



THE MARYLAND RELAY Connection

FALL 2018



TAM Staff Receive Citations from Governor Hogan

Brenda Kelly-Frey, director of Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM), and Asia Johnson, public relations officer, were both recently presented with Governor's Citations for their work with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities in Maryland.



Brenda has spearheaded many initiatives to improve telecommunications access in Maryland, including establishing the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program in 1997 to ensure that every Maryland resident has access to telecommunications solutions regardless of ability or income. For more than 30 years, Brenda has been an advocate for the Deaf community and has helped introduce multiple bills that have passed into law. Her passion and determination have broken down many barriers to communication and she will continue her vital work for years to come.

Asia exemplifies quality customer service and is always working to ensure Maryland residents know about the important services TAM offers. As public relations officer, she focuses on program outreach and is constantly going above and beyond to ensure residents receive quality customer service through the whole application and program process. She is passionate about her work and it shows through the individualized attention she gives customers.

These citations are not only in recognition of Brenda and Asia, but of the entire TAM staff who work hard every day to ensure TAM and Maryland Relay can bring life-changing services and support to the community. **We'd like to thank everyone at TAM for making this possible and Governor Larry Hogan for his continuous support of Maryland Relay.**

Pictured above left: Governor Hogan and TAM Director Brenda Kelly-Frey with her granddaughter (Evelyn). Above right, from left to right, Tarita Turner, Sabrina Fields, DoIT Secretary Michael Leahy, Asia Johnson, Dominique Mattocks, Kevin Steffy



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mdrelay.org



You may notice that in our contact information, we include a Video Phone (VP) number. Persons using American Sign Language can contact us via Video Phone at 443-453-5970.



Pictured above: Brenda Bush

MAT Evaluator Spotlight

The Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program provides eligible applicants with the specialized telecommunications equipment they need to make and receive phone calls independently.

This program is successful largely due to the dedication and hard work of our MAT evaluators throughout the state. Our evaluators receive the approved MAT applicants' contact information from the TAM office and conduct in-person evaluations to match each with a telecommunications device that is best suited to meet their needs. Jane Hager and Brenda Bush, two of our MAT evaluators, love what they do and truly care about the people they serve.



Pictured above: Jane Hager

"I've been a MAT program evaluator since 2010," says Brenda. "It has taught me that everyone has a story and being able to hear those stories from clients is my favorite part of my job. I meet so many nice people, and they're always so grateful to receive a device that allows them to communicate independently."

Brenda serves clients in many areas throughout western and southern Maryland, including in Washington, Frederick, Montgomery, and St. Mary's counties.

When she isn't helping her clients regain their independence, Brenda lives a very colorful life. She loves traveling in search of live music, spending time with her grandchildren, repurposing old furniture to give it new life, and painting.

Jane is an evaluator who works with MAT program applicants in the Eastern Shore region, covering Somerset County up to Harford County.

"Because I have a lifetime of experience with hearing loss, I can often relate to a lot of the frustrations that people feel," says Jane. "I love meeting with clients and seeing their reaction when they realize they can use a phone more easily. It's very satisfying that you can really help somebody in a very direct and immediate way." Away from work, Jane is an avid yogi and loves being outside and tending to her organic garden.

Thank you to Brenda, Jane, and all our evaluators who help us keep Maryland connected! To find out how you can qualify for the MAT program, visit mdrelay.org.

Thank You, Models!

We recently had a photo shoot to capture the most up-to-date telecommunications equipment and refresh our marketing materials. Our models included Maryland Relay's public relations officer, Asia Johnson, and actual Relay users who volunteered to spend the day with us at the photo shoot. Thank you to our volunteer models and we look forward to sharing our new pictures!

MAT Updates

Request a new evaluation after three years

MAT program recipients who have had their equipment for more than three years are eligible to be re-evaluated by our MAT evaluators. If you feel your telecommunications needs have changed and your device is no longer serving you well, make an appointment with a MAT evaluator near you to be matched with a new device.

CapTel® 800i models to be replaced

All CapTel 800i models will need to be replaced with a newer model. If you have a CapTel 800i, please call 1-877-248-9331 to be issued a replacement. If you feel your CapTel is no longer meeting your needs, make an appointment by calling 800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960 (Voice/TTY) to meet with an evaluator near you.

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Pictured below: Lead MAT evaluator Kevin Steffy works with an applicant who is DeafBlind during a MAT evaluation.



Our Fall Intern is Here!

