



In This Issue

- [What's New at NDA](#): Introducing our new eNewsletter, CEO and adult facility!
- [Employee of the Month](#): David Killam, Therapist and Case Manager
- [Teacher of the Semester](#): Heather Jilao
- [Dear Dr. Cohen](#): Can I get my school district to pay for private education for my deaf or hard-of-hearing child?
- [Job Postings](#): Mental Health Technicians, Certified Recreation Therapists
- [Quote of the Month](#): Helen Keller

What's New at NDA

NDA Introduces eNewsletter, CEO and Adult Facility

Welcome to the first edition of the National Deaf Academy's monthly eNewsletter. In each edition you can expect updates about NDA, a profile of our employee of the month, current job postings, and more.

We encourage our readers to send questions to our clinical team. Please reply to this email with your question. Each month, a question will be selected and answered by one of our clinicians. This is a great opportunity to learn more about mental illness and autism as it relates to deafness and communication disorders.

This is an exciting time at NDA. We welcomed Stephen Fahey this summer and officially named him CEO on Oct. 18. We are very fortunate to have Steve join the team, as he brings nearly 20 years of psychiatric administrative experience.

Although Dr. Alan Cohen has stepped down from his seven-year reign as CEO, he continues to be extremely involved at NDA as our medical director.

In addition to Steve joining NDA, we recently opened our new adult building, which contains 48 new beds. Be sure to look for our upcoming edition of our print newsletter, the *Sign Post*, for a complete story on these developments.

[Back to top](#)

Employee of the Month

David Killam Therapist and Case Manager

For most people, the ideal career is one where you're doing what you love. David Killam, therapist and case manager at National Deaf Academy, is doing just that.

David, who was born deaf in an all-hearing family, knew from a young age that he wanted to help others. "It's where my heart is - helping those who need it, especially those with problems," says David.

David began his career at NDA in November 2002 and has proved to be an irreplaceable member of the staff. He works tirelessly every day, ensuring NDA residents receive the highest quality care.



No one can miss David's contagious smile and friendly spirit. His fellow employees remark at what a great team player he is. "David has been a great pleasure to work with. He does his job 110 percent and is always willing to help out," says Melissa Watson, clinical director. "He has a nickname, 'Happy Happy,' as his joy is contagious at NDA. He works very hard to make sure our residents are taken care of."

Before joining the NDA family, David worked for various organizations for the deaf and hard of hearing in Florida, Maryland and the District of Columbia. He holds a B.S. in biology from Gallaudet University and two master's degrees from Western Maryland College in education and counseling. David has served as an advisory board member of the Council on Disabilities, has been a board member for the Florida Registry Interpreters for the Deaf for eight years, and has received the Deaf Services Bureau's Leadership Award. David is also very proud of being a part of the inaugural class of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, N.Y., in 1968. This was where he learned sign language and deaf culture.

David was born in Indianola, Iowa, but moved to Florida at the age of 5, where he has spent most of his life. He lives in Leesburg with his two miniature schnauzers, Willow and Pumpkin, and two cats, Tabitha and Sabrina. In his spare time he enjoys the outdoors and researching his ancestry. David says the best memory he has is that of the summers he spent as a teenager working on his grandmother's farm in Iowa.

[Back to top](#)

Teacher of the Semester

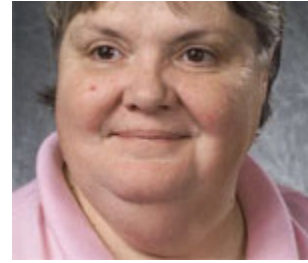
Heather Jilao

NDA has a deep appreciation for all of its charter school teachers. Their dedication, commitment, creativity and innovative skills are demonstrated on a daily basis with our



residents.

In recognition of their efforts, NDA, along with the charter school board members, wish to recognize a teacher each semester. This semester we recognize Heather Jilao. Heather joined the NDA Charter School staff in early 2004. She relocated from Washington, D.C., where she taught at Gallaudet Model Secondary School.



Heather is currently teaching our residents social/personal skills, learning strategies and marketing education. In addition to her teaching job, Heather is also a mentor and counselor, and assists the charter school director.

Our residents refer to Heather by stating that:

- She teaches us to support one another
- She encourages us to work in treatment and to be successful
- Heather is a nice person who uses positive behavioral support, a method of interacting with others using respect and dignity as the basis for all communication
- I like her because she takes time to explain things
- She relates our problems to the real world
- She works with our therapist

Congratulations Heather; you are doing a great job.

