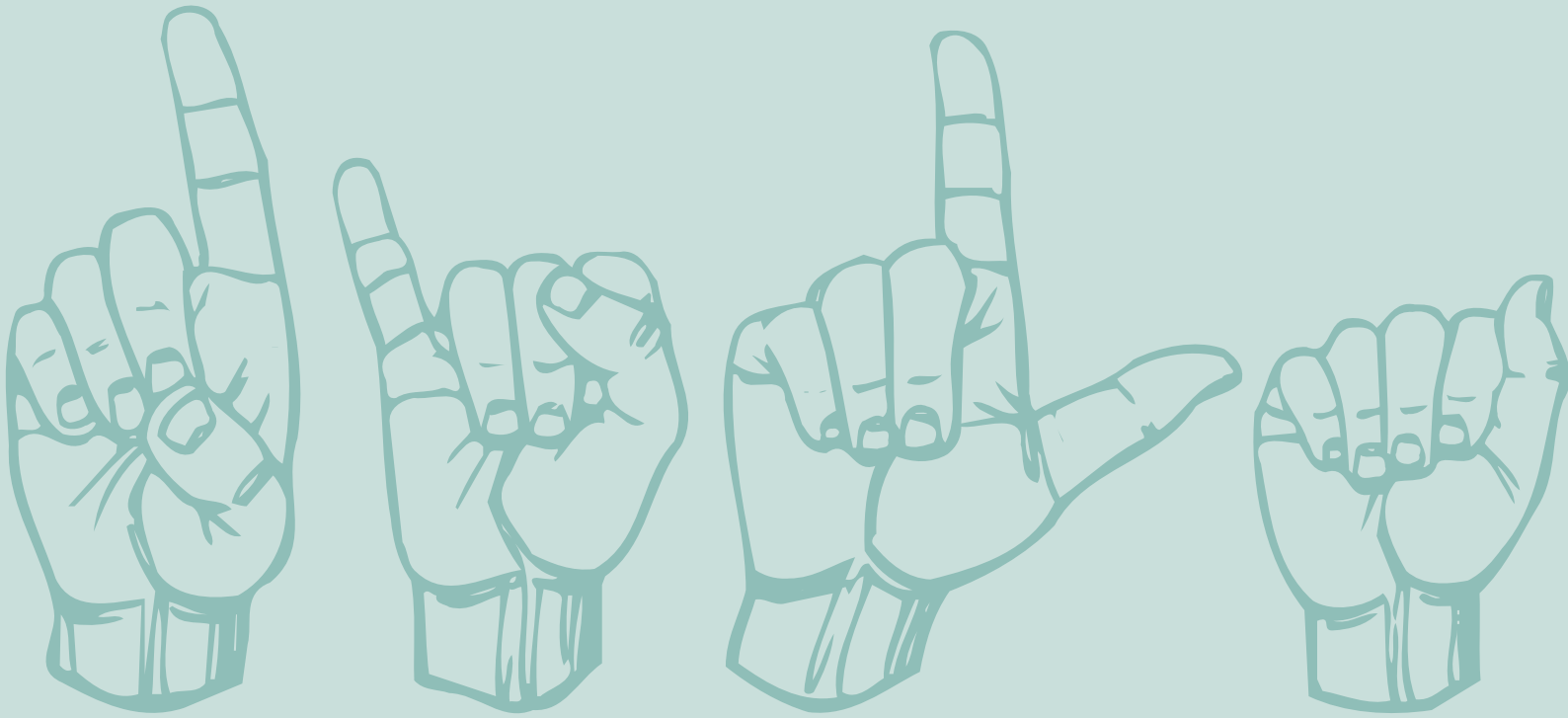


DILA

Deaf Independent Living Association, Inc.

2006 Annual Report

JULY 1, 2005 – JUNE 30, 2006



Dear Friends,

The Deaf Independent Living Association (DILA) embarked on a challenging, rewarding journey in 2006 as we worked hard to finalize our new strategic direction. Last year, members of our Board of Directors and staff gathered for several strategic planning sessions to explore DILA's mission, consumer base, core operating values and plan of action. Their brainstorming and careful thinking culminated at our May 2006 planning retreat, attended by DILA's senior staff and Board of Directors.

In discussing and evaluating DILA's strategic direction (essentially a three- to five-year peek into the future), we agreed on the following organizational goals:

- ♦ Evolve into a comprehensive service center for individuals with hearing loss
- ♦ Develop new service lines, such as education, advocacy and programs for youths
- ♦ Expand the scope of our independent living services to help more deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals of all ages live independently in the town/city/residence of their choice
- ♦ Focus on advocacy issues and raise awareness of the need for reasonable accommodations for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
- ♦ Continue providing support services to deaf individuals with disabilities

As we develop a concrete plan to meet the above goals, we thank the DILA staff, Board of Directors and community supporters for their flexibility and commitment during this time of transition. Our dedication to our work, our consumers and each other are the reason DILA continues to be the leading support agency for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals residing in the Eastern Shore area. Though we have made admirable progress to date, much remains to keep pace with the ever-growing needs of our community.

We hope you enjoy our first-ever annual report, especially the many accomplishments detailed throughout, including our consumer success stories, outreach initiatives, fundraising efforts, expanded communication offerings and supported employment and residential services achievements. Whether a friend, donor, volunteer, staff or board member, you play a vital role in our mission and vision for the future, and we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Max Verbits
President



Jennifer Whitcomb
Executive Director

About DILA



For Eastern Shore residents who are deaf or hard of hearing, the Deaf Independent Living Association, Inc., (DILA) provides access to programs and resources that promote independence and active community involvement. Services offered include supported employment, residential assistance, information and referral and technical guidance.

Our Core Values –

- 1. DIVERSITY**
and making a difference in the community.
- 2. COMMITMENT**
to the agency and individuals served.
- 3. LOYALTY**
toward the agency and each other.
- 4. RESPECT**
for all modes of communication.
- 5. INTEGRITY**
of professional ethics.
- 6. TEAMWORK**
and partnerships in providing quality services.

DILA Staff

Jennifer Whitcomb, *Executive Director*
Lisa Trolan, *Administrative Director*
Ann Murray Grimm, *Program Director*
Ramona Bradley, *Director of Health Care Services*
Laura Jones, *Administrative Assistant*
Marlena Turner, *DIR Manager/Assistant*
Rita Campbell, *Program Manager (Salisbury)*
Camelle Bryan, *Program Manager (Easton)*
Sue Beaver, *Interpreter Coordinator/Staff Interpreter*
Lizette Ramos, *Community Support Specialist*
Celeste Emerson, *Independent Living Advisor (Salisbury)*
Todd Morrison, *Independent Living Advisor (Salisbury)*
Brandon Morris, *Independent Living Advisor, P/T, W/E (Salisbury)*
Belinda Price, *Independent Living Advisor, P/T, W/E (Salisbury)*
Renee Gordon, *Independent Living Advisor, P/T, (Easton)*
Darryl Hairston, *Independent Living Advisor, P/T (Salisbury)*
Joan Taylor, *Job Coach (Salisbury)*
Sarita Cooper, *Job Coach (Easton)*
Eddy Morrison, *Communication Specialist*
Patti Weiss, *Program Secretary (Salisbury)/IT*
Carol Grafton, *Receptionist*
Tom Hopkins, *P/T Maintenance*
John Handy, *Driver, P/T (Salisbury)*
Richard Hudson, *Driver, P/T (Salisbury)*
Sheri Gardner-Thomas, *W/E Driver, P/T (Salisbury)*
Will Chambers, *Driver, P/T (Easton)*

Volunteer Support Staff

Dee Reich
Lou Reich
Tom Weiss

Board of Directors

Max Verbits, *President*
Jane Lind, *Vice President*
Sherry Perkins, *Treasurer*
Carrie Apple
Tom Dryden
Lance MacAllister
Donald O. Peterson
Clara Stafford

Information & Referral

DILA receives many requests for information about hearing loss, deafness and related resources. We are often contacted by businesses, schools, police departments, hospitals, government agencies and other organizations that wish to make their programs and services more accessible to the deaf community. In response, we recommend certain assistive devices (e.g. TTYs, flashing door bells, alarms), refer them to sign language interpreters, educate them about Maryland Relay and inform them of the many resources and services available in their own community.

