



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™

FOCUS

supporting families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing

SAVE THE DATE: 2015 Collaborative Plan Professional Symposium and Parent Conference

The Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans (MNCDHH) is coordinating a dual-purpose, Professional Symposium and Parent Conference, Thursday, April 16-19th. Educators will attend workshops Thursday and Friday. Parents join the teachers Friday evening for the entertainment through Saturday noon workshops and guest speakers. Then parents continue on until Sunday noon for over a dozen workshops designed just for families. Workshop topics will range from assistive technology to social-emotional development and more.

The Collaborative Plan Professional Symposium and Parent Conference will be held at Breezy Point Resort in Brainerd. The northern Minnesota resort features a state-of-the-art convention center. Food and lodging are all included in the cost.

On Friday, Jay Fehrman and Patty Gordon will lead an American Sign Language workshop "The importance of using Fingerspelling with students who are DHH." Immediately following, Deaf performer, Crom Saunders of Chicago will entertain teachers and parents. Crom grew up in Northern California, graduated from California State University, Sacramento with a M.A. in Creative Writing, and entered the world of performing arts as a co-founder of an improvisation comedy group. He also teaches ASL linguistics and theatrical workshops across the county. Parents do not want to miss his session.

The keynote speaker for the weekend, Susan Elliott, will share her unique perspective as a Deaf individual and award-winning educator on a range of topics. Susan has taught students who are DHH in Colorado public schools since 1977. She was selected as Colorado Teacher of the Year in 2009, the first-ever Deaf educator to receive the honor. She accepted the award from President Obama at the White House. Born with a progressive hearing loss, she became profoundly deaf as a teenager. As a National Board Member for H&V, she is a strong advocate for parent involvement in education.

Entertainment on Saturday will be the hilarious twin cities-based comedienne Colleen Kruse. Colleen Kruse is a longtime stand up comic, storyteller, and writer who has worked both local and national stages for over 20 years. Her comedy and storytelling has been featured on FOX, NBC, A&E and the IFC Channel. She is a favorite performer from Mom's Retreats from years ago.

MNH&V will be able to assist a limited number of families with a portion of the registration fee so watch for more details. Mark your calendars now and take advantage of this rare and wonderful educational opportunity.

More details and information posted soon at www.mnhandsandvoices.org.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2015



2015 MNH&V Roller Skating Event

A social event for families with children who are DHH

Sunday, January 25,
5:00 to 7:00 pm

Roller Garden
5622 W Lake St
St Louis Park, MN

FREE event, includes a
FREE hotdog, chips & pop!

Questions or to RSVP
contact MNH&V at:
651-265-2435
866-261-0857(VP)
mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org

Sponsored by  unitron.



MNH&V Lending Library

MNH&V has a large collection of books, DVDs, and games ready for lending. Topics include sign language, cued speech, parenting, Deaf culture, cochlear implants, auditory training, and more. In addition the library has a wide range of recently published articles. Browse online at <http://library.mnhandsandvoices.org/library/>

Bilingual Early Childhood Education Consortium Summit

Thursday, April 9 through 11, 2015.

ASL/English Bilingual Early Childhood Education Consortium Summit is specifically for those who are familiar with ASL/English bilingualism and desire to enrich their professional development. Gallaudet University's Department of Education is proud to host the Summit themed "Making a Difference."

The goal of the Summit is to address the issues facing professionals who are actively involved in ASL/English Bilingual education. It is intended for administrators, service providers, child care providers, early childhood education and early elementary classroom staff, deaf mentors and other related personnel.

For more information and registration <http://bilingualece.org/>

JOB OPENINGS

Parent Guide for SE Asian Communities

MNH&V is looking for a Parent Guide for SE Asian Communities. Candidates should be fluent in both English and Hmong languages and be eager to support other parents like themselves with a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Hours are flexible, 10 hours a week, based out of our St. Paul location.

Provide emotional support, unbiased information, and referral resources to families with children who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing throughout Minnesota. Connect parents to other parents and to local community resources. Plan and implement family support activities. Represent MNH&V in the community. A Parent Guide for the SE Asian Community will be responsible for developing programming for cultural communities, investigating, securing, sustaining, and reporting activities related to these activities.

Come join a dedicated team of parents who share your commitment to providing the full range of opportunities to families so our children reach their potential.

