657 VP or by email at kim.davis@nebraska.gov.



Bonnie Jo Hicks is the new Field Representative II, working from the North Platte Office. She trained to become an interpreter at Mt. Aloysius College and worked as an interpreter in the educational and vocational rehabilitation fields. Her most recent position was as an executive assistant for the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. “That experience, along with a desire to return to the field of deaf/hard of hearing services made the position in North Platte an appealing one.”

Bonnie Jo can be reached at (308) 535-6600 or by email at bonnie.hicks@nebraska.gov.



Brian Bobbie is the new Field Representative II, working from the Omaha office. Brian has a Bachelor’s Degree from Rochester Institute of Technology in Criminal Justice/Pre-Law and a Masters’ Degree in Business Administration, specializing in accounting. Brian’s experiences include serving at Viable Communications as an outreach manager in Maryland. Brian moved to Nebraska recently to be with his fiancée, two children and two precious cats. “I look forward to using my experience and skills to assist Nebraskans with NCDHH services offers statewide.”

Brian can be reached at (402) 682-7042 or by email at brian.bobbie@nebraska.gov.



Judy Tarvin is the new Administrative Assistant, working from the Omaha office. Judy graduated from Metro Community College in 1996 with an Associate’s Degree, studying to become an Administrative Assistant. She worked at the University of Nebraska Medical Center Physicians for 6 and half years before losing her vision in late April 2012. She had surgery in July 2012 and was able to get some of her vision back. “I enjoy all the people I work with and am very appreciative for the opportunity.”



Nebraska Interpreter/Transliterater and Specialty Licenses Due for Renewal on June 30, 2013

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing wants to thank Nebraska's interpreters for their service to all Nebraskans as licensed professionals for the past two years. The expiration date for Nebraska's Interpreter/Transliterater and Specialty licenses is June 30, 2013. We would like to make the renewal process as simple as possible for you. Questions and concerns can be directed to Ben Sparks or Traci Cooney.



Interpreters licensed by NCDHH will receive a notice letter explaining the steps needed to renew their Interpreter/Transliterater license as well as the necessary forms. These forms can also be found online at www.ncdhh.ne.gov/interp_licensing.html. Interpreters can expect to receive their new license within thirty days after we receive your completed paperwork and applicable fee.

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Nebraska VR is in its 91st year of providing opportunities for Nebraska citizens with disabilities to get or keep a job. Individuals who are blind or deaf-blind receive services from the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Nebraska VR serves individuals who have a physical, mental, emotional, or learning impairment and are experiencing difficulty becoming or staying employed. This would include individuals who are hard of hearing or are deaf.



If you have worked with VR in the past, you can return to VR again for help to find work if you meet the criteria above.

What does VR do? It is not so much what VR does for you, it is what you and VR do TOGETHER!

- You and VR decide on what kind of job is a good fit for you
- You and VR decide what services and supports you need to get that kind of job
- Service and supports can include, but are not limited to, skill training, independent living training, benefits counseling, job seeking skills, interpreting, work tools, work clothing, hearing aids, assistive listening devices, transportation assistance and job coaching
- You and VR decide where to get these services and supports
- You and VR practice your job application and interview skills
- You and VR decide what interpreter VR will provide when needed
- You and VR decide on what employers to contact
- You and VR decide when you are successfully employed

If interested in services, visit our website www.vr.ne.gov and contact the VR office closest to where you live by calling toll free (877) 637-3422.

“Living with Hearing Loss”

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) and the Nebraska Education Educational Television (NET) produced a one-hour program on “Living with Hearing Loss”.

This program focuses on information that senior citizens might need in coping with declining hearing. A panel of three people discuss psychological impact of declining hearing acuity, hearing aids and other devices that help one circumvent the poor hearing, and services offered by the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The program also highlights personal interviews with Dr. David Rutledge and Ms. Diane Muelleman, two Hard of Hearing individuals, who share their experiences with being hard of hearing and how that has impacted their lives. These two individuals discuss coping strategies that they have developed.

The panelists include three professionals: Dr. Peter Seiler, Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Dr. Stacie Ray, professor of audiology at Barkley Memorial Center, the University of Nebraska; and Dr. Jim Haley, clinical psychologist in Omaha. They answered questions regarding hearing abilities, available services, and new technology.



Living with Hearing Loss was recorded and has become an online resource for anyone with questions about hearing loss. If you or a family member are concerned about your hearing, NCDHH would encourage you to view Living with Hearing Loss at www.netnebraska.org, keywords: living with hearing loss, and then contact our office. The NET webpage also has online links to resources mentioned during the program such as the UNL Barkley Center, HearU Nebraska and the Lions and Sertoma Hearing Aid Banks. You can also view NCDHH's previous production, Hearing Loss in the Military, a program designed for active military and veterans coping with hearing loss.

For more information about this program, please contact Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist for NCDHH at 402-471-3593 or peggy.williams@nebraska.gov.

