

Dave Heineman
Governor

Mr. Steven Manning
Chairperson

John C. Wyvill
Executive Director

The Communicator

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Spring 2014

A newsletter surveying health, government and issues affecting Nebraskans.

Nebraska State Legislature Receives Advocacy Award



The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was proud to be in attendance of this special presentation. Nebraska Association for the Deaf (NeAD) recognized the Nebraska State Legislature today with the Nebraska Award for Advocacy. The award is given in recognition of the efforts to provide free and equal access to services and communication. The award was presented by NeAD President,

Jonathan Scherling (right), and accepted by Senator Krist on behalf of all the senators.

This year, the Legislature approved closed captioning of the legislative sessions that are televised by Nebraska Education Television (NET). The addition of closed captioning allows people who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing to participate in the political world without barriers.

NCDHH in the News

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Executive Director, John Wyvill, recently appeared on Channel 8 Eyewitness News Midday show with Anchor Erika Summers to talk about Hearing Aid Banks.

The **Nebraska Lions Hearing Aid Bank** and **Nebraska Sertoma Hearing Aid Bank** both accept donations of hearing aids in any condition, style or age.

For more information on Hearing Aid Banks visit our web page at:

www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov



Jonathan Scherling Receives Nebraska Admiral Award



Jonathan Scherling, Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) President, was given Nebraska's highest honorary title and award certificate, Nebraska Admiralship, by Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director, John Wyvill. Approved by Governor Dave Heineman, the certificate recognizes outstanding and prominent citizenship of Nebraska and contributing to promote the Good Life in Nebraska.

"Jonathan is a tireless and visionary leader who is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Nebraskans. Jonathan was nominated because he is making a positive difference in the lives of the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing in this state in his leadership of NeAD. It is an honor and a privilege to work with Jonathan in our shared dream which is captured on our state flag, "equality before the law". We have come a long way, but we have so much work to do before we rest." –NCDHH Executive Director John Wyvill

Notes from the Executive Director

By: John Wyvill



Some exciting things are happening at the Capitol this legislative session as NCDHH works to move the ball down the field in carrying out our agency mission to promote and advocate for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing. Some of the highlights, which you will find in more detail in this newsletter, are: Senator Ken Haar introduced LR 517 requesting an interim study asking us to provide a report with recommendations on the interpreter shortage in Nebraska. Also, Senator Coash introduced

LR 574 requesting an interim study to explore the need for fully integrated residential services for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. And lastly, the Unicameral provided close captioning of legislative debates for the first time in history.

We also made some exciting changes to our newsletter based on the comments and feedback you have provided us. I hope you like the new changes and would welcome your suggestions and story ideas to enhance future newsletters.

I look forward to working with each of you in 2014 to promote and advocate for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing.



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For Immediate Release:

March 25, 2014

Senator Requests Agency for Report on Ways to Address Interpreter Shortages in Nebraska

“I would like to thank Senator Haar for introducing an Interim Study on an issue that is so critically important to the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing communities,” Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Executive Director, John Wyvill, said.

The Interim Study is authorized by Senator Ken Haar with the intention to resolve and study ways to improve the availability of qualified and licensed sign language interpreting professionals. This study will impact not only Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing, but also service providers they work with. NCDHH has been asked by Senator Haar to lead this study and proceed.

The goal is to identify areas of concern, conduct necessary research, and explore various ways to address quality and availability issues. In doing so, the study should examine why there is a shortage of qualified, licensed interpreters in the State of Nebraska; examine complaints and concerns from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community about the proficiency and competency of interpreters in both educational settings and community settings; find opportunities to share and address competency and proficiency issues of sign language interpreters among concerned stakeholders; and include any other issues that the study committee deems relevant.

“This study is of high priority for Chairman Steven Manning and the rest of the NCDHH Board,” Wyvill said.

It is of utmost importance to everyone at the Commission to have cooperation and communication with stakeholders such as the Nebraska educational community, American Sign Language interpreters, and health care providers with commitment to providing the best qualified interpreters and ensure access.

Through coordination with the study committee, NCDHH will work with interested stakeholders as well as the community to find the problems as well as effective solutions for quality and availability of interpreter services. NCDHH will work to provide findings and recommendations to the Legislature in the fall.

The mission of NCDHH 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.



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For Immediate Release:

April 14, 2014

Senator Requests Interim Study to Explore Need for Fully Integrated Residential Services

The Legislative Resolution introduced by Senator Colby Coash, LR 574, is requesting an Interim Study to improve residential services for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Nebraska. The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) has identified unmet needs in residential care, mental health, developmental disabilities and aging.

“I want to thank Senator Coash for his desire to improve the lives of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Nebraska,” NCDHH Executive Director, John Wyvill.

Communication plays a key role in knowing and understanding the expressive needs of this population, which is critical in order to effectively comprehend each individual’s wants and needs. An environment where communication is not effective can cause days filled with feelings of isolation and misunderstandings and confusion with staff.

