



27th Annual
FAMILY LEARNING WEEKEND for
FAMILIES OF Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
June 2-4, 2023



What: MSDB 27th Annual Family Learning Weekend for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Where: MSDB Campus in Great Falls
When: June 2-4, 2023
Who: Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children living in Montana!
Why: IT WILL BE FUN!!

The Learning Weekend is a creative program providing opportunities for families of sensory impaired children to learn about deafness, share their experiences with other families, and learn how to communicate more fully with one another in a warm, caring atmosphere.

The focus of the weekend is to enhance each individual's personal knowledge of deafness and how it relates to the education and development of their child. Informal workshops, group discussions (parent groups, kids' groups, siblings' groups, etc.) and hands-on activities will be offered. Child care and recreation for the children (siblings included) is available at no charge. Families will be reimbursed for mileage at the current state rate.

Housing is provided on a first-come first-serve basis. Each family is generally provided with their own suite of rooms in the cottages and efforts are made to make assignments according to individual needs and preferences. Typically each family has their own bathroom, sometimes two, depending on the size of the family. **Participants need to bring personal items such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste. The MSDB Swimming Pool is OPEN!!!! Please bring your swimming suit. There will be time for the kids to swim and family swim later on Saturday.**

Children's Programs:

The children are divided into groups based mostly on age. Many factors are taken into consideration including friendships, maturity level, and interests when putting together the groups. The children stay with their groups until they join the parents for mealtime. MSDB's finest residential and school staff will be responsible for supervising your children and making sure they enjoy the day as much as you do!

Birth to two: Children will be Camas wing with staff with staff to provide supervision. *Parents should pick up their children prior to lunch and dinner and return them to the same location when they are done eating.*

Three to five: Children will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day. These activities will include snacks, program practice, indoor and outdoor activities including a trip to the MSDB playground (weather permitting). The activities for this group will remain flexible depending on the ages and abilities of the participants.

Six through eighteen: Saturday morning after the group picture, children will re-join their assigned teams which are designed for children to be involved with peers. There will be several activities including program practice, recreation activities and snacks. In addition, a representative from the Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) will have fun projects for the children to enjoy. MTAP will talk about technology, including using a VP, the Video Relay Service, etc. Also during the morning session MSDB Counselors will meet with hearing siblings providing them an opportunity to discuss their feelings regarding having a deaf sibling. Deaf and Hard of Hearing children will meet separately to share their thoughts as well. *This information (while names confidential) will be shared with the parents during the Sunday morning presentation.*

****The kids program is intended to provide entertainment and educational activities that will further the participants understanding of deafness and its impact on the family. Activities are designed for youth with hearing loss and for their siblings. Participants are grouped by age and staff are assigned accordingly, depending on the numbers of the participants and their individual needs. If you have unique concerns regarding your child, please let us know and we will work with you to insure that everyone has a good time.*

Information from various vendors (serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing) will be available throughout the weekend.

Presenter Bios

not all bios were available at press time

David Baier is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Social Security Administration for the Denver and Seattle Regions. He is a Montana Native who graduated from MSU with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Accounting. Prior to working for the Social Security Administration, David spent 8 years serving in the Army. He started his Social Security Career in May of 2008 and has held several positions prior to becoming the Public Affairs Specialist in 2016. He is currently stationed in the Billings, MT field office.

Emilie Banasiak has been with Hamilton Relay since 2012 and is the Regional Relay Outreach Coordinator for Idaho and Montana. She provides information on telephone accessibility services that benefit those who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf-Blind, or individuals with speech difficulties. She shares this information by traveling all over the two states and doing exhibits and presentations wherever there are senior citizens, people with disabilities, or the people who serve them. She trains 911 dispatchers and business employees on how to provide best service on relay calls. Emilie's goal is to inspire others to do more in their lives than they ever thought possible through education and self-advocacy. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, exploring new places and learning about other cultures and languages. She also volunteers as a Deaf mentor to families of deaf and/or hard of hearing children, as well as to ASL interpreting students in her local community.

Donald Goldberg, Ph.D. has been published extensively on topics such as cochlear implants, auditory-verbal therapy, speech-language-auditory assessment, educational audiology, and counseling. He is co-author of *Educational Audiology for the Limited Hearing Infant and Preschooler: An Auditory-Verbal Program*. Don will discuss the potential of early detection, hearing loss confirmation, early fitting of hearing technology, and parent guidance in our early intervention can result in "sky's the limit" outcomes.

Tarja Lewis, BA, is a project manager, focusing on K-12 content and resources, in the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center's National Programs and Outreach on the campus of Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. She grew up in a Deaf family and graduated from a school for the deaf. Lewis earned her bachelor's degree in English literature and communication studies from Gallaudet University and is currently pursuing her master's degree in education from Union Institute & University. She has also served on a committee focused on equity and inclusion in both school settings and educational curriculums. Previously, Lewis taught middle school English to deaf and hard of hearing students for five years before moving to her current position. During her teaching career, she was committed to exploring academic content in both written English and ASL, which she values equally. Lewis encourages questioning, considering different perspectives, and learning with an open mind and heart. She is a strong advocate for deaf and hard of hearing children and their access to education and is passionate about creating positive experiences with reading and writing for them.

