



Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS

—supporting families with kids who have hearing loss—

JUNE 2007

Call me!

Videophones make it easy for signing kids to make calls

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator

Helen Keller once said that blindness cut her off from things, but deafness cut her off from people. She pointed out that the biggest challenge for people who have hearing loss is communicating with other people. Fortunately for our kids, technology is helping bridge this communication gap. One of the coolest technological advancements for our kids is the development of videophones and video relay service (VRS).

Deaf adults often tell stories from their past about relying on friends and family to make telephone calls for them. When teletypewriters (TTYs) were invented in the '60s, people with hearing loss had the freedom to place calls directly to another person who also had a TTY. Conversations were typed back and forth. Many people with hearing loss still make calls on TTYs or use a relay service to make calls to people who don't have a TTY. But, for very young children without reading and writing skills, TTYs offer no help. Even older children often do not have the typing skills to make calls run smoothly. Now, thanks to the development of videophones, kids who sign can converse with friends and family pretty much on their own.

Tanya Miller from CSDVRS explained how the videophones and VRS work:

"When two video users actually view each other through a videophone or web-cam and can speak directly with each other without using a Video Interpreter, this type of call is called a 'Point to Point' call," Tanya said. "When a video user (such as a deaf or hard of hearing person) connects to VRS, a... Video Interpreter (VI) will dial out to a hearing person's telephone. The VI will relay the conversation between the two parties. As the deaf person signs, the VI will voice to the hearing user. When the hearing person speaks, the deaf person can view the VI sign what is being said by the hearing person."

This works the other way, too, of

course. A hearing person can initiate the call to a person with hearing loss. If that person is not home, the VI can leave a Video Mail message that is recorded and emailed to the person with hearing loss, or the VI can send a text message.

CSDVRS offers Voice Carry Over services for children and adults who prefer to speak directly to the hearing caller. The VI may use sign language and lip movements so the video user can benefit from lip-reading the interpreter. This is especially helpful for children who use oral communication or who have cochlear implants but still need some support to access telephone calls. One nice touch is that the interpreters will adapt to the signing style of the child, added Diana Lewis of Sorenson Communications. Diana also offered more insight on how VRS works.

"There is no charge for the phone, as long as this is the only videophone in the home," she explained. "The Relay service is also free, as well as installation, training and support. All that is needed is a high-speed Internet connection. You can either use a TV and a videophone or a computer and a web cam. There are no minimum age requirements, and the phone has to be installed in the home of the child's legal guardian." So, what are the benefits of having a videophone available for your child?

"This was a very good experience," said Rachelle Erickson who had a Sorenson videophone installed for her daughter, Shay. "The whole process took 2 weeks from ordering it online to having it set up. There's no charge, which means I have more money for other expenses. But the best part is that my daughter can talk to her friends easily. She giggles and gets to see her friend giggling on the other end. Hearing people hear emotion in the other person's tone of voice. My daughter can see their emotions."

"I really love it," Shay added. "I really enjoy seeing my friends' faces so I know how they feel when I talk to them." Shay

See Page 4 for a list of local VRS providers.

has used it constantly, and the phone rings off the hook at their house.

"It's an awesome way to communicate," Rachelle said. "Kids with hearing loss deserve just as much of a chance to communicate as hearing kids. I just feel bad that more parents haven't heard of it."

Sorenson installer and trainer, Wayne Faggot, could not agree more,

"When I was growing up, if I wanted to talk to a friend, I had to get on my bike and pedal across town," Wayne said. "Today, kids have it easy because they can just use this technology. It's much easier now."

To get an idea of the way VRS works, you can go to Sorenson's website (www.sorensonvrs.com) where you'll find a video showing a deaf child chatting with her hearing grandparents using VRS. Diana said that many of the kids who use VRS are children at residential schools for the deaf who use the service to stay in better contact with their hearing family members during the school week. These kids also use VRS or their own videophones when they're home on weekends and summer breaks to keep in touch with classmates who are scattered over a large geographic area. Diana also sees the potential use of VRS in the classroom where students could order their own pizza for school parties or schedule their own interviews with prospective colleges.

