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Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, March 2016

Maine Department of Labor

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

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Maine-Lines - March 2016

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March 2016 Newsletter from the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened

Director's Report

There are a lot of things that happen in March. I would like to share that March 13-April 15 is known as Deaf History Month. This is different from Deaf Culture Week where Deaf Culture Week is more about awareness and education. Deaf History month is more historical events related to being Deaf that have occurred. To learn more about these events please read later in this issue.



March 22 is also known as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Appreciation Day. I would like to take this time and hope you will also join me in showing our Appreciation for all the great work that the VRC's do and continue to do. To learn more about these events please read later in this issue.

2016 Deaf Culture Tea / Awards

Invitations and award ballots for the 2016 Deaf Culture Tea and Awards are now available online.

Deaf Annual Tea Invitation

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

Deaf Culture Awards Nomination Form

An Interview with John Shattuck, Independence Without Fear Coordinator at the Iris Network



John Shattuck, Independence Without Fear Coordinator, Iris Network

Independence Without Fear (IWF)

The Iris Network

<http://www.theiris.org/services/independence-without-fear-2>

Would you please describe the Independence Without Fear (IWF) program?

Independence Without Fear (IWF) is a program for Maine's citizens who are deaf-blind/dual sensory impaired. IWF connects consumers to resources and services throughout the State of Maine. Resources and services cover everything from independent living skills to advocacy and equipment.

How did the IWF program get started?

In 2010, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened (DDHHL), and the University of Southern Maine Interpreter Training Program sponsored a support service provider (SSP) training at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. It was paid for with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. 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. Since then the Independence Without Fear meetings have been held on a monthly basis to address procedural issues, identify deaf blind/dual sensory impaired individuals and build a SSP network statewide.

Who are the team players organizing the IWF program?

- The Iris Network
- Disability Rights Maine
- Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened
- University of Southern Maine
- Helen Keller National Center

How is the IWF program funded?

The project coordinator is currently being funded by the Division for Blind and Visually Impaired through the Iris Network contract. The project coordinator's position will be ending in June 2016.*

** Note from the Dept. of Labor: The project coordinator was funded to launch the IWF initiative and efforts are underway for IWF to continue with the above mentioned team players and other partners when the coordinator position ends in June.*

What is the goal of the IWF and how is it being accomplished?

The IWF team is building a Support Service Provider (SSP) network and identifying individuals statewide who are deaf blind/dual sensory impaired.

What is a Support Service Provider (SSP)?

An SSP is a trained individual who enables people with combined vision and hearing losses to access their environments, such as shopping, town meetings, social events, etc., and to make informed decisions. An SSP essentially provides visual and auditory information; although, some SSPs may provide transportation. An SSP does not do the shopping for the individual nor should the SSP be asked to do houseful chores.

Who can become an SSP and how is it done?

Any individual 18 years or older who receives the proper training and passes the background check can become an SSP.

Is an SSP paid for their services?

In Maine SSPs are volunteers. IWF is considering ways to have SSPs paid.

Who benefits from using an SSP?

Deaf blind/dual sensory impaired individuals.

Are there any barriers for the SSP program and if so what are they?

Being able to identify people willing to provide SSP services on a voluntary basis is a barrier. However, we are making great efforts to contact voluntary agencies on a statewide basis.

What are some of the accomplishments of the SSP program?

Over the past year we have contacted over 40 different groups and hundreds of people who have become familiar with the issues deaf blind/dual sensory impaired individuals face on a daily basis. A registry of consumers and SSPs has been developed and is growing.

What would you like to see happen and why is this important to you?

I would like to see SSPs be paid an hourly rate and for the network to become statewide. Also I would like the discipline of being an SSP be recognized as a professional social service provider. Through my experience as the project coordinator it has become very apparent that people who are deaf blind/dual sensory impaired suffer from extreme isolation.

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LD#1469, "An Act to Promote Private Fund-raising for the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf"

LD#1469, "An Act to Promote Private Fund-raising for the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf" was passed into law on March 2, 2016.

This law will allow the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MECDHH) and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD) to raise funds for a variety of activities to enhance program offerings for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families statewide. It will also provide the opportunity for us to do further training of teachers throughout the state who are working with deaf and hard of hearing students. We are very grateful to Senator Breen for the work she has done on behalf of MECDHH/GBSD. With the support of Representative Pierce, she championed this bill through the appeals committee and onto the Governor's desk. Her hard work and keen understanding of the needs of our school and the children we serve has been and will continue to be a significant asset for us!

March 22, 2016 is Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) Appreciation Day

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-resolution/106/text>

March 22, 2016 has been designated as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Appreciation Day. I would like to take the time to show appreciation to the Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RCD) and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) here in Maine. We are fortunate to have four full-time RCD's and one full-time Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) who works with hard-of hearing clients here in the Maine Department of Labor. Please join me in showing our appreciation for all of the RCD's and VRC's.

Deaf History Month is March 13-April 15, 2016

<http://deafness.about.com/cs/featurearticles/a/deafpresident.htm>

Deaf History Month is March 13 to April 15. It celebrates deaf history; Deaf History Month is not to be confused with Deaf Culture Week, which is Deaf awareness.

Deaf History Month began on March 13, 1997, when the D.C. Public Library had a Deaf History Month event with deaf authors and guest speakers. It grew over time and there is currently an effort under way by the American Library Association and the National Association of the Deaf to get the White House to declare it an official national event.

Historical Events:

March 13, 1988-Deaf President Now occurred at Gallaudet University and King Jordan became President of Gallaudet University.

April 8, 1864-Gallaudet University was founded and a Charter was signed by President Lincoln, this is

also known as Gallaudet Charter Day.

April 15, 1817-American School for the Deaf opens and is the first public school for the Deaf.

Changes to MEMA Weather Notification Services

Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) will end the weather notification service they provide via GovDelivery on March 31, 2016. When MEMA started this weather alerting email service it was one of the first of its kind. As technology has continued to accelerate, other services are now offering robust and timely delivery that MEMA cannot match. Although MEMA will continue to offer links to current weather information on their website, they will be retiring the e-mail weather alerting.

MEMA would like to offer the following alternatives that they have tested for effectiveness:

For those with smart phones they recommend the FEMA mobile app which offers timely weather alerts: <http://www.fema.gov/mobile-app>

For those who prefer email notifications the NWS maintains a list of alternatives: <http://www.weather.gov/subscribe>

Some Maine broadcasters offer mobile, e-mail or text weather updates. Check the website of your local stations for more information.

For public officials, MEMA recommends iNWS from the National Weather Service. iNWS issues e-mail and text alerts for NWS products, but is intended only for members of community emergency planning and response management: emergency managers, law enforcement, fire and emergency responders, transportation and safety managers, public officials, government partners of the NWS and members of the media. If you fit one of these categories, register at: <https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/>

Please note that MEMA is retiring weather messages only. MEMA continues to issue emails to subscribers on various emergency management topics, training announcements, emergency safety messages and shelter openings.

MEMA thanks you for your understanding and support – it is much appreciated!

Maine Emergency Management Agency

In Memory of James Levier

The Deaf community appreciates the gift of an anonymous donor who replaced the bench of James Levier. The Deaf community thanks whomever you are, for your generosity and act of kindness.



Pictured left: Original James Levier memorial granite bench on Mackworth Island. Pictured Right: The replaced James Levier memorial granite bench on Mackworth Island.

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