For more information go to www.lifetrack-mn.org/about/careers

Email a resume to HR@lifetrack-mn.org or apply online at www.lifetrack-mn.org/about/careers

Congratulations Lizzy!

Congratulations Elizabeth "Lizzy" Backlund who is the 2014 St. Paul Optimist Club College Scholarship recipient from Humboldt High School. She is one of only 15 seniors in St. Paul and the only senior at Humboldt to be given this outstanding honor. Lizzy was presented the award at the Youth Appreciation Scholarship Awards Dinner last November.

Lizzy is hard of hearing and has attended the DHH Program since kindergarten in the St. Paul area. Academically she is successful in advanced placement and college in the school classes. She also participates after school in the College Possible Program.

Lizzy's extracurricular activities include working as a teacher's aide in the guidance office and acting as team manager for both the girls' varsity softball and basketball teams. Outside of school she volunteers at Pine Lake Pastures where she helps special needs children interact with therapy horses. In the future Lizzy plans to become an early childhood teacher.



Elizabeth "Lizzy" Backlund

2014 MN Annual Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Youth Art Contest Review

Minnesota Youth who are DHH were asked to create artwork about “Senses” and to artistically answer the following questions: “What is a ‘sense’?” and “How do you use your senses?” The results were beautiful works of art by artists from various Minnesota schools ranging in age from Pre-K through 8th grade. Opening night of the exhibition, November 7, 2014 at ArtSpace Jackson Flats in the Arts District of Northeast Minneapolis, featured colorful drawings and paintings of the “Senses” and an overall sense of pride in being DHH.

The art show was made possible thanks to the efforts of Angela Olson, Liza Sylvestre, and Canae Weiss, three artists and teachers who come from different artistic disciplines, as well as each having different hearing levels. Last year MNH&V asked them to help run the MN Annual DHH Youth Art Contest, which they turned into a huge success. A total of 53 individual entries, plus the entire student population at Northern Voices collaborated to create two large sculptural boxes. When asked how the artists reacted to their art displayed, Liza said, “We saw a lot of big eyes and excitement! I think its good for young artists to have the experience of creating something that will be showcased in a professional way for many people to see. It creates an environment for them to make something that they are really proud of.”

In addition to viewing great artwork another fun aspect of opening night was a community-created large-scale art piece. Everyone was asked to contribute by drawing a face or adding to the art piece in some way. Ten feet of bulletin board-sized paper was completely filled with original art by the end of the evening.

“We were really blown away by the talent and variety of artwork and also by the support that everyone gave by showing up for the opening. It was such a great experience to be a part of, we look forward to doing it again next year!” said Liza.



DCMP Membership for Accessible Videos

Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) provides equal access through described and captioned educational media. They support and improve the academic achievement of students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.

A membership to DCMP is free for parents, teachers and other professionals who work with students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired and deaf-blind; and teachers and interpreters in training. Members can also create subaccounts for students. There are no costs associated with any DCMP services.

DCMP makes streaming a wide variety of accessible videos at home or at school convenient. However, some schools and businesses only allow streamed videos through YouTube. Unfortunately, YouTube videos are not all accessible. For this reason DCMP members can use their DCMP YouTube channel for accessible videos or, for some new videos, a 4-minute preview is available. Due to arrangements DCMP has with video producers some new videos on their YouTube channel are only 4-minute accessible previews, but the full videos are available at the DCMP website.

Nearly 6,000 videos are available in the DCMP main library. In addition to 4-minute previews of new videos, many full videos are available on the DCMP YouTube channel, including over a hundred public domain Classic Movies, Deaf History and Awareness videos, Blind History and Awareness videos, Captioning FAQs, Vocabulary Builders in Sign Language, and Equal Educational Access videos.

Register for a DMCP membership go to dcmp.org

DCMP Youtube Channel
www.youtube.com/user/dcmpnad



S.T.O.P. Bullying

Stand up. Take Action. Open up. Protect.

The Minnesota Vikings have teamed with Verizon and PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center to offer a new school program titled, "Viktor's Quest to S.T.O.P. Bullying". This interactive, educational bullying prevention assembly features Viktor, the Official Mascot of the Minnesota Vikings, and a live emcee. This program, for grades K-5, focuses on empowering students to STOP bullying.