Diana pointed out how with VRS a signing student can have an advantage over a hearing peer in some cases. By using a trilingual VRS video interpreter, a signing student could contact a caller who speaks only Spanish and have the VI translate the student's American Sign Language into spoken Spanish.

As for advancements on the horizon for this technology, both CSDVRS and Sorenson hinted they'll be making VRS available for wireless phones. Group conversations or teleconferencing capabilities also are close to being released. Technological advancements like these continue to give our children better access to our community and greater opportunity for independence.

Here's What's Happening Around Town

Wednesday,
June 13

St. Paul Saints D/HH Day at Midway Stadium in St. Paul starts at 7:05 p.m. when the Saints take on the Lincoln Saltdogs. The \$15 package includes a Saints Hat, reserved ticket, hot dog and soda voucher. Tailgating prior to the game starts at 4 p.m. Gates open at 6 p.m. National Anthem and 7th Inning Stretch will be signed. Interpreters will be in front of seating section G. Order tickets online at SAINTSGROUPS.COM (enter 'hh' as the password). For more information, call Jack at 651-644-6659 or email jweatherman@saintsbaseball.com.

Tuesday,
June 19

Practice Cue Clutch meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Java Jacks, 818 W. 46th St. in Minneapolis. Contact Katherine Burns-Christenson at 952-929-3965 or e-mail kbc29@aol.com.

Wednesday,
June 20

St. Paul Public Library's 125th Anniversary celebration at Merriam Park Library featuring Bill the Juggler will be ASL-interpreted. The celebration begins at 1:45 p.m. with a parade around the library, 1831 Marshall Ave.

Tuesdays in July

The Merriam Park Branch Library in St. Paul hosts ASL-interpreted performances beginning July 10 at 1831 Marshall Ave. See Page 5 for details.

Saturday,
July 14

The 17th Biennial Miss Deaf Minnesota Pageant takes place at Minneapolis Community & Technical College's Whitney Fine Arts Theatre, 1501 Hennepin Ave. (www.minneapolis.edu). Tickets are \$35 + \$2.50 for parking. For a flyer with details about the event, see www.minndeaf.org.

Saturday,
July 14

The Cued Speech Association of Minnesota sponsors **Cue at the Zoo** at Como Park Zoo in St. Paul. A transliterator will cue the 11:30 a.m. Sparky show. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy after the show. For more information contact Katherine Burns-Christenson at 952-929-3965 or e-mail kbc29@aol.com.

Saturday,
July 21

Mounds View Community Theatre presents "Oklahoma!" at 7:30 p.m. at Irondale High School, 2425 Long Lake Road in New Brighton. An ASL interpreter will be provided if requested at least two weeks in advance. Tickets will be reduced to \$7 for ASL patron plus one companion. To request this service and order tickets call 651-638-2139, email gosemvct.org or go to www.mvct.org.

Monday,
Aug. 13

Northern Voices' 6th Annual Charity Golf Tournament and Silent Auction takes place at St. Croix National Golf Course in Somerset, Wis. Registration forms are online at www.northernvoices.org, or call Erin at 651-639-2535.

Thursday,
Aug. 16

Join us for our annual Family Picnic from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at Como Park Midway Pavilion South (Midway Parkway and Horton Ave. in St. Paul). We provide dinner at 5:30 p.m. followed by games and fun. This year, magician Norm Barnhart entertains our families. We also have loads of door prizes from generous supporters. Please RSVP by Monday, Aug. 13 to fsc@lifetrackresources.org or call 651-265-2435 (v) or 651-265-2379 (tty).



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Ask for VSA discount!

