



# The DILA Sign Post



Winter 2008

## From the Executive Director's Desk

By Jennifer Whitcomb, Executive Director

Deaf Independent Living Association, Inc. (DILA) continues to diversify our services for the Eastern Shore's deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Our newly launched Employment Program is assisting several individuals referred to us by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), and our Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Support Group continues to welcome new and returning members. In addition, DILA's Deaf Educational Awareness Festival (D.E.A.F.) in October provided a day of deaf culture for the community, filled with wonderful performances, children's activities, exhibits and educational workshops. DILA's Advocacy Program has reached out to area healthcare providers, encouraging them to seek our guidance when accommodating deaf or hard-of-hearing patients. Our

Residential Program has expanded tremendously to provide better, higher-quality services.

In other news, we've consolidated our services into one central location in order to maximize our resources. All the services and friendly staff members of our Easton Office can now be found at DILA's Salisbury headquarters.

In reflecting upon the last couple of years, the board and staff look forward to strengthening and enhancing these many new changes and programs. Through our Information and Referral Program, we're spreading the word so that deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, along with their families and friends, will know DILA is here to meet their diverse needs.



## DILA Honored with Governor's Citation

On Saturday, October 6, 2007, Denise Perdue of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing presented a Governor's Citation to DILA Board President Max Verbits in recognition of our 25 years of outstanding service to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.



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And much more!

## Staff:

Jennifer Whitcomb, Executive Director  
Lisa Trolian, Administrative Director  
Ann Murray Grimm, Program Director  
Ramona Bradley, Residential Health Director  
Lizette Ramos, Employment Manager  
Marlena Turner, DIR Manager/Assistant  
Ken Stottlemire, Community Support Specialist  
Laura Jones, Administrative Assistant  
Pat Nock, Residential Health Specialist  
Sue Beaver, Interpreter Coordinator/  
Interpreter  
Kim Collier, Independent Living Advisor  
Celeste Emerson, Independent Living Advisor  
Renee Gordon, Independent Living Advisor  
Kim Guinta, Independent Living Advisor  
Darryl Hairston, Independent Living Advisor  
Todd Morrison, Independent Living Advisor  
Belinda Price, Independent Living Advisor  
Joan Taylor, Job Coach  
Eddy Morrison, Communication Specialist  
Patti Weiss, Program Secretary/IT  
Will Chambers, Driver  
John Handy, Driver  
Richard Hudson, Driver

## Board Members:

Max Verbits, President  
Michael Hammond, Vice President  
Sheri Perkins, Secretary/Treasurer  
Lance MacAllister, DIR Chairman  
Tom Dryden  
Holly Hoffman  
Donald O. Peterson  
Clara Stafford  
Jeffrey White

## Special Events Volunteers:

McKenzie Baker	Jennifer Kennedy
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Melinda Glover	Dee Reich
Sarah Gregory	Lou Reich
Murray Grimm	Omar Taylor
Liz Hammond	Sara Thomsen
Holly Hoffman	William Tucker
Sade Hollywood	Larry Twilley
Tony Johnson	Tom Weiss
Laura Jones	Christopher West

**Deaf Independent Living Association**, established in 1982, is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. A volunteer Board of Directors governs the agency of approximately 25 staff members, fluent in American Sign Language. Office is located in Salisbury, Maryland serving the Eastern Shore's nine counties. DILA continues to serve as a transitional program between school and working and living in the community for deaf and hearing-impaired individuals.

# Stay Safe—and Warm—this Winter

By Marlena Turner, DIR Manager/Assistant



Did you know that nationwide each year, nearly 1,100 people die in fires caused by faulty or improperly used home heating equipment and 700 people die of hypothermia?

The good news is that there are steps you can take to help prevent these tragedies in your own home. First, here are some simple, yet important fire safety guidelines:

- Have your home heating equipment inspected annually by a professional.
- Keep portable space heaters at least three feet from anything flammable, including bedding, clothing and furniture. Keep children and pets away from space heaters and ALWAYS turn them off when you leave the room.
- Kerosene heaters should be kept in a ventilated room to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use the fuel recommended by the manufacturer and refuel the heater outside.
- Have your chimney, fireplace or wood/pellet-burning stove professionally cleaned each year. Only burn seasoned wood in your fireplace.
- Never use your oven or stove to heat your home.
- Check or replace your smoke detector batteries twice a year (you should have a working smoke detector in every bedroom and on each floor of your home).

