



The Deaf Reader

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President's Message

Written by Dawn Watts ASL: [President's message](#) (click)

Last month, the Ohio Deaf Friends of the Library (ODFL) Board members agreed to collaborate with the Ohio Association of the DeafBlind (OADB) for the Deaf Reader Newsletter. Bryan Grubb, President of the OADB and Board members agreed and signed up



on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on September 27, 2025. Welcome, the OADB.

Thanks to Danny Lucero and Nancy Levin, ASL Storyteller Co- Chairperson and Advocate of the Kids, Ohio Hands and Voices for their involvement with the ODFL for the past two years. The good news is that we received two grants of \$10,000 from State Library and Advocate of the Kids for the ASL storyteller in three libraries: Cleveland Heights Public Library, Dayton Public Library, and Westerville Public Library. It will start this month. In addition, I donated 250.00 to the Stark Public Library for Marlee Matlin's presentation on November 6, 2025. Read the next page 3.

As President of ODFL, I will not be seeking another term, in accordance with the ODFL Bylaws, which limit serving to two consecutive terms. It has been a genuine pleasure working with various individuals over the past ten years, both as Vice President and President. Recently, the ODFL Facebook page announced a celebration of our ten-year anniversary. I would like to sincerely thank my fellow officers who have collaborated with me over the years; their support has been essential to the success of this nonprofit organization.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 13th, via Zoom at 6:00 PM. If you are interested in running for a position on the ODFL Board, please contact Gail Teltser, ODFL Nominee, via email, (page 4) and specify which position you are interested in. Look at the website: ocdclibrary.org for Bylaws.



Warm regards,

Dawn K Watts

Marlee Matlin at the Stark Public Library

TRAID Deaf Services and the Stark Public Library announce Marlee Matlin will give her presentation. It will be on November 6th at 6 pm to 7 pm. You need to make an RSVP.

Stark Library presents Marlee Matlin as part of the Dr. Audrey Lavin Speaking of Books Author Series.

Marlee Matlin received worldwide critical acclaim for her film debut in *Children of A Lesser God* for which she received the Academy Award for Best Actress. In addition to her film, TV, and stage work, Marlee has also penned three novels for children, as well as her *New York Times* best-selling autobiography, *I'll Scream Later*. Marlee's journey is an inspiration to everyone, regardless of the barriers they face. As she so aptly stated, "The only thing I can't do is hear. The rest is there for the taking."

[An Evening with Marlee Matlin | Speaking of Books Author Series | Events | Stark Library](#) (click)



Ohio Deaf Friends of the Library Nominees for 2026 to 2028

ASL: [How to process](#) (click)

If you are interested to run for the ODFL Board members as President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Five Representatives and ODFL Webmaster. More information ODFL Bylaws in the website: ocdclibrary.org

Please contact Gail Telter, Nominee at gailwt142@hotmail.com with your name and what position that you are interested to run

We will have our final meeting at 6:00 pm then we will have the new election voting on Thursday, November 13th at 7 pm.

Ohio Voting Day on Tuesday, November 4, 2025

<https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/current-voting-schedule/2025-schedule/>



DHH Alarms Flyer for Advocacy

Written by: Deborah Ozanich

To encourage state representatives, local fire departments, the Red Cross, and Deaf/Hard of Hearing agencies to agree in distributing fire and carbon monoxide alarms designed for Deaf/Hard of Hearing people. We aim to highlight the urgent need for these alarms!

[Click here to Show Your NEED for Fire & Carbon Monoxide Alarms that light up!](https://forms.gle/1UQDtYmkNXcU1T6W8)

Or type this link and fill in the quick & easy form:

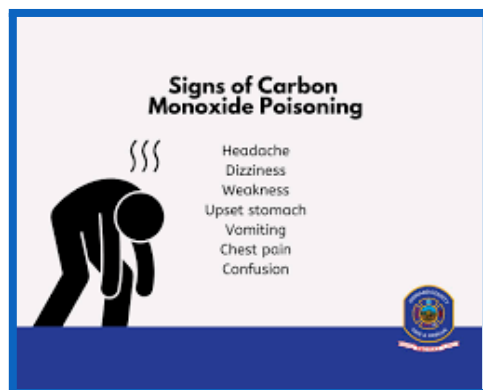
<https://forms.gle/1UQDtYmkNXcU1T6W8>

Show Your Need for Safety! We must demonstrate the need to shake awake or light up fire and carbon monoxide alarms, especially in rural areas. These alarms can be cost-prohibitive, typically costing \$200 to \$500 or more for the necessary accessories. Many of us rely on gas or wood for heating, which can lead to dangerous situations.