Web Site Hits – www.dila.org

During the 2006 fiscal year, DILA recorded a monthly average of 25,819 Web site hits. Though many of these hits came from repeat visitors, DILA received an average of 1,100 hits from new visitors each month. In 2006, the top three pages viewed were “About DILA”, “Interpreter Referral” and “Events.”

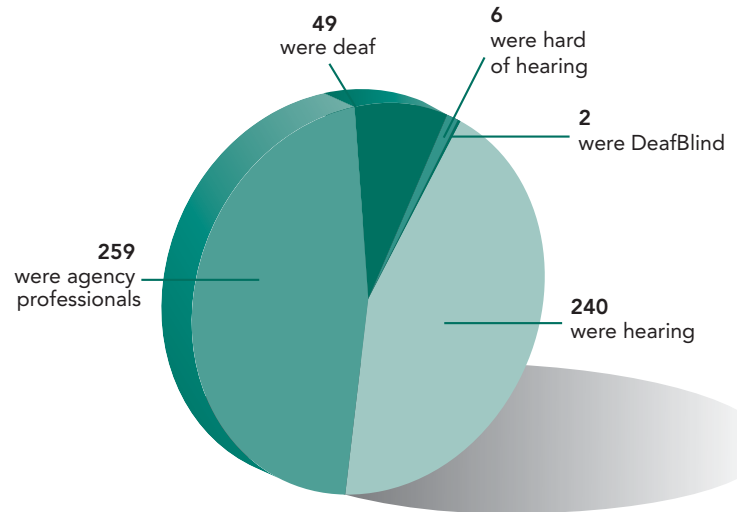
During the last quarter of fiscal year 2006, DILA received 553 information and referral requests, the majority of which related to DILA programs and services, interpreters and room rentals.

Individuals from the following geographic areas contacted DILA for information:

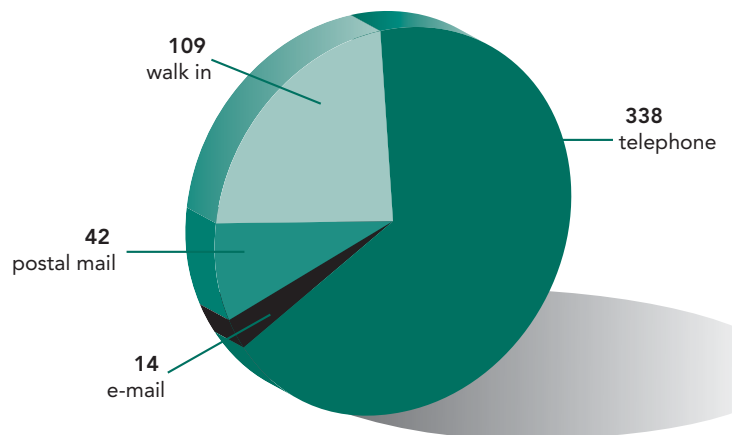
Baltimore City	19
Caroline County	5
Dorchester County	16
Frederick County	3
Kent County	1
Prince George’s County	1
Queen Anne’s County	5
Somerset County	7
Talbot County	28
Wicomico County	219
Worcester County	22
Other areas in Maryland	130
Delaware	25
Virginia	5
Washington, D.C.	6
Other states	12
N/A	49

TOTAL: 553 information and referral requests

Of those who contacted DILA:



The following methods were used to request information:



Facilities & Residential Services

Facilities

DILA's headquarters were deliberately designed to include large training session and meeting spaces that could be rented to the community when not in use. During the 2006 fiscal year, DILA began renting out our board, conference and multipurpose rooms to the general public, with a price break offered to nonprofit organizations and members of the deaf community. For an additional cost, individuals can also take advantage of our onsite catering kitchen.

