



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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GOVERNOR O'MALLEY SIGNS LEGISLATION THAT

BENEFITS PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS IN MARYLAND

Governor Martin O'Malley today joined Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr., House Speaker Michael E. Busch, and Lieutenant Governor Anthony G. Brown, to sign into law two bills that will have a significant impact on Marylanders with hearing loss.

The first, Senate Bill 68 (crossfiled as House Bill 1501) requires a place of public accommodation, on request, to keep closed captioning activated on any closed-captioning television receiver that is in use during regular hours in any public area. Places of public accommodation are excluded from this requirement if (1) no television receiver of any kind is available in the public area or (2) the only public television receiver available in the public area is not a closed-captioning receiver. With the signing of this legislation, Maryland becomes the first State in the nation to make it a civil rights violation to refuse to activate closed captioning upon request.

"This is landmark legislation, not only for Marylanders with hearing loss, but for the estimated 17 million Americans with hearing loss around the country," said Lisa Kornberg, Director of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). "By signing this legislation, Governor O'Malley reaffirms his commitment to people with hearing loss in the State and fulfills his promise that there is no such thing as a spare Marylander."



Governor O'Malley signing SB 68 on May 4, 2010.

The second bill amends the definition of "deaf and hard of hearing individuals" within ODHH's statute to include individuals who are deafblind. The bill also increases the roster for the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing from 16 to 18 members, adding a member with knowledge about deafblind individuals and a representative from the Department of Aging.

In the past year, the O'Malley-Brown Administration has shown tremendous leadership in promoting equal access for Marylanders with hearing loss. In August, in consultation with ODHH and Maryland Relay, Governor O'Malley sent a letter to the entire Maryland delegation to the United States Congress asking them to support H.R. 3101 - the Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2009 and asked the members to work for its swift passage. This bill would ensure that individuals with hearing loss have access to emerging Internet Protocol-based communication and video programming technologies.

For a wrap up of legislative session in ASL, visit <http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/updates.html>.

ODHH Updates and Director's Corner



ODHH Director
Lisa H. Kornberg

What a month it has been here at ODHH! On May 4th, Governor O'Malley signed both departmental bills submitted by ODHH during the 2010 legislative session. (page 1) We also hosted town hall meetings in Cecil and Washington Counties to receive public comments on the quality of state services and programs; ODHH-related functions and operations; and any other issues that affect deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals. Next month we will be travelling to St. Mary's County to host another town hall meeting and hope to see many of you there!

We also began work on four new vlogs that will be posted to the ODHH website in the next month. I want to thank Shane Feldman of Frederick County and Jessica Thurber of Montgomery County for volunteering their time to assist ODHH in this important project. If you are interested in assisting ODHH by signing vlogs for our website, contact me at lkornberg@gov.state.md.us and let me know. I look forward to working with you.

ODHH staff also continued our sensitivity and awareness training program with the local police departments, put the final touches on our five-year strategic plan (to be unveiled next month), and added a new section to the ODHH website specifically for veterans with hearing loss. It has been a busy month indeed!

Lisa

Captionfish Creators Partner with Deaf Politics

DeafCode, LLC and Deaf Politics (DP) have announced an exclusive partnership to develop and launch a Deaf Politics website for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Currently, DP operates primarily through Facebook and Twitter updates, serving as a forum to post and discuss current political news. These updates provide easy access to political information, both in text and video formats, on a vast array of political issues, not just those directly-related to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. But this is just the beginning.

Founded in 2009 by three deaf internet professionals with 30 years of combined experience, DeafCode LLC's mission is to utilize their expertise to build applications that are targeted at the deaf and hard of hearing community. They are responsible for the development and management of Captionfish (<http://captionfish.com>), a captioned movies search engine that delivered over half a million accessible show times across the nation in its first year of existence. DeafCode is based in Seattle, WA. For more information, visit <http://www.deafcode.com>.

"When I established Deaf Politics in March, I had a clear goal of eventually launching a website that would serve as an information hub for the deaf community," said DP Founder Jessica Thurber. "The response and support from the community has been tremendous," Thurber continued, "We have over 700 fans on Facebook and the number keeps growing. The need for a website is clear and I'm thrilled the team at DeafCode sees the potential of Deaf Politics and is willing to make the website a reality."

"When Jessica Thurber first approached us with the opportunity to get involved with Deaf Politics, there was no hesitation on our part," agreed Brendan Gramer, of DeafCode. "The vision that Jess presented to us was intriguing. We couldn't say no to the idea of expanding into yet another area of community awareness and involvement, especially into an arena in which we feel resources for the deaf community have been somewhat lacking. We are absolutely thrilled about the notion of building a platform on which individuals will feel empowered to interact, communicate, and take action more effectively around important political issues, both inside and outside of the community."

The DP website will encourage the community to participate in the information-sharing via blogging, vlogging, and commenting. The website will also provide users with ways to take action. DeafPolitics.org is projected to launch in beta during 3Q 2010.