Please share your contact information using the provided link to help showcase the urgent need for these safety alerts.

Your information will remain confidential and will only be used to inform state representatives and supporting agencies about our community's needs.

Help by spreading this link across Ohio among Deaf and Hard of Hearing friends and family. Feel free to contact me (Deborah Ozanich) at dozanich747@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions about alarm brands or models. Together, we can raise awareness and help save lives! Thank you for reading and making this dream come true for all of us and making us safer in our homes.



Ohio Church Service with ASL Interpreter Service

Deborah Ozanich said that the church works with Cleveland Hearing Speech and Deaf Center as Partner Sponsor with The Bath Church, 3980 W. Bath Road, Akron, Ohio on October 24, 2025 at 7:30 pm

To make musical performances for the Deaf Friendly with ASL Support, to the beat of the music and different sounds in the music. And, there will be another music on December 18th at 7 pm. Here is a link website: <https://www.musicatbath.org/>

Dawn Watts said that the Upper Arlington Lutheran Church provides ASL Interpreter service every Sunday at 9 am at 3500 Mill Run Dr, Hilliard, Ohio. Here is a link website: <https://www.ualc.org/>

If you know any religions in Ohio, please let me know.



Deaf Kids Connect

Written by Brittany Stacey

Ideas to implement for children:

Deaf Missions Simple Chants:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuzCBDvjdeA&list=PLrpMGJit5u0t5H9KVdGpTh9hpSy9eHidh>

Deaf Kids Connect Bible Memory Verses:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGi2o7rzu1w&list=PLYRqdFX1RWQont2rxffkRmIshUV_NdcLn

Happy Hands Monthly memory verses:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2r5xcS9788A&list=PLna6-92bW-AXIa8cYHbJe1rBQLEQjJZh9>

For the whole Congregation:

ASL version of the whole bible :

<https://www.deafmissions.com/aslv?sapurl=LysyOGQxL2xiL2xpLys3ZmtwM2duP2JyYW5kaW5nPXRydWUmZW1iZWQ9dHJ1ZSZyZWNIbnRSb3V0ZT1hcHAud2ViLWFWcC5saWJyYXJ5Lmxpc3QmcmVjZW50Um91dGVUbHVnPSUyQjdma3AzZ24=>

** Remember, you can change the playback speed to slower!**

Hosting Events:

If you are interested in hosting playgroups, game nights, ASL voice off practice at your church, I have used canva

<https://www.canva.com/> to make simple flyers/information posters. Many are free!

Prayer Requests: If you have prayer requests you'd like to share, or are interested in signing up for birthday cards for your kids, here is the link I mentioned to communicate that!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfU6yvg7Z8kl0rkuoEn9ddKUIJ1_48xw7-n-iz3a_M1SuGabA/viewform.

Meeting with Leadership:

If your Church's leadership is looking for a jumpstart at your church, here is a link to a training that Deaf Kids Connect offers. Please connect with us if you are interested in this or something similar. We'd love the opportunity to discuss training/resources that would match your church's needs.

<https://deafkidsconnect.com/education-training/training-for-church-and-ministry-leaders/>

Contact Brittany Stacey at brittany@deafkidsconnect.com

Next meeting will be on Monday, October 13th at 8 pm, contact to Andrea Guettler at andrea@deafkidsconnect.com

Deaf Senior of America Conference at the Kansas City

Written by Dawn K Watts

The conference was successfully held with the introduction of our new CEO, Sherri Collins, on the first day. She and President Phil Aiello of the DSA are committed to enhancing support for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind members.

We are pleased to announce that DSA and AARP have established an official partnership. AARP is dedicated to addressing key issues affecting older Americans (over 50 years old) including the protection and enhancement of Medicare and Social Security, the affordability of prescription medications, and support for family caregivers. Join AARP membership: [JOIN AARP](#) (click)

The next DSA conference will be held in Baltimore, Maryland. Additional information is available on their website: [DSA Conference](#) (click)

Howard Rosenblum announced to DSA members his intention to run for U.S. Congress. We are pleased and fully supportive of his candidacy. More information about him can be found at: <https://www.howardrosenblum.com/about>.



Picture: Art Roehrig, Dawn Watts, Howard Rosenblum, and Mal Peters

ASL Storytelling in Three Libraries

Written by Danny Lucero

As we wrap up the final phase of the Library Grant/AdvforKids initiative, I am pleased to share that our efforts have successfully established ASL Storytelling programming in our metro library systems. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and collaboration of our team.

Attached, you will find several key documents — including agreements, contracts, and scheduled story dates. These materials were designed to create a standardized and compliant framework aligned with the recent grant award, laying the foundation for future ASL storytelling initiatives.

I am scheduled to conduct three storytelling sessions this fall — two in October. One will be held in person at the Miami Township Public Library, and the other will be a virtual session with the Dayton Metro Library through their Storytime\@Home program. You can explore their virtual series here:

Additionally, I'm sharing a link to their Early Literacy Program, which I believe is a valuable resource for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children of all ages:

Dayton Metro Library – Early Literacy: <http://www.daytonmetrolibrary.org/earlyliteracy>

Looking ahead, we have another special storytelling event on November 9th at the Miami Township Library in honor of Native American Heritage Month.

It's inspiring to see ASL Storytelling gaining momentum and expanding its reach. Below is our current schedule:
ASL Storytelling Calendar:

Dayton Metro Library – Miami Township (Danny Lucero)

- * Wed, Oct 15 @ 10:30 AM
- * Wed, Nov 5 @ 10:30 AM
- * Sat, Dec 6 @ 10:30 AM

Heights Libraries – Coventry (Liliana Pokorny)

- * Sat, Oct 11 @ 11:00 AM
- * Sat, Nov 8 @ 11:00 AM
- * Sat, Dec 6 @ 11:00 AM

Westerville Public Library (Christine Stepien)

- * Wed, Oct 8 @ 9:30 AM
- * Sat, Nov 1 @ 10:00 AM
- * Mon, Dec 1 @ 10:00 AM



A heartfelt thank you to Kaela, Nancy and the entire team — your commitment, creativity, and collaboration have been instrumental in making this vision a reality.

National Federation of the Blind of Ohio

The 79th Ohio State convention will be held at the Wyndham Garden Westlake Hotel, 1100 Crocker Road, Cleveland Westlake, Ohio 44145. For more information contact, Delcenia Brown or William Turner Ohio DeafBlind co-chairs at delcenia@prodigynet or turnerw794@gmail.com

Live The Life You Want!

Karlee Wascher, M.A. CVRT Employment Specialist: HKNC and Dawn Watts, Ohio SSP Coordinator and Jason Judy, the Ohio Deaf Blind Advisory Chairperson of the Columbus Speech & Hearing Center will share resources related to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. To know the differences between the three groups of individuals and their communication needs.

Here is a link website: <https://nfbohio.org/convention>





OHIO DEAF ASSOCIATION

Ohio Deaf Association

Written by ODA President, Dr. Marsha Moore

Greetings, ODA and ODFL members and friends!

So many things have happened with the Ohio Deaf Association since the last report. Here are a few highlights!

ODA Deaf/KODA Youth Camp – July 17–20, 2025

ODA's first summer's Deaf/KODA Youth Camp was a resounding success!! 40 campers attended the weekend long camp and engaged in many activities including ziplining, swimming, arts and crafts and rock climbing. A big thank you go to our incredible sponsors, we were able to meet our fundraising goals and provided scholarships to 10 campers to attend the camp. We had 19 Deaf and 21 KODAs so it was a well-balanced group of kids along with great counselors, interpreters, staff and volunteers!

Waving Hands to all who donated, volunteered, and lent a hand where needed!!

