



The New

# SOURCE

AUTUMN '03

A PUBLICATION OF NATIONAL DEAF ACADEMY

## SPECIAL EDITION!

*President's Corner*

*James Tresh, President*

### 2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

*Dear Friends and Families,*

In most parts of the United States, school children have returned to their routine of attending classes and having homework assignments. Some parts of the country already have beautiful displays of multi-colored Autumn leaves. Here in Central Florida, it still feels like Summertime. Our daily temperature is still in the 90s!

As you can see, this issue of THE SOURCE is a "Special Edition!" Each year National Deaf Academy sponsors a major Mental Health Conference. For 2004, our conference will be international in scope. The conference, titled: "An International Conference on Mental Health and Deafness around the Globe," will feature Deaf and Hearing speakers from throughout the world. We have already confirmed presentors from 7 countries outside the United States! The conference will be held at the world renowned Hilton at the **Walt Disney World®** Resort in Orlando, Florida. It will be held from April 8-10, 2004. Participants are guaranteed a

Constructing Vernon Center!



dynamic conference, with opportunities to learn about psychiatric treatment approaches for Deaf people in other parts of the world. One of National Deaf Academy's objectives for this conference is to have at least 50% of the speakers be Deaf

*see President's Corner, continued on p. 4*

### What's Inside!

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## 2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE **SPECIAL EDITION!**

# “Mental Health and Deafness Around the Globe”

National Deaf Academy is proud to present the 2004 International Conference: “Mental Health and Deafness Around the Globe”. This International Conference will be held in Orlando, Florida, USA, April 8-10, 2004. This conference is open to Deafness professionals, Mental Health professionals, Sign Language Interpreters, parents and others who strive to provide quality services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities internationally.

Parents of Deaf children, as well as families with Deaf members, are encouraged to attend this conference. This conference is designed to benefit any person wanting to learn more about the diverse field of Mental Health and Deafness.

This landmark international event, located at the world renowned Hilton at the **Walt Disney World®** Resort, will unite diverse professional and community groups committed to ethical, effective and compassionate services in the area of Mental Health and Deafness.

NDA is proud to offer continuing Education credits to psychiatrists, psychologists, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, nurses, school psychologists, marriage and family counselors, and RID CEUs for sign language interpreters attending the 2004 International Conference.

Deaf and Hearing speakers from “Around the Globe” will be featured at the 2004 International Conference. Please read further in this “**Special Edition!**” of **THE SOURCE** to meet Dr. Ruth Garcia one of the presenters at the up-coming 2004 Conference. For more information, contact Chris Wagner, Conference Coordinator.



Hilton at the **Walt Disney World®** Resort

### — 2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE —

#### APRIL 7, 2004

Arrival to Hilton at the  
Walt Disney World® Resort

#### APRIL 8, 2004

9:00 a.m. Keynote Speaker  
10:00 a.m. Concurrent Sessions  
12:00 p.m. Lunch  
2:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions  
3:45 p.m. Concurrent Sessions  
7:00 p.m. International Wine and  
Cheese Reception

#### APRIL 9, 2004

9:00 a.m. Concurrent Sessions  
10:45 a.m. Concurrent Sessions  
12:30 p.m. Lunch  
2:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions  
3:45 p.m. Concurrent Sessions  
6:30 p.m. Banquet and Entertainment

#### APRIL 10, 2004

9:00 a.m. Keynote Speaker  
11:00 a.m. Wrap-Up  
12:00 p.m. Conclusion of Conference

\*Schedule Subject to Change

#### CHRIS WAGNER

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#### Hilton at the Walt Disney World® Resort

(407) 827-4000  
Rooms start at \$139 per night for  
Conference attendees. Use Reservation  
code **CMH** for reduced rate.

see *International Conference*, continued on p. 4



*Dear Doctor Cohen: I have written to you before about issues related to medication management for my Deaf son's ADD, but now I'm facing a completely new situation that I would like some help with. My family lives in a state that has had very large cutbacks in funding for the residential Deaf school. As a result, there appears to be a push to have my son "mainstreamed" into the local public school. The problem is twofold. First, he was mainstreamed in the past, and did very poorly. More importantly, my local school does not have any other Deaf students, and no real familiarity with Deaf education.*

*HELP!...Mrs. D.G. Edwards*

*Dear Mrs. Edwards:*

For what it's worth, many states are struggling with the same dramatic budgetary cuts that you describe, probably because of the trickle down effect of the poor economy over the past few years. In addition, numerous studies have repeatedly shown that mainstreamed Deaf kids actually do better on many standardized tests, and as a result, the politicians feel justified in reducing funds going to the residential campuses in favor of the less costly "mainstreaming" model.

