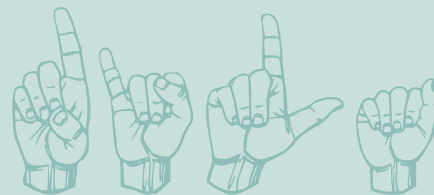




The DILA Sign Post

Winter 2006



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From the Executive Director's Desk

By Jennifer Whitcomb,
Executive Director

DILA's staff and Board of Directors continue to move forward with our new strategic direction. In just a few short months, we've achieved the following:

- Completed the accreditation process with the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services. This will expand the scope of our employment and supported employment services, enabling us to assist more deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. We expect to begin offering expanded services in early 2007.
- Launched a Parents of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children Support Group, which meets monthly to offer guidance, support, education and advice to parents dealing with hearing-loss issues. A listserv is available to facilitate communication between group meetings (www.dila.org/programs.html).

- Established an in-house mechanism to track information and referral requests. This data will play a key role in positioning DILA as the Eastern Shore's premier information source for hearing-loss issues.
- Hosted an internal training session on the Americans with Disability Act to help staff members properly advocate for reasonable accommodations for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

The board is also debating whether to operate our Deaf Independent Residences Inc. houses as Section 8 housing units or to convert them to rent for any deaf or hard-of-hearing individual. Essentially, we want to make sure that a Section 8 housing status will allow us to meet the changing needs of DILA's consumers.

Please keep in mind that our efforts are a work in progress. To share your thoughts and opinions on any of the matters above, e-mail dila@dila.org. Thank you for your continued support.

Go Shopping—and Support DILA

By Patti Weiss,
Program Secretary (Salisbury)

DILA has launched a new fundraising program that allows you to support our organization simply by shopping online. Called "Shop for Charity," the program enables shoppers to donate a portion of

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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

Todd Morrison, *Independent Living
Advisor (Salisbury)*

Belinda Price, *Independent Living
Advisor, P/T, W/E (Salisbury)*

Janese Middleton, *Independent Living
Advisor (Easton)*

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

Tamara Dobson,

Program Secretary (Easton)

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-Thomas,

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

Jeffrey T. White

Go Shopping—and Support DILA, *continued from page 1*

any purchase they make from Shop for Charity's online mall, which includes over 1,000 sites, to the organization of their choice.

Here's how it works:

1. Visit www.shopforcharityday.com/13549. This will take you to DILA's page on the the Shop for Charity Web site.
2. Start shopping! The site features over 1,000 online stores, including Starbucks, Hallmark, PetSmart, Avon and Target.
3. When you make a purchase, a percentage of the money you spend will automatically be donated to DILA.

For more information, visit www.shopforcharity.com.

And don't forget about our Amazon.com link (posted on our Web site at www.dila.org); by accessing Amazon.com through our site, a percentage of your purchase will be donated to DILA. Happy shopping!

Workshop Puts DILA's Emergency Response Plan to the Test

By Ramona Bradley,
Director of Healthcare Services

Three DILA staff members recently attended an emergency-planning workshop at the Holly Center. Sponsored by the Lower Eastern Shore Developmental Disabilities Organization and the Center for Disability and Special Needs Preparedness, the workshop gave participants the opportunity to demonstrate their emergency response plan and receive valuable advice and feedback from workshop organizers, emergency planning experts and other attendees.

From the workshop, participants learned the importance of:

- Establishing a clear chain of command to streamline the decision-making process
- Consistently meeting the needs of staff and consumers during an emergency

- Identifying strengths and weaknesses of the current emergency plan
- Anticipating concerns disabled individuals may face during a weather emergency
- Developing clear lines of communication between the organization and emergency officials

Attendees, which included Bay Shore Services, Dove Point and the Epilepsy Association of the Eastern Shore, were grateful for the expert feedback. By closely analyzing each stage of their emergency plan, participants were able to spot and resolve problem areas quickly. And while no one hopes for an emergency, if one does arrive, DILA will be well prepared to assist our staff and consumers.

Attorney Jeffrey T. White Joins DILA's Board of Directors

By Max Verbits,
Board President

DILA welcomes our newest board member, Jeffrey T. White. Born in Rome, New York, Jeffrey graduated from Stetson University in Florida with a bachelor's degree in finance and a minor in statistics.

