



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™

FOCUS

Supporting families with children who are deaf & hard of hearing

Congratulations to the 2016 MNH&V “High Five” Award Recipients

Congratulations to this year’s “High Five” award recipients, listed in alphabetical order: Katie Michaelson, Nancy Sturlaugson, Karin Schooley (not pictured), Charity Rogers, Rebecca Thomas, and Jessica Williams. Five of the six award recipients were announced and presented a certificate at the last Metro Family Picnic on August 4, 2016. The MNH&V “High Five” award recipients were all nominated with submissions of 200 words or less by parents or care providers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). The submissions were then reviewed by the MNH&V staff and selected by the MNH&V Advisory Board.

The MNH&V community would like to thank all the award winners for their dedicated service. The “High Five” award was created as a way for parents to publicly recognize individuals who have gone above and beyond on behalf of children who are DHH. Past recipients represent a diverse group of parents, teachers, students, interpreters, providers, advocates, volunteers, and role models.

Katie Michaelson

Katie Michaelson is a DHH teacher in Fergus Falls, MN. She taught the daughter of the nominating family from age three through the fourth grade. Katie inspired their daughter and taught her to embrace being hard of hearing. She continued to be in contact with their daughter over the summer and even after their daughter changed schools in 5th grade.



2016 “High Five” award recipient Katie Michaelson.

“We really feel having a strong advocate like Katie as her teacher helped her in her younger years and we wish there were more DHH teachers who took a more personal approach,” said the parent.

Nancy Sturlaugson

Nancy Sturlaugson has recently retired as a DHH teacher for the Benton Stearns Education District in central Minnesota.



2016 “High Five” award recipient Nancy Sturlaugson.

Nominated for the “High Five” award by a parent for her work over the past 10 years with her daughter who is now age 12.

“She has been the biggest advocate for my daughter and I feel her success with her cochlear implants has greatly been because of Nancy and all of her hard work and determination for success,” the parent comment about Nancy. “Words to describe Nancy have been ‘Advocate’ and ‘Teacher’ but I feel she is more than that as I feel she is ‘Friend’ and ‘Family.’”

Karin Schooley (not pictured)

Karin was not able to attend the metro picnic, but plans are in the works to recognize her in her home community. The family of one student nominated Karin Schooley, DHH teacher from the Mounds View School district, for a High Five award. They have learned a great deal from Karin over the years and she is one of their son’s greatest advocates.

“Her positivity is contagious and she is always highlighting the great strengths our son has. She has gone out of her way time and time again to not only provide our son with the tools to communicate, whether with sign or spoken language, but to also provide us, as parents, with tools to help teach him at home,” the family said. “Karin has even had a strong influence on our son’s daycare providers. They are now using sign in the daycare classroom on a regular basis and are very open to learning more.”

“High Five” awards continued on page 2

"High Five" awards continued from page 1



2016 "High Five" award recipient Charity Rogers.

Charity Rogers

A family whose son identified as hard of hearing just before kindergarten three years ago nominated Charity Rogers, DHH teacher for the South Washington School District, for a High Five award.

"Charity Rogers walked into our IEP meeting wearing a big, cheery, brightly colored lanyard, a big smile and her gentle and happy manner," the family wrote, "We had considered waving DHH services, but wanted our son to use a FM system in school."

The grateful family added, "Prior to working with Miss Charity, our son wouldn't look at or communicate with anyone other than his immediate family. During his first sessions with Charity, he slowly turned toward her and even began smiling. He began to trust her and always looked forward to his 'Miss Charity days'."

Rebecca Thomas

Rebecca Thomas, DHH teacher at Blaine High School, was nominated for the High Five award by the parents of a high school graduate. With support from the student's family and Rebecca he had a very busy and successful high school career. The

student lettered academically three years in a row and his extra curricular activities included the wrestling team, National Honor Society, volunteering, and Boy Scouts.

"Rebecca has taught him how to use resources in the deaf community and also encourage him to be a role model for other DHH students," the parents said.



2016 "High Five" award recipient Rebecca Thomas.

"She has also taught him how to learn and respect American Sign Language. Rebecca was also very instrumental in helping Justin achieve the Interpreter merit badge through Boy Scouts of America."

