



The

# Deaf Bee

March 2009

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FREE

## DHHSC Welcomes Fresh Leadership

David Smith  
President, Board of Directors

We are thrilled to announce that the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center, Inc. Board of Directors has appointed Michelle Bronson as Executive Director and Jesse Lewis Operations Director to work as a team to lead DHHSC. Their appointment was effective February 1, 2009. Many of you are already familiar with both Michelle and Jesse. They have been with the organization for several years and know the community and staff well.

Executive Director Michelle Bronson graduated from California State University, Fresno with a B.A. in Psychology, minor in Deaf Education, and a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy. She first started working as a counselor/health educator at DHHSC (formerly VACC) office in January 1996 while an undergraduate and continued until she left to complete a yearlong internship with Fresno Unified School District. In 1999 she returned to the newly reformed DHHSC as a counselor/advocate and worked until 2001, when she had her first child. She became a stay-at-home mother and later had a second child; she was a full-time mother for three and a half years, but started longing to return to work to serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community again. She then returned to DHHSC as a case manager, which included providing counseling services. In May of 2007 she was promoted to Coordinator of Client Services and she also

became involved with the Susan G. Komen breast cancer grant.

Said Michelle of the new position: "we are excited about coming together as a TEAM, and we look forward to working closely with the Deaf Community and the community at large. Together, we can make a difference!"

Operations Director Jesse Lewis graduated from California State University, Monterey Bay with a B.A. Degree in Human Communications. He began working at DHHSC in 2001 as a Client Advocate in the Central Coast Outreach office, was later promoted to CCO's Director of Client Services, then to Deputy Director. As Deputy Director, he supervised the three outreach offices, working mainly out of the South Valley Outreach office. Part of his job required monitoring programs and grant efforts in the Outreach Offices, for which he receive extensive training. He has spent the last year as a consultant

for DHHSC in the South Valley Outreach Office, assisting outreach as needed and continuing to provide direct services to our clients. Of his promotion to Operations Director he stated, "I believe in the ability of even one person to make a difference. Then imagine, a small group of community members have the power as well, to help DHHSC continue to provide services."

The Board is confident that their team leadership roles, along with that of Program Manager Susan Coulter and Interpreting Director Kathy Yoshida, will lead to excellent results for the agency and our clients as well as to help guide us through these uncertain economic times.

We would like to give Danielle Thompson a fond farewell and wish her the best of luck as she embarks on her new path. Please join us in welcoming Michelle and Jesse to their new roles at DHHSC.

**Be a part of our biggest fundraiser this year!**

### join DHHSC BOOSTER CLUB

**who** are booster club members?

We are looking for people like you, who want to support DHHSC's services to our community!

DHHSC needs 200 people to join the DHHSC BOOSTER CLUB Fundaiser.

Anyone over the age of 18 and independent can become a member.

We need people who are motivated and will commit to this one-year fundraiser.

**what** do members need to do?

Members try to raise about \$1 per day in 2009 (\$365 total)

Members need to raise at least \$25 per month or more to meet the minimum goal.

Members will ask for donations, collect and turn in monthly packets with the money.

Members who raise at least \$25 per month average will be invited to a year-end party celebrating our 25th anniversary.

**how** do you get started?

Register to join this fundraiser at DHHSC and attend meeting if one is available.

Pick up your first monthly packet with envelope and forms for donors.

Be familiar with DHHSC's services.

Watch the video vlog on [www.dhhsc.org](http://www.dhhsc.org) (Click on see recent videos, then on the BOOSTER CLUB vlog.

**THE 3 MEMBERS WHO RAISE THE MOST MONEY WILL WIN A PRIZE, GIVEN AT THE YEAR-END PARTY!**

# Board Fundraising Efforts Continue



*Alissa Vigil  
Board of Directors,  
Fundraising Chair*

The Board of Directors is in need of the community's help with fundraising. In recent meetings we have had suggestions on how to raise money. We recently finished one such event at Barnes and Noble Bookstore. Friends of DHHSC and the Board donated their time to gift wrap customers' gifts in hopes for a donation. We raised a little over \$200. For those that gave of their time I would like to say a big THANK YOU!!!

