

The RELAY Connection

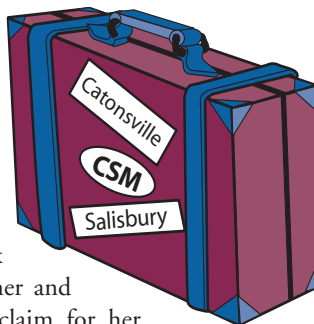
News, information, updates and more from Maryland Relay.

ASL Performer Trix Bruce to Headline Maryland Relay Road Shows

This fall, Maryland Relay will hit the road for a series of informative, entertaining shows you won't want to miss. The first of four "Maryland Relay Road Shows" will take place on Thursday, September 23, 2004, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Community College of Baltimore County's Catonsville campus (formerly Catonsville Community College) in Building Q.

Headlining each show will be deaf entertainer Trix Bruce, an American Sign Language (ASL) performer and workshop presenter who has received national acclaim for her captivating, dramatic storytelling. Entitled "A Night of Improv with Trix: Whose ASL Lines Is It Anyway?" Trix's performances will combine stories, poetry and comedy with multimedia animation, slides, video and sound effects.

And that's not all...the Maryland Relay Road Shows will also feature new technology demonstrations, door prizes and refreshments. The shows are FREE and open to individuals of all ages. The other shows are scheduled for October 8 at the Deaf Independent Living Association (DILA) in Salisbury, November 20 at the College of Southern Maryland and a date to be determined in Frederick (see www.mdrelay.org for details). For more information and directions, visit www.mdrelay.org or call 1-800-552-7724 (voice/TTY).



Big Plans and High Hopes for Maryland's New Department of Disabilities

A major victory of the 2004 Maryland legislative session was the establishment of the Maryland Department of Disabilities (DOD). This newly created department will focus on providing superior educational, employment, health-care, housing and transportation support and services for citizens with disabilities. In the past, these services were handled by different State departments and agencies, causing widespread confusion and disorganization. According to DOD Secretary Kristen Cox, "In response to the pressing need for reform within the disability service delivery system, Gov. Robert Ehrlich has outlined a bold initiative to improve, consolidate and unify disability services...[by] creating the Department of Disabilities Services."

"...Gov. Robert Ehrlich has outlined a bold initiative to improve, consolidate and unify disability services..."

See Big Plans, page 4

Spread the Word About the MAT Program

While many readers already know about the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program, there are still some Marylanders who are unaware this program exists, especially new State residents.

The MAT program enables qualified, disabled Marylanders to receive free assistive telecommunications equipment. The types of equipment available include amplified or VCO telephones (for individuals who are hard of hearing), hands-free telephones (for those with mobility concerns), TTYs (for people who are deaf or speech disabled), picture telephones (for citizens with cognitive impairments) and Braille-type TTYs (for those who are DeafBlind). MAT equipment specialists are available to help approved applicants select the best equipment for their needs, and free equipment training is provided.

If you know of someone who could benefit from the MAT program, tell him or her to call 1-800-552-7724 (voice /TTY) for more information.





The Maryland Relay team: (from left) Patty Bird, MAT coordinator and customer assistance specialist; Nancy Seidman, public relations coordinator; Brenda Kelly-Frey, director of the TAM office; Pam Stewart, contract administrator; and Mike Hollywood, GABTR liaison and outreach specialist.

Deaf Business Owner Brings Unique Perspective to Relay Partner Program



When Louis Schwarz became a Relay Partner, he had some prior experience taking business calls from Relay users—over 25 years, to be exact. So why would Louis bother joining a program designed to familiarize businesses with Relay calling procedures? “With each new Relay Partner, the program’s visibility increases, enticing other businesses to join,” Louis explains. “The more businesses that join, the better we can serve the deaf community, and that’s really the whole point,” he explains.

If there’s one thing Louis knows a lot about, it’s serving the deaf community. In 1983, frustrated by the lack of deaf-oriented financial services, he founded Schwarz Financial Services LLC. Three years later, Louis became the first deaf person in the country to receive all of the following financial credentials: Certified Financial Planner, Registered Financial Consultant and National Association of Securities Dealers General Securities (Series 7) Registered Representative. Today, Schwarz Financial Services is still the nation’s only deaf-owned registered advisory firm, with Louis and his business partner, Simon Roffe, helping members of the deaf

community with everything from retirement and investment planning to mortgage and tax preparation.

The success of Louis’ business venture also has him lending his expertise to several area nonprofit organizations, including the National Association of the Deaf, the American Society of Deaf Children and Dee Cee Eyes. Most recently, he was appointed to the Governor’s Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay as a representative of deaf entrepreneurs and professionals.

