



MONTHLY BULLETIN

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

CHANGE AT ODHH

We are pleased to announce exciting changes at ODHH. All three of the current staff (Lisa Kornberg, Julie Anne Schafer and Laura Quinn) will be remaining with the office in a full-time capacity. Julie, who recently

graduated from the University of Baltimore School of Law, has accepted additional responsibilities as the Assistant Director and will be focusing primarily on policy, legislative and communication issues for the Office. Laura will be the Special Assistant to the Office, utilizing her 18 years of administrative and fiscal experience to run the day to day operations of the Office.

With a fully staffed agency, ODHH looks forward to continuing its outreach to the communities we serves and to building on partnerships made with other government agencies. The Office is also excited about

increasing its focus on important policy initiatives by investing time and staff into monitoring and analyzing legislation and other policy efforts that affect Marylanders with hearing loss. And, in addition to continuing

its efforts in the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing communities, the Office will expand its focus to conduct more aggressive outreach to the veteran and aging populations with hearing loss.



From left: Schafer, Kornberg, and Quinn.

ODHH is committed to sustaining an agency that brings relevance

to both government and to the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community in Maryland. ODHH is prepared to forge ahead in its efforts to represent the Governor and his goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders by providing expertise that enhances the general welfare of Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents.

their quality of life.

As the theme for the conference, "The Past, The Present, The Future," emphasizes, needs to honor and remember the past while working on a present that creates a future that will sustain the Deaf community in Maryland. The keynote speaker, Dr. James Tucker, Superintendent of Maryland School of the Deaf, will welcome participants at the Opening Ceremony at 9am, on July 24.

During the conference, MDAD will explore (cont. on pg. 4)

ODHH

PROGRAMS

- Awareness Training and Technical Assistance
- Constituent Services
- Community Outreach and Education

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2009 MDAD CONFERENCE: THE PAST, THE PRESENT, THE FUTURE

Plans are well underway for the 2009 Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) Conference—an extraordinary event! This year's conference will be held at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland on July 24 and 25. Attending the MDAD Conference may help you turn your biggest problems into your most significant achievements. There will be more than 14 workshop sessions, where presenters will use their expertise and success stories to provide participants with invaluable information and tools to better

ODHH UPDATES AND DIRECTOR'S CORNER

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all of you for your support during the recent legislative session. Without you, the staffing changes that have occurred at ODHH would not have been possible. Please join me in welcoming Laura and Julie in their newly defined roles. We are looking forward to a productive year together.



On May 19th, I attended the bill signing for HB 1480, which added ODHH to the membership of the Interagency Committee on Aging Services. I am excited to join the Committee and to serve as a representative for senior citizens with hearing loss.

The Office continued to serve deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders by answering over 50 requests for information and referrals, in addition to our aggressive training and outreach

schedule. During May, ODHH conducted an Introduction and Training to State Police Training Directors and also presented One-Stop Center Sensitivity & Awareness Trainings in Baltimore City and Cecil County. We also gave a presentation at DORS about adapting daily communication needs in the workplace. Office staff continued to travel across Maryland to increase awareness about ODHH as a resource for deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders. We exhibited at the World of Possibilities expo in Timonium and attended the Deafnet Deaf Awareness Day event in Hagerstown.

As always, ODHH is here to serve you. Please contact us if we can be of any assistance. Be well,

Lisa



SPOTLIGHT ON: THE DEAF AIDS PROJECT

The Deaf AIDS Project (DAP) was created nineteen years ago in response to a dire need for HIV/AIDS education in the deaf community. Since DAP's inception in 1990 under former director Harry Woosley, Jr., the mission of the project has remained the same: to educate the Deaf and hard of hearing community about HIV, methods of transference and resources available to HIV-positive clients and their families. DAP is a government grant project under the non-profit organization Family Service Foundation, Inc. Although there have been amazing developments since 1990 concerning accessibility, facilitation and care available to both HIV positive and negative Deaf clients, there is a vital need for continued HIV education to community members and human service agencies who are ignorant to the distinct cultural and linguistic needs of the Deaf community.

Although DAP works tirelessly to educate and test community members, studies still show that there is a lack of understanding and comprehension about HIV in the Deaf community, leading to a higher prevalence of HIV among members of the community. Recent data shows that Deaf people are on average twice as likely to contract HIV as their hearing counterparts, which is why education about safer sex practices a valuable tool for decreasing the spread of HIV within the community. There is a negative stigma surrounding HIV testing causing people to

feel that being tested makes them automatically guilty of participating in risky behaviors. However, this is not true. The CDC recommends that all sexually active persons be tested every six months.



DAP says that to its knowledge, Maryland is the only state in the country that asks about "hearing status" on the testing encounter forms. Recently, DAP successfully lobbied the AIDS Administration to delegate a code for "ASL" under the language section. The DAP is making significant progress, and encourages community members to become more involved.

DAP services include HIV testing, as well as HIV test counseling in ASL, throughout the State of Maryland. They educate health care providers and interpreters about AIDS in the Deaf community and provide recommendations and support for addressing challenges. In addition, DAP educates members of the Deaf community about HIV and is working toward developing a culturally competent HIV prevention curriculum specifically for the Deaf community.

If you are interested in setting up a presentation, volunteering, testing, referrals, condom distribution, or more information please don't hesitate to contact Sylvie Soulier at ssoulier@fsfinc.org or check out the DAP website at www.deafnonprofit.net/dap/.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

The mission of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations (MCHR) is to ensure equal opportunity to all who live in, work in, or visit Maryland. The Commission also provides educational and outreach programs designed to improve human relations in the State.

