

WORKING TOGETHER EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE – OCTOBER 21, 2005

One-Day Conference for Employers, Employees and Job Seekers who are Hard of Hearing.

The last of 3 planned regional conferences in Pennsylvania devoted to employment issues for people who are hard of hearing will take place at the Comfort Inn Conference Center just outside of Pittsburgh on Friday, October 21, 2005. PA-SHHH has held previous highly successful conferences in Valley Forge (2003) and Harrisburg (2004). "Working Together" is a one day conference developed by hard of hearing professionals with the support of OVR (PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation) and Team PA CareerLink. Workshops will cover a broad range of topics including: assistive technology, hearing aids, coping and communication strategies, legal rights of employees and employers, and dealing with hearing loss on the job and when seeking a job. The conference will bring together hard of hearing people who are now employed and those seeking employment (including students entering the workforce) and employers, human resources personnel, rehabilitation counselors and placement services staff. The

Pittsburgh area conference is sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Office of SHHH (Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc) and the Pittsburgh SHHH Chapter #1 with support from the PA Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), the FISA Foundation, Audex, and Hearing Unlimited. Team PA CareerLink and the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation are also providing technical and programmatic support for this conference. Assistive listening systems, CART (real-time captioning) and ASL interpreters will be provided for all sessions.

The keynote speaker will be Brenda Battat, Public Policy Director and Director of States of the SHHH national office, who will discuss employment issues related to employees with a hearing loss from the employer's perspective. Marcia Finisdore, PA-SHHH State Director, Emerita will speak on "The Impact of Hearing Loss on Work and Life". Stan Swaintek

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Look for this
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Message from Diana

Many SHHH members returned from our national convention in Washington, D.C. last June with renewed energy and many new ideas on how we can improve the lives of people with a hearing loss. The convention also marked a change in the chapter coordinators in our state. Ronnie Adler and Marianne Lock have worked hard over the past 4 years to establish and support existing chapters throughout the state and have earned our heartfelt thanks for a job well done. We now have three new chapter coordinators who have accepted responsibility for providing support for our chapters throughout the state. Barb Beard has been a member of SHHH for the past 22 years and has previously served as a chapter coordinator in Pennsylvania from 1990 until 1995. She has already been hard at work reestablishing chapters in the Lancaster, Reading and State College areas. Russ Green comes to us with experience as a chapter coordinator in New Jersey. Russ has been active in SHHH for the past 10 years and recently moved to Pennsylvania. Wayne Benson is a long time member of SHHH and was recently elected president of the Pittsburgh SHHH chapter. Wayne is currently hard at work planning the upcoming employment conference described elsewhere in this issue of HearSay. Barb has responsibility for chapters in the Central region, Russ for those in the Eastern region, and Wayne those in the Western region of Pennsylvania. Thanks for volunteering for this important job, Barb, Russ and Wayne!

Diana Bender, PA-SHHH State Director □

New Editor for HearSay

When asked to take on the role of editor for the HearSay newsletter, I must admit I was hesitant to commit my time and energy. I have two sons, the youngest who just turned one last month and I am already on the board of the Generation X SHHH of Delaware County as well as the program coordinator of my professional American Dance Therapy Association Chapter. Yet, I quickly learned that creating this informative and professional newsletter takes the work of many people. I look forward to continuing the creative process with the members of Pa SHHH State Office and Terri Waterman at Surreal Concepts. I have committed myself to help share articles about and for the hard of hearing community. Please contact me if you have any ideas for our future issues. Thank you. Beth Ann Rejonis
rejonis@pa-shhh.org. □

In Memory of Jo Burkhardt

Philadelphia Chapter # 1 mourns the loss of its beloved Jo Burkhardt. Jo was a chapter member for approximately 10 years. She was secretary of her chapter until she developed poor eyesight due to macular degeneration. In spite of this she attempted to attend all the meetings. She was known for always looking on the bright side and never complaining. One SHHH member shared how she was complaining to Jo one time about not hearing everything at a play and thus not enjoying theater any more. Jo had responded that she used to feel that way but then became thankful for what she could hear. Her positive attitude and courage were an inspiration to us all. The members of Philadelphia Chapter # 1 will miss her caring, loving personality and genuine warmth. She had no children and her husband, George passed away this April.