“Living in a residential facility is a challenge in the best of circumstances, but for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing the isolation can be overwhelming. This Interim Study is a step forward in Nebraska toward making a difference,” Wyvill said.

The study committee shall explore the need for fully integrated residential services for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing including the need for group homes for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental illness and aging. This committee will consult with NCDHH, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, assisted living associations, developmentally disabled providers, the Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Nebraska health Care Association in carrying out the needs and resolutions for this study.

NCDHH “Office For The Week” In Scottsbluff, Nebraska

NCDHH will be visiting Scottsbluff, Nebraska the week of June 11th as an “Office For The Week.” Many activities will be planned throughout the week and the NCDHH staff wants to meet you, hear your stories and answer any questions you have! For more information and detail for activities planned, please go to our web site at www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov

- **Wednesday, June 11**

- **Hearing Loss Support Group**

- 1:00 p.m. Panhandle Independent Living Services, 1455 11th St., Gering, NE
- Come out and meet your Field Representative for your area!

- **Thursday, June 12**

- **Scottsbluff Senior Center**

- 11:00 a.m. Scottsbluff Senior Center, 1502 21st Avenue, Scottsbluff, NE
- Come learn about all of the services NCDHH has to offer!

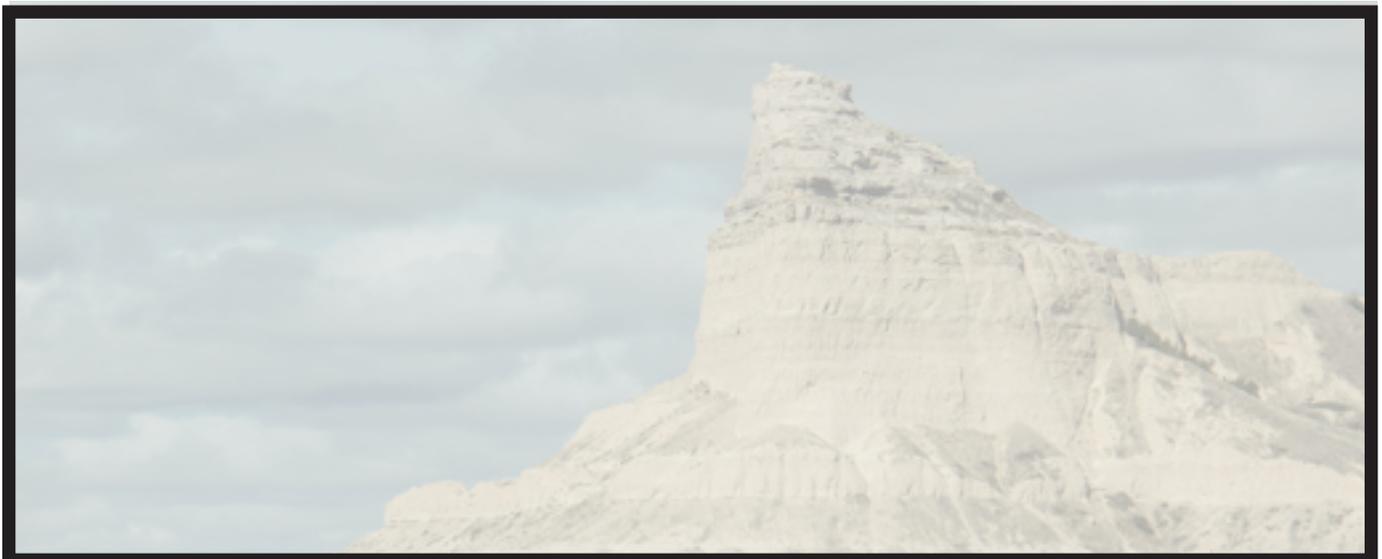
- **Town Hall Meeting**

- 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Educational Service Unit #13, 4215 Avenue I, Conference Rm C, Scottsbluff, NE
- Come meet our Board and share your ideas on expanding our services in your area.

- **Friday, June 13**

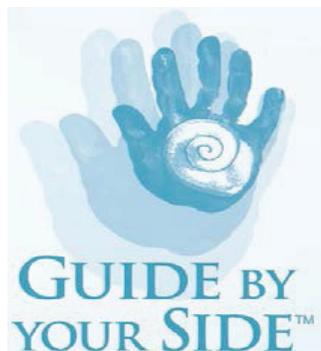
- **NCDHH Board Meeting**

- 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Educational Services Unit #13, 4215 Avenue I, Conference Rm C, Scottsbluff, NE
- We welcome you to come and meet NCDHH staff members as well as the Board of Commissioners



Nebraska Hands & Voices now offer Guide by Your Side Program

by: Colleen Richart, GBYS Program Coordinator



Nebraska Hands & Voices, a parent-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing without a bias towards communication modes or methodologies, is pleased to report that it was recently approved to offer a Guide By Your Side (GBYS) program in Nebraska. The GBYS program matches parents of children who are newly identified as deaf or hard of hearing with trained and experienced Parent Guides, who can provide timely support and guidance to new parents.

