



Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS

—supporting families with kids who have hearing loss—

OCTOBER 2007

Parents, teachers can help mainstreamed students succeed

For some students who are deaf or hard of hearing the least restrictive environment for learning is the regular (mainstream) classroom. While the mainstream setting may be the best placement academically, it often presents social challenges for a student with hearing loss. Accommodations such as an FM system, interpreter, transliterator or captioning can make it possible for the student to understand communication in class. But, these tools usually aren't available to help a student with hearing loss understand conversations in the lunch room, in the halls or on the playground—areas where students socialize with each other.

That doesn't mean students with hearing loss can't do well in a mainstream setting—they can. Having supportive family, friends and teachers, plus an education plan (such as an IEP, IFSP, or 504) that addresses social issues all can help a child with hearing loss succeed in the mainstream.

Since hearing loss is a "low-incidence" disability, a child who is deaf or hard of hearing often can be the only student with hearing loss attending a mainstream school. When the child first starts at a mainstream school, the other kids might never have seen anyone who is deaf or hard of hearing before. They might not have any idea what "hearing

loss" means or how to get along with a classmate who hears differently. It can make things easier for everyone if the class discusses the hearing loss openly at the start of the school year. Our Southeast Parent Guide, Amy Deneen, talked to her son's class when he started third grade at a new school.

"His teacher was great when we suggested that we talk to his class about hearing loss. She tied it into the story they were reading at the time," Amy said. Her son helped plan what they talked about, and volunteered to show the kids how to get his attention with a tap on the shoulder. During their presentation, he explained that "just because people don't hear very well doesn't mean they are dumb, or just because they don't acknowledge your 'hello' in the noisy hallway doesn't mean they are stuck up, that sort of thing," Amy said. "The kids were very receptive, but this was when they were younger. I imagine a high schooler trying to blend in may not want this to happen," she added.

It's true that the last thing most high school students would want is stand in front of a group to talk about what makes them different. Still, it can be helpful to have an in-service with teachers before the school year starts to answer questions about working with a student who has hearing loss. This can be done by the district's itinerant teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH teacher), and can include the parents and the student, depending on their preferences. If you want to ensure that an in-service like this happens for your child, be sure to include it on your child's education plan.

While an in-service helps teachers know how to get along with a student who has hearing loss, it doesn't reach the high school student's classmates and potential friends. As parents, we can't force other students to become friends with our kids. But, we can provide

opportunities for friendships to develop. School activities like clubs and sports often need volunteers. Volunteering can give us the chance to encourage our kids to become involved and make new friends. Doing an activity with other kids gives them something in common to talk about. And, sometimes having a parent participate helps a teen be more willing to join something, explained Jackie Niemand, a Stillwater psychologist whose clients include people with hearing loss. Jackie added that the responsibility for making friends really falls on the teen's shoulders.

"If the deaf or hard of hearing teenager can take the initiative and be persistent in working through communication barriers, they will most likely give themselves a better opportunity to 'fit in' and create some new friends in the process,"

she said. "The work of any teenager who 'wants in' to a new group is to make themselves interesting.... Talking to new people with comfort and confidence takes strength and the ability to persevere. When adding a language or communication difference in a teenage community, there is an additional potential challenge to be met here. For example, if hearing students are not able to adequately and easily communicate with deaf or hard of hearing students, there can be a tendency for the hearing student to not try, to not persist and to give up quickly and to go back to what's easy—their original friendship group. Being open, positive and persistent in teaching hearing peers signs and/or communication tactics creates an energized atmosphere for communication change to start to occur within a hearing group."

Even when a child with hearing loss is getting along well in a mainstream school, she still may need to have friends outside of school who have hearing loss, too.

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Hands & Voices' national website has an article about parents' rights and role in choosing a school placement for their child. See www.handsandvoices.org/needs/placement.htm. For other helpful articles on socialization and mainstreaming, go to www.handsandvoices.org, scroll over "Resources" and click on "Topics."

