



deafHOOD
INSTITUTE

MUSEUM
OF DEAF
HISTORY, ARTS & CULTURE®

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

*Where Deaf history lives,
where Deaf future begins.*

@TheDeafMuseum



HELLO

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Champions of MDHAC,

In 2025, the Museum of Deaf History, Arts & Culture ♦ Deafhood Institute (MDHAC) continued to grow as a Deaf-centered home for history, creativity, and community. Through Deafhood Institute classes and workshops, Deaf-guided museum tours, Hands-On immersive activities, and a variety of cultural events, MDHAC created meaningful opportunities for learning, connection, and Deaf pride.

Among those efforts, we are proud to have launched a grant-supported program highlighting *Hand Talk*, a Native sign language used for generations by Indigenous communities across North America. We are privileged and humbled to have hosted a month-long exhibition honoring the life and work of Charles “Chuck” Baird, a renowned Deaf artist of Kansas. In addition, we are thrilled to have been selected to present at the American Alliance of Museums’ annual conference, a globally respected convening for museum professionals, which positioned our work on a national stage and recognized our museum as a leader in Deaf history and culture.

Like many museums and cultural institutions across the country, we navigated a year of change and uncertainty that called for thoughtfulness, resilience, and careful stewardship. Even in that climate, your support made it possible for us to continue uplifting Deaf history, celebrating Deaf culture, and creating space for dialogue, discovery, and belonging. As we look ahead, we invite you to continue standing alongside MDHAC by becoming or renewing as a member, making a gift, participating in our programs, and maintaining your presence in our community.

Thank you for believing in MDHAC and helping to build a future rooted in Deaf pride, preservation, and possibility.

With heartfelt thanks,



Wendy Koch
President, MDHAC Board



Chriz Dally
Executive Director, MDHAC

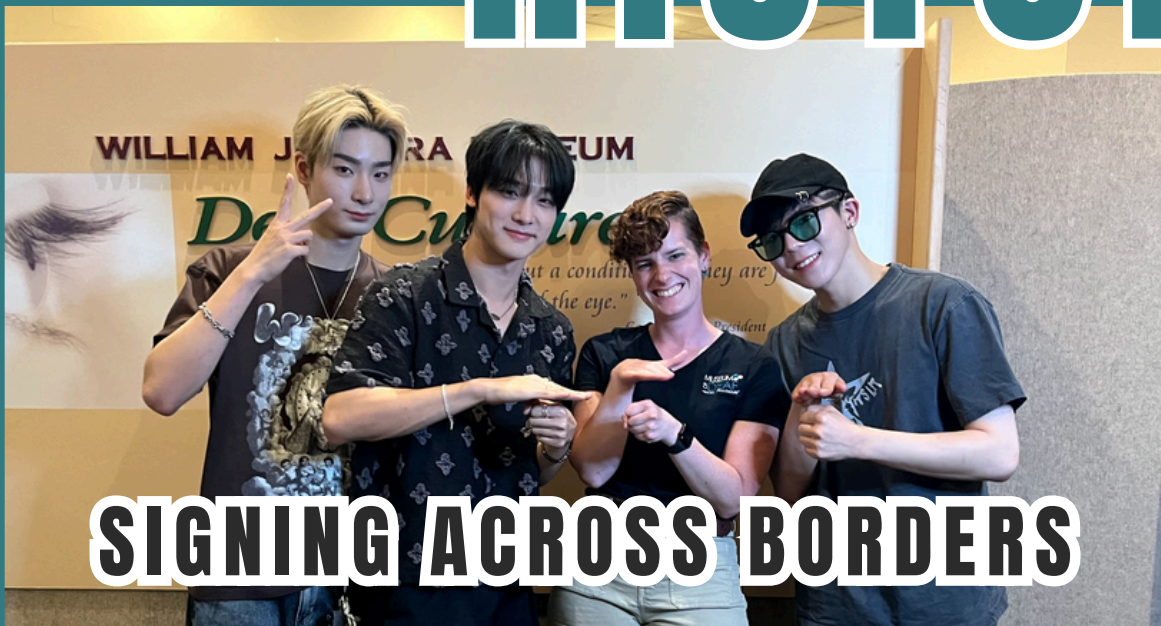


AT A GLANCE

- HISTORY
- ART
- CULTURE

MUSEUM VISITORS: 2,228
WEBSITE REACH: 28,923

HISTORY



SIGNING ACROSS BORDERS

Big Ocean, a K-pop group from Seoul, South Korea, whose members are Deaf, visited MDHAC for a docent-led tour with Lilly Heller as their guide. The group was accompanied by a Korean-language translator, creating a unique and memorable experience for both the visitors and the Museum's docent team.

DEAF SENIORS OF AMERICA



TESTIMONIAL

"Visited the museum 2nd time, always in awe of what it tries to share with the world about Deaf people and culture, heritage, etc." – Visitor from DSA Conference

MDHAC had a busy and meaningful week during the Deaf Seniors of America Conference in Kansas City. On August 1–2, two large groups from DSA visited the Museum through two Deaf-guided Docent Tours with Chriz Dally and Daryl Luton. Many also visited the Museum on their own time. Chriz Dally also presented a workshop, "Deafhood & Deaf Gain: Honoring Our Legacy, Building Our Future," which drew approximately 50 attendees.

