

FOCUS

Supporting families with children who are deaf & hard of hearing

ADA: Awareness, Compliance and Responsibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed in 1990, prohibits all discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas including employment, state and local government, transportation and all places that are open to the general public. It sometimes seems the only people who are aware of the ADA are individuals who are disabled and the parents of individuals who are disabled. One reason for this is there is no federal agency or other government entity who oversees compliance, training, or awareness of responsibilities for the ADA.

The ADA requires that title II entities (State and local governments) and title III entities (businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public) communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities.

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing (dhh) or who communicate differently are covered by the ADA under communication disabilities. Covered entities (title II and title III) are required to provide "auxiliary aids and services" when needed to communicate effectively with individuals who have communication disabilities.

"Auxiliary aids and services" is a general term used in reference to communication options. Effective communication can mean any modality or technology that best suits an individual's communication need. One auxiliary aid or service does not necessarily meet the needs of all individuals. Entities are required to work with individuals to determine an appropriate communication fit. Strong advocacy skills are necessary for parents of a child and individuals who are dhh to request and receive access to effective communication in every activity, event, or outing where communication is necessary.

The United States Department of Justice website states that the ADA is only enforced through complaints, lawsuits, consent decrees, settlement agreements, and mediation. For some entities the request for communication access happens so infrequently that they do not have a protocol in place to meet the request. When staff are not properly trained there might be a delay resulting in a missed program or confusion on who will pay for the service, or an inadequate service is offered as a substitute. The ADA is clear. Entities are always responsible to pay for auxiliary aids and services. If a covered entity flatly denies a communication request and all informal efforts for a resolution have failed, it is then left to parents of a child and individuals who are dhh to figure out what steps to take to enforce their civil rights. Information on how to file a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice can be found at www.ada.gov/filing complaint.htm

The goal is to ensure that communication with people with these disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities.

Join MNCDHH in Marking the 27th Year Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Our Commitment to the Rights of All People

Minnesota Disability Rights March and Rally

Wednesday, July 26, 2017 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Disability Rights March:

Orientation will begin at 1:00 pm at the Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, in the Education wing. The March will begin at 1:30 p.m. to the Minnesota State Capitol.

Disability Rights Rally:

The Disability Rights Rally will be held from 2:30 to 4:00 pm in the Capitol Rotunda.

www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section, Effective Communication, duplication of this document is encouraged.

www.ADA.gov

ADA Information Line 800-514-0301 (Voice) and 800-514-0383 (TTY)

MNH&V EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Central Parent Guide

MNH&V is looking for a Central Parent Guide to continue to serve families in a specified region of Minnesota. Candidates should be eager to support other parents with a child who is deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. The program needs an individual to continue to provide emotional support, unbiased information, referral resources, and connect parents to other parents.

The Central Parent Guide is responsible for organizing events, and sustaining and reporting activities related to these events. This person represents MNH&V in the community and participates in family support activities. The work schedule is flexible and 10 hours a week.

For an outline of duties and application: http://www.lifetrack-mn.org/about/ careers/central-parent-guide-part-time

Parent Guide for the Spanish-Speaking Community

MNH&V is looking for a Parent Guide to continue to serve families in our Spanish-Speaking Community. Candidates should be fluent in Spanish, from the Latino community themselves, and eager to support other parents with a child who is deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. The program for the Spanish-Speaking Community is established, but in need of an individual to continue to provide emotional support, unbiased information, referral resources, and connect parents to other parents.

The Parent Guide for the MNH&V Spanish-speaking Community is responsible for organizing events, and sustaining and reporting activities related to these events. This person represents MNH&V in the community and participates in family support activities. The work schedule is flexible and 10 hours a week.

For an outline of duties and application: www.lifetrack-mn.org/about/careers/ parent-guide-10-hours-week

Deaf Rights Symposium

The Great Lakes ADA Center is host to the Deaf Rights Symposium on Friday, August 18, through Sunday, August 20, 2017, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois.