During the 2006 fiscal year:

- 30 outside events were held at DILA, including DINGO nights (deaf version of bingo), family reunions, baby showers, wedding receptions, church meetings and dinners
- Of the 30 events, 23 were half day, and seven were full day
- Our catering kitchen was used for nine events
- DILA staff members used our multipurpose room 11 times for outside meetings and our board room once
- Nonprofit organizations and members of the deaf community used our multipurpose room 11 times
- Members of the general public used our multipurpose room seven times

Funds generated from room rentals are used to support DILA's ongoing programs and services.



Residential Services

DILA offers residential support to individuals with their own home and those residing in one of ten Deaf Independent Residences (DIR) houses. Purchased through a Section 8/202 program offered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the DIR houses are conveniently located in Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties. Each accommodates a maximum of three residents. Occupants are responsible for all food and personal expenses, and rent is based on HUD guidelines. All houses feature special modifications to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing residents, including TTYs, close-captioned televisions and flashing light systems to signal a fire alarm, ringing telephone and doorbell.

During the 2006 fiscal year, 18 DILA consumers resided in DIR houses. We also provided assistance to 38 individuals living in their own home or apartment. Though DILA's residential services are highly individualized and consumer centered, we often provide guidance in the following areas:

- Making a budget
- Preparing well-balanced meals
- Paying bills on time
- Managing a home
- Developing social skills
- Keeping up with household chores

DILA assisted the following types of consumers this year:

Individual Support Services10 consumers
Fee Payment System12 consumers
Rolling Access Grant35 consumers
Supported Employment18 consumers
State of New Jersey and the Division of Rehabilitation Services2 consumers

Supported Employment

DILA believes that useful, productive employment can bring much success, independence and fulfillment to the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Our Supported Employment Program helps eliminate many of the traditional employment barriers faced by these individuals. As part of the program, trained job coaches fluent in American Sign Language work closely with deaf community members to help them secure and maintain meaningful employment. Specific services provided through the program include:

- ♦ **Job readiness training, such as resume development and interview skills**
- ♦ **Job development and placement**
- ♦ **Benefits management**
- ♦ **On-the-job training**
- ♦ **Interpreting services**
- ♦ **Transportation**
- ♦ **Sign language training for co-workers**
- ♦ **Functional math and English tutoring**

DILA assisted 18 individuals employed at a variety of settings throughout Wicomico and Talbot Counties, including the YMCA, Sam's Club, Blind Industries, Railway Market, Soft Touch Car Wash and DILA. Individuals are assigned to businesses and organizations based on their skill level, transportation situation and desired intensity level.

During fiscal year 2006, DILA laid the groundwork to obtain accreditation from the State of Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services to expand our Supported Employment Program to include job placement and retention services. These capabilities will enable DILA to provide employment assistance to a wider population of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals on the Delmarva Peninsula.

All program participants continue to make progress at their place of employment. One participant received a special award in May 2006, marking five years of outstanding employment at Sam's Club. Another receives frequent compliments from his employer on his outstanding work ethic.

Assisting individuals through the Supported Employment Program is truly a team effort, with input often required from DILA's independent living advisors and staff nurse, particularly in regards to issues such as benefits, medical leave, salary and transportation.

Success Story

Homemaker Turns to DILA to Achieve Career Goals

A homemaker since 1998, Fawn recently attended DILA pre-employment training sessions, where she learned to identify time clocks and calendar months, days and years. In December 2005, Fawn took part in a career assessment at Lower Shore Enterprises in Salisbury. The assessment highlighted Fawn's outstanding organizational skills and attention to detail.

Fawn currently participates in work adjustment training at Lower Shore Enterprises and hopes to become a part-time housekeeper, nursing home assistant or hospice worker. Fawn will begin working with a DILA job coach soon to achieve these career goals.



Interpreter Referral

For residents of the Eastern Shore area who require an interpreter for an upcoming event or meeting, DILA offers our Interpreter Referral of the Eastern Shore (IRES) service. DILA is an organizational member of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). All interpreters are bound by the Code of Ethics established by RID and held to strict confidentiality. IRES currently has a network of 36 interpreters, nine of which are certified by RID.

