



# The DILA Sign Post

Summer 2006



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## From the Executive Director's Desk

*By Jennifer Whitcomb, Executive Director*

Continuing in our efforts to adopt a new strategic direction, DILA's senior staff and Board of Directors participated in a planning retreat over the weekend of May 19, 2006. The goal of the retreat was to explore and refine DILA's mission, consumer base, core operating values and plan of action. We spent a lot of time as a group evaluating and pinpointing our strategic direction, which takes into account our current position, mission, strengths and barriers. Essentially, it offers a three- to five-year peek into the future. Though the strategic direction is not yet finalized, it will include the following goals:

- ♦ Evolve into a comprehensive service center for individuals with hearing loss
- ♦ Develop new service lines, such as information and referral, education,

advocacy, employment and programs for youths

- ♦ Expand the scope of our independent living services to help 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

I want to thank you for your support during this transition phase. If you have any comments or questions about the goals mentioned above, please send them to [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org). Whether a staff member, consumer, friend, volunteer or donor, we value your feedback.

**Now Forming:** Parent-led Parent support group for those with deaf or hard-of-hearing children. First meeting will be Thursday, October 5, 2006 from 6:00-8:00 pm at DILA's Salisbury office. If interested, please e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org).

### Coming Soon: New DILA Logo and Newsletter Name

To coincide with our new strategic direction, DILA is preparing to unveil an updated logo and newsletter name. Both elements will work together to more accurately reflect our mission and vision for the future. Though change can be unsettling at times, it is often necessary to move forward and seize opportunities for growth. We hope you will enjoy the updated logo and newsletter name, and as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions (e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org)).

## 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)*

Joan Taylor, *Job Coach (Salisbury)*

Sarita Cooper, *Job Coach (Easton)*

Eddy Morrison,

*Communication Specialist*

Patti Weiss,

*Program Secretary (Salisbury)/IT*

Carol Grafton, *Receptionist*

Darryl Hairston, *Independent Living  
Advisor, P/T (Salisbury)*

John Handy, *Driver, P/T (Salisbury)*

Richard Hudson, *Driver, P/T (Salisbury)*

Sheri Gardner,

*W/E Driver, P/T (Salisbury)*

Will Chambers, *Driver, P/T (Easton)*

## Board Members\*:

Max Verbits, *President*

Jane Lind, *Vice President*

Sherry Perkins, *Treasurer*

Carrie Apple

Tom Dryden

Lance MacAllister

Donald O. Peterson

Clara Stafford

\*Now recruiting Board members  
(see article on page 7)

# DILA Thanks Recent Donors

DILA's dedicated team works hard to provide our deaf consumers with the support and resources they need to live and work independently. This would not be possible without the donations we receive from local organizations and community members. Our team members see firsthand the positive impact these generous contributions make on the people we serve.

DILA thanks the following individuals and organizations for their recent donations, made in May and June 2006:

- ✦ BCBSM Community Foundation
- ✦ Chick-fil-A
- ✦ Choptank Electric Trust, Inc.
- ✦ Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore (provided funding for the development of DILA fact sheets and brochures)
- ✦ Dr. & Mrs. Mervin Garretson
- ✦ Kitty's Florist
- ✦ Jennifer Whitcomb

*To make a donation to DILA, please visit [www.dila.org](http://www.dila.org).*

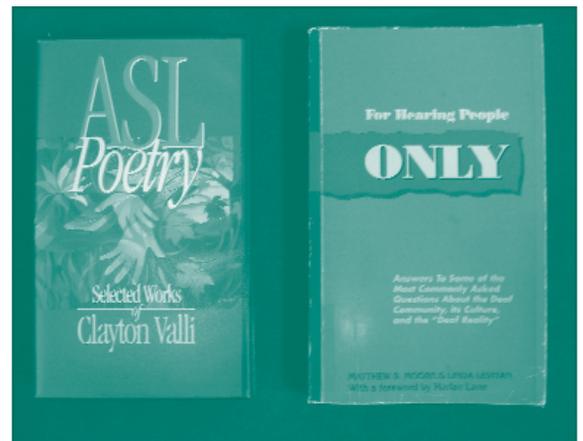
## Check Out Our Resource Library's Feature Presentations

*By Eddy Morrison,  
Communication Specialist*

DILA's Deaf Resources Library is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information on library materials, including books and DVDs, contact Eddy Morrison at 410-742-5052 (Voice/TTY) or e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org). Items can be read or viewed onsite, or checked out for a small fee.