JOEL BARISH SHINES A LIGHT ON MDHAC



MDHAC was featured in a video by Joel Barish of DeafNation, highlighting the Museum's role in preserving Deaf stories and celebrating Deaf culture. During his visit to Olathe, Kansas, Joel spoke with Executive Director Chriz Dally about MDHAC's mission and the importance of protecting Deaf history for future generations. MDHAC is grateful to Joel Barish, DeafNation, and Sorenson for helping share the Museum's story with a wider audience.

WE'RE ON DEAFNATION!

[Watch video on
Facebook.](#)



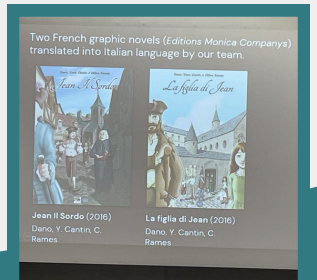
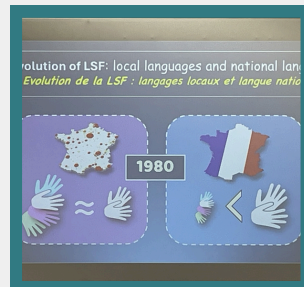
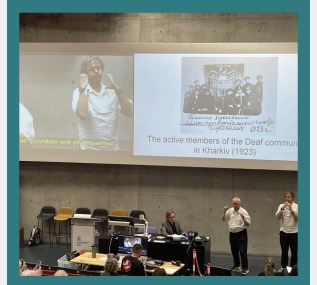
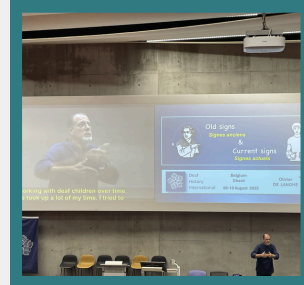
DEAF HISTORY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Chriz Dally attended the Deaf History International Conference in Belgium, where scholars, historians, artists, and community members gathered to celebrate, preserve, and document Deaf history from around the world. The conference provided meaningful opportunities for learning, connection, and dialogue while strengthening MDHAC's engagement with the global Deaf history community.



2025 BELGIUM

During the trip, a small artifact of Abbé de l'Épée was purchased for our archives. A few highlights included connecting with Christophe Taveirne, Deaf owner of Soepbar Sordo, the first Deaf-owned restaurant in Belgium, and John Hay, Scottish Deaf historian, respected British Deaf Studies lecturer, and former president of Deaf History International. MDHAC hopes to attend the next Deaf History International Conference in Japan in 2027.



Abbé de l'Épée



Christophe Taveirne



Soepbar Sordo

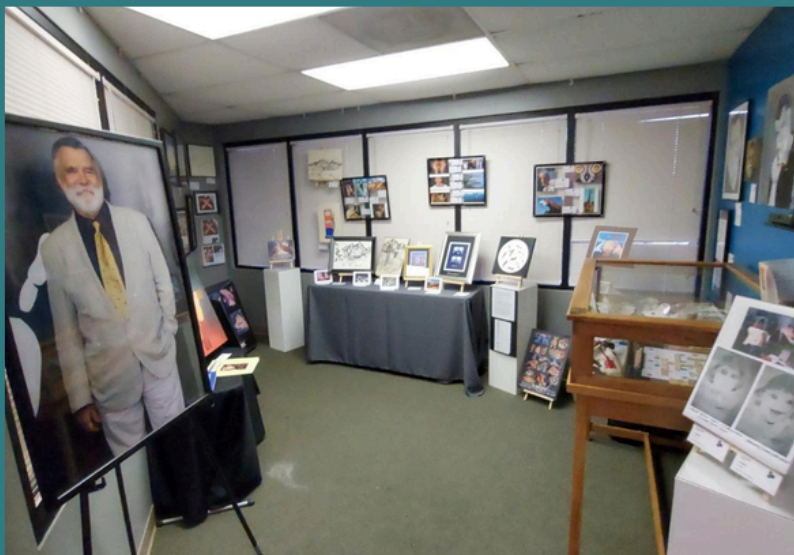


John Hay

ART

CHUCK BAIRD

MDHAC hosted a wonderful event celebrating the life and legacy of Chuck Baird. The Museum continued honoring his contributions throughout the month with a small gallery display, inviting visitors to reflect on and enjoy his lasting impact on Deaf art and culture.