The program teaches students:

- How to identify a bullying situation
- Different roles people play in bullying
- Ways to safely STOP bullying

For more information visit www.vikings.com/stopbullying or contact Brandon Clemens, Marketing Coordinator, Minnesota Vikings at email: ClemensB@vikings.nfl.net or phone at 952-918-8532

Mayo Clinic Pediatric Cochlear Implant Conference

SAVE THE DATE

April 25, 2015, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm at the Mayo Clinic, Gonda Building, Rochester, MN.

Building Blocks for Listening & Language Development, the Mayo Clinic Pediatric Cochlear Implant Conference, is designed for ECSE teachers, speech pathologists, teachers of DHH, outreach consultants & educational audiologists who work with children ages 0-3 years who are deaf and use cochlear implants to access sound for the purpose of developing spoken language.

Guest speaker is Kristina M. Blaiser, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Assistant Professor, Communication Science & Disorders, Idaho State University & Former director of Northern Voices an auditory/oral school in Roseville, MN. Other speakers scheduled from the Mayo Clinic Cochlear Implant Program are Melissa DeJong, Au.D. & Alyce Breneman, Au.D. and Ruth Stoeckel, Ph.D., CCC-SLP & Becky Baas, M.A., CCC-SLP.



The Blue Lobster By Gallaudet University

The latest VL2 Storybook App is titled, *The Blue Lobster!* This storybook is designed for readers, ages 3 & up. Young readers will find rich ASL storytelling, original and beautiful watercolor illustrations, and a large vocabulary collection of finger spelled and signed words. Every page contains a sentence video in ASL and English text.

Other Storybook Apps, designed for older readers, ages 5 & up are titled, *The Baobab* and *The Boy Who Cried Wolf!* Find these iPad story apps and *The Blue Lobster* available at the App Store!

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/the-blue-lobster/id920137853?mt=8>





MNH&V Literacy Event

In November metro area MNH&V hosted a Literacy Event at Wescott Library in Eagan. Apple harvest themed stories were read aloud by Adult role models, including Deaf Mentors from Lifetrack's Deaf Mentor Family Program and a cueing adult.

Parents met with Debra Chatelle, a recently retired DHH teacher in the St Paul school district. Parents received tips for reading to their children and information on literacy development. Our readers reinforced their discussion by showing how to use the tips for reading.

The whole group acted out the 2nd book. Kudos to Isaiah who was played the main character from the book, *Caps For Sale!*

Stay tuned for more MNHV Literacy events in the future.

ASL Classes for Families

Family friendly American Sign Language classes for those with little to no sign language skills offered by ASLBlend. Instructor, Melissa Schroeder, born Deaf, is a parent of 3 children and currently works as an Interpreter Referral Specialist for ASL Interpreting Services.

Classes are for 8 weeks starting January 22 through March 12 on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. Classes are located at Peace Church, 2180 Glory Drive, Eagan, MN. Cost is \$75 per adult and free for children age 5 to 13, accompanied by a paid adult. An assistant will help with children's activities.

Questions or to register by phone contact Becky Rosenthal at 651-927-7865 or register online at ASLBlend.org/workshops.



The View from Greater Minnesota

Central Minnesota Winter Snowflake Party

December 13, 2014 approximately 75 people attended the Winter Snowflake Event at Benton-Stearns Voyager School in Sauk Rapids MN. Entertainment featured a magic show by Captivating Carter, a Deaf Magician. Children played in gym and enjoyed craft activities, like making snowmen out of sweet treats, coloring, and making snowflake ornaments. Santa and his signing elves were on hand to hear what the children wanted for Christmas.

Due to the popularity of the MNH&V Greater Minnesota Holiday Event the 2015 event is already scheduled. Mark your calendars for December 12, 2015, and look for more details to come.



Guidance on Effective Communication for Students Cued American English Introduction Workshop

Students with disabilities, like all students, must be provided the opportunity to fully participate in our public schools. A critical aspect of participation is communication with others.

— Letter to Colleagues, November 12, 2014

Three government agencies; U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, issued A Letter to Colleagues and a FAQs sheet as guides for public schools to maintain the rights of students who are DHH or deaf-blind.

Public schools are obligated to meet the communication needs of students with disabilities. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) are laws that address similar issues in different ways. IDEA requires schools provide a free appropriate public education, consisting of special education and related services. Title II requires schools to ensure students with disabilities receive communication that is as effective as communication with

others through the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services.

In many circumstances, an individualized education program under the IDEA will also meet the requirements of Title II. However, the Title II effective communication requirement differs from the requirements in the IDEA. In some instances, in order to comply with Title II, a school may have to provide the student with auxiliary aids or services that are not required under the IDEA. In other instances, the communication services provided under the IDEA will meet the requirements of both laws for an individual student.

