

T R I P O D  
SUPPORT COMMUNICATION EDUCATION



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## MISSION STATEMENT

TRIPOD is committed to developing, demonstrating and disseminating an effective public school program for educating deaf and hard-of-hearing children with their hearing peers.

## OUR BEGINNING

TRIPOD was founded in 1982 by the mother of a young deaf boy to meet the complex educational needs of deaf children and their families.

With the support of two well known educators of the deaf from California State University at Northridge and Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and with the help of community leaders and educational professionals, TRIPOD established an educational program where deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing children learn together in co-enrolled classrooms.

In February of 1984, with just four children, the first TRIPOD Montessori Preschool opened its doors in a small house in West Hollywood, California. The TRIPOD Model School Program grew grade by grade along with its first student, and currently serves over 120 children from birth through high school in public school classrooms.

Today, deaf and hard-of-hearing children are co-enrolled with their hearing peers and siblings in a Total Communication setting where language is not a barrier. In this natural environment, hearing children model spoken language for deaf children and all children develop sign language skills together. Classes are team taught by regular and special education teachers.

In June of 1998 seventeen years after TRIPOD's creation, the founding student graduated from Burbank High School along with his friends, both hearing and deaf. The TRIPOD Model School Program is recognized world wide and is replicated in numerous public schools throughout the country.

## THE PROGRAM

TRIPOD, a model educational program for deaf children and their families, is a unique public/private partnership with the Foothill and Pasadena Special Education Local Plan Agencies (SELPA's). It is located in four school sites within the Burbank Unified School District in Burbank, California.

## THE PARENT-INFANT/ TODDLER PROGRAM (PIT)

HORACE MANN CHILDREN'S CENTER  
*Ages Birth to Three*

When a child is diagnosed as deaf or hard-of-hearing, hearing parents mourn the loss of the child they thought they had...a hearing baby. They soon realize they are unable to communicate with their child. How will their child know loving lullabies or simple explanations of the world? The family has entered a foreign realm where normal parenting often collapses. It is at this time that the parents have the greatest need for psychological support, and it is crucial that this support is offered to the whole family, not just the deaf child. The PIT program focuses on reestablishing a healthy parent/child interaction. Parents and teachers work together to integrate the deaf child as a full member of the family. A teacher of the deaf with an early childhood background provides weekly home visits to each family. Instruction is provided in oral and/or sign language methodologies. To compliment the Home Visits Program, TRIPOD offers parents a weekly morning support group facilitated by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. In this setting, parents meet other families facing the same challenges and are able to interact with other parents, both hearing and deaf. They also observe their child relating with hearing and deaf children, which enhances communication development. The challenges of being a deaf parent of a hearing child, a hearing parent of a deaf child and a deaf parent of a deaf child, are all addressed in the TRIPOD PIT program.

## MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

HORACE MANN CHILDREN'S CENTER  
*Ages Three to Six*

The preschool and kindergarten focus on the education of the whole child, a classic Montessori philosophy which includes developing social skills as well as academics. In addition, Montessori philosophy emphasizes the importance of language development through both aural and visual language skills. The hearing children co-enrolled in the TRIPOD Preschool program include

hearing siblings of deaf TRIPOD students and hearing, signing children of deaf staff. In this co-enrolled environment, the interaction between deaf and hearing children allows for socialization, friendships and acceptance.

## THE ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

GEORGE WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
*Grades One through Five*

With a ratio of two to one, hearing and deaf children are co-enrolled in public school classrooms. These classes are team-taught by a general curriculum teacher and a special education teacher of the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Each classroom employs a Total Communication philosophy, with both teachers speaking and signing simultaneously. The hearing children develop sign language skills and help deaf children develop a sense of belonging and peer group support. The hearing classmates also model spoken language. As with the preschool and kindergarten, the social interaction between the hearing and deaf children in the classrooms and on the playground helps foster acceptance and tolerance.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

JOHN MUIR MIDDLE SCHOOL  
*Grades Six through Eight*

Continuing with the co-enrolled classroom philosophy, middle school deaf students are offered the same opportunities for entrance into all curriculum courses, and may also participate in their choice of extra-curricular activities - the same choices given to their hearing peers. These activities may include: dance, cheerleading, drama, band, and chorus. Total inclusion fosters acceptance and greatly enhances self esteem at an otherwise challenging and trying time of life.

BURBANK HIGH SCHOOL  
*Grades Nine through Twelve*

The TRIPOD program continues co-enrolled classrooms at the high school level, offering total curriculum choices to the deaf students, and broad extra curricular opportunities. In addition to the types of activities students enjoyed in mid-

dle school, TRIPOD's Burbank High School students can play high school level sports and compete in the National Deaf Academic Bowl. All of these activities enhance social and emotional growth through continued interaction with hearing and deaf peers, and help provide TRIPOD students with a fulfilling and rewarding high school experience.

## INCLUSION OF SIBLINGS

At TRIPOD, hearing siblings who live in the SELPA district have the opportunity to be enrolled in the program at the PIT and pre/K levels. This option supports communication between siblings and exposure of siblings to other deaf children. The hearing children benefit both academically and socially from routine exposure to sign language.

