



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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Governor Proclaims Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

Governor Mike Beebe has proclaimed June 24 – 30 as Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week. The theme this year is "Unfolding All of Life's Possibilities".

Velarius Hall, of Little Rock, will accept the proclamation at a presentation at the State Capitol on Wednesday, June 27, at 9 a.m. Hall is a recent graduate of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults (HKNC), located in Sands Point, NY. Hall is one of more than a million people in the United States who are deaf-blind.

Hall will be joined at the presentation by representatives from DHS Division of Services for the Blind, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education Deaf/blind Project.

The observation of this week is to bring awareness to the public about the abilities and potential of individuals who have multisensory disabilities and to pay tribute to Helen Keller as a guiding example of courage, hope, determination, and achievement for other individuals with multisensory disabilities.

Helen Keller was deaf and blind from infancy. She was an American author, activist, and lecturer who became a role model for others. She was the first deaf-blind person to graduate from college. She worked for the American Foundation for the Blind for more than 40 years. President Lyndon B. Johnson awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, one of the United States' highest civilian honors, and more recently, Alabama put her image on its state quarter. Her life's story was made famous by the play and film "The Miracle Worker". Throughout her lifetime (1880-1968), she traveled the world and worked unceasingly to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Information about HKNC can be found on its website, www.hknc.org.

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DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. DSB also serves youth and older blind individuals. People wanting information about DSB's programs and services can call 1-800-960-9270 or 501-682-5463 or visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx>.