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Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Fall 2013

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened

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MAINE-LINES

THE DIVISION FOR THE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING & LATE DEAFENED

Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened (DDHLD) Director's Report



Wow so it is fall already. Hope you are all taking the time to enjoy the foliage. I am thrilled to announce that we have been able to fill the Bangor RCDHH position. We have hired Nancy Hickey who is a great addition to our team. Please be sure to read about her in this issue.

We had our annual tea awards this past September and I am happy to say we had a great turnout and also a great key note speaker. There were about 125 people who attended this year. I would like to take this opportunity to remind people to start thinking about making nominations for people who you feel deserve to be recognized or awarded for their hard work and commitment to the community. We look forward to your nominations for next year.

I have been working with the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened on the 5 year plan and am pleased to share that a new five year plan is in place. I am looking forward to working on the goals on the five year plan. You can see the five year plan at <http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dod/index.shtml>.

This past August we also had 1 day training for CRP's on working with Deaf and we had a good turnout for this training. The training focused on transitioning, Deaf culture and finding resources. It is our goal to have more

CRP's become familiar on working with Deaf population.

Happy Fall

Terry Morrell

Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened



Maine Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened

The next Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened meeting is taking place on January 9, 2014, 4-7 PM at the Central Maine Commerce Center, Department of Labor, Frances Perkins Conference Room, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta, ME. The meeting is open to the public and all are welcome.

The Commission has several available member positions and the Commission's Five-Year Plan has been developed and is ready to be worked on.

Please consider serving the Deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened communities! See the link below for more information on the Commission. Thank you!

http://www.maine.gov/rehab/advisory_councils/dod/index.shtml

22nd Annual Deaf Culture Tea September 19, 2013

The 22nd Annual Deaf Culture Tea took place September 19, 2013, in the Hall of Flags. The Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened recognized several community members with awards for their dedication and work within the Deaf community.



Terry Morrell, Director of the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened

The event began with opening remarks from the Division's Director, Terry Morrell. Terry welcomed approximately 130 people to the annual tea. Richard Freund, Deputy Commissioner, at the Department of Labor also welcomed the audience.



Richard Freund, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Labor

Michael "Mikey" Krajnak, Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), was the keynote speaker. Mikey is a New York City native living in Boston, Massachusetts. He grew up as the only Deaf member of a hearing family. He learned American Sign Language (ASL) when he was eighteen years old attending National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, New York. After he mastered in sign language, he went to Gallaudet University and graduated with Bachelors of Arts in Sign Communication (which is now ASL Teaching). Since his graduation from Gallaudet, he has worked in a wide diverse of employment, focusing on ASL. He returned back to NTID and taught ASL to interpreting students; moved to Cleveland to work for Ohio Relay Service as a translator. Imagine a laptop as means of communication between translator and a communication assistant while managing a phone call between two parties! He also worked as a communication specialist at Westborough State Hospital and Worcester State Hospitals. During that time, he worked with Dr. Neil Glickman as an illustrator developing over 3,000 clip arts focusing on a wide diverse of skills, diagnoses, side effects, to name a few.

Currently he is working as a Referral Service Supervisor at Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. During his free time, he works as a freelance certified Deaf interpreter; an ASL coach, working in theatres; reading zombie novels; giving oracle angel card readings and last but not the least, spending time with his husband Brian and a 13 year old cat, Dash.



Michael "Mikey" Krajnak, CDI, Keynote Speaker

Mikey's inspiring speech:

"Putting Compassion into Action"

I knew that I wanted to talk about compassion and action but I wanted to change how I talked about it. If we think about action and compassion, I don't think of compassion as sympathy or pity. It's different. I also thought about what action means. It is a doing. It is functioning. It is performing. Action can mean many different things. If you look in the dictionary, under the word "compassion," there is an indication that it means recognize somebody suffering. It seemed to me it put an emphasis on suffering, which wasn't what I was thinking of when I think of compassion. I grew up in a family that was not Deaf. I went through my school years. I traveled around. I had a journey as an individual, a spiritual journey and a journey of Deaf identity, which I followed to Deafhood. It's a journey discovering who I am. Who is Mikey and what am I doing here on earth? What do I exist for? Why am I alive? That was part of my journey and that was the beginning of my journey, my spiritual journey, to think about why am I here on earth. It doesn't have to do with structured religion. I'm thinking in the broadest of terms in a universal sense. If I think of the world, the universe, the natural world, why I am here and that was what I started to learn on my spiritual journey.

