AURORA
of Central New York
Annual Report 2009

Serving People who are
Blind, Visually Impaired,
Deaf or Hard of Hearing

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A United Way Agency of Central New York,
Oswego & Cayuga Counties
Contract Agency of Onondaga
County Office for Aging & Youth
**AURORA’s Statement of Financial Position**

- Government Contracts $1,189,870
- Program Fees $826,077
- United Way $120,437
- Donations $25,909
- Net Investment Income (177,674)
- Fundraising $115,047
- Adaptive Equipment Sales $40,540
- Legacies $7,773
- Misc. Income $1,498
- Grants $21,658
- Total $2,171,135

**2008 Audited**
- Assets $2,884,137
- Liabilities $320,625
- Net Assets $2,563,512
- Total $2,884,137

**2009 Audited**
- Assets $2,757,895
- Liabilities $349,768
- Net Assets $2,408,127
- Total $2,757,895

**Auditors:** Buffington & Hoatland CPAs

**Estate Gifts and Foundation Grants**

We wish to thank the following organizations/individuals for their generosity and support of AURORA’s services:

**Funding Sources**

- Fred & Berthe P. Harder Foundation
- Welch Allyn, Inc.
- Key Foundation
- Empire Vision
- Entergy Nuclear Northeast
- Cultural Resources Council of Syracuse
- Louise B. Stickley Trust
- Flora Bernice Smith Foundation
- P. Drescher Co., Inc.
- Druger Eye Care
- Retina-Vitreous Surgeons
- H. Kenneth Fitzgerald
- Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli
- Estate of Delores B. Davis

- NYS Office of Vocational & Educational Services to Individuals with Disabilities
- NYS Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped
- NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
- Onondaga County Office for the Aging
- Onondaga County Authorized Agency
- United Way of Central New York, Inc.
- United Way of Greater Oswego County
- United Way of Cayuga County
- Fees for Service
- Fundraising Events
- Memberships & Donations
- Corporate & Foundation Grants
- Syracuse Veterans Administration Medical Center
Please join us in celebrating the memory and life of Rev. William Lange, Jr. who passed away on June 20th at the age of 100. This annual report is dedicated to Rev. Lange, who will be remembered for his ministry to the Deaf community as an Episcopal priest, ordained in 1943. He tirelessly traveled and served over 20 upstate cities during his tenure and touched the lives of many with his love for God, and his desire to advocate for Deaf concerns as well as educate others about the Deaf community.

We will remember Rev. Lange at AURORA for his steadfast support of our Deaf services and programs. He was a positive force who shared his wisdom to advise us and promote our efforts to serve the Deaf community since the 1970s. Debra Chaiken, AURORA’s executive director, said this about Reverend Bill: “His advice as a board member and honorary board member was invaluable. He and Vera (his wife) have been so helpful and truly understand the mission of what we are trying to accomplish here. I’m grateful to have known him.”

**Mattie Letham Community Leadership Award**

Michael A. Schwartz, Associate Professor and Director of the Disability Law Clinic at Syracuse University, was this year’s winner of AURORA’s Mattie Letham Community Leadership Award and is an outstanding advocate and leader. His efforts have led to advances in accessibility and understanding on behalf of people with sensory loss and other disabilities within our community.

Michael spearheaded a collaborative partnership between AURORA and Syracuse University by teaming members of our Program Advisory Committee with students from the Disability Law Clinic to tackle tough community-wide advocacy issues such as accessible public transportation and, most recently, sensitizing services and personnel at the Syracuse Hancock International Airport. He has also been a regular and highly sought after presenter at AURORA’s Deaf Awareness Week events.

Michael has been an invaluable resource and consultant for staff and consumers alike. In particular, he works together with Maggie Russell, AURORA’s Director of the Marjorie Clere Interpreter Referral Service, to educate the legal profession on accessibility for the Deaf and hard of hearing via professional sign language interpreters. The law requires that courts and attorneys’ offices be accessible. However, Michael acknowledges that the legal profession remains much like an ocean liner, “very hard to steer.”

When asked what motivates him the most, Michael responded quickly: “Justice...I want to see justice done in the community.” A worthy and attainable goal and one that Michael is obviously willing to work for, each day of his life.
Excellence Award Recipients

Joyce Knighton has been involved with AURORA’s Visually Impaired Support Group since 1997; group facilitator Nancy Anderson calls Joyce “a friend to everyone” and says Joyce phones group members between meetings with words of encouragement.

Joyce has volunteered to help with AURORA’s mailings and other projects for the agency. She is always willing to lend a hand and is known for her gentle and caring style.

Lisa Roszyk is a junior at Paul V. Moore High School in Central Square, where she is exploring her career options. Her choice to become a teacher of the visually impaired has not been made lightly. Blind since birth, Lisa knows what a difference a good teacher and mentor can make. She is a young lady who radiates confidence. At school Lisa belongs to several clubs, including the Science Club, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and GSA (Gay/Straight Alliance). Lisa lives in Brewerton with her parents, brother, dog and cat.

Donna Wine is a residential habilitation counselor at Transitional Living Services and the editor of the Siracusa newsletter. She is very active in the Deaf community as a member of the Deaf Advocacy Council and with other organizations. She graduated with high honors from St. Mary’s School for the Deaf and won the National High School Students for Excellence Award. She went on to Rochester Institute of Technology, graduating with an associate of fine arts degree.

When Songtha Cosby of Syracuse was born Deaf 20 years ago, his doctors told his mother that he would never talk or learn. Today Songtha is a successfully employed young man with a bright future ahead of him. He works at the East Syracuse Walmart where he loads trucks. He enjoys his work and works hard at it. Songtha learned his strong work ethic as a student and then Counselor-in-Training at AURORA's Summer Education Program. Many of the younger campers looked to him as a role model. Songtha’s long-term goals include college and a possible electronics major.
In Review .......

Program Accomplishments

13,459 hours of professional interpreting services were provided to 14 Central New York counties through the Marjorie Clere Interpreter Referral Service (MCIRS).

90 youth and adults received employment and placement services this year.

59 people received assessment and/or instruction in how to use adaptive technology for computer proficiency through the Adaptive Technology Center (ATC).

390 patients received comprehensive low vision examinations for a total of 560 hours of low vision service.

455 individuals with vision loss received instruction in cooking, home and personal management to remain independent in their homes, jobs and communities.

211 consumers successfully completed training in orientation and mobility to travel safely and independently in spite of a vision loss.

873 people received social work support, information and advocacy to develop skills for coping and accessing community resources to deal with a loss in sight or hearing.

63 community presentations were made by staff and volunteers to educate about treatment, care and prevention of sensory loss and promote AURORA and its services.
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United Way