



In Touch

The Newsletter of the Deafblind Multihandicapped Association of Texas
Spring Edition ~April 2018

From the President's Pen



I am so excited and honored to be elected as President of DBMAT. I will strive to motivate our Board and membership as a whole to advocate for our deafblind community and support each other. Ultimately we are all doing what we can to help improve the lives of our loved ones who are deaf-blind. We hope to create "Moments of Joy" along the way for each of them as well as us, who support them! I would like to Honor Jan van Dijk in this article as well. As you may already know we have lost him this year, due to illness. The impact he has had on our deaf-blind community worldwide is phenomenal! He has researched and raised awareness worldwide with his traveling the world that has creating acceptance of his teachings by so many to increase services for the deaf-blind. He graced us with his presence here in Texas at DBMAT Camp in 2012. We thank him and will always remember him.

Our Family Conference last September was a big success and we look forward to the next one. We were so fortunate Just to recap, the following officers were elected at the Board Meeting: Vivecca Hartman – President, Denise Sewell – Vice President, Becky Harmon – Secretary (taking on Denise's remaining half term); and as Members At Large – Diana Avila, Jennifer Bailey, Mark Potts & Susie Welch.

We had some really great nominations for the awards this year. The following wards were given:

Christian Knapp The Great Motivator Award was given to Jarvis Thompson. The Everett Bryan Award was given to Lisa Braziel. We are

fortunate to have you all in our Community. Congratulations to all!

A Couple of our DBMAT Executive Boards Members will attend the Deafblind International (DbI) Network of Americas in mid April. We will share more with you in our next newsletter, after they come back.

Our Legislative Committee has already been hard at work with meetings, data gatherings and correspondence with our State Agencies, both HHSC and TEA. If you want to join the committee, you will see how impactful we can be! Please just let me know and I can add you to the Yahoo Group.

Susie can always use articles for the next newsletter, so please write down those ideas to share and make them into a couple paragraphs to share with other families through our newsletter. We appreciate any and all help so please give us a call.

Don't forget to mark your calendars. Our Family Conference is **September 14 – 16th at Camp Young Judea**. Hope to see you there!

Vivecca

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*After Graduation Happenings in the Life
of a Deafblind Young Lady and Her*

Mom...

By Becky Harmon

We are hanging in there! That's what I say when everyone asks about us since Kersten's graduation. This first year after graduation has been challenging but I figured it would be especially since I retired from teaching (wow-31 years) at the same time to be able to take care of her. Kersten has liked being at home with me but it has been really frustrating to get her to do things -just like her last year at school! I just think of it as "Kersten time" instead of "DeafBlind time." She was really ready for school to be over! However, now she thinks that staying home is really cool and we really don't need to do or go anywhere! NOT! We have places to go and people to see. But an occasional afternoon nap is really very nice. Just sayin'...

I do think this year would have been better if I had someone who could help out. So far, I've not been able to find anyone to work with her. Usually I find someone from Camp Summit but this year it didn't work out. I just need someone for about 3 days a week and I can work with their schedule... just haven't found the connection yet. Wish more signers were around our area. This is one of if not THE biggest concern and hurdle of parents. Finding good help-INTERVENERS!

So, I've signed her up for everything Camp Summit has available ☺. I know she loves it, she's safe, and I get a little break from being with her or maybe I should say she gets a little break from being with me ☺

She is actually at Camp Summit now for spring break. I think she may have withdrawals from not having her iPad for the week. Since now she is focused (obsessed) with Olympic ice skating ☺ and of course she loves Mako Mermaids videos.

We are going to Heather's Old Skool Village in Lake Worth two days a week. A really unique Day Hab. She gets to hang out with kids her age+. She plays Wii frisbee golf and bowling and usually is the best

at both. She beats the boys! Pretty funny! We work on crafts together, eat lunch, enjoy dancing to music-usually outside. They always have something going on! I stay with her since they don't have anyone that signs. I think they feel comfortable with her now so I may start leaving her for a short time and run an errand or two since there are several places around there to shop. She signs "school" when we talk about it.