[Back to top](#)

Dear Dr. Cohen

Dear Dr. Cohen:

I read in the newspaper that the Supreme Court is going to hear a case about parents placing their children in private special education programs that are paid for by the public school system. Does that mean I can place my deaf daughter in a special program, too?

Mrs. J.B., Ann Arbor, Mich.

Dear Mrs. J.B.:

That's an interesting but difficult question to answer as you will get many different responses depending on whom you ask. As background, please understand that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, refers to federal statutes stating that every child is entitled to a free public education, and that the education must meet the child's unique needs.



On the surface that seems to support the notion that a child with special needs, such as your deaf daughter, is entitled to receive a free education that meets her needs as a deaf child. However, the question that arises is whether or not the family's home school district can, in fact, meet those needs.

In the case scheduled to go before the Supreme Court, the parents unilaterally decided that the school district could not meet their child's needs, and as a result, placed him in an expensive private school which was reluctantly paid for by their home district. The school systems countered by saying that they are quite sure they can meet the child's needs, and at the very least, deserve a chance to do so.

In the case of deaf students, almost all moderate to large school systems have some provisions for deaf and hard-of-hearing kids, but the problem arises when a deaf kid has multiple exceptions, such as emotional problems or autism. In those cases the options are less clear, but the school systems remain reluctant to commit to expensive private programs such as National Deaf Academy.

Bottom line: The truth is that there is no simple answer because the system can easily be abused, especially by parents with means who can hire attorneys and intimidate poorly funded school districts. That said, there is no question that many deaf kids have been denied adequate access to appropriate education over the years, so it's critical that families of these students gain access to both medical and legal advocates so that all opportunities can be fully explored and exhausted before settling for a second-class education.

Alan Cohen, M.D. serves as Medical Director and CEO of National Deaf Academy.

Reply to this email with your question.

[Back to top](#)

Job Postings

Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator will carry a caseload of five and oversee our adult enhancement and independent living skills programs, as well as expand our vocational program. A master's degree in counseling, deaf education, social work, and/or a related field is required. Must be licensed in Florida or license eligible from another state. This candidate must be fluent in ASL, English, and have a strong knowledge of deafness and deaf culture, as well as have good resources within the deaf and/or hard-of-hearing community.

Mental Health Technicians (MHT)

Individuals holding the MHT position are responsible for implementing and assisting in the daily management of our residents. MHTs work on an ongoing basis to improve the resident's social, communication and personal hygiene skills. They engage the residents in activities, help implement their treatment programs, and maintain a safe living environment while providing close supervision and observation. This job is also often referred to as psychiatric assistant, group advisor, dorm counselor, CAN, or youth leader. We prefer the candidate to be fluent in American Sign Language; however, we will train the right individual.

Certified Recreation Therapists (CTRS)

Responsibilities include planning, directing and organizing recreational programs, assessments, and documentation. Fluency in American Sign Language preferred, but willing to train the right candidate. B.A. in therapeutic recreation or related field and current CTRS required.

How to Apply

NDA offers a competitive salary and an excellent benefits package. Send resume to:

Director of Human Resources
National Deaf Academy
19650 US Hwy 441
Mt. Dora, FL 32757
Email: btashlein@nda.com
Phone: 352-735-9500
Fax: 352-735-4939
EOE

Working at National Deaf Academy

National Deaf Academy offers a wide range of deafness and mental health employment opportunities. More than 60 percent of our direct-care staff members are deaf or hard of hearing. Though we actively seek individuals who are fluent in American Sign Language, many of our current employees have developed fluency both on the job and through classes available on campus.

Employees enjoy an excellent benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision and a choice of electives such as short- and long-term disability. We offer a paid time off (PTO) plan that is generous and allows for flexibility. In addition, employees can participate in NDA's 401(k) plan and enhance their professional growth through tuition reimbursement.

National Deaf Academy also serves as an internship site for therapists, social workers, educators, interpreters and other professional disciplines.

[Back to top](#)

Quote of the Month

"It is a terrible thing to see and have no vision."
-Helen Keller

[Back to top](#)

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please reply to this email.

- Residential Mental Health Care for Deaf Children, Adolescents and Adults -
National Deaf Academy - 19650 U.S. Hwy 441, Mt. Dora, FL 32757 | V: 352-735-9500 | TTY:
352-735-9570
www.nationaldeafacademy.com

To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

manage your preferences | **opt out** using **TrueRemove®**.

Got this as a forward? **Sign up** to receive our ~~future~~ emails.

email marketing by Parthenon Publishing Inc.
