



August, 1985

Austin, Texas

Is silence as rich as sound?

"Children of a Lesser God" by Mark Medoff is a triple Tony award winning play taking us inside the world of individuals who are deaf and helping us to understand the artful communication — and the frustrations — of those who cannot hear. This touching and witty play opened at Austin's Capitol City Playhouse in April.

The play is a sensitive and emotional love story focusing on a teacher for the deaf and hearing impaired who falls in love with the school's most challenging student — a young deaf woman who refuses to speak.

Drawing on local talent, the two leading roles were perfectly cast. Bob St. Pierre, chosen to play James Leeds, the therapist, has a real life profession which parallels his role in the production. His student and sweetheart, Sarah Norman, is played by Linda Clark, an accomplished deaf actress with extensive background in drama.

The first act of the play is primarily concerned with Sarah Norman's education in school, and the second act deals with the couple's education in marriage.

Their relationship is stormy at best, and at one point Sarah passionately declares to her husband that the "hearing world" can never hope to comprehend the world of the deaf, and — that she would like to have children, deaf children. They temporarily break up and in the end, Sarah resolves to be her own woman until she can meet James again in some space

that transcends silence and speech.

Kathy Weldon, a GCDP member, landed the part of Lydia in the play. Lydia continually attempts to steal the teacher's affection from Sarah Norman. In this, her first acting job, Weldon did an outstanding job. She captured the character and is also skilled in lip-reading and sign language.

Weldon who has a hearing impairment expressed the play's im-

portance for hearing people, "What a person thinks and feels is more important than how well he or she speaks."

" 'Children of a Lesser God' will undoubtedly help bridge the gap between hearing people and individuals who are deaf and hearing impaired."

-Kathy Weldon



Linda Clark plays Sarah Norman, a deaf woman who isolates herself from the hearing world in "Children of a Lesser God".

Dart reappointed to National Council

On June 21 Justin W. Dart, Jr., was sworn in and recognized for his successful advocacy as a member of the National Council on the Handicapped (NCH). Judge Bob Thomas of Waco conducted the swearing in ceremonies at Austin's Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. Judge Thomas is an associate justice for the court of appeals and Chairperson of the Texas Council on Disabilities.

Frances Ruegg, a mother-figure and long time friend of Justin's, traveled from New York to attend the ceremonies. Ruegg spoke of Justin's spirit of adventure as a young boy and marveled at his drive as an adult. With a twinkle in her eye Frances Ruegg added, "I remember listening to Justin until the wee hours of the morning. He would tell me all about his dreams and ambitions."

Dart has been a human rights advocate for more than 35 years. He is vice-chair of the NCH, a member of TGCDP and a member of the Texas Council on Disabilities.

Truly dedicated to disability issues, Dart recently took a temporary apartment in Washington, D.C. in order to devote full time to participating in and preparing the NCH 1986 Report to the President and the Congress.

The NCH is an independent federal agency which is mandated to provide Congress and the Executive Branch with policy advice designed to promote the independence, productivity, and full social participation of more than 36 million Americans with disabilities.

The United States Senate confirmed Dart's second three-year term as a member of the NCH on May 16, 1985.



Dart shows his commitment to the disability rights movement by participating in disABILITY Rally Day '85.

November 8 Dallas to host 3rd Annual Barbara Jordan Awards



Steve Johns, Manager, City of Dallas Handicap Services Office, agreed to chair the program development subcommittee of the media conference and Barbara Jordan awards banquet steering committee.

Dallas was chosen as the host city for this year's media conference and Barbara Jordan Awards banquet. Because it is a prime media market the city has the capacity to make the '85 event the best ever. The Lincoln Radisson Hotel was recently chosen as the conference site.

This month a steering committee composed of Dallas media professionals, business executives and leaders in the field of disability will meet to begin planning the event.

Judging sessions are currently underway and nearing completion. In early August winners and non-winners will be formally notified of the judging results.

For updates on the judging process or plans for the media conference and awards banquet call (512) 445-8741.

Mark your calendar November 8
— Dallas!

Concerns explored for the state's Black disabled population

In May, the Office of the Governor and the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons jointly sponsored a conference to share information on the impact of cultural differences and the rehabilitation of disabled Black Texans.

Melvin Sikes, an Austin clinical psychologist, elaborated on several topics he considered for his address.