Submitted by Carolyn Meyer and Marianne Lock

PA SHHH thanks Philadelphia # 1 Chapter for the donation that was made in memory of their beloved friend Jo Burkhardt. □

Celebrate...

a birthday, anniversary or special occasion by making a donation to PA-SHHH. The perfect gift for the person who has everything while being tax deductible to boot!

Hearsay is produced by:

Surreal Concepts, Inc.

Website: www.surrealconcepts.com

Email: info@surrealconcepts.com

Phone: 610-361-9277 (Terri Waterman)

Print • Web • Video

USED HEARING AIDS NEEDED FOR VIETNAMESE CHILDREN

We are seeking donations of used behind-the-ear hearing aids for the Village of Hope, a large foster home for orphaned, abandoned, hearing-impaired, and other severely disadvantaged children and adolescents in Danang, Vietnam. The Village of Hope was established 15 years ago by the East Meets West Foundation, a nonsectarian charitable organization dedicated to improving health, education, and economic conditions in Vietnam. USAID helped launch the Village of Hope by providing seed money; however, those funds



expired in 1997. Now under the auspices of the local Committee on Population, Family, and Children, the Village of Hope receives substantial management input and financial support from East Meets West, as well as funding from individuals and other organizations throughout the world.

If you wish to donate a hearing aid, please contact Carol Miller, 6100 City Avenue, #1216, Philadelphia, PA 19131, 215.477.6541, csmiller6100@verizon.net. An active East Meets West Foundation volunteer, Carol has traveled to Vietnam ten times since 1995. Many thanks.

Telephone Contacts

For SHHH activities and information, feel free to call:
Wayne Benson Western PA 412-661-4724
Ronnie Adler Eastern PA 610-644-3154

cont'd from 1st page

of OVR and Edward Burau from Team PA CareerLink Resources will present "Getting and Keeping the Job". Diana Bender, PA-SHHH State Director, will discuss "Challenges in the Workplace". Attorney Margaret McKenna of the Center for Disabilities Law and Policy will discuss "Legal Issues Related to Hearing Loss". Elaine Mormer of the University of Pittsburgh and Christopher Eckert from Hearing Unlimited will present "Technological updates for Communication in the Workplace". Dr. Catherine Palmer of the University of Pittsburgh will moderate a panel discussion on "Working with a Hearing Loss". Exhibits of assistive devices and information related to hearing loss will be available in the exhibit hall throughout the day.

The registration cost is \$35 per person if submitted prior to the deadline of Friday, October 14 and \$60 for a parent attending with a student and includes continental breakfast and lunch. Details are provided in the registration form below.

The conference will be held at:

Comfort Inn Conference Center
699 Rodi Road
Penn Hills, PA 15235

For more information, contact

Mr. Wayne Benson Tel.: 412-661-4724
Email: awbenson@juno.com

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Home ___ work ___ TTY ___ V ___

Email _____

Accessibility Needs:

Assistive listening systems, real-time captioning (CART) and ASL interpreters will be provided for all sessions. The conference center is fully accessible to those using wheelchairs. If you require any additional accommodations, please specify:

Fee Schedule:

Individual - \$35 before 10/14/05

Individual - \$40 after 10/14/05 or on-site

Student with parent - \$60.00

Registration fee includes breaks, lunch and attendance at all workshops.

Payment information:

Make check payable to PA-SHHH and send it together with the registration form to:

Wayne Benson
 5800 Elgin Street
 Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Registration Deadline: October 14, 2005

No refunds for cancellation after October 18

Overview of the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Starting January 1, 2006, Medicare will offer a new prescription drug benefit. Over the next several months, everyone on Medicare will need to make important decisions about signing up for this benefit and choosing a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. People who have both Medicare and Medical Assistance (ACCESS) will be especially affected by the changes.