I am honored to have this opportunity to be a Program Coordinator for the GBYS Program. I am a mother of two children, ages 6 and 5. I have been a stay at home mother for over 5 years. My older child was born deaf and I was seeking other parents of deaf and hard of hearing children for guidance along the way. I also wanted to help other families that need the support from people who have a child that is deaf or hard of hearing. On top of that, I am hard of hearing myself, so I can also give parents some insights into what it is like to have a hearing loss.

We currently have 6 trained Parent Guides that will support families state-wide: Katie Holewinski, Shelli Janning, Stacy Luther, Leslie McCaslin, Debb Niles, and Jill Selvey. The Parent Guides are parents of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind who have received special training that prepares them to function in this important capacity. Parent Guides are able to bring their direct experiences, specialized knowledge and personal compassion to their role while making the family's needs their prime agenda.

Several services we can provide under the GBYS program are: the timely emotional support at the time of screening and/or confirmation of hearing loss; direct parent/peer support; networking; information and resource sharing specific to hearing loss, including sights on navigating the systems from a parent's perspective; and many others. This service is FREE for the families. If a family wishes to be referred, they may contact me at GBYS@handsandvoicesne.org. Family referrals can also be made through the family's audiologist, doctor, teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing, early interventionist or regional coordinator. A family should simply let the service provider know that the family is interested, and the service provider can get the family in touch with us.

Our long-term goal with the GBYS program is to bring families together to let them know they are not alone in this process. We are continuing to increase awareness of the GBYS program through training and collaboration with multiple agencies and service providers. We would also like to add Deaf/Hard of Hearing Guides to the program, who can help parents by providing a personal perspective on what it means to be deaf or hard of hearing.

As with all Nebraska Hands & Voices programs, the GBYS program provides unbiased resources/information about the communication and education choices available to parents so they can make an informed decision to fit in the needs of their child. Our motto with Nebraska Hands & Voices is "What Works for Your Child is What Makes the Choice Right." We know that all of our children deserve to maximize their own individual potential, and we strive to give parents the tools they need to make informed choices in the best interest of their children.

BOSS OF THE MONTH

Executive Director, John C. Wyvill, established the recognition program “Boss of the Month” in an effort to highlight NCDHH stakeholders who make a difference in the lives and communities around them. Each Month, Mr. Wyvill and NCDHH staff will select a recipient from a list of nominations made by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities

If you know of someone deserving recognition, please contact John Wyvill at john.wyvill@nebraska.gov

January 2014



Ms. Frances Beurivage is a very active member of the sign language interpreting field. She has worked in K-12, post-secondary and freelance interpreting environments. Currently, Ms. Beurivage works with the Boys Town National Hospital, evaluation the skills of interpreters working in K-12 classrooms.

February 2014

Dr. Frank Turk has long been an influential Figure in the deaf community. He is well known as the “Father of Deaf Youth of America” because he founded two successful camps: Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) and the National Leadership and Literacy Camp (NLLC). Dr. Turk emphasized the importance of intergenerational leadership and believes in having leaders of all ages engaged in the community by working collaboratively to obtain greater resources.



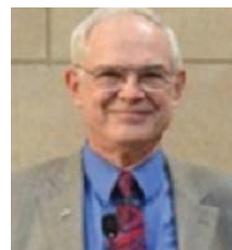
March 2014



Dr. Stacie Ray's commitment to ensuring individuals accessibility to services led her to establish the Nebraska Children's Hearing Aid Bank and HearU Nebraska. An Assistant Professor of Practice in Audiology at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Dr. Ray is also a committee member of the Nebraska Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program, a member of the Nebraska Speech-Language and Hearing Association and serves as manager of the Nebraska Sertoma Hearing Aid Bank and the Lions Hearing Aid Bank.

April 2014

Senator Ken Haar has introduced Legislative Resolution 517 to study ways to improve the quality and availability of interpreter services for Nebraskans who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. With cooperation and work with a study committee and NCDHH stakeholders, Sen. Haar has requested an interim study to identify the areas of concern, conduct necessary research, and explore various ways to address quality and availability issues. Senator Haar's legislative experience and expertise has made him a wonderful advocate for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing community and is most deserving of this award.



NCDHH Seeking Members for Full Commission Board

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH MEMBERS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) is seeking individuals that are interested in serving on the Board. Our legislation requires the commission members shall include three deaf persons; three hard of hearing persons and three persons who have an interest in and knowledge of deafness and hearing loss issues. A majority of the commission members who are deaf or hard of hearing shall be able to express themselves through sign language. Effective January, 2014, there is one vacancy for a deaf representative.