There are other fundraising projects in the works. During the month of May, which is Deaf History Month, DHHSC is planning on hosting a Book Fair at Barnes and Noble Bookstore at Nees and Blackstone. Before the event takes place DHHSC will pass out fliers to bring to the store on a specific Saturday in May. DHHSC will earn a percentage of all the sales that day by anyone who makes a purchase using the flier. This will also be a day to celebrate Deaf History and our Deaf Community. On that day we will have a children's story time as well as an adult activity. Look for more info to come. We hope that this event will be a big success and that we can make this an annual activity and fundraiser.

Additionally, the DHHSC Booster Club has begun. This club will be

comprised of people like you – people within the community who are dedicated to the growth and continuation of DHHSC services. If you are interested in making an impact in the local Deaf community there is more information about the Booster Club on page one of this newsletter and at the website, [www.dhhsc.org](http://www.dhhsc.org).

Starting on February 28 members from the deaf community will be involved with the ASL Children's Story Time at Barnes and Noble in Fresno. The last Saturday of each month from 2pm – 3pm Children will have two stories read to them, followed by a craft or activity and snacks (provided by Barnes and Noble). If you are interested in volunteering as a storytellers/readers (signing the story) and/or interpreting (voice the story) contact

Alissa Vigil at DHHSC for more information.

If you have ideas that you would like to share about fundraising please share them with the board! One person cannot do the job alone and we truly appreciate all of the time and effort that volunteers put in to make this agency great. Please consider volunteering your time and skills to benefit DHHSC and our community.

### Upcoming DHHSC Board Meetings:

**March 10, 7pm -9pm**

**April 14, 7pm -9pm**

**May 12, 7pm - 9pm**

*Board Meetings are generally held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at DHHSC in Fresno. Check [www.dhhsc.org](http://www.dhhsc.org) for changes to this schedule.*

<b>Board of Directors</b> President: David Smith (Deaf) Vice-President: Bryan Minas (Deaf) Secretary: Renee Nealy (Hearing) Treasurer: John Eberwein (Deaf)	<b>General Members</b> Alissa Vigil (Hearing) VACANT <i>Are you interested in become a board member? For more information email <a href="mailto:info@dhhsc.org">info@dhhsc.org</a></i>	<b>Outreach Office Liaisons</b> <i>Merced Outreach:</i> Becky Sortwell (Deaf) CJ Mansfield (Deaf) <i>South Valley Outreach:</i> VACANT <i>Central Coast Outreach:</i> VACANT	<b>Contributing Writers:</b> Paul Barnett Jesse Lewis David Smith Joelene Spires Danielle Thompson Alissa Vigil	<b>Design Editor</b> Shannon Simonelli <b>Proofreading Editor</b> Danielle Thompson
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For more information about the Deaf Bee email [DeafBee@dhhsc.org](mailto:DeafBee@dhhsc.org)

*The Deaf Bee will be published once in 2009*

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## Farwell to Central Valley Community



*Danielle "Dani" Thompson, Executive Director*

Happy New Year! 2009 has begun! This year will be a year of change. One of the biggest changes for me will be personal move from Fresno to Japan. This means I am resigning from DHHSC effective January 29, 2009.

This has not been an easy decision to leave DHHSC. It has been a great opportunity to work with the agency, staff, Deaf/Hard of Hearing community and to get to know many of you on a professional and/or personal level. You have been wonderful and I have appreciated the opportunity you have given me to work closely with you. For that, I thank you.

As I reflect back to my year and two months at DHHSC, I must admit this was a long, tough year. It was a tough year as I had to learn the Fresno community, to get use to Fresno and most of all get use to DHHSC. There were the good times along with the bad times.

I was asked by one community member, "what is your best and worse memory of DHHSC?" My best memory was my first time attending the Martha's Vineyard event in 2008. This was wonderful as I got to meet the community from all walks of life and see the intelligent children and adults of this community. I moved to California from Massachusetts where I had visited the real Martha's Vineyard numerous times so the event here in Fresno brought back sweet memories. I also loved the idea of our community coming together to learn more about Martha's Vineyard. The togetherness of the community was most exciting.