We are using the same app FTVS HD (First Then Visual Schedule HD) for her daily Calendar routine. She will look at the larger calendar also on her iPad where I have marked off when we have appointments and when she goes to her Dad's. For some reason she doesn't want to use the very large paper calendar from TSBVI. That's okay since the iPad is so much more portable.



I never thought about going to a Day Hab after retiring but I feel blessed to be there with Kersten. I still get to help out as a teacher by helping the others learn how to communicate and interact with her.

In the Fall I was very busy finishing my Intervener Practicum at Utah State with Linda Alsop. It was challenging not being assigned to a specific school/teacher when documenting each of the many Standards. I finally submitted the Portfolio so I'm just praying I pass! The Day Hab helped with providing some activities. **I wish I could have done this when she was younger since I learned so much.**

I want to get a better exercise program going so we have a gym membership in the works. If enough people sign up from Heather's Old Skool Village, the gym will set up a program for them. Looking forward to seeing what they have since Kersten is probably getting tired of jumping on the little trampoline. Although, it has been a good routine since there is a counter that helps challenge her to increase her jumps each time.

Well, I hope you get a little taste of what we have experienced since graduation. Setting routines, no matter how small, with lots of "deafblind time" has helped us survive without killing each other!



"Moments of Joy" for Our Kids

By Susie Welch

It has been very difficult to find activities in the community that our son could participate in. When



our son was younger we started him in several Special Olympics activities. We were so lucky to find this. Almost every community has this and it doesn't matter how handicapped you are. Our son has participated in track and field, soft ball throw and bowling. In some of the sports they do have adaptive devices that the participants can use. On the track he would have a rope to follow for a short distance. The one sport he still takes part in is bowling! He does what they call ramp bowling and he loves it. This also gives him a chance to socialize with his peers from the community. It is wonderful! This gives him the opportunity he wouldn't have if he stayed home.

We gave up the track and field and softball throw because he always seemed to get sick after he had been out on the track in March.

I know each community has different sports they offer for Special Olympics. Our community offers basketball too. Some even have golf.

If your child isn't enrolled in Special Olympic, you need to check on what your community offers. It gives them a chance to get out there with their peers and enjoy things that they may never have experienced. They can make new friends and even meet someone to go bowling with sometime. It's not easy for our deaf-Blind kids to make friends, so this gives them another opportunity. Take advantage of this chance to offer your child more "moments of joy" in their life!



Choosing Services

By: Denise Sewell

Many of us are faced with these decisions on a daily basis when caring for our DB loved ones. Do you know what options you have or what is offered in your district or county? The choices can be overwhelming for all of us. The following paragraphs came mostly from the HHS website www.hhs.texas.gov and multiple searches for DBMD waiver as well as using "Google" and typing in key words. The three main "choices" that I found were;

1. Choice of Provider/Agency

2. Choice of CDS
3. Choice of SRO (Bexar County ONLY)

The service definition for Residential Habilitation was amended to reflect the requirement for DBMD individuals to use **Community First Choice (CFC) for Personal Assistance Services (PAS)/HAB services** that are available through Medicaid. These services do not reduce your available budget within the DBMD waiver, but are available in addition to the waiver. When it comes to managing your services, everyone has different needs and preferences in choosing the method of employment for these services. In recent years, there has been a growing movement within the aging and disability communities that is known variously as independent living, self-determination or consumer-direction. While there are some differences in each of these, they have basically this philosophy in common: that people are the best judges of what assistance they may need and of how that assistance should be delivered.

The Texas Health and Human Services System (HHSS) has long been a leader in promoting best practices in home and community services. Some of the earliest and best examples of consumer-directed services were developed and implemented in Texas.

HHSS gives you a choice about how your services are managed:

1) Choosing the **agency option** allows you to entrust responsibility to an agency for your program services. Your provider agency handles all aspects of attendant care.

