



IDAHO HANDS & VOICES September 2010

[www.idhandsandvoices.org](http://www.idhandsandvoices.org)

## **CHANGES IN ADA REGULATIONS--YOUR INPUT REQUESTED**

The Americans with Disabilities Act became law in 1990. Twenty years' of technological advances later, the Department of Justice is seeking public comment about what changes in regulations need to be made, specifically in three areas: 1) access to the Internet 2) access to 911 emergency services and 3) captioning and video description in movie theaters. The comment period for all of these extends until January 24, 2011, but don't wait that long! Go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). You will need to do a "search"--under Document Type, check "Proposed Rules" and under Comment Period check "open." Type "DOJ Internet ADA" in the search box and you should get to a page with only the three documents of interest listed. Each one is a link that will take you to a long description of the issues and what kind of information the Department of Justice is seeking.

## **ANOTHER CHANCE TO GIVE YOUR INPUT**

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare is proposing changes in the way Medicaid services are delivered to children with developmental disabilities. The goals are to better coordinate services and give families the option of having more control over their child's service plan. For complete details and information about how to comment, visit [www.redesignforchildren.medicaid.idaho.gov](http://www.redesignforchildren.medicaid.idaho.gov). The comment period extends through September 22 for written comment, plus three public hearings are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on September 15, at the following locations:

1120 Ironwood Drive, Suite 102  
Lower Level Large Conf. Rm.  
Coeur d'Alene, ID

1720 Westgate Drive  
Suite A, Room 131  
Boise, ID

150 Shoup Avenue  
2nd Floor, Large Conf. Rm.  
Idaho Falls, ID

## **IDAHO HANDS & VOICES SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

The Idaho Hands & Voices board is meeting September 24 at 10:00 a.m. to do some long-range planning. Thanks to IESDB and their video conferencing equipment, we'll be in Idaho Falls, Pocatello and Meridian. If you were interested before, but reluctant to make the drive to Boise, please reconsider getting involved! Contact Renee Higbee at (208) 850-5348 or [higbren2@isu.edu](mailto:higbren2@isu.edu) for more information.

## **FUNDRAISER UPDATE**

No Furnace Creek 508 for Mavis Irwin this year, due to unanticipated problems with training, and therefore no fundraiser for Idaho Hands & Voices. She plans to do the race and the fund-raiser next year, so stay tuned.

## UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

**Deaf Center of Idaho Holiday Bazaar** Saturday, November 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Rocky Mountain High School, 5450 N. Linder Road, Meridian. It will feature holiday gifts, crafts, decor items, homemade goods and more. If you want to help out or are interested in a booth, contact Esther Brune at (866) 440-5734 or ruthbrune05@gmail.com. You can also find this event on Facebook.

**Region 5 (Magic Valley) Hands & Voices:** It's almost October, and time to mark your calendar for the annual pumpkin painting party. We'll meet Friday, October 29, starting around 6:30. Bring a snack and all your pumpkin-painters dressed in old clothes to the Irwins' place in Jerome. Call 324-7544 for directions and to let us know how many pumpkins we need to have available. Watch for a postcard or flier as the date approaches.

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And now, thanks to Karen Marr, a mother in northern Idaho and Catherine Parker, an eighth grade student in the Treasure Valley, we have two more stories about great stuff for kids to do! Send your stories to niwri2@msn.com; I'm also happy to interview and do the writing for you.

### SERIOUSLY IN THE SWIM!

by Catherine Parker

Hi, my name is Catherine Parker, I am a swimmer and an Idaho teenager. In my life, I have been in a lot of sports: soccer, dance, dodge-ball, skiing, ice skating, gymnastics, table tennis, biking, and swimming. Swimming is the only sport in which I really feel at home. Swimming is calming in a way, with water all around you, you're basically floating. For me, swimming is an outlet for all those feelings that build up during school. If you are frustrated, you can stick your face into the water and scream all you want too. Being a deaf swimmer has an advantage, because when 'normal' people go under water, they cannot hear, and deaf people are used to that situation. People who do other sports, don't understand why swimming is also a strategy sport. Swimmers use many strategies to go faster, farther, or to control the race, even to not swim in circles. I am a deaf swimmer, and my goal has always been the Olympics. I have worked hard to get where I am, and I will continue to do so until I make that goal. Recently, I was selected to be a member of the United States Deaf Swimming National Swim Team, to represent the USA next year at the World Deaf Swimming Championships in Portugal. I will train hard to do my best at that meet. Now, I need to help raise enough funds to get myself and the team to Portugal. (Follow me and the rest of the Deaf National Swim Team on their website, [unitedstatesdeafswimming.org](http://unitedstatesdeafswimming.org)) If you work hard, you can also gain this level in swimming, or actually, any sport. All you really have to do is to do your best. I love swimming!!!

### EAGLE SCOUTS TIMES TWO

by Karen Marr

I was asked to write an article about my two sons and their participation in Boy Scouts. You should first know that my husband and his brother were in scouts when they were young and both eventually became Eagle Scouts. So, it was a somewhat foregone conclusion that our sons would also join Boy Scouts. Since I had never been associated with scouts in any form, I didn't know what this entailed. Also, since Michael and Geoffrey both have a severe to profound hearing loss, I wasn't sure how they would be able to participate.

Michael was in first grade when he joined Cub Scouts in Gooding, Idaho, in the fall of 1997. We were in our second year of the five years that we would spend in Gooding so that the boys could attend the Idaho School for the Deaf and Blind. My husband had a job in northern Idaho that he couldn't leave, so he kept the home fires burning while I spent the school year with the boys in Gooding. We traveled frequently between the homes on long weekends and vacations. Our goal was to give our sons a good foundation in sign language and education while still trying to maintain a family setting. My goal was also to learn as

much sign language as possible in order to communicate better with my sons and to assist my husband in learning sign language. ISDB had sign language classes for parents and cottage staff, so I had a good start.