I found that compassion is my strength and I'd like to talk some more about compassion and how it applies to everyday life. How does compassion become integrated in our everyday life, and in action, compassion into action?

I found a Chinese character that is emblematic of compassion and it combines 2 characters, mercy and kindness. I felt that was the perfect definition for me as to what compassion means. As part of my spiritual journey I had a tattoo made on my wrist with those Chinese characters that mean compassion. Anytime I raise my hands to speak in my native language, American Sign Language, I see that symbol, that character for compassion. Anytime I'm ready to have words with someone, I'm ready to judge, to argue, I'm ready to be unkind, I raise my hand and I see that character for compassion. It's a wonderful reminder to me.

Today we're recognizing individuals and I feel that those individuals are emblematic in compassion, applying to all in the audience, not just those who we are honoring. Compassion, how does it function, what does it look like in the world? We are all just beings in the world, individual beings. We are one among many. As we go through our lives in the world, we take on things. We're subject to taking on all aspects of the world as we travel through it. It's like when you eat food, you take in its nutrients as well as other things that might be damaging to you. The environment, you take in the environment. There are some things in the environment that may be chaotic, may be disturbing; there may be natural disasters, political upheavals that we take on. They affect us. We are affected by upheavals, parts of our environment. And I call that energy. We get our energy from all kinds of life sources out in the world. I see energy as being a neutral word and we can look at the quality of what this energy is. As a being in the world, as one among many, I can be doing just A-Okay. I'm good. I'm taking care of myself, I'm doing okay. But I may be affected by the energy that comes into me, whether it's positive or negative that changes me in some way. What do I do with it? Do I take that energy that is negative and throw it back into the world? Do I refuse it and give it back to the universe? Is it something that's disturbing to me, I take it into my body and it creates some kind of discordance? What do you do with it? That's a decision. You can have that negative energy come towards you. You don't need to take it in but you can begin to look at it, examine it, what is it? Does it create anger? Is it anxiety? Is it worry? What is the nature of that negative energy? What is the nature of that upheaval or the discord? We can look at it, not take it in, and say this isn't mine, this is coming from outside of me, but what's important is what we do with it. It's important to recognize it. Don't ignore it. Don't push it aside, but recognize it. We can become overwhelmed if we ignore it. We can drown in it. The important piece is what we want to do with it. Let's honor it. Honor that energy, even if it's negative. You can actually speak to it

and say I honor you, I recognize you, and I'm okay with it. But you're still stuck with what are you going to do with it. You know? I mean, it's the same with positive or negative energy. You can transform energy if it comes at you as negative energy, you can transform it into positive energy, and you can transform it into love, into compassion, into kindness. The important thing is that you transform it into that positive energy and then you put it back in the world. Then you put it back to that person or that situation. It's not something that's spoken. It's something we push back to the person, to the situation, to the universe. Something that has been negative and comes at us, comes towards us, is given to us and thrust upon us, we can take it and transform that energy. We all have that skill. We know how to do that.

I think everyone in the room knows how to transform that negative energy and then put it back out into the universe and that becomes a positive energy that goes back into the universe and builds upon itself. I think that that is compassion in action. And what's critical is that we do that more and more because the more that we do it, the more impact it has and the more people are affected by our positive energy.