Enrolling in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan

If you have Medicare, you can sign up for this benefit by joining a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (PDP). These Plans will either be stand-alone prescription plans or HMOs that offer prescription coverage as part of the benefit package. Each PDP will be different in terms of what they will charge, what drugs will be covered, and which pharmacies you can go to. Once Medicare announces the approved Plans in the fall, it is very important that you compare the different Plans and choose the one that best meets your needs. Once you join a Plan, you may not be able to change Plans until the end of 2006.

If you have Medicare now, you can sign up for a Prescription Plan starting on November 15, 2005. If you do not join a Plan in the first six months, you may have to pay more for the coverage when you do join a Plan.

Help with the Costs of the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

The new benefit is costly. There is help available for people with limited income and resources. If you qualify for this help, your costs for the benefit will be greatly lowered.

You must complete an application to see if you qualify. If you have not already received an application in the mail, you can get one at your local Social Security Office or local County

Assistance Office.

If you do not qualify for this help, then you will have to pay a monthly premium (expected to average \$32 in 2006). You will pay for the first \$250 of your drug costs, and then you will pay for part or all of your drug costs for the rest of the year.

Are You on Both Medicare and Medical Assistance?

If so, you automatically qualify for the most help, and you will only have small co-pays for your medications. If you now get your prescriptions through the Medical Assistance Program, that will change. Starting January 1, 2006, Medical Assistance will no longer cover your prescriptions. Instead, you will need to enroll in the Medicare prescription drug benefit.

Medicare will enroll you into a Prescription Plan and send you a written notice in the fall. You will have drug coverage through this Plan starting on January 1, 2006 unless you choose a Plan on your own before that date. It is important for you to compare all the Plans available and make your own choice to be sure that you are in the Plan that is best for you.

Please contact the Pennsylvania Health Law Project if:

- You have questions about the benefit or about any notices you receive;
- You want help applying for the help with the costs of this benefit; or
- You want advice or help in choosing a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.

You can reach Erin Guay at the PA Health Law Project at eguay@phlp.org or by calling 412-434-4728 (voice/TTY), 1-800-274-3258 (voice) or 1-866-236-6310 (TTY).

PA-SHHH Mourns the Death of Jack O'Keeffe

By Jim Stoltz

SHHH lost a good friend and tireless worker, when John Eustace O'Keeffe, Jr. – better known to all of us as Jack, died after a battle with leukemia on June 6, 2005.

Jack was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. During World War II, he served as a radio technician. After the war, he received his degree in Civil Engineering from the Georgia School of Technology. Upon graduation, he joined the American Bridge Division of U.S. Steel, where he started their computer applications office in 1952 and was chief engineer of Computer Applications, retiring in 1985. Active in many groups such as Boy Scouts of America and Our Lady of Fatima Church and school, we knew him best for his work with hearing loss. Given his background and training, he understandably helped in communication matters. In his local Pittsburgh SHHH chapter, he was newsletter editor for a time early in the chapter's life and filled in several times as an interim editor, as well as chapter treasurer. He also

designed and maintained the chapter website and the website for PA SHHH. In addition, he served on the Board of Pittsburgh Hearing and Deaf Services and the advisory panel for consumer services for VITAC (captioning services). On the State level, he served as chairperson of the TRS (Telecommunications Relay Service) and was one of the first chairpersons of the Advisory Council to the PA Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (and as Marcia Finisdore notes – the best!). He was a great representative of people with a hearing loss to ANSI (American National Standards Institute). He also served on the board of the National Organization of SHHH and various subcommittees such as the Technical Development Committee. Jack was always keen to be an advocate for the hard of hearing community! He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Ret O'Keeffe and children: Laurence, John, Mary Kathleen, and Francis, their respective spouses, 13 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter, and two sisters.

**2nd Annual
Eastern PA-SHHH Banquet
November 6, 2005 - 11:30 am to 2:30 p.m.
Sunday Buffet Brunch**

**Philadelphia Marriott West Hotel
111 Crawford Avenue, West Conshohocken, PA 19428**

CART (real-time captioning) will be provided.

All SHHH members, family and friends are invited. This is a great way to socialize with other SHHH members and support PA-SHHH.

