



In This Issue

- **What's New at NDA**: Outdoor Fun, New Teaching Approach, SignPost Newsletter
- **Employee of the Month**: Steven King, Mental Health Technician
- **Ask a Clinician**: How are staff members who work with autistic residents trained differently from those who work with the non-autistic population?
- **Job Postings**: Clinical Therapist, Clinical Therapist/Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Mental Health Technicians (MHT), Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)
- **Quote of the Month**: Suzanne Stecker

What's New at NDA

NDA Residents Soak Up the Sun, Teachers Explore New Ways of Learning, SignPost Newsletter on Its Way

Happy New Year! With the holidays behind us, we here at National Deaf Academy have hit the ground running.

The Recreational Therapy department began a bike clinic this month, giving residents the opportunity to fix and maintain the bicycles used on campus. The pleasant winter weather has allowed staff and residents to enjoy many outdoor activities - particularly the ropes course, which is being recertified this month.

A new semester has begun at the Charter School and among the usual new projects and activities that accompany a new year, teachers are excitedly exploring a new approach to teaching curriculum - one that is more project based than traditional. We will be highlighting these projects in upcoming newsletters. Stay tuned!

Our print newsletter, the SignPost, will be released at the end of the month. This issue will feature articles by a mother of a former resident and an article written by our Advisory Board member, Diane Morton, Ph.D., on family therapy. [Please click here to subscribe to the SignPost.](#)

[Back to top](#)

Employee of the Month

Steven King, Mental Health Technician

Steven has been with NDA since May 2007. Although this is Steven's first experience working in mental healthcare, he has quickly become one of NDA's most caring and compassionate employees.



Steven is a Mental Health Technician in the special needs program, working one-on-one with the same resident 40 hours a week. He works on an ongoing basis to improve the resident's social, communication and personal hygiene skills. He also engages the resident in activities, helps implement the treatment programs, and maintains a safe living environment while providing close supervision and observation. Some people might consider this a strenuous task, but Steven loves what he does.

A native of Central Florida, Steven is deaf and grew up in an all hearing family. He graduated from the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, Fla. He now lives in Tangerine with his family and three boxers, Cheyenne, Scout and Buck.

When he is not serving the residents of NDA, Steven is an avid surfer. He has been surfing for 10 years and is a member of the International Deaf Surfing Team. Steven recently traveled to Japan to compete in an International Deaf Surfing Tournament. His favorite place to surf in Florida is Sebastian Inlet.

[Back to top](#)

Ask a Clinician

Dear Angela,

How are staff members who work with autistic residents trained differently from those who work with the non-autistic population?

The autistic residents here at National Deaf Academy each require their own dedicated staff member, so each staff member working with this population is required to participate in a unique training program. The program is developed through a system called Social Communication, Emotional Response and Transitional Support (SCERTS).



In November, five of our staff members including myself attended a SCERTS advanced training seminar and recently implemented it as the umbrella program for our Autism Spectrum Developmental Services here at NDA. The direct-care staffers who complete the training receive certificates and a title change from Mental Health Technician (MHT) to Independence Facilitators (IF).

The goal is to train the staff in helping our residents achieve growth toward independence. In addition, staffers learn how to recognize signs of deregulation in the residents, help residents modify their behavior, and use calming

techniques. The training curriculum includes Defining Autism, Sensory Integration, Child Development States, Emotional Regulation, Communication Strategies and Functional Behavior Skills.

This revised training program will provide our staff with skills that will further benefit our autistic residents and continue NDA's commitment to provide the highest quality of care and staff training.

Angela Saunders is the Exceptional Needs Program Coordinator and National Board Certified Teacher at National Deaf Academy.

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

[Back to top](#)

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.

[Back to top](#)

Quote of the Month

"Life has plenty of potholes, but we must drive past with good tires."
- Suzanne Stecker (Deaf woman)

[Back to top](#)

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