We are very pleased to have Catherine Schneider (pictured above) with us this fall as our Maryland Relay intern! Catherine is a senior at Towson University and is majoring in Deaf Studies.

Catherine has a passion for American Sign Language and Deaf culture, and is excited to be able to immerse herself in both during her time with us.

"This internship is an amazing opportunity for Deaf Studies majors," said Catherine. "I look forward to learning more about Maryland Relay and working side-by-side with the great people here."

If you're interested in being an intern with Maryland Relay in the future, send a resume and cover letter to moreinfo@mdrelay.org.



Riley Hines Receives 2018 Hamilton Relay Scholarship



Hamilton Relay, Telecommunications Relay and Captioned Telephone Service provider for the State of Maryland, has awarded a \$500 scholarship to Riley Hines, a graduate of Maurice J. McDonough High School in La Plata.

The Hamilton Relay Scholarship opportunity is available to high school seniors who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, 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 it serves.

“Hamilton takes pride in recognizing outstanding leadership and promoting education,” said Jenny Curran, Maryland Captioned Telephone outreach coordinator. “We are excited to have the opportunity to contribute to furthering Riley’s education and wish her success in reaching her personal and professional goals.”

Riley was awarded the \$500 Hamilton Relay Scholarship after completing the application process, including writing an essay on the topic of communication technology. Riley is attending Frostburg State University this fall to study Secure Computing and Information Assurance.

Maryland Relay Attends NASRA

Brenda Kelly-Frey, director of Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM), and Sabrina Fields, contract administrator for TAM, headed to Minnesota in September for the 2018 National Association for State Relay Administration (NASRA) conference.

This conference shined light on the current telecommunication challenges facing the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities, as well as new technology coming out to overcome those challenges. Attendees heard from representatives from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the iTRS Fund Administrator.



Panel speakers presenting at the NASRA conference.

Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) was an important topic covered at the conference. The session included a panel of IP CTS providers who answered various questions about IP CTS related to the recently released “Modernization & Reform Item” as well as more general questions about service and practices.

Making telecommunications increasingly accessible for individuals who are DeafBlind is a constant goal for Maryland Relay, so being able to hear from two individuals who are DeafBlind about the communication challenges they face was very helpful to keep us moving in the right direction. During this session, the two presenters discussed cultural expectations, access to equipment and services, and their hopes for what the future holds for the DeafBlind community.

We are grateful for what we learned at this conference and look forward to using this knowledge and experience to improve our services for all Maryland Relay users in the future!

Anne Madison Wins 2018 Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award

On August 17, Captioned Telephone outreach coordinator Jenny Curran presented the 2018 Hamilton Relay Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award for Maryland to Anne Madison. Anne is a community health worker and community advisory board member for the Baltimore HEARS (Hearing Equity through Accessible Research and Solutions) program. Prior to her role with HEARS, Anne was a program client. She is also a volunteer with the Manhattan Park Senior Living Community in North Baltimore, and is an AARP Foundation Amazon Echo Project volunteer, which tests the use of Amazon Echo devices in senior housing to combat social isolation.

Anne was nominated for this award because her age-related hearing loss gives her a unique perspective that her HEARS clients and teammates find invaluable. Her experience gives her a strong understanding of what it means to live with hearing loss, and what it takes to be willing and comfortable to share one's experiences.

She is instrumental in teaching clients how to incorporate communication strategies and amplification into their daily lives. Her clients frequently share how impactful their experiences in the HEARS program are because of Anne's thoughtful, supportive, and masterful approach to talking about hearing loss and helping clients become more comfortable with a listening device. Additionally, her peers state that she is a model for what individuals with hearing loss can and do contribute to communities across the nation.

Congratulations, Anne!



Anne Madison receiving the 2018 Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award from outreach coordinator Jenny Curran.

Become a Maryland Relay Partner!

If your business or organization regularly receives phone calls from the public, you could be missing out on opportunities to connect with part of your community: individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, or have difficulty speaking.

By becoming a Maryland Relay Partner, you and your colleagues will receive free training on how to place and receive phone calls to and from Maryland Relay users. Not only will you open your organization up to a new audience, you could also increase your sales or reach more constituents. In addition, you'll receive valuable marketing benefits to raise awareness and boost business.

Learn more and schedule a training for your team by clicking the official Maryland Relay Partner logo on our website.





