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Contact: Bridgetta Bourne-Firl, Outreach Division

Phone: 510.794.3707 or 866.809.9424

Email: bfirl@csdf-cde.ca.gov Fax: 510 794 2577

Celebrating 150 Years of Excellence in Education

California School for the Deaf ~ 1860-2010

A School That Teaches Children to Think

Fremont, California – September 2009-May 2010 - - The California School for the Deaf (CSD) has been educating Deaf and Hard of Hearing children successfully for 150 years, it is a school that teaches children to think. Over the years, successful graduates of CSD have entered a great array of professions.

“Our mission is to ensure that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students receive the best possible education, enabling them to reach their full potential while preparing them to function effectively and to become contributing members of society,” said Dr. Henry Klopping, School Superintendent.

The 150th celebration runs through the school year with the first big event being held in October 2009. Media groups are welcome to come to CSD anytime throughout the school year.

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#### A Historic Overview of California School for the Deaf by Kenneth Norton

On May 1, 1860, a rented home in San Francisco became the first school with Theophilus d’Estrella, the first of three students. In 1869, a new school opened on the foothills of Berkeley. During a windstorm on January 17, 1875, the new school, only six years old at that time, was destroyed by fire.

In 1885, Principal Warring Wilkinson published the *Daily News*, the school’s first newspaper that has now become *The California News*.

From 1877 to 1929, red brick buildings were built for the educational center, dormitories, and annex. In the years following, new building plans were halted by the Depression of the 1920s. It was not until 1950 that the new buildings were built.

In 1980, the school moved to Fremont due to an earthquake fault under the Berkeley campus. The Fremont campus has transformed into a lovely environment that has become internationally renowned in the area of Deaf Education. CSD continues to make the necessary changes that offer students the best and most relevant education. CSD continues to be the best educational opportunity for most Deaf and Hard of Hearing school-aged children in California. Now, CSD has entered its 150<sup>th</sup> year of existence!

For anyone wanting to interview further about the school’s history, Kenneth Norton and Dr. Henry Klopping will be available for interviews. Please contact Bridgetta Bourne-Firl at [bfirl@csdf-cde.ca.gov](mailto:bfirl@csdf-cde.ca.gov) to make arrangements.

## American Sign Language in Use for 150 Years

### Regardless of Various Philosophies and Approaches Over the Years

In spite of a myriad of educational philosophies and approaches over the years at CSD, including total communication philosophy, Rochester's method, simultaneous communication, Signing Exact English, American Sign Language (ASL) has been the language used among students and staff since 1860 when the school was founded. In the olden days, American Sign Language was called "Ameslan." Early in its history, CSD used Total Communication in the classrooms.

Ken Norton explained, "My parents in the 1900s at CSD used sign language all the time but they took lip reading and speech lessons at the school. Rochester method was never rigidly used but the students at that time did fingerspell often as a part of their conversation."

The first teacher was deaf from New York and used sign language with the first students. Principal Warring Wilkinson, who reigned over CSD for 44 years, was a proficient signer. According to Ken Norton's historic book on CSD (page 3), "Dr. Wilkinson surpassed himself in the exhibition of his mastery of sign language while addressing the Association."

### About California School for the Deaf

The California School for the Deaf has an international reputation for its high quality educational program. CSD is a fully accredited, state-funded school for students who are deaf/hard of hearing living in Northern California.

Course content based on state standards for public schools are taught through American Sign Language and English, allowing students full access to learning in all core subjects. Career programs are tailored to student interests and abilities. Students have full access to campus activities including athletics, academic competitions, student body government, Scouting, clubs, drama, yearbook, and Web team.

Teachers and staff members are bilingual users of American Sign Language (ASL) and English, providing students with constant exposure to language and culture. The school also provides them with the technology that Deaf and Hard of Hearing people use in their daily lives. Students develop ASL and English skills to the maximum extent possible. Credentialed and highly qualified teachers use methodology and technology designed for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Experts in learning strategies, media, career, literacy, student outcomes, diversity, and Deaf Studies support classroom learning. Articulated/spoken language teachers, on-site licensed pediatric audiologist and language pathologist work directly with students and families.

The Outreach Division provides services to CSD and non-CSD families with deaf children. Please contact the school at (510) 794-3707 for further information or visit the student-produced website: [www.csdf.k12.ca.us](http://www.csdf.k12.ca.us)