

# October Newsletter



## Successful Outcome at Clear Mask Distribution Event

Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing had its Free Clear Mask and School Backpack Distribution event on September 12<sup>th</sup> at the parking lot next to GCDHH's office. The purpose of providing a free clear mask is to empower our consumers to encourage some businesses and medical services. They could teach them that clear mask is more accessible to communicate through facial expression or lipreading.

We had over 100 people coming from some cities such as Cave Springs, Macon, and Metro Atlanta to learn more about our different programs. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities-Deaf Service had a booth to educate our community to use their service for any mental or emotional needs.

Thanks to Janeth Barahona for donating some clear masks, school backpacks from Crussel-Freeman Baptist Church for the Deaf and Baptist Church, and Sign1News for covering the news about our event.



## GCDHH Spotlight

Kyra Matthews is the Victim Assistance Division's Project Coordinator at the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) which the state administering agency for Victims of Crime Act and Violence Against Women Act funds. As project coordinator, she is responsible for coordinating the Georgia Victim Assistance Academy and Statewide Victim Assistance Strategic Plan as well as managing the state's Local Victim Assistance Program certification process. Prior to coming to CJCC in 2016, she worked at one of Georgia's domestic violence agencies as a housing case manager.

Since learning how to sign the alphabet in kindergarten, Kyra has held a special place in her heart for the Deaf community. She met a Deaf advocate at one of the Georgia Victims Assistance Academies who has become a patient friend always willing to teach and help her learn how to be a better advocate. When out in the world personally and professionally, she intentionally puts herself in the shoes of people who have hearing loss and seeks to educate business owners, managers, and workers about the importance of having realistic and adequate technology and procedures in place. For example, she now rarely goes to the movies without using an assistive listening device just to test the ease of use, professionalism, and preparedness of the staff.

In 2017, she took it upon herself to attend a meeting with the intent to meet a Deaf advocate who would be willing to become a long-term, active participant in the Statewide Victim Assistance Strategic Plan process. She met Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's executive director, Jimmy Peterson. Because of his willingness to ensure the issues around hearing loss as it pertains to crime victim services, we are going into our fourth year of partnership with CJCC. Because of partnerships like this, various professionals who work with crime victims are continually learning about Deaf culture, correcting myths, increasing awareness regarding language access, and the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence now has a program called BRIDGES run by a Deaf advocate to educate and assist victims of domestic violence who are part of the Deaf community. She was glad to

have been part of encouraging CJCC to fund such a program as well as to set aside funds so that all agencies receiving funds through the Victim Assistance Division will always be able to pay for language access for survivors of crime within the Deaf community.



The last day to register to vote in Georgia is October 5th!

## **GCDHH CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:**



Stacey Heath is a Deafblind consumer who came to GCDHH needing equipment and assistance with his daily living. During COVID-19, he faced some challenges where language accessibility was even more limited because Tactile Sign Language is not considered social-distancing friendly. In addition to his challenges, Mr. Heath did not have a properly functioning communication device, leaving him unable to use his iPhone, iPad, and computer. This made it nearly impossible for him to communicate with us and others via technology. Community Coordinator, Andrea Alston took the necessary risk to communicate with him in-person by wearing a face shield paired with a mask. With Mrs. Alston's help, Mr. Heath was able to have dialogue with the various programs such as GCDHH's I Can Connect, GVRA, and Helen Keller National Center to get closer to his goal. He was able to expand his network of resources.

In September, iCC gave him an enlarged keyboard and other devices that allowed him to properly see what he was typing. Since then, Mr. Heath has been on his iPad, computer, and iPhone nonstop, gaining more independence and accessibility that were formerly cut off from him. Currently, GCDHH is working to reach his goal of learning to read braille before he starts applying for jobs. Mr. Heath expressed deep gratitude to Mrs. Alston for taking the incentive to open his line of communication with multiple programs. With GCDHH's support, his dream of increased independence is becoming closer to a reality.

# ASL ONLINE CLASSES



American Sign Language is the 3rd most common language in the U.S. and a beneficial skill for everyday life. It is a rich & visual language used by the Deaf community. Don't just learn ASL, open your eyes to a whole new culture-Deaf culture!

AGES 14+ ARE WELCOME TO ASL VIRTUAL CLASSES!

LEARN FROM YOUR SMARTPHONE, TABLET, LAPTOP FROM HOME!

HIGHLIGHTS OF THESE COURSES



 ONE-ON-ONE ATTENTION TO EACH STUDENT

 INTERACTIVE ONLINE COURSES

 GAIN ACCESS TO AUTHENTIC SIGNERS

*Register today!*



VIRTUAL ASL CLASSES : \$80



VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

SATURDAYS

ASL I 10AM-12PM EST

ASL II 1PM-3PM EST

ASL III 3:30PM-5:30PM EST

JANUARY 23, 30

FEBRUARY 6, 20, 27

MARCH 6, 13, 20

THIS IS A NON-CREDIT 2 HOUR COURSE FOR 8 SESSIONS, PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR CLASSES TO REGISTER

DEADLINE: JAN 13, 2021 WEDNESDAY @ NOON



GOT A QUESTION?



CONTACT ANDREA ALSTON  
AALSTON@GCDHH.ORG



GEORGIA CENTER OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Prior to COVID-19, Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GCDHH) offered American Sign Language (ASL) Courses in-person at the center. When the pandemic started, GCDHH took a new approach with virtual classes for ASL to respect safety concerns. Today, the remote classes are available for community (age 14 and up) and businesses. Below are upcoming available courses:

**ASL I- Beginner**

**ASL II- Intermediate**

**ASL III- Advanced**

\*There will be eight two-hour long classes each semester.



The textbook is highly recommended for all ASL units- **A Basic Course in American Sign Language (Second Edition)**. This can be ordered via Amazon. GCDHH offers online ASL classes for children younger than 14 years old for one hour for eight sessions. We also offer private ASL one-on-one for a separate fee. At the end of the semester, a Certificate of Attendance will be given for those who participated. This is only for the proof of participation in ASL course and this does not count as certified for Sign Language Interpreter. If you wanted to become a certified interpreter, you would have to take Interpreting courses at any college/university that offers them.

**If you are interested to learn American Sign Language, price inquiry or have questions, please email Community Coordinator, Andrea Alston at:**  
[Aalston@gcdhh.org](mailto:Aalston@gcdhh.org)  
**404-381-8448**

**Register Now!**

**GCDHH is still  
hosting Camp  
Juliena Journey, an  
online opportunity to  
take Zoom field trips  
from the comfort of  
your couch! Our**



class this month is  
**Halloween Crafts**  
with Lexy Battybones  
on October 17th at  
11am.  
Registration coming  
soon!



GCDHH is hosting "Literacy Friday" every second Friday of the month starting this month. There will be a new children's story posted to GCDHH's Facebook page and Kid's Zone. Be sure to check them out!

GCDHH  
Facebook

GCDHH Kid's  
Zone

[View Email as Webpage](#)