



Special Edition: The MCDHH Staff



Opeoluwa Sotonwa

Mr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa joined the MCDHH staff in 2014 as the Executive Director. Mr. Sotonwa has been an advocate for disability rights issues since becoming a lawyer in Nigeria. He holds a LL.M. (Master of Laws) from the Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., where he graduated Cum Laude.

Mr. Sotonwa is currently an Appointed Board Member of the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) and was formerly the organization's Vice President. Mr. Sotonwa is a member of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), as well as several think-tank organizations that focus on disability rights advocacy around the world. He was formerly with the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), where he coordinated statewide advocacy referrals for deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians.

Mr. Sotonwa is a member of Missouri Society of Association Executives, Relay Missouri Advisory Committee, Missouri Department of Mental Health Deaf Advisory Council, Missouri Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project Advisory Committee, and Missouri Newborn Hearing Screening Standing Committee . A consummate advocate; Mr. Sotonwa brings a lot of passion and a constituent-centered leadership approach to the Commission.



Office Support Specialist



Laurie Lister

Laurie joined the MCDHH staff in November 2014, having spent six years in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as administrative assistant for the Superintendent of Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled. As a former small business owner, she brings a high level of organization and entrepreneurship to her position as Office Support Specialist. A native of Jefferson City, she graduated from Jefferson City High School and married her high school sweetheart, Larry in 1985. They have three children and four beautiful grandchildren. When she is not in the office, Laurie enjoys scrapbooking. She also loves to spend weekends with her family with emphasis in spoiling the grand babies.

MICS Coordinator



Dee Sanfilippo

Dee Sanfilippo joined the MCDHH staff in February 2015 as the MICS Coordinator. She was formerly with the Missouri Department of Public Safety, serving as Monitoring Specialist for the Missouri Office of Homeland Security and Senior Grant Specialist for the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency. Previously, she worked in program administration with a focus on mental health and nonprofit administration. Much of her work has been done in strategic planning, training, program coordination, and communication, and she has received professional certifications in grant management and meeting facilitation. Dee studied at the University of Kansas, receiving degrees in Journalism (BSJ) and Public Administration (MPA). She has studied American Sign Language and Interpreting, previously serving as a member of the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She's thrilled to be working with the Missouri Commission.



Community Support Liaison



Christopher Ludvigsen

Christopher Ludvigsen is the Community Support Liaison for Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He is a native of St. Louis, Missouri and a graduate of Brentwood High School. He is an alumnus of Gallaudet University located in Washington, D.C., where he received his B.S. in Business Administration in 2008. Chris completed his M.A. in Management & Leadership from Webster University in October 2014. He is currently attending Walden University for a PhD in Management with an emphasis in Leadership & Organizational Change. He went to Australia during his sophomore year of High School and would like to go back to visit again one day.

Staff Interpreter



A.J. Housewright

AJ Housewright is the Staff Interpreter for the MCDHH. A lifetime of experiences in the Deaf community as a CODA led him to attaining a degree in American Sign Language/English Interpreting from William Woods University in 2015. Since graduating, he has worked as a freelance interpreter and as an Instructional Aide for Columbia Public School's Deaf education program. AJ currently holds a BEI Advanced certification and is licensed to interpret in Missouri.



Interpreter Certification Specialist



Jessica Brown

Jessica Brown is the Interpreter Certification Specialist at MCDHH. An alumnus of Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD), she graduated from William Woods University with a Bachelor's Degree in History with additional coursework in Special Education and Deaf Studies. While working as an ASL Lab Liaison at William Woods University, she earned a Master's Degree in Sign Language Education from Gallaudet University in August 2015. Jessica brings passions for ASL, Deaf Culture and ASL Interpreting to the new position. As an experienced mentor to ASL Interpreting students, she will help prospective candidates for MO-BEI test to feel at ease and provide guidance about MO-BEI test. A resident of Tebbetts Missouri, Jessica enjoys hunting, fishing, and gardening, as well as other outdoor activities with her family.

Information Program Specialist



Emily Fry Morrison

Emily Fry is the Information Program Specialist for the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She earned her MA in media communications in 2015 from Webster University, where she also completed her BA in public relations. Emily will use her vast experience in media information to help MCDHH reach out to Hard of Hearing & Veterans with hearing loss. Emily is a native of Columbia, MO. She enjoys playing disc golf, paper crafting, drinking hot tea, and spending time with family, friends, and her dogs.