TESTIMONIAL

"This museum offers an excellent array of Deaf history, Deaf arts, and Deaf culture with most of Deaf staff with the use of American Sign Language. Most of cultural history is explained stories dated in Ancient Greece to the modern date. DeVla led by Chuck Baird was so inspiring and well-matched with the Deaf thoughts. It was full of interest to snoop around the museum. Thank you for enlightening us! "

- Gregory Desrosiers

TESTIMONIAL

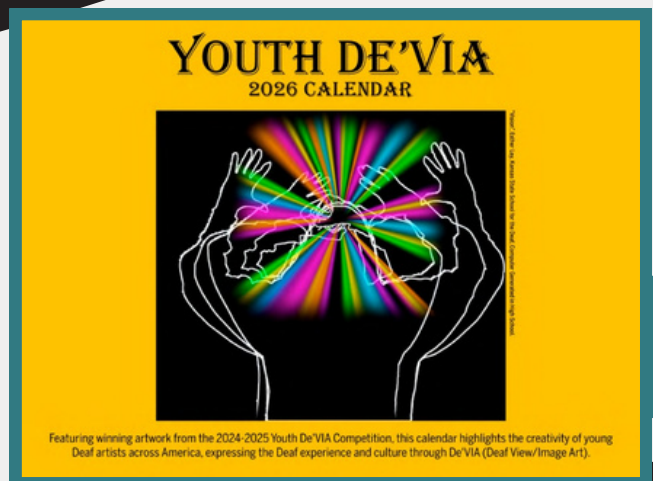
“Nice to learn about improvements in education for those with this 'hidden' challenge. The spotlight on various Deaf artists showcased their amazing talents.” – Donna Reeder



The 2024–2025 Youth De'VIA Competition, hosted by the Kansas School for the Deaf and MDHAC, welcomed 767 artwork submissions from young Deaf artists representing 15 schools across the United States. Through their artwork, students expressed Deaf experiences, language, history, arts, and culture. Winners received certificates of recognition and gifts, and selected artwork was displayed in MDHAC's Chuck Baird Art Gallery.

YOUTH DE'VIA

MDHAC also created a Youth De'VIA Calendar featuring artwork by student artists from various schools. The calendar highlights the creativity of young Deaf artists and extends the impact of the Youth De'VIA Competition beyond the gallery.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO SUSAN DUPOR

MDHAC extends its heartfelt thanks to Susan Dupor for generously allowing us to showcase her DeVIA artwork and incredible artistic skill. Her work, grounded in Deaf experience, language, history, and culture, offers our visitors a powerful and visually compelling way to better understand Deaf lives.

We are deeply grateful to Susan for sharing her art with our community and for enriching our galleries with such meaningful and thought provoking pieces. Her contribution strengthens our mission to honor and uplift Deaf artists and Deaf culture.

thank you

TESTIMONIAL

"I stopped in front of 'Family Dog' and couldn't walk away right away. It made me think about what it must feel like to grow up in a family where you can't fully communicate. I've never experienced that myself, but the painting helped me understand it in a way I hadn't before. It stayed with me long after I left." - Anonymous



PURPLE THAT TAMI

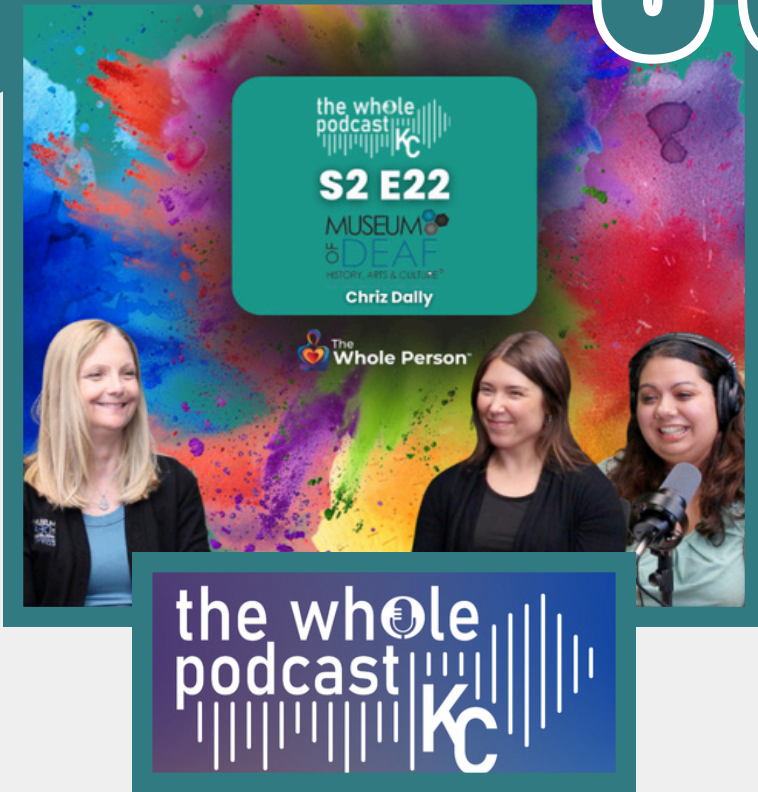
MDHAC Board member Suzanne Dennis, along with co-hosts Lisa Jacobs and Linda Lytle, recently hosted a "Sip and Paint" fundraiser in Ocean View, Delaware. Tammy Waddle of Purple That Tami served as the instructor and led a fun, creative experience enjoyed by all. Proceeds from the event will support the Museum's Youth De'VIA Annual Art Competition.



