



Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bulletin September 2012

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.

New TEDP Coordinator



JoAnne Hirsch is the new Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) Coordinator at the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

For more than 19 years, JoAnne worked for Business Wire, a global commercial press release distribution service. She was the Senior Client Services Representative in Los Angeles and Denver where she counseled thousands of clients and prospects from public and private companies on press release editing, writing, financial disclosure, search engine optimization (SEO) and data analysis. She also created and coordinated all local events, inviting media to speak on various topics that assisted the community, and represented the company at public relations and investor relations trade shows.

Prior to this, JoAnne worked as a marketing assistant for LA Parent Magazine, a newsroom coordinator for LA Daily News, an editorial assistant for Valley Magazine, a marketing assistant for California State University, Northridge's Public Affairs department and volunteered for various deaf and hard of hearing organizations, such as Tripod Open Caption Films and Deaf Arts Council.

JoAnne holds Bachelors degrees in both Journalism and Deaf Studies from California State University, Northridge.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, she and her husband moved to Colorado nine years ago and live in Highlands Ranch with their two Basset Hounds, Maggie and Hoss. They enjoy traveling with their dogs, including many road trips and camping excursions across Colorado, California, South Dakota and more, as well as taking on numerous home improvement projects including tiling, hardwood floor installation and landscaping.

Resolution on the Deaf Education

The Commissioners of the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing approved the following resolution at the June 7, 2012 meeting.



- WHEREAS the report of the Colorado deaf education reform task force, commissioned by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB), was published in 2002; AND
- WHEREAS this report, **A BLUEPRINT FOR CLOSING THE GAP**, details deficits in the Colorado deaf education system; AND
- WHEREAS this report, subtitled **Developing a statewide system of service improvements for students who are deaf and hard of hearing**, makes seven (7) recommended improvements; AND
- WHEREAS little to none of the seven (7) recommendations have been adopted, followed, or completed; AND
- WHEREAS there has been no known follow-up on the recommended pilot "regional programs" pre-K through 12 grade in Colorado, AND
- WHEREAS the administrative and leadership roles of CDE, the State Board of Education, and CSDB, pertaining to deaf education, are not clearly defined in the report; AND
- WHEREAS in order to be fiscally responsible and prudent, it is crucial that deaf education services (CSDB, school districts, autonomous and allied programs) in Colorado join forces to share resources and to nurture such services through creativity and collaboration; AND
- WHEREAS early hearing detection through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE, which identifies children as being deaf or hard of hearing), and intervention through the Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP, which provides technical assistance to parents of children so identified) are critical to such children's ability to succeed in school and to become life-long learners; AND

- WHEREAS much attention is given to “communication” and much use is made of the “communication-driven” phrase in the report due to language deprivation; AND
- WHEREAS a severe shortage, not only statewide but also nationwide, of educational interpreters for deaf and hard of hearing students is still an issue AND
- WHEREAS there is new and mounting concern about the quality (or, more precisely, the lack of quality and competence) among many educational interpreters, AND
- WHEREAS the continuing biggest concern in deaf education is the dismal achievement (liberally cited in the above report as being anywhere between third and fifth grade levels) in English language and literacy among deaf Americans (and Coloradans); AND
- WHEREAS this low English achievement level among deaf Coloradans does not reflect their actual individual intelligence and intellectual abilities (which fall within the normal range of the general population); AND
- WHEREAS scant attention is given in the report to the need for improved, increased, and intense English language and literacy instruction and use; AND
- WHEREAS American Sign Language is the natural language of many deaf children, but is not adequately represented in the curriculum nor in the proficiencies of educators and support personnel, AND
- WHEREAS there has been little if any or published "data collection" of the status of deaf education pre-K through 12th grade in Colorado, AND
- WHEREAS there is no known bona fide rigorous impartial monitoring and/or evaluation of education programs in Colorado, AND
- WHEREAS this report places deaf and hard of hearing students under one numerically-convenient catch-all term (i.e., D/HH); AND
- WHEREAS students who are deaf and hard of hearing are, in fact, two distinct populations with vastly discrete educational approaches and needs; AND
- WHEREAS education ranked highly in the 2010 CCDHH survey of needs –
#2, adult education and literacy;
#4, post-secondary education/college;
#7, pre-school/K-12 education); and
#8 (part one), early intervention programs –
out of 15 categories; AND