This conference is for consumers and providers who work with persons who are dhh on issues related to effective communication and participation in society. Education and professional development on the Americans with Disabilities Act and other similar civil rights laws will be the main topic of the Symposium. Other topics will include access and equitable treatment in the areas of: Arts and Culture, Employment, Government Services, Higher Education, Healthcare, Judicial and Law Enforcement, and Legal and Financial Services.

The Great Lakes ADA Center's mission is to increase awareness and knowledge with the ultimate goal of achieving voluntary compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act within the regions they serve; Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

http://www.cvent.com/events/deafrights-symposium/event-summary-2d2 7645128464ac28dd88681d7203ec7. aspx?i=f1ac07d4-a54d-4be1-9d61-94a8d35a0114

Save the Date • Friday, July 21, 2017

Northern Voices 16th Annual Golf Classic & Auction

On July 21, 2017, Northern Voices 16th Annual Golf Classic & Auction will be held at the University of Minnesota Les Bolstad Golf Course. Register for 18 holes of golf, which includes lunch, and/or a dinner reception featuring a silent auction. All proceeds benefit children who are deaf or hard of hearing learning how to listen and speak. Invite friends and family to join in the fun.

You can become a tournament sponsor, a golfer, a volunteer, or donate to our silent auction. Find more information at https://sites.google.com/a/northernvoices.org/nv-golf-auction-2017/home

Thanks for your contribution!

We rely on your generous support to build better lives for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Make a tax-deductible donation today.

DONATE

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FOCUS is published bimonthly by Minnesota Hands & Voices, a program of Lifetrack. Information in this newsletter about other organizations does not imply endorsement by Minnesota Hands & Voices or Lifetrack.

Lifetrack, 709 University Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55104 Newsletter editor: Mary Stadelman © 2017 Lifetrack



Deaf Quilters of MN

Representatives from Deaf Quilters of Minnesota donated beautifully handmade quilts to help replenish MNH&V Welcome Blanket supply. Club members share a love for sewing, but come from a variety of backgrounds and communities across Minnesota and even Wisconsin. The group started meeting in homes, but now meets monthly at Thompson Hall.

Many years ago the group held all-day quilting marathons to make baby quilts to donate to out of state organizations caring for families who were deaf or hard of hearing (dhh). The group likes the idea of their quilts being distributed in Minnesota to families with a newly identified child who is dhh.



Four representatives from Deaf Quilters of Minnesota delivered the blankets to MNH&V; Topsy Toner-Johnson, Amy Siebert, Marcia Passi, and Brenda Holte. Anne Barlow, Metro Parent Guide (pictured center), was on hand to receive the blankets and personally thank them for their generous donation.

Registration Now Open Workshop Titled "Understanding Deafblindness and the Role of the Intervener"

The MN DeafBlind Project and Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District present Understanding Deafblindness and the Role of the Intervener on August 16, 2017, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Workshop location is in the Pavilion Room at the Holiday Inn & Suites, 8511 Hudson Blvd., Lake Elmo, MN. Early check-in at 8:30 am, a light breakfast and lunch is provided.

This interactive workshop will explain the impact of deafblindness on the communication, cognition, learning and social/emotional development of students who are deafblind. Also, the role of a deafblind intervener in an educational setting and the importance of collaboration with the education team.

Presenter, Dr. Jerry Petroff, is an associate professor at The College of New Jersey and is the Project Director for the New Jersey DeafBlind Project and has been professionally involved in the education of students with deafblindness for over thirty years. Dr. Petroff is nationally recognized as an expert in the education of children with deafblindness.

NO FEE—the cost of the workshop is supported by a grant from MN Department of Education.

For questions about the workshop contact Jay Fehrman by phone at 651-964-1274 or email jfehrman@916schools.org or Cathy Lyle by phone at 612-638-1526 or email cathy.lyle@metroecsu.org.

