

CALLER

THE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia Relay: Telecommunications services for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind or have difficulty speaking

Fall 2022

Celebrating 50 Years

On September 30, VDDHH celebrated our 50th Anniversary with an open house at the Henrico office. Over 80 people came to celebrate, and 12 organizations exhibited. We had a great time celebrating with the community and look forward to continuing to provide accessibility throughout Virginia.



Welcome to the team!

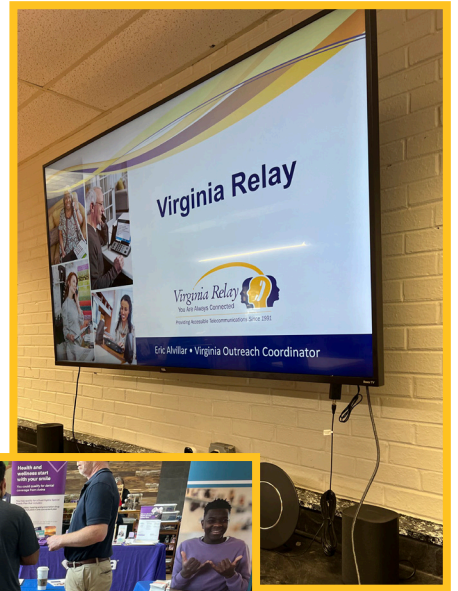
Shae Evans has joined the VDDHH team as the Region 7 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist for TAP. Shae grew up in Central Virginia and is Hard of Hearing. At her previous position with Branches of Life, she provided day support for the program with Deaf, DeafBlind and Deaf+ adults. Shae is currently pursuing a career as a Certified Deaf Interpreter. She looks forward to working with the Deaf community. Her office is located at the VDDHH offices in Henrico, and she can help local customers with Assistive Listening Devices and other resources. In her spare time Shae enjoys experimenting with make-up, fashion and baking!



Virginia Relay Attends the 2022 “Celebrate Communication” Event

After meeting virtually in 2021 due to the global pandemic, The Virginia Relay team was excited to attend the 2022 “Celebrate Communication” event in person at Springfield Town Center Mall. The event, held on September 17th, had over 200 individuals in attendance. The Virginia Relay team enjoyed meeting new faces and sharing information on the VA Relay programs and resources that are available for those in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities in Northern Virginia.

See additional photos from the event and learn more information by visiting <https://nvrc.org/celebratecommunication>.



2022 Virginia TRIAD Conference Resumes In-Person After Three Long Years

Getting to connect with statewide law enforcement agencies, senior TRIAD organizations and the

Office of the Attorney General were the highlights of the September event. After waiting three long years to visit together in person again, the Virginia Relay

team enjoyed presenting as a Platinum Level Sponsor. The 3-day event was spent sharing all the amazing resources and services Virginia Relay provides.



Technology Assistance Program Provides Telecommunication Equipment & Assistive Technology

Do you find yourself sleeping through your alarm clock for work? Or find yourself missing some of your phone calls? Do you struggle hearing over the phone? We've got you covered!

The Technology Assistance Program (TAP) offers specialized telecommunications equipment and assistive technology to Virginia Residents who are deaf, hard of hearing, have a combination of hearing and vision loss or have speech difficulties. Some of the available devices include amplified telephones, captioned telephones, personal amplification devices and various signalers.

With several devices available through TAP, VDDHH offers training on the devices as well as a 30-day trial period where qualified applicants can decide whether to keep, exchange or return the equipment. If you are satisfied with the device, it becomes yours to own. Applicants can re-apply for additional equipment every four years allowing them to always have access to the latest updated technology available.

Being committed to continually providing ways to assist those individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, Virginia Veterans automatically qualify for TAP equipment at no cost upon providing qualification information.

Your local Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist is excited to help you with your application process.

If you are not sure who your local Specialist is, you may either visit our website at www.virginia.vddhh.gov, call us at 804-662-9502, or email us at TAP@vddhh.virginia.gov



Virginia Department for the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

TAP Technology Assistance Program



Text Telephones (TTY)



Captioned Telephones



Amplified Telephones



Personal Assistive Listening Systems



Alarm Clocks with Bed Shaker,
Flashing Lights and Loud Ringers

5 Unique Gifts for Those with Hearing Loss

As the holidays approach, many of us are thinking about gifts for our family members and friends. We are always searching for something fun and unique. As you make your list and check it twice, here are some thoughtful gift ideas for those with hearing loss.

1. VIBRATING AND WAKE-UP LIGHT ALARM CLOCKS

With many options on the market, clock technology keeps advancing and providing ways for inclusivity for those with hearing loss. With features such as vibrations and/or light, these alarm clocks continue to make everyday life easier for those with hearing loss.

2. HEARING DEVICE DECORATIONS AND ACCESSORIES

Here's a fun idea for gifting to those who want to make their hearing device uniquely theirs. Available for various device types, stickers or "skins" are fun adhesive accessories to add. They are removable and can be changed for the season, or simply as the wearer chooses!