Anyone interested in becoming a Full Commission Member needs to submit an application to the Governor's Board and Commission Office, attention Ms. Kathleen Dolezal, PO Box 94848, Lincoln, NE 68509-4848. Contact Ms. Dolezal at (402) 471-1971 (voice) or (402) 471-2414 (tty) or apply online at http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/bc/board_comm.html

Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Service by: Brenda Chappell, Field Representative



Melinda Brown and Susan Trumble recruited a group of women in Nebraska and western Iowa. With the help and guidance from Marilyn Smith, the founder of Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS), and Keri Darling, director and trainer of Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Services (DVAS), founded Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Service (HDAAS) in 2009. With many hours in training, they developed a bond that would last a lifetime and a desire to help those who have experienced abuse.

HDAAS' mission is to empower individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing through awareness, education, prevention and advocacy to stop domestic and sexual violence and to enhance their lives and self-esteem. Their vision is to sow seeds of hope to enrich growth and strength in our heartland community. They chose the term "seeds" because they live in the land where all things grow. A life begins with a seed; it needs a lot of love, care and nurturing. From there it will grow into a beautiful plant. They have a logo showing a hand putting a seed in other hand. They want to give people hope, help them learn to grow and create a better life for themselves. Thus their tagline is "Seeds of Hope."

The members of HDAAS are very eager to help all they can to ensure safety of individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing from any abuse. Ann Thompson, Brenda Chappell, and Susan Trumble are advocates trained by Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell from the Women's Center for Advancement in Omaha. The board of HDAAS hopes to raise enough funds to build a shelter and programs to help deaf and hard of hearing victims. They rolled their sleeves to create activities, like the annual chili contest, which became a trademark. They also provided stuffed potatoes, forum, Village Inn pie cards, and more. They continue to brainstorm more activities to promote knowledge and awareness of this organization.

You can learn more about HDAAS and click "like" on their Facebook page.

NCDHH Board Member: Gina Frerichs

“15 Things About Me”

by: Gina Frerichs



1) I was born in Burke, South Dakota.

2) My mom and I are closer in age than my sister and I. (My mom and I are 18 years apart, while my sister and I are 20 years apart).

3) I am terrified of pheasants and feathers....traumatized as a child.

4) I joined the U.S. Army Reserves when I was a senior in high school.

5) In February 2004, I was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army Reserves.

6) I have a service connected disability for my hearing loss and as of May 2012, have worn hearing aids in both ears. I don't consider my hearing loss a disability, rather an opportunity to educate others and advocate for others who are hard of hearing or deaf. My hearing loss is related to range fire exposure...the one size fits all hearing protection didn't work for me.

7) I am pretty good at lip reading, but would like to learn sign language.

8) My husband, Eric, and I will be celebrating our 10th wedding anniversary in July.

9) We have 3 daughters: Lauren Marie is 10, Reagan Leigh is 8, and Adelyn (Addie) Joy is 4.

10) Channing Tatum is one of my favorite actors, I love Disney World---plan on going back for another family vacation sometime. I enjoy gymnastics and dancing.

11) I have been teaching/coaching gymnastics since 1998 at Heartland Gymnastics in Columbus, NE. All 3 of my daughters are currently active with gymnastics, and my 2 oldest daughters are competition gymnasts. I am one of the team/competition coaches, so I get to spend a lot of time with my daughters in the gym. Would eventually like to have more children....a son would be nice :)

12) I was a gymnast on the 1993 and 1994 South Dakota State Gymnastics Team. (Vermillion High School---Class A back to back state champions.) Beam is my favorite event! I moved to Columbus my junior year of high school.

13) I also am an Independent Contractor for DDC, perform DNA testing bimonthly at local courthouse.

14) I prefer to DVR TV shows to fast forward through commercials :)

15) I have a sweet tooth....Jelly Belly jelly beans are one of my favorites.

NCDHH Board Member: John Hogue

“13 Things About Me”

by: John Hogue



1) Married to Veronica, my bride of 21 years

2) We have three great boys. Daniel, a sophomore at Doane College in Crete, NE, and Isaac, a freshman in high school and Nethanel, a 5th grader.

3) I am an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ for 20 years, this year.

4) Ordained in Disciples of Christ two years ago.

5) I serve on Kamp Kaleo Board in Burwell, NE for fundraising.

6) Love Mexican food- authentic-not Americanized!

7)I have accomplished several mission trips over the years- Puerto Rico, Apostle Islands WI, Appalachia to name a few.

8) Mentor and planner for International Affairs Seminar for young people to NYC and Washington D.C. A trip that is planned every two years and just returned from this trip with 9 students! Lots of fun and stories.

9) I want to travel to Europe with my wife, Veronica.

10) What makes me cringe is high pitched voices.

11) I love Brussels sprouts.

12) The craziest thing I have done is kayaked into a tunnel with rock looking into my face while on my back-not a pleasant experience. But I did it!

13) I climbed into a bell tower and stayed until we collected \$1,000 of food.

League of Human Dignity

by: Jim Anderson, League of Human Dignity Public Information Specialist



The League of Human Dignity is a not-for-profit organization that helps people with disabilities in Nebraska and Southwest Iowa live independently.

