



The DILA Sign Post



Winter 2009

From the Executive Director's Desk

By Jennifer Whitcomb, Executive Director

On November 7, 2008, DILA staff and board members celebrated 100 percent participation in our recently launched Sign to Succeed Campaign, which raises funds to promote much-needed services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. The campaign is also soliciting contributions from community members, who are encouraged to support our efforts as we confront budget cuts and economic uncertainty. (Campaign sponsorship levels are listed on page 5.)

As with nearly all businesses, nonprofit organizations and state and federal agencies, DILA has faced many challenging budget decisions this year as we seek to maintain the programs and services we offer. While all services are equally important, we have identified our core and secondary services to maximize our limited funds. DILA's core services are: Residential, Employment and Supported Employment, Community Support,

Advocacy, Interpreter Referral and Information and Referral. Secondary services include Deaf Educational Awareness Festival (D.E.A.F.), ASL classes, ADA trainings and workshops, Parents of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children Support Group and Camp Adventure. Contributions to our Sign to Succeed Campaign will ensure both our core and secondary services remain strong.

In other news, we recently expanded our Employment and Supported Employment Program to include deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who live in Salisbury but are ineligible for assistance from the Department of Rehabilitation and the Developmental Disability Administration. We extend special thanks to the City of Salisbury for providing us with a \$27,600 Community Development Block Grant to ensure as many deaf and hard-of-hearing Salisbury residents

as possible have the means to achieve their employment goals.

Last but not least, I encourage you to read our informative newsletter, which provides a wealth of information on our wonderful progress. In addition, a digital version of DILA's 2008 Annual Report is now posted on our Web site, www.dila.org, under the "Events & News" section. Hard copies are available for pickup in our lobby.



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And much more!

Staff:

Jennifer Whitcomb, *Executive Director*
 Michael Balea, *Financial Officer*
 Ramona Bradley, *Residential Health Director*
 Ken Stottlemire, *Community Programs Director*
 Marlena Turner, *DIR & Human Resource Manager*
 Sarah Perry, *Employment Manager*
 Kim Collier, *Community Support Specialist*
 Mary Parks-Russell, *Financial Assistant*
 Laura Jones, *Administrative Assistant*
 Lisa Trolan, *Office Coordinator*
 Pat Nock, *Residential Health Specialist*
 Sue Beaver, *Interpreter Coordinator/Interpreter*
 Celeste Emerson, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Renee Gordon, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Kim Guinta, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Kevin McGowan, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Todd Morrison, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Diana Price, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Belinda Price, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Joan Taylor, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Chuck Thomas, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Mary Jo Verdery, *Independent Living Advisor*
 Eddy Morrison, *Communication Specialist*
 Will Chambers, *Driver*
 John Handy, *Driver*
 Richard Hudson, *Driver*

Board Members:

Max Verbits, *President*
 Melanie Donophan, *Vice President*
 Sherry Perkins, *Secretary*
 Frank Williams, *Treasurer*
 Lance MacAllister, *DIR Chairman*
 Holly Hoffman
 Richard Johnson
 Donald O. Peterson

Volunteers:

Kyleigh Beaver	Michelle Martin	Ken Stottlemire
Bailey Bennett	Kevin McGowan	Sara Thomsen
Ramona Bradley	Marne Nolan	John Tomey
Raven Bradley	May Nu	Tony Trolan
Rita Campbell	Sarah Perry	Ben Turner
Paul Carmack	Belinda Price	Marlena Turner
Kim Collier	Anna Proper	Jackie West
Alley Firey	Mike Purkey	Jennifer
Greg Frey	Lizette Ramos	Whitcomb
Sade Haywood	Lisa Rollins	Mr. & Mrs. Frank
Holly Hoffman	Todd Rollins	Williams
Laura Jones	Lisa Skaggs	Stephanie
Greg Lynch	Clara Stafford	Wood

Interns:

Sade Haywood
 Lauren Robbins
 Sara Thomsen

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. Office is located in Salisbury, Maryland serving the Eastern Shore's nine counties. DILA continues to serve as a transitional program between home, employment and education for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Sign Stage on Tour Presents New Twist on Familiar Story

By Ken Stottlemire, *Community Programs Director*



On Saturday November 8, 2008, DILA welcomed Sign Stage on Tour for a performance of James and the Giant Peach at Oak Ridge Baptist Church in Salisbury. Made possible in part by a grant from the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council (awarded by the Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts), the afternoon performance was as pleasing to the eyes as it was to the ears.