## WHAT DOES TRIPOD PROVIDE?

In addition to expertise in deaf education, the following special services and educational support staff are key components of the TRIPOD Educational Model Program:

- American Sign Language Classes for families and friends
- In-Home Family Sign Program for new families
- Full and part-time Teachers' Aides
- Full and part-time Special Education Teachers of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
- Interpreters
- Moving Ahead Specialist
- TRIPOD Captioned Films
- TRIPOD Parent Association

## FAMILY SIGN PROGRAM

The ability of a family to communicate with their child is basic to their child's development. Deaf and hard-of-hearing children, 90% of whom are born to hearing parents, begin life with the tremendous barrier of not having a common language. The young child who fails to develop some language capabilities will be severely impaired in their ability to learn to read and write. Deaf children who have not acquired a linguistic symbol such as American Sign Language (ASL) and/or English, begin school with profound deprivation of language and learning skills. It is not surprising then, that many deaf children perform far below grade level in school. TRIPOD's Family Sign Language

Program provides *free* in-home ASL classes to families new to the TRIPOD program, for 30 weeks during their first year of enrollment in TRIPOD. Families may also invite extended family members and friends to participate in the class, *at no cost*. The instructors are generally deaf students enrolled in California State University, Northridge. In addition to the instruction which they provide, these young deaf people serve as role models for the families.

## TRIPOD CAPTIONED FILMS

TRIPOD Captioned Films (TCF) is a non-profit, community outreach project of the TRIPOD Model School Program in Burbank, California. The only source for first run Open Captioned feature films, TCF brings together Hollywood studios, national movie theatres and a captioned film audience of over 28 million deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans.

Box office hits including Titanic and Episode I - The Phantom Menace are among recent films that have been captioned. TCF currently distributes over 50 films each year to over 250 cities nationwide. Studios participating include Buena Vista Distribution, DreamWorks, MGM/UA, New Line Cinema, Paramount Pictures, Sony, 20th Century Fox, Universal, and Warner Brothers.

If you are interested in bringing a captioned film to your community, please call TCF at (818) 972-2080 (voice or TTY). For more information, check our website at [www.tripod.org](http://www.tripod.org).

## OUTREACH:

Each year, TRIPOD welcomes over one hundred visitors from around the world including: parents, teachers of the deaf, Special Education Directors, and State School Superintendents. One of our goals is to make the TRIPOD Educational Model, currently replicated in several school districts across the country, a standard for deaf education nationwide.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The TRIPOD Friends: A support group that assists TRIPOD through volunteer and fundraising activities.

Each spring the TRIPOD Friends Award Luncheon honors individuals who have made significant contributions to education, the community and deafness.

## RESEARCH GOALS

TRIPOD intends to document the success of the deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the TRIPOD Educational Model School through the publishing of research reports which would include information on academic performance and a cost/benefit analysis. TRIPOD also plans to continue to enhance the TRIPOD Educational Model through ongoing deaf education research.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING

You can insure a bright future for the children of TRIPOD with your financial support. TRIPOD is supported by individual donations and grants from foundations and corporations. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. For more information about making gifts, please contact the TRIPOD office at (818) 972-2080.

## MILESTONES

- Sept. 27, 1982* TRIPOD is incorporated as a non-profit organization.
- July 1983* The TRIPOD GRAPEVINE, a national toll-free hotline, begins taking calls.
- Feb. 1984* Montessori Preschool Program opens, serving children 2 1/2 to 6 years old.
- Sept. 1986* Mainstream Elementary School Classroom is established at P.S. #1 Elementary School in Santa Monica, California.
- Sept. 1987* Montessori Parent-Infant/Toddler Program begins serving families with children ages birth to 3.
- Aug. 1989* Private/public collaboration begins with the Burbank Unified School District.
- TRIPOD serves as a clearing house to have first run films open captioned and available to deaf audiences nationwide.
- Sept. 1990* The Model Elementary School full-inclusion program expands from one team-teaching classroom to all grade levels at Washington Elementary School (a California Distinguished School Award recipient in 1995).
- Sept. 1991* The model full-inclusion programs expand to 6th grade at John Muir Middle School (a California Distinguished School Award recipient in 1994).
- Sept. 1992* Tulare County Office of Education, in conjunction with Tulare City Schools and Santa Ana Unified School District, implements TRIPOD/BUSD full-inclusion model.
- Oct. 1992* Metrolink (commuter rail service) becomes available for TRIPOD students.
- Feb. 1993* Family Sign Foundation is established to provide all first-year families with free in-home sign language classes.
- April 1993* The opened-captioned film project becomes an official outreach service known as TRIPOD Captioned Films (TCF).
- Sept. 1993* The TRIPOD/BUSD Model program is recognized as a regional program serving Burbank, Glendale, La Canada and Pasadena Unified School Districts under the administration of the Foothill and Pasadena Special Education Local Plan Agencies.
- Sept. 1994* The educational model expands to 9th grade at Burbank High School (a California Distinguished School Award recipient in 1992).
- Sept. 1996* The TRIPOD Grapevine, a national toll-free hotline for information on parenting and educating a deaf child becomes the House Ear Institute LEAD Line through a friendly takeover. From its inception in 1983 to 1996, the Grapevine responded to over 8,000 calls from parents and educators.
- Sept. 1997* The Foothill and Pasadena SELPAs/TRIPOD model program for deaf and hard-of-hearing children now serves children from birth through 12th grade. Several schools in California and across the United States are replicating the TRIPOD educational model program.
- Jan. 1998* TRIPOD Captioned Films and TRIPOD establish a website, [www.TRIPOD.org](http://www.TRIPOD.org) to disseminate information on captioned film screenings and the model program.
- June 1998* TRIPOD's first graduates participate in commencement exercises as members of Burbank High School Class of 1998.
- Feb. 1999* Formation of TRIPOD Captioned Films Advisory Board.



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