From its start, the League has been a part of the independent living movement, which rose out of the civil rights struggles of the 1960s.

The Independent Living movement is based on the premise that people with even the most severe disabilities have the same civil rights as other Americans, including the right to choose where they live, work, play and to participate as fully as they want in their communities.

The League was founded in 1971 by a small group of people with disabilities in Lincoln, NE, to address barriers to their independence. The organization gradually expanded its consumer services and established its Lincoln Center for Independent Living in 1981. As the need arose, additional centers for Independent Living were established in Norfolk in 1982, Omaha in 1988 and Council Bluffs in 1995. Today, the League operates in all 93 Nebraska counties through its centers in Lincoln, Omaha and Norfolk; Medicaid Waiver Offices in Scottsbluff, North Platte and Kearney; and in Southwest Iowa through its center in Council Bluffs. A majority of the League's board of directors and staff still are people with disabilities.

League services are meant to help consumers remain independent, in their own homes, in their community rather than relegated to institutions like nursing homes. Each consumer, with assistance from League staff, develops his or her own plan for achieving and maintaining independence. These services include, but are not limited to:

Advocacy, Barrier Removal Grants, disability awareness training, equipment loan & rental, financial benefits coordination, housing referral, independent living skills training, information & referral, mobility & medical equipment sales & service through Mobility Options, a League subsidiary, nursing home transition, peer counseling & support and personal assistant management training.

The League also contracts with the State of Nebraska to provide Medicaid Waiver Services Coordination, which allows eligible residents to receive services in their homes that they need to live more independently.

League funding comes from a variety of local, state and federal grant sources, service fees and charitable donations.

NCDHH Hires Field Representative Eileen Dakan

by: Eileen Dakan, Field Representative



Thank you for welcoming me to the NCDHH team! I am excited to serve the Tri-City area of Kearney, Hastings, and Grand Island! I am looking forward to meeting you and hearing your stories.

Allow me to introduce myself. I was born in Grand Island, and raised in Kearney. My hearing loss began after having spinal meningitis at age 2. My parents would find me sitting in front of the TV watching ‘Sesame Street’ with the volume turned up. I began to wear a hearing aid at age 4 and was “mainstreamed” into regular classrooms, but needed to sit near the teacher to lip read and hear during class.

I still remember the sting of bullying and isolation I experienced as a child and teen. I can still recall the frustration of trying to wear a second hearing aid in junior high, which only made things “noisier” and not “clearer.” And it made me feel even more self-conscious. I refused to wear both, so I only wore one hearing aid. I became dependent on my left ear, the clear ear, with the hearing aid.

As I grew older, my hearing continued to diminish. In my early 20’s, my husband realized that I couldn’t hear out of my right ear and it was confirmed later that week. (Oh how I wished I would have kept trying the second hearing aid in junior high). I thought I would be okay with one hearing aid. When I was almost run over in a parking lot because I didn’t hear a car approaching, my husband insisted that I try a Bi-Cros hearing aid recommended by my audiologist, which treats unilateral hearing loss. It really improved my quality of life, and gives me more “surround sound” like hearing.

Going to Doane College was so exciting for me – using the FM system in my classes opened my world and allowed me to become a better student. I could take notes and not have to focus so hard on lip-reading. I graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Human Services and went onto UNL for a Master’s degree in Sociology with an emphasis on research methods and family studies.

After graduate school, we came home to Kearney so I could work for Region 3 Behavioral Health Services. I’ve also worked as an adjunct instructor of sociology at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Central Community College.

My husband and I have two active elementary age children. We’ve had to make changes in our communication to ensure that “mom” knows what it going on. For example, when they were babies, I had a baby monitor that would shake and light up when they cried. My children have learned to “tap” on my shoulder if they need my attention or ensure they are facing me when they want to talk. We try and take turns talking around the dinner table. My children are teaching me sign language.

I know that my hearing loss journey is not the same as yours. I am eager to hear your stories and look forward to learning how I can best assist you. Please be in touch with me at 308-627-4509 or by email:

eileen.dakan@nebraska.gov

Accessible Smoke Alarms Survey

by: Beth Ellsworth, Field Representative II

Do you lay awake at night because you are worried that you won't hear your smoke alarm if it goes off? I have and it is not healthy!

To reach out to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, the Omaha Fire Department and Mayor Stothert's office is working to provide smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and living in Omaha, Millard and Elkhorn.

The first step is to determine how many detectors are needed. To gather the necessary information, a survey has been created.

The survey is very comprehensive in gathering information; how many floors or levels are in the residence, the total number of people living in the house and if they are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

In order to receive smoke detector, follow the steps below.

- Go to website, <http://www.omaha-fire.org/> Look for and click on "Deaf and Hard of Hearing Smoke Detectors – NEEDS SURVEY."
- At end of the survey, there is a box labeled "Additional Information." Type in the specific fire alarm you need; for an example, strobe or vibration or both.
- When the survey is complete, click "Submit."
- **You're done!**



Please understand this is a survey. The Omaha Fire Department is gathering information about Deaf and Hard of Hearing residents so they can figure how many they need to receive funds.

