



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE  
DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

## ODHH Monthly Bulletin

Oct/Nov 2011

### A message from Director Lisa Kornberg

We may be getting ready to "fall back," but ODHH continues to move forward on issues important to Marylanders with hearing loss. In this issue, you will learn about the many exciting projects going on at ODHH and around the State that improve the quality of life for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind.

On November 11, we celebrate Veterans Day. The purpose of Veterans Day is to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. Did you know that hearing loss is one of the most common service-connected disabilities? ODHH is committed to ensuring that all veterans with hearing loss have access to the programs and services they need. See the "FYI" for more information about service-connected hearing loss.

Finally, at the end of the month, many of us will celebrate Thanksgiving. The staff at ODHH is thankful for you and your continued support of this office. We couldn't do the work we do without you. From all of us, thank you!

Until Next Month,  
-Lisa

### In This Issue

**[The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Announce New Communication Aid for First Responders](#)**

**[ODHH Partners with the Maryland Department of Transportation to Recognize Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)**

**[ODHH Bids Farewell to Special Assistant Laura Quinn](#)**

**[Spotlight On: The Metro Washington Association of the Deaf-Blind](#)**

### The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Announce New Communication Aid for First Responders



The purpose of Deaf Awareness Week, also known as International Week of the Deaf, is to celebrate the culture, heritage, and language unique to Deaf people of the world. The intent of the week is to show the diversity, accomplishments, and potential of the Deaf community. As a part of Deaf Awareness Week, Marylanders are encouraged to increase awareness, understanding, and support for individuals who are Deaf.

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA), in



### **Support for Veterans with Hearing Loss**

The Department of Veterans Affairs reports hearing damage is the most common disability for veterans. An estimated 58,000 veterans have returned from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom with hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears). That damage is permanent for many veterans.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) was established in 2001 to provide expertise related to Marylanders with hearing loss and to facilitate their ability of access resources and services. This includes providing information and support for Maryland's servicemen and women who have lost their hearing.

Quick Facts about Veterans and Hearing Loss:

- Exposure to more than 85 decibels continuously or 140 decibels for any

partnership with the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), the Frederick Police Department, the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission, and Johns Hopkins University Division of Public Safety Leadership, today announce the development of a "point to picture" communications aid for first responders. The development and production of this communications aid was made possible through a grant received by the MCPA through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

"The communications aid is filled with illustrations that are easily understood by individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as persons with limited English proficiency," said Chief Bernard Gerst, President of MCPA. "While this booklet does not replace the use of a qualified interpreter, it does improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the first responder's attempts to obtain critical information," he added.

"Both first responders and members of the deaf and hard of hearing community were sharing concerns with my office about communicating in emergency situations," said Lisa Kornberg, Director of ODHH. "When we approached MCPA with the idea for this project, they immediately began working with us," Kornberg continued, "MCPA is truly committed to serving the needs of all members of the community and ODHH is honored to have worked with them on such an important and valuable project."

The communications aid was developed by Maryland School for the Deaf graduate Bobby Harris, who first started working on the project as an intern at the Frederick Police Department back in 2008. Over the last few months, Bobby has worked as a consultant on the grant project, making changes so the booklet is more versatile and can be used across the state. The communications aid and training materials are currently being distributed to agencies with law enforcement officers and first responders across the State.

## ODHH Partners with the Maryland Department of Transportation to Recognize Disability Employment Awareness Month

In observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, ODHH partnered with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to deliver Sensitivity and Awareness training about people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind to MDOT employees.

Robin Underwood, Title VI and ADA Program Manager for MDOT, coordinated seven training sessions for several different modules within the Department. As a result, nearly 300 employees from the MDOT Headquarters, the Maryland Aviation Administration, Maryland Port Administration, Maryland Transit Administration, and Motor Vehicle Administration were trained on how to interact with customers and employees who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind.

It is through the ongoing provision of information, training, and technical assistance that ODHH is able to increase the awareness and sensitivity of government agencies about the accessibility needs of the Marylanders we serve. We are grateful to MDOT for their commitment to improving access for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. If you would like more information about our training program or would like to request a training session from ODHH, please [contact Assistant Director Julie Anne Schafer](#).

## ODHH Bids Farewell to Special Assistant Laura Quinn



After nearly four years at ODHH, Special Assistant Laura Quinn left our Office to begin a new position with the Governor's Office of Financial Administration. Laura has been an invaluable asset to ODHH and to Marylanders who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind during her time with the Office. Many of you receive the email announcements she so diligently sent out but may not know all of the hard work she did "behind the

length of time can damage hearing. A rifle can produce 160 decibels of sound.

- According to military audiology reports, 60% of US personnel exposed to the powerful roadside blasts suffer permanent hearing loss and 49% also suffer from tinnitus.
- Currently, there are more than 445,000 veterans receiving compensation for hearing loss associated with military service, and 395,000 receiving compensation for service-related tinnitus.

If you are a veteran with hearing loss and have questions about the programs and services available to you, please feel free to contact ODHH or [visit our webpage dedicated to veterans](#).

### Quick Links

[ODHH Website](#)



[Contact Us](#)

[Maryland.gov](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

## ODHH on the Move

### Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Open House

Sat, November 5  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Charlotte Hall Veterans Home  
Charlotte Hall, MD

[Walk4Hearing](#)  
Sun, November 6

scenes." Laura single-handedly captioned all of the Governor's YouTube videos while responding to constituent requests for information, providing trainings to government agencies, and managing the day-to-day operations of the office.

While Laura is sad to be leaving us, it is for reasons of professional growth and development. We hope you will join us in wishing her the best of luck in her new position and best wishes in all of her future endeavors. Laura, you will be missed!

## Spotlight on: The Metro Washington Association of the Deaf-Blind



MWADB, the Metropolitan Washington Association of the Deaf-Blind, Inc., is a social non-profit organization of people who are Deaf-Blind, and their friends, in the greater DC regional area. The purpose of the organization is to encourage, recognize, and promote the needs of Deaf-Blind people in pursuit of economic security, social equality, access to community resources, and privileges as citizens via community, leadership, communication and mobility, and technology.

The 27 year old organization presents social events on a variety of activities, including guest presentations, workshops, potlucks, and educational tours in the DC area. MWADB's members are very friendly and will happily share their unique experiences with you if you want to understand more about people who are Deaf-Blind. Support Service Providers (SSPs) are welcome to join and help by providing visual communication and mobility access via MWADB gatherings.

There is one meeting left for calendar year 2011: November 12 - Thanksgiving Dinner/Election/Awards.

For anyone who wants more information or to get announcements of the organization's social events, please [contact Bruce Denhart](#). You can also visit [MWADB's website](#) for more information.

### Questions? Comments? Contact:

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Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 217 E. Redwood Street | Suite 1300 | Baltimore | MD | 21202

10 AM - Noon  
Tidal Basin  
Washington, D.C.

### **ODHH Town Hall Meeting**

Fri, November 11  
11 AM - Noon  
Maryland School for the Deaf - Columbia Campus  
Columbia, MD

### **Maryland Association of the Deaf Conference**

Fri, November 11 - Sat,  
November 12  
Maryland School for the Deaf - Columbia Campus  
Columbia, MD



Try it FREE today.