Registration questions contact Deanna Rothbauer by phone at 612-638-1531 or email deanna.rothbauer@metroecsu.org

Registration open until August 2 at http://metroecsu.myquickreg.com/register/

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY at MNH&V Metro Family Picnic

Minnesota Hands & Voices (MNH&V) is looking for volunteers for this year's Annual Metro Family Picnic on Thursday, August 3, from 5:00 - 8:30 pm. We are looking for volunteers to help in several areas during the picnic, such as welcoming families through registration and helping children with activities and crafts. American Sign Language Interpreters and **Cued English Transliterators** will be available at the picnic to provide access, but we welcome any parent or student volunteers who have communication skills. too. Volunteers are also needed to arrive early to help set-up and/or stay late to help clean-up. Please let us know what your "super powers" are and what you might want to do to make this event more special for MNH&V families.

"Many hands make light work."

— John Heywood

Over the years we have been fortunate to have an active MNH&V community of volunteers who have made the Annual Metro Family Picnic a success. Please consider joining us this year. Volunteer registration is easy, but takes time to process properly so as soon as you can commit please contact Laura Libby, Parent Education Guide, email at LauraL@lifetrack-mn.org or call at 651-265-2357.

Brand New, State-of-the-Art, Barrier-Free Playground at Gideon Pond Elementary, Burnsville

On June 8, the last day of school, students and staff at Gideon Pond Elementary in Burnsville, host to ISD 917 Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program for 35 years, celebrated with Vikings mascot, Victor, and Vikings cheerleaders. The celebration was to witness U.S. Bank executives present a check for \$50,000 to Gideon Pond Principal, Chris Bellmont. This fulfilled their fundraising goal, started two years ago, to build a state-of-the-art, barrier-free playground at Gideon Pond.

Lisa and Eddie Sardinha, parents of Victoria, a learner in the ISD 917 Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Program, have been on the Gideon Pond Playground Committee from the start. They were part of the program, in which Lisa thanked all for



Thomas, ISD 917 learner, with Vikings' mascot, Victor.



Lisa and Eddie Sardinha, parents of Victoria, a learner in the ISD 917 Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program.

helping to see through the creation of a playground which will be made accessible and barrier-free for her daughter.

"Gideon Pond Elementary is on the leading edge of a movement to make playgrounds more inclusive and right for EVERY child," said Kitri Kyllo, Assistant Director of ISD 917 Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program and a member of the Gideon Pond Playground Committee. "While the playground will benefit the whole community, there is no question it will allow ISD 917 learners with physical challenges a real playground experience where they get to participate side-by-side in play activities with their peers. This is profound!"

Summer Cued American English Classes Offered

Beginning Cue Class

Learn the cued speech system.

Cued Speech Skills Class

Practice words, phrases and sentences.

Transliterator Cue Class

Practice transliterator skills.

Kids Cue For kids ages 8 to 13.

Classes are sponsored by the Cued Speech Association of Minnesota, August 7 and 8, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Located at Falcon Ridge Middle School, Apple Valley, MN. Fee per adult: \$75/members \$60, kids: \$50/members \$45. For class registration go to http://www.cuedspeechminnesota.org/ Documents/2017CueClassFlyer.pdf

"I spy with my little eye" Forward-Looking Leaders, Employers, or Organizations

MNH&V Team is asking parents to keep an eye out for people, places, or programs that make a difference in our community. The service professionals who use their heart, understand, and take action! We want news to spread about good works and actions you spy happening and encourage those organizations who just "get it"!

An employee who understands how critical communication access is and, without needing to be asked, went to any length to accommodate your child who is dhh. The employer who just knew to offer an in-service for co-workers of an individual who is dhh to familiarize them with effective communication and deaf etiquette, making an inclusive environment possible. An indoor park where the video screens already have the captioning turned on. What about the program leader you contacted about accommodations for your child who you found was energized and excited to learn so much and they wondered out loud what else they could do to improve your child's experience? These are the kinds of forward-looking leaders we want to showcase!

