



Summer 2024

MNDeafBlind Project News

Embracing the Joys of Summer!

It seems like every summer passes more and more quickly! Is this just part of being a parent?! That saying, "The days are long, but the years are short" is always popping up in my mind. I hope you are all making the most of these beautiful days (and the rainy ones too)!

I'm excited to share so many fun highlights and photos from our Family & Intervener Appreciation Picnic and DeafBlind Awareness Week in this newsletter. We also have some great opportunities coming up for families, so be sure to check those out.

It's hard to believe, but before we know it, fall will be here and the start of a new school year. I'm available this summer to connect with you to brainstorm and use person-centered planning strategies to prepare for a smooth start to the school year. Contact me today to schedule a time!

-Brandy

612-638-1505 (voice calls)

612-217-2211 (text only)

brandy.sebera@brightworksmn.org



Find and follow us on Instagram,
Facebook, and YouTube

"Funding for this grant activity is made possible with a grant from MN Department of Education. The source of the funds is from federal award – CFDA 84.326T, Special Education - Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children who are DeafBlind." The contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the policy of the federal Department of Education or the state Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the federal or state government



MNDBP Highlights



New friends!



Caricature!



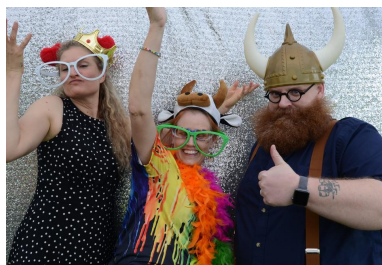
Community Interveners building relationships!

Firefighter fun!



Silly photo booth pictures!

Our amazing Caricature Artists and Face Painter!



Family & Intervener Appreciation Picnic

We had another amazing picnic this year. The rain held off and we were able to enjoy a beautiful day with so many families! This year, we had a few new activities. The Lake Johanna Fire Department joined us with two firetrucks, 6 firefighters and awesome swag bags! The kids were able to experience a variety of parts of the trucks and equipment and ask as many questions as they had! THANK YOU to the Lake Johanna Fire Department!

Families were also provided with all the materials needed to gather and create their very own Picnic Experience Books! If this was something new for your family, and you would like help, please contact Brandy.

Lastly, a huge thank you to DeafBlind Services Minnesota and the Community Interveners who were there to provide access! We truly appreciate you!





Amy Kaufman and Ann Mayes



Dessa Johnson

Shining Stars

Each year, we recognize outstanding individuals who are going above and beyond to support DeafBlind children and youth and their families. Thank

you for the nominations from families!

This year, we recognized four Shining Stars; Amy Kaufman (Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired), Dessa

Johnson (Community Intervener), Kim Poncek (School Intervener), and Erin Widman (Special Education Teacher).

We weren't able to get photos of everyone in person, but please join us in sharing our deepest gratitude and recognition of the amazing work each of these women are doing!!

If you would like to nominate a Shining Star for consideration, please complete this [Shining Star Nomination Form](#).



DeafBlind Awareness Week

DeafBlind Awareness Week was at the end of June. We shared a variety of information through our social medias and were so happy to celebrate some of your children! Not everyone is on social media, so please enjoy these highlights!

If you would like to celebrate your child with us next year, please email Brandy.



I love his honesty and kindness. His knowledge and love for geography and history are unmatched! He's such a fun kid to have!

-Mom



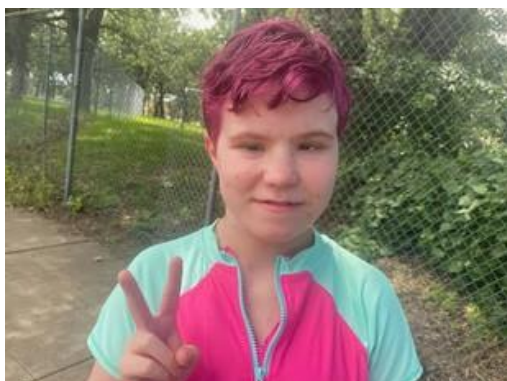
She has a great sense of humor and puts a smile on our face when she giggles and laughs! Her face and demeanor soften when she interacts with more fragile people like the elderly and babies... and she does the same around animals.

