

## Highlights

The 159th quarterly meeting of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) was held on Friday, October 26, 2018, from 1:00 to 4:00 at the Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott in Frankfort, Kentucky. Hearing accessibility was provided during the meeting by CART and ASL interpreters.

Ms. Jeannie Taylor, Executive Board Chair, presided over the meeting and welcomed commissioners and guests to the meeting. After roll call, Ms. Taylor requested that the commissioners review the minutes of the last Quarterly Meeting held July 20, 2018, in Frankfort, Kentucky. Following the acceptance of the Quarterly Meeting minutes, the minutes from the Executive Board Meeting held on September 14, 2018, were reviewed and accepted as well.

Ms. Virginia Moore, Executive Director, reported on KCDHH's quarterly activities from July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018.

## Personnel

Presently there is one vacant position at KCDHH: Internal Policy Analyst III. A candidate has been chosen and referred to the personnel department for the Document Specialist I position. KCDHH is waiting to hear if the top candidate has been accepted.

## DeaFestival

KCDHH hosted DeaFestival on Saturday, September 1, at The Galt House in Louisville. The theme for DeaFestival was *"There's a HERO in ALL of US!"* It has been estimated that 5,000 to 7,000 individuals attended the Festival.

Deaf and hard of hearing professional performers provided entertainment. Kyle Schulze, Deaf Ninja from NBC's American Ninja Warriors, made a special guest appearance at the Festival. A three-minute trailer for the movie 'The Silent Natural' filmed in Hopkinsville, Kentucky debuted. Actor Miles Barbee, who plays Dummy Hoy in the movie, was on hand

to meet fans and sign autographs. The exhibit area was filled with the works of deaf and hard of hearing visual artists. Another highlight of the Festival was the presentation of the Margie Bridges “Pay It Forward” award which recognizes individuals who work above and beyond their normal obligations to support the Commonwealth’s deaf and hard of hearing community. Archie Harris and Brooke Montgomery were selected for the honor.

## **Kentucky Region of the American Red Cross**

KCDHH partnered with the Kentucky Region of the American Red Cross on the project “Sound the Alarm – Save a Life” which was made possible through a WHAS grant. As a result, many Kentuckians received smoke alarm installations. The Kentucky Red Cross received a first-place national ranking for making the most homes safe in the country by installing 11,260 smoke alarms in Kentucky.

## **Language Equality & Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) meeting with NAD and KDE**

Members of KCDHH’s Education Study Group met with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and Interim Commissioner Wayne Lewis on September 18. The meeting resulted in the study group joining forces with KDE’s LEAD-K group to help close the gap for education of deaf and hard of hearing students in the state. Presently KCDHH is drafting a bill and seeking sponsors to introduce LEAD-K to legislation in Kentucky during the 2019 legislative session.

## **Kentucky Department of Education Deaf and Hard of Hearing Guidance Document Committee**

KCDHH is currently attending meetings at the Kentucky Department of Education along with representatives from the Kentucky School for the Deaf, Statewide Outreach Program, and Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The goal of the group is to develop a guidance document which will be designed to influence and determine all major decisions and actions as it relates to the education of deaf and hard of hearing students.

## **Kentucky Board of Education**

KCDHH continues to attend meetings with the Kentucky Board of Education to discuss the issue of Charter schools verses public schools in Jefferson County. According to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the responsibility to Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to all students with disabilities applies to all public schools under federal law. Charter schools are public schools; therefore, they bear the same responsibility.

## Kentucky READY Corps

KCDHH attended the AmeriCorps launch event for Kentucky Students for Disaster Readiness and Resilience (KY READY) Corps at Boone National Guard Center in the Emergency Operations Center. During this roundtable discussion, KCDHH educated attendees about obstacles encountered by the deaf and hard of hearing during emergency situations. KCDHH also informed the group of measures that have already been put in place to overcome them. The group agreed to future collaboration regarding disaster resilience as it applies to the deaf and hard of hearing.

## Telecommunications Access Program

The Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) reported an increase in the number of walk-in constituents this quarter. It was also reported that there has been a steady increase in the number of home visits the TAP staff has made in order to train constituents to use their new phone equipment.

In September, Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, Chair of the TAP Advisory Board, attended the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) international conference in Bloomington, Minnesota. Topics and speakers included networking with telecommunication vendors, the National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program, and updates from the Federal Communications Commission.

