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Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Summer 2011

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

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

Nancy Melanson

Maine Department of Labor, Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.gov

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Well, Meryl did it again, another successful conference! The conference theme was “CHOICES” this year. The keynote speakers were:

- Amy Snieirson, Esq. speaking on “Civil Rights for the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened people”;
- Regan Thibodeau speaking on “Deaf Culture: Evolving in Maine”;  
- Kristine Dach, LCPC speaking on “Choices from a Mental Health, Spiritual, & Motivational Perspective for People with Hearing Loss/Deafness and Those Who Serve Them.”

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.

The workshops in the afternoon included something for everyone:

- Interpreters: Beyond the Classroom, Cubicle and Hospital;
- Vocational “Work” Shop-Keeping Your Benefits, Get Help from or Become a Job Coach or Job Developer;
- See What I Mean: Differences Between Deaf and Hearing Cultures;
- Deaf Culture: A Closer Look-Deaf Chat: VRS

Sponsors included: Maine Center on Deafness, Maine Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened (DDHHLD), PEPNet Northeast, Mobius, Community Counseling Center, Maine Medical Center, Kewl ASL, Sorenson, Purple, and Maine RID.
Meet David Johnson  
State of Maine Postal Service  
Department of Administration & Financial Services (DAFS)

Background information on David: After growing up in Maine and graduating from the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf, David left Maine and went to Connecticut to work in a wire company for twenty-two years, where he was the only Deaf person. He came back to Maine in 2003. He has also been employed as a sheet metal worker, building maintenance worker and a rural postal route mail carrier.

He has been married thirty-five years to Tara, who works as a certified interpreter. He has two grown daughters, still living in Maine. One is an interpreter and the other is a certified nurses’ aid.

David’s supervisors (Andy Giroux and Dan Danforth) praise David as being a great employee, with great work ethics and work performance. They also are familiar with American Sign Language (ASL); they understand and respect the fact that ASL is David’s first language and interpreters are a necessity.

David is a very quiet and private man, which makes this interview very rare, and I am thankful to David for agreeing to do this. Smile.

Now here’s David!

DDHHLD: How long have you worked for the State of Maine Postal Center?

David: I have worked for the State of Maine Postal Center for a year and an half.

DDHHLD: What does your job consist of?

David: I start at six in the morning and my day ends at three in the afternoon. I drive the State Postal Center truck delivering and picking up mail on three different “runs”. I also operate a sorting machine and do various other tasks in the mail room.

DDHHLD: Did you have training in this type of job before?

David: Yes, I was a rural route postal carrier for seven years in Edgecomb, Newcastle and Damariscotta.

DDHHLD: Do you feel that your job is accessible?

David: Yes, I use a Samsung text device provided by the State of Maine. When I am on the road the Center can text me and it vibrates so I know I have a message. I then read the text when it is safe. I also have interpreters when needed for meetings, etc.

DDHHLD: Is there anything that could improve accessibility on your job?

David: The text device I use is great; however, it could have a stronger vibrating signal to make sure I feel it. I would really appreciate a videophone. My supervisors have done everything possible to make it happen, bought the television screen for the picture and made arrangements with Sorenson Relay Service to set up a videophone. (Note: There have been some issues with the set up, but it has been on the technology end and that is currently being resolved. David should have his videophone very soon. Other Deaf State employees do have videophones available for their daily use.)

DDHHLD: How is the communication between you and your co-workers? Is it a comfortable atmosphere?

David: It is good. We help each other, sometimes tease each other and I do not feel ignored here. There is acceptance with them to me and me to them.

DDHHLD: Are you comfortable and satisfied with your job?

David: I love my job, I’m always busy, first I’m inside then I’m outside, it’s great! I work hard, keep focused on my work and do my best.
DDHHLD: Finding employment is a challenge. How did you make this job such a success?

David: It did take some time to get this job. I was working part-time as a rural route mail carrier. I took the tests for the federal government postal center, went to several interviews and kept trying again and again. I did the same with the state postal center. Then the opportunity came; I interviewed with Andrew Giroux, and he was as determined as I was to have me working there. It was a great feeling to have support.

The Special Appointment Program is designed to place individuals with appropriate job qualifications into State jobs, by-passing the civil testing requirement for these jobs. For more information about the Special Appointment Program, please contact the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Valerie Oswald at 623-7963 or Bureau of Human Resources, Laurel Shippee, State EEO Coordinator at 287-4651.

Did You Know?

◆ The Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened (DDHHLD) invites you to visit the DDHHLD web site www.maine.gov/rehab/dod to view the Five-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 13, 2011.

◆ The updated Resources - A Guide to Services for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened Resource guides are available!!

For your current issue, see the contact information below or see us online at the address below:
Nancy Melanson
Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
623-7958 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (TTY)
Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.Gov
www.maine.gov/rehab/dod

◆ Camp Sign-A-Watha
August 17-21, 2011 - Camp Cobbossee, Monmouth
It’s time to sign up!!! Check out the new web site: www.ldsne.org/Camp-Sign-A-Watha. For information contact Julie Novack at 866-215-4821 (VP) or 207-797-3935 (V). E-mail: Jnovack@lssnorth.org

Camp Sign-A-Watha, affiliated to Lutheran Social Services-Deaf Services, is a 5-day residential camping program for Deaf adults with developmental disabilities. The program is designed to provide recreation, personal adjustment, and respite-care for individuals who, because of their physical or mental limitations, would be unable to profit from an alternate camping experience. Camp Sign-A-Watha accepts a wide range of campers, from the independent to those needing assistance in many aspects of daily living.

◆ Maine Deaf Timberfest, August 11–14th, 2011 at Wassamki Springs Campground, Scarborough. E-mail DeafTimberfestME@aol.com or call 866-326-1908 (VP) for more information. Three days of logging events, children’s activities, swimming, games, darts, horseshoes, BBQ, Tug-O-War. Everyone is welcome!

◆ Attention all Deaf-Blind/Dual Sensory Loss Consumers & Support Service Providers (SSP)!!
The Iris Network, Division for the Blind & Visually Impaired (DBVI), Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened (DDHHLD), the Helen Keller National Center & the University of Southern Maine will be officially kicking off the Maine volunteer SSP program, “Independence Without Fear” in the near future. If you would like to apply for SSP volunteer services or you’re a trained SSP and willing to volunteer for this program, please contact the DDHHLD for an application. Thanks! Nancy Melanson - 623-7958 (V) or 1-888-755-0023 (Toll free TTY) or E-mail: nancy.a.melanson@maine.gov
Community Counseling Center has moved to 165 Lancaster Street, Portland!

Contact numbers for the Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors for Deaf and Hard of Hearing:
Sitara Sheikh………………1-866-926-3321 (VP)
Joe Roquebecil…………….1-866-588-6360 (VP)
Ginny Pelletier……………1-866-638-1058 (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); Web site: www.pchcbangor.org.

Do you have trouble using the telephone?
The Telecommunications Equipment Program (TEP) provides adaptive NO and LOW cost telecommunications equipment to Maine residents who cannot use a regular telephone due to ANY intellectual or physical disability.

Emergency Alert Notification System Maine residents with hearing loss have access to audio broadcast warnings through an email-based real time notification system. Individuals who are D/deaf, late deafened or hard of hearing are eligible to receive, either on a loan or cost-share basis, equipment that will allow them to receive emergency alert notifications that are not accessible to them via normal television and/or radio transmission.

Contact Sarah-Jane Wing, Equipment Program Manager
E-mail: sjwing@mcdmaine.org
866-680-9674 (VP) or
Samantha Clark, Equipment Program Specialist
E-mail: sclark@mcdmaine.org

Civil Rights Program the Maine Center on Deafness (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 and local government programs, education, or public accommodation situations.

