Why Clear Masks Make a Difference

As the world continues to adjust to the new norms of staying six feet away from each other, cleaning their hands, and hosting virtual meetings, Deaf and Hard of People are facing a new challenge in the form of masks. They are also part of the new norm and are designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Along with your wallet and cell phone, masks are a must-have essential before leaving the house. Wallet? Check. Phone? Mask? Check.

However, for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) individual, masks are a hindrance for communication as they cover up a large portion of the face, completely stumping the most proficient lip readers. While not all D/HH individuals rely on lipreading, they do rely on facial expressions, social cues and mouth morphemes to convey emotions on faces. This is an obstacle for D/HH individuals during their daily errands and routines. Cashiers ask questions at checkout and random strangers approach you, talking up a storm, and your only evidence of what they are saying is a slight movement from their masks – but that could be just them breathing, too.

GCDHH has been working to raise awareness of the importance of clear masks and with generous donations from multiple sources, were able to accumulate 300 of the masks in various sizes. The **free clear masks distribution event** will take place on Saturday, September 12th in the parking deck of GCDHH’s office. The goal is to restore facial language for D/HH community while still maintaining safety guidelines. Not only will these clear masks provide easier language access, it will also raise
speculations from the public. Let this be your opportunity to educate them on why your clear mask is important. The more that D/HH individuals do this, the more likely the public is to make changes in adopting clear masks.

GCDHH Spotlight

Martha Timms has served on the Board of Directors and a portion of her time at GCDHH as secretary since 2014. She was involved in multiple projects throughout the years such as creating a trademark for the Camp Juliena logo, monitoring and improving the website, and helping to pass several bills including Senate Bill 100 that allowed wireless equipment to be distributed via the state program. In addition, she received the 2019 President Award for her tireless dedication to the center.

However, her proudest moment is being part of the driving force that changed the non-profit’s name. Formerly known as Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI), Martha worked hard with a team to revitalize the non-profit to be more
politically correct and up to date. We are now known as Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GCDHH) from her valuable contributions.

When asked about her time at GCDHH, she stated “I enjoyed getting involved and helping out when I could.” She added, “I watched GCDHH grow and become more involved in the community. We have stronger relationships with outside resource focusing on mental health, vocations, and education than we did before.”

Executive Director, Jimmy Peterson states she was one of the board members that GCDHH could depend on for volunteer time and will be sorely missed. Martha’s parting words from GCDHH are: “I want our readers to know how much we’ve changed. To attain our evolving goal, we need more volunteers. We are a great team”

Thank you, Martha Timms, for your time and volunteer work for GCDHH.

GCDHH still does some in-person outreach following strict social distancing rules. We recently had an event for the Pierce County Senior Center and Pierce County Food Bank on August 19th.

GCDHH CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:
Ricky Haywood recently got hired at a permanent position at Amazon with the help of Employment Support Services at GCDHH. Part of his job search with GCDHH included developing a resume and doing mock interviews. Once ready, the program assisted him with job applications where he eventually landed a position at Amazon. Since working, Mr. Haywood expressed gratitude for the assistance from the program and learned the importance of self-advocacy. Mr. Haywood’s primary language is American Sign Language which brought on past challenges for his job search before he received service at GCDHH. The service was made possible via virtual meetings during COVID-19. Extremely satisfied with the service, he strongly recommends any one with hearing loss to use Employment Support Services to provide tools on job search.

What's New at GCDHH?

GCDHH received the grant from the Foundation to purchase 50 Weather Alert Radio. The weather alert radio is free to qualified clients that approved by GATEDP. The weather alert radio will only work with GATEDP’s Home Aware clock alert. You can APPLY NOW or stop by our Free Clear Mask Distribution on Saturday, September 12th from 9 AM to 1 PM at GCDHH’s parking lot.
Registration is now open for American Sign Language (ASL) classes.

Register Now!

GCDHH is still hosting Camp Juliena Journey, an online opportunity to
take Zoom field trips from the comfort of your couch! Our class this month is How to Care For Your Pets with Savannah LeFors on September 19th at 11am.

Register Now!

GCDHH is hosting "Literacy Friday" every second Friday of the month starting this month. There will be a new children's story posted to GCDHH's Facebook page and Kid's Zone. Be sure to check them out!

GCDHH Facebook

GCDHH Kid's Zone

View Email as Webpage