

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet DeaFestival-Kentucky set for Labor Day weekend

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FRANKFORT, Ky. – Labor Day weekend comes to life, complete with a voyage around the world, non-stop performances and dozens of art exhibits at the eighth DeaFestival-Kentucky on Saturday, Aug. 30.

The one-day event, which celebrates the language, culture and diversity of the deaf and hard of hearing community and its contributions to Kentucky's cultural heritage, is scheduled from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. at the Kentucky Center and Belvedere in Louisville. The event is free to the public thanks to generous sponsor and public support.

DeaFestival-Kentucky is expected to lure more than 10,000 people to Louisville's downtown on Saturday, while WorldFest, a partner with DeaFestival for the second time, could draw an additional 60,000 for the weekend. The biennial festival is a joint effort of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) and the Knowledge Center on Deafness (KCD). KCDHH is an agency in the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet.

“DeaFestival gives people who are deaf and hard of hearing a great environment to showcase their community, language and talents, while giving the hearing community a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture and artistry of people who are deaf and hard of hearing. People who attend will gain a better understanding and appreciation of this diverse population,” said Governor Steve Beshear.

DeaFestival-Kentucky celebrates the language, culture and diversity of the deaf and hard of hearing community and its contributions to Kentucky's cultural heritage. The family-friendly event features three primary programs – SpotLights; “Around the World in 80 Minutes,” a children's program which offers an international glimpse into deaf and hard of hearing cultural differences; and the Elizabeth “Cookie” Williams Art Studio, a venue that showcases the unique and professional works of many deaf and hard of hearing artists.

Exhibitors and craft/hobbyists also will have items for sale. All performances are presented in American Sign Language (ASL) with interpretation into spoken English for festival goers not fluent in ASL. For the first time a portion of the event will be streamed live via the Internet.

“The DeaFestival is a wonderful educational experience for adults and children who want to learn more about the culture and language of people who are deaf and hard of hearing. It also gives people in the deaf and hard of hearing community an opportunity to celebrate their language, gifts and contributions to society,” said Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Secretary Helen W. Mountjoy.

A complete schedule for DeaFestival, as well as performer information, directions to the event and live streaming information, may be found on the DeaFestival Web site (www.deafestival.org)

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The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has spent a quarter century providing effective and efficient leadership, education, advocacy and programs to eliminate barriers and to meet the social, economic, cultural and intellectual needs of deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians.