Back in the 1980’s, Deaf people were not allowed to drive an 18 wheeler truck. Society felt it would be very dangerous for a Deaf person to drive a big truck because they cannot hear if there are problems with their trailer, or a danger to other motorists on the road. Hard of hearing truck drivers have to pass hearing tests to be allowed to drive. Brandon Burton, who is Deaf, was one of the few lucky drivers.

Brandon Burton, from Colorado, has been a truck driver for 16 years and is a very popular person on Facebook among Deaf people across America. He has a Facebook page called “Life on the Road With SnowDog”. SnowDog is his nickname, or call name, among truckers. His page already has 4,718 members, including me. He creates vlogs about his day while on the road. He tells members where he is at and where he is going. Often he will share stories about what happened to him while he is on the road. One example he shared recently, was when he showed up at a military base to deliver his load of rubber. He explained that the military security cleaned out his truck, removing utensils and any object that could be used as a weapon of some sort. He had a friend riding with him at the time, and the military made the friend wait at the gate office while Brandon went in to unload. He explained that his truck and trailer were inspected for any explosives or anything that could possibly be hiding underneath. He told the viewers that he was amazed how intense the military security were when he was simply delivering the load to the military base. He learned that this particular base was a base that was making ammunition (or bullets) for the military to use with their weapons. When he has nothing to share, he will put on some music.
Hello! Welcome to the new year! 2016! Wow!! Where did the time go last year? Last month, I celebrated my 7th year anniversary working for MERIL. It has been that long?? I noticed as I get older, the year goes by faster. I don’t know if it’s just me or how we each feel about the speed of time in each year. I remembered when I was a kid, it felt like forever for Christmas to come around, at the end of the year. I was a very busy kid back then but still time did not go by as quickly as it does now. I wonder if children nowadays feel the same as I do now. Or does it all depend on each of our perspective. As quickly as the year goes by, we all need to remember to stop and take the time for yourself, be with someone you love more often, spend some time with your family (whether they know sign language or not), if you don’t have a family, you have a circle of friends who can be your special family. Say something nice to strangers and even enemies, open the door for anyone, smile and say thank you.

I have to make some changes with the Silent Messenger newsletter. Due to a recent budget cut in my department, I have to reduce the cost for the newsletters. Each newsletter averages about 16 to 20 pages, full of articles, pictures, and clip art. It costs a lot of money to print that many pages including color for each newsletter. It is either cutting back on how many pages in a newsletter, with fewer pictures or clip art, or cut back on the distribution dates. I chose to cut back on how often I send a newsletter out. Because one: I always have so much information to share, it’s nearly impossible to cut back on pages! And two: I know how important pictures and clip art are to Deaf readers who cannot read above the 4th grade reading level. Pictures help feed information about the article and help the readers understand. So I decided to change from sending every odd month, to every three months. That means I will be sending out newsletters in January, April, July, and October of this year. I know some of you don’t like getting event information that will happen within three months time that you could easily forget. I don’t like it either but I have no choice. With that said, I will start using e-mails and social media like Facebook to send notifications or reminders out more often. There are three options you can use to get up-to-date information as well as reminders:

~ Sign up for e-mail distribution: email De Linda at Delindab@meril.org
~ Click to join MERIL’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MERIL4U
~ Click to join Cross Roads Deaf Club’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/CROSSROADSDEAFCLUB

Right now, I have approximately 400 individuals who receive the newsletter, hard copy or electronically. If you are one of those who receive a hard copy but want to get the newsletter through your email, please email me and let me know. I would like to cut back on the numbers of hard copies but I know that not all of my readers have access to e-mail and that is fine. I’d prefer to send a hard copy to those who don’t have e-mail, and send the rest through e-mail. Sorry for any inconvenience, but it must be done.

The year 2015 was a very rough year for me, personally. But things have changed for the better now and I am looking forward to living through the year 2016, along with a big bag of Dove dark chocolate in my hand, and see what happiness the year 2016 will give me!

So... I will just sit and enjoy the ride!
Wishing you the best of luck in your 2016!