Behind the scenes, our dedicated camp committee continued to wrap up financial and grant reports. We have also started planning for Camp 2026 and in fact are excited to announce the camp dates for 2026. Additionally, ODA has already received our first donation for Camp 2026! Please check here for details:

[Save The Date - Camp 2026](#) and share them with your family and friends! Registration will open on January 15, 2026.

® ODA Trademark Approved!

The **Ohio Secretary of State** has officially approved ODA's logo as a trademark. This important milestone helps strengthen our brand and identity. You can see the logo featured at the top of this report. We will use this logo for all printed materials, clothing and on our website as well to promote the Ohio Deaf Association.

Legislative Liaison Update

Dawn Watts, Legislative Liaison, continues to work on several legislative initiatives including the LEAD-K Ohio. The committee has met a few times to discuss strategies for LEAD-K Ohio. Stay tuned for more updates on ODA's advocacy and education in the legislation arena. We will send out any legislative actions that require your support when it happens.

* New Vice President Appointed

The Ohio Deaf Association (ODA) is pleased to announce that **Will Coy-Gonzalez** has been appointed as **Vice President** during a special meeting held on **Tuesday, September 23, 2025**. He will serve in this role through the remainder of the current term until the **2026 elections**.

★ Deaf President Now Screening (DPN) Event - Friday, October 10, 2025 - 5pm to 8:15pm

Do not miss this important event that changed the Deaf World for the better!

Please share this with your friends, colleagues, and family, and invite them to join us for a night of learning about this important and historic event that occurred at Gallaudet University and the Deaf community.

Exciting announcement: Jerry Covell, one of the four student leaders, will be joining us for this DPN event and will share his experiences with DPN. He will also be available for Q&A after the screening along with the **four DPN participants** - John Moore, Dawn Watts, Debbie Manning, and Art Roehrig. Please register so that we can have enough free food and drinks for everyone!

Here is the link to the free registration: [REGISTER NOW](#)



ODA Board Meetings around Ohio

We've set up the next few board meetings around the state. Please plan to meet us at one of the meetings so we can hear from you what you want ODA to do for you. You can find the tentative schedule at [ODA Board Meetings 2025-2026](#). If you want us to host a board meeting in your area, please email TheOhioDA@gmail.com. **See you at the next Board Meeting soon! ODA wants to see you!**

ODA Priorities for the Next 2 Years

At our **September 5, 2025, General Meeting**, we invited community members to share their input in shaping ODA's focus for the next two years. Together, we identified the following priorities:

- ODA Deaf/KODA Summer Camp 2026
- LEAD-K Ohio
- ODA ASL News

Stay tuned as we work on these 3 priorities for ODA! We also got a lot of feedback for long-term goals as well and we will also keep those in mind as well as we move forward for ODA.



ODA on the Road!

ODA is excited to be part of several upcoming events—come visit our table and say hello! While you're there, consider becoming a member of ODA. We were also proud to take part in OSDAA's Fall Festival, DeafNation Expo, and Dayton's Deaf Festival. Stephen Rute, our lead, is working with Chinemeze Nnadi to spread the news about Ohio Deaf Association so find them at an event near you!



Pickleball Fundraiser – Postponed to March 7, 2026

Mark your calendars! We're thrilled to team up with ASLIN and DWAVE for the Ohio Deaf Pickleball Fundraiser. This exciting event supports all three organizations and will be held on March 7. Register now at! See flyer for more information at: [Updated PB Tournament Flyer 3.7.26](#).



New Centralized Calendar

Remember to continue to send in your news, flyers, articles, and events to ODA! We will post them on FB, IG and on our website. You can find it at www.ohiodeaf.org/event. The goal is to help promote community events and to reduce schedule conflicts.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support of ODA's mission. Your energy and involvement keep our community connected, informed, and thriving.