The other extreme, hypothermia, is caused by extended exposure to cold temperatures. The elderly are particularly prone to hypothermia. Many hypothermia cases are linked to power outages that left the victim without heat for an extended period of time. Here are some tips to help you plan ahead in case of unexpected heat loss:

- Dress in layers.
- Have plenty of dry blankets on hand both at home and in your car.
- Keep dry, even while exercising. Excess sweat can cause a rapid drop in body temperature.
- Avoid alcohol consumption.
- Huddle together to stay warm.

For more information about winter home safety, visit the Home Safety Council's Web site, at [www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org).

# Employment Program Puts Job Seekers on Track to Success

By Lizette Ramos, Employment Manager

DILA's new Employment Program is growing by leaps and bounds! We are currently assisting eight individuals referred from the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).

I recently helped one consumer prepare his resume, cover letter and list of references. I also helped him practice for job interviews via a simple role-playing exercise in which I played the role of the interviewer. This consumer was grateful for the assistance and performed well on a recent interview.



In other news, DILA's Salisbury office will soon boast a Job Lab. (The Job Lab will take over the space currently used as the activity room.) This room will be used to train individuals looking for employment and assist them with all aspects of their job search.

I recently had the opportunity to work with Jackie Gast, who established a partnership between the Eastern Shore Business Leadership Network and the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce. Jackie arranged tours of local businesses with job openings—including Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Matech Machining Technologies and Shore Distributors—for DORS, the Wicomico County Board of Education and DILA personnel. The DILA Employment Program sincerely thanks Jackie for her time and effort.

To learn more about DILA's Employment Program, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org).

## DILA Gives Thanks for New Tradition



Consumers and staff shared a cornucopia of delights at DILA's first annual Thanksgiving feast.

## Upcoming Events

February 2, 2008

DINGO

6 p.m. (doors open),

8 p.m. (games begin)

DILA, 806 Snow Hill Road,  
Salisbury, MD

February 7, 2008

Parent Support Group meeting

6-8 p.m.

DILA, 806 Snow Hill Road,  
Salisbury, MD

March 1, 2008

DINGO

6 p.m. (doors open),

8 p.m. (games begin)

DILA, 806 Snow Hill Road,  
Salisbury, MD

August 8-10, 2008

DILA's Camp Adventure

Camp Pecometh, Centreville, MD

Registration fee \$100

## Join DILA's Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

### Support Group

By Ann Murray Grimm,  
Program Director

DILA's Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Support Group typically meets the first Thursday of each month, from 6 to 8 pm., at DILA's main office in Salisbury. October's meeting—held on the third Thursday of the month to allow more preparation time for D.E.A.F.—featured special guest Paul Farrell, director of the Maryland Hearing Aid Loan Bank, which offers temporary hearing aids to uninsured children.

The group's November and December meetings were combined for a special Holiday Party on Saturday, December 1, 2007.

Remember, group members can keep in touch between meetings through a special listserv, [www.dila.org/parentsupport.html](http://www.dila.org/parentsupport.html). To learn more about the group, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org).

The next parent support group meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2007 from 6-8 p.m. at DILA, 806 Snow Hill Rd, Salisbury, MD. *Free childcare is available during the meeting.*

## DILA's Deaf Educational Awareness Festival a Success!

By Laura Jones, Administrative Assistant



This fall, DILA held our Deaf Educational Awareness Festival (D.E.A.F.). The celebration kicked off on Friday, October 5, 2007, with a hilarious (and packed!) performance by Keith Wann. Saturday, October 6, 2007, featured an all-day festival with performances, educational seminars, hearing-loss exhibits and children's activities.

DILA extends special thanks to the D.E.A.F. Planning Committee of Jennifer Whitcomb (chair), Laura Jones (vice chair), Sue Beaver, Ramona Bradley, Cheri Dowling, Renee Gordon, Ann Murray Grimm, Don Peterson, Denise Perdue, Lizette Ramos, Joan Taylor, Marlena Turner and Patti Weiss. We also thank the many donors (listed on page 7) and volunteers (listed on page 2) who helped support this event.



# DILA's Deaf Resource Library and Sign Lab Have Moved!

By Eddy Morrison, Communication Specialist

DILA's Deaf Resource Library and Sign Lab have moved to a new location. The library and lab are now located next to the front office. The move makes both spaces more accessible to the public.

