Media Contacts: Lisa H. Kornberg
ODHH
410-767-1497 (voice)
410-767-7756 (vp/tty)

Shaun Adamec
Governor's Office
Office: 410-974-2316
Cell: 410-919-3206

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor's Office Recognizes Achievement of Miss Deaf Maryland Winning National Pageant Crown

Baltimore, MD (October 9, 2008) – The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is pleased to recognize the accomplishments of Michelle Lapides, a Frederick resident, who was crowned Miss Deaf America for 2008-2010 at a pageant held on Thursday, July 10, 2008 at the National Association of the Deaf's (NAD) Biennial conference in New Orleans. Lapides, who was crowned Miss Deaf Maryland at the Maryland Association of the Deaf's (MDAD) Conference in November of last year, competed with 22 women from around the country to achieve the honor.

"My sincere congratulations to Ms. Lapides for this great honor," said Governor O'Malley. "Our diversity as a State has earned Maryland the distinction of 'America in miniature.' Ms. Lapides' achievement recognizes that our strength as a people is found not in what divides us, but what unites us as Marylanders."

Lisa Kornberg, Director of ODHH will be presenting Ms. Lapides a Governor's Citation during the upcoming Maryland School for the Deaf's (MSD) Homecoming on October 18th.

"It is an honor to recognize the accomplishments of our youth" Kornberg said, "and to live in a State where educational opportunities promote such outstanding leadership in our deaf community. Our office congratulates Michelle on her achievement and wishes her much success with her reign as Miss Deaf America."

Miss Deaf America is an ambassador for the NAD and a spokeswoman for approximately 28 million deaf and hard of hearing Americans. NAD's Miss Deaf America begins her reign when she wins the pageant and continues until the next NAD conference.

Lapides, a graduate of the Maryland School for the Deaf and a student at Gallaudet University, referred to the experience as "surreal" during an interview on the NAD website. Over the next two years, she will work to increase youth involvement in the NAD by utilizing media, video web logs, and Facebook.

About the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was created in 2001 and represents the Governor and his goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders through providing expertise that enhances the general welfare of Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents.