Fall 10-1-2007

Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Fall 2007

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

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalmaine.com/rehab_docs

Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Labor; Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services; Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened; and Melanson, Nancy, "Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Fall 2007" (2007). Rehabilitation Services/Disability Services Documents. 25.

https://digitalmaine.com/rehab_docs/25

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Labor at Digital Maine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rehabilitation Services/Disability Services Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Maine. For more information, please contact statedocs@maine.gov.
The Blaine House Tea was another success again this year! More than ninety people attended from all areas of the state. The first lady, Karen Baldacci, was introduced by John Shattuck, Director for the Division of Deafness, and she gave everyone attending a warm welcome into her home - The Blaine House.

The keynote speaker this year was Terry Morrell from Community Counseling Center in Portland. His speech was very uplifting and inspiring. It brought tears to several eyes in the room. Enjoy the speech, “Coming Together”! Smile.

“Coming Together”

“There are many ways of coming together, and we can look at our history to identify them. Abraham Lincoln demonstrated on the ways to come together – listen to your critics. He actively sought out those who disagreed with him. He demonstrated this by including his critics as members of his cabinet. One writer said that Lincoln “governed by listening and persuading.” Furthermore Lincoln waited for public opinion to be ready for partial then full abolition of slavery before he acted. Sometimes we need to come to our decisions by including those who oppose us – this will allow us to achieve great things.

Another way of coming together was demonstrated by Martin Luther King and his followers. The act of physically coming together gave power and strength to those fighting for civil rights. The bus boycott was successful because of all the people who were willing to come together to fight for what was fair and right.

In order to gain more strength during the civil rights movement, racial lines were crossed. Martin Luther King and his colleagues worked with white people who believed in their cause.
By coming together, the civil rights movement during the 1960s found success. Segregation ended.

Another way of coming together involves finding common ground even though values might conflict. An example of this is how in 2005 the equal rights amendment for gay and lesbian people in Maine was passed. This was passed with the help of some religious groups supporting the bill (law) as they focus on the core belief that no one should be discriminated against. As one Unitarian church member said, “There’s little enough love in the world as it is. If they (gays and lesbians, bi or whatever) find their partnership and their love interest in someone who is a little bit out of the mainstream for most of us, they should be congratulated, not condemned.”

Another way of coming together can be understood when we evaluate what happens when tragedy strikes. Two recent events serve as examples – the terrorist attack on September 11 and Hurricane Katrina. Politicians came together; party lines were ignored. Power and unity was found by focusing on helping. While great gains were made in both tragedies, the problem is that the unity did not continue. In an article “Hurricane Katrina Two Years On” (2007), we learn that in the two years since the tragedy, New Orleans is still struggling. In the first half of 2006, there was nearly a 50 percent increase in the death rate, also the majority of help has come more to areas that attract tourists while the poorest areas are still devastated, and funding that was promised by the government has never reached victims. Focusing on shared values and not on minor differences is important to our society. We know that…divided we are weak, united we are strong.

As I look at my community, the Deaf community, many of us value preserving our language and our culture; however, as we hold on to and cherish these beliefs, we must not discriminate against our own. Division within our community happens as some have cochlear implants, some of us speak, some of us use American Sign Language, some of us use signed English. If we continue to exclude or reject people, then Deaf culture fades. By having harsh judgments power fades, only sticking to our own we limit ourselves.

Rejection and division also happens within the gay community, unity is sometimes not attained because if someone is transgender or obviously gay we reject or avoid them. When these beliefs occur we often lose valuable and important members of a community?

As we look to the Deaf community, we wonder why is this coming together important? What has this allowed us to do?

I can point out several examples, plays at Portland Stage and concerts at L.L. Bean are now interpreted, hospitals provide access to interpreting services 24 hours a day, and a formal program and help for those who have suffered abuse. The process of coming together is a process we have just begun in the Deaf community. This process requires diligence and commitment in order for it to continue.

The challenge ahead of us is to stay together, continue to work together, and continue to value the differences among us that actually help strengthen us. Diversity is a strength that should be valued; let’s continue using that to lead.”

**Outstanding Role Model for the Deaf Community Award**

Brenda Schertz

Brenda has been a great promoter of American Sign Language (ASL), Deaf culture and Deaf people.

Brenda is an American Sign Language instructor at the University of Southern Maine (USM). She provides historical and cultural tours in American Sign Language, offers American Sign Language consultation to various entities, co-coordinated the first Deaf film festival, and readily promotes the culture. She is a vibrant force here in Maine.

She also did a splendid job organizing the Maine Deaf Woman's Conference in November 2006 at the Cliff House in Ogunquit. She was great at finding a chairperson and helping with the committees. It was a 3-day conference with several workshops, and some very talented women! Brenda did a tremendous job. The 2011 conference will be in Portland, Maine.

Brenda’s a great leader, hard working and always does her best for the Deaf community.
Outstanding Role Model for the Deaf Community Award

Terry Morrell

Terry is a positive role model among deaf and hard-of-hearing youth, adults and families. He represents himself as a Deaf individual with pride and dignity. Terry assists people through difficult times and often acts and encourages individuals to advocate for their rights.

Outside of the scope of his work, Terry has actively volunteered behind the scenes with various performing organizations as a consultant to the American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting process. While teaching ASL classes for many years, Terry found opportunities to celebrate Deaf culture with his students. Terry also serves on the Deaf Culture Festival committee, and on the Baxter Foundation committee. Overall, Terry embodies what a successful, Maine Deaf person can become.

Terry was educated in Maine first as a mainstreamed student in public schools. He then went to Governor Baxter School for the Deaf and graduated in 1981. He’s worked for the post office and Goodwill Industries. After he received his master’s in social work, Terry worked for Westborough State Hospital in Massachusetts. Four years ago, he started working at Community Counseling as a licensed clinical therapist. Terry counsels D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing individuals and their families. Leading Deaf parenting groups is one of his favorite activities.

Terry is an outstanding role model for the Deaf community. He has strived to improve the quality of his life and become successful within his job. One unique thing about Terry is that he is very humble, and he often sees the best in people and encourages them to be successful and to get the most out of their life.

He can often be seen supporting and encouraging youths and adults. He volunteers his time as a consultant to the Gay Men’s Choir and theatrical plays that enhance the quality of the performances.

Last year, Hamilton Relay Service nationally recognized Terry as a wonderful role model within Maine’s Deaf community.

Special Commendation Award

Deborah S. Myers

Debbie deserves this award after working many years as a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD) and as a very active member in the Deaf community. She always empowers Deaf people and she’s always ready to help.

She is also a very creative person, helping people to be successful in job exploration and employment. Debbie created her own business (KEWL ASL Interpreting Agency) and she is a nationally certified interpreter. KEWL ASL now provides job coaching and exploration services in American Sign Language for Deaf individuals.

She deserves this recognition for all the seeds she has planted to strengthen the Deaf community.
Karen Hopkins

Among Karen’s roles as Coordinator for Early Childhood and Family Services, Co-Chair of Maine Newborn Hearing Program, and a driving force behind establishing a Maine Chapter of Hands and Voices, she has made an invaluable difference in the lives of Maine’s deaf and hard-of-hearing children age birth to five. She has made a lasting impression on the future of both the Deaf community and the wider community of children who will grow up to be Maine’s adults with hearing loss.

When Karen is with families, she shows her unique ability to empathize, inform, and put families and children first. She has a special ability to balance between respecting parental rights to make communication option decisions on behalf of their deaf or hard-of-hearing child, and the child’s right to acquire a full first language.

With agencies such as Child Development Services (CDS), she works to explain, inform and collaborate to ensure that deaf children receive needed signed or spoken language services beyond the bare provision of “take two hearings aids and we’ll call the speech therapist in the morning.”

In the community, she is seen as a committed deaf professional with the bilingual skills to work either in the “ASL World” or in the “English World.” Maine is very fortunate to have a native daughter with her mix of energy, enthusiasm, and understanding of how best to help families raise deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Karen is most deserving of this honor for superb work with parents and children with hearing loss. Her level of professionalism and enthusiasm knows no equal. She is an extraordinary role model to emulate.

Rebecca Kane

Rebecca is often the driving force behind the scene and someone we do not hear about often. Within Waterville, she encourages and educates the schools about Deaf culture during Deaf Culture Week. Her involvement has been expanding to involve the community. This year for the Deaf Culture Week, she planned a week-long event that included the community fire department, a play in American Sign Language and the involvement of students in some small craft events.

Rebecca is working on attaining her American Sign Language interpreting license. For the past several years she has single handedly brought Deaf Culture Week to the students in Waterville schools inviting Deaf speakers, distributing educational materials and promoting American Sign Language. This year she has invited a Deaf theatre group from New Hampshire to perform, and photographed a human “I Love You” (ILY) hand-shape from the air.
A strong supporter for the Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA), Senator Beth Edmonds stated, "we have to recognize that this is unfinished business the state has to take care of.” It was Senator Beth Edmonds who sponsored the measure seeking the additional money to compensate those who were abused at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf.

Beth was continuously committed to D/deaf and hard-of-hearing people in Maine, a quality she brought to the legislature which is welcomed and appreciated. Beth Edmonds worked closely with the Deaf community on legislative bills related to quality of life issues.

Beth would probably say that she has tried to help in whatever way the Deaf community asked. She did help a lot, especially in efforts to ensure that people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing have access to all the same services and opportunities that hearing people have; and that the State do whatever it can to help those who were victims of abuse at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf, regardless of how long ago the abuse occurred.

Beth’s record stands by itself:

**In the 121st Session --**

- LD 1688 (passed) -- Clarifies the requirement for state agencies and courts to provide interpreter services in proceedings that affect a person's property or other legal rights, and sets the qualifications for the interpreters.
- Two studies (passed) -- one to look at creating an emergency alert notification system, and one to study the needs of Deaf and hard-of-hearing children and adolescents.
In the 122nd Session –

- LD 446 (passed) -- Requires the Secretary of State to provide interpreter services or CART transcription for drivers' education programs and for the drivers test.
- LD 1612 (passed) -- requires the Emergency Service Communications Bureau to ensure that E-911 operators know how to handle calls from persons who are Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.
- LD 1613 (passed) -- created the discount program for wireless communication devices and 2-way pagers for emergency communications.
- LD 404 (the bill didn't pass, but through her and Governor Baldacci’s support it was funded in a budget bill) – the final appropriation needed to fund the Baxter Compensation Authority settlements.
- LD 447 and LD 448 -- (did not pass) -- would have required insurance companies to cover the cost of hearing aids and the cost of interpreters for medical appointments.

In the 123rd Session --

- Beth didn’t sponsor the hearing aid bill that finally passed, but worked for it as a member of legislative leadership, when decisions were being made about which bills to fund.

Deaf Culture Festival
September 29, 2007

The Deaf Culture Festival took place at the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MECDHH) on September 29, 2007. There was a great turn out of people this year. D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, late-deafened, and hearing people, everyone there was having a great time. The weather was exceptional. Tables were set up by many agencies represented by the Division of Deafness, Maine Center on Deafness, Goodwill Industries, Lutheran Social Services, Maine Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Hamilton Relay Service, and many others. There were also several tables set up for retailers selling their goods. T-shirts, jewelry, and many other items people were shopping all day.

In a separate room off the gymnasium, there were face painters, tables set up for children to make their own frosted cookies, and pumpkin decorating. The children’s activities were very well attended.

Not only was the day fun, it was also educational. There were wellness workshops and presentations that took place in the gymnasium. All of the workshops, including the health and advocacy workshop and presentations, were well received by the audience.
The lunch line for hot dogs and hamburgers continued all day long. The line seemed to never end and the food was great. The Maine Center on Deafness sponsored an ice cream social in the late afternoon.

Many thanks and applause to the Deaf Culture Festival planning committee. Everyone involved did a fantastic job organizing the Festival, and it was a huge success!

**Deaf Culture Week Celebrated in Waterville Schools**

Students and staff from the Williams Elementary School in Oakland, Maine join the Manchester, New Hampshire Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing drama team in an aerial picture of the "I love you" sign. The photo ended a week-long celebration of National Deaf Culture Week.

