



# Communicator

Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community of Kentucky

## Calendar

**December 30 & January 2**  
KCDHH Closed for Holiday

**December 31**  
New Year's Eve

**January**  
National Braille Literacy Month

**January 1**  
New Year's Day

**January 16**  
MLKing's Birthday-KCDHH Closed

**January 27**  
KCDHH Commission Board Meeting  
1 p.m.-4 p.m., Transportation Cabinet

**February**  
American Heart Month

**February 2**  
Groundhog Day

**February 14**  
Valentine's Day

**February 20**  
President's Day

**March**  
Kidney Disease Awareness Month

**March 12**  
Daylight Savings Time Begins

**March 17**  
St. Patrick's Day

**April 1**  
April Fool's Day

**April 14**  
Good Friday

### For KCDHH

## Choosing to Make a Postive Difference



Amy Hatzel  
Commission Chair

*"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."*

— Jane Goodall

As 2016 comes to a close, like many of you, I am taking time to look back over the events of this year and I have to ask myself whether or not the difference I made is the difference I wanted to make when the New Year began. It's true what Jane Goodall said, our impact IS a choice. We can choose to be a positive influence or a negative one, or we can sit it out and strive to make no influence at all in the world. Last year, I set out to make a positive difference by giving my all to my students, my colleagues, and my community whenever and wherever I had the chance. Although I fell short at times, overall, I feel like it has been a very good year. Most of the success in reaching this personal goal has come through the work I am privileged to do for you as a Commissioner. KCDHH activities and events throughout the year have provided many opportunities for all of us to choose to make a difference.

Perhaps no other KCDHH event has as much positive influence and potential for impact as DeaFestival. Reaching an ever-broadening demographic, the importance of sharing ideas and beauty through visual and performing arts is immeasurable. Every two years, the board and staff choose to produce this event, knowing that it requires many more hours than it seems possible to give. They choose to move onward, knowing the challenges and pitfalls, the successes and disappointments they will face along the way because they also know how many lives will be affected, empowered, encouraged, by their efforts...KCDHH chooses to make a positive difference. I saw it again this year, as a student wrote:

*"DeaFestival was a lot of things to me. There were a lot of good memories there. When I was there, it felt like people understood me and I didn't feel alone. When I was at DeaFestival, I was learning signs and meeting new people. DeaFestival was just a lovely place to be.*

*There are no true words that can explain how I truly feel."*

This student is hard of hearing. She had never been involved in the Deaf community before, so DeaFestival was her first experience. She returned home feeling inspired, validated, and free to accept herself. I was moved to tears when I read her letter. What I have come to realize in my reflection on this moment is that for it to have ever been possible, every staff member, every commissioner, every artist, and exhibitor had to make a choice to commit to the overall success

See Choosing, Pg. 3

## Commission Members:

### **Amy Hatzel, Chair**

Kentucky Registry of Interpreters  
for the Deaf Representative

### **Joy Kiser**

Alexander Graham Bell Association  
Representative

### **Kelly L. Daniel**

Kentucky Speech-Language Hearing  
Representative

### **George "Buzzy" Tunstall IV**

Parent Representative

### **Vacant**

AARP Representative

### **Jeannie Taylor**

Hearing Loss Association of America  
Representative

### **Edie Ryan**

Member At-Large

### **Barbie Harris**

Kentucky Association of the Deaf  
Representative

### **Gerry Gordon-Brown**

Kentucky Association of the Deaf  
Representative

### **Sec. Hal Heiner**

#### **(Buddy Hoskinson, Designee)**

Education and Workforce  
Development Cabinet

### **Sec. Vickie Yates Brown Glisson**

#### **(Michelle Niehaus, Designee)**

Cabinet for Health & Family Services

### **Holly O'Mary**

Service Provider Representative

### **Nina Coyer**

President  
Kentucky Association of the Deaf

### **Vacant**

Kentucky Association of the Deaf

## **KCDHH Longtime Employee Wilma Wright-Davies Retires**



**Wilma Wright-Davies**

When Wilma Wright-Davies transferred to KCDHH in 2000, she wondered what she had gotten herself into.

"I was looking to better my career," said Wright (known as Billie to her friends), "and knew very little about the deaf and hard of hearing culture. I was so impressed with what they (KCDHH) were doing and knew I wanted to be part of it. It's been a labor of love and where God meant for me to be."

Wright, from Lexington, has made her home in Frankfort with state government and will retire at the end of December after 30.7 years.

"Each and every day has been an eye-opening experience here (KCDHH)," said Wright. "From learning to communicate with staff and many of the people we serve to answering the phone and helping so many, especially the seniors."