“When I first started my business, it was really hard because my communication options were so limited. Now, thanks to the Internet, e-mail, pagers, fax machines, Maryland Relay, Video Relay Service and other communication advances, I’m able to reach so many more people and share my knowledge with them,” Louis says. “That’s one of the main reasons I’m such an advocate of Relay Partner. With just a little time and effort, businesses can access a large community of consumers who could benefit from their services. Believe me, I know...I serve members of that community every day.”

“The more businesses that join, the better we can serve the deaf community, and that’s really the whole point.”

The RELAY Connection

A quarterly publication of the Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM) program in the Maryland Department of Budget & Management.

James C. DiPaula, Jr.,
Secretary

Cecilia Januszkiewicz,
Deputy Secretary

Ellis L. Kitchen,
Chief Information Officer

Nancy Seidman Editor

For questions or comments regarding Maryland Relay, contact:

Brenda Kelly-Frey Director

Pam Stewart Contract Administrator

Nancy Seidman Public Relations Coordinator

Patty Bird MAT Coordinator

Michael Hollywood Customer Service/MAT

Joseph Kolash Account Manager/AT&T

Patty Ferran Account Manager/AT&T

Telecommunications Access of Maryland
301 West Preston Street; Suite 1008 A
Baltimore, MD 21201
1-800-552-7724 V or TTY
410-767-6960 V or TTY
www.mdrelay.org

News from the FCC...

On June 30, 2004, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released the Report and Order, Order for Reconsideration and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to improve relay services, address funding mechanisms for new relay technologies and solicit input from the public.

In this report, the FCC clarified two important issues:

1. Video Relay Services will continue to be reimbursed by the federal government until further notice.
2. The sharing of confidential medical information between a healthcare provider and patient through relay is NOT a violation of Healthcare Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. (See “Relay Users and Healthcare Providers Talk Freely Once Again” on page one for details.)

To read the complete FCC report, visit www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro or www.mdrelay.org. Or, you can contact the FCC directly at 1-888-225-5322 (voice) or 1-888-835-5322 (TTY) to request a copy (ask for information on FCC-04-137).

Maryland Relay Welcomes 23 Relay Partners

Let's give a warm welcome to the newest group of Relay Partners (listed below). To learn more about this beneficial program that educates Maryland businesses and their employees about the proper use of Maryland Relay, or to view a complete list of partners, visit www.mdrelay.org and click on the "Relay Partner" link.

Attorneys

Littlepage & Associates,
Glen Burnie, 410-787-7009

Banks, Loans & Mortgage Services

AccuBanc Mortgage,
Bel Air, 410-515-1238

Corridor Mortgage Group,
Columbia, 410-262-5626

Mortgage Tree Lending,
Bel Air, 410-420-7100

Pinnacle Financial Corporation,
Annapolis, 301-858-6300

Contractors & Home Improvement

H. Payne Incorporated,
Temple Hills, 301-856-2300

N.A.I.L.S.,
Elkridge, 410-852-0465

S&K Roofing, Siding and
Windows, Sykesville,
410-795-4400

Insurance & Financial Planning

AG Harris & Company, Inc.,
Towson, 410-296-9744

Medical Care

Holy Cross Rehabilitation and
Nursing Center, Burtonsville,
301-388-1400

LJ Healthcare Services,
Laurel, 301-776-4500

Miscellaneous

Acme Pet Sitters,
Riva, 410-956-5673

Linda Bradley, Independent Avon
Representative, Baltimore,
410-298-2730

Massage for Health,
Pasadena, 443-623-6258

Real Estate Agents

Coldwell Banker Residential
Brokerage, Annapolis,
410-919-2521

Coldwell Banker Residential
Brokerage, Pasadena,
443-623-6258

Retail

J.J.'s Ultimate Cookie Creations,
Baltimore, 410-984-9495

KaBloom,
Hanover, 443-755-0505

The Paper Shop,
Timonium, 410-252-9375

Rynn's Luggage,
Baltimore, 410-281-1160

State & County Government

Maryland Commission on Human
Relations, Baltimore, 410-767-8569

Wicomico County Department of
Social Services, Salisbury,
410-543-6900

Title & Settlement Services

Renaissance Title, LLC,
Pikesville, 410-258-8896

Maryland Relay to Staff Booths at Many Events This Fall

Maryland Relay is everywhere this fall! In addition to our Road Shows, we'll be staffing informational booths at the events and conferences listed below. These events offer an ideal opportunity to introduce a friend or family member to Maryland Relay and the many services we provide. For more information or if you would like Maryland Relay to participate in your next conference or expo, please call 1-800-552-7724 (voice/TTY) or e-mail moreinfo@mdrelay.org.