The *Letter to Colleagues* and the *FAQs sheet* address the interplay of the IDEA and Title II requirements, which should be helpful to schools, parents, and others in explaining students' rights and schools' obligations to address the communication needs of students.

Find the *Letter to Colleagues* document online at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-effective-communication-201411.pdf.

Find the *FAQs* document online at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-faqs-effective-communication-201411.pdf

Cued American English (CAE) provides the foundation for language development and phonemic awareness that children who are DHH need for English literacy.

During this interactive workshop learn the eight handshapes (consonants) and four placements (vowels) of the Cued Speech system, which combined visually represents the phonemes of English. The workshop will introduce the complete CAE system and offer suggestions for developing fluency.

National Cued Speech Association (NCSA) Certified



Instructors will conduct classes. Workshop is Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Located at the Commons Hotel, 615 Washington Ave., SE Minneapolis, MN.

Preregistration is required. Class space is limited to 30 people.

For more information contact: Sarina Roffé at 800-459-3529 or sroffe@cuedspeech.org or visit NCSA site at www.cuedspeech.org.

At-a-Glance Summary of Requirements

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Provides a free, appropriate public education in a least restrictive environment.

Section 504 Rehabilitation Act

Requires any agency, school or institution receiving federal assistance to provide persons with disabilities an opportunity to be mainstream.

Americans with Disabilities Act or Title II

Extends coverage of section 504 to employment, public and private educational institutions, transportation providers & telecommunications regardless of the presence of any federal funding.

Education Week Featured Four Seasons Elementary A+ School

Education Week recently featured Four Seasons Elementary A+ School, an Arts Magnet School with a DHH Program in St. Paul, in a video. Angela Olson, Liza Sylvestre, and Canae Weiss received a Minnesota State Arts Board Grant to teach art classes and encourage students to think about how art can be used as a vocabulary and a way of communicating that transcends speech and hearing.

The video can be found online at www.edweek.org/go/artsed



Blankets to Welcome MNH&V Families

Unitron, a MN-based hearing aid manufacturer, has generously donated money to buy fleece material to make welcome blankets for families with a baby who is newly identified as DHH. MNH&V Parent Guides give blankets to families during their in-person visits. Many of the blankets have been distributed in the metro area and the rest were sent to Parent Guides in greater Minnesota to be delivered to families all across Minnesota.

In addition to financing the material to make the blankets, Unitron organized their employees to make 97 more blankets, which were recently shipped to MNH&V. Unitron has a history of supporting MNH&V in other ways too, such as sponsoring the entertainment portion of the metro area MNH&V Annual Family Picnic and donating books to the lending library. Thanks, Unitron, for supporting our mission at MNH&V.

Lifetrack staff made blankets with the donated fabric as a United Way activity to kickoff their fundraising week. Also, some of the fabric was sent to Duluth, MN, for Girl Scout Troop 3268 to assemble blankets as a service project.

To the families MNH&V serves the blankets represent the warmth and love other families send to them and the professionals who are eager to support them. A constant reminder of the care and support families can receive from our MNH&V community.

Thanks, Unitron, for supporting our mission at MNH&V and to those who volunteered to create welcome blankets.



Unitron employees systematically creating welcome blankets for MNH&V to give to families.



Our newest blanket recipients.



Give a Hand to Girl Scout Troop #3268 from Duluth for volunteering their time to make welcome blankets for children identified as DHH all over greater Minnesota.

Lifetrack
709 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104-4804



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™

FOCUS

supporting families
with children
who are deaf and
hard of hearing

Minnesota Hands & Voices is a program of Lifetrack

FOCUS Newsletter • January-February 2015



Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/MNHandsandVoices>



Twitter
<https://twitter.com/MNHandV>



Sign up for our weekly mass emails
<http://www.mnhandsandvoices.org/news-events/newsletter-signup.aspx>

**2015 MNH&V
Roller Skating Event**

A social event for families
with children who are DHH.

Sunday, January 25,
5:00 to 7:00 pm

Roller Garden
5622 W Lake St
St Louis Park, MN

Sponsored by
 Unitron.

FREE event, includes a FREE hotdog, chips & pop!

Questions or to RSVP contact MN Hands & Voices at:
651-265-2435 • 866-261-0857(VP) • mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org