Some of our featured materials include:

- ✦ *ASL Poetry*, by Clayton Valli, Ph.D. (videocassette) Twenty-one works by ASL poet Dr. Clayton Valli are recited by a diverse group of signers. Host Lon Kuntze guides viewers through each poem's hidden meanings, helping them gain a true appreciation for this emerging literary genre.
- ✦ *For Hearing People Only*, by Matthew S. Moore and Linda Levitan (book) In a question-and-answer format, the



authors address some of the most commonly posed inquiries about deaf people, related to their community, customs and language. Concise and easy to read, this book is perfect for the layperson who desires accurate, reliable information about contemporary deaf culture.

- ✦ NEW! *Signing Times* series (DVD) Teaches deaf children and their parents basic American Sign Language (ASL) in a fun, memorable way.

# AADB Conference Highlights: Need for Support Service Providers for the Deaf-Blind

By Lizette Ramos,  
Community Support Specialist

Attending the American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB) Conference last month in Baltimore, Maryland, was an astounding experience I will never forget. At the conference, I met many wonderful people from the deaf-blind community, as well as other individuals who have become advocates for the deaf-blind by establishing agencies and organizations to help this population segment.

I also interacted with fellow Support Service Providers (SSPs), who serve as sighted guides for the deaf-blind. For the first two days of the conference, I was honored to serve as an SSP for two students from the Helen Keller National Center, located in Sands Point, New York. (During the final two days of the conference, I served as a DILA representative.)

At the AADB conference, I was surprised to learn that only a handful of states have paid, on-staff SSPs to assist

their deaf-blind citizens. As a result, many deaf-blind individuals are lobbying their state government to fund more SSP programs and soliciting donations to provide SSPs at events. While there are many wonderful SSP volunteers, there is still a need for paid SSPs.

I encourage anyone who wants to become an SSP or learn more about deaf-blind issues to attend the next AADB conference. For more information, visit [www.aadb.org](http://www.aadb.org).

## Donate to DILA Online!

By Laura Jones,  
Administrative Assistant

DILA is now able to accept donations online! Simply visit [www.dila.org](http://www.dila.org) and click the "Give Online" icon (located in the lower left-hand corner of the home page) and complete the online form. You can even designate your donation as a memorial or tribute gift. All information you enter, including your credit card number, is secured by VeriSign.

Making a DILA donation is a great way to support our ongoing efforts to provide useful, effective services for individuals with all types of hearing loss.



## Volunteers Needed for 2007 Deaf Summer Camp

By Rita Campbell,  
Program Manager (Salisbury)

Summer camps for deaf and hard-of-hearing children can be an enriching, fun-filled experience. Many people have inquired about DILA's summer camp for youths and teens (offered several years ago). After much discussion, we have decided to revive the camp for summer 2007!

To do this, we need a team of volunteers to work closely with DILA's staff to coordinate camp details and logistics. If you are interested in helping with this worthwhile project that brings hope and meaning to the lives of area children and teens with hearing loss, please contact us as soon as possible at [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org).

## DILA Employment Opportunities

By Lisa Trolan, Administrative Director

DILA has several positions available at our Easton and Salisbury offices:

### • Independent Living Advisors

Full-time (Easton) and part-time (weekends; Easton and Salisbury offices) opportunities are available. Requires American Sign Language (ASL) skills and a good driving record.

### • Program Secretary

A full-time position (Easton office only) requiring excellent organizational and computer skills, ASL skills (or a willingness to learn ASL) and a good driving record.