Before attending law school in Vermont, Jeffrey served his country in Misawa, Japan, as a Russian linguist for the United States Air Force. He is currently a co-founding partner of Honick & White, P.A., specializing in corporate and land-use law. He and his wife Kara have three children.

For the first part of his three-year term, Jeffrey will work with his fellow



board members to implement our new strategic direction.

DILA is recruiting new board members.

If interested, contact Board President Max Verbits at 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail dila@dila.org. Meeting dates for 2007 are March 15, June 14, September 13 and November 15. Meetings begin at 6 p.m. at the Salisbury DILA office.

DILA Hosts Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Event

By Carol Grafton,
Receptionist

This October, DILA hosted over 70 local business representatives at our main office for a Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event. Attendees enjoyed touring our space and learning more about our programs and services. The event also provided a wonderful networking opportunity for our staff members, who spoke with many key



community leaders about DILA's mission, current needs and vision for the future.

DILA also thanks Sam's Club for supplying refreshments for this event.

Thanks to Our Recent Donors

The high quality of our programs and services is a testament to our generous donors. Their support enables DILA to serve growing numbers of deaf and hard-of-hearing community members.

DILA thanks the following organizations and individuals for their recent donations:

Anonymous – \$500 in memory of Betty Flurer

Cole Foundation, Inc. – \$19,000 for DIR home repairs

ISG International – Computer monitors

Mt. Hermon Lions Club – \$100

The Parents' Place of Maryland, Inc. – \$500 for DILA's new Parents of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children Support Group

Sherry Perkins – \$100

Quota International of Cambridge, Maryland – \$2,600 toward the purchase of an overhead projector, computer and high-speed Internet connection installation for the Supported Employment Program at the Easton office

Uno Chicago Grill (Fruitland)

To make a donation to DILA, visit www.dila.org, click the "Give Online" icon (located in the lower left-hand corner of the home page) and complete the online form. All information you enter, including your credit card number, is secured by VeriSign. If you want your donation to benefit a specific service area or wish to purchase a needed item for our organization, please call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail dila@dila.org.

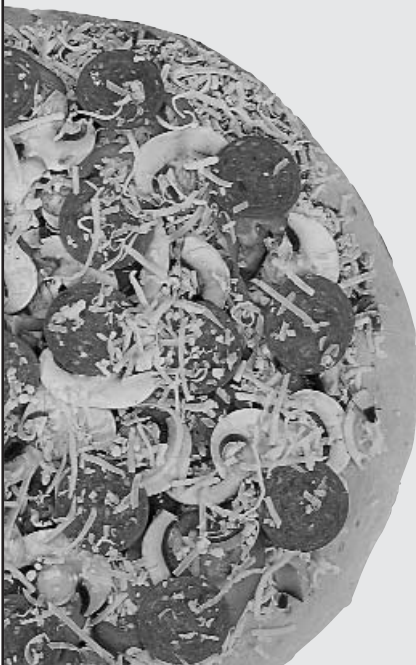


Uno Outing Raises \$178 for DILA

By Laura Jones,
Administrative Assistant

Thanks to all those who attended DILA's recent fundraising event at Uno Chicago Grill in Fruitland. Everyone enjoyed a splendid evening of good food, friends and fun.

In addition to graciously accommodating our large group, the restaurant donated up to 20 percent of each attendee's meal check to DILA, raising \$178 for our programs and services.



DILA Launches Support Group for Parents of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children

By Ann Murray Grimm,
Program Director

DILA recently launched a free support group for parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. For these parents, the group provides a forum to share advice, information, perspectives and resources with those in similar situations. Meetings take place the first Thursday of each month, from 6 to 8 p.m., at DILA's main office in Salisbury, and new members are welcome anytime. Childcare and refreshments are provided.

Between meetings, group members can keep in touch through a special listserv. To access this listserv, visit www.dila.org/parentsupport.html. For more information about the group, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail dila@dila.org.

*“For these parents,
the group provides a
forum to share advice,
information, perspectives
and resources...”*

Deaf Independent Residences

By Marlena Turner,
DIR Manager/Assistant

Deaf Independent Residences, Inc. operates section 8 HUD houses and rents to qualified deaf or hard-of-hearing

individuals who need housing assistance. DIR currently has rooms for rent for the deaf or hard of hearing in the Easton area. To apply for these rooms please contact 410-742-5052 x124 for a Section 8 rent application.

