

Monthly Communicator

Chris Christie, Governor

Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

Elizabeth Connolly, Acting Commissioner

David Alexander, Director

31st Annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day



Communication Coordinator Cathy Grehlinger (R.) greets consumers at DDHH information booth with Interpreter Jennifer Restucci-Smith.

By Ira Hock

For the 31st year in a row the *NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing* held its “**Awareness Day Program**” at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson NJ. Seventeen qualified sign language interpreters and nine interns were provided in venues all throughout the park to make it communication accessible to people who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Student interns also were present from Union County College’s Interpreter Training Program. Park attendees visited the DDHH information booth to ask questions about hearing loss and learn about the division’s services. The event was co-sponsored by the New Jersey Relay Service, which also manned an information booth that included the CapTel telephone.

Director's Corner

The *Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing* (DDHH) has participated in several important projects focused on improving the use of appropriate terminology when referring to people who are Deaf and hard of hearing or who have other disabilities. Our division worked with the *New Jersey Law Revision Commission*, which is mandated to continually review and update the statutory law. The Commission's current project is to recommend the replacement of pejorative terms that pertain to persons with hearing loss and other disabilities.

DDHH has recommended the replacement of certain terms that are "outdated." The use of outdated language contributes to perpetuating old stereotypes. For example frequent use is still made of the term "hearing impaired." This term has a negative denotation and refers to something that is broken. Accepted terms are "Deaf and hard of Hearing" or, "hearing loss" (Deaf with a capital "D" is a cultural phenomenon and should be capitalized in these instances). DDHH also recommended that in all cases, person-first language should be used as much as possible.

In addition to the work with the New Jersey Law Revision Commission, DDHH has worked with other entities such as the police to update their policies and use of terminology referring to people who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

Awareness is the first step toward correcting the public's perceptions of people with disabilities. The public needs to use appropriate language in referring to people with disabilities and hearing loss. It is especially important for the media, elected officials, public speakers and others in leadership positions to portray people with disabilities sensitively and realistically.

- David Alexander, Ph.D., Director

DDHH – A Resource for Communication Access for Deaf Individuals

By Catie Purrazzella, Service Coordinator

The *Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing* (DDHH) often functions as an important resource to other divisions of the Department of Human Services that provide services to Deaf adults with additional disabilities.

Case managers, families and legal guardians often contact DDHH when issues arise related to communication access. For example, a facility contracted to provide services for DHS may refuse to provide interpreters for a deaf client, causing that individual to be unable to communicate and/or benefit from services.

DDHH works closely with these facilities to advocate for consumers and to provide solutions to communication issues. This may include not only improving the ASL fluency of providers but also to create an environment where Deaf consumers can equally benefit from services.

DDHH staff also provides consultation in assuring that a client's home and work environment is accessible with technology such as; videophones, strobe smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, doorbell signalers, and other safety devices that are extra audible and visible.

For additional information, contact Catie Purrazzella at Catherine.purrazzella@dhs.state.nj.us or (609) 503-4862.

DDHH Assistive Device Demonstration Centers Move to New Locations

By Jason Weiland, Field Representative

The ***Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing*** (DDHH) is taking steps to move two Assistive Device Demonstration Centers (ADDC) that currently are being housed in Ewing at the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf and Career Success Solutions at Burlington Community College in Mount Holly. The two Centers were quite successful over the years and were used to display the latest technology available to the Deaf and hard of hearing.

The Shomo Center at MKSD named for the late DDHH Division Director, Brian C. Shomo, is being moved to the NJ DDHH Mercerville office. Staff moved to this location in 2013 and found significant space available to host an ADDC within its own walls, which would permit the field representatives to conduct demonstrations by appointment and also provide an opportunity to display the Center after meetings. The opening for this new location is projected for mid-July 2015.

In 2009, NJ DDHH partnered with Career Success Solutions through a NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services grant along with two other Regional Employment Centers located at Goodwill, Industries in Harrison, and Bridge to Employment in Raritan to establish three ADDCs. In addition, the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired provided space to NJ DDHH so we could open our first demonstration center in 2002. The Kohn Center remains our longest running ADDC. Over the years, the Division has noticed a strong need for a demonstration center in the South Jersey area to meet the technology needs of the Deaf and hard of hearing. With the Mercerville office replacing the MKSD location, DDHH currently is looking for a new location to house its former CSS-BCC Center, which is now closed. Locations being considered are Camden, Hammonton, Toms River, and Atlantic City.

For more information about the new Demo Center openings, stay tuned to the *Monthly Communicator*. To make an appointment for the currently open Demo Centers in Harrison, Raritan, and New Brunswick, please contact Jason Weiland at (609) 498-7006 or Jason.weiland@dhs.state.nj.us

Equipment Distribution Program

By Ira Hock

The division just completed its **Annual Equipment Distribution Program**. It started 23 years ago disseminating TTYs to qualified New Jersey residents who needed them. The program has grown substantially through the years to include accessible smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, baby cry signalers, artificial larynx devices, amplified phones, and captioned phones. The most recent upgrade in captioned phones include the 880i model which has enlarged print and the 2400i which is a touch screen with wifi capability.

Information and applications can be found at: <http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/equipment/>. Once we receive the application it may take between four to six weeks to process.

Other Organizations Serving People with Hearing Loss

■ **Hearing Loss Association of America** - Submitted by Joel Strasser. Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey (HLAA-NJ) Joel.Strasser@hearingloss-nj.org

[News, Views and Dates from HLAA-NJ for July 2015](#)

[HLAA-NJ Chapter News](#)

Middlesex County's Plays-in-the-Park;

Offers Sign Language Interpretation, Open Captioning, Audio Description and Sensory Seminars at one performance of each of its 2015 summer productions. See attached link for productions:

- <http://www.playsinthepark.com/index.php/about-us/accessibility-services>



Calendar of Events

Friday, July 31

DDHH Advisory Council Meeting
East Brunswick Public Library
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Speaker: Philip E. Freeman, Assistant Director
Office of the Attorney General, NJ Division on Civil Rights

DDHH Regular Office Hours: Monday – Friday: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
Office closed : Friday, July 3 – Independence Day

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