IRES highlights from the 2006 fiscal year include:

- ♦ IRES received 948 requests this Fiscal year to provide interpreters; 90% of these requests were able to be filled. The top three types of interpreter requests were related to medical, Division of Rehabilitation Services and Education Interpreting.
- ♦ At a 2006 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) conference, Interpreter Coordinator/Staff Interpreter, Sue Beaver attended a variety of informative workshops, including “What is Sign Language Transliteration?,” “Empowering Your Interpretations: Using Compression Techniques Effectively,” “The Way We Do Things and Why: Analytical Skills for Interpreters” and “Hickory...Dickory...WHAT?: Using ASL Poetry to Interpret Nursery Rhymes.”
- ♦ Continued growth of our relay interpreter service. A relay interpreter is a deaf or hard-of-hearing person who acts as a cultural guide for another deaf individual with particularly complex communication needs. The individual requiring the relay interpreter may have minimal language skills or have another disability that affects language comprehension, such as blindness. In these situations, the relay and sign language interpreters work as a team to ensure accurate, efficient communication between all parties.
- ♦ Providing an interpreter for the Delmarva Shorebirds’ Deaf Community Night



Success Story

DILA Consumer Masters Community Transit System

A part-time custodian at the YMCA in Easton, Tony marked four years of successful employment in August. This past fall, Tony worked with a DILA staff member to master the Delmarva Community Transit. Tony grasped the system fairly quickly, and he now takes the transit to and from work. (Previously, Tony used a taxi to commute to work, which proved costly.)

In May, Tony participated in a career assessment at the Workforce and Technology Center in Baltimore. While Tony enjoys his work at the YMCA, he hopes to become a part-time horticulturist or assistant in a veterinarian’s office.

Outreach

Reaching out to our community is an important part of DILA's mission. Each year, we participate in key outreach events, either as a partner, supporter or representative. We also sponsor activities for the community. The 2006 fiscal year was a busy one as DILA staff members worked hard to increase our presence not only within our local community, but also throughout the State.

During the 2006 fiscal year, DILA participated in the following outreach projects and events:

- ♦ **Ask Me Project** – Funded and administered by the ARC of Maryland, Ask Me is a Consumer Quality of Life Survey for Marylanders with disabilities. Approximately 1,400 individuals are surveyed annually. Survey findings and recommendations are forwarded to the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration.
- ♦ **Maryland Rehabilitation Association/Division of Rehabilitation Services Annual Training Conference:** “Strengthening Ties... Promoting Partnerships”
- ♦ **Eastern Shore Monitoring Project** – Funded by the Eastern Shore Regional Office of the Developmental Disabilities Administration, the Eastern Shore Monitoring Project is a three-year program that assesses residential services offered in the Eastern Shore area. As part of the project, consumers are asked to comment on how a particular service allows them to live safely and independently and establish connections to the community.
- ♦ **American Association of the Deaf-Blind Conference** – DILA not only attended this event, but also donated \$1,000.
- ♦ **Visual Smoke Alarm Distribution Project** – In conjunction with the Maryland State Firemen's Association's Fire Prevention Committee, DILA distributed more than 20 visual smoke alarms to deaf and hard-of-hearing Eastern Shore residents. Funding to purchase the alarms came from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- ♦ **Division of Rehabilitation Services Third Annual Wicomico County Transitioning Night at Parkside High School**
- ♦ **Salisbury Festival**

DILA sponsored these events in 2006:

- ♦ **The Delmarva Shorebirds' Deaf Community Night** – DILA consumers, staff and deaf community members enjoyed a night out together at a baseball game.
- ♦ **Basic American Sign Language Classes at Parkside High School** – A cooperative effort between DILA and Wor-Wic Community College held at Parkside High School after hours.
- ♦ **“Getting It Done Without Sight or Sound: Technologies for People Who Are DeafBlind”** – A cooperative presentation with Holly Community, Inc., Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications Program and Maryland Relay.
- ♦ **Sorenson Video Relay Service Workshop** – Staff learned how to use videophone equipment to better assist our consumers.

