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Steve Hamerdinger, Editor

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Signs of Mental Health

BAILEY DEAF UNIT OPENS FOR DAY PROGRAMMING

Bailey Deaf Unit opened for partial day programming for deaf and hard of hearing patients on May 1st culminating more than 2 and half years of planning and work by the Office of Deaf Services and Greil Psychiatric Hospital. Patients remain on the hearing units for evening activities, weekends and overnight.

The basic programming runs from 9:30 am to 12 noon Mondays - Friday. Group psychotherapy sessions, therapeutic activities, and psycho-educational classes are provided in the mornings by the Bailey Deaf Unit clinicians.

The topics of the morning program covers exercise, recreation in table games, relapse prevention, coping skills, conflict resolution, healthy eating, medication education, deaf/hearing culture, American Sign Language, and psychodrama.

BDU clinicians work as a treatment team for all of the deaf and hard of hearing patients. The team consists of a licensed clinical psychologist, licensed social worker, RN nurses, recreational activity therapist, communication specialist, and qualified mental health interpreters.

The patients participate in interdisciplinary assessments and in treatment planning meetings led by one of the 4 psychiatrists at Greil.



Communication Specialist, Mona Nealy conducts a class while Mental Health Worker, LaShawn Washington looks on

Deaf patients seem to look forward to going over to the Bailey Deaf Unit and have said they wish to stay there all day, instead of going back to hearing units for the afternoons, evenings, nights, and weekends.

Full 24/7 operations will begin when a full compliment of Mental Health Workers can be hired. Efforts continue with recruitment and training of necessary staff to run the program in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way. ✍

NEW REGIONAL COORDINATORS JOIN STAFF

The Office of Deaf Services has two new Regional Coordinators, filling vacancies in Region I and Region IV



*Wendy Lozynsky,
Coordinator Region I*

Wendy Lozynsky started her duties as the Deaf Services Coordinator Region I on April 3rd. She is based in Huntsville at the Mental Health Center of Madison County.

Wendy earned her Bachelors degree in Psychology from Gallaudet University (class of 1992) and her Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Tennessee in 1999. She did her field practice in Nashville, TN with Alcohol and Drug Council the first year and with Family & Children Services the second year of graduate school.

Wendy is also a veteran of the renowned Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people at the South Carolina with the Department of Mental Health where she did clinical work with clients in the Deaf Community.

With her husband, Mike, she relocated to North Carolina where she worked as a Psychosocial

Rehabilitation Social Worker with Wake County Mental Health in Raleigh, NC then as Regional Coordinator for Children Services with the Cumberland County Mental Health Center in Fayetteville, NC. After a hiatus of a little more than two years from work while raising her daughter, she is ready to continue her career.

A born Southerner who hails from Atlanta, GA, Wendy is married to her high school sweetheart, Mike. They have a darling two-year old daughter who's a carbon copy of her mother. Wendy is no stranger to Alabama, having lived here 12 years ago where she worked for AIDB with deaf children. She has many varied interests including rubberstamping, scrapbooking and spending time with her family. They especially love going to the mountains and the beach, making Alabama an ideal place to for them to live.



*Beth Metlay,
Coordinator Region IV*

Beth Anne Metlay began her duties as the Deaf Services Coordinator in Region IV (Southwest Alabama) on May 22nd. She will be working out of the Mobile Mental Health Center.

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**DEAF SERVICES
REGIONAL CENTERS**

Region 1: Northern Alabama

Wendy Lozynsky

Mental Health Center of
Madison County
4040 South Memorial Pkwy
Huntsville, AL 35802
(256) 533-1970 (Voice)
(256) 533-1922 (TTY)

Region 2: Central Alabama

Shannon Reese, Coordinator

J-B-S Mental Health Center
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-991-2212 (Voice)
205-991-2216 (TTY)

Region 3: Wiregrass Region

Liz Hill, Coordinator

Montgomery Area
Mental Health Authority
101 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36109
(334) 279-7830 (Voice)
(334) 271-2855 (TTY)

Region 4: Mobile

Beth Metlay Coordinator

Mobile Mental Health Center
5750B Southland Drive
Mobile, Alabama 36693
(251) 662-2226 (Voice)
(251) 661-5820 (TTY)
(251) 662 2249 (Fax)



A PARENT'S VIEW OF DEAF PROGRAMS

By Mindy Cheyne

Most people know that you can expect some ups and downs in life. However, they also expect to get right back up on their feet. Isn't this what we are taught from childhood...to get right back on that bike and keep pedaling? This is shockingly not the case for most people who have mental illness. Like most Americans, my husband and I had little knowledge about mental illness before it came knocking at our front door. We were soon to learn that adding deafness into the equation made the challenges we would face even more difficult.

We only thought we were prepared for what life had to offer us. We had both been raised in very loving and stable homes. I had some experience working with severely handicapped clients, some of whom were deaf. My husband and I had raised two teenage boys and yet our experiences failed to ready us for what would come. Our journey began when we decided to bring a young deaf woman, Kelly, into our home and family. We knew her history was riddled with trauma, abuse and neglect, however we had fallen in love with her sweet spirit and she pleaded to become part of our family. We wanted desperately to provide some normalcy in her life and we thought we could provide these things through a loving and stable home environment in which she had previously not had.

She was doing very well for a while and then our hopes and dreams for her all came crashing down. Her first crisis led to a hospital commitment. It broke our hearts leaving her at the hospital. We were in desperate need of finding more help than we ourselves or our area had been able

COMMUNICATING IS MORE THAN TALKING

Kelly Jo Cheyne recently participated in the *Creativity 2006 – Art in the Magic City* exhibit hosted by VSA Arts of Alabama. Four pieces of Kelly's artwork were on display at the exhibit and three of them sold. Kelly was able to earn almost \$150.00 for her artwork, and the final piece remains on display at the VSA Arts of Alabama studio in Birmingham, Alabama. Kelly was invited to an awards ceremony where she received a certificate of participation and Honorable Mention for her artwork "Outer Space". After the ceremony, Kelly and several of her guests were invited to a dinner in honor of all of the participants and winners.

In her biography attached to her artwork, Kelly shares this about herself: "I was born deaf in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1976. I have lived in Alabama since 1992. Since early childhood, I have experienced more than my share of emotional struggles which I am working hard to overcome. I also enjoy cats, astronomy, and love jewelry. My artwork not only gives me great joy, but provides me with yet another way to communicate."

We are so proud of the tremendous accomplishments Kelly has made in her artwork and applaud her willingness to share this talent with others. It is such a joy to see her talent recognized both materially and monetarily in the art community. We look forward to seeing more artwork from Kelly in the future.

to provide. There was no such thing as respite for a family with a deaf young adult who also had serious emotional issues. We were told she would only be in the hospital two weeks at most. We knew they didn't have appropriate services for the deaf and yet it was only two weeks. We thought they would surely find an appropriate placement for her. Two weeks turned into several years as we grieved and watched her mental state decline more. We kept hearing that changes were coming in our state because of the *Bailey vs. Sawyer* lawsuit. We tried to remain hopeful.

About three years ago in my search for knowledge and support I found the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). I was blessed to get in on the ground floor as we began a NAMI affiliate in Jacksonville, Alabama. I am currently vice president for this affiliate. They provide education, support and advocacy for the mentally ill and their families and friends. I have learned so much through NAMI and through NAMI's free Family-to-Family education course in which I am now trained to teach.

NAMI has been a tremendous source of information and support for me through this journey. I have become an advocate not only for Kelly, but for others suffering with these major brain disorders and their families.

The brain disorders of mental illness cross all boundaries of race, economic level gender and ethnicity. People with these disorders are not stupid, but the nature of the illness often leads them to believe they are

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RALSTON ASSUMES STATEWIDE PSYCHOLOGIST POST

Frances Ralston, Ph.D, has assumed the post of statewide Psychologist for Deaf Services, ODS Director Steve Hamerdinger announced at a recent staff meeting. Dr. Ralston had been the program director at the Bailey Deaf Unit since January 2005. The change means that Dr. Ralston will be responsible for assessment and testing for all deaf consumers receiving service through the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. "It's the job I really wanted way back when Deaf Services was first set up," Dr. Ralston said.



Dr. Frances Ralston

In addition to psychological testing, Dr. Ralston will be pursuing certification as a forensic examiner, adding an important dimension to the types of services available through ODS.

In addition to her work with out-patients, Dr. Ralston will also serve as the Psychologist for the Bailey Deaf Unit and will be responsible for treatment planning for all in-patients. She continues as Acting Program Director at the Bailey Deaf Unit until a permanent director is named.

Congratulations to Dr. Ralston. ✍

As I See It

By Steve Hamerdinger



A couple of months ago, the following item in the *Washington Post* caught my attention:

CLINTON, Ark. -- A deaf man was fatally shot after aiming a shotgun at authorities despite being given hand signals to lower his weapon, the sheriff said...

The sheriff said [Sammy E.] Thompson may have been suicidal, based on his behavior during the standoff and information provided by his wife, Brenda Thompson, who also is deaf. She said he had been drinking.

"He had mentioned to her ... that if he shot himself, he was afraid he wouldn't go to heaven," Bradley said. "He thought if he got someone else to do it, he'd still go to heaven."

Signaling? Was there an interpreter? Did the police actually have it together enough to realize that to de-escalate this situation would require someone who could communicate effectively? Alas, the Clinton Arkansas *Log Cabin Democratic* reported more the next day.

When he came back out on the porch, he shot in the air and was poking himself in the chest and making an X, Bradley said. The sheriff said that when he arrived at the house, he tried to communicate with Thompson.

"I was telling him to put the gun down. He'd say no," the sheriff said. "I pointed to the middle of the yard to meet me halfway without the gun."

Telling him? You mean as in talking to a hyped-up deaf man who had been drinking and expecting that somehow miraculously the person would understand? Implicit in this whole thing is that the communication breakdown is blamed on the deaf person.

It seems like this is your basic "suicide by cop" by a mentally ill deaf person. In March of 2001, the case of James Lavier made national headlines when he "threatened" police with an unloaded rifle. Traumatized by a history of sexual and physical abuse at the hands of school officials and despondent when the state of Maine turned a "deaf ear" to his plight and that of other deaf students who had suffered similar debasement, Lavier vowed to martyr himself to bring attention to the cause. Mental health workers pled with law enforcement officials to allow them to go inside the security perimeter to talk to him. They were rebuffed. Instead, the police played their assigned roles in this real-life passion play and killed Lavier.

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EVALUATORS TRAINED IN SIGNED COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

As part of its commitment to provide quality services which are culturally and linguistically appropriate, the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation hosted Sign Communication Proficiency Interview Rating training from Donna Gustina and June Reeves of Rochester, New York April 10 - 13.



"The Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI), is a conversational approach to sign language communication skills assessment which permits interview content to vary according to the job responsibilities, background, and interests of each person interviewed. The goal of the SCPI is to assess how well people are able to use sign language for their communication needs, and, as appropriate, to assist people in development of their sign language communication skills."

(From: A brief description of the sign communication proficiency interview (SCPI), Frank Caccamise & William Newell, February 2005.)

This training will allow members of the DMH team to offer evaluations for

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FOCUS ON THE TEAM



Teresa Crum

My name is Teresa Jester-Crum (aka as Tessy to many), and I work for Jefferson-Blount-St.Clair Mental Health Authority as the Home Coordinator for the group home in Gardendale. I started working for JBSMHA in November 2004 as a Mental Health

Worker for the night shift (4 pm to 12 am). I was promoted to Home Coordinator in April of 2005 (8 am to 4 pm) and have been working in that position ever since.

My job as a Home Coordinator is to make sure all paperwork is done on time, teach residents basic living skills such as budgeting, cooking, and personal hygiene. I also supervise all the mental health technicians (6) and make sure all shifts are covered when one is absent or sick. The residents are also taken to doctor appointments for any health check-ups and I make sure that they are being cared for in the best environment possible – and one that is linguistically appropriate. One of the job descriptions require that I be on call 24/7 for any crisis intervention and help staff out when emergencies arise.

I first learned about this job through a co-worker who was also a mental health worker at the same time I was applying for one. I was really motivated to learn more about mental illness and deaf people because I have always wanted to work with deaf people. So after years of being a stay-at-home mother, I decided that this was where I wanted to go so I applied for the job.

I attended Lakeview Elementary school until 4th grade then transferred to Alabama School for the Deaf. After graduations, I went on to Gallaudet College (later changed to University) where I majored in Psychology and got the opportunity to work with deaf students with special needs there. I received my Bachelors in 1983.

