



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Julie Johnson Thompson
Office: 683-4786 Cell: (501) 580-6508
Email: julie.thompson@arkansas.gov

HELEN KELLER DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS WEEK SET FOR JUNE 24-30

Governor Mike Beebe will sign a proclamation at 9 a.m. Monday (June 25) at the State Capitol in recognition of Helen Keller National Deaf-Blind Awareness Week, which will be observed June 24-30 in Arkansas and other states.

In 2006, 310 people living in Arkansas are classified as deaf-blind. The Arkansas Department of Education's Deaf-Blind Project maintains a registry of children who are deaf-blind, from birth to 21 years of age. The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind provides assistance in education and job search and the Project gives support to families and teachers of these children.

"Training for teachers is provided as requested and family support is provided through home visits, family support meetings and other activities throughout the year," said S. Beth Bourgeois, family consultant with the Arkansas Department of Education's Deaf-Blind Project.

People who are deaf-blind are able to attend school with the assistance of sign language interpreters. Some choose to attend college or vocational training classes after they complete high school. The Helen Keller National Center in Sands Point, N. Y., prepares people who are deaf-blind to live independently and to perform job tasks.

"There are many possibilities for deaf-blind persons depending on the choice and skill level of each individual," Bourgeois said.

For more information, persons may call Bourgeois at 501-682-4222 or go online at www.hknc.org or www.dblink.org. In Arkansas, a person may contact the Division of Services for the Blind at 501 682-5463 or toll free 1-800-960-9270 or TTD 1-501-682-0093. The Deaf-Blind Project's number is 501 682-4222.

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The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.