The Student Prince

Friday, June 15, 8 p.m.
Concordia University, 312 N. Hamline Ave., St. Paul; www.skylarkopera.org

Grease

Saturday, June 16, 7:30 p.m.
Osseo High School, 317 2nd Ave. NW; 763-391-2787; www.crossplayers.org

You Can't Take It With You

Saturday, June 23, 7:30 p.m.
Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road; 952-563-8587; www.bloomingtonartcenter.com

Chicago

Wednesday, July 11, 8 p.m.
Ordway Center, 345 Washington, St. Paul; 651-224-4222; www.ordway.org

The Prince & The Pauper

Sunday, July 15, 2 p.m.
Landmark Center, 75 W. 5th St., St. Paul; 651-225-9265; www.steppingstonetheatre.org

Les Miserables

Saturday, July 21, 1 p.m., lunch at 11 a.m.
Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, 501 W 78th St.; 952-934-1525; www.chanhassentheatres.com

Meet Me at the Fair

Saturday, July 21, 7 p.m.
Lakeshore Players, 4820 Stewart Ave, White Bear Lake; 651-429-5674; www.lakeshoreplayers.com

Honk!

Sunday, July 22, 2 p.m., & 10 a.m. July 25
Hopkins Center for the Arts, 1111 Mainstreet; 952-979-1111; www.stagestheatre.org

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Our mission is to build better lives for children who are deaf or hard of hearing by providing parent-to-parent support.

Newsletter Editor: Audrey Alwell

Information in this newsletter about events, services, or other organizations does not imply endorsement by the Family Support Connection or Lifetrack Resources.

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In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator

There is a lot to celebrate here at MN Hands & Voices. We are thrilled to see a mandate for Newborn Hearing Screening pass through the state Legislature. The future of children who are deaf or hard of hearing will undoubtedly be profoundly impacted by this move. As parents ourselves, we know first-hand how big a step this is. What's even more impressive is that all the other legislation—each one that was introduced—passed. This is amazing. So, heartfelt thanks go out to Mary Hartnett, her staff and the Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (MCDHH) and everyone who was involved in this effort. This is truly an historic year for our community.

MN Hands & Voices is celebrating that we, too, found support from the Legislature for our bill. We so appreciate the efforts of Senator Kathy Sharon and Representative Erin Murphy for sponsoring the bill, Capitol Hill Associates for the lobbying work, and Mary Hartnett/MCDHH again for working their magic. And, our deep appreciation goes out to all of you for the letters, phone calls, and testimonials. They made a difference. We are so pleased to see our "Guide By Your Side" program funded for the next two years. Our Parent Guides have worked so hard over the past year. We are excited to see the program continue.

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Our deep appreciation goes out to all of you for the letters, phone calls, and testimonials. They made a difference.

While we're talking about Parent Guides, we have a new Parent Guide for the Northeast Region. Curt Leitz from Duluth will be joining our team effective immediately. He'll be taking over for Kelly Tuomala, who will be staying on as an on-call Parent Guide for families in the northern part of that region. Curt brings a father's perspective to our group, which we are all looking forward to. Curt was able to join all of the Parent Guides at our Annual Training last month, which offered great information about resources and a chance for the Guides to get together and learn from the wisdom of Leeanne Seaver, Director of National Hands & Voices.

May has been a great month for collaboration. We were honored to be a part of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services' very successful Tech Expo on May 5th. Around a 130 people came to downtown St. Paul to learn about technology that makes life a lot easier for kids with hearing loss. Our hats are off to the DHHS staff for pulling this together. We also partnered with the Lions Children's Hearing Center to provide a workshop on Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome. The three presenters were informative and very clear in their explanations. We have electronic copies of their Power Point presentations for anyone who might be interested. We hope to be able to do another workshop like this on another topic. Stay tuned.

Legislature passes all DHH-related bills

All of the bills related to deaf and hard of hearing issues from the recent legislative session at the state Capitol have passed and been signed into law by the governor.

