



# The SOURCE

WINTER '04

A PUBLICATION OF NATIONAL DEAF ACADEMY

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*James Tresh, President*

# Happy Birthday NDA !

*Dear Friends and Families:*

Happy New Year! I hope each of you enjoyed a holiday season that was restful, joyous and fulfilling. It is hard to believe that yet another year in this "New Millennium" has passed. It has been a very busy and productive year at National Deaf Academy.

At National Deaf Academy we recently celebrated our 3rd birthday! In October 2000, the first group of 11 Deaf adolescents were admitted into the National Deaf Academy residential treatment program. The following month we were granted a license to treat Deaf adults. Since that time the original allocation of beds has been consistently full. In order to meet the needs of families in crisis, NDA requested and received approval to expand the number of licensed beds. The Adult Program, for persons of 18 years and above, has recently had the number of beds increased from 14 to 24. In addition, we have built a new 8 bed wing designed to meet the needs of Deaf adolescents with special needs. With the completion of these expansions, NDA can serve up to 80 Deaf residents, coming from throughout the United States. In December 2003, National Deaf Academy dedicated Vernon Hall, to honor McCay Vernon, Ph.D., Chairman of the NDA Advisory Board. Dr. Vernon

### 2004 International Conference



Hilton at the Walt Disney World® Resort

has dedicated over 50 years of his life to Mental Health and Deafness. Vernon Hall has 11 new offices. It provides an individual office to each program therapist, and two psychiatrists. Vernon Hall also has facilities for group and family counseling, and play therapy rooms. The construction of this new office suite will create more up space for the Charter School at National Deaf Academy for further expansion during the next school year.

### International Conference April 8 -10, 2004

In this issue, you will find detailed information about our annual conference for 2004, titled "Mental Health and Deafness Around the Globe." This year's conference will be

continued on p. 4

## What's Inside!

**YOUR KIDS & MINE .....pg. 2**

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW .....pg. 3**

**2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM .....pg. 6**

---

## YOUR KIDS & MINE

---

by Dr. Alan M. Cohen, M.D.



*Dear Doctor Cohen: My Deaf daughter is 14 going on 35. She has been having behavioral problems for several years now. The problems have gradually become worse, and now include running away, promiscuity and drug abuse. The state residential school for the Deaf she attends has been supportive, but they say they can't control her anymore. The school psychologist is suggesting a "Residential Treatment Center (RTC)" like National Deaf Academy. However, my insurance company says if she is not suicidal, they will not pay, despite the fact that I have a good benefit package.*

*HELP!...Ms. L.P., Arkansas*

*Dear Ms. L.P.:*

Now you know how several NDA administrative staff members spend a significant portion of our day - negotiating and struggling with insurance companies! Managed health care companies have made an art form of describing benefits that are frequently not what they appear to be when people sign on. For the record, "hospital" or "acute care" psychiatric benefits usually refer only to brief hospital stays that are intended to simply stabilize the patient. For example, if someone is suicidal he or she may enter a hospital for several days to be treated with anti-depressant medications. Once the hospital patient starts showing improvement, and no longer wanting to hurt himself or herself, the patient would quickly be discharged to an out-patient plan of therapy, medication, and support services.

Residential care, is a separate benefit. Residential care is longer term, usually six months or more, and frequently resisted by insurance companies to avoid the cost of longer-term care. Residential Treatment Centers, like National Deaf Academy, treat chronic and more resistant emotional problems. Individuals with these severe problems do not tend to improve with brief hospital stays. The individual may require more than superficial

interventions to affect change. An example might be someone like your daughter. She may not be an acute risk, but rather, is routinely acting out in a variety of dangerous ways -- such as abusing drugs or running away. In this case, one would have to convince the insurance company of the "medical necessity" of residential care. Under these circumstances the request may come from parents, school officials, a social worker or out-patient therapists. In compelling cases, the insurance company itself may seek an RTC placement as a result of the individual requiring frequent re-admissions to a hospital setting.

When insurance "benefits" are not the issue, the real question from a parent's perspective becomes when is residential care the appropriate intervention? It is my belief that there are three basic reasons to consider residential care. First, and foremost, is when an assortment of out-patient treatment interventions have resulted in one or more unsuccessful brief, acute hospitalizations. This suggests that a "quick fix" may not be appropriate for this person's needs. Secondly, the need for a long term residential approach would be indicated for someone who has been diagnosed with a "Personality Disorder." One such diagnosis is

"Borderline Personality Disorder," commonly referred to as "character pathology" by many mental health professionals. These individuals typically have longstanding difficulties dealing with the world around them, indicated by unstable relationships and a variety of attention-seeking and self-destructive behaviors. Thirdly, for persons who are developmentally disabled, with significant language delays, placement in a setting where communication skills and social behaviors are a priority can be enormously helpful. Thus the residential milieu, that is the treatment environment itself, becomes part of the therapeutic intervention.