Tarita Turner Becomes TRS Outreach Coordinator

We have a new TRS outreach coordinator—and you'll probably recognize her! Tarita Turner began at Maryland Relay almost a year ago as an administrative assistant. Now, as the Hamilton Relay TRS outreach coordinator for Maryland, Tarita will be traveling the state to share valuable information about Maryland Relay services with the community. Born and raised in Annapolis, Tarita is excited to be able to meet and help Marylanders every day.

"I loved being in the office day to day, helping folks throughout the application process," said Tarita. "But I am overjoyed to be the newest member of the outreach team! To me, outreach means traveling throughout Maryland for events and presentations to empower people with the ability to make phone calls independently no matter the perceived limitations. I am looking forward to this new chapter with Maryland Relay."

If you see Tarita in the community, please say hello!

Update Your CapTel® 840 Plus

CapTel has released a software update for the CapTel 840. This software update has many benefits, including:

- Conversations, call history, and redial numbers are all saved even if the CapTel phone loses power.
- Changes to the built-in answering machine, including the addition of a Remote Message Retrieval feature and a new indicator that shows when the answering machine memory is full.
- Maximum amplification is now available during both calls with captions and without captions.
- The ability to erase individual conversations in memory instead of all at once.



Updates for the following CapTel models will also be released in the coming weeks:

- CapTel 2400i
- CapTel 2400iBT
- CapTel 840i
- CapTel 880i
- CapTel 800i

Visit [capitel.com/knowledgebase](https://www.capitel.com/knowledgebase) to update your CapTel 840 Plus or for more information.

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Maryland Relay Travels to TEDPA

Brenda Kelly-Frey, director of Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM), Brenda Bush, Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program evaluator, and Kevin Steffy, MAT program lead evaluator, recently attended the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) conference in Bloomington, Minnesota.

The theme of this year's conference was "Casting into the Future." Throughout the event, several sessions were held to address the future of technology, infrastructure, equipment, and our programs. There was a great discussion on the future of Captioned Telephone Service, which may be evolving soon due to phone lines changing from analog to digital.

Another big topic at the conference was how to connect with underserved communities. At Maryland Relay, we want to reach as many Marylanders as possible to share with them the services we offer. We left TEDPA with great ideas on how to better reach counties that may not be familiar with our services, such as partnering with disability agencies, churches of all religions, food banks, and the LGBT communities in those areas.

One of the best parts of the conference was Speed Networking, when we were able to speak to each vendor for eight minutes about their newest technology options and learn about the latest advancements that can benefit our clients.

Our representatives left with a lot of great information and tools to keep the MAT program moving forward. We're excited to continue and expand our outreach efforts to bring accessible telecommunications technology to more Marylanders.



Celebrating Maryland School for the Deaf's 150th Anniversary

This is a big year for the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) as 2018 marks its 150th anniversary! To celebrate, MSD held a number of events, including a reunion weekend for past and present students, families and staff.

Maryland Relay was proud to be a part of the fun. As platinum sponsor, we set up an exhibit featuring an array of telecommunications devices and information about our services, and spoke to many of the attendees about the MAT program. Outreach coordinator Jenny Curran handed out beach balls to many of the children in attendance, which could be seen flying through the air as everyone celebrated this incredible milestone. Maryland Relay was excited to be a part of the festivities, despite the rainy weather!



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 facebook.com/MarylandRelay711

 twitter.com/MDRelay711



UPCOMING EVENTS

Look for Maryland Relay's outreach coordinators at these upcoming events. To see a complete list, visit mdrelay.org.

January 11

Maryland Speech Language Hearing Association (MSHA) Winter Workshop
Rockville, MD

January 16

State Center Building Lobby
301 W. Preston St.
Baltimore, MD

March 14

Anne Arundel County Caregivers Workshop
Annapolis Senior Center
199 S. Villa Ave., Annapolis, MD

March 16

B'more Healthy Expo
Baltimore Convention Center
1 W. Pratt St., Baltimore, MD

March 22

Senior Resource Guide and Expo
Chesapeake College
1000 College Circle, Wye Mills, MD

March 28-29

Annual Social Work Month Conference
Maritime Institute of Technology
692 Maritime Blvd.
Linthicum Heights, MD

Update from the FCC

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Disability Advisory Committee is recommending that Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) registration requirements be waived for all emergency shelter TRS devices. Currently, TRS regulations require Internet-based TRS users to register with a TRS provider before placing a call. User's registrations are not always transferrable to the device they would use in an emergency shelter. Additionally, some registrations require a username and password, which users may not have access to at the shelter. This change in policy would ensure equal telecommunication access for all in emergency and disaster situations.