The bill to pay for Parent Guides through MN Hands & Voices to help families with babies who have hearing loss was passed with \$199,000 in funding (we asked for \$200,000). This will pay for trained Parent Guides to meet with parents and provide them with unbiased information about language, medical and educational choices. This bill was one of five related to Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI). The others cover newborn hearing screening, a hearing aid loaner bank for babies, a mentor program, and a statewide EHDI coordinator in the Department of Education.

"We convinced the legislators that Minnesota needed a hearing screening mandate—we were in the bottom five of states in the country in the identification of babies with hearing loss reporting them to the Department of Health," said Mary Hartnett of the Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf & Hard of Hearing Persons (MCDHH). "We now have a mandate and programs in place that will help families and babies flourish."

Minnesota's new Newborn Hearing Screening Mandate will ensure that all babies will be screened at birth for hearing loss, Hartnett said. An advisory council (selected by September) will help design the protocols to follow. The new Hearing Aid Loaner Bank will give babies immediate access to amplification. Loans will last an average of 7 months until permanent aids can be obtained. With funding for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Mentors program, families with babies with hearing loss can contract with a mentor trained through a national program who will teach sign in the home to the entire family if that is the communication choice of the parents. The Department of Education's new statewide EHDI coordinator will measure language development of babies with hearing loss, report the results to the families every six months and the aggregate data will be measured.

The Legislature also expanded hearing aid coverage to include all children birth through 21. Minnesota now has the strongest hearing aid bill in the country. Families with fully insured plans can get a hearing aid every three years for both ears with no cap on the amount of the hearing aid. The deductible for the aid cannot exceed that of the standard policy.

Several other bills related to hearing loss issues also passed. These include additional funding for Support Service Providers (SSPs) and Interveners for people who are deafblind, more money for MCDHH to continue and expand its work, a \$700,000 allocation to save Vector—a nationally recognized transition program for students 18-21—and, more funds to support Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf.

In addition, the Special Education Growth Rate was reinstated. The Department of Education estimated that school districts would get \$699 million less in funds by 2009 if this growth rate had not been put back in place. Another bill funds Deaf Cultural Health Workers to partner with health practitioners and educators to incorporate American Sign Language and other modes of communication into health literacy, education and advocacy. Finally, a bill passed that establishes a Health Care Interpreter Study on insurance coverage of spoken and sign language interpreters and competencies in the summer and fall of 2007.

MCDHH will be planning a celebration for everyone involved in lobbying for these bills. To help plan this event, for more about the new laws, or for addresses of Legislators to thank for their work, contact mary.hartnett@state.mn.us.

Service provides psychological testing

Lifetrack Resources' Greater Minnesota Assessment Service (GMAS) is taking applications for assessments and presentation requests for Fall 2007 through Spring 2008. GMAS provides communication-appropriate specialized psychological and social assessments, follow-up, school and family consultation and training to benefit children who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing, ages 0-21 who live outside the seven-county metro area.

Requests for services can be submitted by families, individuals over 18 years of age, school personnel, mental health professionals, court staff, doctors and social workers. Consulting licensed psychologists address issues related to mental health, behavior, childhood trauma, learning disabilities, cognitive development, daily living skills and transition. By traveling to an individual's hometown, the psychologists can connect with family members and community professionals involved with the individual's development.

GMAS is funded through a Minnesota State grant awarded to Lifetrack Resources by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division. Visit www.lifetrackresources.org/GMAS for more information regarding the program, to download the GMAS assessment application, to learn about the presentations or to add your agency or name to the email or mailing list. Or, contact GMAS toll-free at 1-866-840-0749 (v), 1-866-857-2379 (tty) or email GMAS@lifetrackresources.org.

