



21<sup>st</sup> Annual  
FAMILY LEARNING WEEKEND for  
FAMILIES OF Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children  
June 2-4, 2017



What: MSDB 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Family Learning Weekend for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Where: MSDB Campus in Great Falls  
When: June 2-4, 2017  
Who: Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children living in Montana!  
Why: IT WILL BE FUN!!

The Learning Weekend is a creative program providing opportunities for families of sensory impaired children to learn about deafness, share their experiences with other families, and learn how to communicate more fully with one another in a warm, caring atmosphere.

The focus of the weekend is to enhance each individual's personal knowledge of deafness and how it relates to the education and development of their child. Informal workshops, group discussions (parent groups, kids' groups, siblings' groups, etc.) and hands-on activities will be offered. Child care and recreation for the children (siblings included) is available at no charge. Families will be reimbursed for mileage at the current state rate.

Housing is provided on a first-come first-serve basis. Each family is generally provided with their own suite of rooms in the cottages and efforts are made to make assignments according to individual needs and preferences. Typically each family has their own bathroom, sometimes two, depending on the size of the family. **Participants need to bring personal items such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste. The MSDB Swimming Pool will not be in operation for the Learning Weekend. Sorry for this inconvenience as everyone seemed to enjoy this activity**

### Children's Programs:

The children are divided into groups based mostly on age. Many factors are taken into consideration including friendships, maturity level, and interests when putting together the groups. The children stay with their groups until they join the parents for mealtime. MSDB's finest residential and school staff will be responsible for supervising your children and making sure they enjoy the day as much as you do!

**Birth to two:** Children will be in the pre-school room in Bitterroot with staff. *Parents should pick up their children prior to lunch and dinner and return them to the same location when they are done eating.*

**Three to five:** Children will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day. These activities will include snacks, program practice, indoor and outdoor activities including a trip to the MSDB playground (weather permitting). The activities for this group will remain flexible depending on the ages and abilities of the participants.

**Six through eighteen:** Saturday morning after the group picture, children will re-join their assigned teams which are designed for children to be involved with peers. There will be several activities including program practice, recreation activities and snacks. In addition, a representative from the Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) will have fun projects for the children to enjoy.

MTAP will talk about technology, including using a TTY, the Relay Service, etc. Also during the morning session **Darreck Hale, MSDB Supervising Counselor**, and **Yvette Smail, MSDB Behavior Specialist**, will meet with hearing siblings providing them an opportunity to discuss their feelings regarding having a deaf sibling. Deaf and Hard of Hearing children will meet separately to share their thoughts as well. *This information (while names confidential) will be shared with the parents during the Sunday morning presentation.*

*\*\*\*The kids program is intended to provide entertainment and educational activities that will further the participants understanding of deafness and its impact on the family. Activities are designed for youth with hearing loss and for their siblings. Participants are grouped by age and staff are assigned accordingly, depending on the numbers of the participants and their individual needs. If you have unique concerns regarding your child, please let us know and we will work with you to insure that everyone has a good time.*

*Information from various vendors (serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing) will be available throughout the weekend.*

## **Presenter Bios**

*not all bios were available at press time*

**Frank Podobnik** currently serves as the State Special Education Director for the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI). Frank is the father of three sons, two of whom were students with disabilities. He began his career in education as a school psychologist in 1994 and worked in the Great Falls and Butte school districts. Frank has worked for the OPI since 2002 as a full and part-time compliance monitor, dispute resolution facilitator, IDEA grant manager, and for the past few years, state director. Frank has worked with teachers, families and students with disabilities throughout his career.

**Pamela C. Snedigar, MPA** Is currently the Director of the Gallaudet University Regional Center –West (GURC-West) at Ohlone College in Fremont, CA. Pam is a lifelong resident of the Bay Area, where her deaf parents settled. Pam received her B.S., Paralegal Certificate and her Masters in Public Administration from California State University Hayward. She was a paralegal at the California Center for Law and the Deaf (CalCLAD) for 10 years; in that capacity she provided direct services, legislative review, advocacy training and community education.

Her interests and current position at GURC-West, have led her to develop many training and continuing education opportunities for professionals and families in the Western United States. She has chaired or been on core planning committees for a number of state-wide, regional and national conferences, including the California Educators of the Deaf Conference, Western Symposium on Deafness, National Asian Deaf Congress Conference, Intermountain Special Studies Institute, Children of Deaf Adults Conference and the American Sign Language Roundtable. She has also been involved with parent outreach through partnerships with programs available in the states of Montana and Washington.

**Stacy Abrams**, the coordinator of training for Clerc Center at Gallaudet University, will be presenting, “Looking way back when... Are we still the same? Expose, Educate, Empower, Embrace, & Enlighten”. She will discuss the history of early intervention and how different laws/research has impacted early intervention/deaf education for deaf children and their families. She will also share their perspectives of growing in a hearing family, navigating communication, involving other family members, looking for resources, and dealing with society’s views of deaf children and their families. Stacy will also share Clerc Center resources and how families can benefit from resources.