### • Staff Interpreter

A full-time position requiring fluency in ASL and written English, RID certification preferred and a good driving record. (Staff Interpreters travel to various locations on the Eastern Shore.)

### • Healthcare Assistant

A part-time position for a task-oriented, organized individual with ASL skills (or a willingness to learn ASL) and a good driving record. This position requires travel between our Easton and Salisbury offices.

All interested applicants should send a letter of interest, current resume and a list of three references to :

DILA, Attn: Human Resources  
806 Snow Hill Road  
Salisbury, MD 21804  
Fax: 410-543-4874  
E-mail: [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org)

DILA offers an excellent benefits package for full-time employees.

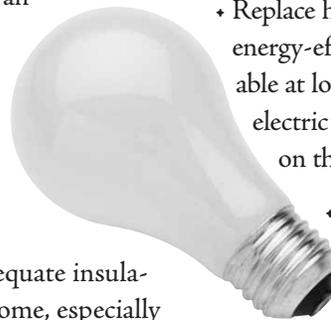
For more information, visit [www.dila.org](http://www.dila.org).

## Take Control of Your Energy Bill

By Marlena Turner,  
DIR Manager/Assistant

The Eastern Shore was thrust into energy conservation mode this summer when utility bills reached an all-time high. Here are some simple suggestions from the U.S. Department of Energy to help you conserve energy at home.

- Make sure you have adequate insulation throughout your home, especially around windows. Inexpensive window insulation is available at most hardware stores.
- Verify that the weather-stripping around all doors is in good condition. Install new weather-stripping if gaps appear or strips start to crack.



- If you have a window-mounted air conditioning unit, check that the space around the unit is properly insulated to keep cold air from escaping and hot air from creeping in.
- Replace high-usage light bulbs with energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs (available at local hardware stores). Some electric companies even offer savings on the bulb purchase price.
- Make sure your hot water heater is properly insulated.
- If you have a forced air heating/cooling system, change the filters at least every two months to keep the system running efficiently.

For more energy-saving tips and information about financial assistance with your energy bills or energy conservation efforts, visit [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov).

## A New Web Site Devoted to Deaf History and Culture

By Patti Weiss,  
Program Secretary/IT (Salisbury)

If you are a fan of Wikipedia ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))—the free, multi-lingual encyclopedia that allows anyone to submit, update and edit articles—you will want to check out DeafWiki at [www.DeafWiki.org](http://www.DeafWiki.org). Created exclusively

for the deaf and hard-of-hearing population, DeafWiki also gives users the tools to create and revise content. The site is currently seeking articles about all things deaf-related, including information about deaf culture, history and famous figures.

To learn more, visit [www.DeafWiki.org](http://www.DeafWiki.org).



# Upcoming Events

## Eastern Deaf Bikers' Deaf Biker Social

August 26, 2006, 1 p.m.  
(Rain date: August 27)

Mike's Famous Harley Davidson Store,  
New Castle, Delaware

Deaf and hearing individuals are welcome. For more information, contact Heidi at [blackrose@tmail.com](mailto:blackrose@tmail.com).

## Deaf Workshop for Families and Professionals

September 9, 2006

Maryland School for the Deaf,  
Columbia Campus

Learn about cochlear implants, telecommunications technology, advocacy and more. For information, contact Cheri Dowling or Maryann Swann at 410-480-4597 or e-mail [Partners@msd.edu](mailto:Partners@msd.edu).

## Parent of Deaf & HOH Support Group

October 5, 2006,  
6:00 - 8:00 pm

DILA  
806 Snow Hill Road  
Salisbury, MD 21804

Contact [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org) for more information.

## Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours

October 18, 2006, 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Being hosted at DILA's Salisbury Office

For more information please call 410-749-0144 or 410-742-5052



## Deaf Retreat and Interpreter's Conference

October 27-29, 2006

Skycroft Conference Center,  
Middletown, Maryland

For deaf individuals, family members, interpreters and others who work with the deaf. For more information, contact Donna Shiflett at 1-800-466-5290, ext. 226, or e-mail [dshiflett@bcmcmd.org](mailto:dshiflett@bcmcmd.org).