Positive attitudes and experiences have and do happen. Share your story or what you "I spied" with us whether it was a small attitude shift or a big system change. It is time to celebrate inclusiveness and ADA awareness where ever we spy it!

Email your story or comments to MNH&V at mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org. Put "I spy with my little eye" in the subject line. Include your name and contact information for questions or clarification for an article.

Lifetrack's: Deaf Mentor Family Program and DHH Role Model Program

Lifetrack's Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Outreach Services includes our MNH&V,
along with offering two other programs
specific to families with a child who is
dhh; Deaf Mentor Family Program (DMFP)
and DHH Role Model Program (DHHRMP).
These programs offer many benefits to
families who have a child who is dhh and
are recognized as playing a critical role
in the Minnesota Early Hearing Detection
and Intervention System.

The DMFP is focused on facilitating early language through American Sign Language (ASL) instruction and sharing valuable insight about the social emotional development of children who are dhh. The program brings together the love of family, ASL, and the wealth of knowledge from a mentor who is dhh to provide a rich language environment for the child.

For more information about finding a Deaf Mentor for your family and the DMFP go to http://www.lifetrack-mn.org/deaf-mentor-family-program

The DHHRMP understands children who are dhh benefit from a positive relationship with a trusted adult who is also dhh. Role Models who have experienced the challenges of being dhh firsthand can help children who are dhh practice important self-advocacy skills and help develop their sense of identity. Families sense optimism and hope by seeing a connection between their child who is dhh to a successful Role Model. The Role Model will serve as a guide to the diversity of language and useful knowledge of technology options.

For more information about finding a Role Model for your family and the DHHRMP go to http://www.lifetrackmn.org/rolemodel

Meet Lifetrack's DHH Role Model — Jessica Stern

Jessica Stern is a role model for Lifetrack DHH Role Model Program. Jessica grew up in a small town in southern Minnesota. Jessica became profoundly hard of hearing as a baby during a harrowing medical experience, which almost cost her her life. After several office and emergency room visits local doctors and emergency room staff could not diagnose Jessica's illness. But with her mother's persistence and the help of one compassionate doctor, Dr. Parnell, they were finally sent directly to the hospital in Rochester. Jessica was one of the first infants to be diagnosed with Meningitis during the Meningitis outbreak in the 1980's. It wasn't until after her first birthday that her babysitter discovered Jessica could not hear due to that illness.

Growing up Jessica's parents, two sisters and various foster siblings worked tirelessly on language skills with her. Her mother would hold up an apple and say, "Jessi, say 'apple' (insert babble), good job!" This went on for hours upon hours; her baby sister learned to speak much earlier than normal because of all the practice. Working on language skills was not easy and it took much patience for her and her family, but she eventually started talking. Jessica had success with hearing aids growing up and her family took sign language classes to give her



Jessica Stern with her husband

another tool to use then and in the future.

In regard to being a role model, Jessica tells a story about an encounter she had with a woman. Apparently the woman had meet Jessica years earlier at an event in Mankato.

"Her son was only 6 weeks old and she had found out that he was deaf. She shared some moving words about meeting Jessica which had impacted the way she raised him because she thought I had turned out pretty great," said Jessica, adding, "My mom was actually there when this woman shared this information and she said, 'That's all I wanted to see when she was a baby, someone who turned out okay at the end of all this." This exchange with her mother and the woman was the driving factor for Jessica's desire to be a role model.

Jessica's advice for parents would be to toss any expectations or bars that someone else has laid down for your child who is dhh. "No one has the right to limit what you and your family can become and no one can see the future," she said. "Although it is hard to see the end result now, the future you is very wise, happy, and telling you to just take on each day with a smile."

Jessica was active in college life by joining a sorority and was a member of several executive boards for campus. She used accommodations for classes as needed, mostly interpreters or note takers. She graduated from the mortuary program within the medical school at the University of Minnesota, and is now a licensed funeral director.

Jessica lives with her husband and they call the Twin Cities area their home.

