

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services to Acquire Muskegon center by October 1, 2009

Two neighboring agencies, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Connection (D/HHC) based in Muskegon, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) centered in Grand Rapids, held several meetings with local advocates, sign language interpreters and other stakeholders from both geographic areas. All came to a mutual agreement that DHHS will incorporate D/HHC's current services into its overall operations as of October 1, 2009 so that services for individuals along the lakeshore will continue uninterrupted. Implementation of a detailed transition plan is underway.

The recent departure of the D/HHC director created the opportunity to explore synergies and find better ways to serve each population. Katie Prins, current Executive Director of DHHS, will oversee the transition and serve in that same capacity for this regional entity. All local communities



July 1, 2009: 84 Seaway Drive, Muskegon, MI 49444. 231-733-6208 (v) & 231-733-6245 (fax).

on the entire western side of the state will access DHHS' regional center in Muskegon with appropriate staff on hand to assist their needs. All staff will be familiar with deaf culture and sign language as a primary mode of communication at the Muskegon center. In July, the office relocated to 84 Seaway, which DHHS will continue to assume in its entirety on October 1.

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New collaboration between DHHS and Pine Rest for Mental Health program

Since Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services became fully independent in the winter of 2008, we created a new relationship with Pine Rest (www.pinerest.org) in April to provide mental

health and substance/narcotics abuse assistance to deaf and hard of hearing persons in Kent County. DHHS employed Mark Harrison MSW, who is deaf and from Rochester,

NY, to head the program at DHHS as a supports coordinator. He works under the discretion of the DHHS executive director with Pine Rest's clinical manager,

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*Bettye Jo Zielinski
Accountant/Bookkeeper*

*Dennis Barth
Hearing Assistance
Outreach Specialist*

*Mark Harrison MSW
Mental Health Sup-
ports Coordinator*

*Karen Stephenson
Job Development/Job
Placement Specialist*

*Darlene Myers &
Kathy Klinge
Receptionists*



Thank you, Sorenson VRS and Harris Communications, for your contribution at Silent Celebration!

RECOGNITION OF THE QUARTER

Sandy Faulkner is our Volunteer of the Quarter. Sandy has worked with the mental health program for the past 3 years as a guide and intermediary, and is our Advocate Specialist as well. She has worked with many deaf people going through difficult times or understanding what is going on with specific situations in their lives.

The DHHS family thanks you from the bottom of our hearts.



How cool is the Ubi Duo? We would like to get two for our agency! It helps with communication in the workplace. Call us at 616-732-7358 if you are interested in donating one for our agency.

2009 Silent Celebration raises \$2,400

The Silent Celebration, which has been a tradition with DHHS for a long time, took place at Johnson Park on June 13, 2009. It rained a little but it did not stop 140 people from attending.

The Board and staff volunteered their time and contributed food for the event. Sorenson Communications and

Harris Communications set up a booth. Kids played games and won prizes. Everyone enjoyed hot dogs, brats, chips, and popcorn courtesy of Celebration Cinema. But the biggest excitement was having **Rosemary Nelson** win a 32-inch flat-screen TV during a raffle!!

Thank you to all who



made this event a huge success. We look forward to a bigger Silent Celebration on June 12, 2010! Reserve the date!

From the Desk of the Executive Director

I wanted to welcome you all personally to our new building and our staff that is here to assist you with any need.

I know change is never easy to go through, especially from the outside looking in, but thanks to all of you who encouraged and continue to have faith in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services as we set up a new place and mission statement to better reflect the deaf and hard of hearing community in Western Michigan. The support was uniquely overwhelming and our

board, staff and partners played a large part in making this transition happen.

As a deaf person, I understand the struggles deaf and hard of hearing people go through. For each small step it takes to be heard for our rights and accessibility, and to be recognized as any other citizen, that means one giant leap in the hearing community. There has been rapid progress here.

Our programs have stayed the same and, as any non-profit agency, we are always allowing room for improvement

and opportunities to serve all deaf and hard of hearing individuals. With the addition of a new regional center in Muskegon this October 2009, we hope you will join us in becoming a collaborative community on this side of the state. Things don't change overnight but we always make sure we forge ahead with our programs and ensure things work in deaf and hard of hearing people's favor.