Mental health council wants parent-advisor

The Minnesota State Advisory Council on Mental Health is looking for a parent of a child/adolescent who has emotional disturbance to serve on the council. This group meets on the first Thursday of the month (10 times a year) to advise the governor, Minnesota Legislature and state departments about policies, programs and services affecting adults with mental illnesses and children with emotional disturbances. Members are reimbursed for expenses and receive a per diem payment. For more information or to apply, contact Bruce Weinstock at Weinstock@state.mn.us or call 651-431-2249.



The View from Here

Southeast:

"**The Mystery of Irma Vep**," a play by the Commonweal Theatre, will have an ASL interpreter for the 2 p.m. performance Sunday, July 29. Tickets will be half the regular price of \$25 (\$6 with student half-price rate). Call 507-467-2525, 800-657-7025, or email tickets@commonwealtheatre.org. The performance will be at Saint Mane Theatre, 206 Parkway Ave. N. in downtown Lanesboro. For a description of the play, see www.commonwealtheatre.org.

Southwest:

A **lecture series on hearing loss** with Nancy Green of the River Valley Hearing Aid Center in Mankato takes place at Old Main Village June 11 and July 2. RSVP no later than five days in advance to 507-388-4200. The programs start at 1 p.m. in Old Main Village's Club Room.

East/West Central:

A **potluck picnic for families with kids who are deaf or hard of hearing** takes place Saturday, July 21 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Rice Park in Willmar. A balloon artist will teach kids how to make balloon animals. For more details, contact lisa.hennen@state.mn.us or 320-255-3690.

Upper Northwest:

The Trollwood Performing Arts School's performance of "Thoroughly Modern Millie" Friday, July 20 at 8:15 p.m. will have an ASL interpreter. The play will be in Trollwood Park, 200 Kandi Lane, Fargo. Tickets are available at Hornbacher's, at the gate or Fargo Stuff (www.fargostuff.com). For more information, call 701-241-4799 or go to www.trollwood.org.

Northeast:

We've just hired a new Parent Guide for your region! Curt Leitz from Duluth has joined our ranks. Kelly Tuomala will stay on in an on-call basis for families in the upper part of the region. To contact Curt, email CurtL@lifetrackresources.org.

FOCUS
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www.csdvrs.com

Video Relay Service Providers

The story on Page 1 explains how video relay service (VRS) works. Here are some local providers:

ATT: www.consumer.att.com/relay/

CSDVRS: www.csdvrs.com

Sorenson: www.sorensonvrs.com

Sprint: www.sprintvrs.com (webcam/PC users)
www.sprintvrs.tv (videophone/TV users)

Webinar looks at bilateral cochlear implants

Advanced Bionics, a cochlear implant manufacturer, will host a webinar (online seminar) June 13 on the latest in research on bilateral cochlear implantation. While the webinar is free, registration is required. To register, go to www.BionicEar.com/support/Harmonywebinars.asp. Past webinars are available at www.BionicEar.com.

Register now for golf classes

Register by June 29 for the second set of golf classes for kids 8-15 offered through CSD-MN and St. Paul Parks and Recreation.

The session runs July 9 - 11 from 8:45 to 10:15 a.m. at Highland Golf Course in St. Paul. Cost is \$15. Students can bring their own clubs or use those provided.

Another class runs July 30, Aug. 6 & 13 (same times) with register due by Friday, July 20.

For registration information, contact Mary Livingston at 651-266-6366 (v), 651-266-6378 (tty) or mary.livingston@ci.stpaul.mn.us or Jessalyn Frank at 651-487-8872 (tty) or jfrank@c-s-d.org.

Class helps parents be advocates

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities is taking applications through July 27 for parents to join Partners in Policy Making classes.

This is a 9-month, internationally known training program that teaches parents and self-advocates how to use advocacy to change the lives of people with disabilities. It is a leadership training program designed for adults with disabilities and for parents of young children with developmental disabilities.

Applications are online at www.mngts.org. For more details, contact Carol Schoeneck at 651-222-7409, x205 or email cschoeneck@mngts.org.

