



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
WVCDHH BOARD MEMBER
CRYSTAL LAW



My name is Crystal Law, and I am proud to serve as the Program Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services at the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services. For over 20 years, I have been dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities, and for the past 15 years, I have focused on supporting and advocating for West Virginia's Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) community—a cause that is very close to my heart.

Originally from Gilmer County, West Virginia, I later relocated to Harrison County in pursuit of greater professional opportunities. My educational journey began at Glenville State University (formerly Glenville State College), where I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. I went on to complete a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from West Virginia University.

To further enhance my expertise, I completed postgraduate certification through the University of Tennessee and the Tennessee School for the Deaf's Orientation in Deafness program. This immersive six-week experience deepened my understanding of Deaf culture, audiology, vocational implications of deafness, and American Sign Language.

Collaborating with organizations and agencies to create impactful programs and initiatives is a true passion of mine. I find great joy in developing opportunities that expand educational and professional prospects for DHH individuals across our state. One of the most rewarding chapters of my career was serving as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, where I had the privilege of guiding consumers as they transitioned from high school to college, and ultimately toward fulfilling careers and independent living. Witnessing their successes and seeing them on their journeys toward achieving their goals has been incredibly inspiring.

I am also honored to serve on the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Board, actively participating in quarterly meetings and special events, such as Deaf Awareness Day. Deaf Awareness Day holds a special place in my heart, as it brings the DHH community together in celebration, sharing resources, fostering connections, and creating awareness about the richness of Deaf culture.

Looking ahead, I aspire to see expanded employment opportunities and increased access to higher education for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in our state. I firmly believe that supporting families and promoting early language acquisition for DHH children will pave the way for brighter futures and successful outcomes.

Beyond my professional life, I cherish hobbies such as reading, watching movies, taking nature walks, and appreciating West Virginia's stunning scenery and wildlife. My love for animals has been a lifelong passion, and although my path ultimately led me away from a career as a veterinarian, I delight in spending time with my beloved pets—Ratchet, Slarvae, Honey, and Levi. When the time comes to retire, I envision myself working with animals once again, rekindling this fulfilling connection.



Theatre for All: Capital High's Eurydice Celebrates Deaf Inclusion

For the first time in Capital High School's theater history, a Deaf actor took center stage in a major school production—and the results were nothing short of transformative.

Mark Mallory, a Deaf student at Capital High, was cast in the commanding role of the Lord of the Underworld in *Eurydice*, a contemporary retelling of the Greek myth. While Mark initially expected a background role, he was stunned and thrilled to be offered the powerful character of Hades.

"I was surprised and really nervous," Mark admitted. "It's my first time playing a supporting character, but it's been an amazing experience." To prepare, he translated his lines into American Sign Language (ASL) grammar, making the performance more natural and expressive. The result was a visually dynamic portrayal that captivated audiences and brought American Sign Language (ASL) to the stage in a meaningful way.

The production was made possible through the close collaboration between Mark, his interpreter Franki Harrah, and theater director Jakob Spruce. Franki worked side by side with Mark throughout rehearsals, interpreting dialogue and helping adapt the script for a Deaf performer.

"Mark brought a spirit of kindness and cooperation to everyone around him," Franki said. "We worked together to make his lines engaging and accessible, while staying true to the character. It became a deeply collaborative process that benefited the entire cast."

Director Jakob Spruce explained that casting a Deaf student wasn't just inclusive, it was artistically inspired. "There's a line in the script where Hades says, 'I can do chin-ups inside your bones,' and I realized the character didn't need to be heard to be understood," he said. "Mark's physical presence and expressive signing made him perfect for the role."

Adjustments were made throughout the production process to support inclusivity. Lighting cues, visual signals, and physical staging helped Mark stay in sync with the cast. The entire ensemble worked together to foster a truly collaborative environment—an experience that left a lasting impression on cast members.

Hannah Coon, who played *Eurydice*, said working with Mark taught her the power of body language and non-verbal communication. "At first, I wasn't sure how it would work," she admitted. "But watching it all come together was amazing. It made the whole process so much more interesting and powerful."

The show featured two interpreted performances—one during the school day and one in the evening—to ensure access for Deaf audience members and their families. Deaf students and their parents were able to experience the play in a way that celebrated both the story and the language of American Sign Language (ASL).