- "Disabled Black Texans: A Double Whammy"
- "Disabled Black Texans: Another New Year's Resolution"
- "Mom, please Mom, I'd rather do it myself!"

Another speaker, Judith Craven, a physician and dean of UT Allied Health Science Center in Houston, found her speaking assignment more difficult than she had expected because of the lack of data available on services to disabled persons including disabled Blacks.

"I asked peers for their perceptions of the disabled and began gathering materials. I found no consistent body of information anywhere." Craven realized as she read through numerous articles, pamphlets and research papers that everyone has a different perception of disability.

Larry Evans, assistant director for the Texas Commission for the Deaf, said there are 100 Black persons who are deaf for every 140 white deaf persons. Evans addressed the audience in sign language, while an interpreter translated his speech. He added that Blacks are not less likely to become deaf, but have little access to the health care system and die from illnesses like spinal meningitis, of which deafness is often a result.

Peg Nosek, an assistant professor at Baylor College of Medicine, asked why so few Blacks are involved in the disability rights movement. Nosek wondered if her definition of independence as a disabled individual — to control her own life, to



Glen Johnson, an Austin physician, expressed a need to redefine "disability" within the system.

go where she wants, to contribute to society as a professional — might be invalid. "Is there something about being Black or Hispanic that makes your definition different from mine?" Nosek asked.

For some, the answer to that question was, "Yes, our needs are different." Common disabling conditions among Blacks are somewhat different from those among whites. Culture and experiences are also different. Several participants said that the definition of disability should be closely reviewed because many Blacks who are disabled are not eligible for services under the current criteria of the human services delivery system.

Insufficient data for disabled Black Texans was another hot topic. It should be noted that data on disabled individuals, in general,

seems to be lacking nationwide.

In an effort to fill that gap in data, Texas has conducted a pilot demographic survey to develop a methodology for estimating the prevalence of Texans with disabilities. The Texas Rehabilitation Commission submitted an appropriation request for 1.5 million dollars to conduct a statewide demographic survey. This survey would provide baseline data necessary to properly plan for services, including services to disabled Black Texans. However, the 1.5 million dollars was not approved during this legislative session. Therefore, the Council on Disabilities is pursuing foundation funding to conduct the survey. For further information about survey, contact: Terry Goodman, Executive Director, Council on Disabilities, (512) 475-3021.

Computer Programming

A unique training and employment opportunity is now available for qualified severely disabled persons through the combined efforts of the Dallas Mayor's Committee for Employment of the Disabled, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, more than 30 leading Dallas area employers and El Centro College.

This program meets the need for high level accessibility and the promise of adequate starting pay to offset high personal costs associated with employment for some severely disabled persons. Graduates can expect to earn \$20,000 – \$30,000 yearly as computer programmers.

A number of slots in the program are available for a short period of time. An applicant who meets the criteria must complete several personal interviews and be ready to begin daily classes for 10 months on September 30, 1985 at El Centro College in downtown Dallas.

After successfully completing two months of on-the-job training in private industry, graduates can expect to be employed full time.

Contact TRC Courtesy Counselor Barbara Bernhardt, Dallas North Office, (214) 692-1665 for information about eligibility requirements, housing, transportation and accessibility.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

PERSONAL

Programmers must

- have acceptance of disability
- possess acceptable attributes of honesty, punctuality, neatness, and cleanliness
- have good work habits, a strong motivation to succeed, and the ability to work under stressful conditions
- be able to accept responsibility, to work closely with supervisors, and to pay attention to detail

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL

Programmers must

- have a sitting tolerance of at least eight hours
- be able to communicate either by voice, through the use of manual communication, or with the aid of a mechanical device
- be able to write legibly or to use a typewriter

EDUCATIONAL

Programmers must have

- a high school diploma, GED Certificate, or the demonstrated ability to achieve the GED
- above average intelligence
- 12th grade reading comprehension
- scores at or above the 50th percentile on the SRA Computer Programmer Aptitude Battery

cut and mail

DEADLINE FOR RECEIVING LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS IS SEPTEMBER 25

LUNCHEON TICKETS WILL NOT BE SOLD AT THE DOOR

Please enclose a check or money order for luncheon ticket(s) payable to the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons. Mail your conference and/or luncheon reservations to:

**Governor's Committee Employment Luncheon
c/o Texas Rehabilitation Commission
118 East Riverside Drive
Austin, Texas 78704**

We regret that refunds cannot be made for luncheon cancellations received **after September 25, 1985.**

LODGING at the Wyndham is \$65 per night (Single or Double). For reservations the toll free number is **1-800-822-4200.** We urge you to make your reservations early to assure the conference rate.