Remember, DILA's Deaf Resource Library and Sign Lab are open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information on library materials, including books, DVDs and VHS tapes, contact Eddy Morrison at 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org). Happy reading and viewing!

## DILA Offers Satellite ASL Class for Businesses

By Eddy Morrison, Communication Specialist

Good news for businesses interested in a basic ASL class for their employees: DILA now offers a specially designed ASL satellite course. Upon completion of the course, students should be able to carry on a basic conversation with deaf co-workers. Our instructors can also modify lesson plans to include vocabulary, phrases and communication scenarios specific to your company. Class time will be spent on receptive skills (comprehension) and expressive practice (use of the language). Time will also be set aside for deaf culture discussions. To register or learn more, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org)

## DILA offers ASL 1 Classes for the Community

For community members, DILA will offer an ASL 1 class this spring. The course will include plenty of student/teacher interaction and focus on language, grammar, comprehension and deaf culture. Please note that class size is limited and enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. We urge you to sign up early to guarantee your seat!

To register or for more information, call 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org).

## Showing our Halloween Spirit



Spirits, ghouls, superheroes, entertainers and other costumed characters added a spooky touch to the Cross Point Church Halloween Party in Salisbury. Elvis Presley (a.k.a. Bill Gold, above) was a-rockin' and a-rollin' in his black suede shoes and snagged first place in the costume contest! At the event, Bill and his friends (below) enjoyed a hayride, hot dogs by the bonfire and more.



## "What's Your First Language—English or ASL?"

By Sue Beaver, Interpreter  
Coordinator/Interpreter

I recently spoke to a group of high school students about my experiences as a CODA (Children of Deaf Adults) member and the role of an interpreter. Before the presentation, the teacher instructed the students to write a list of questions to ask me. One of the questions was, "What's your first language—English or ASL?"



Now, I must admit this question stumped me for a moment. I was expecting the usual questions, such as "How did you learn to talk?" But this question had never been posed to me. After some thought, I gave them my answer: "Both." You see, receptively, ASL is my first language, but expressively, English is. There were many other wonderful and insightful questions posed that day, but this one really sticks in my mind. I would love to get feedback from other CODA members on this question. You can e-mail me at [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org). I look forward to hearing from you!

## DILA Employment and Staffing Updates

By Lisa Trolan, Administrative Director

### DILA welcomes the following new employees:

- Ken Stottlemire, Community Support Specialist. Welcome to the team, Ken!
- Celeste Emerson, returning as an Independent Living Advisor. Welcome back, Celeste!
- Kim Guinta, Independent Living Advisor. Welcome, Kim!

### We also congratulate:

- Sue Beaver, celebrating five years with DILA. Sue has also been promoted to full-time Interpreter Coordinator/Interpreter. Way to go, Sue!
- John Handy, celebrating three years with DILA. Congratulations, John!
- Ramona Bradley, recently promoted to Residential Health Director. Way to go, Ramona!
- Todd Morrison, celebrating five years with DILA. Congratulations, Todd!
- Richard Hudson, celebrating 10 years of employment. Congratulations, Richard!
- Eddy Morrison, celebrating 5 years of employment. Congratulations, Eddy!

### In other employment news, DILA is seeking candidates for the following positions:

- Development Director (full-time)
- Independent Living Advisor (full- and part-time)
- Interpreter Scheduler (part-time)

DILA is currently seeking Freelance Interpreters and Relay Interpreters to contract with for interpreting jobs on the Eastern Shore. Please contact Sue Beaver at 410-742-5052 if interested.

All interested applicants should send a letter of interest, current resume and a list of three references to:

DILA  
Attn: Human Resources  
806 Snow Hill Road  
Salisbury, MD 21804  
Fax: 410-543-4874  
E-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org)

Or, apply online at [www.dila.org](http://www.dila.org).

DILA offers an excellent benefits package for full-time employees. To learn more, visit [www.dila.org](http://www.dila.org).