Anne Arundel County Disability Expo

September 14, 2004
5 – 8 p.m.
Arundel Mills Mall, Hanover

ACT Sign-A-Thon

October 10, 2004
1 – 5 p.m.
Owings Mills Mall

Baltimore County Senior Expo

October 13 – 14, 2004
Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Thursday: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Maryland State Fairgrounds,
Timonium

Howard County 50+ Expo

October 15, 2004
Time TBD
Wilde Lake High School, Columbia

Prince George's County Disability Expo

October 16, 2004
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Harriet Hunter Building,
Camp Springs

Deaf Awareness Day

October 16, 2004
DILA, Salisbury

Disability Awareness Expo

October 24, 2004
1 – 4 p.m.
Jewish Community Center, Owings Mills

Johns Hopkins Hospital Parkinson's Disease Symposium

October 30, 2004
Time TBD
BWI Marriott, Linthicum Heights

Governor's Conference on Vital Aging

November 5, 2004
8:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.
University of Maryland University
College, Adelphi

Maryland Rehabilitation Conference

November 4 – 5, 2004
8 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Workforce Technology Center,
Baltimore

Baltimore County Caregivers Conference

November 6, 2004
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Liberty Senior Center,
Randallstown

“Maryland Relay Nights”



Above: Everyone had a terrific time at this summer's "Maryland Relay Nights," hosted by three area baseball stadiums. Pictured above are: (from left) Kary Dyer signing the national anthem at the Delmarva Shorebirds game; Brenda Kelly-Frey, director of the TAM office; and a group of Maryland Relay supporters enjoying the Shorebirds game.

Big Plans, from front page

In Maryland, people with disabilities represent a significant and growing sector of the population. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Report, 17 percent of Marylanders between the ages of 20 and 65, and 39 percent of Maryland citizens over age 65, have a disability. The State currently spends more than \$2.6 billion (or about 12 percent of its total budget) on providing services to people with disabilities.

The official mission of the DOD is to empower people with disabilities in the communities where they live to achieve their personal and professional goals. For more information about the DOD, visit www.mdap.org/oid.html or call 1-800-637-4113 (voice/TTY).

GABTR Representatives

You can contact representatives of the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) at the numbers and e-mail addresses below. They are on this Board to serve the needs of their community and welcome your input.

Mitchell D. Travers, Chair
301-441-2715 (TTY)
mitch.travers@mdrelay.org
Deaf Representative

Louis Schwarz
877-477-3529
louis.schwarz@mdrelay.org
Deaf Representative

Brenda Battat
301-657-2248 (V)
301-657-2249 (TTY)
brenda.battat@mdrelay.org
Senior Citizen Representative

Paula Holbrook
410-740-0039
paula.holbrook@mdrelay.org
Hard-of-Hearing Representative

Patricia Bowman
410-767-5768 (TTY)
patricia.bowman@mdrelay.org
Government Representative

Cynthia Foss
410-764-8070
cynthia.foss@mdrelay.org
Deaf Representative

Rebecca Ladew
410-467-0967 (TTY)
rebecca.ladew@mdrelay.org
Speech-Disabled Representative

Joy Larson
301-588-6545 (TTY)
joy.larson@mdrelay.org
DeafBlind Representative

Susan Miller
410-767-8036 (V)
susan.miller@mdrelay.org
Government Representative

Annette Reichman
202-205-8352 (V)
202-205-9152 (TTY)
annette.reichman@mdrelay.org
Deaf Representative

James A. Stevenson
301-759-2047 (V)
james.stevenson@mdrelay.org
Government Representative

Relay Users and Healthcare Providers Talk Freely Once Again

Recently, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a Public Notice stating that patients can use relay to discuss confidential medical matters with their healthcare provider—without causing their provider to violate the Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Passed in 1996, HIPAA establishes national information security standards for healthcare providers, health plans and employers. These standards are designed to protect the security and privacy of a patient's personal health information. Not long after HIPAA was passed, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) developed the Privacy Rule, which requires a patient's written permission before his or her personal medical information can be shared with another person.

Once this rule was announced, many healthcare providers refused to discuss confidential medical information over the phone with any patient who called them

through relay. These providers worried that talking to a patient through a relay operator about his or her personal health information, without first obtaining written permission from that patient (or having the relay operator sign a "business associate contract" from HIPAA), could be considered a violation of the Privacy Rule. Relay users grew equally concerned that their access to medical information was being compromised.