Success Story

DILA Custodian Keeps Easton Office in Top Shape

In May 2005, DILA hired Ernie as a part-time custodian in our Easton office. Recently, Ernie celebrated one year of successful employment with us.



Ernie has consistently gone above and beyond the call of duty to keep our Easton office neat and in good repair. He recently installed the toilet paper holders in our restrooms and a paper towel holder in our kitchen. Soon, Ernie will begin classes at the Workforce and Technology Center, where he hopes to study auto mechanics. Once his coursework is complete, Ernie will work with his DILA job coach to find an auto detailing or mechanic position in Easton.

DILA staffed information booths at the following events this year:

- ♦ **Maryland School for the Deaf Career Day**
- ♦ **Gallaudet University Career Day**
- ♦ **Partners for Success Second Annual Students Transitioning to Adult Resources & Technologies (START) Night in Dorchester County**

Communication Resources

DILA offers a variety of communication resources for the deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing communities. Thanks to generous contributions from local businesses, organizations and residents, DILA was able to significantly expand our communications facilities and offerings during the 2006 fiscal year.

Deaf Resource Libraries

Open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., DILA's Deaf Resource Libraries (branches in Salisbury and Easton) feature a variety of informational materials and multimedia resources on sign language, interpreting, deaf culture and history and other topics of interest. The libraries stock a combined total of 760 videocassettes/ DVDs and 165 books.

One of the newest items acquired this year is the Signing Times DVD series that teaches deaf children and their parents basic American Sign Language in a fun, memorable way.

Sign Labs

Both libraries house Sign Labs, equipped with a video camera, VCR, DVD player, monitor and cassette recorder. Visitors can use the Sign Labs to view a videocassette or DVD. If watching an instructional video, individuals can record their image for evaluation purposes.

During the 2006 fiscal year, approximately 60 individuals visited our Sign Lab in Salisbury. Our Easton Sign Lab welcomed many visitors as well.

Tandberg Interpreter Workstation

In August 2005, DILA opened a second Tandberg Interpreter Workstation at our Easton office. Interpreters can use the station to view instructional videos, record their voice and participate in sign language lessons.

Communication Center

DILA celebrated the opening of our Communication Center in October 2005. The center features a Sorenson VP-100 videophone for free public use, a Captioned Telephone (CapTel™) and a TTY (text telephone). This year, over 60 members of the deaf community visited the center to use the equipment.



Success Story

DILA Consumer Launches Small Business

When Brenda first contacted DILA for assistance in May 1991, she never dreamed that 15 years later, she would launch her own small business. And she did it the old-fashioned way: through hard work.

Initially, DILA staff members helped Brenda acquire skills for daily living, including making a budget, preparing nutritious meals and completing basic household chores. With time, Brenda mastered these skills and later moved into a cottage. She now has a full-time job and receives assistance from DILA's staff. Recently, she purchased a bicycle, which she uses for transportation and recreation.

This year, Brenda decided to turn a favorite hobby into a business venture. Her made-to-order crochet business has attracted many eager customers; top-selling items include crocheted hats, scarves and slippers.

To cap off this amazing journey, Brenda received a 2006 MACS Achievement Award in May.

Fundraising

To support our programs and services, DILA coordinated the following fundraising initiatives during the 2006 fiscal year:



♦ **Food Lion Shop & Share Program** – Registered Food Lion MVP cardholders can request that a percentage of their total grocery purchase be donated to DILA.

♦ **Stuffed, themed animals**– For a \$7 donation, individuals can choose a stuffed animal from our extensive collection.



♦ **Delmarva Bike Week®** – A gathering of motorcycle enthusiasts held each September in Ocean City area. At the event, DILA hosted a booth showcasing our stuffed animal selections, which attracted donations from many attendees.



♦ **“I Love You” hands** – For a \$3.50 donation, individuals can select a sculpted version of the ASL sign for “I love you.”

♦ **Window clings** – Featuring the ASL sign for “God Bless America” and available for a \$1.50 donation.

