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Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Summer 2010

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

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

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

MAINE-LINES

How Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Helped Me Get a Job



Joe Roquebecil, Maine VR Counselor for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing in Augusta and Bangor, Maine

I write this article to the Deaf and hard-of-hearing people of Maine to encourage you to use Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to get a job that can bring you satisfaction and opportunity for a more fulfilling life. You can succeed, BUT it is up to you. Yes, you.

First, work hard to achieve your dream and do not stop. Second, believe that you can do it; confidence is contagious. Third, you are responsible for your life. Yes, you are.

My VR counselor in Newark, New Jersey, asked me every time I saw him, "What are YOU doing to look for a job?" My career counselor at New York University asked me every time I saw her, "What are YOU doing to look for a job?" I say the same thing to you. VR counselors and career counselors are like soccer and ice hockey coaches. They give you the tools and push you to succeed. Who scores the goal? The player scores the goal. YOU score the goal. You score the goal because it's your dream.

You score the goal because you know you can. You score the goal because you train hard and work hard at it.

Graduation day, May 2004, the sun shines on Washington Square Park in New York City where New York University holds its graduation ceremony. Two years of full-time graduate school leaves me tired, edgy, and happy. I am the only Deaf student in my major. Two-thirds of that time I also work full-time; then as my studies grow, I whittle down to part-time as a drug counselor with Deaf addicts, most of them with rap sheets. The last third I interned with VR in Manhattan. I am now jobless on this beautiful day in May. I sweet-talk my former employer to hire me back as a group home aide for Deaf clients with serious mental illness. I sweet-talk New York University (NYU) to let me stay in the dorm for the summer. I know I will start as a VR counselor soon. It does not happen. I leave the dorm at the end of the summer and sweet-talk my way into a studio apartment in Montclair, NJ. I have physical, email, and phone interviews in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Vermont. I also check on-line for other listings in the Northeast, Midwest, and Florida. New Jersey VR and NYU Career Services encourage and push, push and push me. No job yet. Fear and desperation is a great motivator. I keep checking, checking, and checking. One day I find a listing for Maine. Oh well, it is worth a try. November 2005, Maine VR offers me a job. After 16 months, GOAL.

Some people might say that I got lucky. No, luck has nothing to do with it. I worked hard for it. I believe I can do it. I believe it is my responsibility to succeed. My mom, dad, and I left communist tyranny and arrived in America. We were poor and knew no English. Willingness to work, believe in ourselves, and taking responsibility are keys. Do not be afraid. Ask Maine VR to be your coach just like I asked New Jersey VR to be my coach. You can succeed but you must want to.

Meet Our Deaf Job Developer Alma Simmons!

Interview with Ginny Pelletier



Alma Simmons

Alma Simmons comes from a long line of lobstermen. She was born in Friendship, Maine, has four sisters, and one sister is deaf. She also had deaf maternal grandparents. She attended Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in Falmouth and graduated in 1972. She worked odd jobs for a while and then went to National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in 1975 and graduated in 1978 majoring in business technology. She got a job in Maryland as a clerk-typist at the Department of the Navy and later promoted to engineering technician at the same site for almost eight years before moving back home to Maine. She has two grown daughters.

Prior to joining the KEWL ASL agency, she worked as a teacher's aide at the Learning Center for Deaf Children in Framingham, MA for several years. She then relocated to Maine for a different job. She also worked as an employment specialist at Goodwill Industries in Augusta and was direct care staff at Motivational Services (MoCo). She joined the KEWL ASL agency in January 2007 as a part-time employment specialist working with deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened VR clients. She enjoys working with clients in different job placements. She is helping clients with intake paperwork, resumes, asking them what they look for in a job, and then puts them on trial work for up to 25 hours a week. When the time is up, they find a job. Alma acts as a job coach to clients, teaching them new skills, supporting them, communicating with their supervisor, and then fades back from being job coach.

She also has several different jobs juggling under KEWL ASL education services like American Sign Language (ASL) tutoring, ASL literacy, a summer program for deaf children and their siblings, assisting teachers that instruct students who are deaf and hard of hearing and non verbal, deaf mentoring to deaf child of adults, exploring deaf culture, meets with parents and explains how to improve communication needs of their child.

