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Steve Hamerdinger, Editor

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SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH



HUNTSVILLE CELEBRATES NEW SERVICES WITH OPEN HOUSE

Under grey skies that did nothing to dim a festive mood more than 80 people gathered to celebrate the opening of the Region I Office of Deaf Services on July 1.

Among the crowd gathered at the Mental Health Center of Madison County were Huntsville Mayor Loretta Spencer, Dr. James Dill, Executive Director of the Alabama Council of Community Mental Health Centers, the CEOs of several mental health centers in the Region I service area and numerous Deaf Community leaders.



Regional Coordinator, Scott Staubach, cuts the ribbon officially opening the Region I office as Mayor Loretta Spencer, Mental Health Center CEO Dr. Gary Porier, and Steve Hamerdinger look on.

Regional Coordinator Scott Staubach welcomed the crowd and introduced Center Director Dr. Gary Porier who made a few remarks. "This is the culmination of several months of work in locating, recruiting, and moving Scott Staubach and his family to our area to provide a base of operations for the Regional Deaf Services Coordinator. Scott has already had a definite impact on our staff in becoming more culturally aware of the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community and of better ways of working with them. We are looking forward to a long

partnership with him and the special services he brings to our mental health center."

Dr. Porier then asked Mayor Spencer, who has been a support of the deaf community in Huntsville, to speak to the crowd, which was evenly divided between Deaf and hearing attendees. "This is a great day for Huntsville to be able to offer this type of service to many of our citizens who have not had services available before," Mayor Spencer said. "We are very pleased that the Mental Health Center is able to provide this service in our community."

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ODS Regional Offices

Region 1: Northern Alabama *Scott Staubach, Coordinator*

Mental Health Center of
Madison County
4040 South Memorial Pkwy
Huntsville, AL 35802
(256) 533-1970

Region 2: Central Alabama *Shannon Reese, Coordinator*

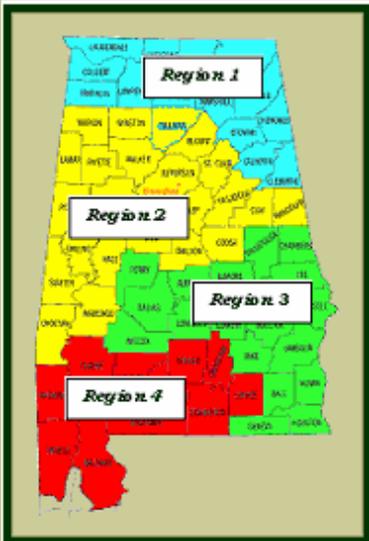
J-B-S Mental Health Center
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-591-2212 (Voice)
205-591-2216 (TTY)
205-591-2214 (FAX)

Region 3: Wiregrass Region

Montgomery Mental Health
Authority
101 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36109
(334) 279-7830

Region 4: Mobile

Mobile Mental Health
2400 Gordon Smith Drive
Mobile, AL 36617
(251) 450-5901



NAD PASSES MENTAL HEALTH MANDATE AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The National Association of the Deaf has adopted a mandate at its Biennial Convention in Kansas City Missouri which instructs the home office to make mental health a priority.

national and state/local mental health authorities; litigation; and development and/or updating of model practice or policy guidelines and disseminating information to the public."

The mandate, which was passed without opposition from the floor, reads,

This marks the first time in the 125 year history of the Association that a bill specifically asking the home office to work on mental health advocacy has been passed. See more about the convention in the full story on page five. ✍

"The NAD shall adopt as a national priority to address the specialized mental health needs of deaf and hard of hearing persons, including; advocacy and partnerships with

As I See It...

If one reads enough, one encounters some really bizarre things. Some are funny, some are sad, and others are downright infuriating.

The later reaction was what was felt as I read a story in the London Daily Mirror. I was tipped off to this by Phil Moos and his essential email list, USA-L.

The headline of a May 20th story screamed: "EASYJET Pay £5k To Ejected Deaf Group." Intrigued, I went to the newspaper site and read the whole story. The more I read, the more the bile rose in my gut.

"The friends, from a centre for the deaf in Liverpool, were going to Amsterdam for the weekend last October when the pilot booted them off.

"Staff argued they didn't have enough carers for the number of disabled people and therefore threatened the safety of the flight. One passenger said: "The pilot thought that because we were deaf we would not be able to follow emergency instructions. He made us feel like young children."

Excuse me. "Carers"? You mean like "babysitters"? In fact, that was exactly how the group felt – like they were little children. And rightly so.

