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What's New at NDA

Valentine's Arts and Crafts

In celebrating Valentine's Day our residents had an opportunity to work on special crafts such as red gloves stuffed and shaped in the form of the "I love you" sign. Residents also created cards, many of which were sent home to their families.

NDA Hosts Rathskellar

On Feb. 19, National Deaf Academy was pleased to host Rathskellar as one of its stops on their 2008 tour. Rathskellar is a renowned performing arts group that uses a combination of ASL poetry, dancing, mime, storytelling, hand-shape stories and comedy to provide an amazing and energetic show.

The residents had an opportunity following the performance to ask the performers questions about the show, their background, and goals for the future. For more information about the performance visit www.rathskellar.com.

Students Study Leadership

As we mentioned last month, The Charter School at National Deaf Academy is undergoing a curriculum revision to become project-based. The chosen theme for the year is "Leadership and How It Applies to Me."

Students are busy within their content classes learning about the positive and negative characteristics of leaders. They are also learning about organizational hierarchy. For example, the social sciences classes are involved in learning about the presidential candidates and the historical and economic factors that drive our

government.

They recently developed a survey for the NDA staff, which the staff completed in a fashion that is similar to the primary elections. The math classes are busy calculating and graphing the results of the survey.

A self-determination class is currently making posters of student leadership characteristics. This same class invited Steve Fahey, CEO of NDA, to be a guest speaker about his role as the leader of NDA and the characteristics he feels are important for a leader to have.

One English class is setting up their classroom as a community. Students are campaigning for mayor of the class and are making campaign posters and election speeches. When the votes are all counted, each student will have a defined role in the class much like in a community. Stay tuned for the latest developments!

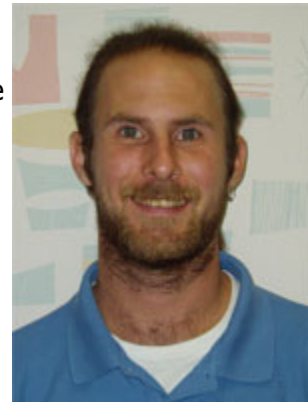
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Employee of the Month

Jerry Hess, Mental Health Technician

National Deaf Academy is proud to announce Jerry Hess as Employee of the Month for February 2008. Jerry is Mental Health Technician and has been employed by NDA for three years.

Jerry works at NDA on the weekends and makes NDA residents his priority. His supervisor commented that he is very responsible, takes his job seriously and is always willing to pitch in and help anywhere he is needed. He is a model at implementing Positive Behavior Support and ensures the safety of the staff and residents.



Jerry attended Rochester Institute of Technology, specializing in graphic and web design. In his spare time, Jerry bowls in a league, enjoys riding motorcycles, antiquing, and spending time with his daughter.

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Ask a Clinician

Dear T.J.,

What are some of the most difficult challenges adolescents face when going into treatment at your facility?

Oftentimes adolescents arrive with a strong sense of resistance toward treatment. These adolescents may minimize or deny the issues they need to resolve or deny



that they need any treatment at all. Instead, they typically blame others for their problems, such as their families, school or the systems that are trying to help them (i.e. Department of Children & Families).



It is during the adolescent stage when young people try to figure out who they are and how they play a role in society. It is critical while they are receiving treatment at NDA that they are given a sense of independence to allow themselves to learn who they are becoming as a person while also being able to work on the presenting problems. Sometimes adolescents are focused on just the presenting problems and refuse to see how their actions contributed to these problems.

Another challenge an adolescent may face when arriving for treatment is a feeling of isolation. Often our residents have been in situations where sign language was not the primary mode of communication; there was a lack of understanding of Deaf culture and those around them did not understand the behavioral problems they were experiencing.

It is critical that adolescents are aware that they are not alone and there are others who may have experienced similar presenting problems. The problems are likely to have built up over the years due to feelings of isolation. For this reason, upon arrival, the staff at NDA pair up the admitting adolescent to the appropriate program (similar languages, presenting issues) as well as to the appropriate therapist to maximize treatment while they are here.

Our goal as a treatment team is to meet each and every resident's individual needs. The staff works with adolescents to understand their unique challenges and motivate them for success in NDA's program.

The key to successful treatment is the client's willingness to receive treatment. There is an enormous difference between a motivated adolescent versus an unmotivated one. Members of the adolescent's treatment team as well as the referral source (family, school, a specific department) play a vital part in the treatment. These individuals can be critical to the adolescent's level of motivation, yet it is often the adolescent themselves that has to be willing to accept treatment.

Joseph (T.J.) Murray is a Deaf therapist at National Deaf Academy.

Reply to this email with your question to an NDA clinician.

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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.

Regional Community Relations Representative

The ideal candidate is a resident of California or a surrounding state with previous healthcare marketing experience, preferably in mental health. Primary responsibilities include identifying viable potential referral sources within the Deaf target markets and determining how to access those sources and developing and maintaining direct referral relationships with the Deaf West. Familiarity in mental health and deafness required. Must be fluent in ASL.

How to Apply

NDA offers a competitive salary and excellent benefit package. 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

"Deaf people do have five senses just like hearing people. We have sense of sight, taste, smell, touch and humor."
- Edna Johnston, Deaf woman

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