Upon graduating from Gallaudet, I worked at a medical lab as a Laboratory Technician for almost 6 years then worked as a letter machine sorter for Frederick Post Office in Maryland for 8 years. After moving to Greenwood, SC, I became a full-time mother for 7 years then moved to Birmingham, AL where I got the job with JBSMHA.

I am a divorced mother with 4 children: Bart 15, Sean 14, Tyler 12, and Chelsea 10. All of them are my pride and joy! I am involved with Greater Birmingham Association of the Deaf as their secretary for 4 years now and I also love beaches, traveling, spend spare time with my children. And I also was born to SHOP!

I've really learned a lot about working with Deaf Services and enjoy working under Ms. Malissa Cates who is the current Program Director for Deaf Services with JBSMHA. I just recently completed the SCPI training under ODS and look forward to being a rater.

WALTRIP WOWS CROWD AT BENEFIT, SHOCCO

Big Biff, Bertha Mae and Ms. Idiot came to town on May 5th and the result was laughter, education and whole lot of help for the fledgling "Friends of the Deaf Program" group. Vikee Waltrip, artist, comedienne, consumer, and survivor shared her talent and her life as a person living with mental illness with an enthusiastic crowd at the Alabama School for the Deaf's McFarlane Auditorium.



Bertha Mae (aka Vikee Waltrip) brings down the house with pithy observations at the Benefit for the Friends of the Deaf Unit

Between her humorous comedy sketches involving raunchy rednecks, wily women and embarrassing educators, Waltrip explained what it was like to be deaf and live with bi-polar disorder. In stirring and provocative terms she narrated her personal journey through mental illness from despair to hope.

"It is important that the deaf community understand that mental illness is common and



Waltrip explains her experiences as a deaf person living with mental illness at the Annual Consumer Conference at Shocco Springs

treatable," said Office of Deaf Services Director, Steve Hamerdinger. "Due to ignorance and lack of knowledge, the Deaf Community has long looked down on people with mental illness. We have to teach them that people living with mental illness can be productive citizens."

Ms Waltrip was also a plenary speaker at the annual Consumer Conference at Shocco Springs. The audience clearly identified with her experiences as described living with mental illness. She challenged the audience to realize that, while they can't recover from mental illness they can always be recovering.



Ms. Idiot, the clueless Deaf Education "teacher" gives Rann Gordon lessons on how to say the Pledge of Allegiance in "SEE"

NEW REGIONAL COORDINATORS JOIN STAFF

Beth graduated from the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Pittsburgh, Pa. Then she enrolled at National Technical Institute for the Deaf, one of the Rochester Institute of Technology nine colleges, majoring in social work. After graduating from RIT, she spent two years in Houston, Texas as a peer counselor for the Center of Independent living. She also worked with the Deaf/Blind program as a Life Skills instructor.

In 1983, she returned to Rochester, NY to work at DePaul Mental Health Services, as senior counselor for Deaf adults group home. She then worked at Hillside Children Center as a socio-therapist. Taking time out from full-time employment to raise her three children (Maxine, now 18, and twins Katharine and Robynne, now 16) she became active in the Deaf community, in a variety of roles. She is one of the co-founders of the Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Victims (ASADV) and worked with a team of trainers to provide training to advocate volunteers.

She received her Masters of Social Work from Syracuse University. While volunteering for ASADV, she also worked at Hillside Children Center as a social worker from 1999 to 2001. She liked to give presentations at various Deaf community groups. She was the community education coordinator and volunteer coordinator for ASADV. She also did free lance work as a relay interpreter for Deaf-Blind consumers and as an advocate for an elder consumers. ☺

ODS EXHIBITS AT ATLANTA'S DeafNation Expo

The Office of Deaf Services exhibited at the DeafNation Expo in Atlanta, Georgia on May 13th. More than 3,000 deaf people from all over the southeast attended and many of them stopped by the booth to ask about mental health services, mental illness and to find out about job opportunities in Alabama. A recurring comment was, "I wish we had services like this back home!"

While the main goal of attending was to recruit for the entry level jobs what are available at the Bailey Deaf Unit and in the deaf group homes, educating the community about mental illness and the need to reduce stigma was a close second. For many people, this is their first exposure to mental health services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Several people asked how a similar program could be started in other states.



