

CALLER

THE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia Relay: Telecommunications services for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind or have difficulty speaking

Fall 2019

Welcome Doral Jackson to the Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC)

We are pleased to welcome our latest representative of the Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC),



Doral M. Jackson, Accessibility Coordinator at Norfolk State University (NSU). Doral received her

Master of Arts in Severe Disabilities Concentration: Rehabilitation Counseling from NSU after gaining a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at East Carolina University. Following her academic achievements, Doral went on to gain 15+ years' experience working with individuals with disabilities and/or exceptionalities, as well as being a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor with the VA Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS).

As an outreach specialist for the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH), Doral had the opportunity to use Virginia Relay to communicate with individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Once she became familiar with the outreach services at VDDHH and Technology

Assistance Program (TAP), Doral worked to educate other people and businesses concerning the operation and proficiency of placing and receiving relay calls. As Regional Counselor for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DARS), Doral gained experience with a variety of communication devices like Text Telephones (TTYs), Voice Carry Over (VCO) and Video Relay to communicate with consumers and community partners.

Currently serving as the Accessibility Coordinator at Norfolk State University, Doral shares information with students, faculty and staff. Additionally, Doral's role as part of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) in Virginia allows her the opportunity to share information with professionals committed to full participation in higher education for people with disabilities.

We thank Doral for her commitment and for joining VRAC!

If you are interested in ways that you can make a difference, contact the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, concerning our current vacancy to represent Mobile Relay Users.

Check Out the Newest Virginia Relay Partners!

The Wellington

Lake Manassas, VA
rui.net/the-wellington

Virginia Career Works

Norfolk Center
Norfolk, VA
www.vec.virginia.gov

Blue Ridge Independent Living Center

Roanoke, VA
www.brilc.org

Aarondale Retirement Community

Springfield, VA
rui.net/aarondale

Better Hearing and Speech Month Winner

Larry Herbert of Richmond, Virginia has been selected as the recipient of the Hamilton Relay 2019 Better Hearing and Speech Month Award for the state of Virginia. Larry is committed to advocating on behalf of Virginians who experience hearing loss.

Larry has played an active role in the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) for over 20 years. He was an active member in Georgia's Augusta chapter and Virginia's Charlottesville chapter, prior to serving as vice president of the Greater Richmond chapter. He has also authored several articles for the Hearing Life magazine, the bi-monthly publication distributed by HLAA.

Presently, Larry volunteers his time advocating for the hearing loop initiative throughout the state. He plays an important role in providing Virginians looping capabilities at various facilities and locations. These capabilities can range from on-site demonstrations to looping systems for hospital community education rooms. He has been personally responsible for looping 15 to 20 churches and other venues in Central Virginia along with looping the Rotunda at the University of Virginia.



We commend Larry Herbert for his advocacy and leadership and are proud to present him with Hamilton Relay 2019 Better Hearing and Speech Month Award for the state of Virginia.

Fire Alarm Safety

A person's home should be the number one place they can feel secure. Nearly 2,500 people are affected by fire every year, and approximately 82 percent of these incidents occur in the home.

These statistics are pushing companies to create a better method for smoke detection that could alert people to a potential fire. Smoke alarms are typically installed in hallways and communal areas, which makes it hard for anyone who has difficulty hearing to be alerted.

Traditional alarms are limited in their ability to accommodate for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and most alarms are not located in individual rooms.

That is why alternate smoke detectors are making headlines and gaining firefighter approval. There are companies who have created a new smoke detector that works with traditional alarm systems to create greater safety measures for those that require more than mere sound or visual cues.

Some devices are designed to detect the high-pitched sounds a traditional smoke alarm emits. These are sounds that a person who is deaf or hard of hearing would fail to notice. There are devices that are made to issue their own reaction that involves a low-frequency sound being emitted while large text reading a single word of "fire" flashes across the screen. As another safety measure, the alarm can activate a pillow or bed shaker. This is an additional failsafe implemented to alert residents who are deaf or hard of hearing during the night.

Remember that all smoke alarms should be tested monthly to make sure they are in working order. **For more safety tips or to find access to a specialized smoke alarm, contact your local fire department for assistance.**

**"Fire!
Get out!"**

When the ordinary smoke alarm tone is detected the alarm will emit a loud, low-frequency alarm. Some alarms are also equipped with loud baritone voice in addition to the low-frequency alarm tone and bed shaker.

**Powerful pulsating
bed shaker vibrates**

85 dB

Remote Conference Captioning Available in Virginia

Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) service offers a solution to read what is being said during a conference call or webinar. The service has been made available in Virginia to provide people who are deaf or hard of hearing the opportunity to read what is being verbally communicated through the conference bridge. RCC delivers captions over the internet, using Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service.

Requesting the service is simple. Complete a RCC Scheduling Request Form online at hamiltonrelay.com/virginia/rcc or call Virginia RCC Customer Care at 1-877-339-2665.

RCC will allow the certified captionist to listen to the audio portion of a conference call. Access to an internet-connected computer, tablet or smartphone will give the user an



easy way to read the captions. This eliminates the need for any software download. Click the appropriate link to direct you to your browser where all captions can be read within seconds of someone talking.