DEAF-FRIENDLY



**Capital High School
Spring 2025 Production:
Eurydice, by Sarah Ruhl**

Director:

Jakob Spruce

**Awarded the 2025 National
Shakespeare Competition
Education Award**

Cast Members:

Eurydice-Hanna Coon

Father- Isaiah Canterbury

Orpheus-Dulce Vance

A Nasty, Interesting Man-Michael Evans

Lord of the Underworld-Mark Mallory

Big Stone-Alexandria Plear

Little Stone-Jillian Arthur

Loud Stone-Sylvia Pierson

Stone-Hope Eggleston

Stone-Renny Fox

Stone-Brookelyn Schenk

ASL Interpreter for Cast and Crew:

Franki Harrah

ASL Interpreters for Audience:

Wendy Lemon

Vanessa Valenti

Antonia Vaughan

Kyra Vaughan

Meegan Wolf

Accessibility Features:

On-stage ASL integration

Two interpreted performances

Visual and lighting cues

for Deaf accessibility



Theatre for All: Capital High's Eurydice Celebrates Deaf Inclusion cont.



Mark Mallory

Mark hopes his performance encourages other Deaf or hard of hearing students to pursue the arts. “I’m inspired by a quote from King Jordan, the first Deaf President of Gallaudet University, ‘Deaf people can do anything except hear,’” he said. “You can do it too!”

Mark credits Deaf performers like Sean Forbes and Marlee Matlin for inspiring his love of performance and says he’d love to act again if given the opportunity.

Beyond the stage, inclusivity is transforming Capital High’s arts curriculum. Mark shared with Spruce that there was no mention of Deaf history or Deaf culture in any of his classes before theatre. “Thanks to Mark and many other Deaf students I’ve taught, I’ve made it a priority to incorporate Deaf education into our arts programming,” Spruce said. Now, during Deaf History Month, his film studies class explores the contributions of Deaf actors and advocates by watching films such as CODA and Through Deaf Eyes, deepening students’ awareness of Deaf culture and representation in the arts.

“Inclusive casting is not just the future of theater—it’s essential,” Spruce emphasized. “Theater should welcome all people of every background, ability, and identity. If your art doesn’t reflect that, then it’s time to ask what you’re truly creating.”

The success of Eurydice at Capital High is a testament to what can happen when barriers are removed and creativity is shared. Through bold casting, dedicated collaboration, and a willingness to adapt, this production evolved into more than just a play—it became a celebration of voice, vision, and visibility for all.



Mark Mallory



Sylvia Pierson, Julian Arthur, Brookelyn Schenk, Mark Mallory, Hope Eggleston, Renny Fox, Alex Plear

Take Time to Enjoy the Journey

Our daughter was an unexpected blessing who completely changed our world. Jenna recently turned eighteen, and I've found myself reflecting on the journey we've taken as a family. It's been full of unexpected turns and challenges, but I wouldn't trade it for anything.



My husband and I are proud parents of three. When Jenna was born, our sons were already in school, nearly ten and twelve years old. I was working over 40 hours a week from home doing medical billing, and life was already chaotic on the best of days. Then came the doctor's visits and audiology appointments, in-home early intervention services, and therapy sessions, which made things even more complicated—but we faced each challenge head-on.

Jenna was the first in our family to be diagnosed with hearing loss, so we had a steep learning curve—and honestly, we're still learning. Not long after, my grandmother, who used a wheelchair due to severe arthritis, came to live with us. With her arrival came even more appointments and responsibilities. Life was far from simple, but it was deeply rooted in love.

One day, I was sharing a funny story with one of Jenna's Birth to Three providers—how she had spilled her drink and was gleefully splashing in it. The provider smiled, then gently asked, "How did you explain that to her to teach her language?" I was caught off guard. I hadn't thought about it that way. That simple question changed everything. Suddenly, every interaction became a language opportunity. We didn't just play with dolls—we named every family member, described clothing colors and styles, and discussed every detail. It was enriching, but it added a new layer of pressure.