“There are over 34 million Americans who live with hearing loss. Only 1 out of 5 people who could benefit from the use of hearing aids uses them. Families, co-workers, employers, and others that people with hearing loss encounter every day are also impacted to varying degrees. The scope of the problem is growing as Baby Boomers age, and as younger people increasingly use mobile devices and listen to music and video through ear buds.”

Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services (HDAAS) was formed in 2009 by a group of deaf women and became non-profit organization in September 2010. HDAAS is guided by a Deaf Board and Committee.

HDAAS’ mission is to empower Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals through awareness, education, prevention and advocacy to stop domestic and sexual violence and to enhance their lives and self-esteem. HDAAS strives to accomplish this mission through the following goals:

- Serve Deaf and Hard of Hearing residents in Nebraska, who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, and to serve their families.
- Provide crisis intervention, advocacy, and follow up services.
- Provide support groups.
- Provide appropriate referrals, e.g., shelters or safe homes and legal advocacy.
- Provide educational training to the professional and personal communities.
- Develop any other related goals as deemed necessary by the Board.

If you like to be updated by Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services on future workshops and events, you can send an email to HDAAS2009@gmail.com. Be sure to include your email address and/or mailing address. You can also like our Facebook page: Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services.

Thank you,
 Chair Deb Weyers – deb.weyers@gmail.com
 Vice-Chair Candice Arteaga – carteaga2010@gmail.com
 Secretary Peggy Scherling – peggy.scherling@gmail.com
 Treasurer Vicki Campbell - vsteinhauer.campbell@gmail.com



Disability at Work...

“Our Court System and the Deaf Rights”

By Brian Bobbie, MBA, Field Representative II - Omaha
May 8, 2013

Imagine someone comes up to you and say that you don't need an interpreter because you are doing well at school with an average of “A” grade. Your rights have not been violated if we provide you a SEEII interpreter. You were not discriminated by the school because you were able to sit in the classroom; watch the interpreter; and be involved in the classroom like other hearing students.

This is all based on the abridged term of “adequate education” as quoted by the United States Supreme Court [*Rowley vs. Board of Education*, 458 US 176]. In another word, you have an interpreter; you have an access to school materials and lectures like other students; and you have got an average grade of “A” – it's all good so meaning that you have been receiving an adequate education at the school. Thus, no rights were violated and no discrimination existed.

You may or may not agree with the Supreme Court's opinion and feel that the decision is unreasonable. You may have the opinion that the Supreme Court Justices does not empathize with deaf folks and understood every individual's needs in the classroom.

The problem here is that the **feeling or emotion** about something like this must be separated from the very idea of **critical thinking** as part of the judicial process; especially when interpreting the law, rules, regulations, and other legal matters. More often than not, the Supreme Court Justices may share your frustrations and disenchantment on how your rights are not preserved in the name of the disability rights. However, the Supreme Court and lower courts as well as the state courts are bound to the letters of law. Additionally, the spirit of the laws (federal or state) as stated in the legislature reports can sometimes aid in making the decision for each case.

Yet, you wonder how it is possible, in your view, that federal district and appeal courts have supported this young deaf child's rights whereas, the Supreme Court did not. The district court has ruled that the child should have a sign language interpreter even when the school was told by their experts that she does not need one [483 FSupp 528]. Other visual aids and auxiliary aids adequately meet her educational needs because she has excelled at school so far. The Court of Appeals supported the lower court's decision to allow the deaf child to have a sign language interpreter in the classroom [632 F2d 945]. But, U.S. Supreme Court disagreed with the district court and Court of Appeals' decisions [458 US 176].



Did this make you gasp? Feel betrayed by the very court that you entrusted in – the United States Supreme Court – to protect citizens' rights and especially disability rights? The truth is that the Supreme Court has the jurisdiction to only interpret what the law says, what it means, and how it applies to the case presented before it. The Supreme Court cannot use your feelings of what is right for us and for our children.

So, does that mean we are stuck with the Supreme Court's decision? The answer is no, technically we are not. We can rally to petition our grievances to our government so they can hear you out and revise the law in respect to the rights of our deaf children including an equal access to effective communication just like all other hearing students in the classroom. This means that we must go to the U.S. Congress and tell them that the "broken" law needs to be fixed. Why is that so? Because Congress represents every American citizen in this country and writes the law that reflects on your issues presented before it and gives you the very law that they hope will fix the problem.



Or, in some cases, it requires a number of cases from different courts to demonstrate that there is a very real problem lies within the law (i.e., **American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**) so, in effect, triggering Congress to review and revise the very law that should improve the quality of deaf children's education in every classroom. The idea behind is that the decision for a disabled child's education should be based on the need and not based on costs. Sadly, the cost appears to be the basis of educational decisions.