Why did this disturb me so much? For one thing, the attitude, though reputed by the administration of EASYJET, is reflective of how society views deaf people in general and deaf people with mental illness in particular. Yes this happened in England, but this story could just as easily happen here. Consider that people who are deaf are not given the same rights as hearing people on common carriers in England or the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act notwithstanding.

(Continued on page 6)

NEW RESIDENTIAL SERVICES OPENING IN BIRMINGHAM

FOURTH STREET HOUSE OPEN FOR RESIDENTS

Shannon Reese, Region II Coordinator, has announced that two new residential facilities will open this summer. These homes will serve consumer who are deaf and have mental illness

The Fourth Street House, which is a Section 8 program in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health Housing Office, opened on June 1st.

An attractive and brand new four bed room duplex with each half having two bedrooms and two baths with shared living room and kitchen the Fourth Street house is owned by the YWCA. Half the house is devoted to a new DeafBlind initiative of the Regional Office and currently houses one consumer. The other



Residential Services staff pictured left to right: Amelia England, Shannon Reese, Nancy Hayes, Christine Giancola, Brooke Kaplan

interesting challenges. Since they often depend on tactile methods for communication, services almost have to be one-on-one. When you add mental illness or other emotional problems to the mix the challenge can be daunting. Providing services to people who are DeafBlind and have mental illness requires a team approach that involves shared

August, under the guidance of Christine Giancola. *✍*

VIDEOCONFERENCE SITES GO ONLINE

Through a partnership with Sprint and Relay Alabama, the Office of Deaf Services has been developing a network of videoconferencing sites around the state. At present, 12 sites have the equipment and 23 more will go into operation over the next several months. All sites are located in community mental health centers or facilities. (A feature story will be in an upcoming edition of *Sign of Mental Health*.)

At present the following sites are equipped.

Central Office	JBS
Data Management	Huntsville
Bryce	Taylor Hardin
NARH	East Alabama
Baldwin County	Montgomery
Calhoun-Cleburne	Mountain Lakes



The Fourth Street House in Birmingham

half is a quasi- independent living unit for two deaf individuals. The DeafBlind program is coordinated by Brooke Kaplan.

There are quite a few people in Alabama who are both deaf and blind and they create some very

resources of both the Division of Mental Illness and Division of Mental Retardation. Much hard work has gone into developing this resource.

A second home, which will be a three bed group home, will open in

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER INGRAM ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT



After serving more than five years as the Associate Commissioner for Mental Illness, Kimberly Ingram announced that she will step down on September 1, 2004. Citing the need to spend more time with her teenaged children, she will step down to devote more time at home and to her work at NAMI. During her tenure she fought to make deaf services a reality and has been a valuable mentor and booster of the program. She has consistently defended the program in the face of tight financial times.

Ms. Ingram, who has been one of the Deaf Community's ardent supporters in the push toward better mental health services, will be sorely missed. We wish her well. 

WORK ON BAILEY DEAF UNIT BEGINS

Renovation work on the long awaited Bailey Deaf Inpatient Unit at Greil is beginning, DMHMR officials have announced.

After many setbacks and delays, the Request for Proposals were sent out and bids were received. Hutchinson Construction Company has been selected to do the actual renovation work. Projected completion date is September, 30, 2004.

The unit, which will have 8 regular beds and 2 crisis stabilization beds, will serve people who are deaf and in need of in-patient treatment from the entire state of Alabama. The program will be modeled on the Westborough State Hospital program in Massachusetts, which is under the direction of Dr. Neil Glickman. It is anticipated that 23 staff people will be hired, including a social worker, a psychological associate, a certified recreation specialist and a communication specialist, in addition to the unit director.

Information on when the unit will open will be distributed when it becomes available. 

FOCUS ON THE STAFF NANCY HAYES



Since October 2003, Nancy has been working full time as the interpreter for the Region II Office for Deaf Services in the Birmingham office of Jefferson, Blount, St. Clair Mental Health Authority. Prior to her present position, Nancy worked as an interpreter in private practice since her move to Alabama in 1999.

Nancy originally hails from the Chicago area. She got her introduction to the deaf world through a foreign exchange student program when she was a senior in high school. Nancy spent a year in Thailand living with a traditional Thai family learning the language and culture. It was during this time that Nancy experienced what it is like to be outside of the mainstream society. While living in Thailand, Nancy met a deaf Thai woman who had never been educated or learned sign language. At that time, Presbyterian missionaries were teaching her ASL. As a result, when Nancy got back to the states, she pursued a degree in Sign Language Interpreting at Maryville College in Maryville, TN.

