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## What's New at NDA

### NDA Celebrates Holidays, Names New Medical Director, Says Goodbye to Therapist

The holiday season has arrived quickly here at National Deaf Academy. The hustle and bustle often associated with this time of year is ever present on our campus. The residents have been busy with several projects you will read about in our Ask a Clinician feature below.



In other news, on Dec. 5, Dr. Maxine Minto was named Medical Director. Our previous Medical Director, Dr. Cohen, will be staying with NDA as a consultant, providing his vast knowledge, compassion and commitment as an ambassador and practicing clinician. Our print newsletter, the Sign Post, will be released in January and will feature an article written by Dr. Cohen reflecting on the past seven years.

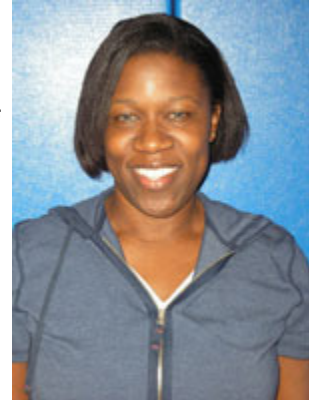
Lisa Montalvo, a Therapist at NDA, recently accepted a position as a School Counselor at the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Lisa began working at National Deaf Academy in 2001 and has experienced tremendous professional growth over the past six years. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor with a Master's in Mental Health Counseling and certification in Play Therapy, Lisa has a true gift for working with special needs residents. We wish her the best of luck in the future - she will be truly missed!

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## Employee of the Month

### Yolanda Blanks, Pharmacy Liaison

As the Pharmacy Liaison, Yolanda works with our residents and staff, ensuring the highest level of care is given by coordinating each resident's medications. She is the contact between NDA and various pharmacies in and out of state, with which she places orders for medications and keeps track of refills.



Yolanda has been a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) for seven years and joined the NDA family a little over a year ago. Prior to working at NDA, she was working in the OB/GYN and pediatric nursing fields. While in pediatric nursing, Yolanda was acknowledged for her work in pediatric pharmaceuticals and vaccinations by Ross Pharmaceuticals, Merck, Similac, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Yolanda decided to become a nurse out of a desire to help people, receiving her LPN degree from Lake Technical Center in Eustis, Fla.

Yolanda is a native of Lake County, Fla., and still lives in the area with her three children and their pet hermit crabs. In her spare time, she enjoys trying new foods and is a budding gourmet chef.

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## Ask a Clinician

*How do the residents celebrate the holidays at National Deaf Academy? What does National Deaf Academy do to ensure as much normalcy as possible during this difficult time for residents and their families?*

*- J. Jackson, Albany, N.Y.*

National Deaf Academy prides itself on providing a warm and caring environment, especially during the holiday season when it may be more difficult for residents to be away from home. While our residents predominately celebrate Christmas, we accommodate all beliefs and celebrations. Recently, we invited a rabbi who signs to visit NDA and share with us the history of Hanukkah. Additionally, the Charter School educates residents on the many different celebrations of the season.



The staff assists residents in decorating the campus and other seasonal activities are also planned. This year, in the theme of giving, the Recreational Therapy department has coordinated a can drive. Residents created posters to hang throughout the campus encouraging staff to donate canned goods, which they will deliver to a local area food bank next week. Residents were also given the opportunity to buy gifts with points earned for their behavior. They were able to send their gifts home to family members, give them to staff, or to a peer here at NDA. The residents also wrote

letters to soldiers in Iraq wishing them happy holidays and thanking them for their service.

One of our favorite and most anticipated traditions here at National Deaf Academy is the annual holiday luncheon. During this event, staff from all departments serve the residents a special lunch, including desserts prepared by the staff themselves.

Despite all the efforts made at NDA to provide residents with an enjoyable holiday season, it can still be hard on both the residents and their families to be apart. We encourage families to call, send cards and gifts, and visit if circumstances permit. Additionally, we give all residents opportunities to have phone time on major holidays so they can have that important connection with their families.

*Melissa Watson, LMHC, BCBA, is the clinical director at National Deaf Academy*

**Reply to this email with your question.**

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## **Job Postings**

### **Clinical Therapist**

A Master's in Counseling, Social Work and/or Psychology is required. Must be licensed in Florida or license-eligible.

This candidate should have experience working with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children, adolescents, and/or adults in a behavioral health setting. You will be required to provide:

- Family, individual and group therapy
- Develop the psychological history, assess the clinical needs of the individual and family, and conduct their treatment plans.

### **Clinical Therapist/Behavior Analyst (BCBA)**

A Master's in Counseling, Social Work and/or a related field is required. Must be licensed in Florida or license eligible.

This position requires that the candidate have experience working with autistic and special needs populations. The candidate does not have to have sign language skills but will be expected to learn over time. Some of our special needs residents are hearing with limited verbal repertoire. This position is responsible for providing individual and family therapy (group therapy is a possibility).

### **Mental Health Technicians (MHT)**

Individuals holding the MHT position are responsible for implementing and assisting in the daily management of our resident population. MHTs work on an

ongoing basis to improve the residents' social, communication and personal hygiene skills. They engage the residents in activities, help implement their treatment programs, and maintain a safe living environment while providing close supervision and observation.

This job is also often referred to as: Psychiatric Assistant, Group Advisor, Dorm Counselor, CNA or Youth Leader. Prefer the candidate to be fluent in American Sign Language, however will train the right individual.

## **Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)**

Responsibilities include planning, directing and organizing recreational programs, assessments and documentation. Fluency in American Sign Language preferred, however, willing to train the right candidate. Bachelor's in therapeutic recreation or related field and current CTRS required.

### **How to Apply**

Send resume to:

Director of Human Resources  
National Deaf Academy  
19650 US Hwy 441  
Mt. Dora, FL 32757  
Email: btashlein@nda.com  
Phone: 352-735-9500  
Fax: 352-735-4939  
EOE

## **Working at National Deaf Academy**

National Deaf Academy offers a wide range of deafness and mental health employment opportunities. More than 60 percent of our direct-care staff members are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing. Though we actively seek individuals who are fluent in American Sign Language, many of our current employees have developed fluency both on the job and through classes available on campus. Employees enjoy an excellent benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision and a choice of electives such as short- and long-term disability. We offer a paid-time-off (PTO) plan that is generous and allows for flexibility. In addition, employees can participate in NDA's 401(k) plan and enhance their professional growth through tuition reimbursement. National Deaf Academy also serves as an internship site for therapists, social workers, educators, interpreters and other professional disciplines.

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## **Quote of the Month**

"Every one of us is different in some way, but for those of us who are more different, we have to put more effort into convincing the less different that we can do the same thing they can, just differently."

- Marlee Matlin, actress

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