



*Serving the deaf and hard of hearing in Pasco and Hernando Counties since 1983.*

8610 Galen Wilson Blvd., Port Richey, FL 34668

727-853-1010

TTY 727-853-1014

Toll Free 1-866-685-9477

[www.deafhhsfla.org](http://www.deafhhsfla.org) [info@deafhhsfla.org](mailto:info@deafhhsfla.org)

## From the Executive Director:

The holiday season is behind us and I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful holiday season with families and friends. Our lives seem to move at a much faster pace than we would like, so please savor every minute you can.

Our poinsettia sale was very successful again and I believe everyone was very happy with their plants.

On a much more somber note, we were so disappointed to hear of the closing of 'Center Stage Theatre and Dance Academy'. Debbie and Keith Snyder had put numerous hours into their academy and many, many children and adults had benefited from it. Last year they were so generous in hosting our first "Vibrations"

show with all proceeds coming to DHHSF. We were in the planning stages for "Vibrations II" and Debbie and Keith were again very excited to help us. Hopefully they can continue their academy at another location as they will be greatly missed.

Therefore, we are planning a fundraising fashion show on April 18th at Seven Springs Country Club. We hope our local community will continue their support. We all have ideas to explore to create fun and exciting events this year.

— Jeff Thomas

**FASHION SHOW**  
**Seven Springs**  
**Country Club**  
**April 18, 2008**

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of Florida, Inc. recently entered into a contract with the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide employment services to individuals who are disabled. Our service area will include Pasco and Hernando Counties. Our scope of services will include training in job seeking skills, appearance and grooming, budgeting, resume' writing, and

interviewing. We also will train job seekers on the Americans with Disabilities Act on proper accommodations they should request.

"We are very excited to be able to offer this service to our Pasco and Hernando potential clients," said Jenny Hess, Clients Service Specialist. "We feel we have a unique specialty in this area and will be able to find consumers employment and en-

able them to keep these jobs."

To participate, you must first have an open case with Vocational Rehabilitation and then you can request DHHSF as your employment provider.

To contact Jenny, please call VP 727-853-1010 or TTY 727-853-1014.

## DHHSF: Your Source For Sign Language Classes

Did you know that Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Florida, Inc. offers sign language classes at our center and throughout the community? Whether you wish to learn ASL as a beginner or as a refresher, we try to find the right class for you. We offer classes in true American Sign Language as well as condensed versions of contact signing.

If you have a group that would like to learn ASL, give us a call and we will work with you to set up a group class.

Class fees are very reasonable. Both day and evening classes are available. Please contact Honey or Jenny to register at 727-853-1010.

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## Our Mission:

To provide the highest quality of services and programs to promote empowerment, equal access, education, independence and integrity to the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired communities.

*Partially funded by:*



## Board of Directors

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**Kelly Landsberg:**  
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**Jennifer Hess:**  
Client Services

**Christine Schmidt:**  
Client Service Specialist

## Do You Miss the Movies?

Port Richey's Hollywood 18 Theatre has Open Caption and Descriptive Audio movies! Go to [www.regalcinemas.com](http://www.regalcinemas.com); click on "Open Caption and Descriptive Audio" for listings. You may also contact the theatre directly by telephone 727-862-9567 or e-mail [theatre418@regalcinemas.com](mailto:theatre418@regalcinemas.com). Come see what you've been missing! Hope to see you there!

## New Equipment Available:

Florida Telecommunications Relay Inc has provided us with new equipment to be offered to Florida residents with a certified hearing loss at no charge. This new equipment has been added to the existing line of telephones we already offer such as: amplified telephones that increase the callers voice by 40db, cordless amplified telephones, captioned telephones, text telephones, speech to speech phones, and ring signalers. The new equipment is as follows:

- **Krown StarPlus Amplified Telephone:** This phone increase the incoming voice up to 53db, has

tone control and a speakerphone.

- **ClearSounds Amplified Telephone:** This phone increase incoming voice up to 40db, does not require electricity, also increases outgoing speech volume.
- **Three new text telephones (TTY):** All three are enhanced for better communication and message capabilities.
- **Ring Signalers:** Both audible and visual ring signalers. The visual is also a transmitter for other devices that can be pur-

chased.

All of the new equipment is on display at our main office.

Please contact or visit us Monday thru Friday for more information.

Telephone: 727-853-1010;  
TTY: 727-853-1014

### Have Advocacy Issues?

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of Florida, Inc. is here to help! Please call us at 727-853-1010, voice or VP; 727-853-1014, TTY, or [info@heafhhsfla.org](mailto:info@heafhhsfla.org).

## Signing for Every Day Living

We have been able to serve over 100 people since the beginning of September. This class is geared toward individuals who would like to learn some basic signs but don't necessarily want to learn the whole language. Each class has a different subject and we use games and demonstrations to help students to learn the signs. The pace is more relaxed than our regular ASL class and there are plenty of chances to practice. There is no need to purchase a book

because all the signs are distributed in a hand-out format.

As with any class, the benefits go beyond the learning of some signs. The connections people make help them learn ways of dealing with the hearing loss and breaks the isolation many people feel. Spouses of hearing impaired individual learn patience and those with hearing loss become more prone to accept help.

This class gives people a

chance to learn a different way to communicate that can help compensate for deteriorating hearing loss.

We also are researching speech reading materials in hopes adding this segment to our class as well. I think this could enhance the experience for all. We are currently setting up classes for February through July. Please contact us to join us!

Jeany 727-853-1010.