De Linda
Interpreter's Corner

Bridge Interpreting is now on Facebook. Please like us and follow our page, www.facebook.com/BridgeInterpreting!
The 2016 Missouri Interpreter's Conference will be held in Columbia October 7th-9th.
Happy New Year from our interpreting team!

Workshop Updates:

Saturday, February 20th, 2016 10:00 am - 11:00 am - Tax Tips for Terps, Judy Hausman, Location: The Whole Person

POSTPONED!! Saturday, April 16th, 2016 8:00 am - 6:00 pm - Mental Health First Aid, De Linda Kelly, Location: Northland Deaf Church. Watch our website for rescheduling information! www.meril.org/services/interpreters/forinterpreters

Interpreting Services Team
Sarah, Lyndsey, Harrison, Chris K, April, Chris B, and Michelle

SAVE THE DATE!

better living 4U

Saturday, April 30th, 2016
8:00 am - 12:00 pm
St. Joseph Civic Arena
https://meril.org/better-living-4U

Better Living 4U is the area’s premier event, showcasing the region’s top organizations representing all aspects of well-being including physical, mental, financial, social and much more.

Our goal is to provide the public with resources, tools, and knowledge, free of charge, that can help people live life fully.

Would you like to provide a presentation or demonstration to the public about how your organization or business can enhance living? Can you provide a health screening that will improve lives?

Opportunities to present and offer screenings are available, and are a great way to connect with the community. If you are interested, please contact Renita Neville (renitan@meril.org or 816.279.8558 ext. 1072).
On Dec. 4th of 2015, there were many hearing people and hundreds of thousands (maybe a million) Deaf people glued to the CW channel on TV, watching the grand finale of America’s Next Top Model. Why? To see if Nyle DiMarco, the first Deaf model contestant would win the competition.

When Tyra Banks announced that Nyle was the winner, social media for the Deaf community blew up with millions of texts and/or vlogs of congratulations, and pictures/videos of Deaf people jumping up and down with joy! Social media for the Hearing community blew up as well! People from all over were sending him congratulations too.

Nyle broke the decades-old stigma of modeling. He actually proved that you don’t have to be 100% perfect to become a model. He has a disability and endured a lot of struggles and barriers, and yet he became America’s Next (and the last) Top Model!! He beat the runner up who happened to be a beauty pageant contestant and a daughter of Ghana Diplomats. Diplomats are people who represent a country and travel to other countries to speak with people there, making peace, and if there are issues with a tourist (who is from the country they represent), the diplomats would assist with communication between the troubled tourist, the country’s officials, and the country where the tourist is from.

Now Nyle has been traveling to several countries, modeling for several magazines. Pretty soon, we will begin to see Nyle in many magazines, a dream of his. What an inspiration! What’s your dream?
2015....err...2016. Wait... 2016?  Well, Happy New Year! I hope that 2015 was a fantastic year for you all!

Time to make my New Year' Resolution for 2016. What is a New Year Resolution? It means that you make a promise to yourself to start doing something good or stop doing something bad. I recently looked through my photo albums (both in my photo albums and on my computer) and I realized that I have not taken many photos in 2015 as I have done in previous years. I thought I'd make 2016 a year of reflection in photos whether the photos are taken through Instagram, my camera, or my phone.

Do you have a New Year's Resolution for 2016? If yes, I want to hear all about it!

CRAIG

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News From Craig’s Ballpark

Silent Lunch Social

12:00 – 1:00 PM every Tuesday

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Come meet with other Deaf, Deafblind, hard of hearing, & hearing signers!
CHURCHES FOR THE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, & DEAFBLIND IN NORTHWEST MO:

Deaf Churches

Northland Deaf Church
101 NE 70th Terrace, Gladstone, MO
www.northlanddeafchurch.org
Deafblind service at 9:30 AM
Main service at 11 AM
Wednesday service at 7 PM

Deaf International Community Church
Center of Grace
520 S. Harrison Street, Olathe, KS
www.deafinternational.org
Sundays at 10:00 PM
Bible Study Wednesdays at 6:30 PM

Deaf Liberty Baptist Church
7910 W. 75th Street, Overland Park, KS
www.deaflibertybaptist.org
Sunday School at 9:30 AM
Worship at 10:45 AM
Wednesday service at 7 PM
Services are in ASL and voice interpreted

