

# CALLER

THE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia Relay: Telecommunications services for the deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind and speech disabled

Winter 2014

## Virginia Relay Photo Shoot at Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind

Virginia Relay recently held a photo shoot to take brand new photos for its marketing materials. The session was held on the beautiful campus of the newly-renovated Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) in Staunton. Special thanks to all of our volunteers and to the staff and students of VSDB for being such gracious hosts!

## Virginia Relay Encourages Users to Complete a Relay Choice Profile

If you are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have difficulty speaking and use Virginia Relay's services to communicate over the telephone, Virginia Relay encourages you to complete your personal Relay Choice Profile. Filling out this free, simple form will help us make sure every relay call you make and receive is as individual as you are. By having a Relay Choice Profile, our Communications Assistants (CA) will always automatically know your communications preferences, allowing us to relay your call more quickly.

*"Help us make sure every relay call you make and receive is as individual as you are."*

The easiest way to complete your customer profile is to visit our website [www.varelay.org](http://www.varelay.org). All of your information will be kept confidential, and you will be asked to create a password to prevent others from changing your information without your permission. If you have more than one relay user living in your household, Multi-User Relay Choice Profiles are available so that each person may select their own preferences.

Your customer profile allows you to select your preferred way to both connect to relay and receive relay calls. Your choices include: Text Telephone (TTY), Voice Carry Over (VCO), 2-Line VCO, Hearing Carry Over (HCO), Speech to Speech (STS), STS with video assist or Voice. If you live with a person who uses relay differently than you, each of you can create your own profile.

You are also able to select your long distance company, designate other special features for your calls including ASL/English call translation and reduced speed text read-out, as well as establish a speed dial list of people you call frequently. Your profile will also allow you to choose how you would like the CA to greet the person you are calling on all of your relay calls.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.varelay.org](http://www.varelay.org) and click on "Relay Choice Profile." You may also request and complete your customer profile via standard mail by contacting us at:

### Virginia Relay Customer Care

833 Park Avenue SW, Norton, VA 24273

Voice: 1-866-894-4116 | TTY: 1-866-246-9300

**Help us relay your calls more quickly by completing your Relay Choice Profile today!**

Photographs from VSDB



## Remembering Ann Cutshaw

Virginia Relay Advisory Council member Ann Cutshaw passed away unexpectedly this past summer. A member since 2009, Ann was the Council's dedicated and gracious representative for the Virginia Association of the Deaf-Blind (VADB). In addition to her many contributions to VRAC, Ann was also the vice president of VADB, a consumer representative on the Governor's Olmstead Commission, and a notable advocate for the blind and Deaf-Blind communities.



Clayton Bowen, VDDHH Relay and Technology Programs Manager, recalls meeting Ann over 30 years ago when he was volunteer director at the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. Even then, Ann with her fiery red hair was a fixture, a friend and a force in the blind and Deaf-Blind communities.

"I was so pleased to recently rekindle our professional relationship through her participation in the Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC)," says Clayton. "Despite knowing her for so long, it was also only in the past few years that I learned of Ann's strong commitment to her church and her love of classic songs."

In fact, anyone who telephoned Ann was often greeted with her voice mail message which always included her singing the refrain of a favorite tune. So Ann, from all of us at VDDHH, Virginia Relay, and the VRAC, *"Happy trails to you, until we meet a-gain..."*



## Special Thanks to Larry Prasse

Larry Prasse, a retired rehabilitation engineer, joined the staff of VDDHH during this past summer to assist with the CapTel and iCanConnect programs. His combination of rehab experience, vast knowledge of assistive technology and his effective rapport with consumers enabled VDDHH to eliminate backlogs in each of our technology program areas. While Larry has "flown south for the winter," he will continue to provide VDDHH with support for the iCanConnect program via e-mail and FaceTime. Larry's brief time with VDDHH truly made a difference, especially for the consumers that we serve. Thank you, Larry!