A few years later after the *Rowley* case was decided by the Supreme Court, another disability case was recently addressed at the Court of Appeals of the 8th Circuit that may be of interest to our readers. The case, *Argenyi vs. Creighton University* [Docket #11-3336/3461], deals with a medical student who was enrolled at Creighton University and who was being denied right to have an interpreter and other visual aids and devices for effective communication in all medical classrooms and labs. This case is based on the Americans with Disability Act but has many similarities to the *Rowley* case.

However, unlike *Rowley* case, the district court had decided that Creighton University was right about their decisions in not providing Mr. Argenyi the services he needs. Despite Argenyi's documentation to the Creighton's School of Medicine administrators regarding inadequate access to communication, Creighton University decided not to heed Mr. Argenyi's request for better services which previously benefited him at an undergraduate school he attended prior to attending Creighton University.

In turn, the United States Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit reversed the district court's decision and remanded the case back to the lower court because, in its opinion, the 3-judge panel decided that there is a sufficient evidence that Mr. Argenyi was "denied an equal opportunity to gain the same benefit from medical school as his nondisabled peers by refusing to provide requested accommodations." [Docket #11-3336/3461] In other words, there is an issue that Mr. Argenyi may be discriminated by the Creighton University and the district court must focus on the fact of whether the discrimination existed based on his disability at the trial level.



Furthermore, the U.S. Court of Appeals of the 8th Circuit also pointed out that the district court used the case laws to support its decision in favor of the Creighton University; however, it found that those case laws were irrelevant and should not be applied to this disability case. From there, the Court of Appeals used the other case laws to support its opinion that are relevant to the case. (Continued on page 8)

NCDHH Welcomes New Board Member, Mr. Mike Brummer

Hello everyone!!!

It is an honor to be appointed to be on the Board of Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH). I am currently employed at Education Service Unit #10 (Kearney) as an Itinerant Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I have a total of 12 years of education experience, 7 years currently at ESU 10. I have taught at residential schools in Iowa, New Mexico, and South Dakota. I hope to bring in my expertise and experience in education as well as my perspective as a person who is deaf to the board to help improve the quality of services available for Nebraskans who are deaf or hard of hearing.



My wife, Anna, and I are blessed to celebrate our twentieth anniversary this coming November. She is currently completing her BSW at the University of Nebraska-Kearney in Social Work and will graduate in few months. Grayson is our 9-year-old daughter, a fourth grade student who loves to read and work on various art projects. Max is our 5-year-old son, a pre-school energetic tumbler. I enjoy many outdoor ventures such as golfing, fishing, and camping. I also enjoy playing games and reading bedtime stories with my family.

I will be starting my new position, Activity Coordinator, for Metro Regional Program for Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Omaha this summer (www.nebraskamrp.com). We are looking forward to moving back to Omaha area.

NCDHH Seeking New Members for Interpreter Review Board and Mental Health Advisory Council

The Nebraska Interpreter Review Board (IRB) is currently seeking applicants for two open positions.

NCDHH is seeking a deaf representative and a representative of local government. The IRB meets on a quarterly basis and is tasked with the responsibility of developing guidelines and regulations for the licensing of sign language interpreters that work for any state entity which receives appropriations from the legislature and includes the Legislature, legislative committees, executive agencies, courts and probation officials.

To inquire, please contact Dr. Peter Seiler at peter.seiler@nebraska.gov.

The Nebraska Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) is currently seeking applicants for two open positions. NCDHH is seeking “two counselors familiar with mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse disorders in hearing -impaired persons.” The MHAC meets quarterly in an effort to ensure full access to comprehensive mental health services.

To inquire, please contact Ms. Peggy Williams at peggy.williams@nebraska.gov



Technology Opens Access to Communication

by Amanda Huff

Technology has changed drastically within the past few years; providing better access to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Smartphones and tablets have become must-have products in almost every household. This is especially true with deaf and hard of hearing individuals; these wonderful products have provided deaf and hard of hearing individuals with better access to the “hearing world.” Apple is one of the biggest names in the smartphones and tablets market. One of the most popular tablets that exists today is the Apple iPad.



The first Apple iPad was released only a short time ago on April 3rd, 2010. Within that short time span, there has already been a total of four generations of iPads; they were released between April 3rd, 2010 and November 2nd, 2012. They are iPad, iPad 2, new iPad, and 4th generation iPad along with the iPad mini. With a wide range of selection an individual can choose an iPad that is better suited for their needs. There are different models of iPads that provides different features with radio type and storage capacity. The newest iPad has a storage capacity of 128 GB with 16, 32, and 64 GB storage still available as an option. They also provide different radio types among different models; some iPads have Wi-Fi only capability while others may have additional cellular network capability such as 3G and 4G (LTE). When an individual considers purchasing an iPad they should do their research and pick a model that is best suited for their needs.

