

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL  
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
Quarterly Council Meeting  
Thursday, May 11, 2017 – Friday, May 12, 2017**

**MINUTES**

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CART Captioner: Lisa B. Johnston, RMR, CRR, CRC

**Call to Order and Roll Call:** 9:00 A.M. EST

*Council members present:* Debbe Hagner, Glenna Ashton, Donna Drake, Chris Littlewood, Mary Hodges, Darlene Laibl-Crowe, Cindy Simon, Debra Knox, Eugenia Halliburton, Rosie Finigan

*Via phone & Chat:* Cecil Bradley, John Jackson, Julie Church

*Staff present:* Shay Chapman, Megan Callahan, Monica Pitts

*Presenters:* Beth Wagmeister, Director of services at goodwill Gulfstream; Peggy Brown, Center for Hearing and Communication Regional Executive Director; Cory Parker, HKNC Southeast Representative; Anindya “Bapin” Bhattacharyya, HKNC Coordinator of National Outreach Adaptive Technology Training Program, Darlene Laibl-Crowe, FCCDHH member representing people who are DeafBlind

**Staff Updates:**

*Shay Chapman* – Presented that session has officially closed and will begin early next year in January. The House and Senate decided upon a budget which did not include the Council being a line item budget but the Department is providing the funds again this year. The Department will continue to fund all that it has in the past for the Council. With session starting early next year, the Department will be starting their funding requests early this year and a request for the Council will mirror the requests in the past.

*Megan Callahan* – Presented a follow up of action items from the previous meeting.

**Committee Reports:**

*Web Committee* – Requested that the Council send any updates for the website that are needed

*Technology Committee* – Reported that the PSA script has been completed and is ready to shoot. Actors are being searched for and the PSA will be shot during the August meeting. Requested that the Council not start the second PSA until the current one is almost finished.

*Education/Medical/Outreach (EMO) Committee* – Voted in Eugenia Halliburton as the chair of this committee.

*Legislative Committee* –No update provided.

*Department of Children and families (DCF)* – No update provided.

*Budget Committee* – Reminded the Council that the Department would cover any necessary expenditures.

*Biennial Report Committee* – An official Biennial Report Committee was created for establishing guidelines and a timeline for report completion.

**Presentations:**

*Beth Wagmeister (Goodwill Gulfstream)* – Beth presented on the updates of Deaf Services, presented on the history of Deaf Services, and the present work they are doing now. In 1985, the Deaf Service Center opened its doors in Palm Beach County and 15 years later, Audiology also became a part of the services offered. Unfortunately, in 2015, the Deaf Service Center closed their doors due to insufficient funds. At that time, it was noticed that Goodwill had Deaf Services in their store but only had one person employed. Beth approached the CEO and mentioned that Deaf Services had just closed their doors. With lots of negotiation, it was decided that the Deaf Service Center would be moved to Goodwill, which is where they still remain today. Some of the deaf services they provide today include programs and services, client assistance, resource connection, community education & events, audiology, interpreting (audiology and interpreting is only available for those age 60+), and sign language classes. The Deaf Service Center at Goodwill Gulfstream now offers communication cards as a way for the officer or emergency personnel to communicate with those who are deaf or hard of hearing. These cards include pictures the officer can point to in order to show the person why they were stopped, and also phrases for the person who is deaf or hard of hearing to be able to point to so the office will know how to best communicate. Goodwill Gulfstream Industries serves five counties; those counties are: Indian River, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin, and Palm Beach.

*Peggy Brown (Center for Hearing and Communication)* – Peggy presented on the history of the Center for hearing and Communication, the programs they have, what they are doing, where they are going as a company, and ultimately, what will happen after the closing of the Deaf Service Center and how they will become more profitable. The Center for hearing and Communication is funded by multiple services in Broward County such as: Children Services Council in Broward County, United Way of Broward County, the Community Foundation of Broward County, and I'm also funded by Broward County Health and Human Services. Funding was also received for the distribution of specialized telephones resulting in the Center for Hearing and Communication being the largest distributor for Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI) in Florida. They also offer an in-home delivery for cradle to college and college on resulting in the covering of the broad span of the community. There are four legs of programs

that the Center offers which are education, social services, outreach, and audiology. The education programs focus on children ages 4-23 that teaches a range of life skills such as driving and employability and it runs all year long. Their social services programs serve individuals and their families with mental health counseling, bridging gaps between communication,

*Cory Parker (HKNC)* – Cory Parker presented on the Helen Keller National Center and what all they offer youth and adults who are deaf and blind. They consider themselves advocates for not only the individual who is DeafBlind, but also their families by providing local resources and referrals. Cory stated that they also provide information regarding the National DeafBlind equipment distribution program called I Can Connect. The HKNC has a national registry form that they ask all people who are DeafBlind to fill out. This form is used for federal purposes such as the census.

