



# Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS

—supporting families with kids who have hearing loss—

JANUARY 2011

## Parents praise all aspects of state school for deaf

It has been called “the best kept secret in the state” for educating students who are deaf. But, parents who send their children to Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) are ready and eager to share the secret with everyone.

MSAD serves students from birth to age 21 who have a variety of needs—some are deaf, some hard of hearing, some have cochlear implants, and some have multiple challenges. It is a bilingual school where the students are taught through American Sign Language (ASL) and use English in writing and reading. The school is located on 40 acres in Faribault, a city of just over 20,000 in southeast Minnesota.

MSAD was founded in 1863, just five years after Minnesota became a state. At the time, the capitol was located in St. Peter and nearby Faribault was one of the hubs of activity in the state. The town also was centrally located based on the population at the time—northern Minnesota had yet to be developed.

In its first year, MSAD enrolled 8 students. The school’s highest enrollment was in 1947-48 with 350 students. This academic year, there are 137 students enrolled. That number has remained steady over the past six years. The average size of preschool and Kindergarten classes is about 7 students, while the average size of a high school class is about 18 students. This year’s graduating class has 22 students.

“Parents who may be hesitant about sending their children to MSAD may want to realize that the old ‘institution’

concept really is a misnomer of decades past,” said Trudy Suggs, a parent. “MSAD is a bilingual school that works to fit each student’s preferences and/or needs, and expects the very best in all areas.”

Students come from all over the state. Some families move here from beyond state borders so their children can attend MSAD. The Barron family moved to the Faribault area when the school for the deaf the boys attended in South Dakota closed. They visited several schools before choosing MSAD—which was “not too big, but not too small.”

“While all of the schools we toured had excellent programs and were very impressive, we knew MSAD was the best fit,” said Kim Barron. “Our kids would be able to socialize with a variety of peers, and yet be in an environment where they would get one-on-one attention.” The Barrons also felt welcome in Faribault, which is used to having people who sign in the community. Kim said her boys can be involved in sports or other community activities without problems. “You know the saying, ‘It takes a village to raise a child’? I feel this applies exactly to our situation. I know our sons will grow up to be confident, bright adults who will be productive and contributing members of society because of what MSAD provides.”

For students whose families live elsewhere in the state, the school provides a residential program. Students stay at

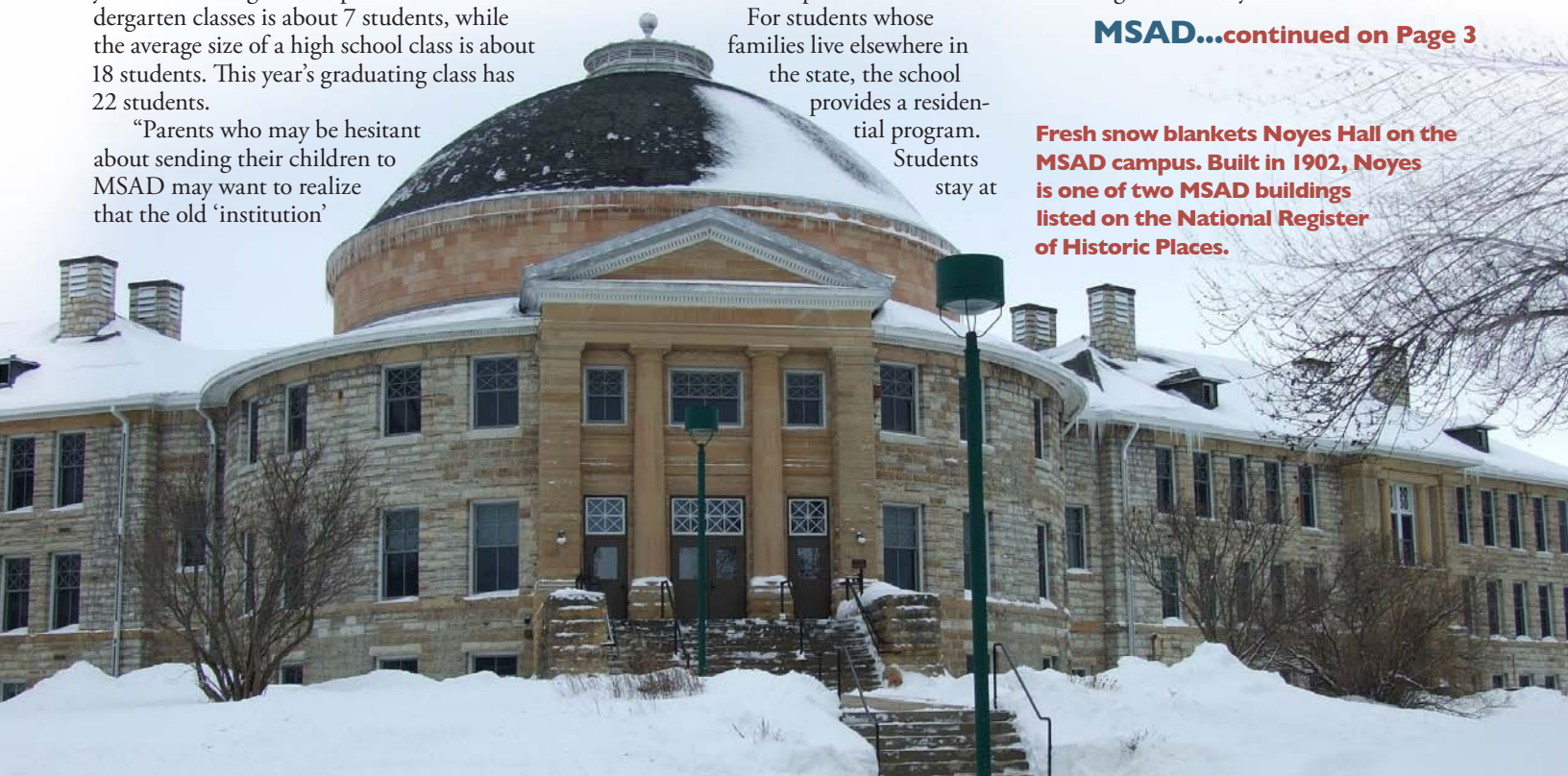
MSAD during the week and commute to their homes on weekends. The dormitories have private sleeping rooms, kitchen areas for making snacks, a recreation/craft center, social areas, homework resource rooms and fitness centers. Currently, about 60% of the students live in the dormitories.