-Mom

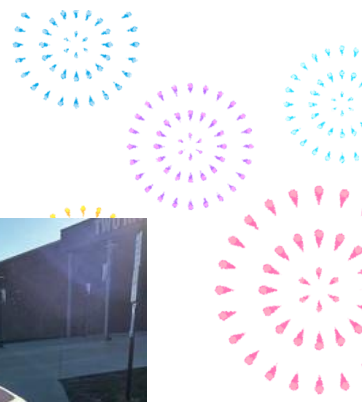


Megan is a funny and friendly young lady! She's very resilient and curious and energetic. Megan would love to teach everyone she meets ASL!

-Mom



DeafBlind Awareness Week



“ He is very compassionate and makes everyone feel welcome!

♥ -Mom



“ I love how curious she is. She loves to learn new things, especially new words! She is a great friend and loves meeting new people. She welcomes everyone with a big smile and hand squeeze!

-Mom



“ Even at 18, he still comes and gives me a hug several times throughout the day. He's willing to pitch in wherever he can- helping with dinner, folding laundry, washing dishes, or serving.

-Mom



“ I love his optimism and determination when he's learning new things!

-Mom



DeafBlind Awareness Week



There is no one we know who loves life more than Eleanor! She loves everyone and getting to know them.

Ella is naturally curious and wants to know about everything. She enjoys traveling or just going places. She loves to have a good time and is always up for a party or just being around people. She has a great sense of humor and with that comes an impish side.

-Mom



Our dear sweet Coraline. She is quiet, contemplative and very brave. Cora valiantly endures every challenge she faces stoically. Her favorite thing she loves to do is to look and collect shirts with high contrast.

-Mom



I love her smile and zest for life. Payton is a joy to be around and loves to use the gait trainer and wheel around in her wheelchair. She gives everyone around her a high five or fist bump. I love how curious and adventurous she is. Always down for going to new places, learning new things, and exploring.

-Mom





Upcoming Events

Family Learning Community (virtual):

August 19th: One-Page Profile (Description)/All About Me

Prepare for the beginning of the school year by utilizing person-centered planning to develop a unique one-page profile specifically focused on your child. This document serves as a valuable resource to introduce your child to new school teams and interveners, and to keep on hand for substitute staff. Options to join at 11:30 am or 6:30 pm.

NEW Series

“Empowering Families Through DeafBlind Training”

Based on parent request and interest, we will start a new series this fall (Oct-April) just for parents/caregivers. The DeafBlind topics will align with those covered during our annual Intervener Training, but for the convenience of families, there will be a combination of online learning, virtual meetings, and (fingers crossed!) an in-person opportunity!

Topics will include: overview of deafblindness, understanding the impact of combined hearing and vision loss on learning, the power of touch, concept development, communication, self-determination & relationships.

[Register for the Family Learning Community](#) to receive updates and more details about both events!

Additional Opportunity

Collaborative Experience Conference: Build Our Future Together

November 1st-3rd (in-person)

The Collaborative Experience Conference is dedicated to providing the most recent resources, professional development, and collaboration for families and Minnesota's teachers and professionals supporting students who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing.

[Parent Scholarships](#) are available and you can find more details. [Register for this conference.](#)





RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT



The CHARGE Syndrome Foundation

CHARGE Syndrome is an extremely complex syndrome, involving extensive medical and physical difficulties that differ from child to child. It is also the largest genetic condition resulting in combined hearing and vision loss (deafblindness).

The CHARGE Syndrome Foundation has a wealth of tools, supports and resources for families. On this [For Families page](#), you'll find information about understanding the new diagnosis, conferences, education, communication, and more!

The **Family Liaison Project** is a model of collaboration to improve the Foundation's outreach to both families and professionals at the national level. Minnesota is currently seeking a new Charge Family Liaison. If you have a loved one with CHARGE syndrome and are interested in this, contact Lourdes Quintana at Lourdes@chargesyndrome.org.

The CHARGE Syndrome Foundation also provides trainings for families and professionals. Recently they hosted a 3-part "Ask the Expert Series". View [previously recorded webinars](#). Scroll down to find the recordings.

The **Ethan Wolfe Recreational Assistance Program** provides individuals with CHARGE syndrome the opportunity to participate in recreational activities! [Read the details and how to apply](#).

The first **CHARGE Syndrome Awareness Day** will be held internationally on **August 8th** this year. This day aims to raise awareness of the variability of CHARGE syndrome to help improve diagnosis and access to best practice interventions. Watch our social media for updates on how you can participate!