Warm regards,

Dr. Marsha Moore,
President, Ohio Deaf Association
www.ohiodeaf.org



Written by Vicky Emerson as OADB Member-at-Large and SSP/CN Coordinator

Ohio DeafBlind Retreat
"Stomp! Stomp! Stomp! DeafBlind Rocks!"
Aug 14 - 17, 2025



Standing Row (left to right): Dawn Watts, Jean Cormany, Julia Felts, Donna Schultz, Todd Craycraft, Brian Farney, Rachel Swindford, Lynn Jansen, Sara Smith, Nelly Pohlmeier, Debbie Brown, Daniel Steiner, Kurt Reh, John Mitchell, Judy Groner, Scott Hamm, Willie Lyons, Amy Weeks, Bryan Grubb, Bobby Sillanpaa, Rae Trambaugh, Jace Judy, Whitney Fain, Shonna Collins, Patong , Jeff Wicks, Art Roehrig, Cheryl Mason, Julie Levine, Patrick Collins

Sitting row (left to right): Denny Starks, Emma Holder, Logan Sanders, Vicky Emerson, Janette Shank, Nick (Judy's dog), Laurie Laughlin, Linda Denny, Shirley Rybarski

Not in photo: Abby Whooten, Ashley Thompson, Betsey Jesenko, Caleb Frazier, Cheyanne Oettinger-Benton, David Mason, Jade Loveless, Marshall Harris, Rick Schultz, Riley Nichols, Scott Hamm, Tonya Grubb

The OADB hosted a camping experience for the DB members at Heartland Conference and Retreat Center in Marengo, Ohio on August 15 to 18, 2025. 15 DB Campers and over 36 CN/SSP enjoyed the sunshine and summer weather together. Activities included nightly camp-fire chats, story-telling, jokes, crafts such as pillow making, tie-dying t-shirts, hiking, golf-cart riding, swimming, wagon rides and ziplining. Meals were delicious and the dining hall was nicely positioned close by and accessible. Please see our new website: TheOADB.com and become a member today!



Campfire chats: Janette Shank, Sarah Smith, Jace Judy, Jeff Wicks, Daniel Steiner, Linda Denny, Shirley Rybarski and Donna Schultz

Left picture: Nellie Pohlmeier shows off her paw-print pillow craft. Pillow making craft activity



American Association of the DeafBlind

Written by Rod McDonald

During our 2025 election process six candidates came forward:

President: Anne McQuade, Georgia

1st Vice-President; Lori Siedman, Massachusetts

Secretary; Rod Macdonald, Hawaii

Treasurer; Debi Dee, Georgia

Members At-Large:

Vicky Magliocchino, Florida

Brett Wilhelm, Missouri

Since all six ran unopposed, the Board and the Election 7 Voting Committee both voted unanimously to accept the six as elected, without the need for a vote.

These six candidates will be seated as of February 1, 2026. The officers will serve four-year terms and the MALs will serve two-year terms.

The current Board also voted unanimously to appoint the six candidates to vacancies on the current Board for the remainder of our term. The new Board, to serve through January 31, 2026, is as follows:

President: Rod Macdonald

1st VP: Anne McQuade

2nd VP: Lori Siedman

Secretary: Tonilyn Todd

Treasurer; Debi Dee

Members At-Large:

Scott Davert

Vicky Magliocchino

Cathy Miller

Art Roehrig

Brett Wilhelm

Ohio Service Dog Awareness Week July 25-26, 2025

Written by Chris Cooley



Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary

It was a wonderful event! I received great community support, with over 50 items donated for a raffle held on July 25 at the Tabletop Game Café, which also hosted a fundraiser for Pilot Dogs. Approximately 20 people attended, and the community filled the café throughout the weekend. Attendees asked questions and engaged actively. I also represented ODFL during this time.

On July 26, we organized a walk with about 15-20 participants, including individuals with various disabilities. Afterwards, we enjoyed lunch at The Chocolate Café, where we received a warm welcome. Later that evening, we had a fun gathering at the Old Arcade Bar, which outreach to us and provided a welcoming environment. We raised over \$60, with proceeds split between Guiding Eyes for the Blind and 4 Paws for Ability. I am proud of our community's participation and the opportunity it provided for awareness and learning.

Ohio's Blue Envelope Program

Written by Chris Cooley

I received assistance with the Blue Envelope Program, which allows individuals with disabilities to display important information for first responders in emergency situations. This program provides a visible sticker for your door or vehicle to indicate the presence of a disability, helping emergency personnel identify specific needs such as interpreters, medical conditions, or medications. The program is free and has been expanding across Ohio, with other states also considering adoption.