Kari Johnson moved her daughter, Kelley, to MSAD’s dorms several years ago so she wouldn’t have to worry about her daily drive to and from school, especially in bad weather. “Although I miss her terribly, I know she is in the right place,” Kari said. Kari credits the residential staff with helping the kids maintain a routine for completing homework, self care and cleaning their rooms. “Now I see an 11-year-old girl who is more responsible than most high schoolers. She knows where she is supposed to be at all times of the day and is ready and prepared,” Kari added. “I think the dorm life has been a HUGE benefit to Kelley.”


Parents also say they appreciate the benefits their children get from participating in the athletics program at MSAD. The school offers football, volleyball, basketball and track, plus co-op sports (with Bethlehem Academy and Faribault High School) in swimming, soccer, golf, softball, baseball, wrestling, and hockey.

**MSAD...continued on Page 3**

**Fresh snow blankets Noyes Hall on the MSAD campus. Built in 1902, Noyes is one of two MSAD buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**



## Here's What's Happening Around Town

- Sunday, Jan. 9** **Naturally Kids**, a free, hands-on nature discovery program for parents and children (5 to 12) with any disability, offers "Happy New Year for the Animals" from 1 to 3 p.m. at Fort Snelling State Park in St. Paul. Make a bird feeder for the visitor center and one for home—bring a suitable container (aluminum pie plate, milk jug or pop bottle with cap). Interpreters are supposed to be requested two weeks in advance. For future topics, see [www.naturallykids.org](http://www.naturallykids.org).
- Sunday, Jan. 9** **Snowshoe with families** and the Cued Speech Association of Minnesota from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge-Bloomington Visitor Center, 3815 American Boulevard East. It's free, but call to reserve snowshoes: 952-858-0715.
- Friday, Jan. 14** **Open Gym runs from 7 to 10 p.m. at North Central University** in Minneapolis for students in grades 7-12 who are hard of hearing, deaf or KODAs. Games include basketball, volleyball, football, 4-square and cards. The event is free, and includes pizzas and drinks. For more information, contact TrungHa at [revtch@gmail.com](mailto:revtch@gmail.com).
- Tuesday, Jan. 18** **The new Deaf Immigrant Center for Education** at Hennepin County Medical Center holds an open house from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Knapp Rehab Facility on the third floor of the Blue Building.
- Thursday, Jan. 20** **Join us for "Understanding Special Education,"** a webinar for families with children newly identified with hearing loss. This online seminar features insights from Carolyn Anderson, Parent Advocate from PACER Center. It goes from 6 to 8 p.m. Captioning is provided. Register by Jan. 19 and we'll send you details for accessing the webinar. See the event flyer for contact information.
- Jan. 22-March 26** **Learn to sign with your family** through our ASL classes at Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church in Minneapolis on Saturdays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. \$10/class/adult or \$75 if paid in advance. Children 5-18 are free. See [www.mnhandsandvoices.org/html/fscevents](http://www.mnhandsandvoices.org/html/fscevents).
- Tuesday, Jan. 25** **A free seminar, "Working with a Sign Language Interpreter,"** offered by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services from 9 a.m. to noon at the Golden Rule Building in downtown St. Paul teaches employers how to interact with clients through an ASL interpreter. Another seminar from 1 to 4 p.m. teaches basic signs. For details on both seminars, see [www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/disabilities/documents/pub/dhs16\\_151737.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/disabilities/documents/pub/dhs16_151737.pdf).
- Jan. 27-30** **Koda (Kids of Deaf Adults) Family Retreat** takes place at Confidence Learning Center in East Gull Lake. Activities may include group discussions, snow tubing, snow shoeing, ice fishing, games. For information, email [emily@dreamsandinspirations.com](mailto:emily@dreamsandinspirations.com).
- Sunday, Jan. 30**  **Join us for our annual PRIVATE party for the MNHV community at the Roller Garden in St. Louis Park from 5 to 7 p.m. See attached flyer for details.**
- Saturday, Jan. 29** **PACER Rocks for Kids fundraiser** begins at 8 p.m. at the Fine Line Music Cafe in downtown Minneapolis. For tickets, call 952-838-9000 or visit [www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org).
- Feb. 5-6** **Cued Speech Association of Minnesota presents "Receptive Skill Building,"** a two-day workshop with Tom Shull. For details, see [www.cuedspeechminnesota.org](http://www.cuedspeechminnesota.org).
- Sunday, Feb. 6** **"Impressionism: Breaking the Rules,"** the ASL-interpreted tour at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, starts at 1 p.m. by the Information Desk in the museum lobby. Questions? Contact [dhegstro@artsmia.org](mailto:dhegstro@artsmia.org).



## ASL-Interpreted Performances

Request the VSA discount.

### **Shrek: The Musical**

Sunday, Feb. 6, 1 p.m. (captioned at 6:30)  
Historic Orpheum Theatre, Mpls; 612-339-7007;  
[www.hennepintheatretrust.org/accessible](http://www.hennepintheatretrust.org/accessible)

### **Romeo and Juliet**

Saturday, Jan. 22, 1 p.m.

### **The Comedy of Errors**

Saturday, Jan. 29, 1 p.m.

Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis;

612-377-2224; [www.guthrietheater.org](http://www.guthrietheater.org)

### **Peter Pan**

Sunday, Jan. 23, 2 p.m.

Burnsville Performing Arts Center;

952-895-4680; [www.burnsvillepac.com](http://www.burnsvillepac.com)

### **Into the Woods**

Thursday, Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m.

Bloomington Center for the Arts; 952-563-8575; [www.bloomingtoncivictheatre.org](http://www.bloomingtoncivictheatre.org)

### **If You Give a Moose a Muffin**

Sat., Jan. 29, 1 p.m. & Thurs., Feb. 3, 10 a.m.

Hopkins Center for the Arts; 952-979-1111;

[www.stagestheatre.org](http://www.stagestheatre.org)

### **The Odyssey**

Saturday, Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m.

Park Square Theatre, St. Paul; 651-291-7005;

[www.parksquaretheatre.org](http://www.parksquaretheatre.org)

### **The Lion in Winter**

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2 p.m.

