ODHH Update

In order to meet growing requests for timely news updates regarding the Governor’s Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), they have turned to internet social media outlets. The first of these social media venues to be launched is the Twitter account. You can visit the Twitter profile at http://twitter.com/ODHH. ODHH will be posting news, updates, announcements and more. They will also highlight information available on the ODHH website, and provide links for more information.

The Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has established three sub-committees. These sub-committees are:

- Education
- Behavioral Health
- Communication

Each sub-committee will be developing goals and timelines to reach these goals. If you would like more information about any of these committees or more information about ODHH, please visit their website at odhh.md.gov or contact them at (410) 767-6290 (voice) (443) 453-5954 (vp) or (410) 767-7756 (tty).

Gallaudet National Essay, Art, and ASL Contest

Each year the Gallaudet National Essay, Art, and ASL Contest for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student, co-sponsored by the Clerc Center and Gallaudet University, challenges students to create original work focused on an established theme. Last year the contest drew a record-breaking 645 entries.

When President Barrack Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in March, 2009, he called on every citizen to make a commitment to service, saying the government cannot do it all. In honoring this call to service, the theme of the 2010 Contest is “Helping Others: How I can Make a Difference in my Community.” This year's contest is focused on student sharing and about new or ongoing community service initiatives.

The contest deadline is February 5, 2010. Students can enter their work in one of two age groups, 15-19 or 9-14. Winners in the 15-19 category will receive scholarship money for the college or postsecondary program of their choice. Winners in the 9-14 category will receive cash prizes. More information can be found at www.clerccenter.gallaudet.edu.

Cochlear Implant Family Support Group
Back to School Strategies

Presented by:
Megan Kessler, M.A.
Clinical Applications Specialist, Cochlear Americas

Maryland School for the Deaf – Columbia Campus
8169 Old Montgomery Road
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Space is limited … Please register by September 25, 2009
For more information contact:
Cheri Dowling, Family Support and Resource Center
(410) 480-4597 v/tty or (410) 480-4598 fax or cad800@aol.com

Turn Your Love of Peanut Butter Into Cash For College

If your kids love peanut butter and their idea of a good time is experimenting in the kitchen, they could win a $25,000 scholarship.

From now until November 13, 2009, children between the ages of 6 and 12 can enter an original recipe in the 8th Annual Jif Most Creative Peanut Butter Sandwich Contest. Sandwiches will be judged on creativity, taste, appearance, nutritional balance and ease of preparation. One winner will earn a $25,000 scholarship and four runners-up will each receive a $2,500 scholarship.

For official rules and entry forms, visit www.Jif.com
H1N1 Flu Vaccine Update

The priority for H1N1 vaccinations fall in five groups:

- Pregnant women
- Those who live with or care for an infant less than 6 months of age
- Healthcare workers and first responders
- Anyone ages 6 months to 24 years of age
- Those aged 25 - 64 with chronic health issues

Parents of children whose disabilities make it difficult for them to communicate when they are feeling ill or how ill they feel should consider getting the H1N1 vaccine because the earlier it is treated the better the outcomes.

H1N1 vaccine should be available mid-October. Seasonal flu vaccine is available now. Tests are being conducted now on the H1N1 vaccine and the CDC does not know whether it will be a single inoculation or if a booster shot will be needed.

For more information visit http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

Hand Washing 101

The key to avoiding illness may rest in little hands. Researchers at the nonprofit Cochrane Collaboration found that the best way to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses is to ensure that young children wash their hands frequently and properly. These tips can help you teach children good technique and habits.

- Wash hands before eating, after using the bathroom, and after sneezing or coughing.
- Wash thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice.
- Dry hands if possible with a clean towel, which helps to wipe off germs.
- Carry hand sanitizer to use when soap and water are not available. Apply a dollop to one palm and then rub over the front and back of their hands and fingers.
- Visit scrubclub.org, a fun, interactive website on the importance of hand washing.


ASL Storyhour
4:45—5:30 p.m.
October 7, 2009
Barnes & Noble
Francis Scott Key Mall
5500 Buckeystown Pike
Frederick, MD

Signing With Young Children
Thursday, October 15, 2009
9:30 - 11:00 a.m.
Potomac Center Conference Room
1360 Marshall Street
Hagerstown MD  21740

Babies have control over their hands long before they develop the fine motor skills required for speech. By teaching their infants to sign, more and more people are recognizing the many benefits of this early communication.

Sign Language Story Time at the
Thurmont Branch of the
Frederick County Public Library
Moser Road
Thurmont, MD
October 22, 2009
10:30 a.m.