Entertainment will be provided by Beth Ann & Dancers. A representative of Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library will display examples of their assistive listening devices and provide information on how to borrow them at no cost! We'll also have an exciting Raffle and a 50/50 drawing!

For directions, call the hotel at 610-941-5600 or visit their website at
<http://marriott.com/property/mapandnearbyairports/default.mi?marshaCode=phlwe>

Cost: \$30.00 per person Deadline: October 28,2005

Any questions, contact:

Carolyn Meyer - jmeyerhart@aol.com - subject "PA-SHHH Banquet"

Ronnie Adler – (610) 644-3154 (v/tty)

Please return this form, make checks payable to "PA-SHHH" and mail to:
Alice Dungan, 6906 Shalkop Street, Philadelphia, PA 19128-3217

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Names of additional attendees: _____

Name of SHHH Chapter you belong to (if applicable): _____

Amount Enclosed: _____ **(\$30 per person)**

Your canceled check is your confirmation.

HearSay Subscription

If you would like to receive your own copy of HearSay, the official newsletter of PA-SHHH, please fill in this form and mail it to the address below. A HearSay subscription is free; however, PA-SHHH is a not-for-profit organization and we are grateful for any donations.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to support HearSay. Donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged in the newsletter and on the website.

- I would like to remain anonymous to PA-SHHH and send this form to:
- I cannot contribute, but I would like to receive HearSay.
- Make donations payable to PA-SHHH and send this form to:
 Marcia Finisdore
 PA-SHHH
 4 State Road, #109
 Media, PA 19063

PA-SHHH Donors

A special thanks to those of you who help make it possible.

Jack O’Keeffe Memorial Contributions

(Made to SHHH to use for the website)
 Russell Green
 Barbara Beard
 Marianne Lock
 John Dzwonczyk
 Ronnie and Mitch Adler
 Diana Bender
 Marcia Finisdore
 William and Grace Pfeifer
 Archieve Reporting (Debbie Cunningham)
 Linda Rusinko

Jo Burkhardt Memorial Contributions

(Philadelphia 1 Chapter)
 Carolyn and Joe Meyer

Newsletter Contributions

Louise Montoya
 Lucille Doughman
 John Delaney
 Susan Streib
 Frances Sokol
 Richard Lenker
 Two anonymous donors

Support SHHH

One way you can make a difference to hard-of-hearing people is to remember SHHH in your will. That way your money will continue to help hard-of-hearing people long after you are gone.

About SHHH

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc., founded in 1979, is a non-profit consumer self-help organization. SHHH opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

The primary purpose of all SHHH members is to educate ourselves, our families, friends, co-workers, teachers, hearing health care providers, industry, government, and others about hearing loss.

SHHH has members and chapters in all 50 states. To find the chapter closest to you, contact a member of the PA-SHHH state committee if you are in PA, or contact the SHHH National Office.

Selp-Help for Hard of Hearing People
 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200
 Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: (301) 657-2248 (Voice)
 (301) 657-2249 (TTY)
 (301) 913-9413 (FAX)

Email: info@hearingloss.org
 Website: www.hearingloss.org

PA-SHHH Needs You

SHHH volunteers from all over the Commonwealth assist the PA-SHHH State Director by serving on the PA-SHHH Advisory Council or one of its committees. The PA-SHHH Advisory Council meets periodically in Carlisle. Committees conduct most of their business by email but meet periodically in various parts of the state as needed. We would be delighted to have you join us. If you would like to serve on either the Advisory Council, or one of its committees, please contact one of the state leaders listed below.



- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| State Director: | Diana Bender | bender@pa-shhh.org |
| Membership: | Russ Green, Chair | green@pa-shhh.org |
| | Barb Beard | beard@pa-shhh.org |
| | Wayne Benson | benson@pa-shhh.org |
| | Ronnie Adler | adler@pa-shhh.org |
| Communication: | Linda Rusinko | rusinko@pa-shhh.org |
| | Gerry Rusher | rusher@pa-shhh.org |
| Government Affairs: | Susan Gast, Chair | gast@pa-shhh.org |
| | Diana Bender | bender@pa-shhh.org |

“Come and join us. You will be welcome!”