My worse experience while at DHHSC was the impact of the economy on us and the false accusations against me and my leadership at DHHSC. The economy impacted us in major ways that I had no control over, nor did I want to face the reality of the resulting decisions that had to be made. We have worked so hard to ensure our community is being served so for the state to cut such a large part of our budget was devastating to DHHSC. I was beyond shocked as to how we were affected by the changes. I still stand my ground to the fact that I did the best for DHHSC and the community.

As a community we must get together and UNITE; it is not the time for us to be divided amongst ourselves. We must show the State of California we need their services and their assistance and to remind them that we are a group of people who may be considered "disabled" but are much smarter than they think! We need their continued support and the ending of budget cuts to Deaf services.

Needless to say, DHHSC and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community will always be in my heart. As much as I am excited for my new journey, I am also sad to leave such a wonderful community behind – Fresno and DHHSC ROCKS!!

*Danielle "Dani" Thompson*

### Deaf-Blind Social Group Meetings Held Monthly at DHHSC

*Annette Carter  
Support Service Provider*

The Deaf-Blind Support Group (DBSG) is a gathering of people with both hearing and vision loss. The group is varied from Deaf to Hard of Hearing; from Blind to low-vision. Everyone has a beautifully unique way of communicating and doing things. DHHSC graciously hosts the activities so there is a place where people can get together and share activities and also learn from each other. It is also a way that the larger community of Deaf and Hard of Hearing can learn more about the individuals and how they communicate differently with vision loss.

Sometimes it is only a matter of vision loss that separates Deaf-Blind people from the community. Other daily life activities are unique with the "dual sensory loss" such as food shopping, clothes shopping, reading the news, making appointments, cooking, cleaning, etc. To make these activities possible, Support Service Providers (SSP) are needed.

At our DBSG, we use many SSPs to make the event possible, and we can always use more. Not only for the once

a month DBSG, but for other life activities. Just a small amount of time given as an SSP opens up a much bigger world for someone else. So everyone has an open invitation to join us!

What happened in 2008? Spa Day, crafts, cooking projects, home-made ice cream, information on technology, and much more!

What are we thinking about for 2009? Car Show, Spa Day, Huntington Beach kayaking, Waterworld, museums, tandem bike ride, Break the Barriers, botanical sensory garden, Underground Gardens, Clovis Trolley ride, and more!

Our newsletter, Connecting Hands, was developed to give and receive information between SSPs and the DB group. Sign up today! If you would like to subscribe to the Connecting Hands newsletter send your contact information to [connectinghands@pacbell.net](mailto:connectinghands@pacbell.net) or call 559-355-4095

If you are interested in volunteering as an SSP or would like more information about DBSG you can contact [connectinghands@pacbell.net](mailto:connectinghands@pacbell.net) 559-355-4095.

DBSG meets the second Tuesday of each month from 12pm to 3pm at DHHSC Fresno.

# Community Leader Starts Retirement

Joelene Spires

I had the pleasure to conduct this interview with Paul Ogden about his semi-retirement, which will eventually transition to full retirement. We feel honored that Paul has been a member of our Deaf community in Fresno, California for 30 years during which time he was in charge of the Deaf Studies Program at California State University, Fresno.

**Joelene:** Please give us a little of your background Where were you born and where did you grow up?

**Paul:** I was born in Staunton, Virginia but I lived in several states during my growing up years and ended up in Illinois for graduate studies before moving to California.

**Joelene:** Are you married?

**Paul:** Yes for 30 years to Anne Keenan Ogden.

**Joelene:** Do you have any kids or pets?

**Paul:** An English Labrador Retriever named Bree keeps us entertained and amused.

**Joelene:** What hobbies do you like?

**Paul:** beachcombing, reading, camping, flying, and mentoring interns in our Deaf Education and Interpreting programs.

**Joelene:** How long did you work at Fresno State University?

**Paul:** Just began my 30th year.

**Joelene:** Could you describe briefly your job?

**Paul:** Before I semi-retired I was the director of the Deaf Studies Program and worked full time as a Professor handling the duties of teaching, writing, administering and all other responsibilities expected of a senior faculty.

**Joelene:** What did you like best about your work?

**Paul:** Teaching and interacting with students.

**Joelene:** What do you or did you find most challenging about your work?

**Paul:** Finding the right students to train to be teachers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. California is

experiencing a severe shortage of teachers and we need to recruit more students who would love teaching Deaf and Hard of Hearing children.