Contact the MCD Civil Rights Program staff:
Amy Sneirson, Managing Attorney
E-mail: asneirson@mcdmaine.org or
Meryl Troop, Civil Rights Advocate & Staff Interpreter
E-mail: mtroop@mcdmaine.org
1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY)
866-347-0275 (VP)

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 for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened Resource Guide www.maine.gov/rehab/dod/resource_guide/clinical.shtml they are trained to help deaf people who were abused. If you prefer non-signing 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
866-760-8430 (VP); 623-7958 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (Toll free TTY)
E-mail: nancy.a.melanson@maine.gov

Maine Center on Deafness
866-971-9133 (VP); 797-7656 (V/TTY)
1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY); 866-347-0275 (VP)
E-mail: info@mcdmaine.org

YOU CAN FEEL BETTER.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
Maine Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened invites you to the Annual Tea in celebration of Deaf Culture Week on Thursday, September 22, 2011 from 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon at the State House Hall of Flags.

Keynote Speaker Romy Spitz

Please Respond To:

Alice Crandall Johnson or Nancy A. Melanson

Alice.C.Johnson@Maine.gov Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.gov
(207) 623-7964 (V) (888) 755-0023 (TTY)

Please respond by September 16, 2011
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  
E-mail: Alice.C.Johnson@maine.gov  
Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened  
FAX:  287-5292  
150 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333  

By August 13, 2011  
Name (optional) _____________________
Maine’s Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Council Presents:
The National Broadband Plan:
What is it? Why should I care?

This two-day forum will examine and discuss the National Broadband Plan to bring high-speed internet to 100 million homes, and the impact that effort will have on rural areas and citizens.

SCHEDULE

Day 1: Thursday, August 25th
8:00 AM - 10:00 AM Open registration
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Consumer Orientation Session
9:00 AM - 9:45 AM - THE CHALLENGE OF DEPLOYING BROADBAND TO RURAL AREAS - IS IT WORTH THE COST, AND WHO IS GOING TO DO IT?
Ben Sanborn, Telecommunications of Maine; Billy Jack Gregg, Universal Consulting; Melinda Poore, Time Warner Cable; Tom Welch, Chairman Maine PUC
9:45 - 10:00 AM - Break
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM - FILLING IN THE GAPS FOR COVERAGE - WHAT CAN WE DO?
Phil Lindley, Connect ME; Sue Corbett, AXIOM; Carol Miller, Director of Broadband Tech, State of New Hampshire
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM - THE FCC, AND BROADBAND ISSUES IT MUST TACKLE
Karen Peltz, FCC
12:00 PM - 1:15 PM - Lunch (provided)
1:15 PM - 2:00 PM - WILL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT REALLY BRING BENEFITS TO THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITY?
Brenda Frye, NASRA
2:00 - 2:30 PM - PROJECT ENDEAVOR - HOW WILL IT HELP MAINE’S DEAF COMMUNITY?
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM - WRAP UP
Bill Black; Ben Sanborn; Joel Shifman, Maine PUC

Day 2: Friday, August 26th
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM - WHAT ARE THE ODDS THAT THE FCC PLAN WILL BENEFIT RURAL AREAS IN NEW ENGLAND?
Bob Loube, Rolka, Loube & Saltzer Associates; Wayne Jortner, Maine Office of the Public Advocate
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM - ADDRESSING FEDERAL ISSUES
Tom Welch, Commissioner Maine PUC; Patrick Halley, FCC, USF
11:00 AM - NOON - Wrap up, Question and Answer period

FREE and OPEN to the PUBLIC
SPACE is LIMITED!
registration is required
email: sclark@mcdmaine.org
or call: 800/639-3884 voice/tty 866/347-0275 videophone

Special Room Rates Available!
Mention the Broadband Forum when you book your room.
800/345-5050 voice www.innbythebay.com

ASL Interpreters and CART
For detailed information on the topics and agenda, please visit:
www.mcdmaine.org
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
Carolyn R. Lockwood, 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.

Betsy Hopkins, Interim Director  Nancy Melanson, Assistant to the Director
Tel: 623-6745 (V)                Tel: 623-7998 (TTY), 623-7958 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (TTY)             1-888-755-0023 (TTY), 287-5292 (FAX)
E-mail: Betsy.Hopkins@maine.gov  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.