For Deaf children, Deaf adolescents and Deaf adults, an RTC is often the optimal choice because a Deafness program can offer the appropriate patient, and his or her family, the option of a therapeutic "holding" environment to clarify difficult diagnostic questions and medication concerns. The residential treatment environment will allow the individual to "work through" issues in a psychiatrically sophisticated and physically safe setting. Many RTCs are affiliated with school programs designed for students with emotional difficulties and learning disabilities.

continued on p. 4

# NATIONAL DEAF ACADEMY - TREATMENT PROGRAMS

National Deaf Academy (NDA) is a residential psychiatric treatment center designed exclusively for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, adolescents and adults with varying psychiatric and behavioral problems. Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals from all 50 states and U.S. Territories come to National Deaf Academy to receive residential care, comprehensive evaluations and education services in an environment created specifically for Deaf people.

Established in 2000 by James Tresh, LMHC, Jennifer Tresh, RN and Alan M. Cohen, MD. National Deaf Academy is a one-of-a-kind facility providing services to a traditionally underserved population – Deaf individuals with severe psychiatric, emotional or behavioral problems. Some common disorders treated at NDA are: Schizophrenia, Bi-Polar Disorder, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Personality Disorders such as Borderline Personality Disorder, and Impulse Control Disorders such as sexual acting-out. Autism Mood Disorders such as Depression, Addictions and Aggression are also treated. NDA also provides residential treatment to Deaf-Blind individuals and individuals with other medical complications or physical disabilities.

## Treatment Programs

National Deaf Academy offers several distinct treatment programs, designed to treat specific disorders or behavioral problems. Treatment programs are available for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adults (ages 18 and above), Deaf children with Autism, Impulse Control Disorders Program for Deaf Male Adolescents, Deaf Children's Program, and treatment for Substance Abuse and Addiction.

A multi-disciplinary team of mental health professionals attends to each Deaf patient's plan of care. Each team includes a psychiatrist,

individual psychotherapist, recreational therapist, registered nurses, mental health technicians and teachers.

All programs integrate individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, family therapy, psychiatry and recreational therapy. Most patients, under 22 years of age, also attend The Charter School at National Deaf Academy. For these individuals the school and treatment schedules are blended into a daily routine.



## Facilities and Amenities

Treatment Programs are enhanced with facilities such as a gymnasium, swimming pool, ropes course, and state of the art out-of-doors play/activities developmental equipment. Other amenities include exercise equipment, basketball court, video-conferencing equipment and off-campus equine therapy at a nearby stable.

## Services to the Community

National Deaf Academy provides many services to the community on a pro-bono basis. A quarterly publication, titled THE SOURCE is published and sent to over 10,000 readers nationally. In addition, NDA maintains affiliation agreements with Gallaudet University and other schools to provide a supervised site for interns from academic programs. Similarly, NDA is available to consult with families, schools and

other agencies or institutions. Finally, each year NDA sponsors a major conference, providing a venue for professionals and families to learn more about mental health care for Deaf people.



continued on p. 5

---

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

---



continued from p. 1

held at The Hilton Resort, on the grounds of Walt Disney World. As announced in the Autumn issue of *The Source*, the conference this year will be international in scope. At the time of this printing, we have confirmed speakers from France, Italy, Belgium, England, Puerto Rico and the United States. I am also happy to announce there will be two book signing events at the conference.

Alan M. Cohen, MD, NDA Medical Director, will sign copies of his book: "Anything but Silent;" a Psychiatrist's Journey into the World of Deaf People and the Founding of National Deaf Academy. In addition, I am also proud to announce another book authored by our Director of Addiction Services, Eugene Crone, Ph.D. The book titled "They Hear Through Their Eyes" is co-authored by Carole Goodman, Ph.D. Each of these three authors will be present at the International Conference to sign their recently published books.

In a few weeks you will receive an additional mailing with a full description of the upcoming 2004 conference. It will contain biographical data about the speakers. In addition, an abbreviated agenda will be provided to offer you a glimpse into the dynamic scope of the conference. National Deaf Academy will bring experts from around the world to Florida to present at the conference. These individuals are professionals who provide mental health care to Deaf people in their own countries. We all hope to learn more about their approaches as well as the challenges they face in their respective countries. I hope many of you will attend this international conference. We promise you this will be an exhilarating learning experience. CEUs have been approved

for a number of professional disciplines. Additionally, you will find a conference registration form on the last page of *THE SOURCE*. You may pay by mail, or you can register on line, using a major credit card. Be sure to register as soon as possible to assure conference and hotel availability.

