

**Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons**

**Tuesday, May 8, 2012**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Atlanta Speech School**

**3160 Northside Parkway, NW**

**Atlanta, GA 30327**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present: Ms. Robin Ferst, Ms. Lee Ann Meadows, Ms. Mary Reed, Ms. Laura Sarsfield, Dr. Helena Solodar, Mr. Comer Yates**

**Members Absent: Mr. Chuck Leavell**

**Staff Present: Ms. Katherine Cadena**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Solodar at 9:25 a.m.

Minor edits were requested of the minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes with the edits and the motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Solodar updated the Commission on opening a bank account. She discussed the advice given by the Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Human Services. The Commission was in agreement to follow the advice, where the Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons will deposit the donations in the DHS operating bank account. DHS would set up in the accounting system a separate fund to account for the donations received by the Commission. The Commission will have access to the fund.

Dr. Solodar indicated that Dr. Barry Freeman, from Nova Southeastern University led an advisory meeting for the Au.D program several weeks ago. The curriculum has been established and a site has been located. A simulation laboratory is in the works and future faculty members are being recruited.

Ms. Ferst discussed the Adopt-A-Band (AAB) public awareness initiative. She discussed the script to be used by volunteers and partners to meet with band directors and other interested parties. The AAB committee has determined that a project roll-out would be helpful to assess the efficiencies of the initiative, as well as provide feedback for enhancements. A packet will be developed, which will include information, earplugs, and research material linked to the Etymotic YouTube public service announcement video. Etymotic will provide an in-kind donation of \$5000 for earplugs. AAB committee members and partners, including the Georgia Academy of Audiology, will champion to encourage the public to participate and AAB. Also being reviewed is the possibility of finding a grant source to continue the project on a long-term basis and expending the partnership to the medical community. Dr. Solodar challenged each Commission member to find one person to adopt a band. The cost is approximately \$10 per band member to provide ear plugs. Ms. Ferst agreed to AAB in Morgan County. Mr. Yates committed to AAB. Dr. Solodar informed members that there are multiple ways to

support a band, including receiving matching donations, or if they will support the band initially, or adopt a band for life and be part of the renewal. Anyone, not just Commission members, can AAB. Ms. Ferst said that the Commission will need to maintain a commitment to support the Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation because they are providing administrative support right now, but that may not be the case for the long term. Dr. Solodar clarified that the ear plugs stay with the student, and each year new band members would need to be fitted with ear plugs. Ms. Ferst said she will look into contacting the Georgia High School Association for further information.

Ms. Sarsfield discussed the looping public awareness campaign. The Committee had a meeting with a representative of Reel Abilities Atlanta. They discussed possibly collaborating to loop a theater for the film festival to be held in October. The Augusta Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) chapter reported that a local Panera Bread Company had been looped. The Atlanta chapter of HLAA would like to have a similar business looped in the Atlanta area and will discuss that at the next HLAA meeting scheduled later in the month. Albany may have a new airport terminal looped. They are attempting to work out engineering challenges. There was discussion about possible looping projects in the Atlanta area.

Mr. Yates discussed the meeting he participated in with Dr. Solodar and with Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, Commissioner for the Georgia Department of Public Health. They discussed the outcomes of the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention program, including the percentage of children who are not receiving either a timely audiological exam within the first three months of life or timely intervention in the first six months of life. Ms. Sarsfield discussed the current state of Georgia's participation in the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ).

Mr. Yates discussed the Georgia Pathway for Language and Literacy Project: A partnership with the Atlanta Speech School, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Georgia Area School for the Deaf, The Georgia Department of Education, and the Georgia Parent Infant Network for Educational Services (Georgia PINES). The goal of the project is for each child in Georgia with hearing loss to reach grade level reading by third grade and develop a network for all educators to have access to resources for educating students with hearing loss. Mr. Yates said the project would like for parents to become stronger advocates for their children. He will provide a demonstration at the next meeting.

The Commission members discussed the packet of information given to parents by Georgia PINES.

Action items were discussed for follow up.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 P.M.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 14 at the Atlanta Speech School from 9:00 A.M. until 12:30 P.M. located at 3160 Northside Parkway, NW, Atlanta, GA 30327.

