

# MONTHLY COMMUNICATOR

February 2013

[www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/home/index.html](http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/home/index.html)

Vol. 34 No. 2

Chris Christie, Governor

Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

Jennifer Velez, Commissioner

David Alexander, Director

## Christie Administration Distributes Communications Technology to People with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss



**iCanConnect**  
The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program

Department of Human Services' (DHS) Commissioner Jennifer Velez announced that New Jersey residents who have combined loss of hearing and vision soon may be able to connect more effectively with family, friends and the larger community using tools offered through "iCanConnect/NJ." The program is a two-year federally-funded pilot project through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

"Communications technology that brings together people personally and professionally is vital, particularly for individuals with sight and hearing disabilities," said Commissioner Velez. "The range of equipment available allows people who are Deaf-Blind to explore innovative opportunities to connect with the broader community."

The program - administered by the FCC's National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program - will be managed by DHS' Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), in partnership with DHS' Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) and The College of New Jersey (TCNJ).

Equipment, such as Braille note takers, iPads, zoom text, and amplified telephones will be obtainable for certain individuals with combined vision and hearing loss.

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program was created by the FCC to ensure that people who are Deaf-Blind can remain safe and healthy, hold a job, manage a household and, contribute to the economy and the community. Grants of up to \$291,500 annually will fund "iCanConnect/NJ" and pay for the equipment and training.

"This program provides us with an extraordinary opportunity to offer technology that will help New Jersey's Deaf-Blind population reach their full potential and provide new avenues for personal and professional growth," said Vito DeSantis, Executive Director of the DHS' Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI). "CBVI is incredibly proud to collaborate with DDHH and TCNJ on this significant initiative."

Eligible applicants must have a combined loss of vision and hearing

as defined by the Helen Keller National Center Act and their income cannot exceed 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level - about \$44,680 for an individual or \$76,360 for a family of three.

For information about eligibility and how to apply for the program, contact Allen Reposh at (609)771-2575 or email [reposha@tcnj.edu](mailto:reposha@tcnj.edu). Information about the new equipment distribution program is available online at <http://njcsd.org/departments/i-can-connect-nj.html>.





## Director's Corner

By David Alexander, *Director, Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH)*

**F**or many people with hearing loss or speech disabilities, an ongoing safety concern is the inability to make a text-to-911 call from a mobile phone or handheld device. Text-to-911 refers to sending a text message (SMS) to a local 911 response center during an emergency situation. Today's 911 system is a voice-based service and is not designed to support text messages. However, the good news is that it will become increasingly available during 2013.

The FCC recently announced that the nation's four largest wireless carriers-- AT&T, Verizon, Sprint and T-Mobile-- have agreed to accelerate the availability of text-to-911 with major deployments expected in 2013 and a commitment to nationwide availability by May 15, 2014. FCC Chairman, Julius Genachowski stated that the agreement will accelerate progress and ensure that over 90% of the nation's wireless consumers, including people with hearing or speech disabilities will be able to access emergency services by sending a text message.

While the service is being phased-in, deployment won't be uniform, and consumers will need to be informed during the transition about whether text-to-911 is available in their local area. To educate consumers and prevent confusion, the FCC proposed that all wireless carriers send automated "bounce back" error messages to consumers attempting to text 911 in areas where the service isn't yet available. The error message would indicate that the text did not reach 911 and that the consumer should instead place a voice call to 911 if possible. The nation's four largest wireless carriers have agreed to provide these automatic "bounce back" messages across their networks by June 20, 2013.

The New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing applauds the recent FCC ruling. Text messaging has become a major mode of communication for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing or who have speech disabilities. As such, the 911 system must evolve to accept texting as well as, other current and future technologies. Additional Information, as well as, future announcements about text-to 911 is available from the FCC home page at <http://www.fcc.gov/text-to-911>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David C. Alexander".

### We Welcome Your Articles and Ads

The Monthly Communicator is published 11 times per year. Deadline for submissions for the March issue is February 1 and should be e-mailed to: [monthlycommunicator@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:monthlycommunicator@dhs.state.nj.us).

**The deadline for the Monthly Communicator is the first of the month for the next month.**

Kindly follow these guidelines for submissions:

- Should be less than two pages
- Plain font, such as NY Times #11 or similar
- Type flush left, no tabs
- No art imbedded within
- Send as Word attachment or an e-mail itself, no PDF
- Art, logos, photos may be sent as attached JPG
- Submissions are not normally repeated
- Content should be of interest to readers, events should be accessible to people with hearing loss, no direct selling products, but educational info about new technology acceptable
- Editor has discretion regarding editing, without final approval of submitter

### Monthly Communicator

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# Signing Santa

By Sharon Wendler

Several classes from the Lake Drive Program for Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Mountain Lakes were invited to the National Signing Santa Day at The Mall at Short Hills on December 6. Thirty of the program's younger students enjoyed their visit with Santa! Not just Santa... but a Signing Santa. Although some of the younger children showed Santa pictures of toys, what Santa really wanted was to see what the children had to say, using sign language! The children were thrilled. They finally got to ask Santa all those pressing questions about the reindeer, how does he get in a house with no chimney, and most important was he really Deaf or just could sign... Santa was indeed Deaf just like them!



The Mall at Short Hills' management arranged the entire event including a delicious lunch for the children at Au Bon Pain followed by an interactive magic show, The Circus

Sisters, who performed the entire show in American Sign Language. Each child received a gift bag from Santa that included the movie "Ice Age 4." This is the first time that a Blu-Ray release has integrated sign language interpretation into the movie using picture-in-picture.

Signing Santa is a fully sponsored event organized by the mall's corporate headquarters. We are thankful to the organizers for inviting us to this most successful event spotlighting our Deaf community. We look forward to seeing Santa again in 2013.



## Deaf/Blind League of NJ Holiday Luncheon

**DBL NJ** celebrated another year with the holiday party at Old Man Rafferty's in New Brunswick.

Friends and family joined members to close yet another successful year for the organization. Our annual party was a big hit! We enjoyed the beautiful decorations, delicious food and, of course, one another's company. More than 50 people gathered together to wish each other holiday greetings and a happy, healthy New Year! Thanks again to DBL NJ's recreation committee for putting together such a wonderful party.

To become a member of the Deaf/Blind League of New Jersey or for more information on our organization, please visit [www.dblnj.org](http://www.dblnj.org). Much luck and happiness in 2013.

- DBL NJ

## Dear NJ Relay



*My sister is looking for a way to use the phone. She can hear perfectly, but cannot speak very well as a result of a car accident. Is there a way she can communicate with people over the phone? We want to talk with her, not just talk to her.*

*Thanks,  
Little Brother*

Dear Little Brother,

Hearing Carry-Over (HCO) may be the perfect solution for your sister. HCO allows a person who has a speech disability to listen to a standard telephone user. The HCO user types his/her conversation to the relay operator. The operator then reads aloud the typed conversation to the standard telephone user. The HCO service is provided at no charge to either party, although long distance charges may apply. To use the HCO service, a TTY with a telephone headset and a standard phone with access to a telephone line are needed. For more information or specific instructions on using HCO services, check [www.njrelay.com/hco](http://www.njrelay.com/hco) or call NJ Relay Customer Service at (800) 676-3777.

Warm Regards,  
NJ Relay



# Veterans Faced with Hearing Loss After Service

By Traci Burton, DDHH Field Representative



**R**eturning soldiers face a myriad of complications after completing a tour of duty and hearing loss may be among them. Hearing loss and tinnitus greatly affect the individuals whether or not they recognize the symptoms. The news posting from [www.healthyhearing.com](http://www.healthyhearing.com) on Friday, November 16, 2012 discusses the issue. Hearing Health Foundation is committed to the Americans serving in the U.S. armed forces who return home suffering from tinnitus and hearing loss. At least 60 percent of soldiers coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan report hearing problems due to noise exposure experienced during their time of service. Surprisingly, hearing loss and tinnitus are more common than post-traumatic stress disorder.

Hearing loss and tinnitus aren't new to the military, found San Diego writer and editor Elizabeth Stump, whose research contributed to the content of this article. John Ayers, 79, of Texas was informed at the age of 25 that he had suffered from hearing loss due to his time in the U.S. Air Force preparing B-47 jet bombers to fly combat missions.

"Earplugs were required only for those who worked on the flight line and next to the aircraft," he said. "Flying at 10,000 feet, the engine roar permeated every part of my body. The droning of the engines made the entire airplane frame vibrate, making it difficult to sleep; hearing other people talk was impossible. It was several days before my hearing returned to normal."

For a variety of reasons, hearing protection for the military remains limited. Hearing Health Foundation strongly advocates using hearing protection in all situations with high noise levels, but while earplugs can protect against noises that reach 80 to 85 decibels, they can't protect fully against explosions and firefights that reach intensely dangerous levels of up to 180 decibels. Some active duty servicemen and women also worry that using earplugs will prevent them from hearing important tactical instructions.

Nathan Beltzee, 35, of New Jersey, served for 11 years in the Army and Air Force. He suffered hearing loss as a direct result of gunfire and loud jet engines.

"I have 40 percent hearing loss in my left ear and 30 percent in my right ear," Beltzee said. "I left the service because of my hearing problems. I was afraid to ever fire a gun again or to be in a situation where I would be exposed to small arms fire or explosions that would make the ringing worse."

There currently is no cure for the noise-induced hearing loss experienced by armed forces, but through the Hearing Restoration Project, Hearing Health Foundation has a goal of a real, biologic cure for hearing loss within the next decade. The cure for hearing loss would help people like Ayers and Beltzee regain hearing lost as a result of their military service.

## Atlantic County Library's Assistive Listening Technology Loan Program

**M**any public places are characterized by background noise and poor acoustic design which negatively impacts the ability of people to hear. These conditions affect all individuals and makes effective listening nearly impossible for a person with any kind of hearing loss. Assistive listening technologies such as a "Personal FM System" or a "Wide Area FM System" may significantly improve listening conditions. The Atlantic County Library located at 40 Farragut Avenue in Mays Landing, NJ offers

the Assistive Listening Technology Loan Program to residents of Atlantic County. Any interested individual or agency/organization is able to borrow, free of charge, a Personal FM System or a Wide Area FM System.

The Personal FM System is for use in small group settings while the Wide Area FM System is for use in larger spaces. The Atlantic County Library has two Personal Systems and two Wide Area Systems available for loan. Neckloops and headsets also are available for loan.

For more information about this loan program please contact the Atlantic County Library at 609-625-2776.

The Morris County Library in Whippany, NJ and the Monmouth County Library Headquarters and Eastern Branch in Manalapan and Shrewsbury, NJ respectively are also participants in the Assistive Listening Technology Loan Program. Residents of Morris County can contact the library at 973-285-6979 to inquire about Morris County's loan program. Residents of Monmouth County should call Headquarters at 732-431-7220 or the Eastern Branch at 732-683-8980.

Additional libraries will be offering the Assistive Listening Technology Loan Program to their county's residents. Look forward to more announcements!

The Assistive Listening Technology Loan Program is funded by the NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

*Traci Burton, Field Representative can be reached at 609-984-7281 or [traci.burton@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:traci.burton@dhs.state.nj.us).*

By Peter Yerkes, *Trustee, HLA-NJ*

## Epiphany at 40,000 Feet – How I Stopped Pretending To Hear

### Plus, A Reader's Story About Positive Customer Service

**Y**ear after year, my New Year Resolutions include a pledge to stop faking it—to give up my habit of smiling and pretending to hear something when I really didn't. I suspect I'm not the only person with serious hearing loss who does this. So I thought it might be helpful to share a recent experience that persuaded me once and for all to give up this bad habit.

The story begins at 40,000 feet over the Atlantic, in a jet carrying me home from a wedding in Rome. I am tall and have a stiff right leg, so I need to get up every hour or so and walk around and stretch.