♦ **DILA tote bags** – Individuals receive a sturdy, roomy DILA tote bag when they make a \$5 donation.

♦ **Online donations** – An online donation form has been added to DILA’s Web site, www.dila.org. Donors simply visit our site and click the “Give Online” icon, located in the lower left-hand corner of the home page. All information entered, including credit card numbers, is secured by VeriSign.

♦ **Amazon.com** – Fans of the online shopping site can have a percentage of their purchases donated to DILA when they access Amazon through DILA’s Web site, www.dila.org to shop.

♦ **Salisbury Festival** – Held each April, this festival celebrates the Salisbury community. At the event, DILA hosted a booth stocked with our stuffed, themed bears.

Success Story

DILA Earns Seal of Excellence from Independent Charities of America



In early spring 2006, Independent Charities of America (ICA) honored DILA with its prestigious Seal of Excellence. This seal is only given to organizations that meet the highest standards of public accountability and program and cost effectiveness. What’s more, organizations must be able to certify, document and demonstrate their achievements in these areas as part of a rigorous independent review.

Of the approximately one million charities operating in the United States today, fewer than 2,000 have received the Seal of Excellence.

Founded in 1988, ICA helps potential donors locate reputable, high-quality charities engaged in causes and activities they wish to support.

Financials

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

Assets

Current Assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	\$554,383	
Investments:		
Certificates of Deposit	299,170	
Accounts receivable	50,763	
Due from governmental agencies	33,121	
Prepaid expenses	<u>24,589</u>	
Total current assets		\$962,026

Fixed Assets:

Land	94,262	
Building and improvements	1,933,101	
Furniture and fixtures	213,675	
Transportation	<u>263,193</u>	
	2,504,231	
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(577,450)</u>	
		1,926,781

Other Assets:

Due from Deaf Independent Residences, Inc.	185,505	
Security deposits	1,995	187,500
TOTAL ASSETS		\$3,076,307

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities:

Accounts payable		\$11,822
Accrued expenses:		
Salaries	\$25,065	
Payroll taxes and withholdings	2,215	
Pension	25,618	
Vacation benefits	26,384	
Other	<u>1,342</u>	80,624
Due to State of Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration		<u>53,801</u>
Total Current Liabilities/Total Liabilities		146,247

Net Assets:

Unrestricted net assets:		
Operations	1,003,279	
Fixed assets	<u>1,926,781</u>	
Total Unrestricted Net Assets/Total Net Assets	2,930,060	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		\$3,076,307

The above statement has been independently audited.

Fiscal Year 2006 Grants

- ♦ **Anonymous** – \$5,000 for the development of public relations materials
- ♦ **BCBSM Community Foundation** – \$1,000 to support the Information and Referral Program
- ♦ **Choptank Electric Trust, Inc.** – \$6,500 to assist with necessary repairs to independent living residential homes
- ♦ **Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore** – \$3,000 for the development of fact sheets and brochures
- ♦ **Rotary Club of Wicomico Co.** – \$500 to purchase video relay equipment

Donor List

Tina & David Crouse
 Food Lion
 Lioness Club of Ocean City
 Ocean City Parrothead Club
 Salisbury Elks Lodge POE 817
 Salisbury Lions Club
 Salisbury Metro Lions Club
 United Way of Delaware
 Patricia Weiss
 Jennifer Whitcomb

Memorial Gifts

Elaine P. Harrington – In memory of Phyllis Eaddy
 Clara & John Stafford – In memory of Phyllis Eaddy
 Karla Wagner – In memory of Bernice Turk

In-Kind Gifts

Joy Carney
 Chick-fil-A of the Centre of Salisbury Mall
 Dr. & Mrs. Mervin Garretson
 Kitty's Florist
 Lance MacAllister



Salisbury Office
806 Snow Hill Road
Salisbury, MD 21804
Phone: 410-742-5052 V/TTY
Fax: 410-543-4874

Easton Office
408 N. Washington Street
Easton, MD 21601
Phone: 410-820-9375 V/TTY
Fax: 410-820-9477

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