CULTURE

ADVANCING DEAF CULTURE AND ACCESS

Chriz Dally was featured for her leadership in Deaf culture, accessibility, and education. She shared insights on building cultural understanding, improving access for the Deaf community, and creating meaningful change through her work with the Museum of Deaf History, Arts & Culture and the Deafhood Institute.



[Watch on YouTube.](#)
[Captions Available.](#)

HANDS-ON IMMERSIVE ACTIVITY

MDHAC welcomed 47 elementary students and six staff members from Bonner Springs Elementary School for a Hands-On Workshop with Sally Luton, Chuck Theel and Lorrie Shank. Students enjoyed an engaging visit and had a wonderful time learning new signs while exploring Deaf culture and communication.

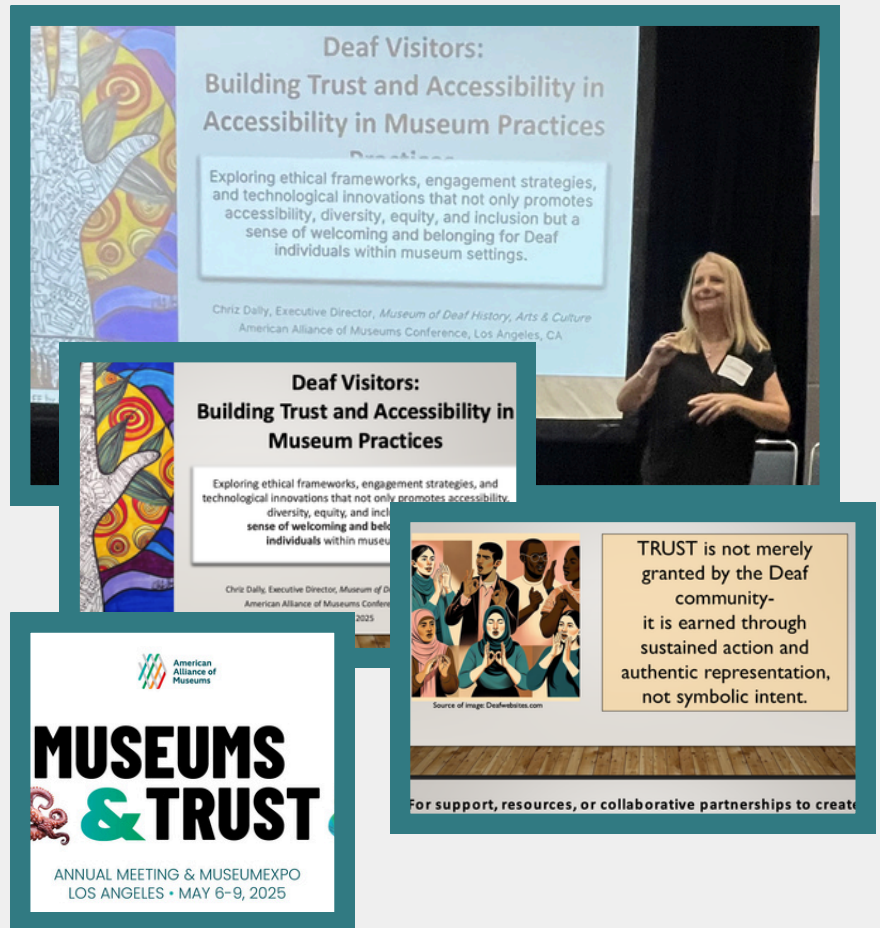


HANDS-ON EVENTS - 12

HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS - 287

AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

Chriz Dally engaged with the national museum field through the American Alliance of Museums, including conversations around community engagement, trust, access, and the role of museums in serving the public. Her participation helped bring Deaf-centered perspectives into broader museum discussions and strengthened MDHAC's connection with museum professionals across the country.

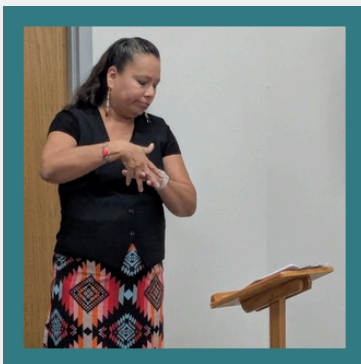


BOOTHS ON THE ROAD

MDHAC hosted information booths at Kansas Day Celebration, KCDHH Deaf/Hard of Hearing Day at the Capitol, Deaf Education Symposium, City of Olathe Sip & Shop, Deaf Seniors of America Conference, Black Deaf Advocates Conference, Deaf Cultural Day at NAMA, KSD Parent Registration, and MCDHH Interpreter Conference.



DEAF CULTURAL SERIES ICE CREAM SOCIAL KICKOFF



MDHAC's Ice Cream Social Kick-Off before Deaf Culture Day was a warm event at MDHAC, featuring guest speakers Hallie Zimmerman and Noah Buchholz, who shared inspiring stories about their journeys and experiences. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the evening meaningful and memorable.