In an age of tight security, flight crews hate this. When I was stretching in the unoccupied galley, I wasn't surprised when an attendant walked up and said...something. I didn't understand a word because large jets are so noisy but I was sure she was asking me to go back to my seat. For once, instead of guessing, I explained my hearing is poor and asked her to repeat what she had said slowly and to make sure she was facing me. After a couple of tries, the story emerged. She and another flight attendant had noticed my cochlear implant. The other flight attendant had hearing problems and wanted advice. Would I mind talking to her? I'd be glad to, I replied.

The attendant (I'll call her Beth) said that a few years ago, she got a bad ear infection. Her ear doctor advised to stop flying until the infection healed. But the airline refused to allow her to go on leave so her hearing started a steady decline. She was reaching the point where it was difficult to function. As we talked, she had to twist her body to get her ear close to my mouth. I could imagine what it was like for her to deal with difficult passengers.

She found it impossible to get advice, she said. Doctors told her to get used to it. I gave her some sources—the Center



for Hearing and Communication in New York, the Hearing Loss Association of America and the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey (where she lives). I also gave her my e-mail address.

I never heard from her so I have no idea how she is doing, but I learned a big lesson. Had I just smiled and walked back to my seat, I would have left Beth feeling she had been snubbed by one more person who didn't care about her or her problems - and I would have missed a conversation that I will always remember. I'm very glad I admitted that I had hearing problems, and did my best to try to converse. One of my New Year's resolutions is to keep trying.

**A**nother incident is on my mind as we start the New Year. I was delighted to hear from an HLA-NJ member named Ellie Berg who had a positive story she wanted to share. Here, in her own words, is her story.

"For a number of years my Sonic Alert Clock with a bed shaker vibrator has been important in sustaining me in an active life style. Without it, I would often be unable to keep appointments and other commitments. I cannot hear my phone ring," she wrote in a letter of appreciation to Sonic Alert.

"So last week, when the bed shaker didn't function, it was serious. I emailed

Sonic Alert about a replacement and immediately received an offer of assistance from Ed Brink, Jr. Over a period of days, he was helpful and thoughtful beyond the call of duty. He phoned me on my Caption Call phone, knew to speak slowly and distinctly, and guided me through various steps with both the shaker

and clock to see if together we could reboot the equipment. He spent a very long time with me, perhaps half an hour, patiently waiting for me to read his words on my phone captions, then providing instructions for me to make various adjustments on the clock mechanism. We were successful and I was embarrassed to have let out a great scream of joy. I send you all my deepest thanks and wishes that all the Sonic Alert people will be blessed with a healthy joyful New Year."

Many thanks go to Ellie Berg for sharing her story. I join her in sending best wishes to the people at Sonic Alert, and to everyone like Ellie Berg and Beth who work hard to live with hearing loss.

I would love to hear other experiences, positive or negative, about customer service, or any other aspect of living with hearing loss. Please contact me at [p.yerkes@comcast.net](mailto:p.yerkes@comcast.net).

*To learn more about HLA-NJ, please contact Arlene Romoff at [info@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:info@hearingloss-nj.org) and request to be put on the email contact list. We also invite you to visit our [www.hearingloss-nj.org](http://www.hearingloss-nj.org), or to attend one of our local chapter meetings in Bergen, Monmouth/Ocean or Middlesex County, and our newest Morris County chapter. Dates, places and times for chapter meetings are available from [info@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:info@hearingloss-nj.org).*



## Deaf Disempowerment and Today's Interpreter

*The following was a presentation made as part of Street Leverage's Thought Leadership event held in Maryland last November. A video of the article can be seen at [www.trudysuggs.com](http://www.trudysuggs.com). Trudy Suggs presented, *Deaf Disempowerment and Today's Interpreter*, at StreetLeverage – Live. Her talk examined how the choices sign language interpreters make while delivering communication access can, and often do, contribute to the economic and situational disempowerment of deaf people. This is reprinted with her permission.*

**I**n the spirit of being transparent, the stories I'm about to share might be uncomfortable for some of you. While I would like to speak my truth, I recognize that you have your own truth as well. I trust that you will evaluate the stories I share and recognize the value in them. I actually was, and am, reluctant about presenting today because like many deaf people who speak out, I've had to endure a lot of negative feedback for being a "strong personality," or an "angry deaf person," and so on. My goal today is for you, as interpreters, to be open to possibly uncomfortable topics, uncomfortable truths, and uncomfortable analyses—

whether they apply to you or not.

I believe that the best way to become bona fide allies is to embrace difficult ideas, opinions and, yes, facts. At the end of the day, we're all in this together.

Four weeks ago, my two-year-old son fell and broke his leg. A week later, I took him, along with my one-year-old, to the orthopedic doctor for a check-up. Now, I live in a town where there are 250 to 300 deaf people living among 23,000 people; we have the deaf school, so everyone knows how to sign or how to work with interpreters. After about 45 minutes of waiting in the lobby—very unusual for a town of this size—I asked the receptionist about the severe delay. The receptionist never once looked up from her computer, saying that the doctor was backed up. I asked if we could see the doctor since my children were restless, hungry and my son, in a body cast from chest to toe, needed

his medicine—which was at home. She said no. I said, "Could you please speak to the doctor or nurse?" She replied, "Oh, no, I can't do that," and I repeated my request. She adamantly refused.

I finally said, "Could you please look at me?" She looked at the interpreter, and I said, "No, at me." Once she did, I asked, "Could you please offer a resolution? We've been here an hour." At that very moment, my baby began crying, and the receptionist finally realized the extent of my situation. A nurse came out who was far more courteous and apologetic. After we talked about the delay, I asked how I could make a complaint about the receptionist.

A few minutes later, the receptionist called the interpreter over, saying the interpreter had a phone call. The interpreter answered the phone, and realized it was the office manager calling for me. All this time, the receptionist was looking at me with dagger eyes. The office manager began asking questions. I explained that I wasn't comfortable talking about the situation because the receptionist was listening in. The office manager reassured me she'd be in touch. As I returned to my seat, I realized the interpreter was still by the front desk. I looked back and saw her cover her mouth as she whispered to the receptionist. When she came back to where we were sitting, I asked what she had said to the receptionist.