## Election Time & Pollworker Volunteers

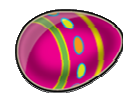
2008 will be a very busy election year with three different election days. January 29th is the Presidential Primary and property tax referendum for Florida residents. August 26th is our state and local primary election date and November 4th is Presidential Election Day. I hope everyone administers their right to vote on all three election days.

We are also asking for volunteers to be pollworkers for the August and November election days and to donate their time for DHHSF. Last year we had four individuals donate their time and it raised \$600.00 for the agency.

Please call Jeff @727-853-1010 if you have any interest in helping.

## 3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt!

**Saturday, March 15, 2008**  
**10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**Starkey Park Shelter 4**



**PLEASE RSVP**  
**727-853-1010 or**  
**[info@deafhhsfla.org](mailto:info@deafhhsfla.org)**

## Meet Our Service Providers Who Help the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

### St. John's Hearing Institute El Salvador Hearing Aid Mission 2007

It was July again, 2007, and time to head back to El Salvador. This was the third year we had joined the yearly mission with St. Patrick Church in Largo, Florida, who for years had been helping with material needs at a sister parish in the village of Gotera, El Salvador, an impoverished area in Central America. The church had allowed us to provide hearing aids to those who suffered from hearing loss and would otherwise never have the opportunity to hear better. Our TEAM this year consisted of three adults and returning with us again, three incredible young ladies ranging in age from 18 – 20 years. The ironic thing about mission work is that in the beginning you “think” you are going to help those “less fortunate” and end up getting help yourself! In the end, you realize you are the one who really needed the help to begin with. I'll come back to this later.

We scheduled two days of our seven day trip to fit hearing aids. The local church, St. Francis of Assisi, spread the word well ahead of time about the work we were there to do and many people signed up to come. We stayed at the convent house with the Sisters that serve in this area and who also end up helping us for these two magnificent days. In addition to our basic hearing aid fitting tools, we brought a video scope to clean out wax as locals do not have access to even this most basic form of care. Many people we meet will no longer feel they need hearing aids after impacted

wax is removed.

Let me introduce you to some amazing individuals who left a lifelong impact on us:



We first met Karla, 7, in 2005. At 5 years old, a very special teacher brought her in and shared with us that she was unable to hear or speak. We fit her with hearing aids and she was able to hear. Her teacher brought her back in 2006 and reported that Karla was now able to speak due to her ability to hear. Now again in 2007 we were overjoyed to see Karla come in with her mother. Never before have I seen more emotion and gratitude on a mother's face as she shared all the accomplishments of this beautiful girl over the last year. Karla was now ahead of the average in school and now involved in dance classes! To show her appreciation, her mother said she was going to bring us two live chickens! We tried to refuse them knowing that it represented about two-thirds of a weeks wage, but she insisted and thankfully brought them already cleaned...we had chicken soup!

All things are possible with God!



This is Ana, a 32 year old woman who came in using sign language to communicate and we assume has never heard before. Once fit with hearing aids she was overwhelmed with joy, crying, screaming out and waving her arms. Once she settled down a bit, she was anxious to return home to hear her two children's voices as she had never heard them before!



Franklin's grandmother brought him from Honduras, a seven hour bus ride, to see if he could be helped...that's LOVE! Unfortunately, we were unable to help him. Not all stories have the happy ending that we wish for!

Thanks to the generosity of Deaf Services, who donated many used hearing aids, we were able to serve approximately 150 grateful citizens of the area. Watching our three young ladies literally take over the hearing aid fitting left me with a sense of awe and confidence that there is hope in future generations. The compassion and care they demonstrated to young and old alike inspire my soul.

Another new development this year was the training of two locals to carry on the mission in our absence, as well as

provide minor repairs to those who use these hearing aids. Sister Sylvia from the convent and an incredible 17 year old young man named Elmer accepted the challenge. We equipped them with the necessary tools and over 100 hearing aids and batteries. Before we left, they had already planned to visit one village per month to spread the gift of hearing.

When I reflect on the hospitality of the Sisters and others who saw to our needs while visiting, and the sheer gratitude of those we served, I am reminded of the stories my grandmother told about how things “used to be” here. A day when neighbors got involved to help each other and when they said “thank you”, they really meant it! I am forever touched by the hugs, tears of joy and the way they communicated their thanks in a language I couldn't understand, but in a way that was crystal clear and pure! What a lesson! Words cannot describe the incredible blessing felt by being in the presence of such giving people.

We went to minister to others, but in the end, guess who got ministered to?

— Robert Smith of St. John's Hearing Institute

### Free Hearing Screenings:

1st and 2nd Wednesday and 3rd and 4th Tuesday of each month at our main office at 8610 Galen Wilson Blvd., Port Richey.

Also held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the Oak Hill Enrichment Center in Spring Hill.

Please call for appointments: 727-853-1010 or 1-866-685-9477 toll free.

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Services of  
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Fax: 727-853-1015  
Email:  
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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

***www.deafhhsfla.org***

Donations are always needed and appreciated for our agency. We appreciate cash, office furniture, office supplies and kitchen supplies. We also assist Sertoma organization with donated hearing aids. Please return the form below with your **tax deductible** gift. **Visa and Mastercard accepted.**

**My Donation**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

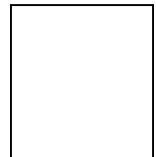
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Donated Item(s) & estimated value: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I want to help others with my **tax deductible** donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

May we publicly recognize your gift? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of  
Florida, Inc.  
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Port Richey, FL 34668



Name

Street Address

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