Read Jessica's entire biography and other role model biographies at Lifetrack http://www.lifetrack-mn.org/DHH/RoleModels

2017 Hands & Voices Leadership Conference

Transforming Systems with Family Engagement: H&V Way

The 2017 conference is September 15 through 17, located at the Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa in Galena, IL. This conference is for H&V chapter leaders, H&V program leaders, parents of children who are dhh, and professionals who work with students who are dhh.

If you are not involved in specific activities for H&V, this conference is still for you. The conference offers informative sessions and inspiring keynote speakers. First time attendees can register for a free session to learn tips on getting the most out of your conference experience (registration required).

Find more details about the conference, along with lodging and travel information at http://handsandvoices.org/conference/2017/index.htm

Early bird pricing ends August 18. Register for the conference and secure lodging at https://co.clickandpledge.com/advanced/default.aspx?wid=41049

Ask MNCDHH — Your Chance to Ask Questions & Learn More About the MNCDHH

Minnesota Commission of Deaf, Deafblind, & Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) is collecting questions from individuals who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, and hearing about the work MNCDHH does, has done in the past, and plans to do in the future, and about how they go about doing it.

Once a month they will provide answers to a random selection of questions to be published in the MNCDHH newsletter and posted on their website and social media.

Please send your MNCDHH questions to http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3665562/Questions-for-MNCDHH

Sign up to receive MNCDHH newsletters: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ MNCDHH/subscriber/new?email=

Find more information about the MNCDHH at their website at https://mn.gov/deaf-commission/

FREE Summer Soccer Camp for Children who are DHH

July 17 to 20, 2017 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Sanneh Foundation offers a FREE Summer Soccer Camp for children who are dhh. This is a great opportunity to meet the social/emotional needs of children who are dhh in grades K-6, interact with peers who are also dhh, learn more about soccer and playing as a team. Interpreters will be provided.

Sanneh Foundation FREE Summer Soccer Camp is located at the Phalen Recreation Center, 1000 Wheelock Pkwy, St. Paul, MN.

The Sanneh Foundation serves youth the Twin Cities metro area. Their mission is to empower youth by supporting and promoting education, physical health, and their social/emotional development.

Questions about the soccer camp email: EManson@thesannehfoundation.org

For registration and more information about the Sanneh Foundation go to: http:// thesannehfoundation.org/programs/ camps/st-paul-soccer-camps/



MN MMCI Chapter #24

Thank you to the Minnesota Masonic Motorcycle Club International Chapter #24 (MN MMCI # 24) for their generous donation to MNH&V. MMCI#24, organized in 2000 and is 63 members strong, researched organizations who serve families in Minnesota and contacted MNH&V. Robin Coninx, Lead Parent Guide, presented MNH&V to their members at a meeting. A motion was made and passed to make their donation to MNH&V.



Pictured in front are James Henderson and Marie Aune, both are MMCI#24 members, Robin Coninx of MNH&V, Dave Foote a MMCI#24 member, and Kris, owner of Draggin. Back row, Eric from Draggin, Lloyd Bendickson, President of MMCI#24, Gordy Aune Jr., Secretary and Treasurer of MMCI#24. Picture taken in front of Draggin Jeans in St Paul.

Back-to-School Checklist Starter for Parents with Children who are DHH

Parents with a child who is deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) have additional considerations before their child heads back to school in the fall. The more parents can get done this summer to prepare their child for the school year the better they can focus on learning.

Health and Wellness

Schedule annual appointments far in advanced during summer break or for after-school to minimize disruptions in your child's learning.

☐ Well-care Visit

A well-care visit establishes a baseline of your child's general health with a doctor you can trust. Many children who are DHH have ongoing health issues that can be noted as part of the child's baseline health. Should your child become ill, the well-care notes along with a doctor who is familiar with your child can streamline a diagnosis for any new concerns.

☐ Update Immunizations

Remember to ask for a copy of your child's immunization records. This saves time filling out health forms for fieldtrips, activities, emergency health cards, etc.