"Nothing, why?"

"I saw you whisper to her, what did you say?"

"Nothing."

“No, I saw you whisper. What was it about?”

She relented and said, “Uh, she began apologizing to me for her behavior, and said she didn’t mean to talk to you like that. I told her it was okay.”

“But it isn’t okay how she treated me. Why didn’t you tell her to apologize directly to me?”

I could see the realization of her mistake dawn over her face. Just then, we were called into the examination room and the appointment was over fairly quickly.

Such a simple act of trying to mediate a situation—when she really didn’t have the right to—became situational disempowerment. Had she been in my shoes, would she have told the receptionist it was okay? I don’t know. Mind you, I would absolutely work with this interpreter again. Still, the experience led me to think about disempowerment.

Let’s take a quick look at the word disempowerment. The word has quite a simple definition for such a powerful concept: to take away power.

As interpreters, you have a very delicate line to walk on the job. You

disempowerment, let’s go back to when I was 13 years old. I went to a public high school that had 80 deaf students and 8 full-time interpreters. I took a theater course with three other deaf students and maybe 25 hearing students; it was interpreted by one of the better interpreters. She criticized my signing every single day, saying that I signed too fast and too “ASL.” She even went as far as voicing gibberish if she didn’t understand me—at fast speeds to mimic my signing speed—and this would cause the hearing students and teacher to break out in laughter.

For an extremely insecure teenager struggling with her identity, having attention called to her like this was beyond horrifying. This was humiliation, pure and simple. The interpreter, to cover up her lack of fluency, purposefully disempowered me. Even today, I momentarily revert to that 13-year-old whenever someone says I sign too fast—which, by the way, a deaf person has never said to me. Interpreters should be accountable for their lack of fluency and not put this on the deaf person’s shoulders.

Every interpreter’s goal should be to ensure communication access, not

people in the ads were actual owners. Not actors.

One of the owners was Holly Daniel, who posed as a deaf person. When I saw the televised advertisement, I immediately knew she wasn’t deaf. I called the car company, and a representative there insisted she was deaf. That’s when I learned that it was a campaign featuring actual owners. After a serendipitous series of events—including a lot of backlash from people who were angry that I would be so nitpicky—I got a tip from someone that this woman was an educational interpreter and not deaf.

When I talked with Holly about the claims that she was hearing, she responded that she was deaf, but she had a twin sister who was hearing, and that was what was causing the confusion. She even faxed me falsified birth certificates. After many odd incidents, she finally came clean. I later found out that she had pretended to be deaf for up to two years before the advertisement—so she didn’t do it for the money alone.

Speaking of money—she was to get \$75,000 for the ad campaign. She ended up only getting \$10,000—and the car company decided not to pursue legal action because that would have cost more. She’s still working as an interpreter and has never apologized to the community for what she did.

So things like this do happen—all the time.

Even if the Holly Daniel story is an extreme example, it happens in so many ways. Power follows money. When people make money off deaf people, deaf culture, and ASL, this can easily lead to disempowerment and have ripple effects.

Take ASL teaching. There are thousands of ASL teachers. Guess how many are deaf? No real statistics exist on this. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of certified Baby Sign Language instructors. How many are deaf? Your guess is as good as mine. I contacted the company that certifies instructors; it wouldn’t respond to my requests. I’ll say probably a very, very small percentage. There are about 20, maybe more, Deaf Studies programs at colleges and universities across the nation. Are all the program directors deaf? No. What’s wrong with this picture?

One of the more common responses when I ask why a deaf person isn’t

*Continued on page 8*

## Let’s take a quick look at the word disempowerment. The word has quite a simple definition for such a powerful concept: to take away power.

have to figure out how to mediate culture, conflicts, personalities, and a million other things all at the same time as interpreting. I won’t go into theoretical mumbo-jumbo about that because you already know this. I will, however, share my experiences as a person who comes from a family of at least 600 combined years of experience in the deaf community, as a mother to four deaf children, and as someone who is supposedly at the center of the deaf community. I also work as a certified deaf interpreter, and have grown up always believing that the deaf community and the hearing community are really not all that much different—even if there are worlds of differences in so many ways.

There are two types of disempowerment discussed throughout today’s talk and workshop, both interconnected: situational disempowerment and economic disempowerment.

For another example of situational

disempowerment in any form. To take away a deaf person’s power, whether intentionally or unintentionally, is unacceptable. With that in mind, there is another way deaf people can be disempowered—and that’s financially.

As we all know, there are people who do take advantage of the deaf community. History has shown this time after time, ranging from pretending to be deaf and peddling ABC cards to trying to get out of tickets or charges. Back in 1997, I uncovered one of the most bizarre stories I’ve ever come across. While we’ll discuss this more in my workshop, it is a long, strange tale with so many twists and turns. This really happened. This isn’t fiction.

In 1997, Saturn, the car corporation, ran a series of advertisements both on television and in print. This ad campaign was called its Real People, Real Cars campaign—and featured actual owners, not actors, in its ads. I need to say that one more time: the

## Disempowerment *continued*

at the helm of a program or agency working with deaf and hard of hearing people is, “We advertised the position and couldn’t find anyone qualified.” That certainly could be the case. Still, I say hogwash. Such situations lead to economic disempowerment and its ripple effects: deaf people aren’t hired, and those outside of the deaf community continue to have beliefs and perceptions shaped by hearing people.

If no qualified deaf person applies for that position, then there needs to be a short-term and long-term remedy. One solution is to keep the position open for as long as possible until someone who is qualified and deaf is hired. Another possible solution is to have an interim director in place, hire someone who is definitely capable of doing the job—and train that person until she or he is ready to take the helm. Is that costly and cumbersome? Perhaps. Cost-beneficial and cost-effective in the long run? Absolutely. This is one of many ways we can help boost deaf economics.