The group's young actors and manager treated us to an amazing performance with dialogue com-

municated in both American Sign Language (ASL) and voice. This allowed all audience members, hearing and deaf, to enjoy the show.

Sign Stage on Tour also put a different spin on the original story; in this version, James was portrayed as a deaf child isolated in a world of non-signing characters. But with a little magic from a mysterious stranger, James' aunts and friends (Spider, Grasshopper and Earthworm) were given the ability to communicate with him in ASL.

At the event, local Daisy Girl Scout Troop #749 helped DILA take tickets and usher attendees to their seats. Thanks to some advance signing instruction from DILA Communication Specialist Eddy Morrison, troop members used ASL to welcome audience members.

Sue Beaver Earns National Interpreter Certification

By Marlena Turner, *DIR & HR Manager*

DILA applauds Interpreter Coordinator/Interpreter Sue Beaver on receiving her National Interpreter Certification (NIC) for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This has been a long-term goal for her, both professionally and personally. Our congratulations go out to her, and we thank her for providing such outstanding professional interpreting services for DILA and the surrounding community.

DILA now offers Job Placement and Job Coaching services to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in Delaware! Call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) to learn more.

ASL Class Update

By Eddy Morrison, Communications Specialist

This fall, DILA hosted our first-ever ASL III Class, featuring nine individuals with diverse career backgrounds, including human services and information technology. We were very pleased to have a group of individuals eager to continue past ASL I and II and commit themselves to an ASL III class.

In January, DILA celebrated another milestone with our first ASL class for children ages 5 to 15, "Sign Time with Eddy!" The six-week class runs through February 14, 2009.

Adult ASL I classes will resume on Tuesday, February 17 and run weekly through Tuesday, May 19, 2009, (14 weeks total) from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

For more information on DILA's ASL classes, visit www.dila.org.

Ten Simple Ways to Go Green

By Marlena Turner, DIR & HR Manager

DIR has spent the past year going green! As some readers may know, we recently installed energy-efficient windows and appliances in several of our Deaf Independent Residences (DIR). While this is a larger, more costly example of energy conservation, there are several small steps we can all take to go green. Here are ten simple ways to reduce your energy usage and help protect our planet:

- 1. Set your thermostat a few degrees lower in the winter** and a few degrees higher in the summer. This easy step can save you hundreds of dollars.
- 2. Use cold water to wash your clothes.** Up to 85 percent of the energy used washing clothes is spent heating water.
- 3. Take shorter showers** or use a low-flow showerhead.
- 4. Use less gas by walking or carpooling** to work or the store.

5. Just say no to plastic bags; instead, purchase reusable nylon bags for groceries and other items.

6. Stop buying bottled water. (Water from the tap can be purified with a filter or purifier.) This small change will lessen plastic pileup in our landfills.

7. Recycle! Most cities have recycle stations or curbside recycling. Check your city's Web site for details.

8. Most electronics (e.g. cell phones, computers, printers, televisions, etc.) can be recycled too. Check your city's Web site for details.

9. Make your own cleaning supplies. (Search online for recipes.) Homemade cleaning products are more cost-effective and better for the environment.

10. Stay informed! There are many more ways to go green. Visit www.gogreeninitiative.org for ideas.

DILA Receives 2008 Best of Salisbury Award

DILA received the prestigious 2008 Best of Salisbury Award (Social Services Category) from the U.S. Local Business Association (USLBA) on December 5, 2008.

Each year, the USLBA identifies companies nationwide that achieve exceptional marketing success in their local area and business category and enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and community. Various sources of information are gathered and analyzed to choose winners in each category with a focus on quality, not quantity.

A Washington, D.C.-based organization, the USLBA works exclusively with local business owners, trade groups, professional associations, chambers of commerce and other business advertising and marketing groups. Its mission is to be an advocate for small and medium-size businesses and entrepreneurs across America.