Ensuring Equal Access to Employment, Housing, and Places of Public Accommodation

Maryland's anti-discrimination laws are administered and enforced by the Commission under Article 49B, Annotated Code of Maryland. Maryland protects those within its borders from discrimination in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation.

Protected Classes

Article 49B prohibits discrimination against individuals because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, genetic information and, in housing, familial status.

Filing a Complaint

Any individual who believes that they have been unlawfully discriminated against may file a complaint with the Commission in person, by telephone, by mail, or online. After a complaint is filed, the Commission may commence an investigation to determine whether unlawful discrimination has occurred.

Mediation Services

Mediation is strongly encouraged by the Commission after a complaint is filed. Mediation is an informal negotiating process for settling disputes. The goal is to assist both parties in exploring issues and to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of those issues. Mediation is voluntary, confidential, and allows both parties to speak for themselves and to make their own decisions. Mediation is offered as a free service and is conducted by trained volunteers who are not employees of the Commission.

Investigating Discrimination Complaints

If mediation is not successful or attempted, an investigation is commenced by the Commission to determine whether there is evidence that the law has been violated. Investigations that find no violation of the law are dismissed with not further action taken. If an investigation finds a probable violation of the law, an attempt is made to resolve the matter by conference, conciliation and persuasion, prior to instituting legal action.

Legal Action and Remedies

If conciliation of the unlawful conduct is not successful, the

case is reviewed by the Executive Director and may be referred to the Commission Attorney to file a lawsuit based on the complaint and the results of the investigation. The matter is filed with the Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings, or if elected by one of the parties in a Housing case, the State Circuit Court. In an employment case, remedies may include hiring or reinstatement, back wages and lost benefits. In a housing case, a proven violator of the law may be ordered to sell or lease the housing unit to the complainant, and to pay compensatory damages. Civil penalties may also be assessed and paid to the State General Fund. In cases involving places of public accommodation, cease and desist orders and civil penalties may be imposed.

Education and Outreach Services

MCHR's vision is to have a state which is free of any unlawful discrimination. To move closer to this goal, the Commission is committed to raising awareness of discrimination and its impact, and helping to identify and change attitudes that cause discrimination.

The MCHR offers the following at no charge:

- Diversity training;
- Sexual harassment prevention;
- Discrimination law;
- Gender issues;
- Hate crimes response and prevention;
- Speaker referrals, conflict resolution and team-building workshops;
- Consultation with complainants, respondents, and other interested persons to resolve problems relating to discrimination;
- Consultation on development of community education programs aimed at preventing discrimination;
- Staff assistance in planning and facilitating conference, seminars, workshops and public meeting.

Locations

MHRC has offices located in Baltimore, Hagerstown, Cambridge, Salisbury, and Leonardtown. For more information, or for the contact information for your local office, visit www.mchr.maryland.gov.

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DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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ODHH ON THE MOVE

June 2009

ODHH Advisory Council Meeting
Tuesday, June 2, 2 PM— 5 PM
MDOT Headquarters
Hanover, MD

MSD Family Fun Fest
Sunday, June 7, 11 AM— 3 PM
Maryland School for the Deaf
Ellicott City, MD

Brown Bag Lunch
Thursday, June 18, 11 AM— 1 PM
Kennedy Krieger Institute
Baltimore, MD

Six Flags Deaf Awareness Day
Saturday, June 20, 10:30 AM— 9PM
Six Flags America
Largo, MD

Deafblind Camp
Sunday-Friday, June 7-12
West River Camping Center
West River, MD

July 2009

MDAD Biennial Conference
Friday and Saturday, July 24-25
Hood College
Frederick, MD



MDAD CONFERENCE (CONT.)

(cont. from pg. 1)

the history of the deaf community, facilitate an understanding of how technology will impact the future, and discuss the future of the Maryland deaf community.

But if you think the MDAD Conference is all business and no fun, you are wrong! MDAD will host the Miss Deaf Maryland pageant on Friday night from 7 to 9 PM, an exciting event for all. As you may know, the current Miss Deaf Maryland went on to become Miss Deaf America in New Orleans last summer. The fun does not stop there—on Saturday night MDAD welcomes a number of talented deaf entertainers who will wow participants with their exhilarating performances. Also on Saturday night,

join MDAD for the “You Sure?” game show, modeled after, “Deal or No Deal”.

Be sure to check out the exhibitions, held on Friday and Saturday, to learn about new technologies, organizations and agencies that may be of benefit to you, and to support many deaf-owned and deaf-friendly businesses in the Maryland area. These businesses and non-profit organizations are what keep MDAD strong and preserve the future for all Deaf Marylanders.

Do not miss out the fun! Register today on the conference website at www.mdadconference.org. For more information, please contact Tessa Volak, Director of Public Relations, at pr@mdad.tv or visit the conference website for more details.

Deaf? Have a problem with drugs or alcohol? Want sign 12-step and support meetings? Deaf Off Drugs and Alcohol (DODA) offers deaf 12-Step and support meetings led by deaf facilitators. All you need is a computer with a web-cam, high-speed internet, and an email account.

If interested, or for more information, contact Mandie Roseberry:

(866) 326-4761 (VP)

(937) 222-2400, ext. 239 (V)

Amanda.roseberry@wright.edu

DODA Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday, All Day: Open Chat

Wednesday, 2 PM-3 PM: 12-Step

Thursday, 7 PM-8 PM: 12-Step

Saturday, All Day: Open Chat

Sunday, 6 PM-7 PM: Women's Group