The Apple iPad has helped open doors for many individuals with specific needs such as deafness, blindness, autism, and developmental disability, to name a few. The applications that can be downloaded on the iPad provide these individuals with access to the world, enhance communication, and in some situations enhance their learning experience. It has empowered deaf and hard of hearing individuals to have better communication with the outside world with several applications that the Apple iPad provides.



One of the most popular applications for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is a mobile videophone. There are several companies that provide video phone capable applications. They are Sorenson Communications and ZVRS to name a two of the biggest companies out there. Sorenson has nTouch and ZVRS has z5. Those applications provide deaf and hard of hearing individuals the ability to make calls from anywhere they have an Internet or cellular connection to hearing individuals through a video relay interpreter or another deaf individual with a videophone. These applications have broken down a big communication barriers and provided greater accessibility to the world for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.



For deaf and hard of hearing individuals who prefer not to sign or prefer written communication, a captioned telephone is an option. Several use CapTel applications that are in the App Store such as Hamilton and Sprint CapTel. Captioned telephones, allow users to read on a screen what is being spoken to them while they still use their voice to carry on the conversation.

There are several other wonderful applications that provide different kinds of accessibility needs that deaf and hard of hearing individuals may have. SoundHound is an application that will listen to any type of music that is currently playing and has the ability to list the artist, song name, and album name if it is able to detect the song. It also has live lyrics feature where it will display the lyrics of the song in real-time. This application is especially useful for deaf and hard of hearing individuals who loves music and potentially would like to know the name of the song or the lyrics of the song. Another entertainment applications are the ABC Player and NBC Player applications which provide closed captioning on the iPad for shows that they aired on television. Deaf and hard of hearing individuals now can enjoy the television show that was broadcast on television that they may have missed on their iPads with closed captioning.



Dragon Dictation is a speech to text application where a hearing individual could speak to the iPad translating what they spoke to text so a deaf or hard of hearing individual can read what they said. SpeakItToMe is a text to speech application that allows a deaf or hard of hearing individual to type what they want. There is an option to change from a male to female voice and adjust the speed of the voice. This is particularly useful in situations where a pen and paper is not readily available.

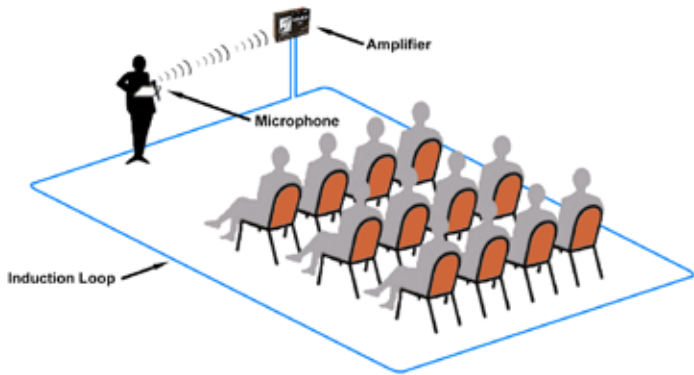


There are so many more applications that provide accessibility and entertainment for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. There will be even more applications that will be developed in the future. The Apple iPad has broken down many barriers that a deaf and hard of hearing individual may face today. Now they can easily make a video phone call to anyone they need to from anywhere they have cellular or Internet service just like the hearing population. The future can only bring enhanced accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing individuals; truly the deaf and the hard of hearing populations have come a very long way.

*This article was written by Amanda Huff, who completed her internship with Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing from January 2013 – March 2013. Amanda graduated in March, 2013 from Southeast Community College with her degree in Computer Technology. This article reflects examples of tablet technology.

“The Induction Loop and Telecoil”

By Beth Ellsworth



There are many kinds of assistive listening devices (ALDs). Some examples are the pocket talker, FM system and infrared systems. One ALD that is effective is the induction “loop”, also called a “hearing loop”.

The induction loop is a thin wire that is placed around the listening area and connected to a special amplifier and microphone. The wire creates a magnetic field that is sent to the person’s hearing aid or headphone, amplifying and clarifying the speaker’s voice. When the sound is going directly into the person’s hearing aid or cochlear

implant, the sound transmitted is personalized to the individual’s hearing loss.

There are two ways to connect with the loop; using a headphone or the Telecoil function of a hearing aid.

Those with hearing aids or cochlear implants that are equipped with a Telecoil (T-Coil) are able to put their device on a special switch called the T switch that activates the connection between the hearing aid/or cochlear implant and the loop system. If the device does not have a T-coil, (or the T coil is not activated) a headphone can be used with the loop.

The T-coil function can provide a drastic increase in the quality of sound and speech created by the hearing aid. This is because the hearing aid is using information received through the electromagnetic field of a “looped” room, telephones or other compatible communication devices as opposed to sound waves that can be distorted by air and background noise. (Continued on page 20)



Using Interpreters Through Cyberspace

By Kim Davis, Field Representative II, Lincoln
Photographs courtesy of Deaf Services Unlimited

Using sign language interpreters through cyberspace, namely through a high-speed internet based connection, has slowly become an alternative to onsite interpreters. This particular service is known as Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), which means, as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, “an interpreting service that uses video conference technology over dedicated lines or wireless technology offering high-speed, wide-bandwidth video connection that delivers high-quality video images.”

