

# Leading the Way

**The Center for Hearing & Deaf Services, Inc.** (HDS), began in 1920 as the League for the Hard of Hearing. Its primary goal, was to provide social activities for people with hearing loss. From these modest beginnings, HDS has evolved into our region's only comprehensive service center for individuals who are culturally deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing, and their friends and families.



Our mission is to provide a diverse and affordable program of quality diagnostic, rehabilitative and supportive services to meet the unique challenges of children and

adults who are deaf and hard of hearing and to serve as an information and referral source for this population and the general public.

The vision of HDS staff is to be caring professionals, serving persons who are deaf or hard of hearing with excellence, dignity, and trust.

## Leading the Way...

- HDS offered the first Chemical Dependency Program in the tri-state area for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- the region's only Assistive Listening and Signaling Device Demonstration and Sale Center
- a Deaf Youth Program to provide activities for youth who are deaf and hard of hearing and their families
- a Hearing Aid Recycling Program
- Sign-A-Thon, the premier sign language awareness event in the Pittsburgh area.



**Center for Hearing and Deaf Services**  
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# Center for Hearing & Deaf Services

## Life Skills Development Program



Enhancing daily living skills and building independence

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# How We Can Help

**The Life Skills Development Program** serves clients who are deaf and mentally challenged by offering instruction and experiences that improve daily living skills and foster independence. Primary areas of instruction are communication skills development, mobility training, personal safety training, academics, computer training, Deaf Culture, physical education, personal hygiene, grooming, utilization of community resources, social skills development, pre-vocational training, and sexual awareness. Social interaction is crucial in acquiring these and other adult daily living skills.

Following an initial intake interview and evaluation sessions, an individualized program is designed with established objectives based on the client's identified needs and abilities. Clients are seen individually and/or in group situations. The progress of each client is evaluated at quarterly staffing sessions and if required, necessary adjustments are made in a client's service plan. The Life Skills Development program provides clients with the opportunity to experience self growth through improved communication and social skills.

All program staff are fluent in American Sign Language, have a knowledge of Deaf Culture, and are trained in the techniques used to teach and/or counsel this population.

## ACADEMICS

Clients acquire important reading, writing, and math skills. Depending on their proficiency, clients focus on learning basic concepts (reading and writing simple sentences, adding/subtracting) or developing more advanced skills (writing paragraphs, reading books, doing multiplication/division problems.)

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

This training helps the client in developing his or her maximum level of social and personal behavior, using an intense approach to build communication skills and self-esteem. Language development is encour-

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aged through practice conversations (spoken and signed), reading materials, video tapes and television programs, and written exercises—as well as real-life social situations.

## COMPUTER TRAINING

Instructors teach a range of topics, from basic typing to Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, to accommodate different skills levels.

## DEAF CULTURE

Clients learn about American Sign Language and conversation etiquette in the Deaf community (ways of interacting, taking turns, getting attention).

## MOBILITY TRAINING

Clients are offered this service on an individualized basis for each client according to his or her need. Trainers cover pedestrian orientation and use of public transportation.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE AND GROOMING

Explains personal hygiene (i.e. use of deodorant, etc), care of clothing, and medical and health needs related to each client's personal hygiene and grooming. After needs are assessed in this area, instruction is tailored for each client.

## PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING

Covers safety issues around the house as well as in the community. Special attention is placed on the prevention of victimization—for sexual and other types of abuse, such as learning how to cope with strangers and others who ask for money or unreasonable favors.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Clients learn about personal hygiene, nutrition, and the human body. As part of health awareness, clients learn exercises for staying physically fit.

## PRE-VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Clients gain confidence in areas such as money management, pay check/source of income, banking, taxes,

math skills training, work attitudes, job preparation, job interviewing, and keeping a job. These skills are important for success in the community and for stability.

## SEXUAL AWARENESS TRAINING/INSTRUCTION

Clients focus on all aspects of sexuality, including but not limited to appropriate social behaviors, public versus private behavior, and sexually transmitted diseases.

## SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

HDS offers clients opportunities to participate in life situations such as parties, movies, and basketball games, to help clients adapt and function socially at an optimal level in the community. Etiquette and manners are emphasized as well as social awareness, appropriate social skills, and tools for effective interpersonal relationships.

## UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community trips and classroom group activities focus on increasing each client's knowledge and understanding of where to turn in need. Examples: how and when to access the police, hospital, poison control center, grocery store, movie theater, and bank, among others.

## LIVE UNITED

Supported in part by the United Way—HDS  
Donation Code: 90

The Center for Hearing & Deaf Services, Inc. does not discriminate in its admission or employment policies on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

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