

# Support

## Parent Forum

Parent Forums facilitate discussions such as establishing boundaries and instilling the kind of character in your children that will help them lead balanced, productive and fulfilling adult lives. Spanish forum also available.

## Deaf Parent Support Group

The purpose of this group is to assist St. Mary's deaf families with specific needs that may help one guide their children to live a productive, balanced and healthy lifestyle. This group provides an opportunity where our deaf parents of deaf children can talk with other deaf parents, share ideas and discuss issues or concerns.

*The doors to the Parent Center are always open and we encourage parents to stop by and learn more. We are located in room 233 in the Main Building.*



For more information on Parent Education Programs please contact:

Beth Winters  
*Coordinator of Parent Education*  
*Main Building*  
(716) 834-7200 ext. 355

*Visit us online at:*  
[www.smsdk12.org/pcenter.htm](http://www.smsdk12.org/pcenter.htm)

## **About St. Mary's School for the Deaf**

*St. Mary's School for the Deaf (SMSD) is a private, state-supported school that serves deaf, hard of hearing and functionally deaf children from infancy through age 21. There is no tuition charge for New York State residents. SMSD has been the primary source of quality education utilizing the full spectrum of communication modes since 1853.*

## Mission Statement

St. Mary's School for the Deaf is committed to providing equitable access to exemplary educational programs that prepare deaf students to be self-directed, lifelong learners, who are productive members of society.



## Family Center

*"Communication Says It All"*



2253 Main Street  
Buffalo, NY 14214  
(716) 834-7200 (V/TTY)  
(716) 335-9612 Video Phone

## Programs

### Sign Classes

Classes are offered to parents, family members, staff and others using both group and individual methods. The sign classes consist of four levels; Novice, Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced to meet your personal needs. In addition, Spanish sign classes are also available.

### Shared Reading Program

The Shared Reading Program is a nationally acclaimed program that helps promote early literacy in young deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The successful program brings together tutors with families and caregivers to teach effective strategies for reading books with children using sign language. Individualized sessions are facilitated by our sign language teacher together with our Parent Educator.



## More Programs

### Silent Dinners

We give hearing families & deaf families the opportunity to interact as well as, improve their sign language skills in a relaxed atmosphere. You can enjoy a delicious meal and take part in special activities.

### Educational Toy Lending Program

Our program promotes social family interaction while using signed communication at a comfortable level. We use educational games that foster effective sign communication at home.

### ASL Story Time

The program emphasizes the importance of literacy, as well as bringing Deaf awareness to our community. Story time offers our students and siblings a relaxing time of sharing and visual learning.

It is a time to bring the siblings and share a story in American Sign Language followed by the completion of a craft for the little ones. These activities are typically done on a monthly basis throughout the school year.

### Family Learning Day

Families can take part in our Family Learning Day, designed to continually support and foster growth within our students.

### Grandparents Day

St. Mary's appreciates our students' grandparents and recognizes them in an annual luncheon.

## Education

The purpose of the Parent Center at St. Mary's School for the Deaf is to serve as a connection between home and school. We provide a variety of resource materials that assist in the many choices and challenges that comes with raising a deaf child. These materials and classes foster improved communication in the home and school by using the Total Communication approach.

### Total Communication:

Total Communication is a communication strategy that utilizes any, and all, appropriate communication processes to enhance communication between people. This can include signing & talking at the same time, signing, speech reading, use of residual hearing, writing or other modes used to enhance the understanding of the topics/ideas/messages being communicated.

*Total communication simply means equal access to communication for all!*

