

A summer of collaboration

This summer has been an exciting one for KCDHH and the deaf and hard of hearing community. In May we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the commission's founding. In July the Hearing Loss Association of America – Kentucky Chapters held its first-ever regional conference and we rolled out a new signaling package for



*Virginia L.
Moore
KCDHH
Executive
Director*

the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP), which you will read about later in this newsletter.

The commission is also in a transitional period as commission board member Amy Hatzel assumes the chair position previously held by Nina Coyer, who served on the board for nine years. We are grateful for Nina's leadership and her representation of the Kentucky Association of the Deaf, and we are excited about Amy's tenure as chair.

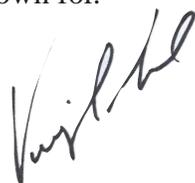
The events of the summer lead us to reflect on the importance of partnerships that we, as an agency, forge with other advocacy organizations. We were pleased to be invited to take part in the planning and execution of the very successful HLAA conference in Louisville. It is a reminder that sometimes the only thing standing in the way of moving a mountain is someone asking the question "what if we could

move a mountain?"

The key is collaboration. We accomplish great things when we work together. That is the theme of this year's Kentucky Association of the Deaf and Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf joint conference — "We Rise With Collaboration." This is the first time KAD and KYRID have held their conference jointly, and we anticipate that the collaborative effort will make both events better in the process.

These "meetings of the minds" are essential to progress, not just in our community of deaf and hard of hearing individuals, but in society at large.

Last spring in this space, I wrote on the theme "United we stand, divided we fall," the motto of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. This summer has been, and this fall will be, a prime example of how the deaf and hard of hearing community, through collaboration, planning and partnership, can exceed its own expectations. It's exciting to think about. Next summer we will present our 11th edition of DeaFestival Kentucky, perhaps the largest collaborative effort we are involved in. Two summers from now, Louisville will host the National Black Deaf Advocates biennial conference and our community in Kentucky will, no doubt, be called upon to help with that effort. And we will come together and welcome those conference attendees as not only members of the deaf and hard of hearing community, but as Kentuckians, full of warmth and hospitality that the Bluegrass State is known for.



Inside

Meet our two newest KCDHH staff members (page 2), check out photos from our 30th anniversary celebration and the Hearing Loss Association of America Kentucky Chapters inaugural conference (pages 4 and 5) and much MORE.

Commission Members**Amy Hatzel, Chair**

Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf President

David Bayersdorfer

Alexander Graham Bell Association Representative

Kelly L. Daniel

Kentucky Speech-Language Hearing Representative

Becky Bush

Parent Representative

Rebecca Crawford

AARP Representative

Jeannie Taylor

Hearing Loss Association of America Representative

Edie Ryan

Member At-Large

Barbie Harris

Kentucky Association of the Deaf Representative

John Horsley

Kentucky Association of the Deaf Representative

Thomas O. Zawacki

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Michelle Niehaus

Cabinet for Health & Family Services (designee)

Liz Agro

Service Provider Representative

Sharon White

President of Kentucky Association of the Deaf

Holly L. Evans

Kentucky Association of the Deaf Representative

Two new faces at KCDHH

This July, KCDHH welcomed two new staff members to the agency.

Jessica Endler came to KCDHH as the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Document Processing Specialist II after working in her family's restaurant and in medical coding with Robley Rex Veterans Administration Hospital. She graduated from Jefferson Community and Technical College with a certification in medical billing/coding.

Originally from Louisville, Jessica now lives in Shelbyville, with her fiancé and his three children, four cats and five fish. She also is a proud aunt to her firstborn nephew. She is proud that her life's journey has brought her to KCDHH.

Natasha joined KCDHH in July 2013 as Interpreter I after coming to the agency from Scott County Schools, where she worked as an interpreter as well.

A 2010 graduate of Eastern Kentucky University's interpreter training program, Natasha has honed her interpreting skills in a variety of settings, including K-12 and postsecondary education, medical and government.

Natasha lives in Georgetown and enjoys socializing and becoming invested in the local deaf community, traveling every chance she gets and widening her culinary palette by exploring the Lexington foodie scene.



Jessica Endler



Natasha May

Commission Staff

Virginia Moore, Executive Director

Anita Dowd, Executive Staff Advisor

Jessica Endler, Document Processing Specialist II

Rowena Holloway, Internal Policy Analyst III

Emily Kimbell, Information Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Natasha May, Interpreter I

Rachel Morgan, Executive Staff Interpreter

Tom Musgrave, Information Office Supervisor

Blake Noland, Executive Secretary II

Rachel Rodgers, Interpreter Referral Specialist

Jim Rivard, Network Analyst II

Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Information Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Wilma Wright, Administrative Specialist II

Cole Zulauf, Program Coordinator

Freemans make a splash in Bulgaria

When they were growing up, Kentucky brothers Kenneth and Edward Freeman were limited in the sports they could participate in because they used cochlear implants. Now that sport, competitive swimming, has opened the world for them.

The Lexington residents competed July 26-Aug. 4 on the international stage, representing Kentucky and the United States in the 2013 Deaflympics in Sofia, Bulgaria. The Freeman brothers were barely edged out of medaling in three of their competitive categories. Kenneth's relay team finished fourth in the 4 x 100-meter freestyle relay and the 4 x 100-meter medley relay and Edward's relay team finished fourth in the 4 x 100-meter freestyle relay.

Bulgaria was a world away from where they started out though.

As young boys, the Freeman brothers took to swimming like ducks to water. At ages 13 and 10, Kenneth and Edward, respectively, began competitive swimming on a recreation league team in Danville.

"They couldn't do contact sports because of their cochlear implants," said Patricia Freeman, the brothers' mother. "Swimming seemed a natural fit."