As a teacher, of sign language classes, as an interpreter, you might do your job and then go home. Maybe you say okay, you know, I've had enough of the community, I've had enough of this social event. You could simply say I'm going to take care of myself, my family, I'm going to do my job, and then I'm going to be done. You know, it's good enough. We could all function in a place of good enough. I think that happens to many people in our daily lives. Then when you recognize that there are people out there who do this kind of transformative energy and I'll warn you, it's addictive, this giving back of energy, of taking in negative energy, transforming it into positive and giving it back to the universe, it's addictive, and it shows when people go above and beyond and the people we're honoring today, if you look at their bios, who they are, these are just your regular folk, but if you look more closely at their actions, it's pretty amazing what they have done. The Deaf Timberfest, for example, is not just your run-of-the-mill act. What keeps it going as a fabulous event year after year? It's not just money. There's not that much money in running a Timberfest, if any. It's something about creating an event in which people come together in making that an annual event. I love seeing those Timberfest folks here today in their bright orange. I just think that is wonderful. I mean, it's like, hey, who are those people in orange, and they're the Deaf Timberfest people.

And the people that we're recognizing, the youth that we're recognizing today, the students or the young people, we can look at young people as being addicted to Facebook, technology and Twitter and not getting involved. What we're seeing today are people who went beyond that, learned as much as they could, take their learning into action. That's unique and that's why we're giving an award to those individuals today. The people who come together time after time and socialize and interact and we have one individual today who's being honored who made those social events part of his mission and that individual has a son, a Deaf son who will then look towards his father as being a leader and see that his father just didn't go home and say "good enough" but to have done extra and became a leader.

We have someone being honored here today who had a job, who had a family to take care of, and rather than just focusing on her own needs and going to work 9:00 to 5:00, clocking out, going home, taking care of her family, retiring, that person really went above and beyond and gave to the community. The people that we're honoring today and the people that have been honored in years past at this Tea have had an impact on your community and on the world. It's a ripple effect. If you think of a stone that you throw into still water and the ripples that go out from the center and get bigger and bigger and bigger until they reach the end, the edges of the water. I think of these people that you're honoring today as each having their own ripple effect on the community. Think about the Deaf Timberfest. How many ripple effects go into a Deaf Timberfest? It's not just one person. If you have one person taking action with compassion, they are then affected 10, 20, 30, hundreds of people, and it goes on from there. It's not just a Maine community but it's ongoing, reaching the whole universe. It's powerful. We want to continue this.

The Tea is not just a ceremony. It has an effect on your community and beyond. That ripple effect is something you want to think about and I think it has to do with compassion and action. I'm in awe. That's why driving into Maine, I felt this great sense of awe and honor to be here today, driving here today, and I just felt great to be a part of this.

Imagine as this goes on year after year, imagine that ripple effect. It's like an ocean of compassion. An ocean of compassion and action, think how many people can be affected by our actions around the world. Imagine that. Please, keep doing what you're doing. Keep up the good work. Thank you, Maine. Thank you so much to the honorees for today's awards. Keep up your good work, and thank you for having me here today.



Michael "Mikey" Krajnak, CDI, Keynote Speaker

Delicious refreshments were provided by Richard Desjardins, operator of the Cross Café, located at the Cross State Office Building. The Cross Café is part of the Business Enterprise Program of the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), also part of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.

The annual awards were given out by Patty Sarchi, Chair and Sitara Sheikh, Vice-Chair of the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened. This year's award recipients and their accomplishments are highlighted in this newsletter.

Clifton F. Rodgers Award A Lifetime Achievement Award

This award is named for Clifton F. Rodgers, a life-long resident of Maine. He attended the Maine School for the Deaf and lived in Belfast for more than thirty years with his wife Dorothy. Cliff was a member of the Division of Deafness Advisory Council for many years and also worked for the Division of Deafness (DoD) as a Rehabilitation Assistant.

Quotes describing him include: "He made an indelible impression on everyone he came in contact with, for his style always created good will and warm feelings," "His knowledge of Maine and its Deaf Culture were immense," and "He passed through this world making it a better place."

This award is unique in that nominations for the award must be made by Commission members. The award is given to an individual in recognition for outstanding service in a professional or voluntary capacity to the Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities in Maine.

The award is presented to an individual who has worked in or with the Deaf community for many years. It is given in recognition of a "lifetime of achievement."