## Irene Schmalz Wins Better Hearing & Speech Month Award

Each May, during Better Hearing and Speech Month, Hamilton Relay recognizes one individual who is hard of hearing, late deafened or has difficulty speaking and who has been a positive influence in Virginia, demonstrating commitment to advocacy, leadership and enhancing the lives of those around them. This year's recipient of the Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award is Irene Schmalz of Alexandria.

Irene is a passionate individual who devotes her time and effort to supporting children with hearing loss and their families. She works tirelessly to provide emotional and informational support to ensure that families are aware of the services offered by Virginia's early intervention system.

She is actively involved in Guide By Your Side (GBYS), a program offered through the Virginia Commonwealth University, that supports families with children who have hearing loss. She became a Family Guide in 2007 and has served as Program Coordinator since 2012. Since her involvement with GBYS, Irene has been instrumental in key efforts, including; publicizing the works of the program to increase referrals, recruiting parents to serve as Family Guides, developing a resource guide for families, representing families at meetings and advisory councils, organizing Meet & Greets and more.

Additionally, Irene devotes her knowledge and talents to a number of other organizations, including the Virginia Network of Consultants, Virginia Commonwealth University, the Virginia Department of Education, Fairfax Public Schools, George Washington University, University of Maryland, the National Summit of Deaf Education and Hands & Voices.

Irene Schmalz is commended for her leadership in the State of Virginia and Hamilton Relay is proud to present her with the 2013 Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award. Congratulations, Irene!



## Congratulations Arva

Congratulations to contracted VDDHH/Virginia Relay Outreach Specialist Arva Priola, who was recently appointed as an at-large member of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) Board of Directors. NDRN is the nonprofit membership organization for the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems and Client Assistance Programs (CAP). NDRN's mission is to promote the integrity and capacity of the P&A/CAP national network and to advocate for the enactment and vigorous enforcement of laws protecting civil and human rights of people with disabilities.



*"I will be able to bring issues from the deaf and hard-of-hearing community that have surfaced nationwide to the board's attention."*

"I am proud to be appointed to the NDRN Board of Directors, as many disability organizations do not have a representative for the deaf and hard of hearing," said Arva. "I will be representing all people with disabilities, but I will be able to bring issues from the deaf and hard-of-hearing community that have surfaced nationwide to the board's attention."





## The Extra Mile Program at The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind

The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) is offering K-12 public school students with vision loss, hearing loss, and who are Deaf-Blind the opportunity to spend one week on VSDB's campus under the direct care of the school and residential staff.

Available three times throughout the school year, The Extra Mile Program (TEMP) allows these students to experience a residential program and a signing environment, practice using specialized technology, as well as share a positive academic and social experience with peers and teachers who are experiencing

life with similar disabilities. During each TEMP week, visiting students follow lesson plans sent by the public school teachers and work on additional Individual Education Program goals.

There is no cost to participate in TEMP, but students must submit an application. For more information or to request an application, please visit [vsdb.k12.va.us](http://vsdb.k12.va.us) or contact VSDB by phone at 540-332-9000, by email at [info@vsdb.k12.va.us](mailto:info@vsdb.k12.va.us), or by standard mail at:

The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind  
P.O. Box 2069 | Staunton, VA 24401

## Ronald L. Lanier Reappointed as Director of VDDHH

On January 15, 2014 Ronald L. Lanier was reappointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe as Director of Virginia's Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH). Also reappointed by Governor McAuliffe were William A. Hazel, Jr., Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Raymond Hopkins, Commissioner of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, and James Rothrock, Commissioner of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services.

"In our first meeting with Governor McAuliffe, he encouraged us to 'try new things', and I am looking forward to bringing that mantra to VDDHH," said Lanier. "Looking ahead, my goals include continuing to delve into newer technologies and increase our Technology Assistance Program offerings as funds allow, as well as expanding our outreach efforts to grow our staff's presence in the community. Also, through collaborations with our partners, we will work to establish a Communications Access Fund so that we can, in keeping with our mission, increase our impact on reducing communication barriers."



Ronald L. Lanier, Director of VDDHH, with his grandchildren.