One night, while I was buried in work at my computer, Jenna came to me and asked if we could go "camping." She had a small Tinkerbell pop-up tent, just three or four feet wide. I still had hours of work ahead of me, but I made a choice. I stepped away from the never-ending to-do list, and we went camping. We set up her little tent on the dew-covered grass, looked at the stars, and lay down in her tent together—well, she did; half of my 5'9" frame was hanging out on the wet grass! But that moment is etched in my heart as one of my most cherished memories.

Over the years, I've made many such intentional choices: afternoons spent atop the Indian Mound in South Charleston—something we'd driven past for years without stopping to explore—and our regular visits to her favorite ice cream shop, rocking on their porch chairs and enjoying the flavor of the week.

Parenting is hard work. And when you add in doctor appointments, therapies, IEP meetings, and more, it can feel overwhelming. But it's all worth it. If I have any regrets, it's not taking more of those small moments to slow down and just be—to be present as a mom, a wife, a friend, a person. I've often heard it said, "The days are long, but the years are short." It's true. Don't let the busyness of life keep you from enjoying the journey.



>>> Things to Do <<<

WHEELING DEAF CLUB

Annual Picnic

Saturday, June 7, 2025, 12:00-9:00 PM

Warren Township Park
400 Williams Street
Tiltsville, OH 43963

Admission \$15

Refreshments served include Hamburgers, hot dogs, Italian sausage, and a variety of other foods, along with water. You are welcome to bring a covered dish. Please bring your own Beverage and a cooler/ice bag

Swimming pool open: 12pm-6 pm, Cost:
Seniors 65+ \$2.00, Adults: \$3.00
Kids: \$1.00, 3 under Free

Scan the QR Code to follow the Wheeling Deaf Club on 



WEST VIRGINIA DEAF SERVICE CENTER (WVDC)

Family Camping

June 20-22, 2025

4800 Watoga Park Rd.
Marlinton WV

Free for families of deaf or hard of hearing children. We will be swimming, fishing, camping, and enjoying time together! Limited number of spots available.

ASL Summer Camp

August 4-7, 2025

160 Old Jacksons Mill Rd.
Weston, WV 26452

Come join us for swimming, STEM, literacy, ASL activities, s'mores, and more!
FREE for deaf/hard-of-hearing children ages 8-13.

Scan the QR Code to register



Scan the QR Code to register



WEST VIRGINIA HANDS & VOICES

Let's Go Fishing

Whether it's your first time trying fishing or you're a seasoned pro, we'd love for your family to join us for a relaxing and fun day by the water! In addition to fishing, we'll have games and activities, so there's something for everyone.

If you have your own fishing gear, feel free to bring it! We'll also have some equipment available to share, but supplies are limited.

Sunday, June 8, 2025, 5:00 PM

Barboursville Park – Shelter 8
Co Rd 31/6, Barboursville, WV 25504

Saturday, July 12, 2025, 10:00 AM

Castaway Paylake
2036 Hawver Road, Hico, WV 25854

Two Dates to choose from:

Scan the QR Code to register



WEST VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Night

Friday, June 27, 2025, 6:35-10:00PM

GOMART BALLPARK
601 Morris Street
Charleston, WV 25301



LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE!

Each ticket includes:
1 Free General Admission
1 voucher for a hot dog and a 20 oz. soda.

Join us for a fun-filled evening at the ballpark celebrating the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community!

Scan the QR Code to register



FAIRMONT ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

28th Annual Pig Roast

Saturday, July 12, 2025, 10:00 AM-8:00 PM

East Marion Park
Pavilion #1
Cole Street
Fairmont, WV 26554

Cost: Adults \$20 - includes admission and 1 door prize ticket. Children (5 years through high school): \$5.00 for dinner. Bring a covered dish and receive an extra door prize ticket!

Scan the QR Code to follow the Fairmont Association on 





June 22-August 3, 2025, from 7:00 - 9:00 pm ET

Signed Language Intervention for Clinicians and Educators

This is a 6-week course that consists of two 3-week subcourses, which build on each other. It is intended for speech-language pathologists (SLPs), deaf educators, or American Sign Language (ASL) specialists. Students will learn about morphology and MLU, phonology, syntax, language analysis, and glossing in ASL.

