



# THE MARYLAND RELAY *Connection*

SPRING 2016



## Meet our New Staff!

We are happy to introduce you to two new members of the Maryland Relay team: Kevin Steffy and Renate Buttrum!

Kevin Steffy is Maryland Relay's new Assistive Technology Administrator. In this role, he serves as lead evaluator for the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program.



*Kevin Steffy*

Originally from Pennsylvania, Kevin has spent the past 11 years of his career with the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI), where he most recently worked as Community Development Coordinator and Coordinator for the Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program.



*Renate Buttrum*

"I'm happy to be in Maryland, because I am now closer to my Deaf parents in Pennsylvania," said Kevin. "I'm also very excited to be part of the Maryland Relay team, as I have had the opportunity to work with both Director Brenda Kelly-Frey and Contract Administrator Sabrina Fields for a few years through our involvement with the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA). I enjoy serving customers who need telecommunications equipment, and I am looking forward to working with the people who apply for the MAT program."

**Kevin can be reached at 800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY), 410-246-4418 (Video Phone) or by email at [kevin@mdrelay.org](mailto:kevin@mdrelay.org).**

Renate Buttrum is Maryland Relay's new Captioned Telephone Outreach Coordinator. Renate will be traveling across the state to educate both individuals and groups about the benefits of Captioned Telephone.

A Maryland native, Renate was previously outreach coordinator for District of Columbia Relay and District of Columbia Captioned Telephone Relay Service.

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Voice/TTY: 800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960

Fax: 410-767-4276

Video Phone: 443-453-5970

[mdrelay.org](http://mdrelay.org)



*You may notice that in our contact information, we include a Video Phone (VP) number. Video Phone enables individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or who have difficulty speaking, to communicate with us over the phone using sign language. Video Phone users may speak with us using a live video feed by dialing 443-453-5970 (Video Phone).*

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"I am excited and looking forward to working with the team at Maryland Relay, where everyone is so passionate and determined to raise awareness of the life-changing services available through Maryland Relay," she says. "My goal is to reach out to all segments of the population throughout the state to ensure everyone who would benefit from Maryland Relay is fully aware of the services and equipment available."

Renate lives in Eldersburg with her husband and two sons. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, music and cheering on the Baltimore Orioles.

**If you are interested in requesting a presentation on Maryland Relay or Captioned Telephone, you may contact Renate at 800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY), 410-767-5970 (Video Phone) or [renate@mdrelay.org](mailto:renate@mdrelay.org).**



*Asia Johnson and Charm Smith*

## Charm Smith Receives 2015 Maryland Deaf Community Leader Award

Charm Smith of Ellicott City is the 2015 recipient of Hamilton Relay's Maryland Deaf Community Leader Award. Charm is the immediate past president of the Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) and is described by her peers as a great problem solver and a tireless advocate.

Charm spends countless hours every week advocating for a variety of special interests that impact Maryland residents. She has been actively involved with Deaf and hard of hearing issues in government, and has been instrumental in helping to pass two state bills benefiting individuals who are Deaf. She supported the bill that established Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) for babies born in Maryland. Another bill advocates for the establishment of the Deaf Cultural Digital Library (DCDL).

A supporter of many Maryland organizations, Charm is an active member on several advisory boards and councils. She serves on the Maryland Advisory Council of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, advising the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Charm also serves on the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR).

Maryland Relay and Hamilton Relay commend Charm for her dedication and volunteerism in Maryland's Deaf community!



## The MAT Tablet Program!

Our team is hard at work on an initiative to make tablets available through the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program. The program will benefit qualified Maryland residents who are Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, low vision, or who have limited speech, mobility, or cognitive abilities.

Based on financial need, individuals will soon be able to receive free of charge tablets that will provide access to Maryland Relay's services in a convenient, portable device. Each tablet will come pre-loaded with apps to support better communication.

The MAT tablet program is still a work in progress, but we are excited to soon make this advanced technology available for Maryland's citizens. Please stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for updates!

 [facebook.com/MarylandRelay711](https://www.facebook.com/MarylandRelay711)

## The Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay

The Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) provides Maryland Relay with vital feedback and insight on the issues that affect Relay users, including quality and trends in Relay services, technology and community outreach.

### **Betty Dodds, Chair**

Deaf/Hard of Hearing representative

### **Dolores Abbott-Dixon**

Deaf/Hard of Hearing representative

### **Deirdre Cheek-Lynch**

Maryland Public Service Commission representative

### **Jason Corning**

DeafBlind representative

### **Paul F. Fitzpatrick**

Maryland State Government representative

### **Joseph B. Ijyemi**

Deaf/Hard of Hearing representative

### **Jennifer Lindner**

Limited Speech representative

### **James D. McCarthy**

Maryland State Government representative

### **Kenneth Putkovich**

Senior Citizen representative

### **Charm L. Smith**

Deaf/Hard of Hearing representative

### **Patricia A. Stewart**

Limited Mobility representative

### **Vacant**

Deaf/Hard of Hearing representative

## Advisory Board News

### Join our Advisory Board!

If you would like to join the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR), we are currently accepting resumes for new members. We are seeking candidates who represent the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community and Maryland State Government. Interested candidates should please contact Sabrina Fields at 410-767-6970 or 443-863-7499 (Video Phone) or [sabrina@mdrelay.org](mailto:sabrina@mdrelay.org).



