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Barbie Celebrates 50th Birthday

Barbie has had over 100 careers, including ASL teacher

For Immediate Release – March 3, 2009

Columbus, OH – As Barbie celebrates her 50th birthday next week, it’s amusing to look back on the 100+ careers she’s had. From ballerina to presidential candidate, Barbie has inspired multiple generations of girls to dream, discover and explore a world without limits. In 2001, Barbie became an American Sign Language Teacher. The doll came with teaching accessories such as a chalk board and stickers depicting more than two dozen words in sign language. Barbie’s right hand is shaped in the sign for “I love you.”

This Barbie is particularly special to Columbus Speech & Hearing Center employee Marlan Toman. Though Marlan was an adult when this doll was first introduced, because she is Deaf, she was thrilled to own one! Now, this Barbie is a collector’s item that can be hard to find.

“I was particularly excited when Mattel created the Sign Language Barbie because of the inspiration it provides to young girls who are Deaf,” said Marlan.

Just like Barbie, the Columbus Speech & Hearing Center teaches American Sign Language (ASL). Community Classes are available for individuals ages 16 years and older. Classes for varying skill levels are offered, including ASL I, II, III and Conversational Sign. Each ASL class lasts two hours and is held for eight weeks. New classes begin continuously throughout the year.

For more information about ASL classes offered through the Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, call 614.263.5151 or visit www.columbusspeech.org.

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, founded in 1923, is a non-profit United Way organization serving more than 10,000 people annually. Services include hearing evaluations, hearing aids, speech therapy for children and adults, occupational therapy and treatment, and vocational services for people who are Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf and Deaf-Blind through the Comprehensive Program for the Deaf and Ohio Deaf-Blind Outreach Program. Generous charitable giving from the community help offset the cost of the Center’s valued services for low-income families.