Lakeshore Players Theatre, White Bear Lake;

651-429-5674; [www.lakeshoreplayers.com](http://www.lakeshoreplayers.com)

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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

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PACER Center and MN Hands & Voices/Lifetrack Resources present:



# **A WEBINAR:** NEXT STEPS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN NEWLY IDENTIFIED WITH HEARING LOSS: **UNDERSTANDING SPECIAL EDUCATION**



THURSDAY, JANUARY 20

**6:00 TO 8:00 P.M.**

PRESENTED BY:

**CAROLYN ANDERSON**

PARENT ADVOCATE FROM PACER CENTER



**PARTICIPATE FROM THE COMFORT  
OF YOUR OWN HOME.**

WEBINAR AVAILABLE AT:

<http://mnhandsandvoices.na5.acrobat.com/special/>

**CAPTIONING WILL BE PROVIDED.**

## **REGISTRATION**



**To register or if any questions contact:**

MN Hands & Voices/Lifetrack Resources

651-265-2435/866-346-4543 Toll-free

[mnhv@lifetrackresources.org](mailto:mnhv@lifetrackresources.org)



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## MSAD...continued from Page 1

“Communication barriers often prevent deaf/HH students [at other schools] from full participation in athletics and other school activities,” said Roxie Mitchell, MSAD Director. “At MSAD, those barriers are eliminated.”

MSAD’s inclusive environment is evident on the playing field. “Everyone is given an opportunity to play—even the special needs students,” said Cheryl Anderson, a parent. “Coaches give the players praise for doing the best of their ability.”

The school has received national recognition for athletics, most recently with its powerhouse volleyball team, which won the championship of the Eastern MN Athletic Conference the past three years and the Great Plains Schools for the Deaf tournament championship for the ninth straight season. The team recently was named the National Deaf Interscholastic Athletics Association Division II Team of the Year for the fourth year in a row. Several volleyball and football players made All-American this year, while football coach Kevin Rademacher, Sr., and volleyball coach Michele Heise were selected as the 2010 DeafDigest Coach of the Year in their respective sports.

The school also excels in academics, receiving “high praise for its current programs and practices,” explained Roxie Mitchell, referring to the school’s most recent accreditation by the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) as well as the AdvancED certification group. “The accreditation process validates to the stakeholders and the general public the integrity of the school’s program,” she explained. MSAD was commended for having “curriculum based on measurable expectations using a variety of technology, numerous new programs to meet diverse learning needs, and staff and faculty that are highly qualified and PASSIONATE about MSAD,” Roxie said. Parents agree.

“The teachers and staff, who are phenomenal role models, gently push my children to exceed expectations and so-called standards,” Trudy Suggs said.

“They truly care about deaf children and it shows in their work,” added Kim Barron. “We feel blessed knowing our children’s education is in very good and capable hands.”

*Editor’s note: Thanks to our SE Parent Guide, Mary Ellen Bondhus, for gathering information for this story, and for heading out after the blizzard to take photographs of the campus.*



## Make plans to attend Lobby Day March 2

The Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans holds its annual Lobby Day at the capitol March 2. The day begins with a training and updates about issues in the current legislative session that are related to deafness. The group rallies at the capitol rotunda at noon, and meets individually by appointment with legislators in the afternoon.

The Commission has set up a link to register for the day so they can schedule interpreters and appointments with legislators. Go to [www.surveygizmo.com/s/430438/h9tow](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/430438/h9tow). Volunteers are needed to serve as team leaders. You can volunteer at the same link.

The Commission also has set up an online training course to help people prepare to make their case to legislators. See [www.mncdhh.org/makingyourcase](http://www.mncdhh.org/makingyourcase).

Registration for Lobby Day also can be done by calling 651-431-5961 (V), 866-824-8479 (VP), or 888-206-2001 (TTY).



**Will Bondhus signs “candy” with Sweet Spot owner Marie McCarthy while he buys a treat. “I enjoy learning American Sign Language and I appreciate the patience from the Deaf Community as they teach me,” Marie said. The Sweet Spot is one of many stores in Faribault, home of the state school for the deaf, where staff go out of their way to make deaf patrons feel comfortable.**

## Federal EHDI law reauthorized

Late last month, President Obama signed the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Act of 2010 (HR 1246, S3199), which reauthorizes the original legislation mandated almost 10 years ago. Hands & Voices’ parent leaders were among those who provided testimony at senate committee hearings.

EHDI 2010 ensures newborn hearing screening services, full diagnostic evaluations, and support to families with infants and toddlers identified as deaf or hard of hearing. This reauthorization emphasizes state funding for follow-through services for babies who refer for further testing.

On another legislative note: our federal appropriation request has died with our federal legislators’ decision not to push any appropriations through.

“We are very grateful to Congresswoman Betty McCollum and Senator Al Franken for their commitment to our work,” said Candace Lindow-Davies, MNHV Coordinator. “Thanks, too, to all who wrote letters of support and advocated on our behalf. The bill made it through to the very end. So we are very proud of our efforts, and are hopeful, in the future, funding for cultural communities can be realized.”