Workshop Fee: \$39 **

July 1, 2025, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm ET

Let's Dive Deeper: Autism and Diagnostic Decision Making in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a behaviorally defined disorder that includes consideration of symptoms that overlap with language and communication risk factors that may be heightened in DHH children. This presentation will provide information and guidance on working with DHH children with complex medical, developmental, and social histories that require a highly tailored intervention plan. **Workshop Fee: \$39 ***

*This course offers 0.20 ASHA CEUs.

**This course offers 0.20 ASHA CEUs and is an automatic ACE Award.

For additional information
or to register,
go to
language1st.org/events

OR

Scan the QR Code



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

American Sign Language (ASL) Summer 2025

Courses will be offered on the campus of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, located in Romney, West Virginia. Housing is available at no cost to the student.

Combined, all three instructors have more than 50 years of professional experience in the field. These courses are fun and incredibly valuable. You will be amazed at what you can learn in just a few days!

\$250 for three credit hours • Seating is limited • Get on the waiting list today!

Co-Sponsors: MU - DHH Teacher Certification Program | WVSDB | WVDOE-OSP

ASL I & ASL II

(2 Separate Classes)

6/16 - 3 pm - 7 pm

6/17 - 06/20 - two sessions

6/21 - 9 am - noon

6/22 - 4 pm - 7 pm

6/23 - two sessions

6/24 - 9 am - noon

ASL III

6/20 - 1pm - 6 pm

6/21 - 9 am - 2pm

6/22 - 3 pm - 7 pm

6/23 - two sessions

6/24 - 9 am - noon

For additional information contact **Julie Barie**,
barie1@marshall.edu or 304-546-8499



WEST VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (WVCDHH)

Early Literacy in ASL: Storytelling for Parents and Early Intervention Specialists

Saturday, June 14, 2025, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM EST via Zoom



Join the WVCDHH and Dr. Christine Firkins for a free virtual workshop tailored to parents of Deaf children and early intervention specialists. The three-hour workshop will introduce foundational storytelling strategies through two beloved children's books: Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? and Goodnight Moon. ASL interpreters will be provided

Early Literacy in ASL: Storytelling for Parents and Early Intervention Specialists

Saturday, June 28, 2025, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM EST via Zoom



Join the WVCDHH and Dr. Christine Firkins for a free, interactive workshop focused on navigating English words that carry multiple meanings and how to effectively translate them into American Sign Language (ASL) based on context and intent. This workshop is intended for educational interpreters, teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and professionals who support Deaf and hard of hearing students in K-12 settings. ASL interpreters will be provided.

Scan the QR Code or visit:
<https://forms.gle.93deuQZbpmxAFqR18> to register.



Scan the QR Code or visit:
<https://forms.gle.UziwBvvXVfjzHmyz8> to register.



>>> Learning Opportunities Cont. <<<



WEST VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (WVCDHH)

Disability Benefits, Eligibility, application process, and appeals

Thursday, June 26, 2025, 10:00-11:00 AM via Zoom

Scan the QR Code
to register



Join us for a FREE monthly virtual workshop series presented by Kimberly Stephens, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist covering 27 SSA offices across West Virginia and Western Pennsylvania. With over 20 years of experience—including roles such as SSI Claims Specialist—Kimberly brings deep insight into Social Security programs and services. ASL interpretation and captioning provided.



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
Center for Disabilities

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CONCENTRATION IN DEAFBLINDNESS

Virtual Summer 2025: An Introduction to Deafblindness

This first course will provide foundational knowledge of deafblindness and the impact of hearing and vision loss on learning and communication, as well as key evidence-based instructional strategies for supporting those with deaf-blindness.

This course includes content from the following Open Hands, Open Access modules: Overview of DeafBlindness, The Sensory System, the Brain and Learning, Building Trusted Relationships, Touch for Connection and Learning, Maximizing Vision and Hearing, The Role of the Intervener, and Intervener Strategies.

- \$450 registration cost
- Option to add 3 graduate credits through the University of South Dakota (separate registration link) \$120
- Course begins on June 10 (7 weeks)
 - 3 synchronous meetings on June 10, June 24 & July 22 from 10:00-12:00 CST.

For more information
contact

Brandy Sebera

brandy.sebera@usd.edu

[edu](mailto:brandy.sebera@usd.edu)

Scan the QR Code
to register



WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

Opportunity for Interpreters to Earn 8 hours of CEUs!