Omaha Fire and Rescue Contact information: 402-444-3560

Beth at 402-595-2774 beth.ellsworth@nebraska.gov

Brenda at 402-682-7042 Brenda.chappell@nebraska.gov

LR517 Receives Support from Retired Staff



Retired NCDHH employee, Norman Weverka stopped by the Lincoln office earlier this month to pledge his support of the Interim Study introduced by Senator Haar on ways to address and improve the licensed and qualified interpreter shortage in Nebraska.

From all the staff at NCDHH, we thank you for your support and willingness to help participate in this important issue in Nebraska!

Have You Heard about Smart 911?

by Heather Pucket, Field Representative

Smart911, a relatively new emergency service and used in only one town in the state of Nebraska, offers the user the ability to create a profile for their family that provides personal and medical information to emergency responders when 911 is dialed. Smart911 does not only mean peace of mind in your own home town, the service is currently available in over 26 states across the United States, which allows local dispatchers the ability to access your family's information and ensure a timely and accurate response to your emergency.



I took the opportunity to visit my local 911 center here in North Platte to learn more about this up and coming service. Mary Ann Agler, Clerk-Dispatcher Supervisor at the North Platte Police Department, states that North Platte's Smart911 covers all of Lincoln County and the town of Gothenburg.

"Unfortunately, only about 3% of the population is currently registered in our area. However, the North Platte Police Department continues to spread the word about this service through the news media, sending informational leaflets in the light and water bills and speaking at local churches and agencies such as the Area Agency on Aging," Agler said.



The advantage of this system is the vital information that is provided to the dispatcher when the call is received. Currently, at the time a 911 dispatcher receives your emergency call, they are provided with a telephone number and an address, if you call from a landline. But considering the fact that the majority of us now exclusively have cell phones, we are literally just a number.

Have You Heard about Smart 911? cont.

by Heather Pucket, Field Representative



“People have gone to cell phones. We don’t get good data. We only get a general area of their location, which is approximately a four mile radius,” she said. “However, if the individual has a Smart911 profile, no matter what household phone they call from, a plethora of information is immediately displayed on the 911 dispatcher’s screen including, but limited to what the user chooses to add to their profile.”

Options to add to an individual’s profile are:

Phone numbers associated with the household, family names, photos, family address and directions, emergency contacts, medications, allergies, disabilities or impairments, and more.

“This information allows us cut right through to the facts. And knowing what kind of situation we are walking into can help us better plan our response,” Agler said.

But how secure is my information? Who has access? Smart911 and Ms. Agler assured me that this information is 100% private and secure. The only time your private profile information can be accessed is when you personally enter your profile online or when you dial 911. No one has access to your profile at any other time. When you dial 911 in an emergency, the profile is opened for the dispatcher and emergency personal only. Once the call is complete, your profile is automatically closed and no further access is allowed.

And how is my information kept up-to-date? Smart911 is also set up with the ability to send the user an email every six months reminding them to review their profile and update their information.

If this is a service that you would like your community to consider, Ms. Agler recommends that you contact your local 911 provider to discuss the possibility of adding the security of Smart911 to your area.

Heather Pucket, Field Representative, North Platte
308-535-6600 or heather.pucket@nebraska.gov

Hearing Loss and Acceptance

by Beth Ellsworth, Field Representative II



Growing up with a hearing loss presented me and those close to me with unique challenges. I relied on lip-reading even after my parents found out I was hard of hearing and began wearing hearing aids.

Watching movies or television was different for me. I made up stories because I could not understand what was being said. When I wanted to know what the real story was about, I relied on my mom to tell me what was happening. One movie I watched practically every year was the Wizard of Oz. I loved it! With my hearing aids I could hear the music but not understand the lyrics. Every year I would pester my mom with “what did they say?” When the captioning box came out I don’t know who was more excited, my mom or me! And I found out for the first time what the real story was about. Sometimes my interpretations were better!

In my second year of college I was in a class about community awareness and advocacy. At the time there was a salesman that was going door to door selling vacuum cleaners and hearing aids (Imagine that!). My instructor suggested that I take on that project and advocate for hearing aid users. That was quite an experience. In one of the meetings I was explaining why selling vacuum cleaners door to door was acceptable but selling hearing aids was not. Over the next few meetings I was able to provide some awareness about hearing loss. I explained what it means to have a hearing loss and that each individual hearing loss is unique!

Looking back I realize I went through the grief process to finally accept my hearing loss. When I was in denial I pretended that I was fine and it was just that everyone mumbled. But that did not work and I became more and more isolated. Then I became angry! I screamed “It’s not fair!” I should not have to go through this! I was not a happy person to say the least. The theme for that time in my life was “Why me?” Then I went into bargaining. I told myself, if I just try harder I can be “normal”. When I was with others I faked it and pretended I was following conversation. I could hear but I did not understand what was being said. After trying to maintain this façade I wore out and I became very sad. And eventually I became depressed. “Why bother!” I thought, “It’s too much effort so I give up”. Finally I realized I needed help and met with my school counselor. I was defensive at first, but with her help and the support of others I gained acceptance.