**Joelene:** Did you create any new programs at Fresno State University in past years?

**Paul:** As part of a terrific faculty department team we have worked hard to revise and expand the Deaf Education program. We have also designed and created a program for training professional interpreters.

**Joelene:** Do you think the new programs are successful? Will you extend them in the future?

**Paul:** We are focusing primarily on recruiting more students interested in being professionals working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children.

**Joelene:** We understand that you are in semi-retirement right now, but you are still working at California State University, Fresno. What are your future plans at CSUF? What are your projects?

**Paul:** Enjoying to the full extent my first semester as a semi-retired professor, I teach one class, advise students, and fundraise for my dream project, The Silent Garden.

**Joelene:** When you are fully retired will you travel to other countries, stay home or write a new book?

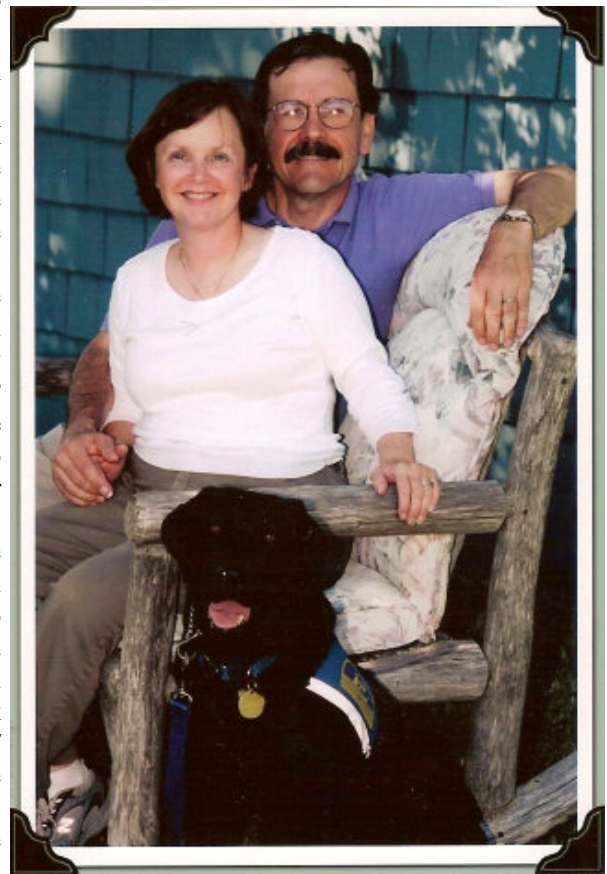
**Paul:** Anne and I have been looking forward to many opportunities for new adventures, projects... Our challenge is making the transition from working full time to working part-time and with a purpose. Our goal is to continue to give back to the wonderful Fresno/Clovis community we have lived in for 30 years. Our goal is to live "purposefully."

**Joelene:** What do you think a Deaf person needs to be successful?

**Paul:** A successful Deaf person must admit that there are many mountains left to climb, and not all have ready ascents. Fortunately our climbing team (our Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and hearing colleagues and friends) has sturdy legs, dedicated hearts and the will to attain the summits.

*The DHHSC family would like to thank Paul Ogden for his continued support and encouragement of the Deaf community of the Central Valley. We are grateful for leaders such as Paul.*

*Below: Paul and Anne Ogden with their service dog Bree.*



**The  
Deaf Bee  
Spotlights  
Community  
Members**



**Pao Vue**



**Mao Vue**

**From Within  
the  
Honeycomb**

Mao and Pao are not often seen at DHHSC, nor do they often use American Sign Language. Who are these people? Mao and Pao are a married couple both hailing from Laos. Laos is in Southeast Asia – occupying the northwest region of the Indochinese peninsula- it is surrounded by China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma. The official language of Laos is Lao.

Pao had just turned 18 years old when he met Mao. He instantly fell in love with her and immediately asked her father to allow them to date. Mao's father initially said no. After a few attempts, Pao finally got his chance to date Mao. He smiles and giggles telling his story of their first date where they went to a makeshift movie theatre. At that time, Laos was communist and movie theatres were forbidden so many communities hosted movies at home and called it the Movie Theatre. After a few dates, Pao asked Mao's parents to marry her. He emphasized that Laos culture required him to ask Mao's parents for permission to marry their daughter. For Pao, he had to ask twice! They got married in traditional Laos style: with family and friends gathering for the festive wedding.