Activities included, visiting with a deaf woman and her hearing ear dog, learning about videophones, Sidekicks and other technology that people in the Deaf community use. Each student enjoyed a cookie shaped like the "I love you" sign, learned the history of Deaf culture, and had question and answer time with the Manchester group with twenty two students and nine staff including interpreters.

With the encouragement from the Maine Center on Deafness, one class participated in a "moment of silence" all wearing earplugs for fifteen minutes during class time so they could simulate and identify with people who are hard of hearing.

**Association of Late-Deafened Adults of Maine (ALDA-Maine)**

Pictured: Lauren E. Storck, Ph.D., is a resident of mid-coast Maine for three years. Before that, she was a seasonal resident for about 30 years.

The Division of Deafness would like to introduce Lauren Storck from North Haven. Lauren is an advocate in Maine, nationally, and internationally, for people with hearing loss. She is now deafened herself, and is the founder of the first Maine Chapter of ALDA (www.alda-maine.mysite.com), as well as a member of several other associations for and about hearing loss. She also remains active in several professional committees related to healthcare, group dynamics, and international exchange.

The following is an interview with Dr. Storck.

**Could you tell us what exactly ALDA is?**

ALDA, [www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org), is a wonderful grass-roots all voluntary national association that was started in Chicago about 20 years ago by people who did not use sign language and could not understand others at home or at work due to hearing loss. They felt a need to establish a community that understood our special needs and skills. Most were young adults who were searching for better information and camaraderie; they did not identify with Deaf culture or other pressures to join Deaf communities.

In the fall of 2008, ALDA's annual conference will be in Chicago again to celebrate this important anniversary. All reading this are invited! ALDA welcomes all late-deafened, hard-of-hearing, and D/deaf people too, as well as families and employers. ("Late" deafened simply means losing hearing after learning to speak, so that ALDA members have a huge variety of hearing loss and experiences. Officially, ALDA still uses the acronym that stands for the Association of Late-Deafened Adults).

ALDA-Maine is our own special ALDA Chapter, one of many ALDA Chapters and Groups around the USA.
ALDA-Maine (www.alda-maine.mysite.com) provides information, support, advocacy, and outreach about hearing loss via meetings and social events in many different parts of Maine. We also have an interactive online forum for members, a public website, and community events to foster inclusion of all people with hearing loss by using full communication access (using real time captioning).

Is ALDA a national organization? ALDA is not only a national association, it is truly a large family of others who understand what life with hearing loss is all about.

Are there meetings to attend; if so, where & what kind of accommodations are made? ALDA-Maine has several different sorts of meetings and social events too. Whenever possible, we arrange for CART - real time captioning - provided by a professional CART provider. Reading text is "full equal access communication" for us, since in any situation that has more than two people; most of us are unable to understand speech, even with hearing aids.

Is there a cost? Joining ALDA-Maine is only ten dollars annually and we try to keep this as low as possible. Dues help pay for copying costs of our flyer and brochure. Our major cost, however, (for CART) depends on a lot of fund-raising. In order to survive as a volunteer group, we need to find some major sponsors soon.

Is anyone welcome? Everyone is welcome! We encourage people to join us, to visit our meetings, and to join in our conversations in person and using text (E-mails are a wonderful way to communicate too). The best way for nonmembers to keep up to date is to look at our public website.

How do members of ALDA communicate? ALDA-Maine uses an active 'googlegroup' on the internet to distribute regular information and to encourage discussions among all members. At our 'in person' meetings, we speak like you do; yet we also try to arrange and pay for CART since that is the best way to keep talking. There are still a lot of myths and misunderstandings about people with hearing loss. For example, most of us (95% of people with hearing loss) do not use sign language. We live in the hearing world and we require captioning, and when that is not available, paper and pencil is a slow but very useful substitute. We also learn to lip read, a very important skill that is not taught enough.