VRI services are offered by various interpreter referral agencies nationwide, making it possible to secure an interpreter when; such examples, but not limiting to, onsite interpreting services cannot be secured due to scheduling issues or up-to-the-moment’s notice, due to a lack of qualified interpreters in one’s area, or based on an economical service fee.

Private and public service providers are often confused with the function of the Video Relay Services (VRS), which handles telecommunications relay calls through the use of video technology hooked up to a television, a computer with a webcam, or mobile phone with a front-facing camera. VRS is vastly different from VRI, as explained by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) who mandates the most of the internet- and wireless-based telecommunications relay services. FCC has made clear statements, “VRS is not the same as Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). VRI is the use of an interpreter located at a remote location through a video connection when two people are together [in the same room] and they need an interpreter. VRS may not be used in such circumstances. VRS is a type of telephone call.”



The Federal Department of Justice mandates that a public accommodation that chooses to utilize qualified interpreters via VRI shall ensure that it provides: (1) Real-time, full-motion video and audio over a dedicated high-speed, wide-bandwidth video connection or wireless connection that delivers high-quality video images that do not produce lags, choppy, blurry, or grainy images, or irregular pauses in communication; (2) a sharply delineated image that is large enough to display the interpreter’s face, arms, hands, and fingers, and the participating individual’s face arms, hands, and fingers, regardless of his or her body position; (3) a clear audible transmission of voices; and (4) adequate training to users of the technology and other involved individuals so that they may quickly and efficiently set up and operate the VRI.



Any individuals, including consumers, who may be dissatisfied with the VRI service, whether it is the technical issues and/or the interpreter’s professional conduct or qualification, have the option to address the situation or file a complaint with the appropriate party or parties. Such party or parties to consider may be the administrator of the facility where VRI is being provided, the administrator of the VRI agency, the Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board, the National Registry of Interpreters for

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Accessing Emergency 911 Services

By Ben Sparks



When an emergency strikes, response time is critical. The difference between life and death can be measured in minutes. We all want to be able to rely on an emergency system when the time comes to reach out for help.

For the Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations, reaching out for help has always taken more effort and time due to communication barriers. With each generation of new technology, those barriers are being taken down and replaced with accessible emergency services, thanks to the work of the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, countless first responders and developers. Each new telephone or telecommunication device is designed and re-designed to make sure that the user can access 911 services in a timely manner. The FCC Chairman Genachowski stated, "Access to 911 must catch up with how consumers communicate in the 21st Century – and today, we are one step closer towards that vital goal." These new technologies include cellular phones, videophones and captioned phones.

What happens when a person calls 911 using a captioned telephone?

The way 911 calls are managed by captioned telephone systems varies. NCDHH encourages you to contact CapTel or CaptionCall to make sure you understand how each company handles these critical calls.

When a person calls 911 with a CapTel telephone, the telephone does not provide captioning automatically. "911 calls are treated as Voice Carry Over calls during which the 911 call-taker can hear everything you say, and then types their response. The response appears on the CapTel display screen," according to their webpage, <http://www.captel.com/911.php>. The text that the CapTel user reads is typed by a live 911 call-taker, not generated by the captioning system that CapTel normally uses. This reduces response time because the spoken message of the 911 call-taker does not go through CapTel's captioning system.



According to CaptionCall Customer Service, CaptionCall telephones do not change to a VCO mode when placing a call to 911 services. The 911 call-taker's message goes through the CaptionCall captioning system and appears on the CaptionCall user's screen as text.



With either captioned phone, the 911 call-taker will be able to hear your voice and you are encouraged to speak directly into the handset as you would with any other captioned call. 911 call-takers will ask for your name, verify the address you are calling from and ask for a brief explanation of your problem.



What happens when you call 911 with a video phone?

When you install your videophone into your home or office, you are required to input your location. This is called your Registered Location. This is an important and possibly life-saving step. When a person dials 911 using a videophone, the information that you input for your Registered Location will be automatically sent to the 911 dispatcher's computer screen. If you are not sure if your Registered Location is correct, be sure to contact the customer service department of your default VRS provider.

The 911 operator will ask a few questions when they receive your emergency call. They will want to know who you are, where you are at and the kind of emergency you have so that they can send the right kind of help to you.

What about texting to 911?

The ability to send a text message to 911 from your mobile phone or handheld device is not available today, but may become available within a few years. For example, AT&T, Verizon, Sprint and T-Mobile have all agreed to focus efforts and make text-to-911 available by May 15, 2014. If you attempt to text 911, you should receive a "bounce-back" message informing you that the text did not arrive at the 911 call center.