Hot off the Presses!

Printed in November, DILA's first-ever annual report includes a special letter from our executive director and board president, consumer success stories, key data about the individuals we serve, our donor list, financials and more. To request your free copy, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail dila@dila.org.



How loud is too loud?

Regular exposure to certain noises can cause hearing loss over time. Sound levels are measured in decibels; the higher the decibel level, the greater the risk of permanent hearing loss. The National

Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders offers the following guidelines to help protect your ears:

Decibel Level	Effects	Examples
110 & above	Regular exposure of more than one minute can cause permanent hearing loss.	Firecracker (150 decibels) Ambulance siren (120 decibels) Chainsaw, rock concert (110 decibels)
100 - 109	No more than 15 minutes of unprotected exposure recommended.	Personal stereo system at maximum volume (105 decibels) Wood shop, snowmobile (100 decibels)
85 - 99	Prolonged exposure can cause gradual hearing loss.	Motorcycle (95 decibels) Power mower (90 decibels) Heavy city traffic (85 decibels)
60 & below	No effect on hearing.	Normal conversation (60 decibels) Refrigerator humming (40 decibels) Whispered voice (30 decibels)

Who is a Qualified Interpreter?

By Sue Beaver,
Interpreter Coordinator/Staff Interpreter

When this question arises, I refer to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for the definition. The ADA defines a qualified interpreter as “an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.” Although every interpreting situation may not be covered by the

ADA, this definition is a good starting point considering that the State of Maryland does not offer state licensure for interpreters.

DILA recently offered training for staff on the ADA, and the question, “Who is a qualified interpreter?” was asked. I thought the ADA’s response was accurate. It is the deaf or hard-of-hearing consumer who ultimately decides if an interpreter is qualified.

Volunteers Urgently Needed for Upcoming Events!

DILA is seeking volunteers for our Summer Deaf Camp and Deaf Awareness Day. Both events are still in the planning stages, and we urgently need volunteers to help get each event off the ground. Event-day volunteers are also needed (dates and times to be determined). Please consider giving some of your time to these causes; both are very important to those we serve and help increase awareness of DILA’s many programs and offerings. Even if you only have one hour to spare, your assistance will be greatly appreciated. To volunteer or learn more, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail dila@dila.org.

Upcoming Events



Parents of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children Support Group

First Thursday of each month
6 – 8 p.m.
DILA's Main Office
806 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury

16th Annual Winter Deaflympics

February 1-10, 2007
Salt Lake City, Utah

For more information, visit
www.2007deaflympics.com.

DINGO (deaf version of BINGO)

First Saturday of each month
(through May 2007)
8 p.m. (doors open at 6 p.m.)
DILA's Main Office
806 Snow Hill
Road, Salisbury



ASL Classes at DILA

By Rita Campbell,
Program Manager (Salisbury)

A distinct language with its own vocabulary, grammar and linguistic rules, American Sign Language (ASL) is the most commonly used sign language in the United States. For community members and interpreters, DILA offers basic, intermediate and advanced ASL classes at our main office in Salisbury.

Most classes meet weekly for two hours (ten weeks total). If interested, please e-mail your name, phone number and preferred ASL class (basic, intermediate or advanced) to dila@dila.org.

Please indicate in your e-mail if you are an interpreter. A DILA staff member will contact you shortly with the dates and times of the next available class.

“For community members and interpreters, DILA offers basic, intermediate and advanced ASL classes at our main office in Salisbury.”

Teachers who wish to request an ASL class at for their school or classroom can e-mail us at the address above or call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY).

Have You Visited DILA's Deaf Resource Library Lately?

By Eddy Morrison,
Communication Specialist

DILA's Deaf Resource Library is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about library materials, contact Eddy Morrison at 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail dila@dila.org. Items can be read or viewed onsite, or checked out for a small fee. This month's featured resource is:

- *ASL Pah!: Deaf Students' Perspectives on Their Language*, edited by Clayton Valli, Ceil Lucas, Esme Farb and Paul Kulick

The debate over the educational value and importance of American Sign Language (ASL) has largely been waged by administrators, teachers and hearing professionals. Ironically, no one has ever asked those impacted most by this



debate—deaf students—to share their opinions. Until now. This combination book and videotape features moving essays, journal entries and interviews on the role ASL plays in the lives of deaf students, including its impact on their families, education and identity. Note: The videotape is a translation of the accompanying text and does not feature voice-over translation.