CULTURAL EVENTS: 17
CULTURAL SERIES PARTICIPANTS: 5,370

DEAF CULTURE DAY

MDHAC participated as a partner, alongside *Kansas School for the Deaf* and *WholePerson*, in the Deaf Cultural Festival (now Deaf Culture Day) at the *Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art* since 2015 in downtown Kansas City. 2025 welcomed a record-breaking 3,260 attendees! The event filled the halls with energy, joy, and a strong sense of community. MDHAC was pleased to connect with visitors at its booth and share more about our work with visitors.

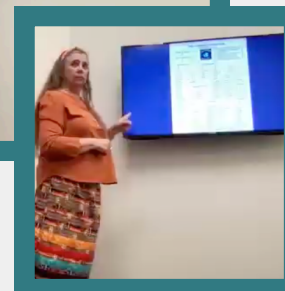
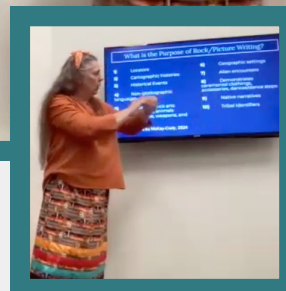
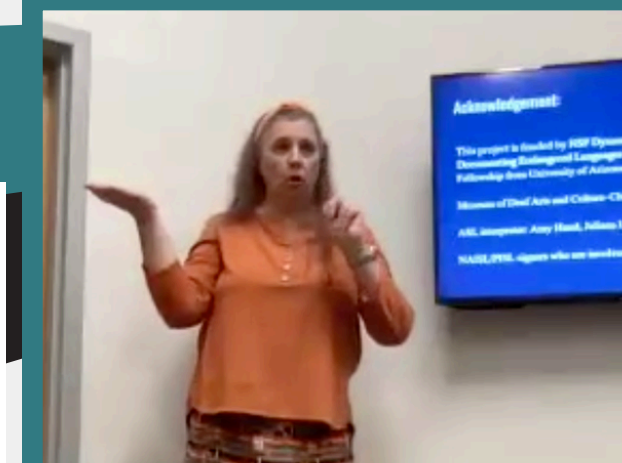
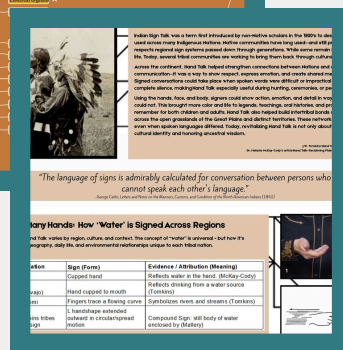
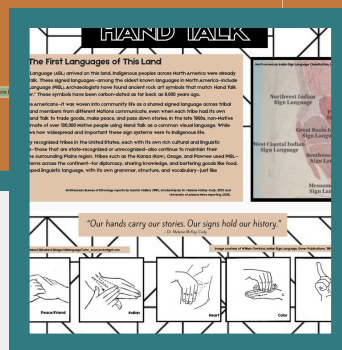
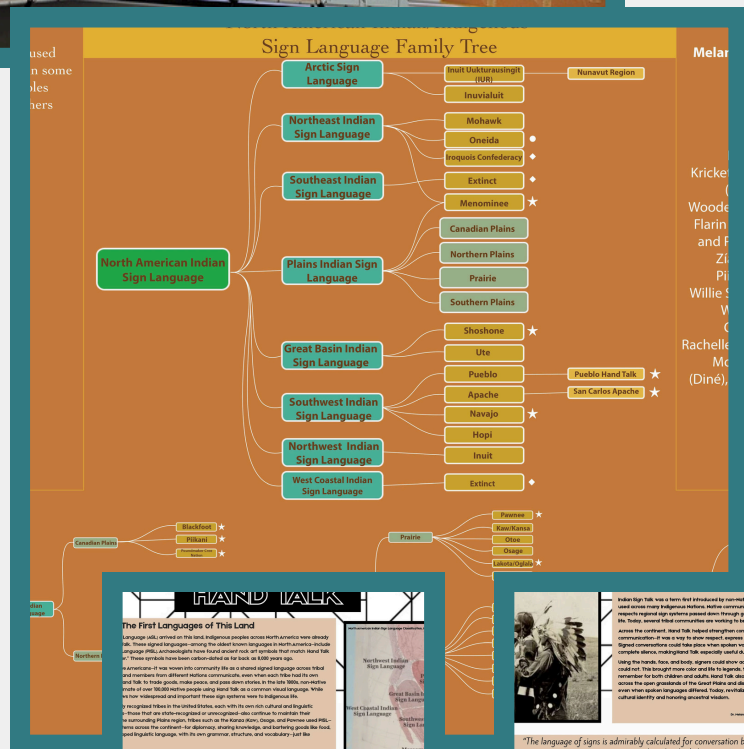


HAND TALK EXHIBITION

MDHAC presented HAND TALK, a special exhibition exploring the deep history, cultural richness, and visual beauty of North American Indigenous Sign Languages. Held September 17 through October 18, 2025, the exhibition invited visitors to experience the legacy of Hand Talk through an engaging and interactive display. Free and open to the public, the exhibition offered an opportunity to learn more about these powerful visual languages and their continued cultural significance.