I first heard the term deaf economics when I interviewed DeafNation’s CEO Joel Barish for an article. He said that it’s extremely important to support deaf owners:

“. . .with more people supporting deaf businesses, there will be more job opportunities for deaf people because deaf business owners are more likely to hire deaf people more than anyone else. As a result, they can empower each other by working together or supporting each other. At the same time, with this support, visibility and networking will grow beyond the deaf community into the hearing community. It’s unfortunate that many people can’t see the bigger picture and will only chase the cheapest rates or prices instead of supporting deaf-owned businesses.”

With today’s dismal unemployment rates, we know deaf people are among the most underemployed people. Yet interpreting is one of the fastest-growing professions, largely in part because of laws requiring communication access, but it’s also because ASL is now an awesome thing to know, a cool language. Even though it has gained recognition as an actual, stand-alone language, it continues to be mocked by so many entities. We’ve all heard of the recent Lydia Callis spoofs on the Chelsea Handler show



and even Saturday Night Live. While I understand Lydia’s general refusal to speak to reporters aside from the one interview I saw, I wish she could tell reporters to talk to deaf people. That would be incredibly refreshing.

I remember sitting by the pool at the 2001 RID conference in Orlando. I was with an interpreter friend, and I looked around. Interpreters surrounded us, and I said, “Wow. Everyone here is making money off my language.” She giggled, and then shushed me, saying, “Don’t say that! You’ll piss them off!”

Years later, as I remembered that conversation, I wondered why I shouldn’t have said that if it was the truth. ASL is a wealthy language not only in its contents, but also in its moneymaking opportunities.

Don’t think this is an attack on hearing people. It isn’t. After all, I, like many others, make money off my languages of ASL and English. I run a writing company that specializes in both ASL and English. I work as a certified deaf interpreter. I teach ASL and English. I train interpreters. So I have absolutely no issue with making money off any language—as long as the goal isn’t to make money, but to really share the culture and language, and to encourage genuine language acquisition.

So why do so many interpreters, mentors, rehabilitation professionals, ASL teachers, and others bristle at the idea that they’re making money off ASL? Maybe because it’s a harsh way to look at their professions. Perhaps if we face the truth, and say, “Yes, we do make money off ASL,” that’ll help us gain greater appreciation of the responsibilities that accompany the language and culture.

Even so, what is more important—to me, at least—is to understand how we can be allies in such challenging

situations. How do we come together to prevent disempowerment in any form or shape? As interpreters, and as consumers, we can become aware of disempowerment, particularly situational disempowerment and how we often participate by accident or decisively. By actively resisting the almost automatic temptations of empathizing with hearing consumers—or even deaf consumers—we can minimize, even eliminate, potential disempowerment. By refusing to control situations, by deferring to the deaf person whenever appropriate, by allowing the consumers to control the situation, and by ensuring that you don’t speak on behalf of the entire deaf community especially if you’re hearing—you can take steps towards ensuring that deaf people retain their power while you do your job. Through supporting deaf businesses and agencies, operate under the assumption that a qualified deaf person should be the automatic choice—and if this isn’t the case, be among the first to question why not.

Another approach is to always analyze why something happened, and not instinctively blame it on the deaf consumer, however educated or uneducated he may be. Look at all the factors involved. Analyze whether or not the consumers felt as if they had full communication access. For many deaf people, a trigger point is losing communication access.

The bottom line is we must always strive to ensure that each culture and community is maintained and preserved by its very core, which in this situation are deaf people. However, we also must be careful to remember that if a deaf person expresses frustration at disempowerment, it doesn’t necessarily mean she or he is angry, divisive or separatist. Rather, take a look at the situation, and figure out how, if at all, you or other interpreters might have contributed to the situation. Support deaf businesses, services and events. If a job opportunity comes up, see if it would be best filled by a deaf person. If no deaf person is available, figure out how to ensure that a deaf person could be brought in.

Of course, your primary responsibility as interpreters is language facilitation and cultural mediation. But we must remember that all individuals, deaf or hearing, should always strive for full, mutual respect rather than disempowerment.

# POSITIONS AVAILABLE



## OUTREACH SPECIALIST

**Objective:** To spread the word of Speech-to-Speech (STS) Services through the State of New Jersey.

**Description of STS Service:** Speech-to-Speech (STS) Service allows a person with a speech disability to voice their conversation. A specially trained relay operator listens and repeats the person with a speech disability's dialogue to the called party. For more information on how STS works, please visit [www.njrelay.com/sts](http://www.njrelay.com/sts).

**Summary:** The community STS Outreach Specialist will work primarily in the field (on the street) with speech disability communities, rehabilitative communities, civic organizations and the community at large in order to promote and raise awareness of Speech-to-Speech services. The work also includes organizational planning and attending of various marketing activities such as health fairs and tradeshow.

### Duties:

- Community Education
- Networking
- Presentations and Workshops
- Tabling at Health Fairs and Tradeshow
- One-on-one training on how to use STS as needed

### Requirements:

- Knowledge about speech disabilities is preferred
- Initiative, resourcefulness; experience as a "self-starter"
- Knowledge and experience in networking
- Experience in marketing and promoting services
- Interpersonal skills and ability to handle escalated issues
- Assess the customers' needs and offer appropriate training based on speech disability needs
- Provide a quality customer experience
- Public Speaking Skills
- Sufficient computer competency, working skill set for Microsoft applications
- Effective Time Management Skills
- Self-management and accountability
- Ability to represent the company through high moral conduct

### Benefits:

- Flexible hours and excellent part-time pay rate

If interested, send an email to Aparna Lele, New Jersey Relay Account Manager, at [Aparna.Lele@sprint.com](mailto:Aparna.Lele@sprint.com) with a resume copy or fax to 913.523.1137.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

PAHrtners Deaf Services is a dynamic team of behavioral health professionals serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and adults. We take great pride that our program is strongly Deaf/HOH centered with about 85% of our staff being Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Our staff environment is one of incredible teamwork and mutual support. As a

result, we are rapidly growing with new programs and expansions of our existing programs. Whether you are a high school graduate, recent college graduate or have many years' experience in the field of human services we have a career building position waiting for you! E.O.E.