It is recommended that SSPs and DSPs have a Blue Envelope in their vehicles for safety purposes, ensuring that first responders have access to vital information to provide appropriate assistance.

To request your free Blue Envelope, please send an email to:
Kelli Gothard at kgothard@socog.org



Driving While Deaf

Written by Phillip Wells

It is a common misconception that being deaf prevents you from driving. In order to keep people informed and provide the deaf and hard of hearing with reputable information, we created a guide on driving while deaf. Check it out below:

samndan.com/driving-while-deaf/

Meirowitz & Wasserberg, LLP is composed of very compassionate trial attorneys, who are highly aggressive in the courtroom. Nothing is more important to the firm than its clients, and we have successfully represented injured people seeking justice by obtaining the maximum compensation that they deserve. Our mantra is “We Represent People, Not Corporations,” and we believe in fighting for the rights of the everyday-person.

Although past results are not to be considered indicative of futures ones, listed below are some of our most noteworthy recoveries. Of course, no two cases are exactly alike, so we showcase these real results as evidence of what we are capable of, and to demonstrate our proven track-record of successes on behalf of our clients.

If you or a loved one has been seriously [injured in an accident](#), harmed by a [defective product](#), or been diagnosed with [mesothelioma](#), [lung cancer](#), or [asbestosis](#), [contact](#) our experienced and [highly skilled attorneys](#) today, for a free, no obligation consultation, to discuss the details of your case.

Co-Navigator (CN)/Support Service Provider



Support Service Provider/Co-Navigator of Columbus Speech & Hearing Center conducted a Deafblind Training session at St. Rita School for the Deaf in Cincinnati, Ohio, on Saturday, September 27th.

The workshop was attended by over 25 participants, including individuals who are Deafblind. The participants expressed great enthusiasm and interest in learning about Deafblind culture.

The next training workshop is scheduled to take place in Toledo, with details to be announced in January 2026. If you know of any individuals interested in becoming an SSP or Co-Navigator, please encourage them to complete an application form.

If you know any DeafBlind or Hearing Blind person, please have them to apply: [Application form for DB people](#)

New Ohio DeafBlind Advisory Chairperson, Jason Judy

Committee: Shonna Collins, Deborah Kenrick, Janae Miller, and Vicky Emerson

HKNC Regional Representative: Kacie Weldy

Earn .15 PS CEUs
or .3 PS/PPO CEUs for
Interview 10/14 and
Discussion 10/28

**THINK TANK TUESDAYS
PRESENTS**

HONORING THE DEAFBLIND PROFESSIONAL

Think Tank Tuesdays offers this opportunity to honor the Deaf/DeafBlind experience and appreciate each guest's journey.

**ON ZOOM
IN ASL**



Tuesday, October 14th

5:00-6:30pm PST

8:00-9:30pm EST

FEATURED GUEST

JASON A. CORNING

Jason A. Corning is a PhD candidate in International Psychology, focusing on disability, mental health, and inclusive systems across cultures.

With over 15 years of experience in accessibility, usability, and community advocacy, he leads Three Monkeys Communication - promoting equitable design, ProTactile training, and global disability education.

Jason actively serves on the Oregon Disabilities Commission and collaborates with organizations worldwide to improve quality of life for DeafBlind individuals and other marginalized communities.



Register for this interview at:
www.GrowProfessionally.org

MassRID is an approved RID CMP sponsor for Continuing Education Activities.

ASL Morning & Muffins

Please join us for a morning of open play, muffins,
and resources for the deaf community at the
inclusive playground!!



**Saturday, November 8th
9am-12pm**

Blendon Woods Metro Park
4265 E. Dublin Granville Rd.
Westerville, OH 43081



Metro Parks Adaptive Adventures
Questions: mlrichley@metroparks.net

OADB Holiday Party/Deadline on Nov. 28, 2025

Holiday Party will be on Saturday, December 13, 2025 at 10:30 am to 3 pm at Der Dutchman Restaurant, 720 State Route 97 W, Bellville, Ohio 44813. RSVP please.

