

NEWS FROM PATHFINDER

BY MELISSA FORTSON

RECREATION INFORMATION ON THE PATHFINDER WEB SITE

These sports and leisure resources - and more! - can be found on the Pathfinder Web site at www.familypathfinder.org

People of all abilities should have access to recreational facilities and activities. The **United States Access Board** publishes ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for Play Areas and Recreation Facilities. Web: <http://www.access-board.gov/>

The Community Life section of **DisabilityInfo.gov** includes information and links related to outdoor recreation, sports, fitness, travel and tourism resources. Includes tips for travelers with disabilities and information on the accessibility of federal recreation sites. Web: <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov> (click on "Community Life")

The **National Parks and Recreation Association** advances parks, recreation and environmental efforts that enhance quality of life for all. Its **National Therapeutic Recreation Society** branch provides resources related to therapeutic recreation. Web: <http://www.nrpa.org/>

The **Tennessee Disability Pathfinder** database lists disability and other community resources. These recreation-related service categories — and over 50 others — can be found on the Pathfinder Web site: <http://www.familypathfinder.org> (click on "Search the Pathfinder Database").

Arts Programs & Therapy: Programs that provide people with disabilities with organized opportunities to pursue the arts. Includes art, dance, music and theatre programs. Includes creative arts therapies.

Camps or Summer Programs: Residential or day camp facilities that are appropriately staffed and equipped to provide an opportunity for children who have developmental, emotional or health-related disabilities.

Recreational Programs & Therapy: Programs that provide opportunities for people of all ages to participate in the specific recreational activity, game or sport of their choice. Includes recreation therapy.

Therapeutic Horseback Riding: Programs that provide riding instruction to individuals with disabilities as part of their therapy treatment.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder

English & Español
(615) 322-8529
(800) 640-4636

TTY/TDD users:
please dial 711 for
free relay service

www.familypathfinder.org
tnpathfinder@vanderbilt.edu



Melissa Fortson is information & referral specialist/program coordinator with Tennessee Disability Pathfinder.

YOUTH SUMMER SIGN PROGRAM

BY SHARON LIMPUS

Imagine communicating in three languages — English, Arabic and American Sign Language! That's a reality now for one student at West End Middle School in Nashville who attended the Youth Summer Sign Program (YSSP), a day camp offered by the League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Nashville.

Ayman Abdul Shaheed is hard of hearing and the youngest of five children. The energetic and friendly teen moved to the United States from Iraq when he was eight. Mr. Shaheed has been an active participant in the League's youth program. Last Summer, he attended YSSP, a two-week day camp open to all students — hearing, deaf or hard of hearing — interested in learning American Sign Language.

"My comprehension moved from 'better' to 'excellent'" said Mr. Shaheed. "I learned how to sign better and communicate with other students."

Mr. Shaheed also made new friends and had lots of fun. He said he is more self-confident after his YSSP experience.

This year, two sessions of the program will be offered, based on the participants' grade levels. "Session 1" runs June 2-13 for 1st-6th grade students; "Session 2" is offered June 16-27 for 7th-12th grade students. Classes are Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4 pm and take place at the League's Mary McKinney Youth Center, 415 Fourth Avenue South, Nashville.

"Our Youth Summer Sign Program opens up a world of new experiences for students of all ages — whether they are hearing, hard of hearing or deaf — because it is the perfect combination of fun and education," said Brigitte Ochoa, director of Youth Services.

Last year, there were more students than ever participating in the League's Summer camp programs. "We were able to offer some

scholarships from community partners, including the Middle Tennessee Electric Customers Care, Inc. and the Sertoma Clubs of Nashville and Hendersonville," said Ms. Ochoa. "The League also participated in the Summer Camp Voucher Program through Metro Nashville Government. We were very grateful for all of this support. Without it, many students would have missed a fulfilling Summer camp experience."

The cost of YSSP is \$300 per student, which includes all materials, supplies, snacks and field trips. Deadline for registration is May 30.

