

New England Center for the Deaf, Inc.

“Communicating a better future”

FY2025 Annual Report



Table of Contents

Table of contents	1
Introduction and brief history of NECD, Inc.	2
Board of Directors and Bios	2-3
Meet the new Director	3
Activities	3
Strategic plan update	3
Facilitated Trainings	4
Advocacy	4
Fundraising	5
e-Encounters	5
2025 Joseph H. Weingart Memorial Scholarships	5
2024-2025 Private Donors and Corporate Sponsors	6
FY 2025 Financials	7-8

New England Center for the Deaf, Inc. originated in 2011 as a result of the tragic loss of a young man in the Deaf community. This loss illuminated the need for comprehensive Deaf – understanding social services, and thus NECD, Inc. was formed. The founding members, Tracy Knight and Joseph Sisk recruited the Board and thus New England Center for the Deaf, Inc. was created.

Since the formation of the board and the Incorporation in March of 2011, we have moved forward in our development. In 2012 we were granted our 501 C 3, Federal recognition as a non-profit agency. Our Board currently consists of 4 members, 3 of whom have been involved since the inception of NECD, Inc. and our newest member joined us this year. Our Board members are very committed to our mission and come to us from a variety of backgrounds. All board members bring specific strengths and benefits to the Board and to the agency.

We are very proud to introduce the current NECD, Inc. Board of Directors.

Tracy Knight: Tracy is the CEO and President and co-founder of NECD, Inc. Tracy has her BSW from the University of Saint Joseph (formerly St. Joseph College) and her MSW from Fordham University. She recently earned her Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) credential. Tracy is the mother of a Deaf son. Tracy has been connected with the Deaf communities in Missouri, Kansas and Connecticut for almost 35 years. During this time, Tracy served on the Region 5 Council of Developmental Disabilities, the Southwest Missouri Task force on Autism and is a former member of the Parent Advisory Committee at the American School for the Deaf. She is currently working as a Therapist.

Joseph Sisk: Joe is the Chairman/COO and a co-founder of NECD, Inc. Joe has his BA in Psychology from Bard College and his MA in Psychology from The New School for Social Research. He has subsequently earned his License as a Professional Counselor and he is a Nationally Certified Counselor and holds his Specialty Certificate in Substance Abuse. He is also a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional. Joe has over 35 years of experience in the field of human services. In addition to his responsibilities at NECD, Inc., Joe currently works full-time at another social service agency in Connecticut.

Christopher Knight, Jr.: Chris (Cj) is a Director on the NECD, Inc. board. He is Deaf and is fluent in American Sign Language. After growing up in Missouri and being educated in the mainstream through elementary school, his family moved to Kansas where he attended the Kansas State School for the Deaf. He graduated from middle school at KSD. Chris came to CT where he attended the American School for the Deaf and graduated with his high school diploma. Since graduation he has obtained his veterinary assistant certificate from Tunxis Community College.

We are very proud and pleased to announce the addition of Ashley Melendez to the NECD, Inc. Board of directors. **Welcome to the NECD family, Ashley!**

Ashley Melendez: Ashley identifies as a Latina woman with a hearing impairment. She was born and raised in Connecticut and graduated from Wethersfield High School. Her passion for helping others and giving back to her community has been a driving force throughout her life, especially during challenging times in her young adult years. Ashley is the only member of her family with a hearing impairment. Ashley's cultural volunteer work has allowed her to actively engage in community service throughout the Greater New Haven area in Connecticut, promoting and celebrating the Puerto Rican culture. During her college years, she attended Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in upstate New York and Gateway Community College in New Haven, Connecticut to pursue her career in psychology and business administration. Eager to complete her education, she plans to continue her studies.

ACTIVITIES

We again were able to offer to provide to the community Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets this year to assist individuals with Deaf household members. This support was made possible only through your donations.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This year we were focused on facilitating the NECD, Inc. Strategic plan. We created a first responder's Communication Card. This is an 11" X 17" laminated card with which will assist first responders (Police Officers, Ambulance and EMT workers, etc.) to become aware and to better communicate with individuals who are Deaf during emergency situations. We are very excited to have distributed these cards (with a dry erase marker included) to first responders throughout all of the 6 New England states.

We also distributed this card to Hospital Emergency Departments to better assist them in serving patients who are Deaf and who come into their departments seeking assistance.

We have received some very positive feedback. One example is that from the Police Department in Manchester, New Hampshire. They distributed the Cards throughout their department to areas where they have frequent contact with the public, and over 330 employees have been introduced to these cards. They had indicated that: *"The cards have been immediately well received, and there have already been several comments on how they may prove beneficial to us."*

The Boston, MA EMT Services was also very happy to receive the cards. They requested an additional 80 cards so that they could outfit all of their emergency vehicles with this tool!

We are proud to be partnering with first responders and other medical providers throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island. There was no

charge to the recipients for these cards. The cost was absorbed by the agency and made possible through your donations to help those individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing throughout New England.