Due the war in Laos, when General Phoumi Nosavan, wanted to control the royal army and keep Laos under communist rule, Mao and Pao's families

escaped to United States of America. As Mao has stated "it was a long, hard journey for us."

The transition to America has not been easy. They both had to learn a new language and learn how to adjust to the American way of life. Both their families did not know English nor sign language.

Fast forward a few years: Mao and Pao now have six children – all hearing. Their favorite American food is French fries from McDonald's, however they still enjoy cooking their native Hmong food. As for the best shop in the world: Mao and Pao both said "Wal-Mart!"

Pao's best memory of moving to America was the cars. "I like cars, move fast and here have many nice cars. I got into an accident and do not enjoy driving anymore." Mao's best memory of being in America is having her six children and the wonderful treatment she received at the hospital while having her babies.

They both thank DHHSC for providing cooking classes and are very thankful to Jolene Spires teaching them how to cook American food and independent living skills. Mao and Pao would love to see a Foreign Born Deaf Club happening one day at DHHSC and would love to have a Hmong Deaf Festival similar to Chinese New year parade in San Francisco – thousands of Hmong and Deaf persons attending the event.

# 2009 Digital Transmission Transition

At midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders. In order for your television set to receive digital broadcasting you will need to have a TV converter box. A TV converter box is a new product that plugs into your analog TV and, along with your antenna, will keep your analog set working. A TV connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service does not require a TV converter box. A TV converter box is a one-time purchase and usually costs between \$40 and \$70.

To help you with your purchase of a TV converter, Congress created the TV Converter Box Coupon Program for households wishing to keep using their analog TV sets after February 17, 2009. The Program allows U.S. households to obtain up to two coupons, each worth \$40 that can be applied toward the cost of eligible converter boxes. Consumers can apply now for up to two \$40 coupons per household by going online at [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov), calling 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009), or by mailing their application to PO Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. Coupons will be mailed to eligible households and are good for 90 days from the date they are mailed.

Since most stations are already transmitting digital broadcasts, consumers with older model televisions using an antenna to receive their free channels can connect the converter box and begin to enjoy the benefits of digital TV now. If you bought your TV set before 1998, it probably doesn't have a digital tuner at all. Almost every TV set made before 1998 was a traditional "analog" set. If you bought a big-screen, projection TV between 1998 and 2004, it may have a built-in digital tuner inside. But chances aren't great. Only a limited percentage of projection TV sets (and generally only those 42 inches in diameter or larger) included digital tuners before 2004.

If you purchased a new TV set since 2004, your chances of having a

built-in digital tuner improve dramatically. Starting in 2004, many of the TV sets sold at popular electronics stores feature digital tuners. But it's not a sure thing. Even some of the newer TV sets are purely display monitors that lack the internal circuitry needed to pick up digital broadcasts. Usually these sets have been advertised as "HD-ready" or "HDTV monitor" sets. That means they can display digital and high-definition signals, but they need help getting those signals in the first place. You'll still need a special converter or a cable TV connection. Finally, cable and satellite subscribers should check with their providers to see whether there are or will be any cable- or satellite-specific changes to their pay service.

*Information compiled by Paul Barnett from [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov)*

## Want more information?

### Visit these Websites:

- Coupon Program administered by NTIA [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov)
- Private sector Digital TV transition administered by the DTV Transition Coalition [www.dtvtransition.org](http://www.dtvtransition.org)
- Government Digital TV transition administered by the Federal Communications Commission [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov)
- Retailer participation administered by NTIA for retailers [www.ntiadtv.gov](http://www.ntiadtv.gov)
- Consumer electronics industry, Tips for consumers on navigating the digital transition at [www.DigitalTips.org](http://www.DigitalTips.org)
- Broadcasters and consumer electronics industry, Tips for enhancing antenna reception at [www.antennaweb.org](http://www.antennaweb.org)

## Get Assistance from DHHSC Searching for Your Next Job

*MaiNou Vang*

Want a job but afraid and do not know where to start??? Come to DHHSC any day during work hours and schedule an appointment to meet with a Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) counselor. At your appointment you will meet with the DOR counselor and begin the job search process.