Dr. Ralston talks to potential staff (we hope!)

Representing Deaf Services at the Expo were: Steve Hamerdinger, ODS Director; Shannon Reese, Region II Coordinator; Malissa Cates, Deaf Program Director at JBS; Dr. Frances Ralston, Psychologist; and, Charlene Crump, Mental Health Interpreter Coordinator.



Part of the crowd that hung around the booth all day. Hundreds of people stopped by

"It was a very successful day on many levels," said Steve Hamerdinger, ODS Director, "But I think the most satisfying was dispelling the myth that Alabama is a 'backward' state." ✍



Shannon Reese explains mental health services and ODS



Recruiting them young!

POSITIONS OPEN WITH DEAF SERVICES

OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES

INTERPRETER POSITIONS (2)

(See page 12)

THE BAILEY DEAF UNIT

The following positions are based at Greil Memorial Psychiatric Hospital, 2140 Upper Wetumpka Road, Montgomery, AL. 36107

BAILEY UNIT DIRECTOR

SALARY RANGE: 78 (\$42,458 - \$64,622)

QUALIFICATIONS Master's degree in counseling, social work, psychology or a similar related field. Considerable experience (48 months) related to the area of deaf services, including administrative or supervisory experience. Other job related education and/or experience may be substituted for all or part of these basic requirements upon approval of the Job Evaluation Committee.

MENTAL HEALTH WORKER

SALARY RANGE: 46 (\$16,502 - \$23,322)

QUALIFICATIONS: One year of college/post-secondary technical training and one year of experience in providing direct care or teacher aide services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals, preferably in mental health psychiatric hospital, group home, or nursing home. Other job-related education and/or experience may be substituted for all or part of these basic requirements upon approval of the Job Evaluation Committee.

For more information on any of these positions, or for application, please contact: Steve Hamerdinger Director
Office of Deaf Services
Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
100 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
Steve.Hamerdinger@mh.alabama.gov
(334) 353-4701 (TTY)
(334)353-4703 (Voice)

GROUP HOMES

Group homes in Birmingham and Mobile are always accepting applications for direct care staff. For more information, contact: Malissa Cates, Program Director
Jefferson-Blount-St. Clair Mental Health Authority
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-591-2212 (Voice)
205-591-2216 (TTY)
mcates@jbsmha.com

A PARENTS VIEW

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not sick. Many of them learn to manipulate their environment and avoid facing important issues in their lives. It is extremely important that few barriers be in the way of communication so that misinformation and confusion are less likely to occur.

We are very grateful for the changes that have occurred in Alabama's Mental Health Department related to deaf services. We and others are benefiting from these services. Kelly's last hospitalization was at Greil hospital where the deaf unit is being set up. Some of the staff for the deaf unit were already in place and able to work with her. It was a real blessing that she was able to work one-on-one with a psychologist, who is herself deaf, for treatment and she had full access to mental health trained interpreters. They were fluent in her mode of communication and were able to serve her in an environment that was more linguistically and culturally appropriate. I believe as a direct result of this environment, Kelly had a relatively short stay there. She improved enough to move into one of the states deaf group homes.

The group home's staff has been very dedicated and has worked diligently with her on important life skills. Kelly is participating in various community activities and recently participated in a local art exhibit and auction. She received honorable mention for one of the pieces she entered and she sold one piece. Way to Go! She has been in the home now approximately six months and we have renewed hope for her future. We believe that linguistically and culturally appropriate services have made a world of difference for our loved one. 

DONATION SPARKS NEW ART THERAPY PROGRAM

Through the generous donation of Jeff and Marie Gaskin, Jefferson-Blount-St. Clair Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority Deaf Services Program will establish the first art program designed specifically for deaf individuals. JBS MH/MR Authority will partner with VSA Arts of Alabama to provide art classes one hour per week for thirty weeks with a trained art therapist and licensed interpreter.

The classes will be open to all residents of the group homes and held at one of the 4 deaf group homes in Birmingham.



One of Kelly Cheyne's paintings

The Gaskins' donation has met all of the financial obligations necessary to fund this program as we develop it. Without the tender heart of Jeff and Marie Gaskin, this idea would still be nothing more than a dream.