Check out our redesigned Web site: www.dila.org

Living Wills Workshop

By Camelle Bryan,
Program Manager (Easton)

In August, attorney John A. Hayden III conducted a seminar on living wills at DILA's main office. A partner at the Baltimore law firm Whiteford, Taylor & Preston, LLP, John has provided free tax assistance to members of Baltimore's deaf community for many years now—and recruited several coworkers to do the same. He is also fluent in American Sign Language.

“All attendees enjoyed John’s seminar and were appreciative of the helpful information he shared.”

A living will is a legal document that specifies in advance the level of medical treatment you desire if you are unable to communicate your preferences due to injury or illness. In addition to living wills, John also covered such topics as

general power of attorney, special power of attorney, guardianship, healthcare directives, organ donation, wills, advance directives, probate, estate tax and special needs trusts.

This information will help us better assist deaf and hard-of-hearing community members with these types of matters. While we cannot provide legal advice, we can direct them to certain resources, such as computer programs that help individuals develop a will, the Maryland Volunteer Lawyer's Service for those on limited incomes (though technically you do not need a lawyer to create a will or health care directive or designate a power of attorney, John still suggests consulting a legal professional) and a special will check-off list to help them get started.

All attendees enjoyed John's seminar and were appreciative of the helpful information he shared.

Employment Services

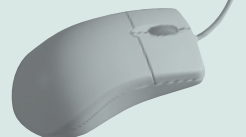
By Sarita Cooper,
Job Coach (Easton)

As a job coach at DILA's Easton office, my main focus is helping deaf individuals improve their job skills and find better jobs. While many job sources are equally accessible to both deaf and hearing individuals, it doesn't always work to the deaf individual's advantage. This is where I step in to assist deaf consumers; being deaf myself, I am able to assist them better with some of the barriers and obstacles they may encounter along the way. One of the top sources for deaf job seekers is the Internet. The most widely used job resource is www.HireDeaf.com.

Another is www.DeafDigest.com. Other places to check are the Division of Rehabilitation Services, job fairs, newspapers and friends and family.

Be sure to take a look at these job resources available on the Internet:

- www.HireDeaf.com
- www.DeafDigest.com



DILA Defines Six Core Values

DILA staff members recently gathered to expand upon our six core values. Moving forward, our core values will include the following explanations:

- **Diversity** and making a difference in the community.
- **Commitment** to the agency and individuals served.
- **Loyalty** towards the agency and each other.
- **Respect** for all modes of communication.
- **Integrity** of professional ethics.
- **Teamwork** and partnerships in providing quality services.

Salisbury Christian School Partners with DILA

By Rita Campbell,
Program Manager (Salisbury)

Early this summer, DILA was contacted by the principal of the Salisbury Christian School who was interested in offering American Sign Language (ASL) as part of the school's elective curriculum. An agreement was reached, and DILA began teaching an ASL class at the school. Teaching high school students is a new experience for me; there are 13 students in my class, most of whom are ninth graders and have never had a deaf teacher before. My students are eager to learn the new language and come prepared for new challenges every day.

Staff Updates and Employment Opportunities

By Lisa Trolan,
Administrative Director

Please join DILA in welcoming Tamara Dobson to our team. As the program secretary in our Easton office, Tamara will provide clerical and administrative support to our program manager and other personnel.

In other news, DILA is seeking qualified individuals for the following positions:

- ♦ Full-time independent living advisor
- ♦ Full-time staff interpreter
- ♦ Full-time supported employment manager
- ♦ Part-time healthcare assistant

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

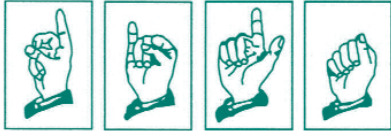
DILA offers an excellent benefits package for full-time employees. For more information, visit www.dila.org.

**Deadline for
the Spring 2007
Issue of *The DILA
Sign Post*:
February 15, 2007!**

Please e-mail all articles and announcements to Laura Jones at Laura.Jones@dila.org by this date.



Visit our Web site: www.dila.org



D I L A
DEAF INDEPENDENT
LIVING ASSN., INC.

806 Snow Hill Road
Salisbury, MD 21804

Phone: 410-742-5052 V/TTY
Fax: 410-543-4874
E-mail: 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.