### Welcome, Jim!

We recently welcomed Jim McCarthy as the newest member of the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR). Jim represents the Maryland State Government and is the Executive Director of Maryland's Technology Assistance Program. He was nominated for GABTR by Carol Beatty, Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities.



## Local Businesses Complete Maryland Relay Partner Training

Last year, we introduced Maryland Relay Partner, a program that provides free Relay training and promotion to local businesses. The program has been well received so far, as many companies and organizations have requested training to become Maryland Relay Partners.

We recently held our first Maryland Relay Partner training event at the Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM) office. Attendees learned about Maryland Relay and our services, including how to identify, answer and place Relay calls.

By providing this training, we hope to eliminate the missed connections that often happen when businesses accidentally hang up on Relay calls. It is great to see that our local business community is supportive of our



*Renate Buttrum conducting Maryland Relay Partner training*

program and care about improving communication with the many citizens who use Maryland Relay!

**Maryland Relay Partner is open to all Maryland-based businesses. To enroll, business owners may visit [mdrelay.org](http://mdrelay.org) to complete an online inquiry form, or call us at 800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960 (Voice/TTY) or 443-453-5970 (Video Phone).**



## Banner Year for MAT!

As 2015 came to a close, we were pleased to see that it was a great year for our Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program! The number of customers MAT served in 2015 increased by more than 8 percent over 2014, and the amount of equipment that was distributed increased by more than 11 percent! It is great to know that more people across Maryland are benefitting from MAT and receiving the telecommunications equipment they need.

**If you, or a loved one, are unable to use a standard telephone, please contact us to see if you qualify for no-cost telecommunications equipment through MAT. Visit [mdrelay.org](http://mdrelay.org) or call us at Maryland Relay at 800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY) or 443-453-5970 (Video Phone).**

## See our New and Improved Office!

The next time you visit us at Maryland Relay/ Telecommunications Access of Maryland, you will notice some big changes!

Visitors to Maryland Relay will benefit from an updated evaluation center where MAT program applicants can try the latest assistive telecommunications equipment for themselves.

We also now have an expanded and modernized waiting area, where we are showcasing the history of Relay technology in our very own small museum! We have several historic pieces of telecommunications equipment on display, including a text telephone (TTY) from 1975. We are still looking for interesting pieces to add to our collection. If you have an old assistive telecommunications device that you are willing to donate, please contact us at 800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY) or 443-453-5970 (Video Phone).

We hope you will make plans to come see our new space soon!



*TTYs like this from the early 1970's weighed about 300 pounds. They were affectionately called "green monsters" or "clunkers".*

*TTY donated by Larry and Carolyn Brick.*

## Brenda Kelly-Frey Receives 2016 Ally Award from Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Congratulations to the Department of Information Technology's Brenda Kelly-Frey, Maryland Relay and TAM Director, who was recently honored by the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Brenda was awarded with the first ever 2016 Ally Award for her contributions to Maryland's Deaf and hard of hearing communities. She received her award during the 7th Annual Legislative Awareness Day in Annapolis, on Monday, March 7.



*Award Winners: (l to r) Allan Kittleman, Howard County Executive, TAM Director, Brenda Kelly-Frey, Nancy Jenkins and Ethelette Ennis*



## Telecommunications Access of Maryland

Maryland Dept. of Information Technology  
301 West Preston Street, Suite 1008A  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Look for Maryland Relay's Outreach Coordinators at these upcoming events. To see a complete list, visit [mdrelay.org](http://mdrelay.org):

**June 15-18:** Maryland Joint Bench/Bar Conference, Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel, Ocean City

**June 18-19:** MPT Salutes Vietnam Veterans LZ Maryland; Maryland State Fairgrounds; Timonium

**June 20-22:** 124th Annual Maryland State Firemen's Association Convention & Conference, Ocean City Convention Center, Ocean City

**June 25:** Maryland Association of Family Physicians Summer Conference, Crown Plaza Annapolis Hotel, Annapolis

**July 16-23:** Washington County Ag Expo & Fair, Sharpsburg Pike, Boonsboro

**September 19:** Senior Expo at the Great Frederick Fair, Frederick Fairgrounds, Frederick

**October 21:** 50+ Expo Howard County, Wilde Lake High School, Columbia

### TEDPA and NASRA Come to Maryland

The Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) and The National Association for State Relay Administration (NASRA) will both be hosting their annual conferences in Annapolis, Maryland this year!