Special Thanks to ODHH Interns

Each year, ODHH welcomes interns from area colleges to help strengthen students' job skills by integrating training with closely related practical work experiences. Though their work often happens "behind the scenes," these interns make significant contributions to ODHH's goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, ODHH welcomed three seniors from Towson University: Michelle Plewes, Kerry Maier, and Jennifer Ryan. These interns worked tirelessly to assist ODHH in improving the quality of life for Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind residents. All three women graduated from the Deaf Studies Program on May 19, 2010 and have big plans for their futures.

Michelle Plewes, who worked primarily on issues related to access to behavioral health services, will be attending Gallaudet University's Masters of Social Work program in the fall. After graduate school, Michelle intends to become an LCSWC and have her own private practice.

Kerry Hiett came to the Office with a passion for advocacy and assisted with many of ODHH's legislative projects. She is starting the Interpreter Preparation Program at CCBC-Catonsville next fall and hopes to become an interpreter and work in deaf advocacy.

A certified EMT and Honors College student, **Jennifer Ryan** interned with ODHH to combine her medical expertise with her desire to educate people with hearing loss about emergency preparedness. She also worked on projects that will help inform first responders about the unique needs of people with hearing loss. Jenn will attend UMBC in the fall to pursue her Master's in Emergency Health Services.

From the staff at ODHH: Thank you Michelle, Kerry, and Jenn for all of your hard work! We congratulate you on your accomplishments and wish you nothing but the best in your already bright futures.



Intern Kerry Hiett gives Commencement speech for the College of Health Professions at TU.

CSSD Deaf-Blind Day Program

Community Support Services for the Deaf, Inc. (CSSD, Inc.) now offers day programming that specializes in providing a fresh and creative approach to traditional day services for individuals who are Deaf-Blind.

The program's site is located at CSSD, Inc.'s Norwood Recreational Center in Woodlawn, Maryland. The Traditional Day Habilitation Program for the Deaf-Blind provides the specialized support individuals who are Deaf-Blind need to become successful and productive in their daily lives. Community interaction and volunteer work are the program's primary goals, with a focus on activities that are socially and educationally based. Activities are creative and designed to expand the imagination and talent of each individual. Trips and leisure activities in the community are offered on a regular basis. In their center they work on several community-based projects such as The Kibble Connection, which is a program developed by Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland to assist in feeding the pets of clients that receive home delivered meals. CSSD, Inc.'s day program is responsible for the preparation and assembly of pet food care packages that are delivered monthly by Meals on Wheels volunteers. The individuals in the Deaf-Blind program also create greeting cards seasonally for each recipient of a pet care package. This in-house activity allows the individuals to touch the lives of many people in the community. In addition, the program offers professional consultants for mobility, communication, Braille, and musical education.

All staff are specially trained to provide services to individuals who are Deaf-Blind. For more information please contact Noel Morphet at NMorphet@gmail.com.





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ODHH on the Move

June 2010

Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Quarterly Meeting
Tuesday, June 8, 11 AM –2 PM
MDOT Headquarters
Hanover, MD

St. Mary's County Town Hall Meeting
Tuesday, June 22, 1 PM - 3 PM
Northern Senior Activity Center
Charlotte Hall, MD



July 2010

State Directors Meeting
Tuesday, July 6
Philadelphia Marriott—Downtown
Philadelphia, PA

National Association of the Deaf Biennial Conference
Wednesday, July 7– Saturday July 10
Philadelphia Marriott—Downtown
Philadelphia, PA



ODHH will be closed on July 5th in observance of Independence Day

MSD Wins National Academic Bowl Championship

For the second time in school history, the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick, Maryland claimed victory at Gallaudet University's National Academic Bowl championship tournament held April 25-26, 2010 in the university's Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center. This year's Maryland team of Andrew Biskupiak, Todd Bonheyo, Christy Hediger, Asher



Kirschbaum, and Ethan Sonnenstrahl soundly defeated the Metro Deaf School/Metro Deaf School-Minnesota North Star Academy team, which placed second among the 16 teams competing for the national title.

The Frederick team's triumph comes as no surprise to many long-time Academic Bowl watchers since the Maryland School for the Deaf has competed in the national championship eight times. "We are

proud of all the teams in this year's tournament," said Sherry Duhon, Gallaudet Academic Bowl Coordinator. "Although only one team wins top honors, all share in the sense of accomplishment that comes with being in the national championship."

The Maryland School for the Deaf's triumph follows three months of regional competitions involving 76 teams of deaf and hard of hearing students from all-deaf, as well as mainstream, high schools all over the country. The three highest ranking teams [plus one at-large team] from those matches challenged each other in the national contest at Gallaudet.



There is a new video posted on the State of Maryland's YouTube that describes the process of applying for and receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits from the State of Maryland. The captions for this video have been edited by ODHH staff to ensure accuracy. To view this or any other video from the State of Maryland, visit Channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/StateMaryland>. ODHH is reviewing the captions for all videos and editing them when necessary to make sure they are correct and complete.

More of Governor O'Malley's captioned videos, including his State of the State address (also in ASL) are available on the ODHH website at <http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/video.html>.