During her spare time, she enjoying making crafts, doing puzzles, visiting family, and is very active at the Central Maine Deaf Club in Gardiner, Maine.



Ginny Pelletier & Alma Simmons

Please feel free to contact Alma Simmons by E-mailing her at asimmons1953@gmail.com, Video Phone 866-678-8325 after 7pm or contact KEWL ASL Deborah Myers at 207-240-3177 if you have any questions about their services.

Hearing Loss and Aging: Advances in Technology and Adaptive Equipment

On May 14th the University of Maine at Orono hosted a free hearing loss symposium at the Buchanan Alumni House from 8:30 AM to noon. Lenard Kaye, Director for the Center on Aging and Professor of the School of Social Work at the University of Maine, coordinated the event.

It was sponsored by: University of Maine, Center on Aging; University of Maine, Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies; Maine Department of Labor, Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened and the Maine Center on Deafness. Communication Access RealTime Captioning (CART) was available for people who wished to use it.

Guest speakers included: Amy Engler Booth, Staff Audiologist, Conley Speech, Language & Hearing Center, Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at the University of Maine and the Maine Center on Deafness, featuring Jennifer McCann, Program Manager, HIV/AIDS Prevention & Health Sexuality Program, Meryl Troop, Interpreter/Civil Rights Advocate and Elissa Moran, Executive Director presenting a Deafness 101 workshop.

There were presentations on the latest developments and technology available for folks who are hard of hearing and presentations on language access and civil rights law.

**Deaf Blind Training for Interpreters & Support Service Provider's (SSP)
June 28 – July 2, 2010
What a Success Story!!**



Larry Poulin & Deb McCrum, Deaf Interpreter at L.L. Bean

Have you ever put a blindfold over your eyes and maybe earplugs in your ears and then try to safely walk around? It's an experience that will most likely leave you humble and scared. Recently there was a Deaf-Blind Interpreter/SSP Immersion Training at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf on Mackworth Island, and it was an incredible experience for everyone involved.

The need for specialized Deaf-blind interpreters and SSP's in Maine has been recognized, and work has begun. Over 60 people participated in the training. Sister Bernie Wynne, Molly Rimer and Susan Shapiro, faculty from the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in Sands Point, NY, helped train the interpreters and SSP's. Their expertise and passion was critical in making the training such a success.

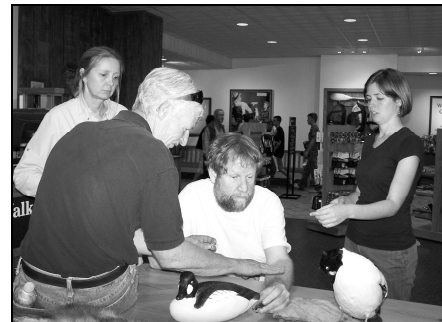
Department of Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman provided opening remarks on the first day, highlighting the unique opportunity this training offered and the dedication of the volunteers in attendance.

Every day began with setting up the environment for communication. Every day and every person is different, so you need to know a lot of information about the person and the situation you're interpreting for or guiding. Each day batteries were charged, FM systems were made available, interpreters were placed with signing Deaf-blind participants, and for those who didn't use sign language, they would use finger spelling (if known) in palm of hand or the print in palm method, but most importantly the Deaf-blind person's needs had to be met for communication. This can be time consuming and frustrating, but as Sister Bernie would say "you find a way."

Judy Shepard-Kegl from the University of Southern Maine (USM) and several other Deaf-blind interpreters who have had a previous "train the trainer" experience at HKNC trained interpreting students. HKNC faculty

trained everyone in the SSP class that included orientation and mobility training. This included some simple, common sense things that people can do. For example: raise your hand, wait your turn to speak, and then always announce who you are. When guiding someone who is blind, if you do need to leave them, do not leave them in an open space; take them to a wall or something grounded.