*Anindya “Bapin” Bhattacharyya (HKNC)* - Bapin presented on the distribution program I Can Connect and what it is. In 2010, President Obama signed the Video Communications Access Act of 2010, which allotted \$10 million to set up a national deaf blind equipment distribution program; the program is run by the FCC. The program finally began in 2012 and has been a tremendous success thus far. FTRI teamed up with HKNC last year and reinvented the program to be what it is today. Anyone who can show medical documentation that they are DeafBlind and meet the annual income qualifications is eligible to join this program. The income qualifications are 66,000 or less a year, in a household of two people or, depending on how many people are in the household, their amount can increase from 66 to 85,000. Anyone interested may visit the website and apply. Once approved, the individual is contacted and put on the schedule for a technology assessment meaning that a trainer will go to their home and bring lots of different equipment which can be demonstrated to the person. Once it has been decided what is needed, another training appointment is set up for after the equipment has been received.

*Darlene Laibl-Crowe (FCCDHH)* – Darlene conducted a DeafBlind activity that included the use of blindfolds and ear plugs. One activity was done with a partner where one would describe a picture to the other, either by drawing on their hand or describing the picture, while the other was blindfolded. Another activity was counting coins while blindfolded. Each participant received about \$1.28 in a brown paper bag. With the blindfold on, the participants took the coins out of the bag and had to figure out which coins there were, as well as count the money. An index card with each participant’s name written in braille was also given. Some cards had two lines of braille and some only had one. If the index card only had one line, your name only needed to be written in basic braille. The second line was contracted braille which is used if your name has a contracted sound in it. Along with the coins and pictures, a bill counter was brought and explained. This technology makes it easier to know which dollar bills you have by inputting the bill and the bill counter vibrating for different dollar amounts. This activity was used to bring awareness to the Council.

**Public Comment:**

*June McMahon (FAD Vice President):* Since moving to Florida 14 years ago, June has noticed many needs within the community but one stands out to her, mental health services for people who are deaf. There aren't many mental health counselors or centers for people who are deaf but that is what's being requested most by the community. June went on to speak about the lawsuit with Baptist Hospital. The hospital was using live interpreters but then switched to VRI which is concerning because it is hard to communicate via VRI in a hospital. Another thing June mentioned is that she is working on a project for more housing for senior citizens who are deaf. This is also an important project because many senior citizens who are deaf are placed in assisted living facilities that aren't catered to meet the needs of an individual who is deaf so these people oftentimes feel isolated.

June mentioned that more transitional services needed for those who have difficulty after high school becoming successful. Some students go directly to college after high school and the others don't. Or they do and have a hard time succeeding.

*Carrie Carter:* Carrie had the same concern as June with the VRI situation. She mentioned a friend who was pregnant and in the hospital and couldn't use the VRI due to limited communication access through the computer.

*Elizabeth Fields:* Mentioned she is trying to attend more deaf events and Council meetings to bring more awareness and try and prepared for anything that may happen.

Elizabeth told the Council about a friend of hers who is deaf and was in prison. He had no way to communicate with anyone outside of the prison because they didn't have any equipment or interpreters to do so. They use TTYs as an "acceptable" form of communication equipment but that technology is outdated, no one relies on that technology anymore.

*Jessica (Elizabeth's roommate; just moved to Florida from Maryland):* Jessica is concerned about SSPs and their availability. She hasn't seen any training for SSPs in South Florida which is hurting the Deafblind community.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held in Safety Harbor, FL August 10-11, 2017, location TBD

### **Exhibit Discussion:**

The Council held a discussion regarding the possibility of holding an exhibit type of event at the next quarterly meeting. The idea is that different organizations in the area where the meeting is held will attend as well as any member of the public so the public can learn about different services in their area. There will be two conference rooms, one for the meeting and one for the exhibits. During the meeting the participants and members are invited to attend and observe and during the scheduled breaks, and possibly after the meeting concludes on Thursday, the exhibit hall will be open. Unfortunately, the exhibit event will not be taking place at the next meeting in August, but a time will be scheduled on the agenda for this discussion.

### **Action Items:**

1. Send quarterly correspondence letters to organizations regarding the meeting's public comments – EMO Committee
2. PSA Committee hold a conference call – PSA Committee
3. Find out if the Council can fundraise and have sponsors for exhibit events – Shay Chapman
4. Send a list of contacts for correspondence letter to Megan by May 26<sup>th</sup> – Entire Council
5. Send previous EMO letters and reports to Gina Halliburton – Cindy Simon
6. Establish guidelines and timeline for report – Biennial Report Committee
7. Send Megan/DOH completed correspondence letter to be mailed from DOH – Gina Halliburton
8. Update website membership – Megan Callahan
9. Contact IT about adding Legal Systems Access DVD to website – Megan Callahan
10. Find hotel for next meeting – DOH Staff
11. Inform Florida Building Commission and Public Service Commission of new members – Glenna Ashton
12. Send an email to visitors thanking them for coming and provide them with resources – Glenna Ashton
13. Send any website updates that are needed – Entire Council
14. Send updated PSA script with the changes that were made during the Feb. meeting – Megan Callahan
15. Check with the newspaper editor for any responses from the Council's article – Mary Hodges
16. Invite Sharon Caserta to the November meeting in St. Augustine – Donna Drake