Upon learning of this dilemma, the Maryland Relay Customer Service Office took action by contacting the legal departments of the FCC and HHS. After some discussion, HHS and the FCC clarified this matter in the FCC's recent Public Notice. Now, relay users can talk freely with their healthcare providers over the phone. If your healthcare provider is reluctant to talk with you via relay, tell him or her about this latest FCC ruling, which can be found on the Maryland Relay Web site, www.mdrelay.org.

"It's Possible" Commercials Honored at Local and National Awards Shows

Maryland Relay's "It's Possible" television commercials have been impressing a new audience lately—awards-show judges. At the 2004 Telly Awards, our "It's Possible" commercial received a Silver Award (the equivalent of first place), and our "It's Possible—Dial 7-1-1" spot was named a finalist. Founded in 1978, the Telly Awards competition honors outstanding local, regional and cable television commercials and programs. The awards committee receives over 10,000 entries annually.

The television commercials were also recognized at the 2004 Public Relations Society of America-Maryland Chapter Awards Ceremony, where they earned second place honors in the "Public Service Announcements" category.



Consumer's Corner

How to Avoid Problems with your Telephone Bill

Here are some tips on how to avoid problems with your telephone bill, courtesy of the National Consumers League (www.natconsumersleague.org):

- Think of your telephone bill the same way that you do your credit card bill or bank statement. Examine it carefully before sending your payment, making sure to check for mysterious charges, services you never agreed to and phone numbers you don't recognize. If you don't understand something, contact your telephone service provider and ask for an explanation.

- Don't accept collect calls from people you don't know.

- To avoid pay-per-call abuses, ask your local phone company to implement a free 900-number block, which will prevent anyone from dialing a 900 number from your home phone.

- Don't make or return calls to phone numbers you don't recognize. Some international numbers look just like domestic numbers; international calls, however, have a much higher per-minute rate. If you are not sure whether a number is international, ask the Relay Operator.

- Consider putting a free "PIC freeze" on your long-distance telephone service. This ensures that your long-distance provider is never changed without your direct permission (most customers with PIC freezes have to give their provider a personal password to make changes). You will need to contact your long-distance and local telephone providers to do this.

Maryland Relay
301 West Preston Street
Suite 1008 A
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

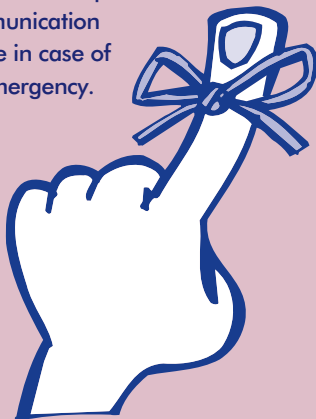
Return Service Requested

Presorted Standard
US Postage
PAID
Permit #6440
Baltimore, MD



IT'S POSSIBLE

When using Relay technologies like VRS and Internet Protocol Relay (IP), remember that computer and Internet connections can shut down unexpectedly. Always keep your TTY nearby to use as a backup communication device in case of an emergency.



MARYLAND RELAY CONTACT NUMBERS

7-1-1 in Maryland	1-877-735-5151 ASCII	1-800-877-1264 Spanish
1-800-201-7165 Voice	1-800-785-5630 Speech-to-Speech (STS)	1-800-552-7724 TAM Office/Customer Service
1-800-735-2258 TTY/HCO/ 900 Pay-Per-Call	1-866-669-0874 Reservation number for Maryland Conference Relay, Voice/TTY	Visit our Web site: www.mdrelay.org
1-888-VCO-WORD (1-888-826-9673) Voice Carry-Over (VCO)	1-866-669-0853 (Voice) 1-866-669-0865 (TTY) 1-866-669-0871 (Fax) AT&T/Maryland Relay In-House Customer Service Numbers	Or send us an e-mail: moreinfo@mdrelay.org <i>(Be sure to include a subject line or your e-mail will be deleted by our virus scanners.)</i>
1-877-258-9854 Two-Line VCO		

Maryland Relay Road Shows

Thursday, September 23, 2004, from 7 to 9 p.m. – at the Community College of Baltimore County's Catonsville campus (formerly Catonsville Community College)

Friday, October 8, 2004, from 7 to 9 p.m. – at DILA in Salisbury

Saturday, November 20, 2004, from 7 to 9 p.m. – at the College of Southern Maryland, La Plata campus

Additional show in Frederick to be announced soon on our Web site, www.mdrelay.org!