Cost:

Member: \$30.00

SSP: \$15.00

Non-member: \$35.00

Contact: Linda Denny at purplerose0712@yahoo.com or Donna Schultz at donna.schultzdb@gmail.com

Name:

Email address:

1. Are you bringing your SSP and family or friend(s)? Yes or No

2. Will you need a Volunteer SSP? Yes or No

Payment to Check/Money order (OADB) or CASH (AAP) OADB OADB

Send a check and form to OADB

PO Box 763

Brice, Ohio 43109

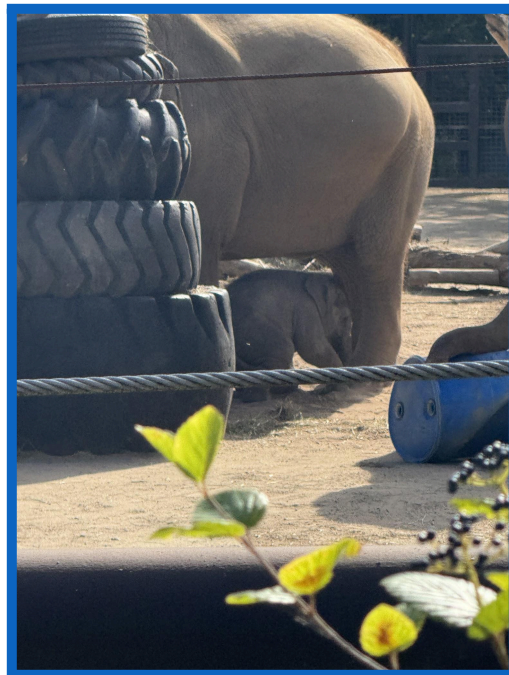
Columbus Zoo for the DeafBlind, Deaf, H.H. and Hearing Blind

On September 27, 2025, the Columbus Zoo hosted a special all-day event dedicated to individuals who are Blind, Hard of Hearing (HH), and DeafBlind. The event was attended by over 25 DeafBlind participants, more than 30 CN participants, over 10 individuals who are Blind, and over 10 Deaf/HH individuals. We gratefully acknowledge the Heritage Interpreting Agency for providing ASL interpretation services.

There were different booths for public people who learned about DB, Deaf, and HH. Here is a movie of children: [ASL to children](#) (click)

One of the DeafBlind participants, Darla C., shared that she had an excellent experience. Here is a movie [DARLA C](#) (click)

A picture of Mom Elephant and “Rita Jean” a baby, named after Rita Jean Wolfe who was involved with Columbus Zoo’s history in 1926. Rita Jean represents Hope, Love, and Compassion.





The Walters–Smithdas Legacy Atrium

— Ribbon Cutting Ceremony —

November 17, 2025 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Helen Keller National Center, 141 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point, NY 11050

Hors d'oeuvres, light dinner fare, and refreshments will be served

The unique friendship between Barbara Walters and Dr. Robert J. Smithdas represents what is possible when people choose to reach across perceived boundaries with patience, respect, and curiosity. It is a reminder that the most meaningful connections are often forged not in spite of our differences, but because we take the time to understand and celebrate them.

You are cordially invited to celebrate the unveiling of a newly imagined space where touch opens new worlds of experience and connection.

"Over the years people have sometimes asked me who was the most memorable person I have ever interviewed," Barbara Walters reflected towards the end of her career. "They expected it to be a president or a king, maybe a movie star, but it isn't any of those." That person was Dr. Robert J. Smithdas, whom she famously called "the most memorable interview of my career." Their connection blossomed into a remarkable friendship that would span decades.

Dr. Robert J. Smithdas (1925–2014) forever changed the landscape for individuals who are DeafBlind. His work demonstrated that with proper training, DeafBlind individuals can support themselves and fully participate as members of society. As the second DeafBlind person to graduate from college (following Helen Keller by 50 years), he earned his bachelor's degree from St. John's University in 1950, then went on to earn his master's degree from New York University in 1953. He later became a teacher, poet, and passionate advocate who co-founded the Helen Keller National Center.