DR. MELANIE MCKAY-CODY

MDHAC welcomed Dr. Melanie McKay-Cody, a leading advocate for the preservation and revitalization of North American Indigenous Sign Languages, including Plains Indian Sign Language (PISL). Her presentation explored the deep history, regional diversity, and cultural significance of these powerful visual languages, often known as Hand Talk. Attendees gained a greater understanding of how Indigenous Sign Languages have connected communities across generations and why continued preservation efforts are essential today.





2025 **THIRD** **5K** **ASL** **FOR ALL!** SHARED SIGNING COMMUNITY

MDHAC and Kansas School for the Deaf Endowment hosted its Third Annual ASL for ALL 5K on September 27, 2025, at Frontier Park in Olathe, Kansas. The event welcomed runners, walkers, rollers, families, and community supporters for a morning of movement, connection, and celebration of American Sign Language. Designed to help foster Olathe as a "Shared Signing Community," the ASL for ALL 5K brought together Deaf and non-Deaf participants in support of greater access, communication, and community belonging.

The next ASL for ALL 5K has been announced for September 26, 2026, as MDHAC and Kansas School for the Deaf Endowment continues this growing community tradition.

421 RUNNERS

DEAFHOOD INSTITUTE: LEARNING & PRACTICE

Amid a year of turbulence, MDHAC continued its Deafhood Institute programming, including Deafhood presentations, educational outreach, and community engagement, with care and resilience. In that climate, this work remained an important way to foster dialogue, encourage learning, and maintain a sense of connection and belonging within and beyond the Deaf community.

Marvin Miller, Deafhood facilitator, presents at the Louisiana Association of the Deaf conference in Baton Rouge, encouraging attendees to look deeper at Deaf identity, shared history, and the power of Deaf-centered perspectives.



TESTIMONIALS

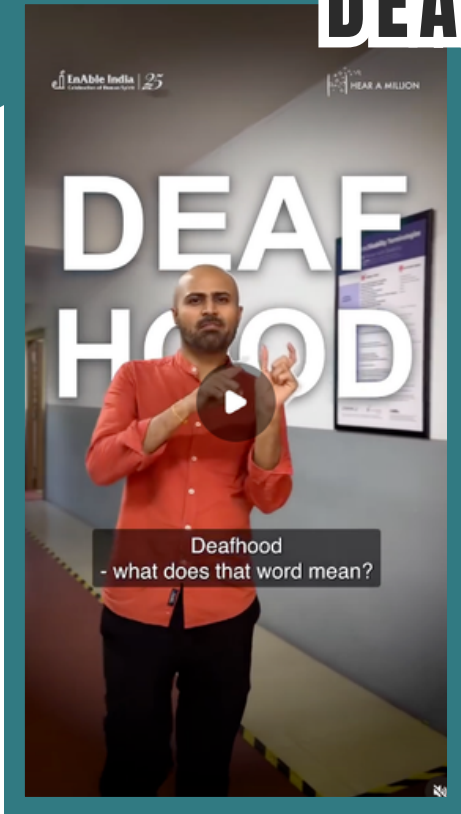
"Thank you for the ever so enlightening and eye-opening learning experience. It will serve me well as a recently Certified Deaf Mentor and for my work with the DHH department at a Toronto high school. I look forward to seeing you again for Deafhood 201 in October!"~ a Deafhood 101 participant

"I simply love watching Marvin interact with the students and this time around with faculty and staff as well... I love to see the eyes light up and the expressions on people's faces as he helps to facilitate their discovery, rediscovery, learning, relearning AND unlearning of so much information be it historical.. social... cultural... political.. ecological and so forth!"- Gallaudet University Program Coordinator



Dr. Jenny Gough, Deafhood facilitator presents at the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreter Conference in St. Louis, encouraging interpreters to critically examine power dynamics in their work and understand the impact of authentic Deaf representation in decision-making spaces.

DEAFHOOD ACROSS BORDERS



This short Instagram reel, created by Enable India, offers a glimpse into how Deafhood learning is inspiring Deaf communities and allies beyond U.S. borders. It highlights the impact of our shared work in affirming Deaf identity, challenging audism, and nurturing pride and possibility. Check out the snapshots from Marvin's Deafhood training featured in the reel to see this work in action.

[Watch on Instagram.](#)
[Captions Available.](#)



YOUTH CURRICULUM

Deafhood Institute's Youth Curriculum Team gathered in Olathe for a third summer to continue developing the Deafhood Youth Curriculum, with a strong focus on filming. Youth Curriculum Coordinator Joyce Brubaker led production and direction with Marvin Miller, alongside important contributions from MeLisa Dennis, Marie Qualls, and Cameron Symansky. Joyce and Marvin will begin testing the curriculum at two schools as work continues toward a final draft.