This year's recipient of the **Clifton F. Rodgers**

Award is:

Lois Morin



Pictured left to right: Polly Lawson, Support Service Provider; Patty Sarchi, Chair, Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened and Lois Morin, award recipient

Lois Morin has spent decades tirelessly supporting the Deaf Community of Maine. First, she was a math teacher at Governor Baxter School for the Deaf and then became one of Maine's first Certified Deaf Interpreters. She has been on countless committees and is still on the Maine Deaf Timberfest committee.

Promoting American Sign Language, Deaf Culture, and Deaf People Award

This award is given to a person who worked to improve Maine's Deaf community through leadership by promoting American Sign Language, Deaf Culture, and Deaf People.

Regan Thibodeau



Pictured: Regan Thibodeau, award recipient, via SKYPE and Sitara Sheikh, Vice-Chair, Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened

Regan brings Deafhood back into our community and inspires those who strive for better Deaf community leadership. With Regan's leadership, passion and beautiful American Sign Language she has become a dedicated American Sign Language instructor for Deaf students and has pushed for American Sign Language standards among Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and and Hard of Hearing staff.



Henry Thibodeau, Regan Thibodeau's grandfather, accepting the award on behalf of Regan

Outstanding Citizenship Award

This award is given to a person who is a leader in the Deaf community.

Josh Seal



Pictured left to right: Polly Lawson, Support Service Provider; Patty Sarchi, Chair & Sitara Sheikh, Vice-Chair, Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened and Josh Seal, award recipient

Josh Seal has proved that he is a leader in promoting Deaf events around the state and involved in the Maine Deaf community. He is continuing the Deaf Night Out, southern Maine tradition, and has become the latest chairperson for the Deaf Culture Festival. He is involved with Maine Deaf basketball and softball. He is a positive role model and is now a leader in the form of fatherhood to an adorable deaf son.

Citizenship Youth Award

This award is given to a student who is a leader in school and the Deaf community.

Josh Larrivee



Josh Larrivee, award recipient

Josh is a youth that has overcome many obstacles to become who he is today. He has made so many people proud of him over the years. He has become a leader by being himself. He loves animals and will encourage others to think about caring for others. He is determined to continue his schooling after high school and has plans to attend the National Technical Institute for the Deaf after attending Southern Maine

Ginny Hewes - Advocate for the Needs of the Deaf Community Award

Ginny Hewes was known as the “I Love You” (in American Sign Language) Lady of Saco. Mother to a Deaf daughter, Ginny became a tireless advocate for not only her own daughter, but for all Deaf children. As a result of her personal advocacy, the Deaf Services Coordinator position was established at the (then) Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, which has, in turn, resulted in specialty signing group homes, culturally competent case management services, linguistically competent mental health counseling services, and the largest source of employment for culturally Deaf signing adults in Maine—social work. Her reach has extended far beyond the needs of her own daughter, beyond even Deaf children, to make a positive impact on all Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened Mainers.

This award is given to a person or organization that advocates for the needs of Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in Maine.

Clayton Marr, III



Pictured: Sitara Sheikh, Vice-Chair, Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened & Clayton Marr, III, award recipient

Clayton has worked hard for the needs of Deaf people in his community. He’s demonstrated strong advocacy skills, starting when he was a student at Governor Baxter School for the Deaf, throughout college and then at work. Today he continues to use these skills at the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, where he is employed and within the Deaf community. People have looked to him to share his creative problem solving ideas in terms of advocacy for the Deaf in Maine. His knowledge and self-confidence have increased by his many travels and interactions in the international Deaf community. Recently he joined the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Council and he is also active on Deaf sports teams.

Special Commendation Award

This award is given to an individual or agency whose activities in and with the Deaf community deserve recognition.

2013 Deaf Timberfest Maine Association for the Deaf



Pictured left to right: Polly Lawson, Support Service Provider; Patty Sarchi, Chair & Sitara Sheikh, Vice-Chair, Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened and the 2013 Deaf Timberfest Committee

This committee, with Wayne Shook as their Chair, was recognized for their tireless promotion on providing a Deaf tradition during the summer time. They work hard to provide this event every 2 years. Many other Deaf people from other states attend this event, which shows that Maine is able to provide to the Deaf community on a national level. There have been many positive comments about the committee for their dedication to provide a time to allow Deaf people to interact and share stories while participating in fun lumberjack activities.



