<Beginning of transcription>ODHH February 2024 Update: Upcoming Community Meetings, Events, and Recognition

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Greetings from the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing! Time continues to fly by as we work on strengthening and expanding our programs and services for the community. ODHH’s team has grown tremendously over the last two years from 9 staff to 20 staff. We are continuing to work hard to create and fill several new full-time positions. As we grow, we continue to develop robust policy and procedures and work on making our infrastructure more efficient and leaner.

The Case Management offices are expanding throughout the state starting with Vancouver, Washington, in November 2023.  In the three months since the launch of the program, the community has responded well. We are expanding along the I-5 corridor in Western Washington from Olympia to Bellingham, and eastward into Tri-Cities area, and finally opening in Spokane, with each region receiving dedicated Case Managers through this spring and summer. To support and drive the growth of dedicated support, we will continue to recruit and hire, including for community resources, an application developer, and administrative support personnel.

To keep the Washington community apprised of these changes, we are hosting in-person and virtual Case Management community meetings on February 29, March 5, March 28, June 11 and 12, statewide.

The Hard of Hearing Consultation and Resources program continues to provide requested training to multiple state agencies and service providers to assist in identifying gaps in services, discuss impacts of hearing loss, and share resources. Outreach to residential facility owners and staff continues identifying opportunities for training and education. One facility in Spokane is converting a conference space into a training room; they have asked the program to come provide routine presentations to the Hearing Loss community and service providers.

The Family Mentor program is heavily promoting education and outreach efforts statewide as we have a growing waiting list of families, partners, and providers in need of supports and services. The Community Outreach program is sponsoring several community events over the next several months.

We are hosting a collaborative training session with the Adult Family Home Council on March 12, participating in the WA-HLAA Annual Meeting on March 23, and looking forward to expanding Family Mentor Services with a Deaf Mentor Training to be held this spring in collaboration with CDHY and Utah State University’s SKI-HI Project.

We are also hosting two community events for the DeafBlind community on April 3 at the Sound Transit Headquarters (2-5p.m. in the Santa Fe Room) and on April 17 at Seattle University (5-8p.m. in the Casey Commons, Room 530).  More details on how to RSVP coming soon!

Preparations are underway for the second annual ODHH Expo on May 17, at Clark College in Vancouver, WA. We are also a proud sponsor of Black ASL Deaf Nation, which will take place on June 15 in Seattle. We are also sponsoring Deaf Fiesta, which will take place this fall in central Washington.

We continue to provide quarterly ALTSA Focal Point presentations, with the most recent session on February 6. The next Focal Point presentation is scheduled for May 7.

Staff news:

Jacki Forsythe, our current Administrative Assistant 5 will be retiring after 11 years with ODHH. Her last day is March 29.

Thu Le has received a promotion from Administrative Assistant 3 to Administrative Assistant 5 and started her new role on February 19. In January, Lucas Doelman celebrated 23 years, Daniel Wharton celebrated six years and Thu celebrated two years of state service, respectively.  Kelly Robison celebrated 30 years with ODHH on February 1.

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Hello.

We want to recognize Lucas Doelman, our Office Assistant Two, for his incredible work for ODHH for 23 years. His work ethic is amazing. We recognize his hard work and his contribution to ODHH for all of the work he has done.

Thank you for your continuing hard work.

We also want to recognize Kelly Robison, our TED Program Manager. We want to recognize her work and her longevity. She has worked for DSHS and for ODHH for 30 years. I want to congratulate her for her hard work and her contribution for these 30 years that she has given to us. Thank you for your contribution and for your steadiness. We are really honored to have you as a part of the ODHH team. I really appreciate that.

Now we recognize both Lucas and Kelly. We recognize their contribution to ODHH, which, at 23 years and 30 years, is a combined 53 years of contribution to ODHH. We want to thank you for your service and for all the work you've done to improve and move the work forward. I really appreciate your work and really appreciate having you as a part of the team.

Thank you, Lucas, and thank you, Kelly, for your continuing hard work.

Thank you.

Earnest Covington III <End of transcription>