LEARNING TOGETHER: ALLIES IN DEAFHOOD



CEUflix

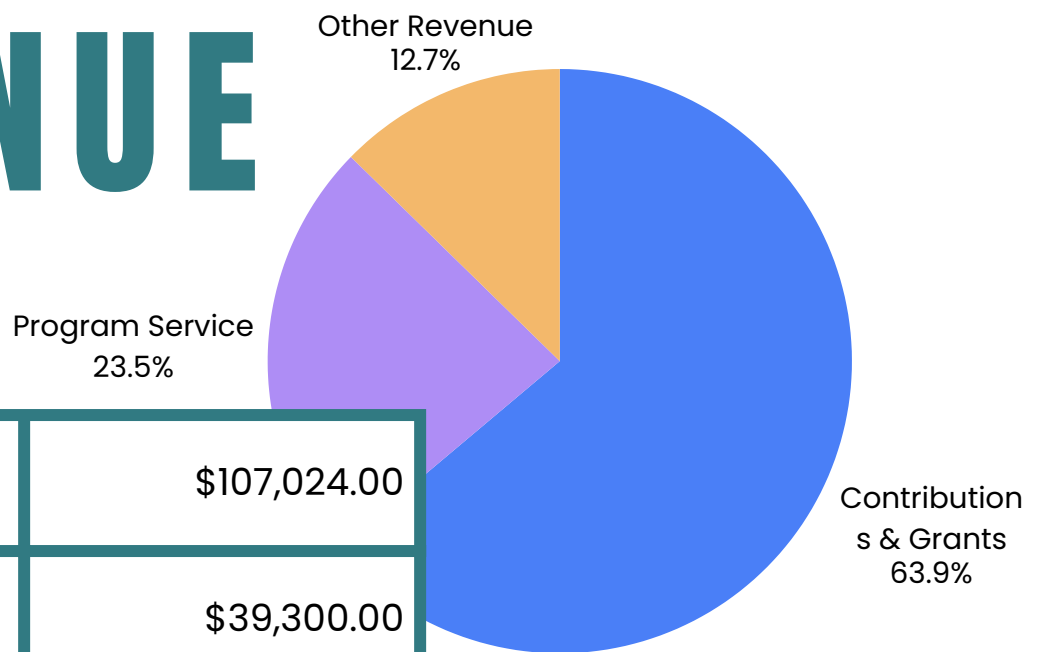
CEUFlix produced a video that included a training with Dr. Jenny Gough on *Allies in Deafhood* introducing participants to the concept of Deafhood. This collaboration helped expand access to Deafhood education and supported continued learning around Deaf identity, culture, language, and community-centered perspectives.



**DEAFHOOD INSTITUTE
EVENTS: 28
PARTICIPANTS: 1,163**

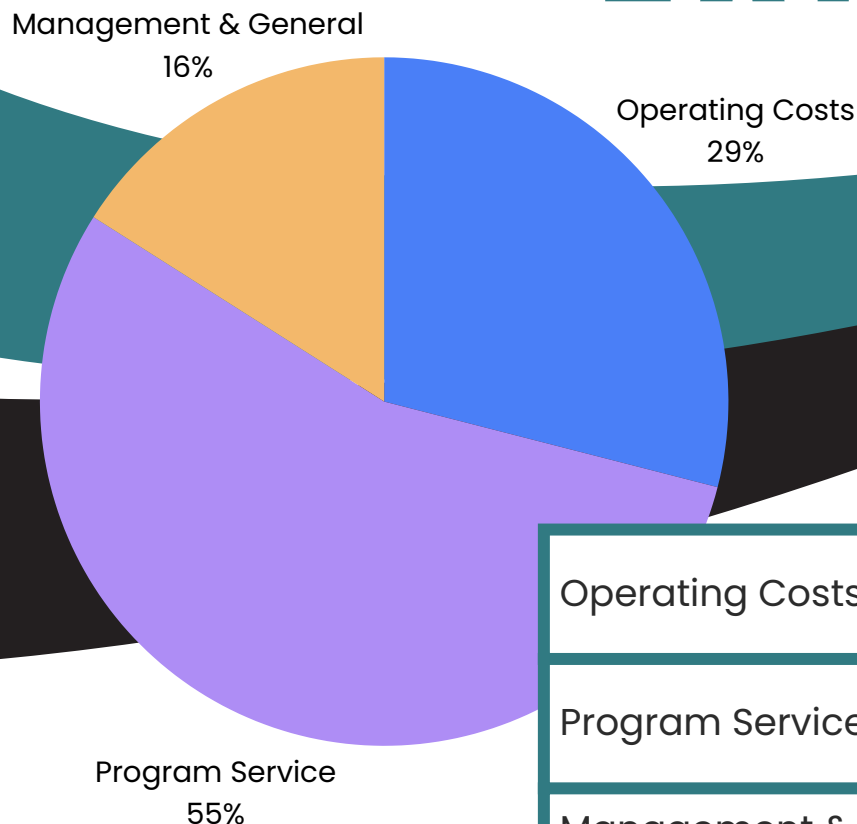
Deafhood Institute is a program of the Museum of Deaf History, Arts & Culture Inc. To learn more about Deafhood Institute visit deafhood.org.