## Wilmington Club for the Deaf's 70th Anniversary Banquet

November 4, 2006

For more information, call 302-428-0393 or write Wilmington Club for the Deaf, 620 South Van Buren Street, Wilmington, DE 19805.

## DILA: Your One-Stop Gift Shop

By Laura Jones, Administrative Assistant

Need a gift for someone special? Donate \$7 to DILA and you can choose a stuffed, themed bear from our extensive collection, including nurse, army, new baby, birthday, thank-you and first communion bears. We also have DILA tote bags (\$5 donation) and "I Love You Hands" (a sculpted version of the ASL sign for "I love you"; \$3.50 donation). Visit our Easton (408 N. Washington Street) and Salisbury (806 Snow Hill Road) offices to view these and other gift selections.



## Volunteers and Partners Needed for DILA Deaf Awareness Event

By Ann Murray Grimm,  
Program Director

DILA is considering hosting a deaf awareness event next year. To do this, we need partners and volunteers to assist with planning. If you wish to donate your time and energy to this event, please contact us soon at [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org).



## The Perfect Space for Your Next Meeting or Special Event

By Laura Jones, Administrative Assistant

Searching for the ideal space for an upcoming family reunion, training workshop or event? DILA rents out the meeting rooms listed below for a small fee (half- and full-day rates are available). For an additional cost, you can also take advantage of our onsite catering kitchen. Please note that we are a non-smoking facility and alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

♦ **Multipurpose Room** – features a spacious, raised stage with a podium, floor-to-ceiling draw curtain and a large projection screen (located over

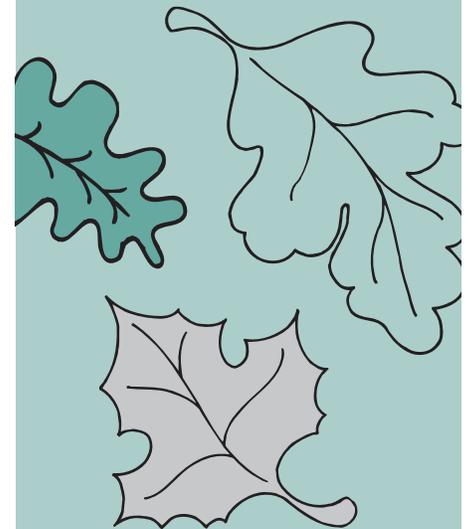
the stage area). The room can accommodate up to 88 people for table seating or 189 for theater-style seating. It can be rented weekdays, evenings or weekends.

♦ **Board and Conference Rooms** – equipped with dry erase boards and seating for up to 25 people. A VCR/DVD with monitor or overhead projector is available for an additional fee. These rooms can only be rented during regular business hours.

For more information, please contact Laura Jones at 410-742-5052.

**Deadline for the Fall 2006 issue of The DILA Sign Post September 30th!**

Please e-mail all articles and announcements for our fall newsletter to Laura Jones at [Laura.Jones@dila.org](mailto:Laura.Jones@dila.org) by September 30, 2006.



## DILA Helps Consumer Master Cooking, Household Chores and More

By Renee Gordon,  
*Independent Living Advisor (Easton)*

Working one-on-one with consumers to help them improve their life skills is always a beneficial experience. Lately, I have been working with an Easton consumer to enhance his social, domestic and personal skills. So far I have helped him make a household chores schedule, master food-handling and

preparation techniques and get involved in his community. Recently, he joined the local YMCA and the over 55 club at Peebles department store. He has also taken up scrapbooking with a fellow DILA consumer.

In addition, I have encouraged him to be more outgoing in his social interactions by initiating conversations and introducing himself to others.

# Congratulations to DILA Consumer Brenda Diggs

By Celeste Emerson,  
Independent Living Advisor (Salisbury)

On May 24, 2006, Brenda Diggs proudly accepted a 2006 MACS Achievement Award. Since May 9, 1991, when Brenda first became a DILA consumer, she has worked hard to master skills for daily living. She now resides in a cottage and requires only minimal assistance from our staff. Brenda loves to crochet and is currently trying to expand her made-to-order afghan business.