Overland Park Church of Christ
1300 W. 119th Street, Overland Park, KS
www.deafchristianfoundation.org/deafministry
Hearing worship at 8:15 AM (interpreted)
Sunday School at 9:45 AM
Deaf Worship at 10:45 AM
Wednesday Bible Study at 7 PM

Churches Using Interpreters

Frederick Boulevard Baptist Church
5502 Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph, MO
www.frederickboulevard.com
Sunday School at 9 AM, in ASL
Worship at 10:15 AM, interpreted

Living Word Community Church
Gladstone Community Center
6901 N. Holmes Street, Gladstone, MO
www.facebook.com/living-word-community-church
Worship at 10:30 AM, interpreted
Lunch social then bible study (interpreted), afterwards at the pastor's home, 7600 N. Park Ave, Gladstone, MO

New Life Cathedral
323 N. 8th, St Joseph, MO
Worship at 10:30 AM, interpreted
Wednesday at 7 PM, interpreted

First Raytown Baptist Church
10500 E. 350 Highway, Raytown, MO
www.firstbaptistraytown.com
Worship at 9:30 AM, interpreted & real time captioning

Country Side Baptist Church
14150 W. 175th Street, Olathe, KS
www.csidge.org
Sunday School at 9 AM, in ASL
Worship at 10 AM, interpreted

Redeemer Olathe Lutheran Church
920 S. Alta Lane, Olathe, KS
www.redeemerolathe.org
Worship at 10:45 AM, interpreted

St. Paul Catholic Church
900 S. Honeysuckle, Olathe, KS
www.spcatholic.org/Deaf-Ministry
Mass 10 AM (1st, 3rd, and 4th Sundays), interpreted
2 PM (2nd Sundays Deaf Mass, August to April)

Prince Of Peace Catholic Church
16000 W. 143rd, Olathe, KS
www.popopolathe.org
Mass at 5 PM on Saturdays, interpreted

St. Joseph Catholic Church
11311 Johnson Drive, Shawnee, KS
www.stjoeshawnee.org
Mass at 10:30 AM (1st, 3rd, and 4th Sundays), interpreted

Any other churches not listed, please notify De Linda at delindab@meril.org
Come watch the Super Bowl on the **BIG SCREEN** at MERIL and cheer for your team!

If you don’t like football, you can still come and watch a million dollars worth of commercials!

CRDC will have a 50/50 Football Pot, you can place a bet with $5 on one or both teams, with a winning score.

Bring a hot potluck dish to share with other people. Do not bring any dessert because CRDC will bring a cake.

If you don’t want to bring potluck, you will need to pay $5.

**Sunday, Feb. 7th, 2016, at MERIL**

5 PM to ?? (when the game is over)

$5 per person or free if you bring a hot potluck dish to share!
Beginner's Sign Language Class

WHEN: Tuesday evenings 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
February 16th - April 5th, 2016

WHERE: MERIL
4420 South 40th Street
Saint Joseph, MO 64503

COST: $50 (includes a book)

Sign up online at:
https://meril.org/beginner-sign-language-class-registration

Contact 816.752.7490 or email chrisk@meril.org for more information.
**MERIL’s Silent Thanksgiving Social Lunch**

Fifteen people came to the Silent Thanksgiving at MERIL, on Tuesday November 24th. A lot of times, individuals with hearing loss would feel left out during a family or any social gathering, because with so many people in a room, all talking at the same time - it can be quite difficult for a person with any type of hearing loss to keep up with the conversation. The most common reason for this challenge is that people forget not to speak in unison, or talk with food in their mouth, or to establish eye contact with the person who has hearing loss.

So at this lunch social, people with hearing loss did not feel left out and we made sure that all were engaged in such conversation, and not sitting alone, watching people. Twelve people brought a side dish to share and De Linda (from MERIL) brought a turkey she cooked at home. It was a fun and delicious event!

