Hello everyone,

After almost 20 years of NVAD membership, I became President of NVAD in January 2021. But, I never dreamed I would be President during a pandemic.

What do you do when you can’t meet in person? You go totally virtual, and get creative to keep things going. At the same time, you make changes because of the new reality.

So, I cut general meetings and increased social meetings, figuring that with the pandemic, people would need some form of connection.

What about family-friendly events? Offer things online for kids. Like the signing santa we did in December. As I write this, we are planning an ABC Stories event for the Fall.

With the help of some wonderful NVAD members, the February Super Bowl event moved online. We had visitors, games, and some football 101. I actually learned a bit about how the game is played!

NVAD’s Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/NorthernVirginiaAssociationoftheDeaf) and group, Northern Virginia Deaf Community, have both seen significant growth during this pandemic. As I write this, the Facebook page is at 493 likes and may be at 500 likes by the time you read this. It already has over 500 followers.

Before this pandemic, I was very camera-shy. When the only way you can meet is online, you get over any camera shyness pretty darn quick! I long for when I can see everyone in person again, and stand next to the podium again, and sign/voice “this meeting will come to order…”

Jamie Berke
President, NVAD
Hello everyone,

I seem to be wearing a lot of hats these days. It’s getting hard to keep them all balanced on my head!

Let’s start with the presidential candidate’s hat. By now, many of you may have seen my vlog on Facebook, the one where I announced my candidacy for VAD president. Thank you to everyone who has expressed their support for me. Those of you who are members of VAD, please show up at the VAD election this Saturday, April 24, 2021. It will be held on Zoom from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. See you there!

Now for the editor’s hat: Pat Beech is helping me one final time with getting out “The eNVADer”. I truly appreciate her help. Thank you, Pat. I am Googling and looking for tutorials on the technical aspects of producing a newsletter. Please let me know if any changes or improvements to the newsletter are needed. Also, please feel free to send articles, photos, or any items that you feel will be of interest to NVAD members.

As for the NVAD representative’s hat, I don’t have a lot to say here. I will be honest and admit I seem to be the “contentious” one on the VAD board. I have not agreed with a lot of the board’s decisions lately, and I have gotten some grief for it. Nevertheless, I have to stand up for what I believe is right. I have never been one to do something just because everyone else “says so”.

And finally, the NVAD vice president’s hat: I mainly act as advisor to our president, Jamie Berke, when she needs it. However, she is a capable woman and has shown that she can stand on her own two feet as president of NVAD. Please give her support and encouragement as she continues to learn and grow into her role as president.

That’s it for now. Here’s hoping as more people get vaccinated for COVID-19, that we will finally be able to see each other in person again and get reacquainted. Happy Spring!

Melanie Williams
Northern Virginia Association of the Deaf (NVAD)

**NVAD General Meeting on Zoom**

Saturday, May 8, 2021
9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Registration will be required.
Link will be emailed soon.
Vaccinate Virginia call center is now accessible in ASL!

Karen Brimm, Community Services Manager, and Eric Raff, VDDHH Director, have been working on a project to improve accessibility at ‘Vaccinate Virginia’ call center, working with the Department of Health, Deloitte (vendor managing the call center), and Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD).

This collaboration paved the way to “ASL Now” service available via video phone without having to use VRS. Director Raff required that CSD hire 4 Deaf Virginians to work as agents serving Virginia. Virginia is the first state in the country to establish an “ASL Now” service and has been available for several weeks now.

The following announcement was posted on VDDHH Facebook including the Department of Health news release -


Deaf Mentor Project

VDDHH is partnering with Hands and Voices, Virginia Association of the Deaf, and Families to Families to explore the feasibility of establishing a Deaf Mentor pilot in Virginia. Deaf Mentors would provide support to families with deaf or hard of hearing children with ASL and Cued Speech, Deaf Culture, assistive technology, and more. A parent survey went out and approximately 80+ parents responded with high interest. A deaf survey will go out soon to see how many deaf people would be interested in becoming Deaf Mentors. The challenge is we don't have the funding to start the program and it would have to begin on a voluntary basis. A background check and training will be required.

Eric Raff, Director
Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
NVAD’s first Zoom social was a success. On February 7 (Super Bowl Sunday), eleven people came to the Zoom including at least two non-members. Everyone had fun trying to answer the creative football trivia questions developed by Pat Beech.