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See Tips for Teachers on Page 4
for more ideas to support
mainstreamed students.
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Here's What's Happening Around Town

- Sunday, Oct. 7** "Art Since 1950," a free, ASL-interpreted tour at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, begins at 1 p.m. in the Target Wing, third floor atrium. The museum is at 2400 Third Ave. S. "Georgia O'Keeffe: Circling Around Abstraction" will be the Nov. 4 interpreted tour at 1 p.m. A special exhibition admission will be charged. For details, see www.artsmia.org.
- Saturday, Oct. 13** **2007 DeafBlind Services and Technology Expo** runs from noon to 4 p.m. at the Mn. Dept. of Human Services' Elmer Andersen Building, 540 Cedar St. in St. Paul. Special presentation by Anindya Bhattacharyya, better known as "Bapin" from the Helen Keller National Center. For more information contact Paul Deeming at 612-362-8454 (v), 612-362-8422 (tty), 612-362-8433 VP, or email pauld@dbsm.org.
- Tuesday, Oct. 16** **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.
- Thursday, Oct. 18** Minnesota Hands & Voices' Coordinator, Candace Lindow-Davies, is among the presenters at the **6th Annual Midwest Auditory Oral Education Conference** from 7:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the University of Minnesota, Continuing Education and Conference Center. Download the registration form at www.northernvoices.org.
- Oct. 18 & 19** "Access: Where Inclusion Begins" is a conference put on by The Mainstream Center at Clarke School for the Deaf in Springfield, Mass. For details, see www.clarkeschool.org.
- Friday, Oct. 26** **DeafTeen Quest**, a youth group for teens with hearing loss, hosts an evening at Shafer Corn Maze near Taylor's Falls from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Cost is \$8, plus money for food. Meet at Cedar Valley Church, 8600 Bloomington Ave. S., in Bloomington. For a registration form email COHDeafOutreach@aol.com.
- Saturday, Oct. 27** Cued Speech Association of Minnesota's **Fall Festival offers family fun** from 1 to 3 p.m. at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, 5760 Portland Ave. S. in Minneapolis.
- Friday, Nov. 2** Apple Valley High School presents "**The Robber Bridegroom**," a musical about a man who saves the richest planter in the county from a nasty gang and wins his daughter's heart. An interpreter can be requested for the 7:30 p.m. performance by calling 952-431-8203 or 952-431-8737 (tty) at least 36 hours in advance. Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$7 for ages 62+ and \$5 for students.
- Friday, Nov. 2** **CSD-MN and Saint Paul Parks and Recreation offer swim time exclusively for families with members who are deaf or hard of hearing.** The pool at Arlington High School, 1495 Rice St. in St. Paul, opens from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Cost is \$4 for adults, \$3 for children 12 and under.
- Saturday, Nov. 3** **The Merriam Park Branch Library** (1831 Marshall Ave. in St. Paul) **hosts Sign Language Storytimes** at 10:30 a.m. with stories presented in ASL with voice interpretation. For more information, call 651-642-0385 (v) or 651-298-4184 (tty).
- Saturday, Nov. 10** **St. Paul/Minneapolis Black Deaf Advocates** host "**Endurance from the Past; Strength for the Future**" from 5 to 11:30 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown St. Paul. The black-tie affair costs \$35/person. RSVP by Oct. 26 to rannadutch@yahoo.com or k7wazza@aol.com.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Ask for the VSA discount.

The Seagull

Saturday, Oct. 13, 7 p.m.
Guthrie Theater, 818 2nd St. S., Minneapolis;
612-377-2224; www.guthrietheater.org.

The Best Haunted House Ever

Saturday, Oct. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Lyric Arts, 420 E. Main St., Anoka;
763-422-1838; www.lyricarts.org.

Whistle Down the Wind

Wednesday, Oct. 17, 8 p.m.
Ordway Center, 345 Washington, St. Paul;
651-224-4222; www.ordway.org.

Jane Eyre

Friday, Oct. 19 & Thursday, Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m.
Guthrie Theater, (see above)

Fashion 47

Friday, Oct. 19, 8 p.m.
Children's Theatre Co., 2400 3rd Ave. S., Mpls;
612-874-0400; www.childrenstheatre.org.

Alexander & The Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Friday, Oct. 26, 7:30 p.m.
Children's Theatre Co. (see above)

Agatha Christie's The Hollow

Sunday, Oct. 28, 2 p.m.
Bloomington Center, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road;
952-563-8587; www.bloomingtonartcenter.com.

Disney's The Lion King

Sunday, Nov 4, 1 p.m. & Saturday, Nov. 10 at 2
Historic Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin
Ave. S., Mpls; 612-373-5639; www.hennepin-theatredistrict.org/guestservices/aslad.

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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 Minnesota Hands & Voices or Lifetrack Resources.