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**Congratulations**

**Reverend DaV'elle Gilbert**

On May 4, 2015, DaV'elle Gilbert, certified sign language interpreter, made a commitment with God to serve and help His people by being ordained as a reverend, through her church, Living Word Community Church, in Gladstone, MO. De Linda Kelly recently learned of DaV'elle’s ordination and went to interview her.

De Linda asked, “Congratulations! So your official name is Reverend DaV’elle Gilbert?” DaV’elle signed “Yes, that is correct.” When asked about her goal or passion as a reverend, DaV’elle said “I believe God gave me the skills and the passion to become a sign language interpreter. So, to give back to God, I want to work with the Deaf people and help them make their connection with God.” One special moment that DaV’elle cherished so deeply, after being ordained, was to be able to baptize two of her five daughters, Jasmine and Sidney, at Smithville Lake. De Linda asked if DaV’elle is willing to go to another church as a guest speaker or to lead a bible study for the Deaf. “Yes, I could but it cannot conflict with my own responsibilities for my church, but if it is being arranged ahead of time, then we can work something out.”

De Linda told DaV’elle that she has never ceased to amaze her with her skills or passion. She was a Navy Seabee for 20 years as a Petty Officer, in construction, then after her retirement with the Navy, she went back to school to become a sign language interpreter. Then she just got herself ordained as a Reverend! De Linda asked DaV’elle what else is she doing. She smiled really big and said “Well I am competing in body building, in fact, I have a competition in April and I’m currently studying to become a certified Physical Trainer. So I can help people work out and reach their own goals.”
The Christmas party, on Dec. 5th, was almost cancelled due to MERIL’s main building (where CRDC usually has their events) was closed to the public for the whole weekend, for the safety of our guests. De Linda didn’t want the party cancelled so she came up with a plan B.

De Linda and Craig Aslin, along with the 3 officers, Sherry, Scott, and Brandie came 2 hours early to get things out of the main building. Sherry stood outside grabbing what Craig and De Linda brought out and loaded the van and truck. Then they went to the MERIL north building and started unloading things to the loft, upstairs. They finished just in time when guests began arriving to the party.

Thirty seven people came from places like Olathe, Overland Park, Kansas and Cameron to attend CRDC’s 6th annual Christmas party. There were a lot of new guests that came for the first time, which CRDC members were happy to meet. CRDC was excited to have 4 new hearing friends who, don’t know sign language, come to the party to show support. It is great to see hearing allies, supporting CRDC.

After all bellies were full of delicious food, all 8 children came up to the front for a game. De Linda explained that there is no Christmas without snow - snow makes Christmas very Christmassy. Kids agreed and said they love snow. De Linda pulled out a box of Kleenex tissues for each kid and explained that each kid had one minute to pull as many tissues as they can out of the box. There were a few kids that emptied their boxes right before the timer went off, however one girl was the winner who emptied her box 17 seconds before the buzzer! When the game was over and there was “snow” all over the floor, De Linda yelled “SNOWBALL FIGHT” and all of the kids grabbed the tissues and threw them in the air and at each other! Then she told the kids to throw snow at their parents and guests. It was nice watching snow all over the room.

After the snow settled, De Linda talked with the kids, to find out what they would want for Christmas, then we had a surprise guest. It was Santa Claus, coming to visit CRDC! When Santa finished passing out some gifts for the children, he decided to stay and join the adult game. Everyone gathered around in a circle and picked a gift. Due to the large number of people participating, CRDC officers and De Linda decided not to do the Dirty Santa game where people can steal a gift from others. De Linda found a poem online a person read, and each time the person said “left” or “right”, the gifts had to be passed left/right. Stacey Storme and her mother were generous to help read/sign the story so De Linda could assist the guests with moving the gifts. After the story was finished, whatever gift the guest had in their hands, was their gift to take home.

After people left, the elves stayed to cleaned up and returned everything to their rightful places back at the main building. The last elf (De Linda) who was leaving MERIL, said "Now, DASHER! Now, DANCER! Now, PRANCER and VIXEN! On, COMET! On CUPID! On, DONNER and BLITZEN! To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall! Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all! I need my sleep!" Zzzzzzzzzz....
12 Days of Christmas

On the 12th day of Christmas, CRDC gave to me:

12 times my gift was exchanged,
11 people came from Kansas,
10 times De Linda wished she could sit down,
  9 kids, running around,
8 boxes of SNOW, thrown everywhere,
  7 people, arriving late,
6 busy elves, keeping the party going,
  5 tables, filled with people laughing,
4 hearing friends, who don’t know sign language, came to say HEY!