## Governor McAuliffe to Include Captioning on all PSAs

Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe recently signed a decision to include captioning on all of the Governor's public service announcements (PSAs). This is great news for Virginia's deaf and hard-of-hearing community as it will give thousands more people access to PSAs on a wide range of topics, from emergency preparedness to outdoor recreation opportunities. VDDHH and Virginia Relay would like to thank Governor McAuliffe for his support on this matter and recognizing that adding captions to all PSAs will make this important information available to more Virginians.

## Introducing the Hamilton CapTel® Call Me #

The Hamilton CapTel Call Me # is your personal phone number that makes it possible to receive captioned calls on your PC/Mac, smartphone and tablet. Share this single phone number with your family, friends and business contacts so that they can call you directly, without first having to dial a toll-free number.

Whether you are a seasoned pro or new to Hamilton CapTel, you are just three easy steps away from your new Hamilton CapTel Call Me #.

Already registered with Hamilton CapTel?

1. Log in to your account at [www.HamiltonCapTel.com/login](http://www.HamiltonCapTel.com/login)
2. Click on "Receive Calls"
3. Click on "Get your Hamilton CapTel Call Me # Today!"

New to Hamilton CapTel?

1. Visit [www.HamiltonCapTel.com/login](http://www.HamiltonCapTel.com/login)
2. Click on "Register" and then complete the form
3. Receive your new Hamilton CapTel Call Me # in a flash!

Please note that once you obtain a Call Me #, you will no longer be able to receive calls via the toll-free access number. To use Hamilton CapTel on your smartphone, it must have voice and data capability.

## Brenda Estes Receives Hamilton Relay 2013 Deaf Community Leader Award

The week of September 22-29 was celebrated nationwide as Deaf Awareness Week. Each year during Deaf Awareness Week, Hamilton Relay recognizes a community leader who is deaf or deaf-blind and has been a strong influence within their community and/or the commonwealth of Virginia, and who is committed to enhancing the lives of those around them. The 2013 recipient of Virginia's Deaf Community Leader Award is Brenda Estes, a contracted VDDHH/Virginia Relay Outreach Specialist at the Endependence Center, Inc. in Norfolk.

Brenda Estes continues to be a pioneer, innovator, mentor, leader and tireless advocate for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. After fighting to overcome her own personal challenges, Brenda was inspired to advocate for others, ensuring that individuals with hearing loss know their rights and how to access appropriate accommodations.

Brenda has been involved with numerous associations, organizations, clubs and activities throughout Virginia. Through her work at the Endependence Center, she assists individuals with captioned telephones and assistive devices. A longtime member of the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA), Brenda has served as the secretary, president elect and president of the organization. She was on the planning committee for the ALDA International Convention and had the opportunity to be host of a previous convention.

Brenda served as the 2013 vice president for the Virginia Beach chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) and served two terms as president for the Virginia Beach chapter of Self Help for Hard of Hearing (SHHH). She was a member of the advisory boards for Southeastern Virginia Society of the Deaf, the Tidewater Community College American Sign Language (ASL) program and the Virginia Relay Advisory Council. Furthermore, Brenda served on committees for the ALDA & TDI 2013 Joint Conference, and as a committee member and consultant for the Virginia Association of the Deaf Conference.

In addition, Brenda has been involved with the Virginia Beach City Public School for the Deaf/HOH Task Force, the Northern Virginia Community Roundtable for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and has been an SHHH Mentor for children between the ages of 10-14.

Highly acclaimed by her peers, Brenda is described as a compassionate, humble and down-to-earth leader who relates well with others and communicates effectively. For those reasons and more, we commend Brenda for her efforts and are proud to award her as the recipient of the 2013 Deaf Community Leader Award for the Commonwealth of Virginia!



