

Educating about hearing loss

We at KCDHH want to wish all of you a very happy holiday season! During this time of year, we are thankful for so much, and that includes friends and family, the very cornerstone of our lives. We sometimes forget that those interpersonal relationships and the connections forged between generations are very important. At the heart of these connections is communication. We celebrate and give thanks for the many modes of communication available to people with a hearing loss. In that spirit, we encourage the preservation of all cultures within the deaf and hard of hearing community as we promote awareness of those cultures statewide. This process starts with basic education of the population. This fall, KCDHH Executive Director Virginia L. Moore was invited to submit a column about hearing loss and the deaf and hard of hearing community to the State Journal in Frankfort. The following column ran in the State Journal's Nov. 3 edition.



*Virginia L.
Moore
KCDHH
Executive
Director*

Here's a challenge for you the next time you're at a large group gathering. Try to pick out the folks in the room who have a hearing loss.

It's not easy. Not all people with a hearing loss wear hearing aids. Not all deaf people use sign language. As a disability, hearing loss is invisible. It's not as obvious as seeing a person in a wheelchair. But just as that person in a wheelchair needs certain accommodations to access public places like shopping malls, movie theaters and other locations, so too do deaf and hard of hearing people need accommodations for their different communications needs.

There are approximately 694,000 Kentuckians who have a hearing loss, and more than 7,000 of those people live in Franklin County. Currently one in five Americans, or 48 million people, has some degree of hearing loss, according to the Hearing Health Foundation. The National Institutes of Health report that hearing loss is the third most common health issue in America, behind only arthritis and heart disease. It is a myth that hearing loss affects only the aging population and the NIH reports that 65% of people with a hearing loss are under the age of 65. The NIH also reports that one in five American teens will experience hearing loss at a much younger age due to the prevalence of music listening devices like MP3 players and iPods blasting music directly into the ear. Hearing loss is no longer a condition of old age. It affects Americans at all stages of their lives.

Because hearing loss, as a disability, cannot be seen, it leads to much confusion and misconception from the general population. Without proper information, resources and accommodations dealing with a hearing loss can be stressful, frustrating and isolating. Hearing loss does not just affect the individual who has the hearing loss but also their family, friends, coworkers and others they interact with. Fortunately, there are civil rights laws in place to protect the rights of individuals with a hearing loss. There are also resources available to help those individuals deal with communication barriers they face.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures

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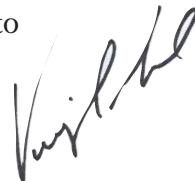
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equal opportunity for persons with disabilities, which includes hearing loss, in employment, state and local government services, public venues, commercial facilities, and transportation. This act affords individuals with a hearing loss the right to work and to have access to the same goods and services the general population has access to. It does not give individuals with disabilities more; it merely gives them equal access to the same goods and services that their hearing counterparts are already getting.

Advances in technology have also opened the doors to deaf and hard of hearing audiences who once were unable to enjoy a trip to the theater with their friends and families because the accommodations they needed — movie captions — were not available, or were not even mandated by law.

That changed with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. According to the ADA, “no individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who owns, leases or operates a place of public accommodation.” It should be noted that the ADA has an undue hardship clause that will exempt any business that can show that providing accommodations would cause undue hardship on their business or otherwise have an adverse effect on their goods and services.

Technology, including telephone equipment, is available to help those with hearing loss enjoy social interactions. The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Telecommunications Access Program exists to put this assistive technology in the hands of those who need it.



Occasionally we need a reminder that not everyone is aware of hearing loss, and this piece is intended not only to educate that population, but to remind those with hearing loss that they are not alone in the deaf and hard of hearing community. Use the message here to help educate friends and family about your hearing loss.

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“Rising with Collaboration”

Leadership comes from within

Recently, KCDHH has been contemplating the question “What can we do to keep the pride and respect of deaf and hard of hearing culture alive?” The commission is looking at all aspects of culture and the individual, and one way we are seeking to help preserve deaf and hard of hearing culture is by promoting partnerships, such as the one undertaken this fall by the Kentucky Association of the Deaf and the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

KCDHH was proud to be a sponsor this fall for the first-ever joint conference between the Kentucky Association for the Deaf and the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

The conference was Sept. 12-14 at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, with the theme “We Rise with Collaboration.” KCDHH Executive Director Virginia L. Moore and several staff members attended multiple workshops.

In addition, at the KAD board meeting members voted to hold the conference jointly on a biennial basis.



From left, Kentucky Association of the Deaf President and KCDHH commission board member Sharon White, National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Executive Director Shane Feldman, National Association of the Deaf President Chris Wagner and Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf President and KCDHH commission board chair Amy Hatzel gather at the first-ever KAD-KyRID joint conference.