Currently Nancy holds Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf certification in transliteration and interpretation, as well as, the qualified mental health interpreter certification from the Alabama Department of Mental Health. Mental health is Nancy's preferred area of specialization for interpreting and she is happy to be working with JBS Deaf Services. Always staying involved with professional interpreter organizations, Nancy was recently re-elected as president of Alabama Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. It is her hope that ALRID will attract the involvement of interpreters across the state; thereby creating a strong organization that continues to promote the quality of interpreter services. *Continued on Page 7*

DEAF SERVICES ATTENDS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF CONVENTION

WORLD CLASS BARBEQUE A HIGHLIGHT!

Several members of the Office of Deaf Service had the opportunity to attend the 47th Biennial Convention of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) in Kansas City, Missouri. NAD has been the single largest advocacy group for the rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens for over a century. Workshops were designed with new advocacy strategies in mind for the nearly 1,500 attendees.



ODS Staff at NAD pictured clockwise from bottom: Steve Hamerdinger, Director, ODS; Christine Giancola, Region II House Coordinator; Shannon Reese, Regional coordinator, Region II; Charlene Crump, MHI Coordinator; Brian McKenny, Staff Interpreter, Greil.

The Office of Deaf Services unveiled its exhibition booth which attracted considerable attention. In addition to displaying information about emerging deaf services in Alabama and informing participants about job openings in the various program administered by OSD, a media presentation about mental health and deafness ran continuously. Information about Alabama and its

abundant opportunities for high quality of life were also prominently displayed.

Steve Hamerdinger, director of Deaf Services, and Shannon Reese, RCD of Region II, had the opportunity to present on setting up effective community programs for the Deaf. To the knowledge of most seasoned convention attendees, this presentation was the first time that a consumer oriented presentation on advocating for better mental health service was made at the convention.



Shannon Reese looks on as ODS Director, Steve Hamerdinger makes a point at their presentation on advocacy

In an historic moment, the convention adopted a floor motion hammered out by Hamerdinger and Linda Russell, state coordinator of mental health service for the deaf in Wisconsin. The motion, which carried without opposition, reads, "The NAD shall adopt as a national priority to address the specialized mental health needs of deaf and hard of hearing persons, including; advocacy and partnerships with national and state/local mental health authorities; litigation; and development and/or updating of model practice or policy guidelines and disseminating information to the public." This marks the first time in the 124 year history of the organization that the delegates went on record demanding that NAD

adopt a priority of active advocacy for better mental health service.

ODS staff members had featured roles at the convention. In addition to the presentation, Mental Health Interpreter Coordinator, Charlene Crump was one of the convention staff interpreters, an appointment that is considered prestigious within the rarified world of high level Deaf Community politics. Another Alabama Qualified mental health interpreter, Dee Johnson, was also on the interpreter staff. Greil staff interpreter, Brian McKenny, and Region II staff Christine Giancola were exhibit booth attendants and were heavily involved in efforts to attract new staff to our far-flung programs.

Among the Alabama delegation was Judith Gilliam. Mrs. Gilliam, who is currently the president of the Alabama Association of the Deaf and who also serves on the Deaf Services Advisory Committee, was one of the key advocates involved in pursuing the establishment of mental health services in the state.



The ODS Booth was popular with convention attendees

Irvine Stewart, former RCD of Region IV, performed all week with the current crew of the Wild Zappers, lead by original Zapper, Fred Beam. Poetry renditions,

motivational skits, and song interpretations accompanied the traditional dance routines the Zappers are well known for.

The Alabama ODS group, led by Missouri expatriates McKenny and Hamerdinger, made it a goal to sample the best of Kansas City barbeque, arguably among the best in the country. Four completely different styles of barbeque were sampled during the week complete with detailed history of how each style came to be. The delegation enjoyed the culinary treats, if not the tedious lectures from former pitmeister Hamerdinger! *✍*

HUNTSVILLE CELEBRATES NEW SERVICES WITH OPEN HOUSE

Continued from page 1

Office of Deaf Services director, Steve Hamerdinger, thanked the Deaf Community for their advocacy and support, with special mention of the commitment of the Huntsville Chapter of the Alabama Association of the Deaf. "This is a proud day for Northern Alabama. You helped make this happen," Hamerdinger said.