DILA Job Lab Grand Opening Makes Headlines

By Sarah Perry, Employment Manager

On October 22, 2008, DILA hosted a grand opening celebration for our new Job Lab. The event was a major success, with many community members, government officials, businesses and nonprofit agencies in attendance. The grand opening was also featured on the local news and in *The Daily Times*. Thanks to everyone who helped make this celebration such a success!

DILA's Job Lab is located at 806 Snow Hill Road in Salisbury and is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. No appointment is necessary. The lab features numerous employment resources, including a computer with Internet access; lists of job search Web sites and current openings; resume, cover letter, interview and ADA resources; and much more. We also offer a Job Seeking Skills Training class, along with job development and coaching services.

DILA's Employment Program is sponsored in part by the City of Salisbury Community Development Block Program, the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Another Great Adventure

By Ken Stottlemire, Community Programs Director & Marlena Turner, DIR & HR Manager



Fifteen deaf and hard-of-hearing children, their siblings and children of deaf parents descended upon the cabins of Camp Pecometh in Centreville, Maryland, to participate in DILA's first-ever overnight Camp Adventure, held in August 2008. Campers ages 5 through 17 spent the weekend playing games, canoeing, doing crafts, hiking and making friends. Friday night was devoted to getting to know each other around the campfire, with awesome storytelling from Rita Campbell. Saturday featured canoeing, hiking, "Splashdown" (giant water trampolines) and face painting. When Sunday morning arrived, everyone was exhausted but sad to leave.

Camp Adventure 2009 (scheduled for August 7 – 9, 2009, at Camp Pecometh) is currently in the planning stages, but we need your help. Please consider contributing to DILA's Sign to Succeed Campaign to help keep Camp Adventure alive.

The camp is an expensive endeavor, and we work hard to make sure no child is turned away due to inability to pay. We also need volunteers to join our Camp Committee. If you are interested in giving money or time, please contact Ken Stottlemire at ken.stottlemire@dila.org or call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY).

Remember, without you we cannot make Camp Adventure happen. Every little bit helps give area children a weekend to remember.

First-Ever Camping Trip

By Chuck Thomas, Independent Living Advisor

DILA consumer William Tucker accomplished his dream to go camping. In September, a friend of William's and I traveled with William to Elk Neck State Park on the Chesapeake Bay. We camped at Elk Neck for three nights and enjoyed fishing, mountain biking and even a night out to a crab house in the town of North East.



Don't Let the Flu Get the Best of You

By Ramona Bradley, Residential Health Director

The flu season is upon us! Here are three tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help protect you and your family from the flu this year:

1. Get a flu shot.

Though it's best to get a flu shot in the fall, it can still be effective if administered in late winter or early spring. Keep in mind that it takes about two weeks for the flu shot to take effect.

2. Take everyday precautions.

Wash your hands frequently and cover your mouth when you cough. If someone in your household gets the flu, keep it from spreading by washing anything the person has touched (e.g. pillowcases, sheets, hand towels, etc.) and disinfecting common areas (e.g. sinks, toilets, phones, computer keyboards, remote controls, etc.).

3. Use antiviral medications.

Ask your doctor about antiviral medications, which may help protect you from the flu and reduce the severity and duration of your symptoms.

Think you have the flu? Symptoms can be mild or severe and include fever, body aches, cough, chills and fatigue. If you experience these symptoms—especially if you are at high risk for complications from the flu (e.g. 65 and older, living with a chronic medical condition like diabetes or heart disease, pregnant or a young child)—call your healthcare provider.

For more information about the flu, visit www.cdc.gov or contact your local health department.

Sorenson VRS Now Available at Dorchester County Public Library

By Laura Jones, Administrative Assistant



Deaf individuals can now visit Dorchester County Public Library, located at 303 Gay Street in Cambridge, to try Video Relay Service (VRS). For sign language users, VRS makes it possible to converse

in their native language with the person they are calling. With this feature, users can express real emotions and feelings (similar to a person-to-person conversation) and benefit from enhanced communication speed.

VRS is open to the public for use during the library's normal hours of operation. Traveling to or from the beach? Make a free VRS call on the way, either at DILA's headquarters in Salisbury or at the Dorchester Library in Cambridge.