Of course, what rarely gets considered is the fact that many of the kids that do well in the typical public school programs are the highest functioning members of the very diverse Deaf population. Often, these kids have the most sophisticated and fluid communication skills, whether using sign language or orally based communication. These students have few of the other problems that many of the more delayed Deaf children frequently present with. In essence, the politicians end up comparing apples and oranges, rather than looking at the significant differences that may exist between different populations.

Almost more important than the legislature's tendency to group all Deaf kids together is the fact that few politicians make any attempt to fully appreciate the importance of Deaf

culture, and the primary role that State Deaf schools play in perpetuating this all important aspect of Deaf life. To give a very simplistic example, one need only look at a culturally Deaf boy of 10 years of age attending a local public school with an interpreter at his side throughout the day. He has few peers to communicate directly with, and even fewer adults that may understand his unique social/educational experience. Ultimately, it's essentially impossible for a student that utilizes sign language as his or her primary mode of communication to have a "normal" social or academic experience in an environment that is neither aware of, nor sensitive to what it means to be Deaf. In a nutshell, that was one of the major reasons Jennifer, Jim and I opened National Deaf Academy.

Now before I start getting angry letters, let me clarify that I do not mean that state Deaf residential schools must be the answer for every Deaf student. That would be as ridiculous as sending all Deaf kids to a mainstreaming program. Instead, what I am recommending is that each state develop a comprehensive approach to Deafness. This would include individually assessing each potential student and determining, with the help of experts in Deaf Education and other Deaf adults, which educational intervention makes the most sense. The hope would be that

a more efficient use of the limited funding for Deaf programs could be developed by experts that know what they're doing, as opposed to simply choosing the same plan for every Deaf student regardless of his or her unique issues.

This of course, doesn't help you today. What I would suggest to you is that you consider requesting a new Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P). This would provide you and your supervising school district an opportunity to sit together in the same room and explore various educational options. You may want to bring an expert from your local Deaf Service Center or other advocate who can assist you in elucidating what Deaf culture is all about. You can make the point that residential schools are more important for some than for others. It will also provide you with an opportunity to see what programs the school is planning to implement. You want to feel secure that your son receives the most appropriate educational program. These are rights guaranteed by both Federal and State law. My experience has been that most schools are desperately trying to do their best. Unfortunately, limited funds makes it difficult for schools to do all that might be desirable to have quality programs for Deaf students at the local level.

*President's Corner, continued from p. 1*

professionals from the United States and around the globe. Deaf presentors will conduct their presentations in their native sign languages. Please read on in this "Special Edition" of THE SOURCE to learn more about the conference. A registration form is on the back page for your convenience.

**The Charter School at National Deaf Academy** continues to grow and expand. We are proud to announce the appointment of a new Charter School Director. Ms. Amy Cohen Efron, Psy.S. has assumed this big responsibility. Amy, who is Deaf, is a nationally certified School Psychologist with experience in both the fields of Deaf Education and Mental Health care. We are very excited to have Amy join the NDA team. She has already enhanced the school with her creativity and expertise. Please meet Amy and read about her in this issue of THE SOURCE.

National Deaf Academy has been experiencing growing pains! We have maintained census capacity. Therefore, we are currently adding new buildings and structures to our campus. One such project is "Vernon Center". This new building is dedicated to Dr. McCay Vernon, Ph.D. for his lifetime of devotion to the Mental Health care of Deaf people and his mentorship of young

professionals entering the field. Dr. Vernon has been a psychological consultant to NDA since the company's inception and serves as the Chairperson of our Advisory Board. The building will be complete and ready for occupancy in December. You will find a photograph of Vernon Center on the front page of the THE SOURCE.



