

SIGN of the TIMES E-NEWS

October 2010

Iowa Department of
Human Rights



Office of Deaf Services

ANNOUNCEMENT

continued

Fair housing laws give Iowa woman a new lease on life By Shawna Anderson

All Iowans deserve safe and accessible housing. We shouldn't have to put up with landlords who fail to accommodate the modest requests of tenants with disabilities. Diane Tekippe, a resident of a small Northeastern Iowa town, called upon the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Fair Housing Act (FHA) to achieve safe and accessible housing. During the autumn months of 2008, Ms. Tekippe dealt with a landlord who ignored maintenance requests, and openly mocked her deafness by shining a flashlight in her face to get her attention. "I would leave notes on his door, letting him know that something needs fixed, and sometimes I visited him at his workplace...I think he assumed that because I'm deaf, I'm also dumb," Diane remarked. After months of requesting repairs on a moldy, leaking window, and a malfunctioning furnace, Diane filed a housing discrimination complaint with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

Under the Fair Housing Act, federal legislation signed into law in 1968, it is illegal for direct providers of housing to discriminate based on disability, race, sex, and other characteristics. Actions such as charging tenants with disabilities for the installation of reasonable accommodations, such as flashing fire alarms for people with deafness, are prohibited under both the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It was through this encounter with unjust treatment that Diane began to learn firsthand the importance of fair housing and disability laws, and why they are imperative for a happy and thriving community.

"These laws are a great thing. With or without disabilities, we should be totally equal under the law," Diane comments. "Fair housing is something we all need to be a part of, not just because it is the law, but because equality is the right thing to do." It was because of these laws, she further asserts, that she was able to come to the Commission with her discrimination complaint, reach a settlement agreement, and move on with her life.

Diane is currently very happy with her life; she uses assistive devices such as a flashing doorbell, a flashing fire alarm, video phone relay system, and an iPhone as a vibrating alarm clock. It's truly a new life for Diane, who now lives in a different apartment complex with a wonderful landlord who doesn't ignore her or mock her disability. "I don't struggle much these days...It's a new life," she says.

Shawna Anderson is an AmeriCorps VISTA at the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Her VISTA project includes raising awareness of disability and housing issues in the state of Iowa, as well as facilitating a statewide ADA recognition campaign. For more information on her project, contact her directly at Shawna.Anderson@iowa.gov, or visit <http://www.adaiowa.webs.com>.

If you suspect that you are a victim of discrimination, call the Iowa Civil Rights Commission toll-free at 1-800-457-4416. Our services are 100% confidential and free.

Visit DSCI website: www.deafservices.iowa.gov Questions or Comments? Email us: dhr.dsci@iowa.gov

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NEW LIBRARY MATERIALS

Our library received six new health related informational DVD's in American Sign Language about the following topics:

1. Be Smart, Beat Skin Cancer
2. Breast Cancer Education, Every Deaf and Hard of Hearing Woman Counts!
3. Colorectal Cancer Take Action!
4. GYN Cancers: Ovarian, Cervical & Uterine
5. Know Your Options Prostate and Testicular Cancer
6. Live Smoke Free

For more information on how to borrow or check out these DVD's, go to our Library webpage:

<http://www.deafservices.iowa.gov/the-library/index.html> or call 515-281-3164, Toll-Free 1-888-221-3724 or email to dhr.dsci@iowa.gov

SUBMITTING ARTICLES, NEWS, RECENT EVENTS, OR INFORMATION

The deadline for submission for the November issue is October 30th. Send e-mail submissions to the editor at dhr.dsci@iowa.gov

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



10/01: 6:00 pm: American Sign Language Social hosted by Deaf Awareness and DMACC located at [ALL-Play](#) 615 - 3rd Street, Des Moines. Games, eat and drink.

10/23: 9:00 am—4:00 pm: Iowa Association of the Deaf Board Meeting hosted by Cedar-loom Association of the Deaf located at North Star Community, 3420 University Ave., Waterloo.

10/30: 8:00 am—Noon: Panel Discussion on Deaf Culture located at DMACC—Des Moines Area Community College, 2006 S. Ankeny Blvd., Building 6 Auditorium, Ankeny. Open to the public, Free admission. Interpreters will be provided. CEU's available for attending this event. For more information, contact James Halischak at jmhalischak@dmacc.edu

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MARY POPPINS

There will be interpreters at the two shows listed below:

Sunday, December 5th, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 9, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Civic Center of Greater Des Moines, Des Moines, Iowa

Ticket Information: <http://www.civiccenter.org/>

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