Jessica Williams

Jessica Williams was nominated for her dedicated work as a DeafBlind Intervener for a metro area family with three children, two of which are DeafBlind. Their oldest daughter who is Deafblind graduated from high school this year and will go on to college in the fall. Jessica helped their daughter with resumes, mock interviews, and how to learn the bus routes where her jobs were located.

"Jessica is the reason my daughter made it to college. My daughter volunteers countless hours for many organizations as well as had some very unique jobs with very demanding hours. Without Jessica my daughter would never have had these experiences," the parent said then added, "Jessica took so many hours away from her family to support mine. She taught my kids they can do anything be proud of who they are."

In 2017 parents or care providers please consider nominating someone for a MNH&V "High Five" award. Nominations will be accepted from May 1st to July 1st, 2017. To nominate someone simple write a 200 word or less explanation of 1) what the nominee has done above and beyond what is typical for their role and 2) how this individual has made an impact on a child and/or the community. At least one specific example is very helpful. Email your nomination to mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org and include in the subject line "High Five Award". MNH&V staff will compile and forward the submissions to our Advisory Board who will select the winners. We ask for only one nomination per family per year.

Find the complete "High Five" submissions online at www.mnhandsandvoices.org.



2016 "High Five" award recipient Jessica Williams.

I am MNH&V

Mai Vang

Mai Vang works full-time at ARCH Language Network as a Financial Specialist Services in St. Paul, MN and as a Deaf Mentor for Lifetrack's Deaf Mentor Family Program (DMFP) specializing in the cultural Asian/Hmong communities. The DMFP helps families with children who are DHH develop communication skills using American Sign Language (ASL).

"I believe every child deserves to have communication accessible in their life and be able to communicate with their parents and the people around them. As a deaf mentor, I'm there to support the parents with ASL and to teach the parents about Deaf culture and the Deaf community," commented Mai.

In 1989 Mai's parents immigrated to America living in Kansas City, Kansas for a short time before settling in Minnesota. When Mai was just over a year old she became deaf and at school age her mother enrolled her in a DHH program where she learned ASL. Mai uses an ASL Interpreter for doctor visits, meetings, job interviews, or wherever she needs to communicate. In college she found the Access Support Services helpful also.

"I want the Asian/Hmong community to learn about Deaf culture and the Deaf community. The Deaf community is growing and so is the Asian/Hmong community," Mai adds, "I want parents to know that ASL is a communication method and there is support for them."

Growing up Mai and her mother struggled with a language barrier. Her mother did not know English very well and had to work extra hard to learn sign language.

"It was a hard challenge for my mom. In my youngest years, I didn't have a deaf mentor program or other programs to help out with communication between my mom and I. Or a program that



explained about deafness and the services that support parents with children who are DHH," Mai explained.

"My advice for the parents of children who are DHH is don't be afraid to make mistakes on your communication style, sign the best you can," Mai offered, "open your heart and mind, and be patient with your child."

The people who helped Mai and her mother to communicate were the DHH teachers she had throughout her life. Also, Mai expressed how important Deaf Camps were to her growing up and she encourages parents to consider sending their children to a Deaf Camp.

Mai's advice for children who are DHH, "Be proud of who you are, you have the will and the power to change the world one day. Go and chase your dream, don't let your deafness stop you from doing anything."

Mai loves the collaboration between MNH&V and the DMFP to spread the word about their programs.

"It means the world for all parents to know that they have tons of support systems available," she adds especially to the Asian/Hmong community, "we are here for you and you are not alone, our program will give you the power to change your life and your child's life."

MNH&V EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Parent Guide for the Cultural Spanish-Speaking Community

MNH&V is looking for a Parent Guide to continue to serve families in our Spanish-Speaking Community. Candidates should be fluent in Spanish, from the community Latino themselves, and eager to support other parents with a child who is deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. The program for the Spanish-Speaking Community is established, but in need of an individual to continue to provide emotional support, unbiased information, referral resources, and connect parents to other parents.

The Parent Guide for the MNH&V Spanish-speaking Community is responsible for organizing events, sustaining, and reporting activities related to these events. This person represents MNH&V in the community and participates in family support activities. The work schedule is flexible and 10 hours a week.

For a full outline of duties and application go to: www.lifetrack-mn.org/about/careers/parent-guide-10-hours-week

Thanks for your contribution!

**We rely on your generous support
to build better lives for children
who are deaf or hard of hearing.**

Make a tax-deductible donation today.