Kenneth is a sophomore mechanical engineering major at the University of Kentucky, and Edward, 16, is a senior at Lexington's Lafayette High School and attended Governor's Scholars in Morehead this summer. They lost their hearing at young ages. Kenneth became deaf when he was three years old

and wore hearing aids until he was six when his parents chose cochlear implant surgery for him. Edward started wearing hearing aids when he was two years old and, because Kenneth had taken so well to the implant, Edward received implants when he was five. The implants are made of ceramic, so they did not play contact sports.

Growing up, the Freemans benefitted from information and services available through the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Patricia Freeman said that learning about her boys' hearing loss was easier, knowing that the commission was there, with information about raising children with a hearing loss and advice on how to self-advocate for accessible communications and other rights guaranteed under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Patricia Freeman was eventually appointed as a KCDHH commissioner, serving from 2000 to 2012.

The Freeman brothers were two of six swimmers on the USA Deaf Sports Federation team competing in the Deaflympics. Olympian swimmer Marcus Titus coached



Kenneth Freeman, top, and Edward Freeman practice in Lexington for competition in the Deaflympics. The games were held July 26-Aug. 4 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

the team. Titus, who is the first deaf swimmer to make it into the Olympic Trials, gained fame in the deaf and hard of hearing community in the 2012 trials when he advocated for the use of hand signals to start a race. He finished eighth in the Olympic Trials in the 100-meter breast stroke.





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A World of Resources
First Regional Conference
Hearing Loss Association of America-
Kentucky Chapters



Sotonwa elected to NBDA leadership

KCDHH Information Program Coordinator Opeoluwa Sotonwa was elected Vice President of the National Black Deaf Advocates at that organization's biennial conference in New Orleans.

Sotonwa's responsibilities will include presiding over the NBDA bylaws committee. He also will run the youth arms of the organization, identifying and nurturing young leaders and exposing them to the organization's policy initiatives. Sotonwa will represent NBDA at selected events alongside President Patrick Robinson. Additionally, his role includes monitoring the NBDA's strategic plans, ensuring continuity with the organization's policy initiatives.

Kentucky will host the NBDA biennial conference in 2015, where its members will flock to Louisville, making Kentucky, and the River City, home to three major deaf and hard of hearing events four years in a row — the National Association of the Deaf Biennial Conference in 2012, the Hearing Loss Association of America - Kentucky Chapters



Opeoluwa Sotonwa, far right, with National Association of the Deaf Chief Executive Officer Howard Rosenblum, left, and attorney Claudia Gordon, the Obama Administration's new Public Engagement Advisor for the Disability Community.

Regional Conference in 2013, DeaFestival Kentucky in 2012 and 2014 and the NBDA Conference in 2015.

News around the state



From left, Jeannie Taylor, Donna Woods, Ron Haynes and Jean Haynes celebrate the recent promotion of the Bowling Green Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America from a chapter in formation to an active chapter.



Paducah Tilghman High School wrestler Zenon "Jay" Rodriguez, right, accepts an award Lt. Col. Fred W. Bates of the Kentucky National Guard for being named to Tom Leach's 2012 All Resilient Team. Jay, who is deaf, began wrestling for Paducah Tilghman as a freshman, losing most of his matches. His sophomore year in the program, he improved to 32 wins and became a team leader and elite performer for the school's wrestling program, as well as mentoring younger wrestlers. Currently a senior, Jay also participates in the Paducah Tilghman JROTC program.

New TAP equipment promotes safety

The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) is rolling out a new advertising campaign to promote its Telecommunications Access Program (TAP), as well as new equipment that is available to Kentuckians.

Posters for the TAP campaign, titled "It's For You!", are being sent to audiology offices, health departments and other social service agencies across the state in

order to reach out to the 650,000 deaf and hard of hearing and speech impaired Kentuckians who are potential TAP applicants.

"TAP is an important service we provide at KCDHH," said the agency's Executive Director, Virginia L. Moore. "We want everyone who has a hearing loss to know that they can receive an amplified or captioned telephone or wireless devices and a signaler of their own choosing at no cost to them through this valuable program."

KCDHH is now offering a signaling device package to existing and new TAP applicants.

This package, which includes a smoke alarm, wireless vibrating pager, charger, bedshaking device and telephone transmitter, greatly improves the safety of a consumer within their own home.

"Whenever we go to town hall meetings or out into the communities of the commonwealth, our deaf and hard of hearing consumers consistently ask about access to personal safety devices like the ones we are now offering through TAP,"

Moore said. "We are very excited to be able to bring this equipment to our consumers, at no cost to them."

In order to participate in TAP, applicants must be legal Kentucky residents for at least one year, five years of age, and have been determined by a state licensed medical professional to be deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired or deaf-blind. In addition, applicants must verify that they have telephone or internet service already at their places of residence with a bill showing the applicant's name, address and phone number. Identification is accepted if that bill is in another person's name.

"The ability to communicate is a common denominator among all of us, including the deaf and hard of hearing and speech impaired," Moore said. "We have been fortunate to receive testimonials from many participants in TAP telling us how much their world has opened up and how they don't feel isolated anymore, simply because they have the right kind of communication device to accommodate their needs."

For more information, or to apply for TAP equipment, contact KCDHH at kcdhh.ky.gov or 800-372-2907.



IT'S FOR YOU!



KCDHH

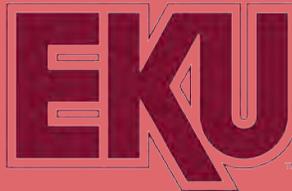
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We rise with collaboration!

**See you at the Kentucky Association of the Deaf and
Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
joint conference!**

Sept. 12-14 at Eastern Kentucky University

For more information, visit www.kydeaf.org