# DILA Thanks Our Recent Donors

The high quality of our programs and services is a testament to our generous donors. Their support enables DILA to serve growing numbers of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

DILA thanks the following businesses, organizations and individuals for their recent donations:

## Silver Sponsorship (\$10,000 – \$19,999)

Cole Foundation, Inc. – \$19,000

for DIR home repairs

John Ben Snow Memorial Trust –

\$15,000 for DIR home repairs

## Copper Sponsorship (\$1,000 – \$4,999)

Quota International of Cambridge,

MD – \$3,000 for DIR home repairs

Rotary Club of Wicomico County –

\$1,000 for DILA's Deaf Educational Awareness Festival

## Bronze Sponsorship (\$500 – \$999)

Choptank Electrical Trust – \$846

for DILA's Deaf Educational Awareness Festival

## Supporters (\$25 – \$499)

Community Pharmacy

Delmarva Printing & Design, Inc.

Food Lion, LLC

Betty Gray

Laura Jones

May Nu

Sandy & Joe Perez

Riverside Pharmacy

Jennifer Whitcomb

## Memorial Gifts

Louise Montoya – \$50 in memory of J. Howard Leonard

## Much-Appreciated In-Kind Gifts

Almost Anything Handyman Services

Joy Carney

Joseph C. Woodard Printing Co.

MCS Construction, Inc.

Natalie Moore

Robert B. Richardson

## Rummage Sale In-Kind Gifts

Ramona Bradley

Laura Jones

Jennifer Whitcomb

## Deaf Educational Awareness Festival Donations

Sue Beaver – gardening gift basket

Joy Carney – interpreting services

Centre at Salisbury – \$50 gift card

Choptank Electrical Trust – \$846

Kim Collier – Longaberger®

warming brick

Community Pharmacy – \$100

Deaf Digest – advertisement

Delmarva Printing & Design, Inc. – \$25

Devaney & Associates, Inc. –

T-shirt artwork

Marianne Doremus – interpreting

services

Family Support & Resource Center –

children's craft

Melinda Glover – interpreting services

The Gospel Shop – scented wax

figurine

Green Turtle Salisbury – dinner

for two

Murray Grimm – various items

Horse Bridge Golf Course – associate

golf membership

Laura Jones – various items

Maureen MacCaffrey – interpreting

services

Maryland School for the Deaf Family Education & Early Childhood

Development – children's craft

Traci McCready, Premier Designs

Independent Distributor – pendent/earring set

Marne Nolan – interpreting services

Glenn Parsons – pony and wagon rides

Pepsi-Cola Bottling – five cases of

two-liter sodas and 300 cups

Sandy & Joe Perez – \$100

RCP Electric, Inc – bags for volunteers

Ann Richardson, Tastefully Simple

Independent Contractor – baking dish with brownie mix

Riverside Pharmacy – \$100

Rommel's Ace Hardware –

bounce house

Rotary Club of Wicomico County –

\$1,000

Salisbury Fire Department

Salisbury Police Department

Shockley Management, Inc. –

oil change at Jiffy Lube

Super Fresh – two \$10 gift cards

Super Pet

Sweet Dispositions – quarter

sheet cake

Lisa Trolan – various items

Marlena Turner – various items

Vernon Powell Shoes - \$25 gift

certificate

Walmart, North Salisbury – two \$25

gift cards

Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Whitcomb

Wood Creek Golf Links – four rounds

of golf



## **DILA to Offer Overnight Summer Camp in 2008**

*By Ann Murray Grimm, Program Director*

Save the date for DILA's first-ever overnight summer camp for deaf and hard-of-hearing children: August 8 to 10, 2008, at Camp Pecometh in Centreville, Maryland. Activities will include a water splashdown, swimming, canoeing, campfires and more. Registration information will be available soon. Contact DILA at 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org) for more information.

## **Advocacy Program Off to Promising Start**

*By Ann Murray Grimm, Program Director*

In collaboration with the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Maryland Association of the Deaf, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and the Ocean Pines Library, DILA's new Advocacy Program continues to sponsor presentations on Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Past presentations have taken place in Dorchester, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset Counties.

The program also offers presentations with a special focus. For example, we recently conducted a presentation on the importance of effective communication between hearing and deaf individuals in a medical setting. Separate training sessions were held for healthcare providers and the deaf community.

Future ADA presentations are being developed and scheduled at this time; contact DILA at 410-742-5052 (voice/TTY) or e-mail [dila@dila.org](mailto:dila@dila.org) to learn more.

*Visit our Web site: [www.dila.org](http://www.dila.org)*



806 Snow Hill Road  
Salisbury, MD 21804

Phone: 410-742-5052 V/TTY  
Fax: 410-543-4874  
E-mail: [DILA@dila.org](mailto:DILA@dila.org)