If you choose the **agency option**, your provider agency will:

- Select, schedule and manage your attendants and substitutes, with input from you about your needs.
- Set wages and benefits for your attendants.
- Manage time sheets, payroll and employment records.

This option is available in all Texas Health and Human Services programs.

2) Choosing the **Consumer Directed Services (CDS)** employer option allows you to pay higher

wages and more control over your program services if you're able and willing to take more responsibility for coordinating the services.

If you choose **CDS**, you or your designated representative will:

- Recruit, hire and train your employees and backup employees (including family, friends or neighbors).
- Set wages and benefits for your employees based on a service budget created with the help of your service planning team.
- Set schedules and submit timesheets for your employees.
- A Parent cannot be employed through the CDS Option, unless the deafblind individual is an adult and has their own guardianship.
- Select a CDS agency to:
 - a. train you to hire and manage employees,
 - b. process your timesheets and payroll,
 - c. process receipts and invoices, and
 - d. act as your agent to pay federal and state employment taxes.

CDS is available in the following programs:

- Consumer Managed Personal Assistance (CMPAS)
- Community Attendant Services (CAS)
- Community Living Support Services (CLASS)
- Deaf Blind Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)
- Family Care (FC)
- Home and Community-based Services (HCS)
- Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP)
- Primary Home Care (PHC)
- Texas Home Living (TxHmL)

3) Choosing the **service responsibility option (SRO)** allows you to balance control and responsibility over your program services. You supervise your attendants and the agency handles all of the paperwork.

If you choose **SRO**, you or your designated representative will:

- Interview and select your attendants;
- Train and supervise your attendants; and
- Set schedules for your attendants.

Your provider agency will:

- Provides you with good applicants to interview, if you like.
- Hires your attendant.
- Sends a substitute if other plans fall through.
- Sets wages and benefits for your attendants.
- Manages time sheets, payroll and employment records.

Service Responsibility Option (“SRO”) is available in Bexar County as well as the Panhandle and South Plains regions of the state in these programs:

- Community Attendant Services (CAS)
- Family Care (FC)
- Primary Home Care (PHC)



Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

By: Adopted from Molly Sinanan’s notice from HKNC

Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

June 24 – June 30, 2018

- Every year the last week of June is devoted to the recognition of deaf-blind individuals.
- Coincides with birthday of Helen Keller (June 27, 1880)
- In 1984 it was formally recognized by the Federal government
- Approximately 2.4 million individuals are deaf-blind

Links to General Information on deaf-blindness:

American Association of the Deaf-Blind:

<http://www.aadb.org/>

Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths & Adults: www.helenkeller.org/hknc

National Center on Deaf-Blindness:

<https://nationaldb.org/>

World Federation of the DeafBlind: <http://www.wfdb.eu/>

For more information, contact:

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 141 Middle Neck Road
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Proclamation 5214 -- Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week, 1984

*By: By the President of the United States of America
 A Proclamation*

June 22, 1984

Our eyes and ears provide vital ways of interacting with the world around us. The lilt of laughter, the beat of a brass band, the smile of a friend, and the poetry of a landscape are but a few of the life blessings that our senses of sight and hearing help us to enjoy. But for some 40,000 Americans who can neither see nor hear, the world can be a prison of darkness and silence.

Inadequate education, training, and rehabilitation for those who are deaf and blind may prevent these Americans from becoming independent and self-sufficient, thereby greatly limiting their life potential and imposing a high economic and social cost on the Nation.

We must prevent such problems among our deaf-blind citizens by fostering their independence, creating employment opportunities, and encouraging their contributions to our society. Crucial to fulfilling this urgent national need is research on the disorders that cause deafness and blindness. Toward this end, the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke and the National Eye Institute as well as a number of voluntary health agencies are supporting a wide range of investigative projects that one day may provide the clues to curing and preventing these devastating disorders.

On June 27 we commemorate the 104th anniversary of the birth of Helen Keller, America's most renowned and respected deaf-blind person. Her accomplishments serve as a beacon of courage and

hope for our Nation, symbolizing what deaf-blind people can achieve.