DONATE



Kitri Larson Kylo & Karen Doenges

National Cued Speech Association (NCSA) held a 50th Anniversary of Cued Speech Conference, July 8-10, 2016. At the Saturday evening Gala two Minnesota professionals, Kitri Kylo and Karen Doenges, received the Cueing Leadership Award. The award was to acknowledge their commitment to English literacy using spoken/Cued English. Other recipients are from all around the country and they are: Tom Shull, Sarina Roffé, Suhad Keblawi, Penny and Eddie Hakim, and Angela Kuhn.

Kitri Larson Kylo is Assistant Director of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program in Intermediate School District 917. For more than 20 years Kitri has led a team of professionals who have provided a bilingual-access program for learners who are DHH to acquire skills in both American Sign Language and English literacy through Cued English. This team of professionals has contributed to the language, reading, writing, academic, listening, and spoken language skill development of numerous learners from preschool through secondary school.

“It is a gratifying privilege to have contributed to the ‘gift’ of literacy for these wonderful children,” Kitri commented, “many of whom are now adults.”

In addition to her work at ISD 917, Kitri wrote an article in the Fall 2003 Odyssey magazine and the chapter, *A Bilingual (ASL and Cued American English) Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students: Theory to Practice* in the textbook, *Cued Speech and Cued Language for Deaf and Hard of*



Karen Doenges and Kitri Larson Kylo

Hearing Children, edited by LaSasso, Crain, and Leybaert, March 2010, Plural Publishing. The ISD 917 D/HH Program was also featured in a 2007 PBS Reading Rockets episode on literacy.

Karen Doenges, M.A., CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist for ISD 917 Deaf/Hard of Hearing Preschool Program, works primarily with learners age two to six years who are DHH and their families. Karen works closely with Kitri to implement a bilingual-access program for preschool learners who are DHH. She has presented on the topic of Cued English/Cued Speech numerous times to parents and professionals, including at Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association, NCSA, MNH&V, Mankato State University, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Saint Paul College, and statewide conferences for DHH educators. As a Speech-Language Pathologist, Karen has served on various committees and is currently a member of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) team for the southeast metro area.

When asked about Cued English Karen replied, “By establishing fluency in English through simultaneously delivered spoken and Cued English, students arrive at kindergarten and first grade more prepared for the task of reading—they have phonological awareness, vocabulary, and syntax knowledge. Literacy is the lifelong “prize” of having clear, visual access to English through cueing!”

Deaf Education Midwest Conference

Save the Date

Midwest Conference on Deaf Education (MWCDE) will be held June 8-9, 2017 at the South Dakota School for the Deaf. The mission of the MWCDE is to provide an opportunity for individuals who work with children who are DHH to share their expertise and information regarding current best practices in deaf education with one another and with parents.

MWCDE is co-sponsored by North Dakota School for the Deaf, Gallaudet Midwest Regional Center, and South Dakota School for the Deaf. One college credit available through Augustana College.

To register and for more information visit <http://mwdeafconference.org>

Girl Scout Troop #57623

Girls in grades kindergarten through 5th, who are DHH or a daughter of an adult who is DHH (CODA), are invited to join Girl Scout Troop #57623. Spoken English support will be provided for girls who are new to ASL.

Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Friday of every month from 6:30-8:00 pm.

The next meeting will be on Friday, September 23, at Thompson Hall, 1824 Marshall Avenue in St. Paul. The Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens (MADC) sponsors Girl Scout Troop #57623

To join or renew a membership visit <http://www.girlscoutsrv.org/join-us/>. There is a \$15 annual membership fee.

For more information contact Emily Burke, parent and troop leader, by email at girlscouts@minndeaf.org



DHHS Diversity Training

September 21, 2016, 9:30-11:30 AM

Introduction to Deaf Culture

October 2016, January 2017,

April 2017, May 2017

New Opportunity!* Hearing Loss 101

** Call 651-431-5964 to see if your agency meets the criteria for a FREE training at your facility.*

November 15, 2016, 9:30-12:00 noon

March 16, 2017, 9:30-12:00 noon

Survival Sign Language

December 6, 2016, 9:30-11:30 AM

Hearing Loss in the Workplace

February 22, 2017, 9:30-11:30 AM

Mental Health Services in the Deaf Community

June 6, 2017, 1:00-3:30 PM

DeafBlindness: Living in Helen Keller's Shadow

Register by phone at 651-431-5940 or email at dhhs.metro@state.mn.us. More information online at <http://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/seniors/services/deaf-hard-of-hearing/>

Online Workshop Series

Smart Ears is offering 7 online workshops this fall specifically on teaching children who are DHH to listen and talk. The workshops are for educators and health professionals, and are not for parents. These workshops focus on children who are DHH from age birth through 8 years old. Smart Ears' workshop series are offered Spring and Fall.