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In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator

It's official—Minnesota Hands & Voices now is the name of our program. We have been a chapter of the national organization of Hands & Voices for quite a while, but we've been a bit slow to remove the name "Family Support Connection." I have been asked about this several times recently, and I did want to make it clear that Minnesota Hands & Voices is our official name. We will continue to be part of Lifetrack Resources, the umbrella non-profit organization where our state chapter is housed. They have been tremendously supportive of this program from the ground up. But, we do want to identify with National Hands & Voices. We encourage all our readers to visit the Hands & Voices website, www.handsandvoices.org, to benefit from all the information and resources they provide. We couldn't be more proud of our relationship with the National Hands & Voices leaders and the network of parents across the country.

You will see the Family Support Connection name start to disappear over time. However, being careful stewards of the money that comes to our program to offer parent to parent support, we are not going to use up a lot of resources by throwing out brochures and replacing them with new ones. So, please use up your stash of our tri-fold, lavender and black brochures. The Family Support Connection email and web address still work, but point you to:

mnhv@lifetrackresources.org
www.mnhandsandvoices.org

We are excited to be approaching our seventh year of providing support to families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We have seen much change over the past seven years and are eager to see that change continue to offer better opportunities and a brighter future for our children.

You will soon get a letter asking for your financial support for the work we do. We hope that you will strongly consider investing in our mission to provide all families with comprehensive information about the full range of choices for their child with hearing loss, and the belief that parent-to-parent support plays an integral role in the range of services families benefit from. I know my life has been so enriched by the wisdom of my fellow Parent Guides and the hundreds of parents I have had the pleasure to meet over the years. I believe my son has benefited tremendously from these connections. We hope that you and your child or the families you work with also have been helped either through this newsletter, from contact with our Parent Guides or by other means of support offered by Minnesota Hands & Voices. Your donations help us do the work we do.

Legislators hear testimony about need for better communication between deaf, police

Several members of the Deaf community in the Twin Cities testified last month before the Minnesota House Health and Human Services Committee about the need for better training for police in dealing with citizens who are deaf. The Minnesota Disability Law Center and Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing People also presented recommendations to improve relations between police and people who are deaf.

One of the people who testified was Doug Bahl, who had experienced firsthand the difficulties of trying to communicate with police during a traffic stop last November. Doug told legislators about his experience and how his efforts to inform the officer he is deaf were misunderstood. To ensure that other citizens who are deaf have an easier time communicating with police, the Minnesota Disability Law Center and Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing People made these recommendations:

- require the Public Safety and Corrections departments add to their intake forms if a person is deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind;
- have training with deaf, hard of hearing part of mandatory officer training;
- create a statewide public safety and corrections ombudsman on disability;
- create model policies and procedures for communication and accommodation for deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind at the state and local levels; and
- create a statute allowing deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind to communicate with officers in writing.

Rep. Shelley Madore (DFL-Apple Valley), the group's chair, said the issues would be addressed in the 2008 session.



The View from Here

Southwest:

Barnes & Noble in Mankato hosts **ASL Storytime with native American Sign Language storytellers on the first Saturday of the month** at 10 a.m.

East/West Central:

The Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative presents **"Parent Night, Meeting the Needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students"** Thursday, Oct. 11 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Brainerd's ALC All-Purpose room. Free light supper is provided. Key speaker is Dr. Ron Lybarger, a consulting psychologist with Lifetrack Resources' Greater Minnesota Assessment Service. RSVP by Oct. 10 to Kim. Huether@ISD181.org or call 454-5530.

The **Dads Retreat** scheduled for Oct. 12 - 13 in Brainerd has been canceled due to low registration. It might be rescheduled or changed to a couples retreat in the future.

Reason for Hope Retreat for families with kids who have special needs is Oct. 26 - 27 at the Best Western Americanna Inn in St. Cloud. See www.reasonforhoperetreat.org.

Mainstream...continued from Page 1

“I think it is very important for (deaf and) hard of hearing kids to establish a bond with others in the same boat,” AGBell mentor Lynne Voss said in our November 2004 *FOCUS*. “It boosts their confidence and self-esteem.” Other adults with hearing loss, who in general felt positive about their experience in mainstreamed education, have said they wished they could have had more opportunities to interact with others “like themselves.”

Having access to social time with other kids who have hearing loss can be written into a student’s education plan. One way to do this is to write a goal that allows the student to go on field trips or other social outings with deaf or hard of hearing students in the area—either from other mainstream schools or at schools for the deaf. The education plan also can have a goal to encourage friendships by offering a class or club to teach other students sign language or Cued English if a student uses one of those modes of communication.