Pamela Snedigar, as Director of the **Gallaudet University Regional Center – West** (located at Ohlone College in Fremont, CA) since 1999; Pam provides systems analysis related to deaf education. Including design, implementation and support of specialized projects serving regional needs. She holds Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice Administration, a Paralegal Certificate, and a Master's in Public Administration from California State University Hayward. She has further studies in Community College Administration from Alliant International University. She was a paralegal at the California Center for Law and the Deaf (CalCLAD) for 10 years; in that capacity she provided direct services, legislative review, advocacy training and community education. Her interests and current position have led her to develop many training and continuing education opportunities for professionals and families, as well as workshops for deaf and hard of hearing students. Along with providing opportunities for interpreter language development in math and sciences, she has developed training on cultural issues for deaf and hearing interpreters who have deaf parents, leadership (with an emphasis on women of color), advocacy, ethics. Workshops for students include financial literacy for K-12 students, and college/career readiness. **Her personal motto is in memory of her deaf parents, "everyone deserves the opportunity to develop language and by using language we develop an educated populace".**

GURC-West Description (MSDB FLW Sponsor) The GURCs were established in 1977. Through partnerships with host institutions, the four GURC share Gallaudet's undergraduate and graduate programs and the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center's resources and expertise through training programs, workshops and conferences, youth programs, technical assistance, and consultation with deaf and hard of hearing individuals and their communities. Ohlone College in Fremont, California is the seat of Gallaudet University Regional Center – West. GURC-West serves the western portion of the United States and its territories.

GURC-West has been a proud sponsor of the Montana Family Learning Weekend since 2004.

Deaf Learning Weekend 2023 Schedule

(subject to change)

Friday, June 2, 2023

- 4:00-6:00 *Check in:* Yellowstone Cottage. Room Assignments and Family Picture
5:00 *Tour:* Especially helpful for first time attendees. Meet in the Yellowstone Lobby.
5:30-6:20 *Dinner:* Pizza, salad and dessert in the MSDB main dining room.
6:30-6:50 *Welcome: Parents and children in the Mustang Center (Gym).*
All children (except the White Team) will remain in the Mustang Center. Parents will go to Bitterroot.
7:00-7:15 *Introduction:* (IMC)
7:15-7:45 *Ice Breaker:* Getting to know the participants a bit earlier in the weekend.
8:00-8:45 *Young Adult Panel:* Pre-selected individuals will share their journey. This is a very powerful session for the audience as well as the panel members!
8:45 Pick up your kids from the Mustang Center.

Saturday, June 3, 2023

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in the main dining room.
8:45-9:00 Group Picture – All Participants together in front of the big sign (each family will get a “Memory Book” at the end of the weekend to take home).
9:00-10:10 *Don Goldberg - "Everything YOU'ALL Want to Know About Teaching Children with Hearing Differences How to Listen and Develop Listening & Spoken Language: It's a FAMILY Affair"*
This workshop introduces parents to the importance of encouraging children to grab opportunities in order to grow. Helps parents recognize their role in promoting personal and professional growth in their child. Identifies ways parents can help starting early.
10:10-10:20 Break
10:20-11:50 *Tarja Lewis - Moving from Language Development to Literacy*
A review of language milestones and discuss how language development directly impacts children’s literacy skills/development. A discussion on the few critical ways that parents/families play in their deaf child’s development. TWO? hands-on activities will allow families to practice reading with their children and We will wrap up with a walk through the Clerc Center’s Online Community, which will include many various resources that families can use.
11:50-12:00 Pick up your children, they’re yours for lunch
12:00-12:45 Lunch in the Dining Room
12:45-1:05 Kid’s Program - Mustang Center (Gym)
1:05-1:10 Parents back to the IMC
1:15-2:15 *Breakout Session #1 (Pick one) Deaf Mentor Program, ASL, Social Security Disability 101*
2:15-3:15 *Breakout Session #2 (Pick one) Don Goldberg Part II. . . OR. . . Tarja Lewis Part II*
3:15-3:30 Break
3:15-4:30 *Parent Groups*
 - *Mom’s Group - Conference Room in the Basement*
 - *Dad’s Group – Life Skills Room*
 - *Grandparent (other caregiver) Group - (if enough interested)- Outreach Office*
4:45-6:15 OPEN SWIM FOR FAMILIES Free Time
6:00-7:00 *BBQ:* Dinner in the main dining room
7:00-8:30 **Parent Panel** – This is always a very popular session for both the presenters and the participants in the audience - IMC
7:00-8:30 Children will be in the cottages watching movies with their group or playing outside.
8:15-8:30 Pick up your kids from the cottages

Sunday, June 4, 2023

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in main the Dining Room
9:00-9:10 *Announcements*
9:10-10:10 *Emilie Banasiak - My Journey*
10:10-10:20 Break – hand out evaluations
10:20-11:20 *Panel - Hands and Voices, National Association of Interpreters in Education*
11:20-11:45 *Sibling Summary*
11:45 *Pick up Children – Pick up your sack lunch* Have a wonderful summer Travel Safely



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WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT MSDB's FAMILY LEARNING WEEKENDS!

"I think every family with a deaf child should come to at least one to see if it's helpful to them – we love it and learn each and every time we come to MSDB!"

"I like that my brother feels welcome and fits in every time he is here and I support him."

"I was very impressed with MSDB in general. I had no idea that this was such a 'gem'. Montana is very lucky."

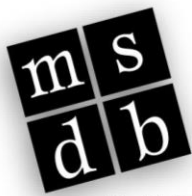
"Informative, we met a lot of amazing families, the staff was great and the kids had fun"

"Seeing all the kids together is the best part! We always learn something new that helps us with our lives!"

"The staff are great, always different options for presenters – changes every year"

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CHILDREN

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind

3911 Central Avenue
Great Falls, MT
59405

1 800 882-MSDB

www.msdbmustangs.org

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