At times it became “Football 101” as more knowledgeable attendees explained basic football concepts like “rush” and “sack.” There were technical problems showing funny YouTube football videos, so the list of selected videos was emailed to attendees afterwards.

Everyone had a good time, even those who weren’t really football fans.

Calendar of Events

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<th>Business Meetings</th>
<th>Social Meetings</th>
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<td>• Saturday September 11</td>
<td>• Saturday July 10</td>
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<td>• Saturday November 6</td>
<td>• Saturday August 7</td>
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<td>• Saturday October 2</td>
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<td>• Saturday December 11</td>
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NVAD Board 2021

President:
• Jamie Berke
Vice President:
• Melanie Williams
Secretary:
• Jeanne Lavelle
Treasurer:
• Robert Goodwin
Members-at-large:
• Joe Duarte
• Paul Daniels
• Jill Moebus

Board Meetings:
• Monday April 26
• Monday May 31
• Monday July 5
• Monday August 2
• Monday September 6
• Monday September 27
• Monday November 1
• Monday December 29

E-mail: info@nvrc.org
URL: www.nvrc.org

Jamie Berke
NVAD President
NorthernVADeaf@gmail.com

Melanie Williams,
NVAD Editor
mywilliams@verizon.net
The Community Access Collaboration (CAC) supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims/survivors of sexual and domestic violence was established in October 2019 after receiving funding from the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. The CAC was created to improve services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims/survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Planning District 10 in and surrounding Charlottesville, Virginia. VAD has been involved with this project since the very beginning with three other partner agencies: Shelter for Help in Emergency (SHE, Lead Agency), Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA), and Susanne Wilbur, LCSW. We meet almost every Friday and several times weekly with Federal support groups and monitors.

Now in the second year of the grant, the CAC is focusing on “Needs Assessment”. The purpose of the “Needs Assessment” is three-fold: to generate knowledge concerning the needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community regarding sexual and domestic violence; to gather information on existing policies and procedures at each partner agency; and the practices and knowledge of leadership, supervisors, staff, and volunteers have about Deaf and Hard of Hearing victims/survivors.

Two groups of seven Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals will soon be meeting on-line under rigid confidentiality rules and directives as part of this Needs Assessment. The question master is a highly skilled, ASL fluent former resident of Virginia, who has guided these kind of sessions in the past. Both groups are raring to go. We are just waiting for the Federal level go-ahead.

Rachel Bavister
VAD Representative to CAC
March 30, 2021

Dear State Associations,

NAD Region 1 will be sponsoring a virtual event for NAD Region 1 State Association Day on Saturday, May 1, 2021. We are inviting deaf/hard of hearing and deafblind consumers to join this very first webinar event. Our theme is “Making Connections, Creating Changes” and the mission statement is NAD Region 1 supports activities of the NAD through mutual statewide advocacy, outreach and membership. Therefore the vision is NAD Region 1 aims to be the leading resource for statewide support and issues resolution utilizing collaboration and networking.

The webinar will be in a Ted x format and will have two panels, one in between and the second one at the end of the day.

To make this event possible, we are asking that each state association sponsor the event with a monetary contribution to help defray costs, including interpreters and presenter stipends.

Your state association may send a check payable to PSAD and send it to:

PSAD
Robert Probst
P.O. Box 74,
Lock Haven, PA 17745

Your much appreciated donation is fully tax deductible and will help to make this virtual event a successful one.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Luisa Gasco-Soboleski
Sponsorship Coordinator
Email: president@deafcad.org
SAVE THE DATE!

NAD Region I State Association Day

“Making Connections, Creating Change”

May 1st 2021 9am-4pm EST (via Zoom)

The committee of State Association representatives from NAD Region I is inviting people to a day of virtual workshops, panels, and discussions about D/DB/HH issues.

Cost: FREE!

Who can attend? Anyone who is Deaf, Deafblind, Hard of Hearing or who are hearing allies of the D/DB/HH community in Region I.

Where? The event will be on Zoom. Registrants will get an email link to join.

Topics for the workshops, panels, and Town Hall are TBA. Find out more about the event at this link and register by April 28t 2021:

https://sites.google.com/view/nadregion1conference2021/home

Questions? Comments? region1deafconference@gmail.com

Thank you to PSAD for sponsoring and hosting NAD Region I State Association Day.