Parents can help their kids make friends with others who have hearing loss by attending events offered by organizations like ours that serve people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We can help families connect with each other or help kids find peers they can do things with or chat with on the Internet.

When our kids in the mainstream get frustrated with miscommunication—and that happens even to well-adjusted kids—our job sometimes might not be to fix the problem, but just to let our kids express their frustration.

“Most of the time, just being heard and understood is so much more effective than getting help fixing the problem,” Jackie said. She advocates being a child’s “cheerleader,” acknowledging her frustration, but encouraging her that she has what it takes to face this challenge.

“When others have confidence in us, we have a tendency to do things even WE don’t think we can do,” Jackie added.

A recent issue of *Mainstream News*, a publication of Clarke School for the Deaf’s Mainstream Center, had this to say about success in the mainstream: “The success we’re talking about is not measured by academic performance alone. It is about a student’s ability to connect with others, to participate, to develop skills to manage his hearing loss, and to feel good about his place in the world as much as it is about his ability to manage academic expectations.”

Tips for Teachers:

Working with a student who is deaf or hard of hearing

Teachers have a huge impact on how a student and her classmates view her hearing loss. Here are some tips gathered from students, parents and other teachers to help you have a positive experience teaching a student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

- It can help both you and the student feel more comfortable working together in the classroom if you meet there once or twice before classes begin. When you work together to solve communication issues in the classroom, you’ll build rapport along with the student’s self-advocacy skills.
- If the student uses an interpreter, remember to look at the student, not the interpreter, during conversation. The student will need to look at the interpreter while you are talking, but should look back at you when answering. This can take some getting used to.
- Your attitude can influence how the student feels about using equipment (such as a sound-field system) that makes him obviously different from the other students. Being matter-of-fact about it, and making it a natural part of the daily routine will help all the students accept that this is just the way things are done in their classroom, and not give them reasons to tease him.
- During class discussions, identify the speaker so the student knows where to look. A teaching strategy that works well for all students is for you to repeat or restate what a student has said.
- If the student is engrossed in work, she might not notice you’ve started class again. To get everyone’s attention equally, flip the lights off and on.
- When you check if students (not just the one with hearing loss) are understanding a topic or an assignment, have them demonstrate their understanding by explaining it in their own words.
- Because it is impossible for a student who lipreads to see your face when you write on the board, consider making notes on an overhead projector. Then you’ll be facing the class while you talk and write. In that same vein, try not to roam around the room when you’re talking.
- By writing the day’s assignments on the board, you ensure that everyone sees them. Providing a syllabus and grading information in writing helps, too.
- If you correct homework as a group in class, you’ll make it easier for the student to follow along if you give him the answer key. It’s difficult for the student to both look down at his paper and watch you speak. The same is true with note-taking. In older grades, the student’s education plan may require a note-taker or having class notes provided by the teacher.

To learn more about the issues affecting your student who is deaf or hard of hearing, look over Hands & Voices’ booklet “Mainstreaming the Student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing.” To find it online, go to www.handsandvoices.org, scroll over “Resources” and click on “Downloadable Documents.” The booklet talks not only about how to make the classroom a better environment for listening, but also about the impact hearing loss has on a student’s self-esteem and social interactions.

The Mainstream Center at Clarke School for the Deaf in Massachusetts provides resources for schools that have mainstreamed students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Their publication “Have You Heard? Welcoming a Student with Hearing Loss to Your School Community” is available for \$15 at www.clarkeschool.org/content/mainstream/products.php.

“Tips for Kids” offers ideas for kids with hearing loss to help them talk with people at school. “Tips for Friends” provides information about hearing loss and its impact on communication, as well as helpful hints for communicating with children who have hearing loss. Both booklets are available at www.oraldeafed.org/schools/moog/newsinfo.html.

For more ideas, go to agbell.org and click on the “Professionals” tab.

Guthrie Theater tries out captioned shows

Striving to make performances accessible to all patrons, the Guthrie Theater will caption "The Home Place" Nov. 8 at 7:30 p.m. and "Jane Eyre" Nov. 10 at 1 p.m.

The performances will be captioned by c2 (caption coalition) inc, a provider of Live Performance Captioning and CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation). For the open-captioned performances, a 4-foot wide screen beside the stage will display dialogue from the show in real-time.

Tickets for this service are priced from \$17 to \$27 and are on sale through the Guthrie Box Office at 612-377-2224 (voice), toll-free 877-44-STAGE (voice) and 612-377-6626 (tty). The Guthrie is located at 818 S. 2nd St. (at Chicago Avenue) in downtown Minneapolis. For more information, or to buy tickets online, see www.guthrietheater.org.