The Federal Communications Commission has three facts that you need to know about text-to-911

- In an emergency, always make a voice call to 911 if possible
- In most cases, you cannot today reach 911 by sending a text message
- In the future, you may be able to send text messages to 911-but you should still make a voice call if you can

What happens when you call using a TTY?

When a call center receives a call from a person using a TTY, the 911 call center's computer system automatically identifies the incoming call as a TTY signal and alerts the 911 operator to use a TTY to communicate. The location of the TTY user is also sent automatically to the 911 call center. The Lincoln/Lancaster 911 call center trains monthly on proper TTY language, procedures and etiquette.



Faith, Focus and Follow-through

By John C. Wyvill

John was born in Chicago and was in Illinois foster care system until he was adopted at an early age. After adoption John was diagnosed with sensorineural hearing loss in both ears. The doctor informed John's parents that his 95% hearing loss in both ears would significantly compromise his future educational advancements. The medical team also informed his parents that John, now age four, would be "lucky" to graduate from high school and that college would not be a realistic option. In an effort to provide comfort and support upon learning the news of the diagnosis some friends of the family assured John's parents the he could have successful career as a carpenter or plumber even with limited education.

At age four John was provided with a hearing aid in his right ear. At the time the thought was to introduce one hearing aid and then the second hearing aid would be assimilated as John made the adjustments and grew older. Over time John resisted efforts to introduce a hearing aid for his left ear. As the years passed, efforts to provide John with a second hearing aid for his left ear ceased.

In stark contrast to the doctor's predictions, John went on to become the first person to in his family to graduate college, receive a law degree, and become an attorney. Of note, in college, John graduated with distinction in his major, political science, and was named top graduate in his major.

John already has an impressive career as an attorney and in state government. Refusing to be defined or limited by his disability, he has set several milestones for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. For instance, he served as an assistant legal counsel to Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee and later became the first Deaf or Hard of Hearing Cabinet member in Arkansas when Governor Huckabee named him to serve as the director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education. He also served as the director of the state's vocational rehabilitation agency/hospital.



In other notable firsts for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, John served as president of his local county bar association, was president of the Council of State Administrators in Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), was named to the Nebraska Health and Human Services Cabinet, was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Education to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf National Advisory Group, and was appointed by President George Bush to the U.S. Access Board. John currently teaches law and ethics courses at Bryan College of Health Sciences and works for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Lincoln, Nebraska.

There were three important keys to success in John's journey. First, is Faith, that unwavering belief and confidence in yourself and your ability to be successful. Second, having the Focus by the development of a clear game plan to be successful in what you want to accomplish in life. Third, is the actual Follow-through of the plan that you developed. Faith, Focus and Follow-through are the three cornerstone that John has used throughout his life.

iCanConnect

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) is happy and excited to announce a special program to assist people who have both hearing and vision loss with their telecommunication needs. The program is called I Can Connect and is operated by NCDHH.

The National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) is a national program required by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA). That act has provided \$10 million annually throughout the United States for the distribution of telecommunications equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind. The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) in Lincoln has been selected by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to administer the NDBEDP for the State of Nebraska.

Communication is essential for staying healthy, holding a job, managing a household and participating in the community. Modern technology has vastly expanded the way most people communicate through voice, data and video services. But for people who have combined vision and hearing loss, special equipment may be necessary to make a phone call, send an e-mail or access the Internet.

How does this equipment distribution program work?

This program provides communications technology free of charge to low-income people of all ages who have combined vision and hearing loss. The FCC has set aside funding to support one program in each state, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These participating programs will distribute this communications equipment to qualified individuals and provide equipment installation, training and support to help recipients make the most of this technology.

What kind of equipment will be distributed?

This program provides a wide range of hardware, software and applications to suit the varying communications technology needs of people who have hearing and vision loss. Examples include products that are available to the general public and may be accessible to people with hearing and vision loss or products that are adaptable through the use of specialized equipment, such as screen enlargement software, screen readers or braille displays. For additional information on types of equipment offered, please visit www.icanconnect.org/equipment.



You can find more information regarding the iCanConnect program online at www.ncdhh.ne.gov or by calling your local NCDHH office.

An Interview with Verla Hamilton

by Beth Ellsworth

When did your parents find out you have a hearing loss? How did they find out?

My parents found out about my hearing loss from my kindergarten teacher. My teacher suspected it by the way I was not always responding in the classroom.

What was your family and school experience like?

I went to a country school for elementary school and there were two other students in my class. There were usually 15 students in all eight grades. After I got hearing aids, there was an adjustment, but I persevered. I would not be without the hearing aids today! I lipread all of the time. I “hear” with my eyes.

I went to “town” school for grades 7-12. That was a challenge, because of more students in the classes. My mom and dad were my advocates. I had to really pay attention when there was a discussion. I know I missed out on much of what was said if there was a class discussion.