Their love for the deaf community and generosity will impact the lives of deaf individuals for many years. It is our hope that VSA Arts of Alabama will be approved for future grant money to continue the program past the initial thirty weeks. However, if anyone is interested in making a tax deductible donation specifically to this cause, please contact Malissa Cates, Program Director of Deaf Services for JBS MH/MR Authority at mcates@jbsmha.com.

JAMES JONES "TAKES THE CAKE"

As part of Deaf Awareness Month, the Office of Deaf Services had a special contest where Mental Illness Division employees were challenged to solve a crossword puzzle where the clues were all deafness related. . The prize, for the person who completed it correctly first, was a chocolate raspberry trifle baked by MH interpreter Coordinator, Charlene Crump.

James Jones, who works with the Office of Consumer Relations, was the winner. "I know this puzzle and the desert took a lot of work by Charlene, a trait that appears to translate to all other areas of her life," he told us.



James Jones with his winnings

The puzzle was developed as part of ODS's outreach to the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Can you solve it? See page 11

As for the desert, James tells us, "The desert was beautiful and tasted great. I would have shared if it had not been the single serving size."

Thanks to Charlene who created the puzzle and baked the cake! If you think you get all the answers let us know! 

As I See It

Continued from Page 4

Lack of appropriate mental health services in Maine played a major role in the death of Lavier, and, I strongly suspect, in the death of Thompson. Even more critical, protocols for dealing with stand-off situations involving deaf people seem to never consider the fact that there will be no hope for peaceable resolution unless those plans include a negotiator who is fluent in American Sign Language.

Not all these situations end tragically. When a competent mental health worker who signs and knows how to de-escalate a crisis is allowed to intervene the results can be dramatic. Such was the case a few years ago in South Carolina. In a chillingly similar scenario the local SWAT team had surrounded a deaf consumer who was threatening to kill himself and anyone who came near. Instead of shooting, they asked a local crisis worker who was fluent in sign language to talk to the deaf person. Within 15 minutes the counselor and the client were sitting on the porch of the house, gun safely in the hands of the police and were debriefing the incident.

Crisis intervention such as this is the norm for hearing people suffering from a psychotic breakdown, but it is very unusual for a deaf person to have access to this. The result is that crisis intervention tends to be extremely traumatic, even when the methods used are not lethal. In the course of my work over the years I have heard of everything from nets to "gang-tackling", Tasers to tranquilizer darts being used. I have sat with families who poured their hearts out about the dilemma they faced when calling the police. They knew they had to call, but they knew also the loved one would be hurt in the

process. Intervention would be delayed until the last possible moment in hopes that maybe, somehow, the person with mental illness will "calm down" and confrontation averted. Sometimes, this happens. When it does not, however, the stage is set for an avoidable tragedy.

Alabama, thankfully, has not had a similar situation, although the potential is certainly there. Emergency services are not prepared to deal with a "Thompson-like" situation should it happen. ODS staff has, however, successfully prevented several incidents from developing into a full-blown crisis requiring SWAT team response. When a potentially violent situation involving a deaf consumer occurs in one of the Deaf Services group homes, successful de-escalation is likely. When it occurs outside those homes and away from the home base of Deaf Services staff, the situation could become more volatile.

This indicates a need to work closely with local law enforcement and emergency response officials to help them develop humane and appropriate protocols when responding to a deaf person with mental illness who is in need of psychiatric intervention. Deadly force as a solution to communication failure should not be an option. Nor should physically dangerous non-lethal force be used except in extreme situations. (See related story on page 10)

Too often when confronted with a unique situation people will revert to going "by the book." The book doesn't cover all situations. Being able to adapt, adjust, and improvise is important. Recognizing differences between how to intervene between deaf and hearing people is critical. **As I See It**, it's the only way to prevent deaf mentally ill people from committing "Suicide by Cop."

EVALUATORS TRAINED IN SIGNED COMMUNICATIONS PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

Continued from page 5

clinical staff working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations.

During April 10-13, staff members from the facility and community settings gathered to gain competencies in communication assessment. The training was well received and the presenters were quite impressed with the Department's effort. In order to achieve an appropriate cross section of the signing population, several individuals from the community were invited to participate in the evaluations and received SCPI evaluation scores at no cost.