How can ALDA benefit someone who is losing his/her hearing? ALDA is great for anyone, including families of people with hearing loss, to learn more about different kinds of hearing loss, about different resources that we use and need more of, and also to make new friends. Hearing loss is a huge change in anyone's life, and many times family and work relationships become strained too.

Meeting and sharing with others is totally supportive. It keeps us going when others in the hearing world ignore us or find it a struggle even to understand that we really cannot hear them anymore. We can communicate though! We just need to enable our society to provide communication access for us.

ALDA also collaborates with state agencies and departments to help communities understand the ADA and our civil rights under the law. The Attorney General of Maine, for example, is firmly supportive of all people with disabilities having equal protection under the law. ALDA educates its members and others about how to request and obtain captioning, or any other resources that are needed. Nothing cures hearing loss, and we strive to continue healthy lives in Maine with a combination of resources and understanding from others.

How did you become involved with ALDA? When my hearing declined significantly in 2001, I joined the ALDA-Boston Chapter. It was a lifesaver for me, just to begin my journey of learning about life with hearing loss from others who have so much experience. When we moved to Maine full time three years ago, it was clear that Maine's population of people with hearing loss (hard of hearing and late deafened) did not have a place to help themselves and to advocate for better resources. We have a long way to go together, and we aim to have fun too!

What is the biggest need for late-deafened adults in Maine? Maine needs many more professional CART providers for the growing population of people of all ages with hearing loss. We also need to educate our communities about some significant differences between hard-of-hearing/late-deafened people and D/deaf people who have different valuable needs.

It's time for Maine to offer more communication resources to about 95,000 hard-of-hearing/late-deafened citizens, and the 'pay-back' will be many times over the investment in terms of health and active employment of many of us in Maine.

Thanks so much, Nancy, for this interview - we hope many readers contact us via email to aldamaine@gmail.com soon.
Winter is here & the storms are starting!!

Just a reminder that the Maine Center on Deafness (MCD) is still distributing the emergency notification equipment and emergency notification services.

The equipment consists of one-way pagers, two-way pagers, and NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) weather only text radios. The one-way pagers are at no cost. The two-way pagers and NOAA weather only text radios are available to individuals through the "Cost-Share" or "Lending Program" from MCD. The cost of the two-way pagers are dependent on the individual’s annual income. The monthly service cost for the two-way pagers is the responsibility of the deaf/hard-of-hearing person.

You may qualify for a $10 discount on your wireless cell phone, two-way pager, or pre-paid service*. If your family’s income is less than 135% of the poverty level, you may receive $10 of your monthly service fee or a $10 reimbursement for pre-paid service. Contact Elissa Moran at (207) 797-7656 or through e-mail at: EAlert@mcdmaine.org for more information.

*Must be deaf or hard-of-hearing, Maine resident, and receive Emergency Notification Messages (ENS) messages from MEMA.

Telecommunications Equipment Program (TEP)

The Telecommunication Equipment Program (TEP) is available at the Maine Center on Deafness (MCD). MCD offers specialized communications equipment to qualified people in Maine. The TEP is funded by the Universal Service Fund (USF) and the Division of Deafness, which is located within the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.

For more information, contact:
Maine Center on Deafness
68 Bishop Street, Suite 3
Portland, ME 04103
Voice/TTY: 207 797-7656
Voice/TTY: (outside Portland area): 1-800-639-3884
Fax: 207 797-9791
E-mail: info@mcdmaine.org

What’s New!

- **Deaf and hard of hearing printed on an individual’s drivers’ license! This is on a voluntary basis only.** If a person is deaf or hard of hearing, they can now request the words to be printed on their drivers’ license. This law passed in the last legislative session.

More information will follow when the new printed decals are available.

- **Division of Deafness Advisory Council Meeting dates:**
  
  January 10, 2008
  April 10, 2008
  June 12, 2008
  October 9, 2008

  Place: Department of Labor
  Frances Perkins Conference Room
  45 Commerce Drive, Augusta

  Time: 5:30 PM - 8:15 PM

The Division of Deafness Advisory Council meeting is open to the public. Interpreters and CART will be available.
The Division of Deafness 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  
Tel: 623-7957 (V)  
1-888-755-0023 (TTY)  
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.