For more information contact Julie DeRoner at (301) 600-1617
## Auto Insurance and Your Teen Driver

### Driving Information and Tips for Young Drivers

Insurance rates for teenage drivers are high because teenage drivers, as a group, have much higher accident rates than other drivers. According to the Maryland State Highway Administration, 93% of all crashes are caused by distracted drivers, so please keep the following in mind while driving:

- **Remain alert when driving.** Keep your eyes on the road at all times.
- **Stay focused on driving.** Don’t let your passengers or anything else distract you while driving.
- **Wear your seatbelt.** Seat belts have been proven to reduce the risk of injuries and fatalities.
- **Never drink and drive.**

### Information About the Privilege to Drive for Young Drivers

- If you have a provisional license and are under 18 years of age, state law prohibits you from using a wireless communication device while driving, driving between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m. or having a passenger under the age of 18 unless you are accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old and has driven for three or more years.
- To be eligible for a full driver’s license, a provisional licensee cannot have a conviction for a moving violation in the past 18 months.
- If you are under 18 in Maryland, a parent, guardian or other qualifying adult must co-sign your license application to allow you to drive. And remember, a co-signer can write a letter and withdraw his or her consent, allowing the MVA to suspend your license.
- Police officers are authorized to stop and detain any person when they reasonably believe the individual is, or has been, driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol (blood alcohol concentration of between 0.04 or 0.08), drugs, controlled dangerous substances or driving while intoxicated (blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 or higher).

### Tips for Reducing Auto Insurance Premiums

Probably the easiest and least expensive way for a teen to obtain auto insurance is to be added to his parents’ policy. Parents may add their teenage driver to their policy by listing him as a driver or, if the parents’ name(s) are listed on the title of the teen’s vehicle, by adding the vehicle to their policy. Either way, the bottom line is this: the parent’s rates will increase.

- **Keep a clean driving record.** Drivers with accidents and moving violations usually pay higher premiums than those with clean driving records.
- **Carefully choose the vehicle you drive.** Certain vehicles cost more to insure because they cost more to repair, are more likely to be damaged in an accident or are frequently stolen.
- **Drive a vehicle with safety features.** Some companies offer discounts for items such as air bags, anti-lock brakes, automatic seatbelts and anti-theft systems.
- **Maintain a good credit history.** Companies may consider your financial stability and charge higher premiums based on your financial status. (i.e. credit card history, amount of credit, how timely you pay your bills, etc.)
- **Keep your grades up.** Some companies offer a discount to young drivers who maintain good grades, such as a “B” average or better.

### Factors Affecting Auto Insurance Premiums

Rating factors are characteristics that place you within a group of drivers with similar risk-related characteristics. Companies set rates for each group based on the claims paid for the policyholders in that group. Some common rating factors are:

- **Driving record**
- **Age** (as young drivers haven’t yet had the time to accumulate a safe driving record, their insurance rate as well as their parents’ will be affected by both age and driving record).
- **Sex** (young males up to age 26 generally pay higher rates than same-aged females.)
- **Address or zip code** (the location where the vehicle is primarily garaged.)
- **Vehicle type** (sports and high performance cars cost more to insure.)

For more information about Auto Insurance for teen drivers

Contact the Maryland Insurance Administration at 800-468-2000 (v) or 800-736-2258 (tty) or www.mdinsurance.state.md.us
Deaf Awareness Week
September 20 - 26, 2009

Deaf Awareness Week is the last full week of September, in commemoration of the first World Congress of the Deaf held that week in 1951.

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) participates in the International Week of the Deaf, initiated by the World Federation of the Deaf, to celebrate the culture, heritage, and language unique to deaf people of the world.

For more information, visit http://www.nad.org/issues/american-sign-language/deaf-awareness-week

12 Tips for Making Studying Fun

What do Jello-O powder, a flashlight and old scrubble letters have in common? They are all tools you can use this school year to get your child to enjoy homework and studying. There’s nothing more boring (and sometimes less productive) than parking your child at the kitchen table with their homework. If you or someone else in the home can find 15 extra minutes each night to employ some creative study activities, it might make the difference between knowing something and truly understanding it.

1. Buy your child a special set of school supplies that can only be used for homework. This can include colorful, fancy pens and pencils and colored paper.

2. Have a sliding glass door? Buy washable window markers and let your child write vocabulary words on the door, then wipe clean.

3. Using blank index cards, have your child make his own vocabulary flash cards with a picture he draws or cuts out of a magazine on one side and the spelling word on the other.

4. Children love to combine art and learning. To help them memorize vocabulary and spelling words, tear off a large sheet of tin foil and cover it in finger paint, shaving cream or even pudding and let your child write spelling words in it.

5. For something a little less messy, pour salt or colored Jello-O powder on a cookie sheet for the same exercise.

6. Have your child write vocabulary words on index cards and adhere them to a wall. Turn off the lights and shine a flashlight on each word and ask your child what it means and to use it in a sentence.

7. In nice weather, let your child write words on the driveway with sidewalk chalk.

8. Buy old scrabble sets at yard sales and combine all the letter tiles into one Ziploc bag. Let your child use the tiles for spelling out words.

9. Single out some spelling words each week as “Wow Words,” post them somewhere the whole family can see them and every time a family member works a Wow Word into conversation, praise them.

10. If your child must memorize a map or diagram, cover up key terms with Post-It notes and have your child fill in the blanks.

11. If your child is having trouble with certain spelling words, have them write the troublesome letters in a different color to help the brain recognize the correct answer.

12. Make sure you have Play-Dough, Legos, blocks - anything your child can handle during math and counting exercises. Cereal like Fruit Loops and Cheerios can be used as well.

Many local school systems have tips and activities on their Websites. For example Baltimore County Public Schools publishes monthly learning calendars with different activities for every day of the week at www.bcps.org/parents.