In college, hearing the lectures in a large lecture hall was a challenge. I always seated myself in the front row.

I never had speech therapy, because those services were not offered in the late fifties and sixties in the rural areas of Nebraska. When I was a senior in college and about to go out to student teach, the head of the department called me in to his office and said I needed to get some speech therapy. If I did not, he said it would be questionable that I could go ahead and finish the teacher education program. He referred me to a therapist in the area who traveled to several schools up and down Highway 20 in northwest Nebraska. This wonderful therapist worked with me weekly before I went to student teach the second half of the first semester of my senior year. She did not charge anything! I was so grateful to her. When I returned to campus for the second semester, I continued to get speech therapy.

Did you have road blocks and how did you and your family deal with them?

Before I was allowed to student teach, I had to meet with the principal of the elementary school to which I was assigned. The first thing he did was to cover his lips. Of course, I rely on lipreading a lot. He said he thought I would do ok. I was close enough to him to hear what he was saying. If he had been any farther away, I probably would not have heard him. I used residual hearing and the use of the hearing aids to hear what he said.

What are some accomplishments that you are proud of?

I am so happy that I got to be an itinerant teacher of the hearing impaired during my teaching career. It gave me the opportunity to work with students individually. I am proud that i was able to do that job for 34 years.



Nebraska RID Chapter now accepting nominations for the Propp Family Legacy Scholarship

NeRID will award \$500 to candidates who will use the funds for:

- Registration fees for an approved training event
- Offsetting fees for room and board for approved events
- Offsetting travel fees for approved events
- RID exam fees (NIC, SC:L and future exams)

These funds will be awarded to a candidate as a reimbursement to events they have already or will participate in the future.



Qualifications:

Professional Membership: Applicant has been an neRID member in good standing for a minimum of two years.

License: Applicant has held a Nebraska license and worked in Nebraska for a minimum of one year.

Certification: Applicant has an interest in sitting for an RID exam and willingness to work in Nebraska.

References: Applicant is able to provide letters of recommendation from interpreting colleagues and members of the Deaf community.

Application Process: Please send references, Letter of Interest, information about the class or event you wish to use the funds for or proof of participation (if you have already attended the event) to neridscholarships@gmail.com.



Interpreter License (Continued from page 3)

As a reminder, these forms are due before June 30, 2013. If you fail to renew by June 30, 2013, you will have thirty days to pay an additional \$25 late fee. After 30 days, the license is revoked and an additional \$75 reinstatement fee applies. Please remit all paperwork to :

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 Attn: Licensing
 4600 Valley Road, suite 420
 Lincoln, NE 68510

We are encouraging all sign language interpreters to be aware of the renewal date. Every licensed interpreter is a vital resource to the Deaf community and service providers of Nebraska. If you have any questions about the license expiration, fees or any other issues related to licensing, feel free to contact us here at NCDHH at ben.sparks@nebraska.gov or traci.cooney@nebraska.gov or you can reach them, respectively, at 471-3581 and 471-3593.

VRI (Continued from page 13)

the Deaf (RID), and/or the appropriate federal agencies. Additionally, NCDHH Field Representatives in the Lincoln, Omaha and North Platte office can provide guidance, advocacy service, and referrals regarding federal and state statutes and regulations highlighted in this article.

NCDHH has a list of VRI service providers that provide Nebraska licensed interpreters to meet the state statute where needed; as well as contact information for certified and/or licensed onsite interpreting services when NCDHH's Statewide Interpreter Referral Agency contact is not in operation during the evenings, weekends and Holidays.

Current listed VRI providers are:

Deaf Services Unlimited; (800) 930-2580, www.deafservicesunlimited.com

Virtual VRI; (866) 440-9140 Ext. 101, www.virtualvri.com

One Interpreting; (877) 469-8377, www.oneinterpreting.com

For additional information: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), www.ada.gov; Federal Communications Commission (FCC), www.fcc.gov; Nebraska interpreter certification and/or licensure procedures and remote/ onsite interpreting services contacts, www.ncdhh.ne.gov.



Loop Systems (Continued from page 12)

Secondly, without the telecoil, it is necessary to check out a headset to benefit/utilize the loop. Most of the time some form of identification is required to ensure that the headset is returned. The headphones are frequently not used because of this added responsibility.

Below is a list of different facilities that have been “looped” in Nebraska:

Eastridge Presbyterian Church 1135 Eastridge Dr. Lincoln NE 68510 402-488-7844

T D Ameritrade Park 1200 Mike Fahey St. Omaha NE 68102 402-546-1800

St. Pius X Catholic Church 6905 Blondo Street Omaha NE 68104 402-558-8446

St. Joseph Catholic Church 102 S. 9th Street Springfield NE 402-253-2949

Downtown Omaha Public Library- has 6 counter loops for use at the checkout and information desks

Dundee Presbyterian Church 5312 Underwood Avenue Omaha NE 68132 402-558-6449

There are many resources on loop systems and general information about hearing loss. The National Hearing Loss Association of America has a wealth of information! Hearing Access Solutions LLC is a resource for more information on loop systems as well.