PAHrtners is looking for dedicated, motivated, energetic individuals who are fluent in American Sign Language and knowledgeable about Deaf Culture and the Deaf Community to fill the following positions:

### RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR for DSA: (Full time position)

The qualified candidate shall possess: HS Diploma and 5 years of Mental Health direct care experience, fluency in ASL, knowledge of Deaf Culture. Excellent writing and communication skills required. Responsibilities: Day to day management and supervision of residential setting for deaf adults with mental illness and behavioral health concerns. Supervision of direct care staff, development of residential programming and staff schedules, planning and leading staff meetings, coordinate staff trainings, manage petty cash and consumer funds, coordinate consumer services with internal/outside agency providers and families, conduct consumer and staff interviews, complete monthly reports, service plans and staff evaluations, follow up with physical and psychiatric medical concerns. Must be willing to work some evenings and weekend.

### RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTORS: (Full time position)

This position provides leadership role for residential staff and direct client services. Qualifications: minimum of a HS + 2 year related experience; valid drivers' license; advanced fluency in ASL; minimum of 2 years' experience with Deaf Community; demonstrated an ability to supervise, teach, advise and motivate staff members as well as Deaf Consumers; must possess strong interpersonal skills. Duties: Provide guidance and training for staff and support to Deaf consumers with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities living in the community; promote consumers' independence and social relationships. Must be willing to work some evenings and weekend.

### RESIDENTIAL COUNSELORS: (various positions available)

This position provides direct client services including encouraging client independence in areas such as skills in daily living and community integration. Duties: Provide supported living and training to Deaf consumers with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities living in the community; promote consumers' independence and social relationships. Positions open for weekend and evening shifts. Qualifications: HS + 1 year related experience; valid drivers' license; advanced fluency in ASL; demonstrated competency in independent living skills; ability to teach, advise and motivate Deaf Consumers; strong interpersonal skills.

Send your letter of intent and resumes to:

Linda Claypool, Office Manager/HR  
PAHrtners Deaf Services  
614 N. Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038  
Email: [lclaypool@pahrtners.com](mailto:lclaypool@pahrtners.com) Fax: 215-884-6301  
215-884-9770 TTY/V  
[www.pahrtners.com](http://www.pahrtners.com)



# Hearing Loss Association of America Convention 2013: June 27-30 Portland, Oregon is the host city Convention 2013 Registration is NOW Open!

**P**ortland, the pioneer of "green" initiatives and sustainability, has so much to offer our Convention 2013 attendees. There are loads of parks, gardens, museums, theaters, tax-free shopping, wineries ... the list is endless. So start planning now by visiting our "micro-site" created by **TravelPortland** – it is chock-full of information about the area as well as day-trips to Mount Hood (via the Columbia River Gorge), and the Oregon Coast (just an hour and a half away). TravelPortland now has a mobile app - visit the micro-site for more information.

## Schedule-at-a-Glance

Take a look at the preliminary schedule to help you determine the appropriate registration package as well as travel and hotel needs. The schedule is subject to change; please check the **Convention 2013 Program & Exhibit** Guide for the final schedule.

## Oregon Convention Center

All sessions will take place at the Oregon Convention Center located at 777 Northeast Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Portland, OR 97232 with the exception of:

*(These three events will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Portland)*

- Get Acquainted Party - Thursday evening
- Farewell, the Saturday evening banquet
- Awards Breakfast and Ceremony - Sunday morning

## Keynote Speaker: Howard Weinstein, *Inventor of Solar Ear*



After a series of life-changing events, Howard took a volunteer position with the World University Service of Canada to work at Camp Hill Community Trust, a community for people with disabilities in Botswana. During his four years at Camp Hill, Howard implemented the startup company Godisa Technologies, where he employed persons with hearing loss and physical disabilities. Through Godisa, Howard produced three new products: a solar energy powered hearing aid, an analog solar charger, and a rechargeable battery. The innovation of these products won Godisa an International Design Award for the best product

in Africa in 2005. Within three years, Godisa manufactured more than sixty thousand hearing aids and became financially sustainable. After four years in Botswana, Howard went to Brazil to replicate his social business. Howard employs people who are deaf to manufacture hearing aids run on new solar-powered battery technology, freeing hearing aid users from the economic burden of buying regular zinc batteries at \$1 per week. Through the broad distribution of these hearing aids, especially to children at a critical time in their development of speech and cognitive abilities, Howard will create new access to hearing aids and improved social integration for the largely excluded population of low-income people with hearing loss in the developing world.

**Howard's keynote speech will take place during the Opening Session, Thursday, June 27, 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

## Research Symposium, Latest Developments in Hearing Rehabilitation Research

The highly anticipated Research Symposium which will be presented by research audiologists from the **VA National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR)** located at the Portland VA Medical Center.

Research audiologists from NCRAR will describe the findings of studies taking place at the NCRAR and present the following:

### ■ Diabetes and Hearing Loss: Current Findings and Thoughts

#### ■ Approaches to Tinnitus Management

- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation
- Progressive Tinnitus Management

#### ■ Approaches to Auditory Rehabilitation

- Computerized Auditory Training
- Group Aural Rehabilitation

Join us for the Latest Developments in Hearing Rehabilitation Research on Friday, June 28, 2013 from 9 a.m. - noon.

For more information, visit: [www.hearingloss.org/content/convention](http://www.hearingloss.org/content/convention)

# The Communicator Signboard

## New Jersey Association of the Deaf



### NJAD Board Meeting

Saturday, March 2, 2013

Noon to 1:45 p.m.