WHEREAS combining the above four critical needs under one heading, i.e., education, would place it as the top issue, the most pressing need, of deaf and hard of hearing children and adults; AND

WHEREAS deaf and hard of hearing Coloradans, having experienced first-hand the realities of being deaf or hard of hearing, are the true key “consultants” in advising of and addressing D/HH educational provisions and needs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH), that this Commission:

expresses its appreciation for all the hard work and good intentions of task force members who contributed to the above report;

supports the intentions inherent in that report;

affirms its strong commitment to the enhancement of and excellence in education of deaf and hard of hearing children and adults in Colorado,

regrets so little, if any, progress has been made since the publication of that report;

recognizes deaf students and hard of hearing students are, in fact, two distinct populations with vastly discrete educational approaches and needs;

believes that the Department of Public Health and Environment (which monitors the early hearing detection and intervention system) and CHIP are the key partners in jump starting education of deaf and hard of hearing children;

respectfully requests that the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) revisit and revive the recommendations first “blueprinted” in 2002;

strongly urges CDE and CSDB to invite CCDHH to institute a new task force;

further urges this task force to involve the grassroots deaf and hard of hearing communities in at least six (6) different locations of the state:

- Greeley/Fort Collins and the northeast,
- Colorado Springs/Pueblo and the southeast,
- Metro Denver, north of I-70,
- Metro Denver, south of I-70,
- Cortez/Durango and the southwest, and
- Grand Junction and the northwest;

calls upon this task force to come up with a workable blueprint, with clearly stated start and finish dates, for action by both administrators and providers in the Colorado deaf education system and the grassroots deaf and hard of hearing communities of Colorado;

emphasizes that it is not enough for Colorado to be good in educating our children – it is more important for us to strive to be better, and most important to aim to be the best; and

is fully aware that Time is of the essence.

Currently, the CCDHH staff and Commissioners don't have an immediate course of action; however, work to build support for re-visitation of the blueprint and implementation of the recommendations is underway.

For more information about this resolution or if you are interested in being part of this long-process, contact Cliff Moers, Administrator of CCDHH at cliff.moers@state.co.us or 720-949-7462 (VP/voice).

Gallaudet University Regional Center – Southwest Survey

To help Gallaudet University Regional Center (GURC) – Southwest, which is based in Austin, Texas at Austin Community College, better serve the state of Colorado with their resources, please participate in the survey at their website: <http://www.austincc.edu/swgurc/asl-esol.php>. Their survey is at the top right of the website.

Through the GURCs, Gallaudet University capitalizes on partnerships developed with the host institutions. Since 2011, the GURC at Austin Community College has helped to bring the mission of the university alive in the regions; by providing educational opportunities, professional development, information dissemination, building local and regional alliances and promoting excellence in academics for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. The Southwestern Region administered by GURC at Austin Community College is comprised of the following 8 states: AK, AZ, CO, LA, NM, OK, TX and UT.

The GURCs offer training workshops, technical assistance, and extension courses. The GURCs address the educational, transition, and professional development needs of deaf and hard of hearing people, their families, and the professionals who work with them.

The GURCs work within the Gallaudet University office of Regional and National Outreach. The GURCs coordinate many of their activities through various departments within Gallaudet and the [Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center](#) at Gallaudet University. To support the promotion of academic excellence the regional centers work with the Office of Enrollment Services which coordinates the Gallaudet University [Academic Bowl](#).

The GURCs connect and share resources between organizations, services and schools throughout the regions and Gallaudet University, enhancing opportunities for our target constituents.

Job Opening

The Mental Health Center of Denver has an opening for the American Sign Language Case Manager position. To apply, go to <http://mhcd.org/jobs/clinical-case-manager-i-asl-1471>.

Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting and community forum will be held at the Goodwill Industries of Denver. It will be held from **4 p.m. to 7 p.m.** on **Thursday, December 6, 2012**. The address is:

**6850 N. Federal Blvd.
Denver, CO 80221**

Our meeting notice and agenda are also posted at
<http://www.coloradodeafcommission.com/commission/agenda.aspx>.

The CCDHH meetings and forums are always open to the public. You are more than welcome to come and be part of the informative as well as interactive sessions.

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