Brenda has certainly come a long way since 1991. Please join DILA in congratulating her on this prestigious honor.

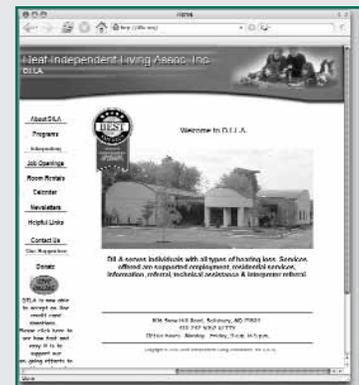
## DILA's Board of Directors Seeks New Members

By Max Verbits, DILA Board President

Here's your chance to help shape DILA's future! DILA's Board of Directors is seeking new members, specifically those familiar with hearing-loss issues, fundraising and nonprofit organizations. (Individuals with hearing loss are encouraged to apply as well.) The Board

meets quarterly in February, May, August and November. One of our primary functions is to secure adequate funding to support DILA's current and future programs and services. For more information, contact Board President Max Verbits at 410-742-5052 or [mfv@dbfinc.com](mailto:mfv@dbfinc.com).

Check out our redesigned Web site:  
[www.dila.org](http://www.dila.org)



## DILA Sponsors Two Supported Employment Workshops

By Camelle Bryan,  
Program Manager (Easton) and Sarita Cooper, Job Coach (Easton)

On February 21, 2006, DILA sponsored a workshop on our supported employment services. At the workshop, we discussed transportation, interpreting and job coaching (i.e. DILA representatives visit consumers at their workplace to ensure they are meeting expectations and have access to the communications resources they need).

We also explained how DILA job coaches work with employers to educate them about deaf culture, American Sign Language (ASL) and Maryland Relay. To illustrate these points, we conducted a role-playing exercise in which DILA employees acted out common workplace scenarios.

We held a second workshop on May 18, 2006, titled, "Understanding Your Pay Stub." Attendees were asked to bring their pay stubs to the workshop, and as we dis-

cussed various pay stub elements, such as gross pay, deductions, net pay and expenses, they followed along on their own pay stubs. We also covered deductions (e.g. FICA, federal, state, Medicare and insurance), basic pension plans and benefits and vacation packages.

Both workshops were beneficial to all attendees, and we plan to offer similar presentations for DILA consumers and other interested individuals in the near future.

# Helpful Tips for Working with Interpreters

By Sue Beaver,  
Staff Interpreter/Coordinator

For a hearing person with little or no experience working with an interpreter, the process can seem daunting. Here are some simple tips to keep in mind:

- ♦ Make sure there is adequate lighting and that all participants are within clear view of each other (i.e. there are no obstacles, such as columns or tall plants, that may hinder communication)
- ♦ Speak directly to the deaf person—not the interpreter
- ♦ Remember that there may be a delayed response from the deaf individual, since

the interpreter is typically a sentence behind the speaker

- ♦ If you are reading from a speech or script, pause at important points
- ♦ If possible, provide any written materials, such as agendas or printed copies of PowerPoint presentations or speeches, to the interpreter before the meeting or conversation

If you need help securing an interpreter for an upcoming meeting or event, contact DILA's Interpreter Referral Service at 410-742-5052 (Voice/TTY).



Look for DILA's first-ever annual report: Coming October 2006!



806 Snow Hill Road  
Salisbury, MD 21804

Phone: 410-742-5052 V/TTY

Fax: 410-543-4874

E-mail: [DILA@dila.org](mailto:DILA@dila.org)

## Deaf Independent Living

**Association**, established in 1982, is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. A volunteer Board of Directors governs the agency of approximately 25 staff members, fluent in American Sign Language. There are two offices—located in Salisbury and Easton, Maryland—that serve the Eastern Shore's nine counties. DILA continues to serve as a transitional program between school and working and living in the community for deaf and hearing-impaired individuals.