REGISTER NOW !

**GENERAL MEETING AND EMPLOYMENT AWARDS LUNCHEON
OF THE
GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE FOR DISABLED PERSONS**

8:30 A. M. TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1985

**WYNDHAM HOTEL - SOUTHPARK
4140 Governor's Row
Austin, Texas 78744**

"Transition to Independence"

GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

Opening Ceremonies Bobby C. Simpson, Chairperson
Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons, Presiding

Keynote Address

Small Group Sessions Transitional Services Provided By
**EMPLOYERS
SCHOOLS
STATE AGENCIES**

EMPLOYMENT AWARDS LUNCHEON

Presentation of Awards Representing Governor Mark White
Carole Rylander, Member, State Board of Insurance

- Handicapped Person of the Year**
- Physician of the Year**
- Public Employee of the Year**
- Employer of the Year (two awards)**
- Governmental Agency of the Year**
- Governor's Citation for Meritorious Service**

Advance reservations required for the awards luncheon.

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**GENERAL MEETING and EMPLOYMENT AWARDS LUNCHEON
REGISTRATION**

There is **NO REGISTRATION FEE** for the General Meeting (morning sessions).

LUNCHEON TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED BY September 25, 1985. Please assist us with conference planning by mailing your registration early.

YES, I plan to attend the conference .

- I/We wish to reserve _____ ticket(s) to the luncheon at \$12.50 each.
- I/We will attend the morning sessions only.

	Name	Organization	Mailing Address	Telephone No.
1)	_____	_____	_____	_____
2)	_____	_____	_____	_____
3)	_____	_____	_____	_____
4)	_____	_____	_____	_____

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM

Artist Richard Wawro visits Austin

Who is Richard Wawro? He is an artist and his preferred medium is oil crayon. He has produced more than 2,000 drawings, many of which have been shown in London, Paris, Krakow and the United States. Richard's pictures are filled with airplanes, trains, boats, cars, space ships and buses. As part of Richard Wawro's tour of the United States, he came to Austin's Littlefield Mall in May, where he exhibited many of his paintings.

Richard, born in Scotland in 1952, had cataracts in both eyes, displayed autistic behaviors, and with an IQ of 30, was described as "hopelessly retarded".

At 5 years of age, Richard began drawing, but did not speak out loud until he was eleven. At 8 years of age, Richard had an opportunity to display his developing talent at his first art exhibit in a village in Scotland. Ted Wawro, Richard's father, became aware that his son had developed special artistic talents. He said, "Richard is like a blotter soaking up details and constantly searching for new images, which many times show up in later paintings. My son is articulate and

emotional when he is describing his paintings."

In 1983 an award winning documentary film, "With Eyes Wide Open", premiered in Austin. The film revolves around Richard Wawro, and shows hundreds of examples of his drawings. The film is available in 16 mm and video format. For further information about the film, contact the producer, Dr. Laurence Becker, Creative Learning Environments, 507 Park Boulevard, Austin, Texas 78751, (512) 454-4489.

GCDP REPORT

The GCDP Report promotes employment and public awareness of the abilities and special needs of persons with disabilities. This quarterly GCDP Report is published by the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons.

Communications may be addressed to: Cindy Counts, Editor, GCDP Report, 118 East Riverside Dr., Austin, Texas 78704. You may also call (512) 445-8741 VOICE or TDD.

Taped Copies of the GCDP Report will be provided upon request.

Cindy Counts Editor
Susan Antoniewicz Illustrator
Sue Durban Illustrator
Becky Nieto Illustrator
TRC Printing Services Printing

Sweetwater NETH Week

Appointment of a special ad hoc Subcommittee for National Employment the Handicapped (NETH) Week October 6 - 12, 1985 in Sweetwater has been announced by Lita McEachern, Chairperson. NETH Week is sponsored annually by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

The Subcommittee is headed by

Kathy Rosson and includes chairpersons of standing subcommittees which will be holding special activities during NETH Week. The Subcommittee will be working closely with the Public Information subcommittee chaired by Gail Redden.

All community groups will be invited to hold activities and to participate in the week's events.

Texas Governor's Committee
for Disabled Persons
118 E. Riverside Dr.
Austin, TX 78704

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