## Additional Quarterly Activities Supporting KCDHH Goals

- Kentucky Board of Interpreters – *Meeting*
- Bluegrass Laryngectomy Conference – *Conference*
- University of Kentucky Retiree Resources for Successful Living– *Outreach Event*
- Kentucky Academy of Audiology – *Conference*
- National Law Enforcement Training Program – *Meeting*
- BBQ on the River (Paducah) – *Outreach Event*
- Engage for Change – *Meeting*
- Fern Creek Deaf Senior Citizens – *Outreach Event*
- Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation – *Quarterly Meeting*
- Lexington Deaf Seniors – *Meeting*
- Statewide Advisory Council for Exceptional Children – *Meeting*
- Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Advisory Board – *Meeting*
- National Hands & Voices Leadership Conference – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Public Employees' Deferred Compensation Authority – *Meeting*
- Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives Records Management Training – *Training*

- Education and Workforce Development Cabinet's Communication Meeting – *Meeting*
- DHH Mental Health Advisory Board – *Meeting*
- Southwest Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) – *Conference*
- National Association of State Administrators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing – *Videophone Conference*
- Community Conversation on Substance Abuse – *Meeting*
- Texas School for the Deaf (LEAD-K) - *Meeting*

## **KCDHH Study Groups**

### ➤ **12 Education Study Group**

**Chair: Amy Hatzel**

*The purpose of the group is to improve educational outcomes for students with hearing loss being served in both residential and mainstream settings by providing complete access to language (spoken or signed) and to support systems that families and educators need to establish maximum individual access to instruction. Ms. Hatzel reported the following progress points/developments:*

- *In August, the study group members and staff from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) met with the State Legislative Affairs Coordinator from the National Association of the Deaf (NAD). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Language Equality an Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) legislation that is happening in several states and what we need to do to pass similar legislation in Kentucky. After much discussion about the obvious educational gaps our deaf and hard of hearing students are experiencing, a decision was made to initiate the process of drafting a bill and seeking sponsors to introduce LEAD-K legislation in Kentucky.*
- *In September, work of drafting this bill began.*

### ➤ **Needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Senior Citizens**

**Chair: Michelle Niehaus**

*According to Mrs. Niehaus's report, the overall purpose of the group is to bring together stakeholders from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities as well as state and private agencies serving the population of aging adults in order to identify gaps in services, map existing resources, and develop a plan for addressing these issues strategically to so that our valued elders do not spend their last years in isolation or undue hardship.*

Since the previous KCDHH Quarterly Meeting the following actions have been taken:

- *The TeleCare program with ElderServe in Louisville has five volunteers now and is expected to have more by the time the first training is scheduled in November. Telecare is part of ElderServe, which provides services to those who live in Louisville, but anyone in the commonwealth can volunteer. Volunteers within TeleCare call isolated seniors to check on their well-being.*
- *The group has developed a first draft of a “Where to Start” resource guide for individuals seeking agencies and organizations who serve senior citizens state-wide.*
- *Future opportunities for Lexington Deaf Seniors are being investigated. A new Senior Center in Lexington may be a good resource and support system for deaf and hard of hearing seniors in the Lexington area.*
- *The Study Group anticipates submitting their three-year grant request for the Civil Monetary Penalty funds (CMP) before Thanksgiving. The vision is still the same to partner with the long-term care Ombudsman program and create care teams to meet with people in nursing homes, providing information and advocacy for those in long-term care facilities.*

## **Other Announcements and Additional Actions of the Commission Board**

- Michelle Niehaus received the ‘Distinguished Service Provider Award’ at the SERID Conference held in Louisville the first week of October.
- Gerry Gordon-Brown was named Chair of the TAP Advisory Board for a second term.
- The next Executive Board Meeting will be held at KCDHH Conference Room on December 7, 2018 from 1:00 - 3:00.
- The 160th Quarterly Commission Meeting will be held on January 25, 2019 from 1:00 - 4:00 location to be determined. Hearing accessibility will be provided by CART and ASL Interpreters.

## **In Closing**

The 159th Quarterly Board Meeting was adjourned.

Jeannie Taylor, Commissioner  
HLAA Representative  
[Jeannie@hearinglosskentucky.org](mailto:Jeannie@hearinglosskentucky.org)  
October 30, 2018