School holds golf fundraiser

Northern Voices, an oral school for the deaf located in Roseville, is looking for sponsors, players, volunteers and donors for the school's 6th annual golf tournament Aug. 13 at St. Croix National Golf Course in Somerset, Wis. The fundraiser will include a silent auction. To see how you can participate, go to www.northernvoices.org, email development@northernvoices.org or call Erin at 651-639-2535.



A Little Grin

By Candace Lindow-Davies

"Thrilled" isn't a strong enough word to describe how excited my son was about getting a videophone installed in our home. Thank goodness for Wayne Faggot, the installer who is one of the most patient adults I have ever met. He managed to hook up the equipment and train my son and me to use it, all while my son literally climbed over the top of him to help.

Once we had our videophone, my son quickly went through and gave each friend and family member a distinct light pattern (similar to a customized ring tone on a cell phone) Then he placed his first call. This was directly to a friend from school that also had a videophone in his home. Sitting back and seeing the two boys converse—getting a glimpse of life in their home, seeing a cat walk through the frame—was all very amusing. But, my favorite part was when the two boys started cooking up plans to get together. (You know how kids do that without thinking to consult the parents who are supposed to drive them around.) Well, into the scene popped an adult's hand—just a hand signing, "No. Not Sunday. Maybe Saturday? 3? OK." Then the hand disappeared. Just like that—play date set. Gotta love this technology!

Theater makes performances accessible to deaf, hard of hearing

The Guthrie Theater's performance of "1776," a musical tribute to American patriotism, will be accessible to patrons with hearing loss for two performances this summer. ASL-interpretation will be provided at the 7:30 p.m. shows on Friday, July 27, and Thursday, Aug. 16. The Aug. 16 show also will be captioned. Tickets for these shows have been reduced to \$17 (regularly \$27-\$57). To order tickets, call 612-377-2224 (v) or 612-377-6626 (tty) or go to www.guthrietheater.org/visit/the_building/access_services.

Documentary DVD, website available

The PBS documentary "Through Deaf Eyes" now is available on DVD and in book form. PBS also has expanded the companion website at www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes/ to include information about Deaf Culture. Topics include language, early 19th century deaf education, the first school for the deaf, the formation of the Deaf community, oral education, technology as a cultural force, and civil rights. The website also offers an extensive discussion guide and video clips from the documentary.

Camp offers ASL immersion

Campers and volunteer counselors can register now for Deaf Culture Camp of Minnesota, which will take place July 27 through Aug. 1 near Frederic, Wis., at Wilderness Fellowship Campground (www.wildernessfellowship.com).

The camp was set up four years ago so hearing campers can immerse themselves in ASL and Deaf Culture. Campers must be age 18 or older and have completed at least three levels of ASL. Cost is \$275. Volunteer counselors who are fluent in ASL receive free room and board.

To register for camp of learn more about it, see www.dccmn.org.

Library holds interpreted shows

The free summer program will be ASL-interpreted at 2 p.m. Tuesdays in July at Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. in St. Paul (across from Thompson Hall Deaf Club). Here's the schedule of entertainers:

- 10th—Schiffelly Puppets
- 17th—Storyteller Bob Gasch
- 24th—Big Fun Show
- 31st—Dakota Wild Animals

For details, call 651-642-0385 (v) or 651-298-4184 (tty).

Next month, we'll send out a combined July/August FOCUS. Please send information about events happening in July and all the way until school resumes. Send details to fsc@lifetrackresources.org.



Off the Shelf

By Laura Godfrey

As you look for great summer reading materials, please keep our resource library in mind. We have a whole collection of books for children packaged with reading tips and support materials from the national Shared Reading project. You can find these titles on our website. Just go to www.familysupportconnection.org, click on "Lending Library" and then search using the phrase "Shared Reading."

