



ALDA NOTE #2

ALDA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The programs of the ALDA Chapters and Groups are quite varied. Indeed, the activities are as diverse as the people themselves, and reflect local interests, values, lifestyles, and resources. For example, a rural ALDA Group might take a trip to the county fair, have a Sunday afternoon pot-luck, or an evening watching a captioned video in someone's home; whereas a metropolitan ALDA Group might visit an art museum, or go to a professional football game or an interpreted theatrical performance. A Chapter located in a city by the sea might enjoy sailing, surfing, or a picnic at the beach; whereas a Chapter nestled in the mountains might prefer to go hiking, horseback riding, or have dinner at a ski chalet. Just as ALDA is very heterogeneous with members coming from different racial, ethnic, geographic, economic, occupational, cultural, religious, linguistic, and age groupings, so too ALDA Chapters and Groups manifest these many differences. This diversity of ALDA programs is indeed one of the great strengths of ALDA, reflecting ALDA's greatest resource - its members!

Common Program Areas and Sample Activities

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES ... ALDA provides people with hearing loss with a much-needed social outlet, an opportunity for relaxation, fun, and fellowship with others who also share the common experience of becoming late-deaf. Successful social activities vary immensely from group to group, depending on the preferences of the members. While the "house party" is probably the most common ALDA social event, some examples of other social activities that many ALDANS find enjoyable include the following:

- captioned movies (either in homes or theaters), interpreted plays, a ballet, dinner theater
- luncheons, pot-lucks, picnics, barbecues, ethnic restaurant dining, cook-outs, smorgasbord
- watching football / baseball / softball / basketball / hockey games, as well as other sporting events
- holiday parties such as Christmas, Halloween, New Year's, ALDA's Birthday, 4th of July, Memorial Day
- fairs, rodeos, circuses, zoos, carnivals, theme parks, river/lake/ocean cruises,
- stock-car / midget / dragster / motorcycle / moto-cross / bicycle / horse / dog / human races
- museums, planetariums, aquariums, botanical gardens, state/national parks, national forests, historic sites
- roller / ice skating, billiards, bowling, hikes, bicycle / horseback / hayrack rides, snow skiing
- pool / beach parties, sailing, surfing, swimming, water skiing, canoeing, fishing, boating
- card parties, chess / checker tournaments, charades, board games, scrabble
- boat / sport / home / dog / flower / fireworks / laser / antique-car / horse shows

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA... In an effort to provide late-deafened adults with a reliable and continual source of information concerning the challenges presented by hearing loss, ALDA maintains a website (www.alda.org) that features a variety of news and resources of potential interest to late-deafened adults. ALDA also distributes information on its

Facebook and Twitter pages. Similarly, several ALDA Chapters and Groups maintain their own websites and social media pages.

SUPPORTIVE OUTREACH...A goal of ALDA is to identify and contact as many people with hearing loss as possible. Reaching out to newly deafened adults is an especially important activity, as this may be their time of greatest need. Outreach can be accomplished through contacts with deaf service providers, agencies, and professionals who are likely to encounter late-deafened adults, such as the following:

- hospitals, clinics, hearing aid dispensers, veterans administration hospitals
- otologists, neurotologists, audiologists, otorhinolaryngologists, family practitioners
- rehabilitation / vocational / family counselors, social workers, sign language instructors
- churches, colleges, universities, local deaf groups, senior citizen / independent living centers

ADVOCACY/REPRESENTATION... One of the goals of ALDA is to represent and advocate on behalf of late-deafened adults before both public and private organizations on all matters pertaining to the problems created by hearing loss. Local ALDA advocacy and representational efforts may involve activities such as:

- get the local news real-time captioned by all TV stations
- get real-time captioning services provided on the same basis and at the same cost as sign language interpreters
- get city council meetings captioned
- get local retail merchants to install cash registers that have the amount of the sale clearly visible to the consumer
- get all local government units and emergency service providers (police, fire, ambulance) to become TTY accessible and knowledgeable about receiving relay calls, and through ongoing monitoring make sure they remain accessible

EDUCATION/CONSULTATION... The development of ALDA has led to greater insight into and understanding of late-deafness among the professional

community and the general public. Still, we must always be looking for opportunities to provide information and consultation to late-deafened adults, their families and friends, human service providers, governmental agencies, the private corporate sector, and the general public related to the problems of people with hearing loss. Such opportunities might include:

- submitting feature stories to your local newspaper, and submitting articles to national deaf media
- giving presentations at meetings of local groups, service providers, and professional organizations
- sharing information with other persons with hearing loss, their families and friends
- appearing before government agencies, committees, and commissions to discuss the needs of persons with hearing loss
- appearing on radio and TV shows to discuss the issues of late-deafened adults

NEWSLETTER...ALDA publishes a widely acclaimed newsletter called *ALDA News*. A mix of humor, information, and personal sharing, the newsletter has played a key role in ALDA's growth. Similarly, many ALDA Chapters have local newsletters tailored to the specific needs of their members.

COMMUNICATION... In one-on-one situations, ALDAns communicate with each other in a variety of ways, according to the abilities and preferences of the people communicating with each other. Some rely on one of the several systems of sign language, such as Pidgin signed English (PSE) or Signing Exact English (SEE II). Others may utilize cued speech, or they may be effective speech readers. And others may depend on text writing, be that with the aid of laptop computers, tablets, cell phones, or notes written in longhand. The ALDA philosophy is simple: whatever communication mode works best in interpersonal situations is the right one for the people using it. In group situations, the primary concern is that all members of the group be able to follow the discussion. Therefore, some form of text captioning is strongly advocated. ALDA's overriding concern is that all are able to participate in group interactions and no one is left out.