Trainings

The Boston, Massachusetts EMT Services contacted us requesting that we facilitate a training for their incoming new class of EMT trainees. We were more than happy to oblige. We created and presented a PowerPoint presentation on Understanding the Deaf Community. This included discussions designed to normalize deaf individuals and reduce the stigma that often accompanies those who communicate in this different style. We also created this training to better explain their cultural identities and the Deaf culture. We ended the presentation with a discussion of communication; how do people who are Deaf communicate and we reviewed the Communication Cards that we previously provided. These cards are not meant to make communication seamless with people who are Deaf or those unable to verbally communicate due to an emergency situation. However, the use of the cards reflects respect for those who communicate differently and shows a real attempt to communicate with all individuals. These cards and the commitment of the Boston EMS to train their staff will also serve to improve community relationships.

ADVOCACY

This year we provided the following assistance:

We received communication from a State of CT worker asking for assistance with a young man who is Deaf in regard to employment assistance. In their searching, they found nothing but dead ends for services that could assist this young man. In fact, they expressed: *“Many of the staff do not speak sign language or even have peers for this young man to communicate. I am finding it very disheartening.”* This is why NECD, Inc. exists, and we were able to make a number of referrals for them to pursue.

A Deaf woman reached out for help. She was feeling depressed and possibly suicidal. We referred her to and assisted her in engaging in therapy services and connected her to AA meetings in her area.

FUNDRAISING

NECD, Inc. has completed our annual appeal letter writing campaign. As always, we thank our loyal, generous and supportive private contributors.

New England Center for the Deaf, Inc. continues to be a recipient of an annual grant from the Town Fair Tire Foundation. This year it increased and is now being administered by the Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund. We thank them for their work in assisting non-profits across the country.

NECD, Inc. also is an annual recipient of a donation from the Zach's Family Foundation and continues to receive support from them. They generously donate 10X Chai. In the Jewish religion, Chai is 18 and is a symbol of 'life'. Donations are often made in increments of Chai.

This year, we also showed an increase in our budget by about 25% as compared with last year. Although our goal was a 50% increase, the trend is in the right direction.

e-NCOUNTERS

We are committed to maintaining our web site, twitter account and Facebook page. Our web site is maintained and is current with news and agency activities.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

Joseph H. Weingart Memorial Scholarship

This year, NECD received a record number of applications for the Joseph H. Weingart memorial scholarship. The candidates were all very strong. Due to the generosity of our donors, we were able to offer four awards to the top four candidates including a first-place award of \$1000 awarded to an exceptional young woman named Kathryn Byxbee of Greenwich, CT. Katie is attending Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) -- the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) to major in Engineering. There were also three runner-up awards. The first was for \$750 awarded to Abigail Previlon who will also be attending RIT-NTID to major in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. Michael Bueso received \$500 to assist him as he attends RIT-NTID for Illustration Design, and Lori Hylinski who will be attending Northwestern Connecticut Community College to become a certified Deaf Interpreter also received \$500. Please get to know these awardees by visiting our web site where you can meet them and learn more about them.

New England Center for the Deaf, Inc.

2024-2025 Contributors

The Board of Directors and Management of NECD, Inc. wishes to thank all of those people and businesses, large and small, who have helped us with financial contributions allowing us to assist individuals and families. Without your generosity, we would not have been able to facilitate the building of, and the continued life of NECD, Inc. Thank you all!

Friends **\$1-\$99**

Leanne Dillian
Carolyn Gold
Kathleen Macdonald & Patricia Eshelman
Dominick “Fred” Reisen

Sponsors **\$100-\$499**

Elizabeth and William Cheney
Daniel and Kristen King – Woofer Audio/Video Electronics
Ann Z. Levinthal and the Hon. John Newman
Anonymous
Zach’s Family Foundation

Donors **\$500-\$999**

Gerald and Anne Levinson

Patrons **\$1000-\$4999**

Town Fair Tire Foundation via Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund

Benefactors **\$5000-\$9999**

Endowers **\$10,000+**

Corporate Sponsorship

Foundations that supported NECD this year:

Town Fair Tire Foundation via the Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund
Zachs Family Foundation

Financials

FY 2024-2025

Beginning balance: **\$6462.57**

	REVENUE	EXPENSES
FY21 Personal Donations	\$1338.45	
Network for Good	\$	
Corporate donations		
Big Y (Community Bag Project)	\$ 41	
Stop & Shop (CBP – Simsbury 0522)	\$	
Big Y Cares Blooms event	\$	
Town Fair Tire Foundation Grant	\$2500.00 via BOA Charitable Giving	
Zachs Family Foundation	\$180.00	
Events		
Donations/raffles		
Supplies		
Food/Ice		
Administrative expenses		
Meeting dinner		\$41.32
Secretary of State (annual filing)		\$50.00
Supplies (Amazon envelopes, markers, Velcro for CommCards)		\$68.56
Walmart (USB Drive)		\$8.38
Travel		
Postal costs		
PO Box renewal		\$268.00
Stamps/Mailings		\$247.95
Other administrative		
Agency Cell Phone		\$371.04
Grant station		\$
Web Site expenses		
Domain		\$14.95
Web site (2 years through Dec 2026)		\$612.57
Promotional items		

Advocacy

Seat Belt Covers		\$
First Responder Communication Cards		\$303.12
First Responder Communication Cards (2 nd run, Boston EMS)		\$347.55
ASL books		

Client services:

Holiday baskets		\$
Other food for families		
Joseph H. Weingart Memorial Scholarship		\$

TOTALS:	\$10522.02	\$2333.44
Ending balance:	\$8188.58	