Warm wishes,
Katie Prins, MBA
Executive Director

Hearing Assistance Outreach program expands to serve customers with all types of hearing loss

The program, formerly known as the Hard of Hearing program at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, serves any deaf or hard of hearing persons over the age of 60 with hearing aids, adaptive equipment, and consultation, as long as they fit the income and age criteria for assistance. This is made possible

through Kent County Senior Millage funding. Dennis Barth, who is our Hearing Assistance Outreach Specialist I, and Cindy Hall, our Outreach Specialist II, are both hard of hearing. They know first-hand the struggles a person with hearing loss faces, whether they're deaf, hard of hearing or late-

deafened.

While Cindy gives presentations, Dennis assists clients in the office.

United Way, MRS, and Quota have been wonderful assets to the program for persons under the age of 60 or employed and in need of assistive equipment or consultation.



Muskegon continued from page 1...

Both parties agreed that the ultimate goal of a regional presence by a sole agency will create a consistent service model. The measure of that success in Muskegon will be seen in such areas as providing highly qualified sign language interpreters, job development and

placement services, hard of hearing assistance, ASL classes, advocacy and training seminars Inclusion is the goal pointing to an economic benefit for communities who recognize the widespread incidence of deafness and growing numbers of individuals who are

hard of hearing.

DHHS would like to recognize and thank John McKendry Sr. and his wife for putting forth into action their dreams of services for the deaf and hard of hearing in the Muskegon region, and we will do our best to continue that relationship.

“DHHS has done an incredible job bringing the business to a whole new level and continuing strong with its stakeholders in the community.”
- DHHS consumer

Pine Rest continued from page 1....

Sheri Rodriguez, who knows sign language and has been a huge asset to the program and the clients. We currently have 21 clients – mainly adults – and look forward to many new opportunities with

the mental health program in the near future, including family services and children services. All clients have to go through Network 180 for referral first to DHHS. Contact Mark Harrison at mharri-son@deafhhs.org for any

questions about our program or if you feel you may need assistance. He will give you more information about Network 180 and how you can get services with DHHS through them.

In June, Family Research Council donated money to DHHS in honor of **Susan Sterenberg**, who passed away in 2007. DHHS expresses gratitude from the bottom of our hearts for your generous contribution and cherishing her memory.

Peter Cook visits Grand Rapids; gives hilarious performance and interpreter training workshop

Peter Cook, who is a renowned deaf comedian and performer, as well as a workshop instructor, travels all across the country and the world, making people laugh and learn about deaf culture and interpreting.

On March 20-21, he stopped in Grand Rapids.

Cook said it was one of the very few cities he



Cook giving a performance in GR.

has visited that deaf and hard of hearing people have shown such kindness and hospitality towards him.

Cook gave a performance as a fundraiser for DHHS on March 20 at Pine Rest—Postma Conference Center. Approximately 75 people attended. The following day he gave an

all-day workshop mainly for interpreters and ITP students, focusing on ASL classifiers. The workshop was maxed to capacity. DHHS and WMRID raised \$2,000 for the weekend-long events. DHHS plans to invite Peter Cook back again for spring 2010! Watch for details in the future.



1st Annual DHHS Kids Kamp Kick-Off!

Kids Kamp made its debut on June 23, 2009 with at least 20 kids between the ages of 2-12. The kids are deaf, KODAs, kids of interpreters, aunts or uncles who may be deaf. The Kamp has special visitors every week, ranging from Sensory Sa-

fari to Paws with a Cause to a circus, with Kraft Korner, Signing Time, and outside activities that encourage sign language as its primary mode of communication. The kids love it and the volunteers all have a good time.

Kamp runs two times a week for four weeks from June 23 to July 16 at DHHS. It costs \$25 per household. Call us for more information at 616-732-7358. We look forward to a wonderful Kamp experience with you in 2010!

Donate to DHHS as a gift for or in honor of someone

If you want to honor someone's memory, celebrate a special time in a person's life, or give money as a gift on behalf of a loved one, DHHS is a wonderful opportunity for you to do so. We are glad to receive donations to keep the agency running. The person will be mentioned in the newsletter. The person's name will be on a plaque in the conference room once the capital campaign is complete, and a card of gratitude will be sent to you by the DHHS executive

Director. If you want to make a gift contribution on behalf of someone, we will send that person a personal card. Please include the name and address of the person you want to send the card to, who the gift is from, and any greeting or personal note you want on the card.