## Deaf education website could be dropped

The Deaf Education website ([www.deafed.net](http://www.deafed.net)), which was originally funded by grants, has received support to continue services through April. This support comes from the Council for Exceptional Children’s Division for Communicative Disabilities and Deafness (DCDD) as part of its plan to increase DCDD membership.

The Deaf Education website provides a central location to search for resumes, post positions and investigate the shared Deaf Education knowledge base. To ensure its continuation, the website’s managers are asking professionals to go to the site before April and consider joining DCDD. A link is provided half way down the home page.

# Minnesota Hands & Voices Roller Skating Event

*For Families with Children who are  
Deaf or Hard of Hearing*

**Sunday, January 30, 2011**

**5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

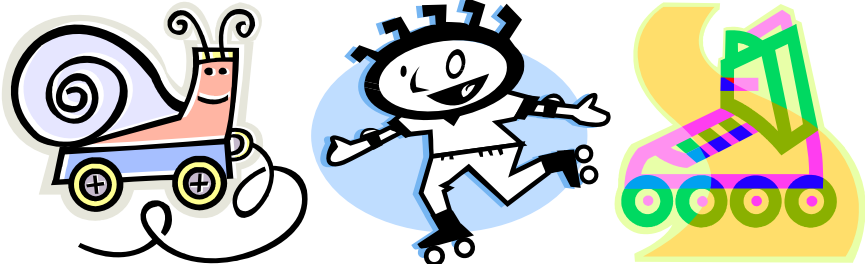
(We have exclusive use of the rink!)

**Cost: FREE!**

(Donations are welcome at the door)

You will also receive a coupon for a  
**FREE Hotdog, bag of chips and pop!!!**

The Roller Rink will be **closed to the general public** so this is a great way to get out there to test your skating feet, socialize with all of your friends and meet new friends!! It is a lot of fun for the entire family.



*Parents enjoy this fun event with their children*



#### **Directions:**

**From the North:** Take Hwy 100 south to Minnetonka Blvd. Exit. At the end of the exit (stop sign), take a left. Go straight through the lights. Roller Gardens is on the right side of the road next to Marathon Gas station. (You will see a dinosaur on the roof of the Roller Rink)

**From the South:** Take Hwy 100 North to Minnetonka Blvd. Exit. At the end of the exit, take a right. Go over the bridge. Take a left at the lights on Lake Street. Roller Gardens is on the right side of the road next to Marathon Gas Station. (You will see a dinosaur on the roof of the Roller Rink)

**Questions on Directions?** Call Roller Garden at 952-929-5518  
5622 W. Lake Street  
St. Louis Park. MN 55416

**Questions on the event?** Call MN Hands & Voices at:  
651-265-2435(v), 651-265-2379 (TTY)  
or e-mail: [mnhv@lifetrackresources.org](mailto:mnhv@lifetrackresources.org)

**RVSP's appreciated.**





# I am MINNESOTA HANDS & VOICES

## Coda + Coda = Deaf: The Amundsen Family of Faribault

Hello to fellow members of Minnesota Hands & Voices! Having been invited to write an article about our family, here I sit by the cozy fire reflecting on the remarkable circumstances of our story.

I'll start off with our "how we met" story—the condensed version. Jeff and I met in 1999 at baggage claim in Sydney, Australia. We were both traveling to Australia for the International CODA (Children of Deaf Adults) conference. So, even though we technically met via our involvement in the CODA organization, I still like to believe that there's a level of fate involved, since we literally bumped into each other at baggage claim. Pretty amazing when you consider that we weren't even on the same flight!

After a year of long-distance courtship, Jeff moved from Washington, D.C. to be with me in Minnesota, and we got engaged shortly after that. With both of us being Codas, our wedding was quite an experience with a significant dose of Deaf influence.

Three years later, when Jack was born, we knew we had about 25% chance of having a Deaf child, according to the geneticist that we had seen. We figured it was all a part of the surprise: boy or girl, deaf or hearing—we would be fine either way. Ironically enough, Jack passed his newborn hearing screening. Throughout Jack's first year, we were so concerned with his other health issues, that his hearing was the last thing on our minds. Keep in mind, that because all of Jack's grandparents are Deaf, we had been signing with him from Day One; thankfully laying the groundwork for a strong foundation of language for him. Around his first birthday, we began to realize that he wasn't hearing everything. Jeff even did the classic home hearing test—banging a couple of pot lids together. Sure enough, Jack didn't even flinch. Time to see the audiologist!