The courage and patience of the Deaf-blind participants was heart-felt and appreciated by everyone. The outing to L.L. Bean on Thursday afternoon took a lot of trust on the part of the Deaf-blind person. The SSP's and interpreters worked hard to guide and interpret the proper way in order to provide a safe, fun time for everyone.



Pictured: front/left Deaf interpreter, Fred McKinley; back/left L.L. Bean employee; center Tim Cook; right interpreter at L.L. Bean

The food (was exceptional!!) provided for the week-long conference was prepared and served 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, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI).



Patty Sarchi & Susan Shapiro in the SSP classroom

The training was sponsored by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened (DDHLD), and the University of Southern Maine Interpreter Training Program and was paid for with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

This training is just the beginning; the foundation has been laid, but the work and training needs to continue.

Meryl's 22nd Conference!
"Privilege"
June 25th, 2010
Colby College, Waterville



Opening remarks

Well, Meryl did it again, another successful conference! The keynote speakers were Tiffany Tuccoli, Gallaudet University master's thesis presentation, "What is Privilege, How Does It Apply to Hearing Status and How to be an Ally" and Michelle Ames, from Community Counseling Center, presenting on "Deaf Self Advocacy." Both were amazing!

It was a great opportunity for networking with all the different agencies and organizations, many of which had tables with great resources available for the taking.

Approximately 150 people attended. The workshops in the afternoon included something for everyone. Deafness & Hearing Loss 101; Ask Attorney Amy: Legal issues relating to hearing loss; Deaf chat, Self Advocacy and Being An Ally; Vocational Services which included Social Security benefits and work.

Another Day at the State House!



Governor Baxter School for the Deaf/Portland High School students at the Blaine House. Present: Blaine House hostess & Regan Thibodeau, teacher

On May 6th, several Governor Baxter School for the Deaf/Portland High School (GBSD/PHS) students and school staff members enjoyed the day touring the Blaine House and State House in Augusta.

The students enjoyed learning about the history of both buildings. A State House tour guide explained how the State House was renovated, and they were able to accomplish that renovation with the front section remaining standing while the remaining three walls were rebuilt. The Blaine House tour guide shared the history of the mansion and some stories about who has stayed there overnight.

One thing the students seemed fascinated with was the butterfly collection in the State House legislative waiting room. They also visited a legislative hearing room before the tour ended, with lunch in the Cross State Office Building Cafeteria.



State House tour guide & Regan Thibodeau, teacher at GBSD/PHS with students in the House of Representatives



The Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened (CDHHLDD) invites you to visit the DDHHLDD web site www.maine.gov/rehab/dod to view the 5-Year Plan that has been created by commission members.

The Commission for the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing & Late Deafened meetings are open to the public and take place at the Central Maine Commerce Center, Department of Labor, in Augusta, in the Frances Perkins conference room, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM.

The next meeting date is October 14, 2010.



THE DEAF COMMUNITY OF THE STATE OF MAINE
INVITES YOU TO THE GOVERNOR'S TEA
IN CELEBRATION OF DEAF CULTURE WEEK
ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2010
FROM 2:00 TO 4:00 IN THE AFTERNOON
AT THE STATE HOUSE HALL OF FLAGS
(ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE BLAINE HOUSE)
KEYNOTE SPEAKER TO BE ANNOUNCED

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

ALICE CRANDALL JOHNSON
ALICE.C.JOHNSON@MAINE.GOV
(207) 623-7964 (V)

OR

NANCY A. MELANSON
NANCY.A.MELANSON@MAINE.GOV
(888) 755-0023 (TTY)

PLEASE RESPOND BY SEPTEMBER 8, 2010
Deaf Culture Awards
Nomination Form

I nominate: _____

For the Promoting of 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 or Deaf People.

Because: _____

I nominate: _____

For the Outstanding Citizenship Award

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

Because: _____

I nominate: _____

For the Citizenship Youth Award

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

Because: _____

I nominate: _____

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

This award is given to a person or organization that advocates for the needs of the Deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened citizens of Maine.

Because: _____

I nominate: _____

For the Special Commendation Award

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

Because: _____

Please Return to: Alice Johnson
Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened
150 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333

E-mail: Alice.C.Johnson@maine.gov
FAX: 287-5292

By August 11, 2010

Name (optional) _____

Did You Know?