3 cars got lost, De Linda to the rescue,
  2 buildings we ran to and fro,
And 1 big Christmas Spirit!

A girl, pulling “snow” out of a box during a contest.
Kids were surprised to see Santa Claus! Each got a treat from him.
Santa, playing the gift exchange game with a friend.
Stacey interpreting while her mom reads a story.
All kids are the winners and they put snow on De Linda’s head!
In honor of her final performance in Broadway's *Spring Awakening*, actress Marlee Matlin penned a letter about her experience, the barrier-breaking show, and how far we have to go in making Broadway accessible for all.

I’ve always wanted to be an actor — since I was seven years old. Though many people thought that was impossible for a young Deaf girl, I was encouraged never to let anything stand in the way of my dreams. Fourteen years later, I was standing on a stage with an Academy Award in my hand — the first Deaf actor to receive one. I was honored and humbled.

Now, 30 years after the Oscar, I’ve returned to the stage and I am humbled and honored once again, this time to be part of the groundbreaking Broadway revival of *Spring Awakening*, the Tony-winning musical as reconceived by Deaf West Theater. With nine Deaf actors, we are making our Broadway debuts, signing in American Sign Language, integrating seamlessly alongside our hearing peers as they sing and sign with us. The best part of all is that we are standing alongside shows like *Hamilton* and *The Color Purple*, as part of the giant wave of diversity that has come to Broadway.

But as our show comes to its close, I have had several opportunities to observe that despite how the Broadway community and audiences have embraced us, there is still a long way to go in terms of accessibility for theatergoers who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Here’s how it goes. I’m able to watch TV, surf the internet on my mobile device or see a film (even opera!) with the benefit of captions. And if I prefer to use a sign language interpreter, there are video relay services and interpreters ready upon request. But as I quickly found out, if I wanted to see a Broadway show, I was told I’d have to wait for an open-captioned performance — often times weeks or months away. And as for sign language interpreters, that option rarely exists at all. Suddenly, I imagined what it must be like for millions of Deaf and hard of hearing people like me who come to New York City and want to see a Broadway show but are told they’d have to make accommodations that hearing people do not.

I know that Deaf and hard of hearing audiences have benefited from the theater community’s efforts by organizations like Hands-On, Roundabout Theatre and TDF to provide sign-interpreted and captioned performances. But the time has come, particularly in light of the success of *Spring Awakening*, to remove all barriers and include Deaf and hard of hearing audiences. Captioning and interpreters must be available upon request just as they are everywhere else. Anything less is not truly accessible. It’s 2016, and the technology and means are out there to make it happen.

I am so grateful that Broadway has welcomed the Deaf actors of *Spring Awakening* with open arms. And you can bet, we will be back with many more productions. In the meantime, it is my hope that as diversity continues to expand on Broadway, full and equal access for millions of Deaf and hard of hearing theatergoers will also expand; we cannot wait in silence any longer.
music and belt out a song in sign language. On his page, he will often ask if anyone would like to meet him at the town where he drops or picks up a load. So naturally, there are a lot of people who would make the time to go out and meet him. There’s something about him and his vlogs that makes his viewers want to meet him so bad. Brandon is also a member of Positive Diversity of Life, another Deaf-based Facebook page, where he shares his vlogs.

Through Brandon’s SnowDog Facebook page, I learned that he was heading to St. Joseph, late one night, to pick up his next load and head down to Louisiana to drop it off. I contacted him and asked if I could meet him and Dixie, his faithful and loyal dog, who always rides with him wherever he goes. He was very polite and said “yes ma’am”. After getting the address, I went out to meet him at a warehouse southwest of St. Joseph. When I walked to greet him, I extended my hand to shake his, he ignored my attempt at a handshake and gave me a hug. Yes, it is part of Deaf culture to hug each other, but it was more than that with Brandon. We stood outside and chatted while he threw a tennis ball for Dixie to chase after. Brandon explained that Dixie sleeps a lot in the truck so this would give her an opportunity to use up her energy. He said that he got Dixie when she was a puppy and takes her everywhere he goes in his truck. After a while, we sat in my van to continue with our conversation, while staying warm.