Stacy grew up in a hearing family who signs. She was the first child in the Arkansas School for the Deaf Parent Infant Program at 18 months old. Her mom, Betty, played a huge role in establishing the program. Stacy felt that because her family signs, she was able to grow up independent and had full access at school which led to participating in so many different activities. She is an alumni of Gallaudet University and University of California at Santa Barbara. Stacy taught deaf students for five years before diving into early intervention. She was the deaf mentor program coordinator in both New Mexico and Arizona for ten years. Stacy ensured that families with deaf children had opportunities to meet with deaf adults. She just recently relocated to Washington, DC, where she is the coordinator of training for Clerc Center. Stacy is the proud mom of two bilingual deaf children, Coffey & Mattea.

# Deaf Learning Weekend 2017 Schedule

(subject to change)

## Friday, June 2, 2017

- 4:00-6:00 *Check in:* Yellowstone Cottage. Room Assignments and Family Picture  
5:00 *Tour:* Especially helpful for first time attendees. Meet in the Yellowstone Lobby.  
5:30-6:20 *Dinner:* Pizza, salad and dessert in the MSDB main dining room.  
6:30-6:50 *Welcome: Parents and children in the Mustang Center (Gym).*  
All children (except the White Team) will remain in the Mustang Center. Parents will go to Bitterroot.  
7:00-7:15 *Introduction:* Consultants and Vendor Fair Information (IMC)  
7:15-7:45 *Ice Breaker:* Getting to know the participants a bit earlier in the weekend.  
8:00-8:45 *Parent Panel:* Pre-selected parents will share their journey. This is a very powerful session for the audience as well as the panel members!  
9:00 Pick up your kids from the Mustang Center.

## Saturday, June 3, 2017

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in the main dining room.  
8:45-9:00 Group Picture – All Participants together in front of the big sign (each family will get a “Memory Book” at the end of the weekend to take home).  
9:00-10:15 *Session 1* (pick one session)
  - Mom’s Group - IMC Library Area
  - Dad’s Group - Conference Room in the Basement
  - Grandparent (other caregiver) Group - (if enough interested)- Outreach Office10:15-10:30 Break See Vendors, get drinks and snacks  
10:30-11:15 *Session 2* (pick one session)
  - OPI-Beginners - Conference Room in the Basement
  - Deaf Blind Project-PreEts Transition – IMC Library Area11:15:-12:00 *Session 3* (pick on session)
  - OPI - Advanced Topics - Conference Room in the Basement
  - Early Intervention/EHDI - IMC Library Area12:00-12:45 Lunch in the Dining Room  
12:45-1:15 Kid’s Program - Mustang Center (Gym)  
1:15-2:00 Vendors - IMC Library Area  
2:00-3:00 *Session 4*
  - Clerc Center-Family Dynamics (see Stacy Abrams bio for more detail) – IMC Library Area3:00-4:30 *Session 5* (pick on session)
  - Clerc Center – Continuation of Family Dynamics – IMC Library Area
  - Deaf-Blind Project – Daily Routines and Communication – Conference Room in the Basement4:30-6:00 *Vendors are available to answer questions*  
6:00-7:00 *BBQ:* Dinner in the main dining room  
7:00-8:00 *Session 6* (pick one session)
  - Beginning Sign Language
  - Advanced ASL
  - Communication and CI’s8:15-8:45 *Successful Adult-IMC*  
9:00 Pick up your kids from the cottages as they will be watching movies and eating snacks

## Sunday, June 4, 2017

- 7:45-8:45 Breakfast in main the Dining Room  
9:00-10:00 *Montana Telecommunications Access Program and Hamilton Relay:* info about this program.  
10:00-11:30 *Love and Logic Presentation and Sibling Summary .*  
11:30-12:00 Closing – evaluations, Family “Memory Book”  
12:00 Lunch – Dining Room  
1:00 Everyone should be on their way! Have a wonderful summer travel safe!



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**WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT MSDB's FAMILY LEARNING WEEKENDS!**

*"I think every family with a deaf child should come to at least one to see if it's helpful to them – we love it and learn each and every time we come to MSDB!"*

*"I like that my brother feels welcome and fits in every time he is here and I support him."*

*"I was very impressed with MSDB in general. I had no idea that this was such a 'gem'. Montana is very lucky."*

*"Informative, we met a lot of amazing families, the staff was great and the kids had fun"*

*"Seeing all the kids together is the best part! We always learn something new that helps us with our lives!"*

*"The staff are great, always different options for presenters – changes every year"*

**SPONSORED BY:**

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind ♦ The M.S.D.B. Foundation, Inc.  
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Mailing Label