Not sure what is available? Check out our website or contact the Field Representative in your area. We look forward to hearing from you!



47th Biennial Nebraska Association of the Deaf Conference

June 6-9, 2013

Regency Lodge; 909 South 107th, Omaha, Nebraska

“Gateway to Collaborative Partnership”



Conference Flyer, Registration and Schedule can be found at

www.nead1902.org



Missouri Teen Institute 2013

Teen Institute (TI) is a 7-day training camp designed to teach Deaf and Hard of Hearing teens to be education and prevention advocates among their peers. Recognizing that teens influence their peers, the curriculum focuses on drug and alcohol abuse prevention, HIV/AIDS awareness, and other issues critical to teenagers.

For more information online:

www.deaflead.com/teen-institute.html

NCDHH Support Groups

Gothenburg

Meets the second Tuesday of each month at
1:30 pm
Stone Hearth Estates, 110 20th Street

Kearney

Meets the third Tuesday of each month at
2:00 pm
Northridge Senior Living Community
5410 17th Avenue

North Platte

Meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at
1:00 pm
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
5th & Willow Streets

Omaha

Meets the last Friday of each month at
10:30 am
Dora Bingel Senior Center
923 N. 38th Street

Scottsbluff

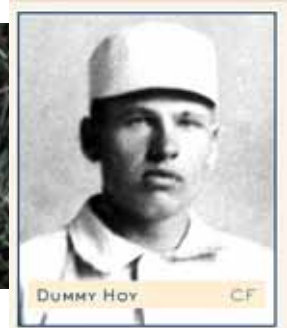
Meets the first Tuesday of each month at
2:00 pm
Panhandle Independent Living Services
510 Broadway

The Nebraska School for the Deaf Alumni Association

invites you to join a Baseball Fever event.
June 22, 2013 1:00pm-4:00pm
Boys Town National Research Hospital
BTNRH Auditorium, 2nd floor
555 North 30th Street, Omaha
\$5 for movie, drinks, snacks and fun!

Learn about baseball history
Learn the famous song "Take Me Out To the Ball
Game"
Watch 'I See the Crowd Roar': the Story of William
"Dummy" Hoy
Learn the History of the NSD Baseball Team

Contact NSDAA President Amy Willman for more
information at awillman2@unl.edu



Nebraska's Annual Deaf-Blind Summer Institute

July 22-26, 2013

Literacy Blast!

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, East Campus



Come and attend workshops entitled

"All Children Can Read-Let Us Show You How! Literact Instruction for Learners with Multiple Disabilities,
including Deaf-Blindness"

"Sensory Processing: Behavior, Memory, Language and Learning, Introduction to the
READY APPROACH"

"Let's Create Some Tools" & "Updates on DB Project"

For more information and the Registration Form, please visit the NCDHH online Newsroom at
www.ncdhh.ne.gov/newsroom.html
Or call (800) 545-6244.

RESOURCES FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING NEBRASKANS WORKSHOP



Saturday, September 28, 2013
 9:00am - 4:00pm
 Omaha Association of the Deaf
 4050 Hillside Ave., Omaha, NE



No cost - Lunch is provided

Topics include:

Consumer Fraud & How to Protect Yourself; Nebraska Department of Justice

Advocating for Yourself; Mary Hughes, Deaf Advocate

Improving your Financial Awareness; Nebraska Department on Economic Education, UNL



Summer Programs 2013 offers a number of exciting, empowering, and dynamic programs for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing high school teenagers. Designed for high school youth up to age 18, these programs provide stimulating summer experiential and learning opportunities that blend excitement, education, and enjoyment in a bilingual environment rich in cultural diversity—and located just minutes away from historic Washington, DC! All camps are held at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC.

Immerse into ASL!

Have you always wanted to learn sign? Do you already know sign language but want to learn more and have the opportunity to interact with deaf kids your age

**Young Scholars Program:
 Law and Justice**

Interested in law? Can you see yourself as a lawyer holding court during a major trial? Then come to Gallaudet for the summer and join us for our new Young Scholars Program

Discover your Future

Do you want the opportunity to discover your future possibilities while grabbing the opportunity to see Gallaudet and vibrant Washington, D.C.

**Young Scholars Program:
 Exploring the Sciences**

Got science on the brain? Do you like chemistry? Marine biology? Underwater robotics? Then join us this summer for our new Young Scholars Program

www.gallaudet.edu/summer_programs.html



**Nebraska
Commission
for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing**

4600 Valley Road, Suite 420, Lincoln, NE 68510-4844

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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 neces-
sarily the views of NCDHH.
The NCDHH newsletter is pub-
lished four times annually.

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North Platte Office

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Room 207
North Platte, NE
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