We also have a couple of other books I wanted to point out:

"Keys to Raising a Deaf Child," by Virginia Frazier-Maiwald and Lenore Williams provides advice and encouragement on helping children adapt to deafness. The authors emphasize ways to overcome problems so that the child interacts as a social and intellectual equal with children who can hear.

"Language Learning in Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing," by Susan Easterbrooks and Sharon Baker, is written for teachers, but offers insights for parents, too.

We also have a fairly recent (2000) video from a Discovery Channel documentary about cochlear implants called "Sounds of Silence."

To make a library request, go to www.familysupportconnection.org or call 651-265-2372 or 1-866-346-4543.

Parent Child Institute canceled

The Parent Child Institute that was scheduled for June 8-10 at Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf in Faribault has been canceled since only a few families registered for the weekend. The event was sponsored by the Minnesota departments of Health and Education, MSAD, and the Minnesota Resource Center for the Deaf/HH to help families with young children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

North Star Academy names new leader

Minnesota North Star Academy has chosen Kimberly Kause as the school's new Executive Director beginning in August.

Kause holds a Bachelor's degree in elementary education from Gallaudet University and a Master of Education degree in deaf education from Kent State University. She has been teaching at Metro Deaf School (MDS) in St. Paul, where she serves as a Team Leader. She also has taught ASL at Kent State and the University of Minnesota. She currently is a student at the Gallaudet Leadership Institute, studying for her Educational Specialist degree in change leadership, and expects to earn her principal's license from the University of Minnesota by Spring 2008.

North Star is a bilingual-bicultural charter high school primarily for students who are deaf, deafblind, or hard-of-hearing. The school recently completed its third year. For more about the school and the appointment of Kause, see www.mnnorthstaracademy.org.

Inventors develop automated Cued Speech system

Inventors in France are working on a virtual "talking head" that would cue what is being said on television. Guillaume Gibert, Gerard Bailly, Frederic Elisei, Denis Beautemps, and Remi Brun have been working on the ARTUS project for several years. The project has created a system that changes subtitles to French Cued Speech via an animated figure with hand and face gestures consistent with cueing. There's no word on when or if this system will be available to cuers in the U.S.

Cued Speech classes, camp set for summer

The Cued Speech Association of Minnesota (CSAM) will offer a weekend class in Cued American English July 28-29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Black Hawk Middle School in Eagan. A beginning class will introduce the handshapes and vowel placements. Participants will leave this class with an introduction to cueing single words, short phrases, and sentences. An intermediate skills class will sharpen skills and increase fluency.

CSAM offers several Play and Cue dates over the summer. CSAM also will sponsor Camp Cueing Aug. 3-5 with Cue S'more Night Aug. 4. For information about any of these events, email Katherine Burns-Christenson at KBC29@aol.com.

Conference looks at using both sign, Cued Speech

A CueSign Conference will take place July 12-15 at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, New York. The focus is on the dual-lingual deaf child, with educational workshops, activities for kids and opportunities for networking. For more information and registration, see www.cuesigncamp.com.

NTID hosts summer weekend camp for minorities

Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) hosts "Steps to Success," a summer career exploration mini-camp Aug. 3-5 for African-American, Latino, or Native American students with hearing loss entering 7th, 8th, or 9th grade in Fall 2007. Campers will learn more about their own interests, get ideas for future careers, and meet kids from all over the country. Parents, guardians, or teachers are encouraged to come along and take advantage of workshops and presentations that will help them support their young student through this time of transition. For registration information see www.rit.edu/NTID.

NTID brings together experts in deaf education

The National Science Foundation has awarded National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) a \$149,000 grant to host a conference June 21-22 on "Cognitive Underpinnings of Learning by Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students." The conference will feature experts from around the world and will focus on how deaf students learn in areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Oxford University Press will fast track production of a book highlighting contributions by presenters that will be available free to all conference participants. Information on the conference and the center can be found at www.ntid.rit.edu/CognitiveUnderpinnings.