An option available for parents is a personalized 3-Day Intensive Program. Families who live in an area with limited access to specialized services and whose child was recently identified as DHH. The Intensive Program is designed to give these families and their children a head start in developing spoken communication.

For more information visit <http://smart-ears.com/parents.html>

The View from Greater Minnesota MNH&V Family Picnic SW



Mental Health Services for Children Who are DHH & Their Families, Northwest, MN

Mental Health Services for children who are DHH and their families is now available in the northwest region of Minnesota. These services are being provided by Therapeutic Service Agency, Inc. (TSA) with a grant from Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services.

TSA offers culturally and language specific health services for children who are deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing from birth to age 22, and their families who are experiencing difficulty due to emotional or behavioral problems. Psychotherapy and rehabilitative services for individuals, families, or groups developing skills to help strengthen the emotional, behavioral and social functioning of children and their families.

Services are provided by mental health

professionals who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and are familiar with Deaf culture. They have a broad understanding about the physical and mental health needs and how these needs influence school, behavior, social relationships, and the family life of children and adolescents who are deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing.

More about TSA at www.hoperealized.com

To make a referral contact TSA, Inc. by phone 320-629-7600 or 651-224-4114 or by email at info@tsapc.net

For more information on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Mental Health Program and Services contact Jacqlyn Davoll, Project Manager, by cell phone at 218-343-6196 or email at jdavoll@tsapc.net

Closed Captioning Law for Medical Waiting Rooms

As of August 1, 2016, Minnesota's closed captioning law is in effect. In Minnesota a new law requires closed captioning to be on at all times in certain medical facilities. The law applies to waiting rooms in hospitals, surgical centers, birth centers, and some group homes. The group homes affected are those that provide housing, meals and services to five or more people who are developmentally or physically disabled, chemically dependent, or mentally ill.

The law does not apply to medical clinics, nursing homes, or assisted living facilities. However, remember that by law individuals who are DHH can make a request for the closed captioning be turned on in places where it is not required to be kept on at all times. By law these places are required to turn on the closed captioning when an individual who is DHH makes a specific

request. Closed captioning is considered a "reasonable accommodation" under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If you are in a hospital waiting room in Minnesota and notice the closed captioning is not on ask a staff person to turn it on. The law requires them to turn it on as soon as possible. If on more than one occasion you notice they are not in compliance with the closed captioning law, contact the Commission by email at mncdhh.info@state.mn.us or by phone at 651-431-5961 or 612-284-0284 (VP). Include the following information: the name of facility, floor/room, name of the staff person you spoke with and their job title.

More information at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?year=2016&type=0&doctype=Chapter&id=150&su=0>.

Transition

Employees' Practical Guide to Accommodations Under the ADA

Updated Guide From JAN

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) generates educational documents with practical information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). JAN is a service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The latest update to the *Employees' Practical Guide to Requesting and Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act* provides a summary of the top issues employees have about accommodations and ideas for resolving them. JAN updates the *Guide* as new information is made available. The *Guide* answers basic questions about ADA and how to request and negotiate accommodations. You can find out answers to questions like: what is the ADA, how do I know if I have rights under Title I of the ADA, how do I request an accommodation, do I have to tell my employer that I have a disability, what accommodations can I request, what if I am not sure what accommodation I need, or what if I need another accommodation in the future?

Download the Guide as a PDF at <https://askjan.org/EeGuide/>

For more information about JAN visit <https://askjan.org>

Contact JAN if you want to discuss an issue in more detail by phone at 1-800-526-7234 or 1-877-781-9403 (TTY) or email at jan@askjan.org.

The View from Greater Minnesota



Southwest Minnesota Welcome Blanket Recipients



Northwest Minnesota Welcome Blanket Recipient

2016 Minnesota Hands & Voices Metro Family Picnic Photo Highlights



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



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™



Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS Newsletter

September-October 2016

A BIG Thank You to All the Metro Area Family Picnic Volunteers!