DILA assisted with the installation of a Sorenson VRS phone at the Dorchester County Public Library, and funding was provided by a grant from Quota International of Cambridge, MD.

Help DILA Sign to Succeed

By Laura Jones, Administrative Assistant

Contributions to DILA's Sign to Succeed Campaign help provide much-needed services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Community members, businesses, organizations, DILA employees, board members, volunteers and consumers are encouraged to donate to the campaign. Sponsorship levels are as follows:

\$1,000 and above

Name listed on Sign to Succeed Campaign board in DILA's main lobby
Sign to Succeed Campaign pin
Name listed in DILA's biannual newsletter, annual report and Web site (www.dila.org)
Advertising link posted on DILA Web site

\$500 – \$999

Name listed on Sign to Succeed Campaign board in DILA's main lobby
Sign to Succeed Campaign pin
Name listed in DILA's biannual newsletter, annual report and Web site (www.dila.org)

\$26 – \$499

Name listed on Sign to Succeed Campaign board in DILA's main lobby
Sign to Succeed Campaign pin
Name listed in DILA's annual report

Up to \$25

Name listed on Sign to Succeed Campaign board in DILA's main lobby

For more information about the campaign or to make a donation, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY).

Tech Expo Showcases Latest and Greatest Communication Devices

By Kim Collier, Community Support Specialist

On November 6, 2008, DILA held its first-ever Assistive Technology Expo, supported by the Wicomico County Executive's Community Enrichment Grant. The expo was a huge success and attracted many local and national organizations, including Holly Community Inc., the Wicomico County Board of Education Assistive Technology Department, the Helen Keller National Center, Sorenson, Hands On VRS, Maryland Relay, Harris Communications, Hear-More, HumanWare and the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Everyone from the community was invited, and there were many new communication technologies to discover and learn about.

Some of the technologies showcased included a mobile videophone, new Braille features for the deaf-blind, phones that translate spoken words into text and more! If you missed the expo and would like additional information, please contact DILA at 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY).

DILA Thanks 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 individuals.

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

Platinum Sponsorship (\$30,000 and above)

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation – general support of core services

Gold Sponsorship (\$20,000 - \$29,999)

City of Salisbury, Community Development Block Grant – DILA's Employment Program

Silver Sponsorship (\$10,000 - \$19,999)

John Ben Snow Memorial Trust – DIR repairs
Maryland Home and Community Care Foundation – ADA workshops for the community

Bronze Sponsorship (\$5,000 - 9,999)

Anonymous – general operating expenses
Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, Inc. – Parents of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children Support Group
Wicomico County of Maryland, Community Enrichment Grant – DILA's Educational Advocacy Program

Copper Sponsorship (\$1,000-4,999)

Choptank Electric Trust – technology
Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation – Job Seeking Skills classes
Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council – James and the Giant Peach performance

Copper Sponsorship (\$1,000-4,999) (cont'd)

Bruce and Nancy Whitcomb – Sign to Succeed Campaign

Friends (\$500 - \$999)

American Legion Post #64 – FY 2008
American Legion Post #64 – FY 2009
Apple Discount Drugs
Jennifer Whitcomb

Supporters (\$25-\$499)

Charles Brown Glass Co., Inc.
George W. Collins
D. Page Elmore
Expert Collision Repair, Inc.
Fuller Hall & Associates, Inc.
Betty A. Gray
Mr. and Mrs. Francis Langlais
Lioness Club of Ocean City
Donald & Harriet Maloney
David D. Neill
May Nu
Quota International of Salisbury, Maryland, Inc.
Trice Geary & Myers, LLC
Charles K. Williams

Much-Appreciated In-Kind Gifts

Anonymous
Richard Caldwell
Joy Carney
Comcast Cable
Ever-well Massage and Bodyworks
Gardner Signs, Inc.
Harvest Time Irrigation, Inc.
Holt Food, Paper & Chemical Company
Lankford-Sysco Food Services
Laura Jones
Oak Ridge Baptist Church
Richard Oswald

DILA Thanks Our Recent Donors (*cont'd*)

Much-Appreciated

In-Kind Gifts (*cont'd*)