Honoring Their Legacy

In honor of Barbara Walters and Dr. Robert J. Smithdas, a dedicated space has been designed and is scheduled for completion in October 2025 at the Helen Keller National Center. This newly reimagined atrium was made possible through a generous gift from the Estate of Barbara Walters.

This renovation represents a significant transformation for our campus facility since our original buildings were constructed in 1976. The atrium has been thoughtfully designed with functionality and accessibility as the primary focus, incorporating input from individuals who are DeafBlind to create a tactile, aesthetic, and accessible space for participants visiting or living on campus.

Please join us as we honor Barbara Walters and Dr. Robert J. Smithdas and unveil this space that will welcome future generations of DeafBlind individuals to the Helen Keller National Center.

Questions: Contact Monica Godfrey-Lehrer, Major Gifts Officer at (516) 944-8900 ext. 289 or mgodfrey-lehrer@helenkeller.org.

 [Click here to RSVP](#)



HEARING
SPEECH + DEAF
CENTER



6

DEC
2025

10AM - 1PM

FOOD, GAMES & MORE



HEARING SPEECH + DEAF CENTER

2825 BURNET AVE, 3RD FLOOR, CINCINNATI, OH

Step into Santa's Village, where holiday magic shines!

Children can meet Signing Santa, giggle
with the Signing Grinch, and enjoy treats, crafts,
and festive fun.

Register to receive a special gift from Santa!

<https://bit.ly/47FchU3>

Ages 12 & under (or strong believers!)



ViaQuest, Inc

Behavioral and Mental Health

We specialize in mental and behavioral health treatment for nursing facilities, individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities; those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/low vision or deafblind; those with CODAS; families and couples, and the aging population.

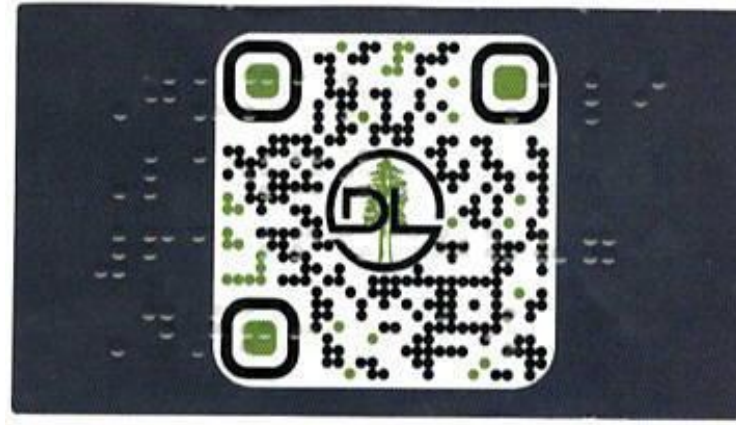
Counseling Services:

Our licensed signing and deaf counselors and social workers help clients deal with abuse, trauma, anxiety, depression and other mental health disorders through talk therapy. We can provide individual or group counseling in our office or in the community. Counseling focuses on digging into the root causes of behaviors. Our counselors provide a goal-oriented approach to help clients understand unhealthy and harmful thoughts and beliefs and focus on replacing them with positive ones. Our counselors will provide an assessment and customized treatment plan that is tailored to each individual to achieve their goals.

Website: viaquestinc.com/contact-us/

If you need an attorney for an American Sign Language Access lawsuit, use this QR code below.

Darr Law: Jumana M. Ali
Attorney
JMA@Darr.law
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614-653-7887



If you have any issues regarding this newsletter, please contact the Director, Editor, or Co-Editors at TheDeafReader@gmail.com

The Next Deaf Reader Newsletter [January 2026](#)

COMPUTER

If you need someone to fix your PC or Apple computer, Justin Watters, a Deaf Computer technician, can help and support you. You can contact him at jwwatters3@gmail.com. He will charge you for the service.

DINGO

Senior Citizens for the Deaf at the Columbus Colony Housing II, Multi-Purpose Room 1105 Colony Drive, Westerville, Ohio on the first week and third week every Thursday at 11 am to 3 pm.

Columbus Deaf Club at the Columbus Colony Housing II, Multi-Purpose Room, 1105 Colony Drive, Westerville, Ohio on the third week on Saturday at 5 pm to 9 pm.