Please remember that while you are receiving services or assistance from DHHSC for employment/job placement, you have rules to follow. DOR and DHHSC expect you to:

1. Show up on time for appointments – you need to prove that you will be responsible enough to arrive to work on time. If your DOR counselor sees that you are frequently not on time they will know that you are not ready to start the job search and will assist you with pre-employment skills.
2. Do not expect DHHSC to find you a job – you are an active participant in the process! It is

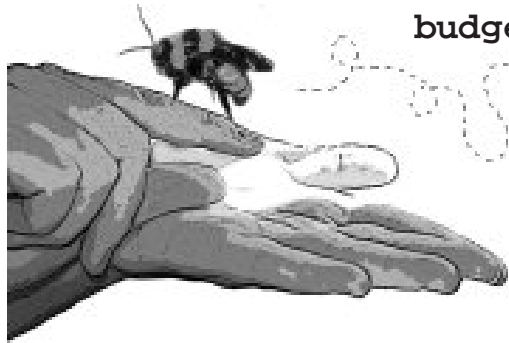
your responsibility to look for the job you want and apply for it.

The DOR counselor will assist you with resume building, interviewing skills, dressing appropriately for job interviews, general counseling on jobs/employment, post employment follow up, and advocacy for your rights as a Deaf/Hard of Hearing person. DOR will also provide an interpreter for your interviews so that you can give your best impression to potential employers.

The applicant who is eager, enthusiastic, and motivated is the person who will have more success landing a job. You may not be hired at the first place that you apply so keep in mind that the more places you apply for employment, the better the chances that you will get a job. We have had several successful clients in this program that have been placed at jobs because they have worked diligently with us to find employment.

# From the Editor:

It is with sadness that I announce that this will be the last issue of the Deaf Bee for the year. Because of the ever increasing budget cuts DHHSC has made



the decision to redirect newsletter funds into client services. You will still be able to keep up with events and activities at the website, [www.dhhsc.org](http://www.dhhsc.org) where we will be posting vlogs and event fliers.



## We would like to extend a special THANK YOU to our “Circle of Friends” who continue to support DHHSC with their donations and contributions!

Individual:

Anne & Raul Bettencourt  
 Gus Briseno  
 Reno & Martha Coletti  
 David and Linda Hammer-Brown  
 Robert & Imogene Hyatt  
 Annette Klein  
 Gary Lueng  
 Bryan Minas  
 Paul & Anne Ogden  
 Carol Perrier  
 Marty Pigott  
 Helen Porter  
 Winston & Judith Thompson  
 Rashad R. Wanis  
 Christy West  
 Ray & Oweta Wicks

Business/Organization:

Alicia Reagan Memorial  
 Anonymous fund of the Community  
 Foundation for Monterey County  
 Big Dog Stores  
 Big Five  
 Blockbuster Video  
 BJ's Restaurant Management

Blue Moon  
 California Credit Union  
 Catalano's Market  
 Central CA RID  
 Cheesecake Factory  
 Chem Tech  
 Chili's Restaurant  
 Claim Jumpers  
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 Pebble Beach Golf Course  
 Pigott & Associates  
 RaboBank  
 Sam's Club  
 Save Mart Supermarkets  
 Sharper Image  
 Sephora  
 Six Flags Magic Mountain  
 Sorenson Communications  
 Spaghetti Factory  
 Starbucks  
 Subway  
 Target  
 TGI Friday's  
 Tony Roma's Restaurant  
 Union Bank  
 Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory  
 in Fashion Fair  
 Walmart, Inc.  
 Wells Fargo Bank  
 Wicks Family Trust  
 Verizon  
 Visalia Sequoia Lions Club  
 X-treme Gyms  
 Zena's Island Day Spa

*No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, handicapped status or the ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination with respect to DHHSC's services. DHHSC's facilities are accessible to all persons with disabilities.*



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Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center's mission is to advocate, seek equality, and promote self-determination through empowerment for those who seek our assistance, and to enhance the awareness and understanding of the Deaf Culture and the unique communication needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.