REVENUE



Contributions & Grants	\$107,024.00
Program Service Revenue	\$39,300.00
Other Revenue	\$21,250.00

EXPENSES



Operating Costs	\$46,967.00
Program Service	\$91,019.00
Management & General Expenses	\$26,195.00

TESTIMONIALS

"Thank you very much for sharing with us. I personally wished our time together could've been longer. I find sign language fascinating and I love learning more words and phrases. I know my group had a great time. I appreciate all of the volunteers and docents." – Siobhan DeFeo

"I just wanted to take a moment to say thank you for the tour that you gave to me at the museum last Thursday afternoon. I really loved meeting you, learning about the Deaf culture, and relearning some facts and signs. I was amazed at how much I still remember from 4 years of ASL so many years ago. I can confidently say that I understand at least 90% of our conversation, if not more. Thank you for taking your signing slow for me and being patient with me. That was seriously such a great tour. I learned a lot. I'm inspired to pick ASL back up and see where it can take me in the future. I look forward to supporting the museum and the Deaf community here in Johnson County. Thank you!" – Elizabeth Holschuh

"Back from a road trip, ended up staying for 3 hours. The museum looks small from the outside, but there is so much on the inside. Incredible art, so much history of the local Deaf school, and history of the broader Deaf community. Also, I appreciate how the museum centers Deaf folks by having them on staff – communicating with them at the front desk was lovely and gave me a glimpse into what it's like to not be able to communicate the same way." – Rayne

The logo for the Deafhood Institute, featuring the word "Deafhood" in a stylized font with a blue and teal wave-like graphic to the left, and the word "INSTITUTE" in a smaller, spaced-out font below it.

The logo for the Museum of Deaf History, Arts & Culture, featuring the words "MUSEUM OF DEAF" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a small graphic of three hexagons to the right of "OF". Below "DEAF" is the tagline "HISTORY, ARTS & CULTURE®".

APPRECIATION



MID-AMERICA
ARTS ALLIANCE

We are deeply grateful to the Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation for investing in the redevelopment of our “Who We Are” exhibition, allowing us to more fully center Deaf lives, language, and culture in our storytelling. We also thank Humanities Kansas for supporting our exploration of Native American history through Hand Talk, also known as Native American Sign Language, honoring the long-standing visual communication traditions that intersect with Deaf experience. And, we deeply appreciate the sustained support from Mid-America Arts Alliance (MAAA) has helped keep our museum, Deafhood Institute and DeVIA art programs thriving, ensuring that Deaf-centered narratives and expressions stay visible.



Chuck Theel and Lilly Heller

VOLUNTEERS: 38
VOLUNTEER HOURS: 1,856

thank you



MDHAC is grateful to the ASL and interpreting students from KU Edwards Campus and St. James Academy who served as volunteer interns. Their time, energy, and willingness to support the Museum contributed to MDHAC’s daily work and community engagement. We appreciate their commitment to learning, service, and Deaf history, art, and culture.

BOARD

HONORING OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

MDHAC extends heartfelt gratitude to Suzanne Dennis and Lorrie Shank for their nine years of dedicated service and commitment to the Museum. Their leadership, support, and passion have helped strengthen MDHAC's mission to preserve and celebrate Deaf history, art, and culture. We are deeply grateful for the time, care, and energy they have given to MDHAC and the community over the years.

**SUZANNE
DENNIS**



**LORRIE
SHANK**



Thank you

2026 INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS

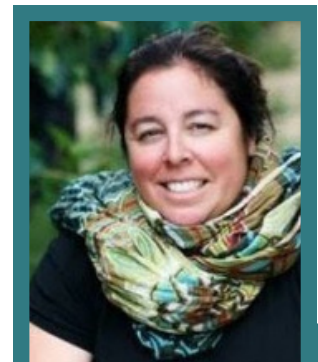
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Olathe Health/University of KS Health System
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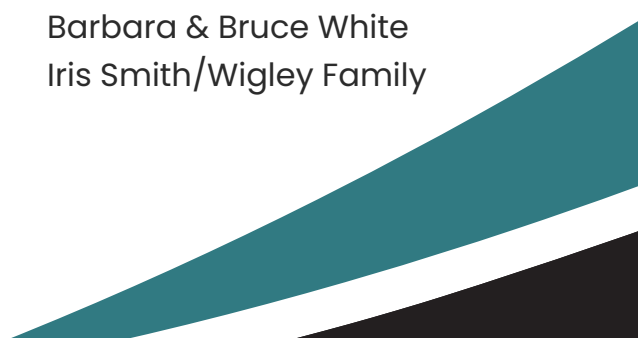
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thank you

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Kansas Commission for Deaf/HoH
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