



Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bulletin August 2009

VISION

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, in concurrence with the Colorado Department of Human Service vision, seeks to become the nation's leader in empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, families, and communities to become safe and independent.

MISSION

To promote the interests of our constituents and to work to ensure the quality of communication access for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing living in the state of Colorado.

"Cliff Notes"

I want to take this opportunity to challenge every one of us to become activists in our own, independent ways. I have read and discussed, with interest, the positive impact that activists can make.

In July 12, 2009 *Parade*, Craig Holman of Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy organization, says that "many political "campaigns are "astroturf," not grassroots, and they adopt populist-sounding names that belie the fact that are bankrolled by large corporations, trade associations, or ultra-wealthy individuals who have little in common with regular Americans." Those of us in the deaf and hard of hearing community are considered regular Americans. In that case, we have been mis-represented or have not been heard.

I also often hear deaf and hard of hearing people say that the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is responsible for any deaf and hard of hearing issues and the needed programs. While it is true that the Commission makes every effort to represent all deaf and hard of hearing citizens, through the seven Commissioners who were appointed to represent their stakeholder groups (hard of hearing community, interpreting community, etc.) transparency between the Commission and regular Coloradans does not fully exist. The Commission is a Type II agency, which means by law, the Commission falls under the umbrella of the Department of Human Services and must follow it's protocol before proclaiming a position on state or local legislation or creating a new program. It would be unrealistic to expect the Commission to handle all community issues and address all the needs all by itself.

These are two examples of how critical it is for any of us to advocate by and for ourselves. History has shown that advocacy organizations have success in promoting rights for deaf and hard of hearing people. A few examples of the successful grassroots work in the beautiful State of Colorado are: Deaf Child's Bill of Rights, insurance for hearing aids to minors,

Telecommunications Relay Service, Title Protection for Interpreters, and establishment of the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. More often than not, these initiatives were championed by just one individual. This person, in collaboration with the grassroots community, pushed changes through legislation, policy work, funding solicitation, education, etc. The approach here, little or big, is not just about diagnosing problems, it is about caring for people.

I simply cannot imagine us halting many important initiatives because we have groups of special interests and the Commission in place. There is so much work ahead of us and so little time to accomplish it all. Help (advocacy or activism on all fronts) is needed. I have faith that deaf and hard of hearing Coloradans have the wisdom and ability to steer change in their community. We are inspired when people have the freedom, power and confidence to engage and to enhance their unique place in life for many years to come.

In the words of Charles Earle Funk, the 1880's lexicographer, says that "beneath the visible blades of grass, keeping the grass alive and making it grow, are the simple roots". We all need to be the "simple roots" if we intend to turn our beautiful State of Colorado into the "greatest of the great" State of Colorado!

About Legal Auxiliary Services

The month of July was a time to close out fiscal year 2009 and gear up for fiscal year 2010. It is always fun to look at the year-end summary, see the trends and compare data with previous years. The biggest change this year was the increase in dollars spent for court ordered treatment and therapy. This is the one part of the program that uses the highest percentage of resources as treatment and therapy can take several months or even years. Another area, that has continued to expand, is the dollars spent for jury duty. We see this as a very positive sign that deaf and hard of hearing citizens are being called to serve and are actually being selected as jurors. We are looking forward to fiscal year 2010 as we know that we will see even more progress and exciting new phases of the program put into place.

Stay tuned!

Mental Health & Substance Abuse System-level Advocacy

The Commission Mental Health and Substance Abuse (MHSA) Implementation Team is pleased to announce that it was awarded a grant of over half million dollars for the period of September 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011 from the Strategic Allocation Committee/Department of Human Services. The Team received every dollar it requested!

The Mental Health Center of Denver in partnership with the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing were funded to implement the training and technical assistance center described in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Mental Health and Substance Abuse Action Plan. The funding supports:

- A coordinator position to work with the Implementation Team;
- Communication access for implementation team and other key meetings (interpreters and CART providers);

- An assessment of training and technical assistance needs among mental health and substance abuse providers;
- Technology assistance for providers throughout the state;
- Training and technical assistance on appropriate delivery of services for providers throughout the state; and
- Stipends for family and consumer participation.

The four goals of the Action Plan, guiding the implementation of this grant, will lead to a long-term, sustainable approach to providing services. The goals include developing a long-term governance structure, establishing a technical assistance and education center that partners with a statewide network of competent providers, developing standards for providing services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals, and establishing and engaging a network of consumer and family leaders.