June Reeves and Donna Gustina discuss rating with participants

The SCPI will provide a mechanism for mandating specific sign language requirements of all candidates who apply for employment within the mental health system and a map to future training needs. ✍



Reviewing practice tapes with the instructors

HUNTSVILLE POLICE, ODS STAFF RIDE TOGETHER TO LEARN MORE ABOUT POLICE WORK WITH MENTALLY ILL DEAF PEOPLE

*By Shannon Reese, Region II Coordinator
Dawn Marren, Region I Interpreter*

April 4, 2006 10:30 PM. I am sitting in a police car in Huntsville. Dawn Marren, Region I Staff Interpreter, and I are on a "ride along" with Huntsville Police K-9 Units. We wanted to learn more about them and hoped they can learn more about us. We also wanted to increase awareness about how to work with deaf and mentally ill individuals. Dawn and I split up, each of us riding with a different officer. I ride with Officer John Ware, and we are accompanied by his K-9 dog, Drago. Dawn's goes with Officer Scott Hudson, with his dog Loki. I converse with Officer Ware via a laptop.



Officers Scott Hudson (l) and John Ware (r) with Shannon Reese

Before Dawn and I started our rides, the officers talked about the K-9 program, and how the dogs are constantly being trained to keep their senses sharp. We were shown how Drago finds a small stash of marijuana in a van...an interesting experience! These two, very capable, dogs were bought in Europe and brought to America to be trained by these two officers. In return,

Dawn and I talk about how to work with deaf, mentally ill people so their actions will not be misunderstood as violent when they are not.



Officer Scott Hudson and Loki

Off we go...riding through crack neighborhoods, and now...a DUI stop! It seems the driver is under the influence. We are stopping and the driver is resisting arrest. Drago stands poised and ready to jump out and assist with the arrest if needed. Of course I sit and do not even attempt to pet Drago for fear of getting my hand bitten off! These dogs are not for petting purposes; they are trained for specific duties...such as sniffing for drugs or other items.

NAMI PRAISES AMH/MR'S DEAF SERVICES

"DMH/MR has also reached out in a progressive way to the deaf community, including training a number of interpreters on how to respond effectively to individuals with serious mental illness who are deaf."

From "Grading the States"
http://www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/Grading_the_States1/Alabama_Grades/Grading_the_States_2006_Alabama_-_Narrative.htm

Officers are faced with unpredictable criminal behaviors coupled with justifiable concerns for self-preservation. "Calls" are responded to and handled in a matter of moments. Hesitation or failure to act, can risk lives. In the case of deaf suspect, though, hesitation is needed to re-assess the situation, make adjustment to effectively address communication barriers, consider mental illness concerns, and modify de-escalation strategies. So much happens so fast and each decision may have grave consequences.

The K-9 officers had some experience in working with local deaf consumers and shared their difficulty in identifying if someone is Deaf or non-compliant. The officers asked if Dawn was on the dispatcher's list of interpreters. We look forward to getting started with deaf awareness trainings for police



Officer John Ware and Drago

departments this summer.

Yawn...it is now 3 AM. The ride-along has been an awesome experience and, I believe, a mutually educational one. We are happy to go home and sleep, knowing that these officers and their brave dogs are still on duty! ✍

THINK YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE?

All the answers to this puzzle are people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Good Luck!



Puzzle © Charlene Crump, 2006
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Across

- 1 Father of Sculpting/Michelangelo of the West(6)
- 4 Discovered Tantalum (7)
- 7 Father of American Horticulture (6)
- 8 Responsible for the Football Huddle (7)
- 11 Invented a way for Deaf people to use TTYs (10)
- 13 Invented the Hand Signals for Strikes and Balls in Baseball (3)
- 14 Creator of the Want Ads (7)
- 15 Father of Rocketry (11)
- 17 Invented the Bicycle Luggage Carrier Rack (4)
- 18 Invented the light bulb (6)
- 20 Discovered how cholesterol is synthesized in living cells (9)
- 21 Discovered the cause for Typhus (7)
- 23 Creator of the cartoon "Henry" (8)

Down

- 2 Developed a Method that was used in the Manufacture of Steel (9)
- 3 First to Apply Anthropology to the Study of Advanced Societies (8)
- 5 Invented Shorthand (5)
- 6 Developed accurate methods to measure the intensity of the of light emitted from stars (7)
- 9 Patented a device for holding an ironing table (5)
- 10 Her husband used dots and dashes to communicate with her (5)
- 12 Developed Vector Calculus (9)
- 16 Founder of the Girl Scouts of America (3)
- 19 Discovered the ionization of high voltage cables (8)
- 22 Father of the internet (4)

Answers Next Month!