Other Summer camp programs offered by the League include:

Camp Rise 'N Sign — a weekend overnight camp for youth who are deaf or hard of hearing, their siblings or hearing youth with deaf parents. Sponsored by the AT&T Pioneers and the League, this unique camp features indoor and outdoor activities. Students in grades two through 12 are welcome. Dates run Friday, May 2, to Sunday, May 4, at Camp Hillmont in White Bluff.

Stepping Stones — a Summer Youth Literacy program offered as a one-month-long day camp for youth in grades 4-8 who are deaf or hard of hearing. It features reading, writing, math, special activities, field trips and deaf culture. This program is offered weekdays from 9 am-4 pm from July 7 to 25 at the League's Youth Center.

For complete information, contact [Brigitte Ochoa](mailto:Brigitte.Ochoa@baldhnh.org) at bo@ldhnh.org or 615-248-8828 (V/TTY), or visit www.leaguefortheblind.org.

Sharon Limpus provides communications and marketing services to the League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. A homeschooling mom, she makes her home in Franklin with her husband, teenage son and a spoiled Beagle named Solo.



TENNESSEE DULCIMER CHOIR

Providing Musical Opportunities for Students with Autism

BY ALICIA CONE AND SARAH ELIZABETH MUSGRAVE

Sarah Elizabeth Musgrave entered the world of autism when her two-year-old cousin, Sean, was diagnosed in 2004. Today, through her senior project, she is touching the lives of other children with autism. Ms. Musgrave and her songwriting partner, Tammy Vice, have developed a curriculum to teach children with autism how to play the mountain dulcimer without the need to verbally communicate, which is a challenge for some individuals on the autism spectrum.

Each week, Ms. Musgrave goes into a school as a volunteer intern with VSA arts Tennessee — a statewide nonprofit with a mission to

empower individuals with disabilities through the arts — and works one-on-one with children with autism. Some of these students will be given the opportunity to join a newly-formed performing dulcimer choir for children with autism through VSA arts Tennessee.

The Tennessee Dulcimer Choir is a project conceived by VSA arts Tennessee and funded by the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities. VSA arts Tennessee has partnered with the Grand Old Dulcimer Club to provide training sessions in Sumner and Davidson counties on the history and performance techniques of the dulcimer. The project primarily targets students with an autism spectrum disorder,

but also will include others who share an interest in learning about this unique Appalachian instrument.

Ultimately, the Tennessee Dulcimer Choir will represent the State in local and national festivals and performances. Other partners in this initiative include the Tennessee Department of Education, schools and community groups in Davidson and Sumner counties, the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University and Belmont University.

In addition to developing the dulcimer curriculum, Ms. Musgrave has been instrumental in creating other musical opportunities for students on the autism spectrum. In collaboration with the Blair School of Music, she coordinated a benefit concert in early March at the Turner Recital Hall at Vanderbilt University. A silent auction included donations from the Oak Ridge Boys, Dancing to the Spirit of the Wood, the French Shoppe, Brown's Florist, Bodyworks Emporium, Hickory Tree Studio, Salsarita's

and Staples, to name a few. The concert featured singer-songwriters Tammy Vice, Walt Aldridge and Gordon Ellis; jazz duo Beegie Adair and Jim Ferguson; Ms. Musgrave performing with friends Bill Taylor, Janita Baker and GR Davis; and special guest artist, Mark Leland.

Proceeds from the concert were used to purchase dulcimers for the Tennessee Dulcimer Choir members and will be theirs to keep. A May 3 2008, reception is planned at the Country Music Hall of Fame to induct the new members into the Tennessee Dulcimer Choir and present them with their instruments.

"As a performer and songwriter, I am proud to be part of a community in Nashville which has a strong desire to give back," says Ms. Musgrave. "I grew up with music as a very important part of my life, and I want these children to have the same opportunities as I did."

Alicia A. Cone, PhD, is project research and development coordinator for the Council on Developmental Disabilities.