When asked how he became CDL (Commercial Driver’s License) certified when Deaf people weren’t allowed to drive 16 years ago, he responded, “I barely made it through. I had some hearing back then and was able to hear some with my hearing aids. There were several other Deaf drivers, long before I began. There was one guy, Lon Smith, who had been driving for 45 years. You just have to know how to use the system,” says Brandon. He then explained about a group that he has been involved with, Deaf Truckers United (can be found on Facebook as well). This group, DTU, is a group of 250 current and retired Deaf truckers who are fighting for their rights as Deaf truckers. They were able to work in the state where they lived, but were unable to travel to other states. The federal rules would not allow Deaf drivers to travel interstates, until now. They have been involved with the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; trying to prove to the administration that Deaf people don’t need to hear to be able to drive a semi truck safely. It was with their effort that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration was convinced to allow Deaf and hard of hearing drivers to become CDL certified with a waiver for the hearing examination. DTU’s motto that they live by is “It’s about the skills, not hearing”.

Their motto is right, when it comes to driving; it is not about how well you can hear to drive safely. You depend heavily on your eyesight. Yes, sometimes the ability to hear can be helpful, but we Deaf drivers always find another way to know what’s going on with the vehicle we drive by watching for any activities around us and feeling the vibrations from the vehicle. Often times Deaf drivers know something is wrong with the engine before a hearing driver would hear trouble. I remember when my brother was out driving my car and listening to the engine for any trouble. I knew something was wrong and I would tell him “Did you feel that?” He would often say “Feel what??” By now, he has learned not only to listen very carefully with his ears but to pay attention to how the vehicle was feeling in order to understand as I was trying to describe the problem.

The truck Brandon was driving, is a company truck, not his own. I asked him what would be his dream truck. He had the biggest smile on his face and said “Peterbilt! An old school Peterbilt with two large smoke stacks!” He then described the interior of an older Peterbilt model and how much room there would be for Dixie. He also stated that he prefers 18 speed manual transmission but will settle for 10 or 13, which is common for a semi truck. He stated that he is old school by heart, loves classics and antique trucks so that’s why he longs for an older Peterbilt.

I realized what draws him to many Deaf supporters, it is his charisma. He is such a warm-hearted, and very friendly gentleman. A few times during our interview, he would say “yes ma’am” or “no ma’am.” He has this big passion about truck driving and is so willing to talk to people about it. I mentioned to him that I knew someone from Springfield whose husband just became a Deaf truck driver and is now on the road driving. He smiled and said “Yeah, I know who you’re talking about. I was the one who convinced him to become a truck driver.” He added, “Truck driving is not for all Deaf people. You need to be able to communicate with the police, the brokers, the repair crew, the people at the weigh stations. You don’t have to be able to lip read and speak, but you need to be able to fully understand a lot of vocabularies that we truckers use. Truck driving is a stressful job and it can be very dangerous! It takes your time away from your family and that can be a very hard thing to do.” Brandon has five children waiting for him to come home safely. “How do you communicate with the brokers and your boss?” I asked. “Smartphone, texting, Facetime, VRS on smartphone, and we have this equipment called Qualcomm that all truckers use. We can look up the next assignment to go pick up. We used to have to call in to find the next pick up, now we don’t.”

I asked what was the most dangerous job he had done, “Wide loads! People in cars don’t care about giving me some space while I am driving. That was very stressful!” He had traveled to all states except Hawaii and Alaska and he has pulled all kinds of trailers except a “car hotel” (a trailer with multiple cars next to each other). His biggest dream is to haul loads into Canada sometime and drive on ice (frozen lake) in Alaska as we see on a TV show called Ice Road Truckers. I asked how he got his call name, SnowDog. He said “I love snow so much and would get all giddy when it’s snowing outside. And you know… Dixie, I love her to death. So a friend came up with the name SnowDog and it stuck”. As he would say, at the end of his vlogs:

10-4 POW!
What a great way to close 2015 with the largest Christmas party we have ever hosted! Thirty-seven people came to the 6th annual Christmas party. We had to relocate the party to the MERIL north building but all’s well that ends well! There were a lot of kids this time and Santa Claus came to surprise them with a small gift for each of them. The officers are hoping most of them will come back next year, along with more new faces. We think everyone had a good time.