Pictured left to right, bottom: Clayton Marr III, Lois Morin and Henry Thibodeau Left to right top: Wayne Shook, Chair, Timberfest, Josh Seal & Josh Larrivee

Welcome Nancy Hickey, Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Nancy Hickey, Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Vocational Rehabilitation is pleased to announce that we have hired Nancy Hickey as a Rehabilitation Counselor for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She is working out of the Bangor office serving northern and eastern Maine. Nancy is a graduate of Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. Nancy started with the division on August 19, and we look forward to working with her! Nancy can be reached through email at Nancy.Hickey@maine.gov or videophone 207-433-5234. Welcome, Nancy!

In Nancy's words: Hello, my name is Nancy Hickey and I recently moved to Maine from Castle Rock, Colorado. I have 2 children and a wonderful husband who is also deaf. My children are thirteen year old twins, Emily and Bryan; they are both fluent in American Sign Language. We also have a dog named Dakota. Dakota also knows sign language, words such as, walk, food, treat, bathroom and sit. I was the third deaf person to graduate from Pepperdine University. I enjoy working in Maine with wonderful people and great co-workers.

◆ **Contact numbers for the Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors for Deaf and Hard of Hearing:**

Nancy Hickey, Deaf Counselor.....
207-433-5234 (VP)

Carlton Ming, Hard-of-Hearing Counselor.....
207-347-3200 (V)

Terry Morrell, Supervisor.....
207-470-7668 (VP)

Ginny Pelletier, Rehab. Assistant.....
207-470-7670 (VP)

John Post, Deaf Counselor.....
207-514-0183 (VP)

Joe Roquebecil, Deaf Counselor.....
207-221-5526 (VP)

Sitara Sheikh, Deaf Counselor.....
207-226-7270 (VP)

◆ **Resources—A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened resource guide available on-line!**

Website:
www.maine.gov/rehab/dod/resource_guide/index.shtml

◆ **Do you have trouble using the telephone?**

The Telecommunications Equipment Program (TEP)

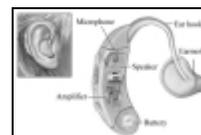
provides adaptive no-cost and low-cost telecommunications equipment to Maine residents who cannot use a regular telephone due to **ANY** sensory, intellectual or physical disability.

Contact Justin Gifford, Equipment Program Manager
Email: jgifford@mcdmaine.org
207-766-7111 (VP)

The **Civil Rights Program** at the MCD promotes the rights of D/deaf, late-deafened and hard-of-hearing people throughout the state. MCD advocates for D/deaf, late-deafened and hard-of-hearing individuals whose civil rights related to hearing loss have been violated in employment; housing; federal, state or local government programs; education; or public accommodation situations.

Contact the MCD Civil Rights Program staff:
Meryl Troop, Civil Rights Program Manager
Email: mtroop@mcdmaine.org
Beth Gallie, Attorney
Email: bgallie@mcdmaine.org
1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY)
207-766-7111 (VP)

◆ **WANTED, USED HEARING AIDS**



Do you have a pair of hearing aids in a drawer?

Want to put them to good use? Mail them to the Penobscot Community Health Center/Warren Center. We will fix them and pass them along to an individual in need.

Penobscot Community Health Center
(PCHC)/Warren Center
P.O. Box 439
Bangor, Maine 04401
Tel. 941-2850 (V); 877-542-9000 (V)
941-4932 (TTY)
Website: www.pchcbangor.org

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Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing
& Late Deafened
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Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened

The Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened provides a program of services to Deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened people in Maine, which includes information and referral, advocacy, and accessibility promotion.

Terry Morrell, Director

Tel: 470-7668 (VP)

623-7957 (TTY)

Email: Terry.L.Morrell@maine.gov

Nancy Melanson, Assistant to the Director

Tel: 623-7958 (V), 623-7998 (TTY)

287-5292 (FAX)

Email: Nancy.A.Melanson@maine.gov

*The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*