Mayor Loretta Spenser addresses Open House crowd while Stacie Yarborough interprets

Mr. Staubach, who came to Huntsville from New Hampshire, has been visiting mental health centers in the Region and has been providing in-service training to staff. As a result of these efforts, his caseload is rapidly growing.



Dr. Gary Porier speaks to Open House crowd while Mayor Loretta Spenser and ODS Director Steve Hamerdinger look on.

One of the exciting innovations that Region I is piloting is providing therapy through videoconferencing, making another goal of Deaf Services a reality. Because of the nature of the Region people may live far away from services making creativity essential in working with deaf people with mental illness. Scott is available to provide counseling to people throughout the state through the use of the Office of Deaf Services videoconferencing network. *✍*

As I See It...

Continued from page 2

Secondly, people who are deaf and live with mental illness are stigmatized by both the hearing community and the deaf community. Hearing people often see us as objects of pity, incapable of determining what is best for ourselves. The Deaf Community often sees us as possessed of evil or unable to control ourselves and our behavior. Either way the deaf person who has mental illness is treated little better than a small child. People feel the need to "speak for us." Our language and culture are trivialized. I often hear people tell me, "we have a therapist who is taking sign language at church and she will work with our deaf clients." Yeah, right. Like we really need more "carers." Or more

insulting, "Oh, interpreters are good enough..."

The entire point of the Office of Deaf Services is to move mental health delivery past the "caretaking" stage and to a place where true recovery happens. Yet it is a constant struggle. Between ignorance on one hand and paternalism on the other, hard won gains can easily be lost. *✍*

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Office of Deaf Services has a mandate to provide training to providers of mental health services who work with deaf and hard of hearing people. Additionally ODS staff are involved in community educational activities. There will be several events in the coming weeks. If you are interested in attending any of these events or in scheduling training event in your area, please contact Steve Hamerdinger, steve.hamerdinger@mh.alabama.gov or phone (334) 353-4703

July 30th - University of Alabama School for Social Work, Tuscaloosa

August 6th - UAB School of Psychiatry

August 7th - Huntsville Association of the Deaf Annual Picnic

August 11th - Senior Health Care Seminar, Montgomery

August 12th - 14th Mental Health Interpreter Training Week 1, Montgomery

August 19th - 21st Mental Health Interpreter Training Week 2, Tuscaloosa

August 25th - 26th - Alabama Council of Community Mental Health Centers Conference, Birmingham

September 7th - October 24th History Through Deaf Eyes, Birmingham

October 15th - 16th - Early Hearing Loss Detection and Intervention Conference, Birmingham

October 28th - 31st - Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness, Nashville

November 5th - Certified Deaf Interpreter training, Montgomery

EMPLOYMENT

OPPORTUNITIES AT ODS

The following positions are open or anticipated:

Currently Open:

Mental Health Technicians:

10 positions in Birmingham
Contact: Shannon Reese

Regional Coordinators:

Mobile, Montgomery
Contact: Steve Hamerdinger

Regional Interpreters:

Huntsville, Montgomery, Mobile
Contact: Charlene Crump

Unit Director: Bailey Deaf Unit:

Montgomery
Contact: Steve Hamerdinger

Anticipated (Montgomery)

Staff interpreter: Bailey Deaf Unit:

Montgomery
Contact: Brian McKenny

Other Positions anticipated at the Bailey Unit:

- Social Worker
- Nurses
- Communication Specialist
- Psychology Associate
- Mental Health Technicians (Direct Care Staff)

Contact: Steve Hamerdinger

Because application processes will vary between programs, contact the person listed under each position for information about the application process.

For more information about program vacancies or anticipated programs, contact Steve Hamerdinger at:

steve.hamerdinger@mh.alabama.gov or call (334) 353-4703 (voice) or (334) 353-4701 (tty)



Part of last year's MHIT Class. Twenty five participants took the 40 hour training.

MENTAL HEALTH INTERPRETER TRAINING SET

This year's Mental Health Interpreter training will be held over two weeks, August 12th -14th and August 19th – 21st. The training will move among various settings in the state so that participants will be able to get a feel for the variety of treatment settings. Sites include Central Office, Greil Psychiatric Hospital, Montgomery Area Mental Health Authority, Taylor Hardin Secure Medical, Bryce Hospital and JB-S Mental Health Authority.