Wright has worked with the Telecommunications Access Program providing landline and wireless equipment to Kentucky residents to make communication on the telephone more accessible. She has also been responsible for stocking eight demonstration cabinets across the state for Kentucky residents to stop in and test a variety of telephones. And if you call KCDHH, you probably talked to her on the phone.

Her next chapter, according to Wright, will be just as rewarding. "I'm going to focus on me and staying healthy and spending time with my husband and family," added Wright. With her husband Simeon retiring from state government next year, she says there is still much to see and do.

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### **Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

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#### **Staff**

Virginia Moore, Executive Director  
Tashina Crowe, Executive Secretary II  
Anita Dowd, Executive Staff Advisor  
Jessica Endler, Document Processing Specialist II  
Rowena Holloway, Internal Policy Analyst III  
Emily Kimbell, Information Coordinator for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing  
Natasha May, Interpreter I  
Rachel Morgan, Executive Staff Interpreter  
Blake Noland, Information Coordinator for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing  
Jayna Oakley, Information Office Supervisor  
Jim Rivard, Network Analyst II  
Rachel Rodgers, Interpreter Referral Specialist  
Wilma Wright, Administrative Specialist II  
Cole Zulauf, Program Coordinator

## **“Learn from Yesterday, Live for Today, Hope for Tomorrow”—Albert Einstein**



**Virginia L. Moore**  
**Executive Director**

KCDHH works towards bettering the lives of the deaf and hard of hearing from cradle to grave. As always, our work is driven

by the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community. As we approach the New Year, we thank 2016 for helping us reach today and to meeting the ongoing needs that will continue in 2017. This New Year brings hope for fresh beginnings and exciting new relationships and opportunities for the Commission and its communities. I've listed a few of the of the most recent issues and concerns below.

KCDHH has met with the new Commissioner of Education, Dr. Stephen L. Pruitt. He is dedicated and has made a commitment to the education of our K-12 children. The Kentucky Department of Education and KCDHH have also made a commitment to continue working together to improve education for mainstream students and Kentucky School for the Deaf students. KCDHH has already started discussions regarding the Deaf Child's Bill of Rights and Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K).

The use of interpreters is also

extremely important to the deaf and hard of hearing community. The need for effective communication affects every aspect of our life. During 2016, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), a national certifying body, posed a moratorium on providing certifications. This not only severely limited the number of newly certified interpreters, it has also put into question the validity of those already certified. KCDHH met with RID and the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) to ascertain correct information and to assure the validity of the National Interpreter Certification (NIC). KCDHH is working with the Licensure Board to assure our regulations are valid and will serve the needs of both the interpreters and deaf and hard of hearing population.

Throughout the nation, 2016 proved to be a challenge for law enforcement and deaf and hard of hearing citizens. Safety for both law enforcement and the community is also a concern for KCDHH and was the primary reason for the development of the Communication Visor Card several years ago. With this new national concern, the Kentucky Commissioner of Justice asked KCDHH to assist in developing policy and training for law enforcement officers. KCDHH is presently working with Gallaudet University, the Deaf Unit in Washington, DC, the Commissioner

of Justice and the Kentucky State Police to develop procedures for law enforcement officers during traffic stops, as well as general engagement with the community.

Through town hall meetings this year, KCDHH also discovered the continued frustration the community is feeling with regards to access to hospitals, doctor's offices, employment and social security offices, as well as other state offices. In order to better address this issue in 2017, KCDHH will be implementing a Regional Outreach Program. Once a month, KCDHH staff will be stationed in regional areas for up to three days to meet with hospitals and other local offices to advocate for access. Staff will also set up office time to meet with individuals to discuss advocacy needs.

With KCDHH's efforts of 2016 in the rearview mirror, we focus our attention on 2017 and the continued goals of empowering our deaf and hard of hearing citizens so that they can take ownership of the quality and direction of their lives. We ask that as our staff at KCDHH hopes to continue to inspire our deaf and hard of hearing citizens to make a meaningful difference in their communities, that you help us by continuing to let us know your needs. We look forward to working with you in 2017!

## **Choosing to Make a Postive Difference as a Volunteer**

**Continued from Pg. 1**

of the event. Every individual had to make the choice to go “all in,” to work together for a positive outcome. I am so thankful for the choices they made, aren't you?

As 2017 approaches, I hope each of you comes to realize that YOU have

this same choice to make. You have the opportunity to make Kentucky a place that is progressive, positive, and empowering for individuals who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Wherever you are, whatever you do, you can choose to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others. Every gesture, every step, no matter how

insignificant it may seem to you in the moment, has the potential for impact. So, in the New Year, I challenge you to make the choice to be a positive difference in the world. Strive for peace and prosperity for not only yourselves, but for your loved ones, neighbors, and friends. This is my New Year's wish for all of you.

*Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing Kentuckians*



**KCDHH**

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