In order to encourage public recognition of and compassion for the complex problems caused by deaf-blindness and to emphasize the potential contribution of deaf-blind persons to our Nation, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 261, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the last week in June 1984 as "Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week."

Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning June 24, 1984, as Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week. I call upon all government agencies, health organizations, communications media, and people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 4:20 p.m., June 22, 1984]



DBMAT Committees

By Vivecca Hartman

DBMAT Committees: DBMAT loves to have new ideas and other people's involvement! We are most effective, when we divide and conquer our time and talents! In order to assist us in being able to do this, we have focus group committees that you can select one (or more ☺) to join. The purposes of these committees are briefly defined as follows:

Legislative: To obtain and share legislative (both state and federal) information that affects people who are deaf blind and multihandicapped with the whole group. When there is action to be taken, where DBMAT may have an impact, this committee

can organize and plan an approach for all to be able to participate.

Fundraising: To organize and communicate fund raising tips for all to participate in.

Conference Planning: To organize and plan the annual conference. The majority of the work for this committee is via conference calls starting 6 months prior to each annual conference.

Education: To organize ideas that are good for sharing amongst our families. Based on each family's experiences and tips and tricks learned, one of the goals of this committee is to have a web-based place for knowledge sharing.

Regional Coordinators: To have a DBMAT member in each region of Texas as a contact person for any new locals that want to reach out and talk to someone close by.



DBMAT Mission, Vision & Principle

Statements

By The DBMAT Board

Mission — The mission of DBMAT is to promote and improve the quality of life for all Texans who are deaf-blind multihandicapped. We support the establishment of educational, rehabilitative, vocational and independent living opportunities of these individuals for all ages.

Vision — DBMAT recognizes that people who are deaf-blind multihandicapped will benefit from the provision of Quality Intervener Services lifelong. When intervener services are provided from the age of diagnosis, the person who is deaf-blind multihandicapped is most likely to develop to their full potential with an abundance of "Moments of Joy", (as defined by Dr. Jan van Dijk). As the person who is deaf-blind grows, his/her needs will change, but quality intervener services will always be required.

The DBMAT Board recognizes their primary goal is to advocate for quality Intervention to be available to all deaf-blind individuals who could benefit from it, until it is it is a viable option legally allowable to all

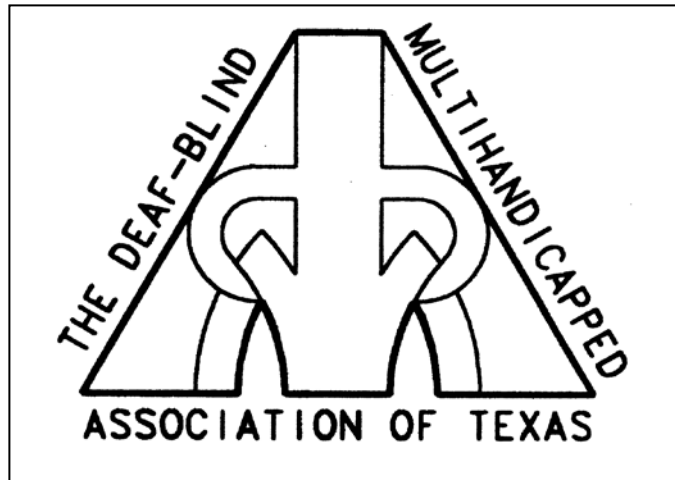
who want to request it. The commitment to this goal began during their Board meeting, held on June 9, 2006 and continues to be a primary focus today. In addition to the primary goal, we advocate for all deaf-blind individuals to have access to the services applicable for their individual needs.

It is DBMAT's vision to provide to individuals who are deaf-blind multihandicapped, as well as their families, access to other members, training opportunities, social events, as well as resources for which we maintain or have the ability to direct our members to.

Principles — We promote family education and understanding of our deaf-blind multihandicapped family member's abilities and disabilities. We offer resource information and referral to families, professionals, state agencies, and provider agencies serving people who are deaf-blind multihandicapped of all ages.

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