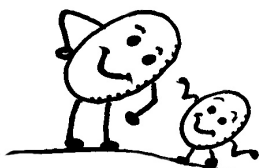
The Guthrie has been a leader in making its offerings accessible to patrons with disabilities. The theater offers ASL interpretation, audio description, sensory tours, wheelchair and companion seating, FM receivers for hearing assistance and audio descriptions, high magnification (2.8X) glasses, audio cassette tapes, and Braille and large print programs and brochures. Access programs at the Guthrie are sponsored by Xcel Energy Foundation and Allianz Life Insurance.

Free online course offers latest news on assistive technology

The Family Center on Technology and Disability is offering a free Online Institute on Assistive Technology Oct. 8-28 that provides CEUs.

The Institute features two discussion strands: Transition and Assistive Technology and Autism and Assistive Technology. Participants can access the Institute online at anytime during the 20-day period. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be issued by RESNA. There is no fee for the Institute, as it is supported by the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

To register, see www.fctd.info/institute/oct2007/register.php.



A Little Grin

By Amy Deneen,
Southeast Parent Guide

My son, Matt, enjoys playing soccer. Even with his hearing aids, he cannot hear a thing on the field because it is usually windy and the coach and other players talk on the run, often turning their backs to Matt. So, to know what to do, he relies heavily on observing the other players.

He really likes playing defense. This year was the first year the "offsides" rule went into effect. To help Matt better understand the rule, we worked with him on a play called the "offsides trap." Since he is so practiced in observing others to help him figure out what is going on in the mainstream environment, he got very good at executing this play. He was soon instructing his hearing teammates so that they could be in position to pull the trap. He has done so well at this play, pulling it off with ease and saving many goal opportunities that he has earned the adoration of the coach and his teammates.

On the soccer field, Matt's hearing loss has become his strength. Since he doesn't have to listen to the yelling of teammates, coaches, and fans, he can just play the game and react to the action on the field. He's a better player because he's not distracted by hearing.

Show performed in ASL

"Barbie Seguy" a one-man show with Minneapolis entertainer Barry R. Segal, will have voice interpretation Saturday, Nov. 3, at 8 p.m. at the Center for Independent Artists, 4137 Bloomington Ave. S., Minneapolis.

The show features Segal dressed up in drag as Barbie, sharing jokes and stories about Deaf, DeafBlind, Hearing, Gay and Jewish cultures. For a preview, see www.uniquetouchart.com/brsegaltheater/. Tickets are \$10 and are available by phone at 612-724-8392 or online at www.c4ia.org.

Book examines sign language

A new book, "Talking Hands: What Sign Language Reveals About the Mind," offers a fascinating look at signed languages and a glimpse inside a remote village that has created a sign language all its own.

The author, Margalit Fox, is a *New York Times* journalist originally trained as a linguist. She currently is a reporter in the celebrated Obituary News department at the *Times*, where she has written send-offs for some of the leading cultural figures of this era.

In "Talking Hands," her first book, she takes readers to the village of Al-Sayyid (pronounced es-SAYY-id), a remote Bedouin community in Israel where everyone uses sign language. The people there have an unusually high incidence of hereditary deafness. To communicate, the villagers have created an indigenous sign language all their own. Al-Sayyid is a place that few outsiders have ever seen. The sign language villagers use has sprung up in virtual isolation from outside influences. Because of that "untouched" quality, the Al-Sayyid sign language offers scientists an unprecedented opportunity to watch what happens when the mind has had to create language from thin air.

Margalit learned about the village from one of four researchers who have been secretly studying the signing of Al-Sayyid to try to pinpoint the most basic ingredients from which all human languages, signed and spoken, are made. Their research is exciting because it almost never happens that linguists are on hand to see a language being born. But as "Talking Hands" grippingly shows, their work is also a race against time, because the unique language of the village may already be endangered. The researchers and the book's author are careful never to reveal the exact location of the village.

Besides chronicling the research in Al-Sayyid, "Talking Hands" looks at sign languages around the world, including American Sign Language. In easy-to-read style similar to an Oliver Sacks book, Margalit explains why sign languages are at the heart of some of the most exciting developments in cognitive science today.

The book lists for \$27 and is available at bookstores and online.

For more details about the Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language research project, see the website absl.haifa.ac.il. The website with information about the book is www.talkinghandsbook.com.