Pepsi Bottling Ventures, LLC
Ken Stottlemire
Technology Contracting, LLC
Wal-Mart, North Salisbury
Frank Williams

Sign to Succeed Campaign

American Legion Post #64
Apple Discount Drugs
Sue Beaver
Ramona Bradley
Will Chambers
Michael and Nancy Childs
Kim Collier
Melanie Donophan
Cheri Dowling
Tom Dryden
Easton Lodge No. 1622 B.P.O. Elks
Celeste Emerson
Henry Eure
Amy Figgs
Fitzpatrick Lanes, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Mervin Garretson
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John Handy
Holly Hoffman
Richard Hudson
ISG International
Richard Johnson
Laura Jones
Lisa Kornberg
Jana Layfield
Lance MacAllister
Donna McCole
Kevin McGowan
Eddy Morrison
Todd Morrison

Sign to Succeed Campaign (*cont'd*)

Pat Nock
Ocean City Parrot Head Club
Mary Parks-Russell
Amy Perkins
Scott Perkins
Sherry Perkins
Sarah Perry
Don Peterson
Belinda Price
Mike Purkey
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence A. Russell, Jr.
Salisbury Elks Lodge B.P.O.E. 817
Drs. Bill and Judy Sherman
Bill and Barbara Shockley
Ken Stottlemire
Joan Taylor
Technology Contracting, LLC
Chuck Thomas
Lisa Trolan
Marlena Turner
Max Verbits
Mary Jo Verdery
Patti Weiss
Bruce and Nancy Whitcomb
Jennifer Whitcomb
Frank H. Williams, Jr.

Maryland Charities Campaign

Anonymous – 14 contributors
Evelyn E. Anthony
Verlinda Dillard
John W. May, Jr.

LICA Campaign

Rita Ahrens
Linda Christian
Kimberly Gessner
Ann Guthrie
Gordon Hewitt
Robert Hobbie
Dawn Keen
Anthony Watkins
William Williams

How Important Is Professional Development

*By Sue Beaver, Interpreter Coordinator/
Interpreter*

Communication is a vital part of the human existence. It's how we express ourselves, convey thoughts and gather information. Interpreting allows us to take part in the communication process.

I have thought a lot recently about my own personal journey and the people I have met along the way. Each person has contributed to my own growth and development as an interpreter. Attending workshops and interacting with the deaf community is a vital component of my professional development. Without this growth and development, I would be unable to perform at the level my profession, and more importantly, the individuals I interpret for, require and deserve.

Interpreting is an ever-changing field, and it is our responsibility to grow and develop in our profession so that we may offer the best services possible. We should look at every opportunity to improve our skills and the profession as a whole. One such opportunity is the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf National Conference, August 1 – 6, 2009, in Philadelphia. This is a great way for interpreters to enhance their skills and network on a national level. For more information, visit www.rid.org. I encourage all those in the profession to attend the conference and continue their journey of self-growth and professional development. Trust me, it's worth the extra effort.

THANK YOU

Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, all events will take place at DILA's office in Salisbury, located at 806 Snow Hill Road. For more information on all events, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or visit www.dila.org/events.php.

DINGO (deaf version of BINGO)

February 7 – May 3, 2009
(first Saturday of each month)
4 p.m. (doors open), 6 p.m. (games begin)

What Does Social Security Mean for You?

Wednesday, February 11, 2009
4:30 – 8 p.m.

ASL I Classes

Tuesdays, February 17 – May 19, 2009
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

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

Thursday, March 5, 2009
7 – 8:30 p.m.

What Does the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Mean?

Monday, March 9, 2009
5 – 8 p.m.

ADA – Cecil County

Thursday, March 26, 2009
11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
(community members)
4:30 – 8:30 p.m.
(healthcare providers)
Location TBD

What Is a Cochlear Implant?

April (exact date and time TBD)

ADA – Queen Anne's County

Thursday, May 14, 2009
11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
(community members)
4:30 – 8:30 p.m.
(healthcare providers)
Location TBD

DILA's Camp Adventure (ages 5 – 17)

Friday, August 7 – Sunday, August 9, 2009
Camp Pecometh, Centreville, MD
A summer camp for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, their siblings and children of deaf parents.
Call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) for details.

Visit our Web site: www.dila.org



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