Scheduled speakers include Robert Pollard, PH.D, Robyn Dean, MA, both on the faculty at the University of Rochester School for Psychiatry, Roger Williams, LCSW, CI/CT, Director of clinical services for the deaf program at the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, Bradley Houck, CSAC, of Salem, Oregon, Sue Scott, CI/CT. ODS Staff who will be presenting include Steve Hamerdinger, MA., Director of the Office of Deaf Services, Charlene Crump, CI/CT Mental Health Interpreter Coordinator, Brian McKenny, CI/CT, and Shannon Reese, MA., Region II Coordinator.

MHIT Director Charlene Crump reports that projected enrollment for this year's training will significantly exceed last year's enrollment. 



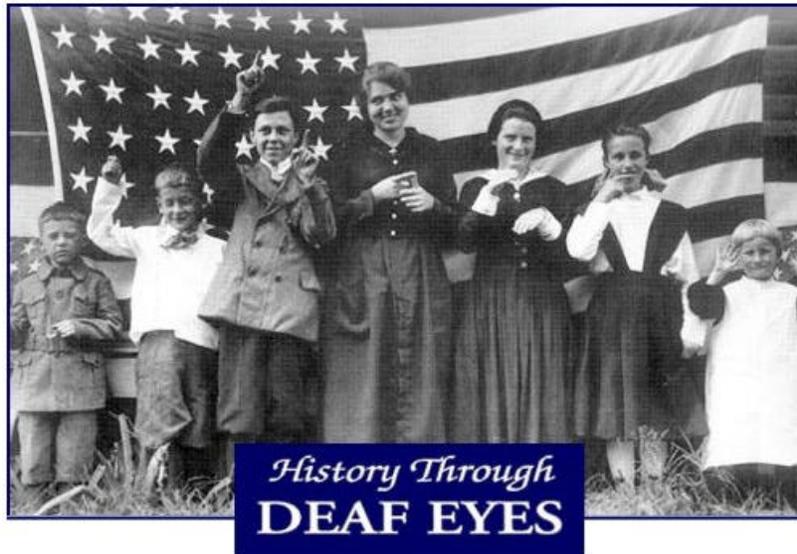
Roger Williams gives some pointers to Lisa Gould and Dawn Lackey at the 2004 MHIT training.

Nancy Hayes (continued)

Nancy enjoys an active lifestyle living on a 5 acre farm in southwest Blount County along with her husband, two teenage children, three dogs, three cats, and two horses. Bicycling and backpacking are her two favorite pastimes and she is always looking for a chance to get away and enjoy them.



OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES PROUDLY SPONSORS



See this exciting exhibit at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
September 7 – October 24, 2004

Presented by the Alabama Association of the Deaf

Along with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the Office of Deaf Services is a proud sponsor of the acclaimed exhibit, ***History Through Deaf Eyes***

Developed by Gallaudet University, ***History Through Deaf Eyes*** is a traveling social history exhibition aligning nearly 200 years of United States history with the experiences of deaf people. Using objects and images collected by individuals, organizations, and schools for deaf children, this exhibition illustrates the shared experiences of family life, education, and work - as well as the divergent ways deaf people see themselves, communicate, employ and adapt technology, and determine their own futures.

Exhibit coordinator, Rev. Jay Croft announced that there will be several special events in conjunction with the exhibit. On September 7th there will be a ribbon cutting by AAD President Judith Gilliam at 10:00 a.m. At 5:00 p.m. a gala reception featuring Dr. I. King Jordan, President of Gallaudet University; Dr. Glenn Anderson, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Gallaudet University; and Dr. Jack Gannon, celebrated author of *Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America* and curator of ***History Through Deaf Eyes*** will be held at Vulcan Park. Tickets will be sold for the reception. Contact Rev. Croft for more information

In addition there will be a special weekend celebrating Deaf Artists with Dr. Debi Meranski, Professor emeritus in Art History at Gallaudet University. She will lecture on October 2nd at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts at 2:00 p.m. and again on October 3rd at the Birmingham Museum of Art at 3:00 p.m.

All good things must come to an end, and we're closing the exhibition with a forum led by Evon Black and Carolyn McCaskill-Henry, both Alabama natives. Topic: "Glancing at the past, shaping the present, inspiring the future." At the end of the program Ms. Black, who is the Account Manager for Alabama Relay, will perform a monologue, "Mama Cares."

For More Information, contact: Rev. Jay Croft, 3424 Oakdale Dr. Birmingham AL 35223
(205) 969-5739 (tty) Email: (jlcroft@juno.com, jlcroft@tmo.blackberry.net). Also watch the www.silentlight.com web site for further updates.