National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Executive Director Shane Feldman and National Association of the Deaf President Chris Wagner gave keynote presentations regarding collaboration between the deaf community and the interpreters that work within the community and how common bonds can strengthen both organizations and their

missions. Marvin Miller provided a presentation regarding Deaf Culture and the transition it is facing in today’s society called Deafhood. Austin W. Andrews presented one of the workshops that received the most positive feedback from all attendees, which enlightened and educated all on the strength of American Sign Language (ASL) as a unique language.

SAVE THE DATE!

For this, our 11th production of DeafFestival Kentucky, we are partnering with the events of WorldFest, Aug. 29-31. Join us on Saturday, Aug. 30 for a celebration of deaf culture through art, storytelling, poetry and theatre, and stick around for all the excitement, culture and international flavor of WorldFest!

AUG. 30, 2014 • KENTUCKY CENTER FOR THE ARTS • LOUISVILLE, KY.

www.deafestival.org

Dowd appointed to state advisory panel

KCDHH Executive Staff Advisor Anita Dowd has been appointed to the Kentucky State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) by Gov. Steve Beshear.

Deaf since childhood, Anita is not only an advocate for the deaf and hard of hearing community in her professional life, but as a mother of two girls who also have a hearing loss, she is also extremely passionate about promoting awareness of various deaf and hard of hearing issues in her personal life.

“I am thrilled with the opportunity to work with this group for the next three years. I hope that I can bring input from my personal life as well as my experience with KCDHH to the panel that may influence some positive changes in the education of deaf and hard of hearing students here in Kentucky,” Anita said. “I also hope to glean information from my participation that I can share not only with the various working groups



KCDHH Executive Staff Advisor Anita Dowd is one of the newest appointees to the Kentucky State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children.

at KCDHH but to the deaf and hard of hearing community as well.”

Anita also is the President of Kentucky Hands & Voices, a support organization for families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition to her experience with KCDHH, Anita will bring her extensive work and experience with

Hands & Voices to her SAPEC board position.

Though she has lived with a hearing loss since a young age, it wasn't until she became an adult and a mother that she truly recognized and understood the diverse issues that deaf and hard of hearing people face today. Through her work with the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing she has worked tirelessly to promote awareness of deaf and hard of hearing rights and needs. She advocates a multi-faceted approach to deaf and hard of hearing issues as she firmly believes that there are no “one size fits all” solutions to problems that deaf and hard of hearing people face in their lives.

“Having grown up as a deaf child in the public school system and having two daughters that also have a hearing loss, I am very passionate about deaf and hard of hearing children having the best possible education from day one!”

Six things to know about Kentucky's new area code!

If you live in western Kentucky and your area code is 270, there will be some changes that will affect you when you place phones starting in February 2014.

1. If your area code is 270 right now, it will continue to be 270 in March 2014. Your area code will not change.

2. A new area code, 364, will be added to your area in March 2014. This new area code is called an “overlay area code.” The old area code, 270, will still work. These area codes, 270 and 364, apply to both landline and wireless phone numbers.

3. Since there will be two different area codes in your area, you will need to dial the area code even if the call is local. For example, imagine if your friend who lives in the same town as you had the phone number (270) 555-1234. In the past, you only had to dial 555-1234 and the call would work. However, in February, when the new “overlay area code” is added, if you dial 555-1234, it will not work because the phone system will not know if you mean (270) 555-1234 or (364) 555-1234. Starting in March, if you want to call that friend, you will have to dial (270) 555-1234. This does not mean that the call is long distance and it

does not mean that long distance charges will apply. The call will cost the same as it always has in the past; you just need to specify the area code.

4. Also, starting in February 2014, if you want to make a long distance call, you will have to add the number 1 to the area code and phone number. For example, imagine if you have a friend in another state and his phone number was (555) 666-4321. In the past you would dial (555) 666-4321 and the phone call would work. However, starting in March, it won't work. You will have to start dialing 1-555-666-4321. You must start all long distance calls with a number 1.

5. You will have some time to get used to these changes. Until Jan. 31, if you forget to add the area code to a local call or a number 1 to a long distance call, the call will go through. On Feb. 1, if you forget to add the area code to a local number or a number 1 to a long distance call, the call will not go through.

6. Numbers with area code 364 may be distributed beginning March 3, 2014. Telecommunication service providers may continue to distribute 270 numbers for as long as they have any remaining in their inventories.

Thanks for coming to our Town Hall Meeting in Pikeville!



Next...we're coming to Lexington!

Friday, Jan. 24, 6-8 p.m.
Fairfield Inn, Lexington North
2100 Hackney Place, Lexington, Ky.

Come enjoy good conversation as we talk about issues important to deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians.





KCDHH

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Happy Holidays
from all of us at KCDHH!