Work is already underway to advertise for the Project Coordinator position. Keep your eyes peeled for our job announcement!

Petition for Captioning Access

By: Brenda Parrish-Nowicki

The 21st Century Communication and Video Accessibility Act did NOT pass in Congress in 2008. The bill is back and we need your support in signing the petition and helping to spread the word. Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) reintroduced legislation on June 26, 2009 for individuals with disabilities to have access for the Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2009 (H.R. 3101). This bill is referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. We, at Hands & Voices, support the legislative and regulatory proposals of the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT) to ensure full access by people with disabilities to evolving high speed broadband, wireless, and Internet communication and electronic technologies.

We support COAT's efforts to enact the Twenty-first Century Telecommunications and Video Accessibility Act and other laws and policies that will ensure our equality to telecommunications, the Internet, and television programming! Please go to <http://www.coataccess.org/node/add/petition> and show your support.

You can also visit <http://www.coataccess.org/node/4011> to find out more on this bill and to contact your local representatives and senators.

Please look in the next issue of H&V Communicator for the full story. To become a member of Hands & Voices visit us at: <http://www.handsandvoices.org/>

Upcoming Broadway Shows

Submitted for DCPA by Debbie Mohney, Hearing Loss Association of America, Colorado State Coordinator

The following Broadway shows are open captioned through the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA). The dates and theater information is below.

The box office is: 303-893-4100 and patrons would need to request seats in the captioned area for shows. If they buy online with the above code seats in those areas would be selected automatically.

Half price information if available is in each listing below: Half price tickets available (except for Wicked)! Call 303-893-4100 or buy online at www.denvercenter.org using promo code OCAP.

WICKED

The Buell Theatre • October 7 - November 15, 2009
Open Captioning: December 15, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Back in Denver for a third time by “Popular” demand, The New York Times calls Wicked “Broadway’s biggest blockbuster.” In the show’s first two engagements here since 2005, it has broken box office records and sold out in record time. Winner of 20 major awards, including a Grammy and three Tony Awards, Wicked “deserves the passion it inspires” (Rocky Mountain News).

Long before that girl from Kansas arrives in Munchkinland, two girls meet in the land of Oz. One — born with emerald green skin — is smart, fiery and misunderstood. The other is beautiful, ambitious and very popular. How these two grow to become the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good Witch makes for “the most complete and completely satisfying new musical in a long time” (USA Today).

Spring Awakening

The Buell Theatre • December 1-13, 2009
Open Captioning: December 13, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Half price tickets available! Call 303-893-4100 or buy online at www.denvercenter.org using promo code OCAP.

Broadway’s most talked about new musical is now the biggest Tony Award-winner in years. Spring Awakening is the groundbreaking fusion of morality, sexuality and rock & roll that has awakened Broadway like no other musical in recent memory.

Winner of eight Tony Awards including Best Musical, Spring Awakening celebrates the unforgettable journey from youth to adulthood with a power, a poignancy and a passion you will never forget. We agree with The New York Times: “Broadway may never be the same again!”

Little House on the Prairie starring Melissa Gilbert as “Ma”

The Buell Theatre • December 15-27, 2009
Open Captioning: December 27, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Half price tickets available! Call 303-893-4100 or buy online at www.denvercenter.org using promo code OCAP.

For more than 75 years, Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House on the Prairie books have enthralled children with the stories of pioneer America. The beloved television series, starring Melissa Gilbert as Laura, made the Ingalls family part of our own.

Now, this American classic is about to take on a brand new frontier, as the wonderfully inspiring experiences of this pioneer family come to life in Little House on the Prairie, The Musical.

New General E-mail Address!

Please change your e-mail address book with the Commission's new general e-mail address: email.ccdhh@state.co.us. The Commission's former general e-mail address: deaf.commission@state.co.us is no longer available.

Commission Meeting

The Commission's upcoming quarterly meeting will be held from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, 2009, at:

Harmony Library
4616 S. Shields
Fort Collins, CO 80526

See this link <http://www.poudrelibraries.org/locations/> for more information about Harmony Library.

An update about the community resource directory, SB 144 implementation plans, three-year strategic plan and other relevant issues will be presented and discussed at the meeting.

Refreshments and drinks will be served.

Come and visit with us!

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