It was very interesting to observe the reactions to finding out that Jack is Deaf. Jeff, being the only hearing member of his family, had a momentary pause, "again, I'm the odd man out with a family

**Amy Amundsen,  
Coda, wife, mom, ASL interpreter**

of Deaf people." While my Mom's reaction was quite the opposite, "finally, a family member that is Deaf like me!" Both equally profound and relevant in their own way. Wow!

When Jack was just shy of his 3rd birthday, we moved to Faribault to be closer to my family. My parents are both retired teachers from the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD), and we wanted Jack to have the benefit of growing up close to family. Also, my sister, Deb Kasper, is the ASL Instructor at Faribault High School. Little did we know how much her influence has truly infused the community of Faribault. We could go almost anywhere in town and there will very likely be someone who at least has basic ASL skills and an understanding of Deaf people. Perfect example: in signing up Jack for gymnastics last year, I didn't need to request an interpreter because the instructor was a former student of Deb's. Imagine – full access to communication, without a battle. Love that!

On Jack's very first day of school at MSAD in 2007, we were stunned to realize that my Dad's first day of school there was exactly 70 years prior, in 1937! Jack is now 6 years old, and well into his Kindergarten year at MSAD. We are very fortunate to have access to MSAD to meet his academic, social, and developmental needs!

On a final note, it's important to include the fact that my educational background includes a BA in Psychology/Special Ed and an MA from Gallaudet University in Counseling. I am also a nationally certified interpreter, having experience at all levels of education and community interpreting work. There's no question that my entire personal and professional life has prepared me to be Jack's mom. For this, I am eternally grateful!

**The Amundsen family pose during Homecoming activities at MSAD last fall—Jack was chosen as Junior Royalty.**



## The View from Here

### Central

**Sign Language at the Mall** goes from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 8 at the food court in Crossroads Center in St. Cloud. SLAM takes place on the second Saturday of the month.

### Southwest

Bob Westerhaus presents "**Deaf Awareness: Culture and Language**" Saturday, Feb. 5 from 10 to 11 a.m. at the South Central Service Cooperative Conference Center in North Mankato. For a flyer with directions, contact Crista Browne-Krosch at 507-995-2172 (text or voice).

### Southeast

"**There Was a Cold Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow**" is the story for Literacy Night at MSAD Monday, Jan. 31 from 6 to 7 p.m. The evening includes a signed story, a craft, games and other activities. See [www.msad.state.mn.us](http://www.msad.state.mn.us).

## NTID offers middle school math contest

Jan. 15 is the deadline to register for the National Technical Institute for the Deaf's annual Math Competition April 8-10 at NTID on the campus of Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York.

This competition for students in grades 6 – 8 features cash prizes for team and individual winners in several categories.

Registration is \$80 per team of four students or \$20 for students who register individually. To register or learn more, go to [www.rit.edu/NTID/MathCompetition](http://www.rit.edu/NTID/MathCompetition).

## Interpreted ski lessons offered at Hyland Hills

For over 30 years, the Midwest Ski Council has offered ski lessons for kids who are deaf or hard of hearing. This year, the council's volunteers are offering lessons in skiing or snowboarding at Hyland Hills Ski Area in Bloomington.

Volunteer interpreters are available during the lessons, which run from 9:30-11 a.m. five Sundays, Jan. 9-Feb. 6. Minimum age for participants is 6 years for skiing and 8 years for snowboarding.

Equipment and lift tickets are provided for students in either the ski or snowboard lessons for a reduced price of \$85 for all 5 sessions (\$70 without equipment rental). No lift ticket or rental charge for each instructor, interpreter/family member assisting in the program. Other family members can get a \$12 group lift ticket, \$12 ski rental or \$15 snowboard rental on lesson days.

All snowboarders are required to wear a snowboarding helmet, which must be purchased at a sports store before the first lesson. Wrist pads won't be required, but are highly recommended.

For more information or to register for the program, contact Dave Dent at 952-941-7375 or [dad1909@comcast.net](mailto:dad1909@comcast.net).