Beth Ellsworth, Field Representative, Omaha

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“A Parent’s Guide to Hearing Loss”

by: Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist



The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) is proud to announce a program being produced by the Commission in conjunction with Nebraska Educational Television (NET) on “A Parent’s Guide to Hearing Loss”. The one-hour program will air on May 8th on the NET network.

The purpose of this program is to provide resources to parents who have children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Nebraska. The program will include information from a variety of professionals in the field including the diagnosis process, approaches and resources available, technology, support groups, causes and prevention in hearing loss with teens as well as resources and advocacy for ensuring effective communication for children who experience deafness or hearing loss and early newborn infant hearing screening.

Taping for this production will be completed on April 22nd followed by editing. Specific air times will be posted on the NCDHH web page, www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov once the times have been confirmed.



Dr. Stacie Ray being interviewed during production

“Improving Interpreting Services in the Mental Health Environments”



by: Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) will sponsor a workshop for advanced level interpreters on Improving Interpreting Services in Mental Health Environments on May 30, 2014 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm and May 31, 2014 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. The workshop will be held at the Immanuel Medical Center Conference Center in Omaha. Cost for the workshop is \$100. Co-sponsors for the workshop are Alegent Creighton Health, Neb. Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (NeRID), Lincoln Association of Sign Language Professionals (LASLP) and the Iowa State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ISRID). CEU’s will be provided.

Speakers for the workshop will be Steve Hamerdinger, Director of the Office of Deaf Services Alabama Department of Mental Health in Montgomery, Alabama and Brian McKenney, Region V Interpreter Coordinator for the Office of Deaf Services.

For further information about this workshop please contact Peggy Williams, NCDHH Mental Health Specialist at peggy.williams@nebraska.gov.”

Mental Health Advisory Committee

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's (NCDHH) Mental Health Advisory Committee was established pursuant to the terms of Legislative Bill 25, passed in 1995 to enhance comprehensive mental health and substance abuse services for deaf and hard of hearing Nebraskans. The terms of the voting membership, appointed by the NCDHH Board consists of three counselors and two human service professionals. The committee also consist of Technical Advisors representing various communities/services and serves on the committee in a non-voting capacity.

"NCDHH is very fortunate to have such a professional group of individuals serving on this committee making recommendations and providing the Mental Health Specialist and the Commission feedback on quality mental health and substance abuse services for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing." – Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist

Mental Health Advisory Committee Chair:

Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell

- The Chairperson's duties are to open the meeting, welcome everyone, begin introductions, keep the meeting moving and focused, calls for a vote, vote if there is a tie, and close the meeting.



Vicki grew up with three brothers and two sisters, all of whom are hearing; she was mainstreamed most of her life until she attended Nebraska School for the Deaf during her senior year and graduated in 1996. Her time spent there made Vicki realize she wanted to attend a Deaf college. From there she headed off to Washington, D.C. where she attended Gallaudet where she was inspired that the individuals who are deaf can accomplish anything once their mind is set.

After graduating from Gallaudet with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology, Vicki found the job hunt process very frustrating with the communication barrier she faced in the interview process. After much perseverance, Vicki landed a job with Vocational Rehabilitation in the Omaha office as an Employment Specialist with a role working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals to prepare them for jobs. Vicki sees the importance to keep advocating for those who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, specifically in the challenges faced in the job hunt.

Vicki has been a member of the Mental Health Advisory Committee for over five years and enjoys learning other counselors' roles and creating network connections. She has three children with her husband, who supports the Texas Longhorns. In response, Vicki says, GO HUSKERS!

Mental Health Advisory Committee cont.



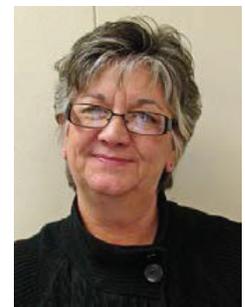
Jill Bird is a technical adviser for the Mental Health Advisory Committee. Originally from California, Jill graduated with degrees from the University of Oklahoma and Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Jill worked as a teacher of the deaf in both residential and public school settings before becoming a vocational rehabilitation counselor when she and her family moved to Lincoln. In 1999, Jill accepted a position as the Coordinator of the Southeast Nebraska Regional Program. Jill and her husband, Nick, have five children, one of whom is deaf.

New to the Mental Health Advisory Committee, Lisa Vogel has been a Licensed Mental Health Therapist and a Board Certified, Registered Art Therapist for 30 years, the last 19 of which have been in Nebraska and Iowa. Lisa became fluent in American Sign Language during a college internship where she worked directly with Deaf and Hard of Hearing incarcerated males, in Illinois. There, she developed an Art Therapy program, which was the first Art Therapy program in a prison in the United States. Lisa is married with two children who are currently attending college.