**Marta Cagle, Virginia Relay CapTel Outreach Specialist, with Brenda Estes.**



## Check Out the Newest Relay Partners!

### Apartment Complexes/Rental Properties

#### Arden Place Luxury Apartments

Charlottesville  
[www.liveardenplace.com](http://www.liveardenplace.com)  
434-295-3200

### Banks, Loans & Mortgage Services

#### Freedom First Federal Credit Union

Roanoke  
[www.freedomfirst.com](http://www.freedomfirst.com)  
540-378-8952

### Computer & Internet Services

#### Meade's Computer Repair & Networking Services

Keen Mt.  
[www.meadesprepairshop.com](http://www.meadesprepairshop.com)  
540-328-0601

### Consultants

#### HDR Engineering, Inc.

Norfolk  
[www.hdrinc.com](http://www.hdrinc.com)  
757-222-1525

### Medical Care

#### Blue Ridge PACE

Charlottesville  
434-529-1300

#### Kissito PACE

Roanoke  
[www.kissitohealthcare.org](http://www.kissitohealthcare.org)  
540-904-2817

#### Riverside PACE

MacTavish, 804-977-5900  
Manchester, 804-549-5500  
Petersburg, 804-518-1220  
Hampton, 757-251-7977  
Newport News, 757-234-8106  
[www.riversideonline.com](http://www.riversideonline.com)

### Nonprofit

#### Riverside PACE

[www.HOMEofVA.org](http://www.HOMEofVA.org)  
804-354-0641

#### Virginia Domestic and Sexual Violence Action Alliance

Richmond  
[www.vsdvalliance.org](http://www.vsdvalliance.org)  
804-377-0335

### Seniors

#### Sullivan House

Virginia Beach  
[www.sullivanhouse.org](http://www.sullivanhouse.org)  
757-563-9955





## >Welcome Samantha Ruhland

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) is happy to announce that Samantha Ruhland has joined our team as AT&T Channel Manager for Virginia Relay. In her new position, Samantha will coordinate VDDHH's outreach services to promote Virginia Relay throughout Virginia and Washington, D.C.

Previously, Samantha worked as a specialist in Gallaudet University's National Outreach Program. She is a 2012 graduate of Gallaudet University with a major in Communications and a minor in Family Studies. She also worked as a campus tour guide in the university's admissions office.

"I am looking forward to working with VDDHH and Virginia Relay to increase awareness and improve communication access for people who are deaf and hard of hearing throughout the region," said Samantha. "I am excited to get out in the community, to learn more about Deaf Culture, and to start my career with a great organization."

"Samantha is very much in touch with the deaf community, and we are confident that she is the perfect individual to represent VDDHH and promote Virginia Relay to the people we serve," said Ronald Lanier, director, VDDHH. "She will be especially valuable in helping us reach those individuals who may not have access to internet and therefore rely on traditional relay services to communicate on the telephone."

Samantha Ruhland currently resides in Washington, D.C.

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*"I am excited to get out in the community, to learn more about Deaf Culture, and to start my career with a great organization."*

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## Ann Olliff Joins Virginia Relay Advisory Council

At its annual meeting in Richmond on October 12th, the Virginia Association of the DeafBlind elected Ann Olliff as its newest representative to the Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC). As a member of VRAC, Ann will represent the needs and concerns of Virginia Relay users who are Deaf-Blind. Ann recently had the opportunity to visit the Helen Keller National Center, a national rehabilitation program serving youth and adults who are Deaf-Blind. While there, Ann says she learned a lot and was able to gain back her sense of identity and self empowerment. A native of Richmond, Ann enjoys the company of her guide dog, Kelly. Please join us in welcoming Ann to VRAC!

# Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC)

### Voting Members:

**Eileen McCartin, Ph.D., VRAC Chair**

Representing Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA)  
eileen.mccartin@Loudoun.K12.va.us

**Carl Amos, Ed.D.**

Representing Hearing Relay Users  
camos@dcc.vccs.edu

**Robbin Blankenship**

Representing Speech-to-Speech (STS) Relay Users  
robbinblankenship@gmail.com

**Traci Branch**

Representing Voice Carry-Over Users  
Traci.Branch@dars.virginia.gov

**Feta Fernsler, Vice Chair**

Representing Internet (IP) Relay Users  
dhsc.feta@gmail.com

**Abra Jacobs**

Representing Centers for Independent Living (CILs)  
jacaw2003@yahoo.com

**Helen Justice**

Representing Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD)  
Justice1118@comcast.net

**Valerie Luther**

Representing CapTel Users  
valuther@vcu.edu

**Kathi Mestayer**

Representing Virginia Chapters of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)  
kwren@widomaker.com

**Ann Olliff**

Representing Virginia Association of the DeafBlind (VADB)  
annolliff@gmail.com

**Brenda Seal, Ph.D.**

Representing the Speech and Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV)  
sealbc@CISAT.JMU.edu

**Barclay Shepard**

Representing Hearing Relay Users  
barclay.shepard@dars.virginia.gov

**John Slone**

Representing Video Relay Users  
john.m.slone@gmail.com

### Non-Voting Members:

**Marta Cagle**

Hamilton Relay Outreach Coordinator for Virginia  
marta.cagle@hamiltonrelay.com

**Christa Cervantes**

Hamilton Relay Accounts Manager  
Christa.cervantes@hamiltonrelay.com

**Samantha Ruhland**

AT&T Channel Manager  
Virginia Relay, VRAC Liaison  
sr493u@att.com

**Brenda Neely**

Center Manager, AT&T Norton Center  
bn1545@att.com

**Gary Talley**

VDDHH Outreach Manager  
Representing VDDHH Outreach Programs  
gary.talley@vddhh.virginia.gov

## William Waggoner Receives \$500 College Scholarship from Hamilton Relay

Virginia Relay is proud to announce that William Waggoner from Chesapeake was selected as Virginia's recipient of the 2013 Hamilton Relay High School Scholarship. As this year's winner, William received \$500 to use towards his college education.

The Hamilton Relay Scholarship opportunity is available to high school seniors who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking. A recipient is selected within each of the states where Hamilton is the contracted service provider and is one of several ways the company gives back to the communities they serve.

William was awarded the \$500 Hamilton Relay Scholarship after completing an application and writing an essay under the topic of communication technology. He is now attending Old Dominion University to study Sports Management.



## Upcoming Events

### **RAM (Remote Area Medical) Clinic**

March 1-2, 2014

Southern Virginia University, Buena Vista

### **NVRC's Overview of Hearing Loss and Communication Challenges**

March 19, 2014

Lee Senior Center, Arlington

### **disAbility Law Center of Virginia (formerly VOPA) Celebration**

March 20, 2014

Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Richmond

### **2014 Speech-Language Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV) Conference**

March 19-21, 2014

DoubleTree by Hilton Williamsburg, Williamsburg

### **Annual HLAA-GR/TAP Equipment Evaluations**

April 12, 2014

VDDHH Central Office, Richmond

### **Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) Meeting**

April 16, 2014

VDDHH Central Office, Richmond

### **Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD) Conference**

May 16-17, 2014

Staunton

### **Danville Festival in the Park/Regional Health Fair**

May 17, 2014

Ballou Park, Danville

### **2014 Annual Conference: Aging Well in Mind, Body & Spirit**

June 3, 2014

Beard Center on Aging at Lynchburg College  
Lynchburg

### **Art of Aging Conference, June 11, 2014**

Expo Center, Fredericksburg

### **Camp Loud and Clear**

July 11-13, 2014

Holiday Lake 4-H Center, Appomattox County

### **RAM (Remote Area Medical) Clinic**

July 18-19, 2014

Wise County Fairgrounds, Wise

### **VDOE Opening Doors Conference**

July 29-30, 2014

Double Tree Inn, Charlottesville

### **2014 ALDA-Con National Association of Late-Deafened Adults Conference**

October 8 - 12, 2014

Marriott Waterside, Norfolk



### **Find Us on Facebook!**

Virginia Relay now has a Facebook page! Just enter "Virginia Relay" in Facebook's search field and click the "Like" button at the top of our page to get regular status updates of Virginia Relay news, events and more.