We went to a Cub Scout orientation meeting for parents and boys in the fall, a time when most scout groups often are recruiting. I had heard that at one time there was either an interpreter available for scout meetings or that there were several deaf boys who went to meetings. As such is often the case that was no longer true. There were no other deaf children at the scout meeting and interpreters were the responsibility of parents to provide. On the other hand, the den leader for my son's age group indicated that he would be welcome and that he didn't foresee any problems with him joining the group. We were made to feel welcome and wanted by the group. I also discovered that the ISDB audiologist and her three boys were very involved in scouting, so at least one other parent knew some sign language.

I quickly discovered that I would be the de facto interpreter for all our meetings. Since cub scouts rely on lots of activities for the boys, I was able to keep up communication with my basic sign language skills. I also continued to work on improving my skills. Since the boy scouts is a private organization, they are not required by law to provide interpreters. However, the Boy Scout organization tries to include as many boys as possible in their activities. I was able to obtain booklets on scouting for boys with disabilities, as well as a booklet showing how to do the scout motto, slogan, and oath in sign language.

When you join scouts, you need to be prepared to make a time commitment as a parent. You don't just drop your child off and leave. Cub Scouts have tiger, wolf, bear, and first and second year webelos dens which correspond to first grade through fifth grade (or ages 7 to 10.) They usually meet a couple times a month and have a pack meeting of all dens once a month. There is a cubmaster who leads the pack meetings and parents volunteer to be leaders of the various dens. Parents are often leaders of the den that their boy is in. There is a book you need to buy for each den group that will help you know what to do with the boys each week. Parents and den leaders check off requirements as you go through the book and earn patches or awards, which are given out at pack meetings. Pack meetings may also be special times to race cars you have made for the Pinewood Derby, race boats in a sailboat regatta, have another fun activity, or have a fundraiser. Scouts also do community service projects like picking up roadside litter or helping in the Scouting for Food program every year. Parents also participate in monthly planning meetings of all parents who wish to attend. Scouting is a family activity which works best if everyone participates. It can be a lot of fun.

I was very involved with our sons when they were cub scouts, partially because I was the only parent with them in Gooding most of the time. I was the den leader of our first year webelos den for a year. It was difficult trying to be the den leader, the mother, and the interpreter all at the same time. I would not recommend doing it all! When Michael became a second year webelos, we moved back to northern Idaho and the boys were mainstreamed into the public schools. We joined dens in our hometown and found the boys and parents equally welcoming and accepting of our sons. Sometimes, as in many situations, we needed to help educate others about deafness, sign language, and communication modes in general. As the parents of deaf children, education also becomes one of our roles.

At the end of fifth grade, Michael "crossed over" into the Boy Scout troop. In addition to Geoffrey's Cub Scout meetings a couple times a month, we now had Boy Scout meetings **every** Wednesday night and a Boy Scout campout once a month. We were very busy for the next couple years! My husband and I divided duties somewhat. He went on a lot of the campouts and hikes. I went to meetings to interpret for the boys and I went to the weeklong Boy Scout camp in the summer as Michael's interpreter. Michael had fun working on the rank requirements (tenderfoot, second class, first class, star, and life) and the different merit badges (more than 100 available) through the years. I had inquired of the different scout camps as to whether they could hire camp counselors who signed, or if they could hire interpreters during summer camp. In general, the camps we attended did not have many counselors who signed and camps did not have the funds available to hire interpreters. At one camp, they thought that they had everything covered

because they had a hard of hearing counselor who wore hearing aids, but didn't know sign language! I quickly discovered that I needed to be very specific about what our needs were.

When Michael had been in boy scouts about three years, we found a wonderful source for interpreters for summer camp. Spokane Falls Community College has an interpreter training program and the students needed contact hours with deaf clients. We were able to obtain one or two interpreters each year for four or five summers. We would arrange with the scout camps to allow the interpreters to stay in camp for free in exchange for their services. We just needed to have them signed up as scouting volunteers and make sure they had their physicals on file at camp also. It was wonderful to have interpreters in camp so that I could just be another parent/mother during the week.

Boy scouts were slightly different from cub scouts. Parents could not sign off on requirements, only the scoutmaster or assistant scoutmaster could do this. Again there was a book to purchase, but only one book for the entire time in boy scouts (from age 11 to 18.) Parental involvement, if anything, was intensified. There were also monthly parent meetings to attend and I became the troop treasurer of our parent committee. The boys worked on more fund raising activities to support their other activities (going to hockey games, snow skiing, canoe trips, summer camp, etc.) They participated in more public service events (marching in the Christmas parade in winter and the city parade in the summer, operating a snow cone booth at the local summer festival, litter pick-up, trail clearing, and helping other scouts with Eagle Scout projects.) They were goal and service oriented, while still having lots of fun and learning many new skills (especially for living in the out of doors.)

Three years ago, Michael completed a wooden foot bridge on a trail as a service project for the U.S. Forest Service and the local community. By doing this project and completing the required merit badges, he became an Eagle Scout. This last year, Geoffrey led the other scouts and parents in a project to build a three paneled information kiosk with a roof for the Forest Service and local community. He completed his required merit badges, and his Eagle Scout Board of Review, and is now an Eagle Scout also. Through scouting, we have learned to be involved in our community and our sons have learned to be skilled and independent individuals. If you have a chance to join scouts, do so, and become as active as you can. You can improve your community, your family life, and yourselves.