



October 2021

## A Look Into Deaf Senior Citizens Group: Silent Fingers

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This month, we are featuring a local group of Deaf Senior Citizens in Metro Atlanta called Silent Fingers. The group has been getting together for almost 30 years now, starting in November 1993 when it was founded by Jeanette Lorch and Donna Leff. While based in Atlanta, it is actually open to the public all over the Southeast.

During the year, Silent Fingers regularly gets together for playing cards, Easter and Halloween parties, field trips, going out to eat at local restaurants, picnics, arts and crafts sessions, and various workshops. Currently, there are around 15 active members, but they are always looking for more members and would love to get them involved. If you're a Deaf Senior in the area, it's a great opportunity to meet up with like-minded people.

The best part of being a member of Silent Fingers is allowing Deaf Senior Citizens to get out of the house and do something together with his/her peers instead of being isolated and staying at home at all times.

Silent Fingers also recently had a big celebration for one of their members, Rosalyn's, 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. They said she was so surprised and thrilled that she has a party whom she can share with her friends and the staff from GCDHH has been good to her. Rosalyn has been a member of Silent Fingers since 2005.



Rosalyn's 90th Birthday



Rosalyn and GCDHH staff.

If interested in joining, please reach out to them on their Facebook page [here](#).



Kyra Matthews is the Victim Assistance Division's Project Coordinator at the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) with the state administering agency for Victims of Crime Act and Violence Against Women Act funds. As project coordinator, she is responsible for coordinating the Georgia Victim Assistance Academy and Statewide Victim Assistance Strategic Plan as well as managing the state's Local Victim Assistance Program certification process. Prior to coming to CJCC in 2016, she worked at one of Georgia's domestic violence agencies as a housing case manager.

Since learning how to sign the alphabet in kindergarten, Kyra has held a special place in her heart

for the Deaf community. She met a Deaf advocate at one of the Georgia Victims Assistance Academies who has become a patient friend and is always willing to teach and help her learn how to be a better advocate. When out in the world personally and professionally, she intentionally puts herself in the shoes of people who have hearing loss and seeks to educate business owners, managers, and workers about the importance of having realistic and adequate technology and procedures in place. For example, she now rarely goes to the movies without using an assistive listening device just to test the ease of use, professionalism, and preparedness of the staff.

In 2017, she took it upon herself to attend a meeting with the intent to meet a Deaf advocate who would be willing to become a long-term, active participant in the Statewide Victim Assistance Strategic Plan process. She met Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's executive director, Jimmy Peterson. Because of his willingness to ensure the issues around hearing loss as it pertains to crime victim services, we are going into our fourth year of partnership with CJCC. Because of partnerships like this, various professionals who work with crime victims are continually learning about Deaf culture, correcting myths, increasing awareness regarding language access, and the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence now has a program called BRIDGES run by a Deaf advocate to educate and assist victims of domestic violence who are part of the Deaf community. She was glad to have been part of encouraging CJCC to fund such a program as well as to set aside funds so that all agencies receiving funds through the Victim Assistance Division will always be able to pay for language access for survivors of crime within the Deaf community.

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*Client Testimonial*

**Jennie Ponder**



"I like this because this equipment will help me to hear better when I go to bible study. I really like it!"

- Jennie Ponder



Jennie Ponder with Quattro Pro

## Do You Have Hearing Loss?

We've got you covered! You may qualify for no-cost equipment from [Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program](#).



Prior to COVID-19, Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GCDHH) offered American Sign Language (ASL) Courses in-person at the center. When the pandemic started, GCDHH took a new approach with virtual classes for ASL to respect safety concerns. Today, remote classes are available for the community (age 14 and up) and businesses. Below are *upcoming* available courses:

**ASL I - Beginner**

**ASL II** - Intermediate  
**ASL III** - Advanced  
**ASL IV** - Advanced+

\*There will be eight two-hour-long classes each semester.

The textbook is highly recommended for all ASL units- **A Basic Course in American Sign Language (Second Edition)**. This can be ordered via Amazon. GCDHH offers online ASL classes for children younger than 14 years old for one hour for eight sessions. We also offer private ASL one-on-one for a separate fee. At the end of the semester, a Certificate of Attendance will be given for those who participated. This is only for the proof of participation in ASL course and this does not count as certified for Sign Language Interpreter. If you wanted to become a certified interpreter, you would have to take Interpreting courses at any college/university that offers them.

**If you are interested to learn American Sign Language, price inquiry or have questions, please email Community Coordinator, Andrea Alston at:**  
[Aalston@gcdhh.org](mailto:Aalston@gcdhh.org)  
**404-381-8448**

**Visit our  
website**

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## **Did you know you can sign up your workplace for virtual American Sign Language Classes?**

GCDHH offers customized ASL classes for businesses and workplaces. With a flat rate (prices are negotiable), your company can pick the hours and multiple dates for virtual ASL classes. You and your co-workers will take sessions and practice together on learning a new language. If interested, you can bring this available course to the attention of your management and contact us at [Aalston@gcdhh.org](mailto:Aalston@gcdhh.org). Your company can make a difference in language accessibility for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community!

**Fill out Questionnaire**

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## Interpreting Services

# GCDHH has its own interpreting service!

Whether it's in-person or virtual interpreting, we will make the process easy for you.

Contact us for more questions or book for an interpreter:

Phone: 404-207-9362

Email: [Requests@gcdhh.org](mailto:Requests@gcdhh.org)

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UPDATE: Our newsletter is now quarterly. Our next issue will be January 2022!

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GCDHH will NOT be closed on Columbus Day, October 11, 2021.

## Follow us on Social Media!



[View Email as Webpage](#)