Ocean City Community Center

Ocean City Free Public Library

Rooms N110 & N111

1735 Simpson Avenue

Ocean City, NJ 08226

**Fun activity with prizes during workshop with NJ Relay**  
*(with free refreshment)*

**2 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

**General Meeting**

**3 p.m. to 5 p.m.**



### Beef 'n Beer Fundraising

Sunday, March 3, 2013

6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

King Pin Lane

6622 Black Horse Pike

Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234

[www.kingpinbowlingnj.com](http://www.kingpinbowlingnj.com)

**Admission: \$25 per person**  
(first come, first served)

- ◆ Draft beer/domestic beer
- ◆ Baked ziti
- ◆ Salad
- ◆ Mini desserts
- ◆ One **Free Bowling** coupon (for future redemption)
- ◆ Roast beef & rolls
- ◆ Chicken wings
- ◆ Coffee/tea

**DEADLINE: February 24**

Make a check or money order payable to "NJAD, Inc." & mail to: NJAD, Attn: March Event, PO Box 354, Milltown, NJ 08850-0354 with your full name and your guest's full name with address, email and phone number.

Also, it's **National Deaf Poker Tournament** weekend at Taj Mahal Casino in Atlantic City. Try to stop by after our event!

## INTERPRETER CHAT



### A Night Out at Panera Bread

Rt. 130, Hamilton, NJ

3rd Wednesday of every month

5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Join the chat!

Often, we work every day without ever really meeting others in our profession. This is an opportunity to come out to chat, make connections and meet new friends!

(Ethical guidelines are followed)

Interpreters, teachers of the deaf, para-professionals, job coaches, students, etc...

Very informal, all are welcome!

QUESTIONS: [grace\\_samis@mac.com](mailto:grace_samis@mac.com) or [trogfamily@comcast.net](mailto:trogfamily@comcast.net)

## DEAF FEST 2013

**DEAF FEST 2013** will be held on Sunday, September 22, 2013 at Middlesex County Fairground, 655 Cranbury Road, East Brunswick, New Jersey 08816

We are currently seeking sponsors, vendors and volunteers for the event.

For more information: [www.njdaw.org](http://www.njdaw.org)

Email: [NJDAW.President@gmail.com](mailto:NJDAW.President@gmail.com)



## 2nd Annual Deaf Jam



**Kean University**

**Thursday, April 18, 2013**

**6-9 p.m.**

**Main Campus "Little Theatre"**

**1000 Morris Ave**

**Union NJ, 07083**

**Join the students of Kean University for a night of entertainment!**

# The Communicator Signboard

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual NJ Deaf Sports Men's & Women's Classic Basketball Invitational Tournament

February 2, 2013

9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Where: John F. Kennedy Recreation Center  
429 John F. Kennedy Way  
Willingboro, NJ 08046

**Team Entry Fee: \$225\***

**Cash Prizes (base 8 teams)**

1st Place = \$800

2nd Place = \$500

3rd Place = \$300

For more information:

*NJDeafSportsInc@gmail.com*

Chairperson: Carl Colon -

*newjerseysports@yahoo.com*

Write a check to "NJDS, Inc"  
and mail to:  
New Jersey Deaf Sports, Inc.  
26 North Shore Blvd.  
Helmetta, NJ 08828-1233

USSSA and EAAD Sanction [www.eaad.us](http://www.eaad.us)

Players/Coaches Admission Fee: \$15 Fan Admission: \$10 Children Under 12: Free

**NO SMOKING, DRUGS or ALCOHOL ALLOWED ON JFK CAMPUS!**

\* \$200 for cash prizes plus \$25 for insurance

## Open Captioned Performance



Saturday, February 23, 2013  
at 3 p.m.

### Two Trains Running

Written by August Wilson

Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson

The 1960s play from Wilson's 10-play cycle about the African-American experience in each decade of the 20th century, *Two Trains Running* illuminates the personal stories of ordinary people against the backdrop of social change and political upheaval.



Two River Theater  
21 Bridge Avenue  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Tickets are \$25 per person for those using this service.

For more information, contact Michele Klinsky at [mklinsky@trtc.org](mailto:mklinsky@trtc.org) or (732) 345-1400, x1808

# The Communicator Signboard

## Zumba Classes

February - April 2013

Hearing, Hard of Hearing and Deaf people are welcomed!

The Club at the The Club at Woodbridge

585 Main Street

Woodbridge, NJ 07095-1104

February 24, 2013

(Sundays until April 14, 2013 - no class on March 31, Easter)

\$40 per 4 classes by February 17; \$40 per 4 classes for 2nd session

Make payable to "The Club at Woodbridge."

Payment must be received by Feb 17.

Please send a check to:

The Club at Woodbridge

585 Main Street

Woodbridge, NJ 07095-1104

Please state that it's for  
Deaf Zumba class.

*Sari Levine is a certificated Zumba  
instructor and knows ASL for 15 years  
and has been teaching Zumba in 3  
places over 3 years.*

Contact Lynne Jacob for more  
information on Facebook under  
"Deaf Zumba in NJ".



## Diverse Deaf Club of New Jersey



### Celebrate Valentine's Day

Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church

1740 Route 130, North Brunswick

Saturday, February 2, 2013

Door opens at 5 p.m.

Admission at door \$10 member and \$12 non-member

Refreshments: Baked Ziti, salad and one drink

**NEW (format) Dingo at 6:30 p.m.**



### Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

Saturday, March 2, 2013

Door opens at 5 p.m.

Admission at door \$10 member and \$12 non-member

Last day of March to update your DDCNJ

membership dues.

Refreshments: Corned beef on rye, cole slaw and  
one drink

**NEW (format) Dingo at 6:30 p.m.**

Please check [www.ddcnj.org](http://www.ddcnj.org) to find out if we are open  
or closed due to the weather.



**GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON** High School

## Governor Livingston's Hilltop Players

Proudly Present:

### CHILDREN of EDEN

**Interpreted Performances:**

**March 22, 2013 - 7:30 p.m.**

**March 23, 2013 - 7:30 p.m.**

**Ticket Prices:**

Adults: \$15 Seniors/Students: \$12

**Ticket Information:**

**Box Office:** 908-464-3100 ext 2999

**Online Ordering:** [hilltop@bhpsnj.org](mailto:hilltop@bhpsnj.org)

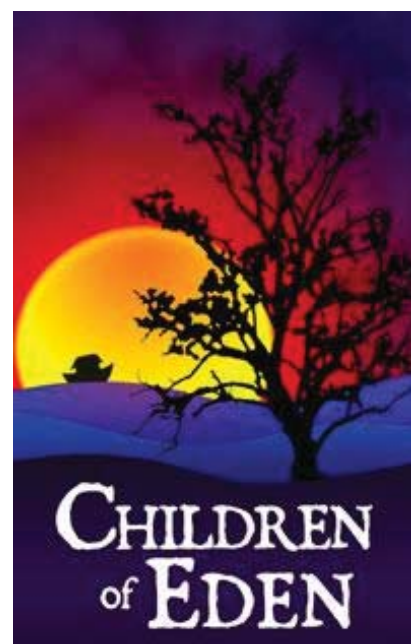
**Mailing Address for Ticket Orders:**

GL Hilltop Players PO Box 114 Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922

Governor Livingston High School 175 Watchung Blvd Berkeley Hgts, NJ 07922

[www.NJDeafProgram.com](http://www.NJDeafProgram.com)

[email: deafprogram@bhpsnj.org](mailto:deafprogram@bhpsnj.org)



# The Communicator Signboard



*New Jersey Deaf Education Affiliates, Inc.*

## **Beyond Academics: Examining the Social Needs of Deaf Students Saturday, March 16, 2013**

**Registration: 8:30 a.m.**

**Conference : 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

**Conference fee:** \$45; \$25 for parents and college students

Hosted by MRESC - Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission  
1660 Stelton Road, Piscataway, NJ

*Communication Services Provided by DDHH*

### **Presentations:**

**Keynote Speaker** – Cindi Sternfeld, Ed.S. – Licensed Professional Counselor

*“Fostering Social Competencies in Deaf Children:  
Helping Children to Survive and Thrive in the Social Landscape”*

**Speaker** – Mark DeBenedictis – Adaptive Computer Specialist,  
Bergen County Special Services School District

*“The Internet, the New Playground: Who’s Really Watching?”*

**Afternoon Professional Learning Communities and Panel Discussions** –  
*“Interpreting Social Situations”* (Moderator Dr. Cindy Williams, Union County College) and  
*“Promoting Social Activities”*

(Moderator Ms. Celeste Bonfanti, Gloucester County Special Services School District)

This conference will discuss the social and emotional needs of deaf and hard of hearing students and address the positive and negative aspects of social networking. Participants will choose an afternoon panel discussion, focusing on either strategies for promoting social activities during and after school or the challenges in providing interpreting services in social situations with deaf and hard of hearing students. This conference will benefit: teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, educational interpreters and CART reporters, general education teachers working with deaf and hard of hearing students, case managers, administrators, speech teachers, audiologists, teacher assistants, parents, and other service providers

RID CEU’s will be provided. Professional Development Hours will be provided.

To request a PDF version of the registration brochure or to be added to the electronic mailing list:

***Juliann Toone, NJDEAF Treasurer, at [juliann.toone@gmail.com](mailto:juliann.toone@gmail.com)***

For additional information, visit: [www.njdeaf.com](http://www.njdeaf.com) or search NJDEAF on Facebook

# Religious Access

## Interpreted Purim Service at T&V



**Be Happy, It's Purim - with ASL-Interpreted Megillah Reading and fun for all on February 23.**

Want something different to do on a cold, wintry Saturday night? Well, then, come on in to where it's nice and warm for an evening of fun no matter how old you are, or how young you really feel. New York's Tifereth Israel-Town & Village (T&V) Synagogue ([www.tandv.org](http://www.tandv.org)) invites you to join us on Purim Night, Saturday, February 23, for an ASL-interpreted service and a full reading of Megillat Esther. For those so inclined, costumes are heartily encouraged, too! Services are tentatively scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. at 334 East 14th Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues in Manhattan, followed by refreshments.

Our team of Deaf and hearing interpreters will include Jon Lamberton, Julie Weisenberg and Bram Weiser, and their work will be underwritten thanks to UJA-Federation of New York's Jewish Community Deaf Interpreter Fund.

Thanks, and we'll hope to see you there!

***(Schedule is subject to change.)***

P.S. Coming soon - more ASL-interpreted services, including a special Friday Night Service for "Shabbat Across America." Keep your eyes open for additional details as they become available, or contact Bram directly. ASL interpreters are available at T&V when requests are made in advance. For additional information, contact Bram Weiser at [bramweiser@usa.net](mailto:bramweiser@usa.net) or (212) 677-0368 Voice.

**Deaf Adult Spirituality  
proudly presents  
Rev. Bismarck  
Topic: Year of Faith**



**Friday, February 9, 2013  
at 7 p.m.**

**St. Peter The Apostle Church  
Rout 46 West and 179  
Baldwin Road  
Parsippany, NJ 07054  
Church Hall  
973-947-7572 VP**



## Grace Bible Chapel of the Deaf

**100 Oakdale Road, Chester, NJ 07930**

**Guest Deaf Speaker: Rev. Jung Kim of Newark, Delaware  
April 20, 2013  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Breakfast, lunch and registration cost \$10 or registration only \$5

**Deadline: April 14, 2013**

No payment accepted at door.

Make a check payable to: Grace Bible Chapel. Mail to: Roy Siskind, 288 Janine Way, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

More info: Roy Siskind - [Rojogolfer@hotmail.com](mailto:Rojogolfer@hotmail.com) or Michael Sarsfield - [ms1262@aol.com](mailto:ms1262@aol.com)

How many adults for \$10 breakfast, lunch & registration: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

How many adults for \$5 registration only: \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

VP/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## MONTHLY COMMUNICATOR



NJ Department of Human Services  
Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
PO Box 074  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0074

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### Dated Material Please Rush

# *Calendar of Events 2013*

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

**May 4, 2013**

**Family Learning Conference  
Bergen County Community College**

## **Sunday, September 22, 2013**

**Deaf Fest 2013**

**Middlesex County Fairgrounds  
East Brunswick, NJ  
Info: [www.njdaw.org](http://www.njdaw.org)**

DDHH Regular Office Hours: Monday – Friday; 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Office Closed: President's Day - Monday, Feb. 18