## Transition

By Rachel Kruzel, Accommodations Assistant, Augsburg College Center for Learning and Adaptive Student Services

### Planning for the changes college brings

Change is inevitable when a student begins college. There are new people, new classes, and new living arrangements. In addition, there are other significant differences between high school and college every parent and student should know. Here are three significant changes:

#### • IDEA vs. ADA – A Change in Acronym and Law

In high school, student disability law was governed by IDEA, or the Individuals with Disability Education Act. In college, disability accommodations and services are governed by the ADA or the Americans with Disabilities Act. Although they serve generally the same purpose—to create equal opportunities for students—they are different in many ways. IDEA ensures that all K-12 students, regardless of disability, receive an appropriate education. The ADA is a civil rights law that creates equal *access* for students who are otherwise qualified to attend college. It creates a level playing field for all students, but it does not adapt curriculum to meet a student's needs. So once a student starts college, say goodbye to IDEA and hello to the ADA.

#### • Students, not parents, 'take the wheel'

Over the course of a child's education, his parents sat by his side during IEP meetings and conferences to ensure he receives everything he needs to succeed. Once a student steps onto a college campus, he's the one who must ask for accommodations. Instead of parents being in the driver's seat, students themselves are instructed to take the wheel. One reason is that FERPA, or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, requires colleges and universities to maintain the privacy of a student's educational records. As a result of this, unless a student signs a waiver allowing a parent access to this information, parents no longer can play a central role in their child's education. Trust your child/young adult to take the wheel and drive towards a degree.

#### • Peek-A-Boo, We Don't See You

In high school, support services sought out a student to make sure the student was progressing through school. In college, it's a 180 degree flip. Students are expected to seek out the services and help they need from offices like disability services or counseling. The same is true for education assistance. Tutors, study sessions, and professor office hours are all set up to help students maximize their potential, but in college, it is a student's job to seek out help.

Despite all these changes, big and small, students can do a great job acclimating to change. As a parent, you will be proud of your son or daughter as they succeed with their transition to college, and proud of yourself for raising a child who is able to adjust well.

Derived from Access Center Parent Information compiled by The Center for Learning and Adaptive Student Services (CLASS) at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, and from Southern Methodist University's Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center: <http://smu.edu/alec/whyhighschool/html>.

## Teen dance set for March

Coon Rapids High School hosts a statewide Teen Dance March 4 for students in grades 9-12 who are deaf or hard of hearing. The free event goes from 6:30 to 10 p.m. at the school, 2340 Northdale Blvd. in Coon Rapids (enter door #9). Student ID is required. DHH students can bring one hearing guest each (with ID). Pizza and snacks will be provided. Questions? Contact [Marla.Kohl@anoka.k12.mn.us](mailto:Marla.Kohl@anoka.k12.mn.us).

## Deaf Ed summit offered at Gallaudet in April

Gallaudet University's Department of Education hosts the second Summit on American Sign Language /English Bilingual Early Childhood Education for Deaf Children at Gallaudet University April 8-9. The Summit is designed for professionals in the field. Seating is limited to 100 participants. For details, contact [Amy.Hile@gallaudet.edu](mailto:Amy.Hile@gallaudet.edu).

## CSI episode to take place at school for deaf

An upcoming episode of the TV show "CSI" will take place at a school for the deaf and feature at least two deaf actors, Phyllis Frelich and Marlee Matlin. Frelich plays the mother of the CSI character Gil Grissom. She plays a professor at the school, where a murder has occurred. Matlin plays her colleague and a former girlfriend of Grissom. Grissom's wife, Sara, will be the one to investigate the murder. The episode is tentatively scheduled to air Feb. 3.

## Play is topic of seminar

Volunteers of America Mental Health Clinics Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program presents "Play Therapy with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth," a day-long seminar for professionals on Feb. 11 at Calvary Lutheran Church of Golden Valley. Presented in ASL with voice interpreting, the workshop is \$90. Credits available. For details, call 763-744-8632 or email [goffman@voamn.org](mailto:goffman@voamn.org).



## Dad's Viewpoint

By Curt Leitz, NE Parent Guide

'Tis the season of long, dark, below-zero nights—a time when despair leaves its frosty scratches on the window of my soul and it just might seem safest to stay in bed all sixteen hours from dusk

to dawn. I don't, though. I can't: unopened mail clutters the counter and dinner needs to go in the crock pot and the school holiday concert takes place at 2:30, with or without me, though I'd better be there waving happily to my daughter. So I soldier on, heating the food and preheating the car and watching for signs of hope.