This service is an optional relay service provided by Hamilton Relay and is funded through the Commonwealth of Virginia. RCC is available to Virginia residents who are deaf or hard of hearing.



Welcome, Virginia Melville to VDDHH!

The Virginia Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) has welcomed a new member to their team!



Virginia Melville was officially appointed as the new VDDHH Administrative Assistant.

Her previous experience as a receptionist and medical assistant has made her an incredible asset to the team. Her passion for the language and culture of the Deaf community began in fifth grade.

It was during this time that she was taught how to fingerspell. She continued American Sign Language (ASL) lessons during high school. Virginia earned her degree from J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in American Sign Language and Deaf Studies. In addition, she has plans to receive her English Interpretation AAS Major and American Sign Language CSC Major. Virginia is the youngest of five children and enjoys spending

quality time with family and friends. She looks forward to greeting visitors and answering calls and getting Virginians connected to the service that best fits their unique communication needs. We are excited to welcome Virginia to the VDDHH team!



Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Summer Events

The past few months have been very productive for the Virginia Relay and VDDHH outreach teams. Several events and presentations took place over the summer, and we are pleased with the opportunities we had to reach our communities.



The Virginia State Police Academy invited VDDHH to provide a Deaf Awareness and Interaction presentation to a class of cadets. Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) works to provide training and presentations to state, local, and private organizations. VDDHH covers a variety of topics including communication access, emergency preparedness, Deaf awareness and interaction, specialized telecommunication equipment, and telecommunications relay services. Visit vddhh.org/outreach.htm for more information.



The Statewide Interagency Team (SIT) attended the Opening Doors Unlocking Potential 2019 conference. SIT is a workgroup of four state agencies that provides services to Virginians who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened or deafblind. The agencies involved are: The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH), Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Valley Community Services Boards (VCSBs), and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Each of these agencies provides, and may also coordinate services based on eligibility.



SIT held a town hall meeting and ADA workshop, provided by the Disability Law Center of Virginia. These interactive workshops are held to provide the latest information on ADA regulations and guidelines, implementation strategies, and efficient practices. Over the summer and early fall, meetings in Richmond and Abingdon had great turnout from the community.



"It's always a pleasure to be in the field conducting outreach and connecting with the community. We look forward to a productive and rewarding year of outreach in 2020!"

Virginia Working to Implement Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) Throughout the State

The basic utilization of 9-1-1 is not a foreign concept. Many understand the procedures and mechanics of the nationally-used emergency contact. After 50 years, the current system has become more limited in its capabilities as consumers continue to gain access to advanced phones and technology. As an Internet Protocol (IP)-based system, NG 9-1-1 provides the capability to send and receive digital data that may include audio/video recordings, live-streaming video, texts, photos, location tracking and more. That is why the state of Virginia is doing all that it can to help Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) adapt to such change through funding, advocacy and education.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has created a dashboard on their government site that contains an updated map outlining all local NG 9-1-1 implementations. Clicking on the appropriate link will allow viewers to see progress updates concerning different boundaries. The site records the number of requests granted or waiting for review. The public may also view and stay updated with the rolling submission calendar that facilitates the entire deployment process of PSAP NG 9-1-1 requests.

The number of approved transitions continues to increase as the 2019 year grows closer to an end. The year 2020 will usher in new development of emergency protocol and capabilities for different PSAP facilities in Virginia. Transferring calls between PSAPs will be more efficient for Virginia personnel.

More in-depth detail concerning NG 9-1-1 and the current deployment plans in Virginia can be found on the Virginia government website at vita.virginia.gov.





Upcoming Events

VDDHH Advisory Board Meeting

February 5, 2020

VDDHH

SIT Workshop & Town Hall Meeting

TBD - Spring 2020

Staunton

VRAC Advisory Board Meeting

April 16, 2020

DARS Central Office

VDDHH Advisory Board Meeting

May 6, 2020

VDDHH

VDDHH Advisory Board Meeting

August 5, 2020

VDDHH

VRAC Advisory Board Meeting

TBD - Fall, 2020

DARS Central Office

VDDHH Advisory Board Meeting

November 4, 2020

VDDHH



Find Us on Facebook!

Virginia Relay has a Facebook page! Just type "Virginia Relay" in Facebook's search field and click the "Like" button at the top of our page to get regular updates on Virginia Relay news, events, and more.

Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC)

Consumer Members:

Paige Berry

Representing Hearing Relay Users

Kerry Byrne

Representing Virginia Centers for Independent Living

Alissa Conover

Representing Virginia Association for the Deaf (VAD)

Karen Darner

Representing Speech and Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV)

Lisa Harbour

Representing Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA)

William Hess

Representing Voice Carry-Over Users

Rebecca Ladew

Representing Speech-to-Speech Users

Doral Jackson

Representing Hearing Relay Users

Jenny McKenzie

Representing Virginia Association for the DeafBlind (VADB)

Teresa Ritzert

Representing Captioned Telephone Service Users

Christine Ross

Representing Video Relay Service Users

Linda Wallace

Representing Hearing Loss Association for America (HLAA) Virginia Chapters

Non-Voting Members:

Eric Alvillar

Hamilton Relay

Christa Cervantes

Hamilton Relay

Mary Nunnally

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Eric Raff

VDDHH Director