

TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS BRINGING TEXAS FAMILIES TOGETHER “Blending In & Standing Out”

Weekend Immersion Helps Families Navigate Hurdles, Advocate for Excellence

FAMILY WEEKEND RETREAT for TEXAS FAMILIES of DEAF and HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS at
TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Austin, Texas – June 14, 2013 Summer is in full swing at the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) as 350 individuals from more than 80 families of deaf and hard of hearing children all across Texas, arrive for TSD’s Family Weekend Retreat (FWR), today through Sunday.

From siblings to extended family, TSD’s Educational Resource Center of Deafness (ERCOD) hosts a full weekend of workshops and activities, annually, for all family members of children in Texas who are deaf or hard of hearing.

With the focus on understanding, nurturing and supporting the education and development of a deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) child, each family leaves TSD’s FWR on Sunday with regret. But, not in a sad way. Families who’ve attended before will tell you that FWR literally changes lives.

And to that, “mission accomplished”, says TSD’s Parent Liaison Lisa Crawford, who leads ERCOD’s FWR, and each year sees the transformation in families by the end of the weekend.

“Every year, we have families get emotional after attending FWR, for a variety of reasons. Many families come back again, Crawford adds, while those who attend for the first time often leave wanting more help and more resources for their child.”

Crawford has assembled an esteemed group of colleagues - professionals and parents - who will present their experiences and lessons learned in rearing their own D/HH children to the families attending TSD’s FWR.



FWR opens at 8:30 a.m. Saturday morning at St. Edward's University's Jones Auditorium with a keynote address from a mother of three – one, a deaf and blind, multi-disabled son. Djenne-Amal Morris - a motivational speaker - also works as a Parent Educator and Training Coordinator in Raleigh, North Carolina, helping others adjust to life with a Deaf-Blind child.

On Sunday, the weekend is capped off with an inspiring closing address from Karen Putz - [ChicagoNow](#) writer, three-time author and the mother of three teenagers who are hard of hearing. Putz herself grew up hard of hearing, and at age 19 became deaf from a fall while barefoot water skiing.

Not only does FWR have parents speaking directly with other parents, professionals help families understand their child's rights to an education - in the least restrictive environment - and help them with communication at home.

The FWR covers all bases for the entire family, including: childcare for the adolescents in each family; workshops specifically for extended family members; social and educational activities for D/HH children of all ages; and a special Sib-Shop for siblings of a D/HH brother or sister. Each group has a unique schedule of activities throughout the weekend to support those individuals. TSD also provides weekend lodging for the families, all meals, and allows time for fun and social activities, giving participants time to spend together networking.

While TSD educates approximately 550 D/HH students, annually, during the regular school year - and another 300+ in summer programs in Austin, the ERCOD at TSD focuses on the estimated 5,000+ students who attend school across the state in other public, charter and private schools – as well as their families, and professionals in the fields of education and D/HH support services. FWR is just one of TSD's statewide outreach programs aimed at doing so.

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WHAT: Texas School for the Deaf's (TSD) 2013 Family Weekend Retreat (FWR) for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH)

WHEN: Friday through Sunday, June 12-14, 2013

Friday:	Registration/Check-in	4:00-8:00 pm
	Family Social/Fun Time	7-10:30 pm
Saturday**:	Welcome & Opening Keynote	8:30 am
	<i>"Incredibly Visible"</i> – Djenne-Amal Morris	
	Presentations & Break-out Sessions	10:45 am – 5:00 pm
	Family Fun Night	7-9:00 pm
Sunday:	D/HH Teen/Young Adult Panel	8:30 am
	Closing General Session:	9:30 am
	<i>"Twists & Turns on the Parenting Journey"</i> – Karen Putz	
	Wrap-Up/Closing	10:45 am - noon

WHERE: Friday & Sunday:
Texas School for the Deaf
1102 South Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78704

**Saturday sessions held at:
St. Edward's University
Jones Auditorium and Ragland Center Cafeteria/Lobby
3001 South Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78704

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ABOUT THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (TSD)

The Texas School for the Deaf is the oldest continuously operating public school in Texas. Educating deaf and hard of hearing students of Texas since 1856, the campus also provides outreach and educational resources for students, their families and professionals in the field throughout the state of Texas. With educational excellence and a strong belief in a culture and community at TSD, students form a unique identity based on their individual strengths and talents. TSD is an environment where students learn, grow, and belong. For more information about the Texas School for the Deaf, visit <http://www.tsd.state.tx.us/>.

ABOUT THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON DEAFNESS (ERCOD) AT THE TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (TSD)

The Educational Resource Center on Deafness brings the resources of the Texas School for the Deaf to the students of Texas, who are deaf and hard of hearing. ERCOD works collaboratively with a variety of agencies, programs, and schools across the state, to create a network of information, services, and support designed to meet the unique needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing, their families, and the professionals who serve them. To learn more about TSD's ERCOD and all statewide outreach programming, visit: <http://texasdhhresources.org/>.