Off the Shelf

Our library has many books that cover education options, including mainstreaming.

“Inclusion? Defining Quality Education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students” is a compilation of papers that were presented at a Gallaudet University conference in 1994.

“Deaf and Hearing Impaired Pupils in Mainstream Schools” looks at a range of issues on this topic.

“13 Keys to a Successful High School Experience” offers tips for teachers from three high school students who have hearing loss about how to make their school day easier.

“Toward Effective Public School Programs for Deaf Students: Context, Process, and Outcomes” analyzes how different factors influence the effectiveness of public education for mainstreamed deaf students.

To request these titles or to find other resources about education, see www.mnhandsandvoices.org or call 651-265-2372 or 1-866-346-4543.

Agreement makes tutoring accessible to students with hearing loss

The Department of Justice recently reached a settlement agreement under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with Sylvan Learning Centers to make Sylvan’s tutoring programs accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sylvan provides tutoring, both in person and online, and personalized instruction to students primarily in grades pre-K through 12.

The settlement ensures that Sylvan will provide auxiliary aids and services, including qualified sign language interpreters, to students who are deaf or hard of hearing when necessary to ensure effective communication. Auxiliary aids and services include providing qualified sign language interpreters, notetakers, computer-aided transcription services, written materials, telephone handset amplifiers, assistive listening devices, videotext displays, and other effective methods of making materials that others access by listening and speaking aloud available to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Under the settlement, Sylvan will not charge students for utilizing auxiliary aids and services they need.

For more information about the ADA or the settlement agreement, see www.ada.gov. Information about the ADA is also available the Department’s toll-free ADA Information Line at 800-514-0301 or 800-514-0383 (tty).

New Sidekicks launched; contest to award prizes for best Sidekick videos

T-Mobile recently introduced two new versions of its popular Sidekick phone/messaging device. The LX is a luxury version with an enhanced video screen. The Slide is a smaller device with a sliding, rather than twisting, screen.

To introduce the new phones, T-Mobile kicks off Sidekick Nation, a user-generated video contest hosted by MySpace where users have the chance to show their creativity and win a grand prize that includes \$10,000 and a trip to Hollywood to see his/her video highlights aired on Jimmy Kimmel Live! To enter the contest, users across the country can create an original video, no longer than two minutes in length, which exemplifies how their Sidekick serves as their social lifeline. Videos are to be submitted on www.myspace.com/sidekicknation by Nov. 12.

For more information on Sidekick Nation: T-Mobile Sidekick Video Contest including the official contest rules, video submission guidelines, prize restrictions and regulations, visit www.myspace.com/sidekicknation. For more information on the new Sidekicks, see www.sidekick.com.

University offers art, science, writing competitions for middle, high school students

Rochester Institute of Technology, home of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, is hosting three contests for middle and high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Details about all three can be found at www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/outreach.php.

The Digital Arts and Animation Competition recognizes the artistic talent of students in grades 9 through 12. Categories are graphic media, web design, 3-D animation, interactive media, photo illustration and free-hand art in digital form. Winners travel to the college to receive \$250 prizes. The deadline to enter has been extended to Nov. 8.

Students in grades 6 through 12 can compete in the third-annual National Science Fair for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students and win cash awards of up to \$500. Students can compete individually or as a two- or three-person team. To qualify, students must submit an entry form and a 250-word science project summary. From those summaries, judges will choose finalists in both middle school and high school divisions, who will be invited to attend the Science Fair March 14-15, 2008 at RIT’s National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, N.Y. While there, students will display their project and compete for first, second or third place in each division. The deadline to submit project summaries is Jan. 15.

The SpiRIT Writing Contest is for students in grades 10 and 11. Each school district or school for the deaf may submit up to two entries. Winners will have their choice of a scholarship and travel expenses to the Explore Your Future (EYF) program in July 2008 at RIT’s National Technical Institute for the Deaf, or a \$500 cash prize. EYF is a six-day career exploration program for deaf and hard-of-hearing students that gives them the opportunity to sample different careers. The deadline to enter the writing contest is March 1, 2008.

Rochester Institute of Technology is internationally recognized as a leader in technical fields, and for providing unparalleled support services for students with hearing loss. The university serves more than 1,100 deaf and hard-of-hearing students as well as 14,400 hearing students on its Rochester, N.Y. campus. *U.S. News and World Report* has consistently ranked RIT among the nation’s leading universities. For more information about the school, see www.rit.edu/NTID.