You may donate money through check or money order to P.O. Box 8812, Kentwood, MI 49518-8812 or phone in with your credit card number.

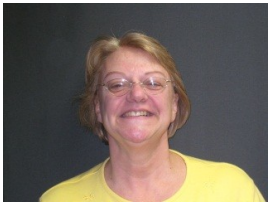
DHHS Staff



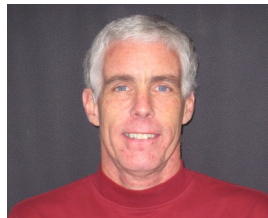
Katie Prins, Executive Director



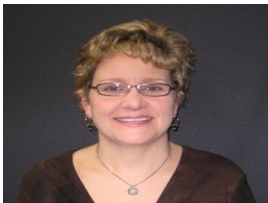
Dennis Barth, Hearing Assistance Outreach Specialist



Deb Atwood, Business Manager



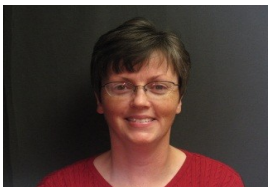
Mark Harrison, Mental Health Supports Coordinator



Bettye Jo Zielinski, Accountant/Bookkeeper



Karen Stephenson, Job Development/Job Placement Specialist



Nan Soper, Interpreter Referral

Receptionists: Darlene Myers and Kathy Klinge

2009 Events

Mark your calendar!

June 23—July 16—Kids Kamp at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

July 16—MADHH presents ASL Night at the Lugnuts at 7 p.m.

July 24-26—Grat Lakes Deaf Leadership Camp in Ortonville, MI by Michigan Deaf Association

September 15-17—ASL I-IV and Conversational ASL start for 12 weeks at Crossroads Middle School and DHHS

September 18—Open House at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

September 26—"Fill Our Ears with Support" 1st annual gala at Pine Rest—Postma Center

October 1—D/HHC will officially become DHHS—Muskegon. We will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

December 5—DHHS will have a booth at ASL Expo in Lansing.

Did you know in Michigan....

- *The Quality Assurance (QA) testing for interpreters is starting again in October 2009? It will be in Lansing.*
- *The state of Michigan now requires at least 3 board of directors for a non-profit agency?*
- *We have a director for DODHH that replaced Chris Hunter last year? Her name is Sheryl Emery. Welcome, Sheryl!*
- *MDA (Michigan Deaf Association) will have a statewide convention in Bay City from August 26-29, 2009.*

New building location and logo for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services!

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services went through a transformation since summer of 2008. The community and stakeholders are taking more notice of our agency and more

resources are becoming available for DHHS to use towards deaf and hard of hearing customers. We moved into a new building in December 2008 and created a new logo to bet-

ter reflect our services in the Western Michigan area. We constantly continue to seek funding to cover building and staff expenses. Your support is valuable.






**Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Services**

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Your business tag line here.



Organization



Visit us on the Web!
www.deafhhs.org

Capital Campaign Launch at 1st annual “Fill Our Ears With Support” Gala in Fall

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services has a two-year land contract for an awesome building that is a first for the deaf community to call a “center of their own.” It houses 10 private offices and an open area for workshops, conferences, presentations, and social events.

DHHS has a goal of purchasing the building at the end of the two-year land contract in November 2010.

Our 1st Annual Gala, which will be held on Saturday, September 26, 2009, at Pine Rest—Postma Center is expected to draw a large crowd. Tickets will go on sale August 1. Reservations can be made with our front desk at 616-732-7358 (v) or 616-828-0186 (VP) prior to August 1.

The main purpose of the Gala is to launch a capital campaign for the building. All

proceeds go directly to our campaign. We will have booths exhibiting our programs, a keynote speaker (to be announced), slideshows of past and present activities and achievements at DHHS, with a formal dinner to follow. More information will be released by the end of July.

Thank you for your continued support in DHHS!

Do you want to sponsor our Gala?

We have Deluxe, Premier and Standard Levels of sponsorship. Contact Katie Prins at kprins@deafhhs.org on more details about all levels and what packages they include. We look forward to seeing you at the Gala on September 26, 2009!