The signs are there. At school, the gym is full of warmth and well-wishes and expectation as Kindergarteners climb risers and hurried parents file to the back and stand along the wall. The music teacher hits a chord, and look! The whole front row of 6-year-olds steps forward, grabs hula hoops, and starts grooving to "Hip-Hop Santa!" Jaded parents everywhere come to the edge of their seats, kids on the risers belt out the tune, and is that a fauxhawk on a Kindergarten teacher's head? Let's hear it for holiday surprises! A proud dad in the back shouts "Sing it, Dylan!" halfway through the first bar. Remember when you could hula hoop like these smiling stars?

The coming night no longer seems so dark. Dinner will be burbling in the slow cooker when we get home, and a pot roast is just the dish to warm my belly and strengthen my resolve to make it through that evening's Mannheim Steamroller concert. (No joke—let's hear it for silent auction dinners and holiday surprises!)

The last chord sounds, hula hoops clatter to the floor, and the audience erupts in applause. Beaming Kindergarteners make way for third-graders, who come in with—could it be?—real wood recorders. What unlikely convergence of enthusiastic teachers, talented grantwriters, generous philanthropists and trust has put such resonant instruments in the hands of our 9-year-olds? Then, cheeks full of air and pride and expectation, they blow, and music rises to the netted ceiling and reverberates back down, into the very bones of the rapt audience.

From the front row Hakim steps forward, his ebony skin glowing above a white shirt emblazoned with the American flag with "We the People . . ." across the top. Hakim lays into a solo on his recorder, and at the side of the gym a very special preschooler sitting in his aide's lap starts rocking and wailing with better rhythm and volume than the music teacher accompanying on the piano!

'Tis the season of hope, pleasant surprises, and lengthening days. The pile of mail waits, but I've gotten bad news before and survived. If a teacher can wear a fauxhawk and a child like Hakim can symbolize what's right in this country, then maybe our nation can solve its fiscal woes and become a beacon of peace. Maybe I'll even enjoy the Mannheim Steamroller concert!

## Manufacturer recalls cochlear implant

Advanced Bionics, a US-based developer of cochlear implant systems, has voluntarily recalled its HiRes 90K cochlear implant device after two confirmed cases where devices needed to be removed from recipients who experienced severe pain, overly loud sounds and/or shocking sensations 8-10 days after the device's initial activation. The company is working with the FDA to find the cause of the problems and to make changes to the product to ensure patient safety and product quality.

## Parents needed for online study

Minnesota Hands & Voices recently was contacted by a doctoral student at Peabody College and the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center to ask for help getting participants for a study of parents of students with disabilities. The study will examine parent-school collaboration as it relates to parental and child characteristics. Parents are being asked to complete an online questionnaire that takes about 20 minutes. Survey respondents remain anonymous. To participate, go to <http://tinyurl.com/2ednxtk>.

## Government could relax captioning requirements

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is considering changes to its regulations to require movie theaters to show captioned movies. DOJ is accepting written comments from the public until Jan. 24.

The changes the DOJ proposes include requiring the number of closed captioned movies shown by a theater chain to be no more than 50 percent of the films shown, and allowing theaters up to 5 years to get to the 50 percent mark. Advocacy groups, such as the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), are encouraging movie patrons to ask the DOJ to eliminate discrimination against people with hearing loss by requiring theater chains to make *all* movies accessible so that a person who has hearing loss can attend a movie at any time and on any day, just as a hearing person could. HLAA points out that technology exists today that provides several options for showing captioned films. To see HLAA's talking points, go to [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) and click on "Urgent Action Alert."

To submit a comment to the DOJ online, go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Click on the "Submit a Comment" button. In the box labeled "Enter Keyword or ID," enter DOJ-CRT-0112, and click on "Search." The proposed rule will appear at the bottom of the page. Click on "Submit a Comment" on the right side. Enter the required personal information and either type your comments in the box or attach a document containing your comments. Finally, click "Submit."

## Number of college students taking ASL on rise

American Sign Language (ASL) is close to surpassing German as the third-most-studied foreign language at America's colleges and universities, according to statistics from a recent study.

The top language studied in U.S. colleges in 2009 was Spanish, followed by French. German was third, separated from ASL by only 4,500 students. Enrollment in ASL classes increased 16% since the previous survey three years earlier.

The most up-to-date list of colleges that offer ASL is online at <http://web.mac.com/swilcox/UNM/univlist.html>.

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**The 2011 Minnesota Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Summit will be March 6-7. This FREE event is packed with great speakers, many national experts, and is a tremendous opportunity for parents and professionals for "Building Connections." For details, go to [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/announce/ehdisummit.htm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/announce/ehdisummit.htm).**