☐ Medication Check

If your child is on medications have a doctor double-check the dose for their age, weight, effectiveness, etc. Extra time for your child to adjust to changes in medications would be helpful before school starts. Make sure your child's current prescription is filled and ready before school starts.

☐ Physical Paperwork

Sports, camps, summer school, etc. often require health forms signed by a doctor. Bringing the forms to their appointment will save time. Doctors can sign forms any time, but it can take extra time to process.

☐ **Visit the Dentist and/or Orthodontist** Schedule appointments sooner than later, because the best times fill up fast.

□ Vision Check

Children who are DHH need to have optimal vision. An annual eye exam is recommended whether your child wears corrective eyewear or not. If your child has glasses, in addition to checking the lens prescription, check for stretches that can obscure their vision. Make sure their frames are the right size with no pressure points and adjusted to fit properly.

☐ Audiologist Visit

Before school starts have your audiologist check the working order your child's equipment, make sure the program is set for optimal sound and amplification. If possible create a separate program for any auxiliary equipment used at school. Your audiologist can answer any questions and make sure you and your child understand how to change programs, batteries and general care of the equipment. Remember to have for your child's old CI processors and hearing aids programmed as up-to-date as possible. Old equipment is a viable back-up plan should something happen to their newer equipment.

TIP: Take notes for your school audiologist or bring their contact information to give to your general audiologist. You'll need to sign a HIPAA form, but then the two can work together on optimizing sound in different learning environments.

☐ Review Insurance and Warranties

Depending on your child's age, maturity, and many other variables it can be unsettling to send them to school with expensive equipment. Reduce anxiety by having a plan should something happen to their equipment. Most homeowner insurance does not cover this equipment. Talk to your audiologist, check product warranties and contact your healthcare customer service to figure out the most economical insurance coverage available.

At Home

☐ Find a safe and accessible place to charge batteries and keep equipment.

- ☐ Label everything going to school.
- ☐ Set up a distraction-free place to study and keep extra school supplies.
- ☐ Have your child memorize their home address and important phone numbers to reach their parents if need be.
- ☐ Update your contact list to include the bus service, IEP manager, DHH and general ed teacher/s, school nurse, attendance line, food service, etc.
- ☐ Check the school website for important dates: parent/teacher conferences, school events, and a list of days school is not in session.

At School

- ☐ Check for a VISUAL alert system and review safety plans with your child.
- ☐ Check tech devices for captioning capabilities; computers, televisions, etc.
- See the school nurse if your child has severe allergies or takes medications during the school day.
- ☐ Visit the school audiologist to touch base about your child's equipment and the auxiliary equipment used at school.
- ☐ Send extra CI or hearing aid batteries to use for back-up if needed.
- ☐ Check your child's classroom for ways to best accommodate their access to language in each environment.
- ☐ Together with your IEP team review your child's accommodation needs with school administrators and, if appropriate, with fellow students.
- ☐ If your child's accommodations includes interpreters, transliterators or a captionists make sure there is a back-up plan for unexpected absences.

For parents of a child who is DHH there is no one back-to-school checklist that covers personal choices and their child's unique situation. Develop your own checklist you can add to over time. You'll have peace of mind and more time for summer fun! Lifetrack
709 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104-4804

MINNESOTA
HANDS&
VOICES

Lifetrack

Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS Newsletter

July-August 2017

2017 Annual ★ Minnesota Hands & Voices ★ Metro

Date: Thursday, August 3rd

Time: 5:00-8:30 pm (rain or shine)

Where: Como Park Midway Pavilion

1199 Midway Pkwy, St Paul, MN

Free for Families

- **★ Dinne**
- **★ Fun Games**
- *** Entertainment**
- **★ Face Painting**
- **★ Door Prizes!**

Dilly Bars graciously provided by







Calling all the Superheroes in the MNH&V Community!

Dust off your superhero costume or come as you are to join our Hands & Voices' League of Heroes!

Find more details online at www.mnhandsandvoices.org/news-events/current-news-events.aspx