### Other News

As always, you will find Dr. Cohen's article titled "Your Kids and Mine" in this issue. Dr. Cohen details the distinctions of a residential treatment facility in comparison to other environments of care. You will also be able to learn specific details about the variety of programs offered at National Deaf Academy in this edition of *The Source*.

The NDA website is being expanded and improved! We expect the new website to be completed and available by Spring, 2004. Our goal is to offer you a website that is easy to access, with information about: treatment programs, career opportunities, available resources, the NDA founders, staff members, conferences and other NDA events. The website will continue to maintain an archive of past editions of *THE SOURCE*. Please feel free to visit the current site at [www.nationaldeafacademy.com](http://www.nationaldeafacademy.com) or the new site at the same address in Spring, 2004.

In closing, please feel free to contact us at any time if you have questions about National Deaf Academy programs or services. Our readers are also welcome to visit and tour our campus. If you wish to have a tour of our campus, please call us for an appointment.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Tresh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Tresh

---

## YOUR KIDS & MINE

---

continued from p. 2

Therefore, complicated learning problems can also be addressed within the Residential Psychiatric Treatment Center.

Ultimately, the length of time and depth of therapy offered in RTC settings is infinitely more comprehensive than short-term interventions. It may also be important to keep in mind that many Deaf people are comfortable

in residential treatment settings, based on their residential experiences in state funded schools for the Deaf. In the present day, many Deaf individuals needing psychiatric care also have other multiple neurologically based problems. Residential mental health care should be a significant consideration for all clinicians seeking care for troubled Deaf children, Deaf adolescents and Deaf adults.

---

## TREATMENT PROGRAMS, continued

---

### Growth and Change

The need is vast for quality mental health care for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. National Deaf Academy has responded to the needs of families and individuals in crisis by expanding patient bed capacity. With the completion of new buildings and other renovations, NDA has been approved to increase capacity to 80 residential beds.



### The Charter School at National Deaf Academy

Affiliated with NDA is the Charter School at National Deaf Academy (CSNDA). CSNDA is a Florida Department of Education chartered public school. It is located on the campus of NDA. As such, the two organizations work as partners to simultaneously provide quality mental health care, and K to 12 special education services to all NDA residents under 22 years of age, who have not graduated from high school. CSNDA is staffed with Florida certified Deaf Education Teachers. The classrooms are intensely staffed with a 1:3 Staff to Student ratio. The school is open 12 months of the year and operates on a quarterly schedule.

As an adjunct to academic services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing students also receive services from a certified audiologist, speech and language pathologist, school psychologist, physical therapist and occupational therapist. These services are

prescribed, on an individual basis, and documented in the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

Recently CSNDA has implemented The Bridges Program. This program is designed to assist students to develop better skills in memory, coordination, attention and sensory integration. Given the number of Deaf persons with concomitant neurological impairments, improvement in these skill areas enhances the Deaf student's ability to perform in school.

CSNDA offers a classroom designed and staffed for Deaf children with Autism. In addition, the school has expertise and experience in teaching students who are both Deaf and Blind.

There is a great deal more about the dynamic services provided at NDA than can be shared in one issue of THE SOURCE. We welcome your inquiry calls and e-mail messages at any time. If you would like to personally visit our campus, please contact Ms. Elena L. Moore, Director of Community Relations to make an appointment. You may call us at: 352.735.9500 or visit our website at [www.nationaldeafacademy.com](http://www.nationaldeafacademy.com).





19650 U.S. Highway 441  
Mount Dora, Florida 32757

352-735-9500 Voice  
352-735-9570 TTY  
800-752-7345 V/TTY  
352-735-4939 Facsimile  
www.nationaldeafacademy.com

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ORLANDO, FL  
PERMIT NO. 1556



Next Issue: Charter School at National Deaf Academy



## 2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:

### *Mental Health and Deafness Around The Globe*

April 8 - 10, 2004 Hilton at the **Walt Disney World®** Resort

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

- SPECIAL RATE (until 3/1/04): \$200.00 USD
- REGULAR RATE (after 3/1/04): \$250.00 USD
- AMEX • VISA • MASTERCARD • DISCOVER



Send Registration and/or Check to:  
National Deaf Academy  
19650 U.S. Highway 441  
Mt. Dora, FL 32757  
C/O Chris Wagner, Conference Coordinator

CARD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME ON CARD: \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL:\$ \_\_\_\_\_