NOTES AND NOTABLES

Margie Fulmer has joined the ODS Central office staff as the Unit's Administrative Assistant.

Region II Coordinator, **Liz Hill**, recently received her license as a Graduate Social Worker

Region IV Staff Interpreter, **Lee Stoutamire** received his Certification in Transliterating from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Christine Giancola, Bailey Deaf Unit Social Worker received her license as a Bachelor Social Worker.

Bailey Deaf Unit Staff Interpreter **Brian McKenny** presented, Mental Health Interpreting: Getting Your Foot in the Door" Chattanooga, TN, March 18th.

Pat Smartt of Birmingham successfully passed her examination for Qualified Mental Health Interpreter.

CURRENT QUALIFIED MENTAL HEALTH INTERPRETERS

Becoming a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter in Alabama requires a rigorous course of study, practice and examination that takes most people nearly a year to complete. More than 80 people have started the process and several are nearing completion. To date the following people have earned their QMHI certificate:

- Charlene Crump
- Sue Scott
- Nancy Hayes
- Brian McKenny
- Dee Johnston
- Debra Walker
- Angel Dahlgren
- Lisa Gould
- Diane Alumbaugh
- Jill Farmer
- Dawn Marren
- Wendy Darling
- Pat Smartt

MENTAL HEALTH Interpreter Institute



SEPTEMBER 12-17, 2006

A 40 - hour course designed to provide a sound basis for interpreters to work effectively in mental health settings as part of a professional team. The course includes: Medical and mental health systems and culture, Sources of communication breakdown associated with mental illness and treatment, Interpreters' roles, tools, and resources, Severe language dysfluency and Visual Gestural Communication, Psychiatric emergencies, Support groups and Community Mental Health Services, and Demand-Control Theory applied to mental health interpreting.

PRESENTERS INCLUDE:

Bob Pollard, Robyn Dean, Roger Williams,
Steve Hamerding, Charlene Crump, Brian McKenny, et. al.

COST OF TRAINING:

In-State: \$50 Out of State: \$100

Interpreter Institute Alumni—Contact us for special rates.

Cost is for the full training and includes the text

Mental Health Interpreting: A Mentored Curriculum by Bob Pollard.

A minimum of 4.0 CES will be offered for the training.

OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES

Because deafness or hearing loss pose their own challenges in coping with risk factors and accessing and receiving treatment services, the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation has established an Office of Deaf Services to break down the barriers that inhibit the department in its mission to enable Alabamians to live in recovery.

Workshop Applications may be downloaded at

<http://www.mh.state.al.us/admin/downloads/DeafServices/MHIOT%20Brochure.pdf>

Online Article Discussions

Monthly discussion of research articles relating to Deafness and/or interpreting and Mental Health.

Pre-registration required.

Continuing Education Credit Offered

<http://jsu.blackboard.com>

List Servs

www.yahogroups.com

To keep you informed of important news and events in mental health and deafness we operate:

ALMHI

Mental Health Interpreters

ALDMH

Deaf and Mental Health Issues

TERPINFO

General Interpreter Information
Alabama

Mental Health Interpreter Positions in Alabama

Salary Range: \$33,241 - \$50,395

The Office of Deaf Services has several mental health interpreter positions available. A combination of training and experience equivalent to a two-year degree plus three years of full-time experience interpreting in a variety of different settings. Must be licensed or eligible for license by the Alabama Licensure Board of Interpreters and Transliterators. Must be certified or eligible to receive certification as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter or its equivalent. Qualified MH Interpreter Certification must be obtained within 24 months of hiring date.

<http://www.mh.state.al.us/admin/downloads/ApplicationForEmploymentExemptClassification.pdf>



Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

P.O. Box 301410

Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Office of Deaf Services