In closing, I hope that you will enjoy this "Special Edition!" of THE SOURCE. It is filled with new information about the Charter School, The International Conference, our new Charter School director, Dr. Alan Cohen's regular article titled: "Your Kids and Mine" and other useful information.

Please feel free to contact us via E-Mail or telephone at any time. We also welcome visitors, by appointment, for tours of the facility.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Tresh".

James Tresh

*International Conference, continued from p. 2*

***Features at the 2004 International Conference:***

- ✦ Workshops
- ✦ Keynote Speakers
- ✦ International Reception
- ✦ Banquet and Entertainment
- ✦ Continuing Education credits will be provided to Psychiatricians, Psychologists, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Nurses, School Psychologists, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Sign Language Interpreters.



### Amy Cohen Efron, Psy.S. Director of Charter School at NDA

Ms. Cohen Efron, Deaf herself, is a nationally certified School Psychologist. She received her Master's degree in Developmental Psychology and a Specialist degree in School Psychology from Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Amy relocated to the state of Florida from the Pacific Northwest in August, 2003. She has worked as a School Psychologist at Washington School for the Deaf in Vancouver, Washington for 9 years, and prior to that, she was a Mental Health counselor in Yakima, Washington. Amy has worked with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students with learning disorders, special needs, Deaf/Blindness and emotional impairments for 11 years. Cohen Efron taught college courses at Western Oregon University and Washington State University on Assessment in Deaf Education and Psychology of Deafness. As a popular speaker, she has presented several topics, including: *Beyond Psychological Evaluation, What Should We Do Next?, Why did Johnny Behave this Way?, Raising Healthy Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Mental Health and Deaf Youth, and Interpreting for Psychological Assessments and Services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children.* Amy authored a handbook called Reaching Out to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children with Learning Disabilities – Capturing the Learning Potential of Each Student and co-authored two assessment tools used for admission of new students into school called: Needs Assessment Inventory Interview and Risk Safety Factor Matrix. Cohen Efron was appointed by Governor Locke in Washington State as a Governor's Directive Leader. In this role she led staff training and curriculum development for Behavioral and Emotional Disturbances in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in 2001 for two years. Prior to that, Amy researched various appropriate psychiatric treatment programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. She visited various treatment programs in Seattle, Pittsburgh and Chicago for seven years until the National Deaf Academy was established in 2001. Amy states, "It is a great honor to work at National Deaf Academy, which I truly believe is the best residential psychiatric treatment facility available specifically for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and adults with behavioral and emotional difficulties. I am impressed with the dedication and commitment of the talented and professional staff at the CSNDA and NDA working together as a team. I am humbled to be a part of the phenomenal team!"

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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### National Deaf Academy is proud to announce Dr. Ruth Garcia! - Presenter 2004 Conference

National Deaf Academy is proud to announce that Dr. Ruth Garcia, a child and adolescent psychiatrist from London, specializing in Deafness, will be presenting at the 2004 International Conference. Dr. Garcia will be presenting a pilot study conducted to measure if the Webster Stratton Parenting Program is effective for Hearing parents and their Deaf children. The objective was to assess if the project has an overall enduring impact on decreasing behavioral problems and improving overall family function.

The subjects in this study were Hearing parents of Deaf children, referred to National Deaf Services, after assessment recommending this parenting skills group as the treatment of choice. The children have all been diagnosed with behavioral problems, with or without co-morbidity. "We are hoping that the outcomes of our pilot project will enable us to access further resources to open the application of this program to Deaf parents and their children."





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COMING IN JANUARY 2004!

*NDA'S 3rd Birthday and Overview of NDA Program and Services*

## **2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:**

### *Mental Health and Deafness Around The Globe*

April 8 - 10, 2004 Hilton at the **Walt Disney World®** Resort

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

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• SPECIAL RATE (until 3/1/04): \$200.00 USD

• REGULAR RATE (after 3/1/04): \$250.00 USD

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Send Registration and/or Check to:  
National Deaf Academy  
19650 U.S. Highway 441  
Mt. Dora, FL 32757  
C/O Chris Wagner, Conference Coordinator