FRIDAY AUGUST 8, 2025, AND SATURDAY AUGUST 9, 2025

Canaan Valley Resorts, Davis, WV

Reserve your room using Group ID Code: 1057WK

Target Audience:

Educational Interpreters, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Teachers of the Deaf, School Counselors, Administrators of Schools and Districts, and Parents or Guardians .

Educational Objectives:

1. Review, understand, and identify key laws impacting Deaf students' rights.
2. Implement best practices to empower Deaf students while maintaining professional neutrality under WVDE policies and the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct.
3. Recognize systemic barriers to Deaf students' participation in educational decision-making.
4. Apply strategies to collaborate with educational teams while supporting student self-advocacy.
5. Ensure Deaf students actively engage in IEP and 504 meetings, transition planning, and vocational rehabilitation discussions.
6. Address student misconceptions about their rights in education and employment.
7. Analyze the effects of Power, Privilege, and Oppression (PPO) on language access and self-advocacy.

Trainer Charity Reedy Warigon

Fee: \$75

(Includes Saturday Night meal)

Registration:

Email Chris Mick at

WVADPRESIDENT@GMAIL.COM



WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF 44TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Canaan Valley Resort, Davis, West Virginia

August 7-10, 2025

TREASURE OF RESOURCES!

Come join us for a weekend full of resources, socialization, and fun!

- Friday and Saturday Night Socials
- Saturday Evening Entertainment
By Keith Wann, ASL Comedian
- Saturday Lunch
- Workshops
- General Assembly
- Exhibits/Resources

For additional information
or to register go to

<https://www.wvad.org>

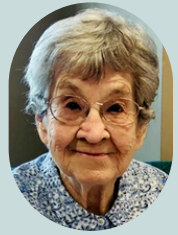
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In Loving Memory: Mary F. Patton

May 26, 1928 – May 26, 2025

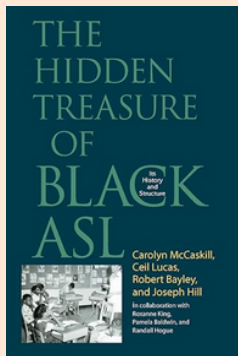


The West Virginia Deaf and Hard of Hearing community mourns the passing of one of its most cherished members, Mary F. Patton, who passed away peacefully on her 97th birthday, Monday, May 26, 2025, at Valley Center in South Charleston, WV. Born in Charleston on May 26, 1928, to the late Hubert and Iva Baker, Mary led a life rooted in service, resilience, and quiet strength. A proud alumna of the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind in Romney, Mary later returned to her alma mater to give back as a house parent, offering support and guidance to generations of Deaf students until her retirement.

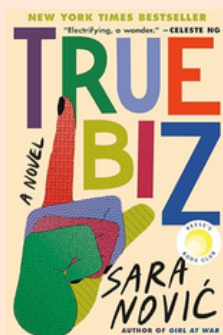
Mary was a loving mother, a dedicated homemaker, and a woman of many joys. She found delight in crossword and jigsaw puzzles, and getting lost in the pages of a good book. A lifelong supporter of community and culture, she was an active member of the West Virginia Association of the Deaf, the Charleston Association of the Deaf, and the WVSDA Alumni Association. She also wore her WVU Mountaineers pride with fierce devotion—cheering on her team through every season.

Mary Patton's warmth, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to the Deaf community will be remembered fondly. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

We extend our deepest condolences to her family, friends, and all whose lives she touched. May her memory be a blessing.

Media
***The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL*** **Carolyn McCaskill, Ceil Lucas, Robert Bayley, and Joseph Hill (Authors)**

The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL, originally published in 2011, presents the first sociohistorical and linguistic study of this language variety. Based on the findings of the Black ASL Project, *Hidden Treasure* documents the stories and language of the African American Deaf community.

***True Biz*** **Sara Novic (Author)**

True Biz is a revelatory novel that plunges readers into the halls of a residential school for the deaf, telling a story of sign language and lip-reading, disability and civil rights, isolation and injustice, first love and loss, and, above all, great persistence, daring, and joy.