◆ Sign Net is here!

John Dunleavy
Alpha One
127 Main Street
South Portland, ME 04106
866-760-1752 (V/VP)
800-906-5375 (TTY)
767-5997 (FAX)
E-mail: info@signnet.org

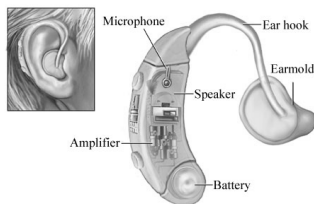
Sign Net is a mobile computer-training program for Maine's Deaf community. The free computer classes are taught by John Dunleavy in American Sign Language and will take 10-weeks to complete. The classes are statewide in local CareerCenters. For more information, contact John Dunleavy at Alpha One.

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

Joe Roquebecil.....1-866-926-3321 (VP)
Rod MacInnes.....1-866-588-6360 (VP)
Ginny Pelletier.....1-866-638-1058 (VP)

◆ **ALDA-Maine (Association of Late-Deafened Adults-Maine)** is an all volunteer group for the empowerment of over 100,000 people in Maine and more in neighboring states who are deafened, hard of hearing, or have a hearing loss of any kind. New members and visitors to all events are welcome. Come talk with us. Read the new "*Hearing Loss Herald*" publication and join us soon for timely on-line information and discussions, whether you have a hearing loss, are hearing, or interested in equal rights for all people with disabilities. See www.alda-maine.mysite.com.

◆ 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 Warren Center. We will fix them, and pass them along to an individual in need.
Warren Center
175 Union Street
Bangor, Maine 04401
941-2850 (V)
Web site: www.warrencenter.org/

◆ Horseshoes, Darts & Pool Table Tournaments



Hosted by the Maine Recreation Association of the Deaf

AUGUST 13, fun starts at 1 PM
AUGUST 14, fun starts at 9 AM
Beaver Brook Campground
Wilson Road, North Monmouth, ME
207-933-2108

Please visit the web site at <http://Beaver-Brook.com>

- Call for your own campsite reservation.
- Bring your own meals, swimming suits, lawn chairs & sun tan lotion.
- We will sell ice cream and bottled water.
- Registration fee: \$5.00 per person and children under age 10 free.
- \$5.00 per single, double Horseshoes & Darts (Pool Table is optional).

More information, Please e-mail me at
Garyph76@Yahoo.com
Co-chairpersons: Gary Huffstater & Denise House
Money collected benefits the Timberfest Fund.

◆ If you attended the Maine School for the Deaf or Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD), counseling is available at no cost to you.

Signing mental health counselors are listed in the *Division of Deafness Resource Guide* www.maine.gov/rehab/dod/resource_guide/clinical.shtml they are trained to help deaf people who were abused. If you prefer **nonsigning** counselors with a qualified interpreter, it can be arranged at no cost to you. Insurance or MaineCare will be billed first (if you attended the Maine School for the Deaf or GBSD, no money will be charged to you for co-pay or deductible).

For more information, please contact:
Department of Labor-Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened
John Shattuck
866-760-8430 (VP); 623-7957 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (Toll free TTY)
E-mail: john.g.shattuck@maine.gov

Maine Center on Deafness
866-971-9133 (VP); 797-7656 (V/TTY)
1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY); 24.97.54.29 (VP)
E-mail: info@mcdmaine.org

You Can Feel Better. You are not alone.

Maine Department of Labor
Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing
& Late Deafened
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0150

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Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Jill Duson, Director

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.

John Shattuck, Director
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1-888-755-0023 (TTY)
1-866-760-8430 (VP)
E-mail: John.G.Shattuck@maine.gov

Alice Crandall Johnson
Rehabilitation Consultant
Tel: 623-7964 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (TTY)
E-mail: Alice.C.Johnson@maine.gov

Nancy Melanson, Assistant to the Director
Tel: 623-7998 (TTY), 623-7958 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (TTY)
287-5292 (FAX)
E-mail: 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.*