3. SMART JEWELRY

From smart watches to smart necklaces to smart rings, "smart" technology sure has advanced in the last few years. Not only are these pieces able to track your steps and aide in your healthy lifestyle, they can also aid those with hearing loss by using vibration and light notifications.

4. DIGITAL DOORBELL

A digital doorbell allows a message to be sent to the user's phone when someone rings their doorbell. With or without additional features such as video, these doorbells make great gifts for your friends and family. Additionally, they make great gifts for young adults or those students heading off to college. Used in their dorm room or other housing, it makes it easier for individuals with hearing loss to adapt to conventional living conditions.

5. THE GIFT OF LEARNING

One special gift idea is gifting sign language courses. A gift idea for those who are just beginning a hearing loss journey or for friends and family to take together, learning to communicate and make communication easier is always a gift.



Check out the newest Virginia Relay Partners!

In Virginia, there are thousands of people who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have difficulty speaking who count on Virginia Relay to connect with standard telephone users. Each day, hundreds of business calls are made through Virginia Relay. However, businesses that are unfamiliar with Virginia Relay may accidentally hang up on Relay callers, mistaking the call for a telemarketer.

Virginia Relay Partner is a free program designed to eliminate hang-ups that many Relay users experience by educating businesses on how to identify, receive and place Relay calls. Here are our newest Partners!

Colon & Rectal Specialists

Richmond, VA
Office Phone: 804-249-2465
crspecialists.com

Total Action for Progress

Roanoke, VA
Roanoke Phone: 540-777-4673
Covington Phone: 540-962-6328
tapintohope.com

To sign up to be a Relay Partner or to recommend a business for training, contact Virginia Relay Outreach Coordinator Eric Alvillar at eric.alvillar@hamiltonrelay.com

FCC Cracks Down on Illegal Robocall Traffic

On October 3, 2022, the FCC announced its plan to remove companies from the agency's Robocall Mitigation Database for violating the databases rules, ultimately restricting their access to make calls until they prove their compliance with the FCC. The FCC requires that all providers certify in the Robocall Mitigation Database that they have fully implemented STIR/SHAKEN or have instituted a robocall mitigation program by June 30, 2023 to ensure that they are not originating illegal robocalls.

This technology protects Americans from scams where inaccurate Caller ID information is displayed making call receivers believe the call is from a legitimate source. The FCC's call authentication program prevents

unauthorized robocalls from passing through the complex web of networks.

The FCC recently notified seven voice service providers operating in the US that they are not meeting the requirements and are at risk of being removed. FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel:

"This is a new era. If a provider doesn't meet its obligations under the law, it now faces expulsion from America's phone networks. Fines alone aren't enough. Providers that don't follow our rules and make it easy to scam consumers will now face swift consequences."

The FCC has made it very clear that this is a serious topic of discussion, and it values the privacy of Americans. Taking what may sound like extreme measures is necessary to continue this protection.

You can read more on the announcement in the FCC News Release issued on October 3, 2022 at www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-remove-companies-robocall-database-non-compliance

CITATIONS:

FCC Federal Communications Commission. (2022, October 3). FCC to Remove Companies from Robocall Database for Non-Compliance. <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-remove-companies-robocall-database-non-compliance>

FCC Federal Communications Commission. Combating Spoofed Robocalls with Caller ID Authentication. <https://www.fcc.gov/call-authentication>



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Visit us at www.varelay.org

Find Us on Facebook!

Virginia Relay and VDDHH both have Facebook pages! Just type "Virginia Relay" or "VDDHH" in the search field and click the "Like" button at the top of the page to get regular updates on Virginia news, events and more.



Morning Chilaquiles

Start your morning right with this fantastic recipe from Virginia Relay Outreach Coordinator, Eric Alvillar!



INGREDIENTS

- 2 Cups oil for frying
- ¼ Cup onion, chopped
- 10 (6-inch) corn tortillas, torn into strips
- 6 eggs

2 tsp. salt

- 1 (7.75 oz.) can Mexican style hot tomato sauce
- ½ Cup water
- ½ Cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large, heavy skillet, heat the oil to 350 degrees. Carefully stir in the onion and tortilla strips. Fry until tortilla strips are crisp and golden.
2. Remove from oil and drain on paper towels. Drain the skillet, leaving only a thin layer of oil.
3. Over medium heat, return tortillas to the skillet and stir in the eggs. Season with salt. Cook and stir until eggs are firm.
4. Mix Mexican style hot tomato sauce and water into the skillet. Reduce heat and simmer until thickened, about 10 minutes. Top with cheese and enjoy!

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Region 7 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist

Enter to Win!

We would like to thank the loyal readers of **The Commonwealth Caller**. To enter the drawing, scan the QR code below or visit bit.ly/VA-relay-prize