An Omaha native, Ann Thompson graduated from NSD, Gallaudet University, McDaniel College and University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Currently, Ann works at Kinghorn Gardens as a crew member.

Karen Potter-Maxwell has been a sign language interpreter since 1980 after graduating from Iowa Western Community College. In the past, Karen has worked full time in the educational and psychological setting while also earning her Bachelor's Degree in Education. Currently, Karen works in private practice. She has served as a Commissioner for Deaf Services Commission of Iowa and has been involved with Nebraska and Iowa Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf since being certified in the early 80s.



Mental Health Advisory Committee cont.



Jan Goracke has been working in the Community Services section of the Division of Behavioral Health for over two years, in the capacity of Network Specialist with the Network Operations Team. Her responsibilities include Division of Behavioral Health liaison with coverage state wide, specifically in Scottsbluff, North Platte and Kearney regions. She serves as the lead for Youth Services, to include the Division's statewide Professional partner Program and Transition Age Youth Professional Partner Program. Jan and husband, Jim, have a daughter and son-in-law who are currently residing in Gering.

Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell became involved with the Commission in 2006 after attending an OAD training/meeting about domestic violence. Yodogawa-Campbell attended college initially to be an Interpreter but switched careers. She has been able to use the education and training she received during that time to educate the hearing community on Deaf culture and bring awareness and accessibility to the domestic violence programs and shelters in Nebraska.



Diane Meyer is the administrative coordinator for the Metro Regional Program for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Diane works to provide professional development opportunities for parents and staff as well as educationally focused social-emotional activities for students.

Born and raised in McCook, Mandy Leamon has been a part of the Commission since 2001. Currently, Mandy works at Psychiatric Services of Fremont, one of several clinics through the Fremont Area Medical Center. She has been providing mental health and addiction therapeutic services for the past 12 years. Now residing in Omaha, Mandy has experience working with a variety of mental health disorders and clients from various demographic backgrounds



NCDHH Hires Public Information Officer

by: Kelsey McGerr



Hello! I am so excited to be on the NCDHH team as the Public Information Officer. I've only been on board for a couple months and it has already been an exciting, humbling and rewarding experience to learn so much about the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing community. I'm a sponge just trying to take it all in!

I was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska. I'm a Nebraskan for life – I don't ever want to leave this place! I love it. I went to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism.

From there I became the News Editor at Channel 8 Eyewitness News in Lincoln. The journalism world is fast-paced, chaotic at times and always changing. I love that there is always something new to uncover each day.

My goal at NCDHH is to bring my journalism experience and creativity to reach and update the community with news happening around Nebraska as well as the country, work with our social media sites such as the NCDHH Facebook page (go "Like" it!) and our web site. I will work with current network relationships as well as form new ones to make our outreach even bigger.

I have my hands full with the two boys in my life: a 15-month-old son named Elijah and my fiancé, Dalton, whom I will be marrying in August – there's never a dull moment and I love every second. When I'm not chasing those two around, you will catch me with friends! I'm so grateful for this opportunity at NCDHH and can't wait to see what the future has in store for this agency.

Social Media and Technology



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

**Like NCDHH on
Facebook!**



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

NCDHH Board Meeting

NCDHH invites you to attend our Board meetings. These meetings are free and open to the public. This is an opportunity to provide feedback, input and participate in NCDHH decision making. We look forward to seeing you! Agendas can be found online at www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov/boards.html



The Board of Commissioners met in Lincoln on Friday, March 14th for the quarterly board meeting. Some of the issues and topics discussed was the finalizing of our Annual Report, which can be found on our web site at www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov as well as changes to our Commissioner Handbook.

Mark Schultz, of Nebraska Vocational Rehab, sat in and gave a presentation offering all of the services and resources Nebraska VR has for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community.



Board Meeting Schedule

Full Commission Board:

June 13, 2014: Educational Service Unit #13
4215 Avenue I – Conference Rm C
Scottsbluff, NE

Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Review Board:

May 2, 2014: Lincoln Medical Education Partnership Building
4600 Valley Rd – Classroom 4A
Lincoln, NE

Mental Health Advisory Committee:

May 13, 2014: Lincoln Medical Education Partnership Building
4600 Valley Rd – Classroom 4A
Lincoln, NE

Vocational Rehab: How Can They Help?

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) recently sat down with Vocational Rehab (VR) Director, Mark Schultz, to discuss the services Nebraska VR provides to students and adults who experience substantial difficulties in participating in education or training, getting hired on a job and/or staying employed as a result of a mental, emotional, learning, sensory or physical impairment.

The informational video can be found on NCDHH's web site at: www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov



Mark Schultz, Director for VR (left) & Ben Sparks, NCDHH Interpreter/Program Asst



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Submit an Article Idea!

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

Please submit articles to:

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

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

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

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