Starting in February of this year, Sherry Thurn will be leaving her officer duties, but still will come as a member of CRDC. “I need to take a break, been an officer for 6 years in a row”, said Sherry, 4 years as a Treasurer and two years as a President. Her Presidential term expires in February and Scott Dollar was elected as the new President, by the members. Scott’s term as Treasurer also expires in February so there was an election for a new Treasurer, and Kitty Sutton won by default (meaning no one else was nominated for this position). So here are the new officers for CRDC:

President: Scott Dollar (2016-2018)
Vice President: Ashley Burton (2015-2017)
Secretary: Brandie Young (2015-2017)
Treasurer: Kitty Sutton (2016-2018)
Sergeant-At-Arms: Not Elected Yet
Executive Committee: De Linda Kelly (2009– on)

Please don’t forget to come to our 6th annual Super Bowl party! This event is one of the largest events we host every year. More details are on page 7 in this newsletter. Please come and watch the game or million dollar commercials. If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Burton, chairman of the super bowl committee.

We, officers, have been working on coming up with different ideas for fundraising and will announce more in the next newsletter. Please continue collecting soda cans for CRDC recycling. You can bring them to De Linda at MERIL, or contact one of the officers to come and pick them up.

Don’t forget CRDC’s next meeting on February 6th, 1 - 4 PM at MERIL. Also don’t forget to join Cross Roads Deaf Club’s Facebook page to keep up to date with all of our activities.
WWW.facebook.com/CROSSROADSDEAFCLUB

OFFICERS WORKING FOR YOU!!
Scott
Kitty
Ashley
Brandie

CRDC Officers
January:
LUNCH SOCIALS - 12 to 1 PM, every Tuesday, Jan. 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th, @ MERIL

February:
LUNCH SOCIALS - 12 to 1 PM, every Tuesday, Feb. 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, @ MERIL
CRDC General Meeting - Feb. 6th, 1 - 4 PM, @ MERIL
CRDC Super Bowl Party - Feb 7th, 5-?? PM, @ MERIL

March:
LUNCH SOCIALS - 12 to 1 PM, every Tuesday, March 1st, 8th, 22nd, 29th, @ MERIL

Do you own a home? Do you live on a rental property?

Do you need assistance with Missouri Property Tax Credit but no one to go to?
If you are one of MERIL’s current participants, then we have someone who can help you with your property tax credit.

Our former Chief Financial Officer, Judy Hausman, has graciously volunteered to assist MERIL participants with their MO Property Tax Credit, only if they have no other way to complete the tax credit forms.

You will need to contact your MERIL specialist or De Linda to make an appointment with Judy. All necessary documentation must be with you at your appointment or you will be asked to come back at another time. Once you have an appointment made, walk-ins will not be accepted. If you need a sign language interpreter, please let your MERIL specialist or De Linda know and Bridge Interpreting Service will schedule an interpreter for you.

- Copy of paid real estate tax receipt;
- All 1099 forms;
- SSI Benefits Statement
- All W-2 forms;
- Letter from Veterans Administration;
- Letter from Social Services, Division of Family Services (DFS), and/or Employment Security;
- Letter from Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE);
- Assessor Certification (Form 948);
- Lease agreement, rent receipts, or signed statement from landlord to include landlords name, address, phone number and last four digits of their SSN.
- Form MO-CRP.
- State ID
- Social Security Card

If you are not sure if you need this tax credit, or if you don’t have everything you need or have questions, please contact De Linda Kelly or Craig Aslin at MERIL and we would be happy to assist you.
Midland Empire Resources
For Independent Living
4420 South 40th Street
St. Joseph, MO 64503

WWW.MERIL.org
WWW.facebook.com/MERIL4U