



HANDS & VOICES Hands & Voices of Oregon February 2011

Executive Director's Letter

Dear Hands & Voices Family,
It seems that in everything I read lately the same statement is made: deafness is about communication; its not about a disability or silence. Since my oldest was first identified with her hearing loss I have had the privilege of talking with many deaf adults. A year ago I interviewed three deaf adults from Oregon School for the Deaf. One of the questions I asked everyone during that interview was why Deaf Culture is so strong. The answers were the same, communication. Sometimes as parents we grieve our children's hearing loss, spend a lot of time in the role of advocate and often forget to consider that our kids are kids first, and they just communicate differently than typically hearing kids. And if our kids use technology, they are able to communicate orally like their hearing peers. Deaf and hearing children do not differ in their ability to process information, only in the means in which they communicate the information. Having read this same information in several places in a short period of time, I can only assume I needed the reminder. If my kids were hearing kids I would communicate with them, as deaf oral kids, I think I talk with them more! Communication is the key to happy relationships, literacy, and to our kids.



Here at Hands & Voices we have some events coming up. In the Portland are we have our Parent Group meeting this Saturday. The time has changed to 10am which will hopefully make it easier for most!

Eugene is working on a monthly parent group - details to come.

Hands & Voices is coordinating two fundraisers this year; the first will be a run/walk event on May 14th at Champoeg Park. We will have a 1 mile family walk/run, a 5k and a 10k. Champoeg Park is a great venue for this event, with the Willametter River, wetlands and forest. It'll be great for kids, walkers and runners. Mark your calendars, all the details will be sent out shortly!

Regards,
Helen Cotton Leiser

Parent Group Meets

Parents mark your calendars:
Saturday, February 12th
10am-11

Portland area parent group.
All parents of deaf/hh children welcome!

Tucker Maxon School
2860 SE Holgate
Portland, OR 97202

Free childcare available, ASL Interpreter available. Meet upstairs from the gym.

Save the Date!!!

1st Annual Run for H&V
Date: May 14, 2011

Location: Champoeg Park
Come out with your family and friends for:

1 mile family walk/run
5K walk/run
10k walk/run

Come walk/run along the Willamette River and wetlands on paved and trail roadways.

More details to come.....!!!

Quick Links

www.handsandvoicesor.org
www.artzcenter.org
www.ndepnow.org

Executive Director

It's that time of year when schools begin holding open houses. As a parent who's child will mainstream in two years we are in the process of interviewing schools. Below is a list of questions to consider when looking at schools:

School Interview:

Individual Interviewed: Teacher/Deaf Ed

Teacher/Itinerant/Special Ed Teacher/Other

Describe their experience with deaf/hard of hearing children

Communication mode used in the classroom

Average speaking/signing distance between the teacher and student

Number of children who are typical language models

Amplification used/available

Related and support services

Has had training with deaf/hard of hearing?

Speech/language therapy?

Occupational/physical therapy?

Educational Audiology?

Deaf/HH support services?

Classroom Observation

1. Is the room size conducive to learning?

2. Is the room adequately lit?

3. Is the ambient noise level in the classroom at the recommended level?

4. Are noise sources in the room minimized?

5. Does noise from adjacent rooms (hallways, etc) spill over into the classroom?

General Learning Environment

1. Does the teacher use a variety of techniques to elicit positive behavior from the students?

2. Is there a schedule showing the daily schedule?

3. Is there a behavior management system in place that provides clear structure for the class and consistent rules?

4. Does the teacher use lesson plans to direct the course of the day?

5. Are activities modified to meet a variety of children's needs?

Instructional Style

1. Classroom discourse and language

a. Are teachers and other adults good language models for the children?

b. Is language consistently accessible to the children? (if sign is used, is the teacher certified to use ASL?)

c. Are peer responses repeated?

d. Is vocabulary and language expanded by an adult?

e. What is the teachers speaking style?

News

Check out the new information on our website www.handsandvoicesor.org

Enhanced GPS for the hearing impaired: University of Utah is studying the use of devices that are mounted to the steering wheel and pull skin on the driver's index fingertips left or right. Researchers are hoping the study will lead to new, touch-based directional devices for hearing impaired people.

New Federal Law: On October 8, 2010 President Barack Obama signed into law the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. The measure requires

smartphones, TV program and cable program guides and internet devices to be accessible to Americans with vision or hearing loss.

The Oregon Chapter of AG Bell is sending 10 kids to Camp Westwind June 26 - July 1 for a fun-filled week of activities, sand, friends, and fun!

Your child must have a moderate to profound hearing loss and be oral.

Please contact Kimberli Davenport for the registration form, which is due Feb. 15th. kim@tmos.org

"I am a genetic counselor and we were recently evaluating a delightful child who is deaf from a Spanish-speaking family. We had a great medical Spanish interpreter, but mother was also accompanied by a representative from H&V (GBYS

Parent Guide) who was invaluable, both to mother and to us. She clearly attends many appointments with mother and she was able to gently remind mother about things she may have forgotten and ask other questions that mother simply may not have thought to ask. She also helped mother brainstorm about reasons to and not to pursue genetic testing at this point." Kory Keller

Self Advocacy

1. What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-advocacy skills are needed by all students regardless of setting or age. Self-advocacy involves having a clear understanding of your needs and rights and knowing how to access services to meet those needs. If well-meaning adults, including teachers, interpreters, and parents tend to intervene to meet those needs, then the student may be missing out on opportunities to learn critical skills. Lack of independence and self-advocacy skills often leads to the unwanted traits of learned-helplessness, including a lack of self-confidence and poor problem-solving skills. Being able to appropriately and confidently advocate for one's needs is crucial for deaf and hard of hearing students.

2. Issues at the forefront:

Independence and self-advocacy skills include the ability to manage the communication dynamics in the classroom or among peers, time management and study skills, taking care of assistive technology needs, and taking an active role in the planning of one's own educational program and services. An example of advocating for communication needs might involve talking to the teacher about the use of an FM system and explaining the effect of background noise on comprehension. Rather than doing this FOR a student, parents and professionals should be equipping the student to do this independently.

3. What should every parent know:

- Building self-advocacy skills needs to begin in preschool and continue beyond graduation.
- Parents may need to take the initiative to ensure that self-advocacy issues are being addressed during educational planning.
- Be proactive by assessing a student's strengths and needs.
- Set goals based on the child's specific learning needs and include these in the child's Individualized Education Plan.
- Students are empowered when they are given responsibilities and held accountable for their actions.
- Allowing the student steadily increasing input and choice when planning programs

and services gives them ownership of their education.

The Beauty of Music by Helen Leiser

When our oldest was identified with profound hearing loss one of the first things my husband mourned and question was her ability to hear a violin in a symphony or the birds sing. I couldn't believe that she couldn't hear all the songs and books I had been reading to her since the day she was born.

Through the use of her cochlear implants she has been enjoying music for almost 5 years. I don't know if she can pinpoint a violin playing, but I am grateful she enjoys all kinds of music; from classical to nursery rhymes to rock.

Yesterday the drive home from school was tough. Ashlin was tired and Mikaylin had been sick. Ashlin had had a melt down and was quiet in the car. When one of our favorite songs came on the radio I looked in my rearview mirror to find her with her eyes closed, singing along to the music and totally in that wonderful space music can bring us to.

I smiled with gratitude that she was able to hear the music and that it was bringing her so much joy at a time when she needed it. I then thought back to the young men at Oregon School for the Deaf who were thrilled beyond belief to have a new sound system in their new digs - the joy on their faces... priceless!

Though Christmas is over my youngest still insists on singing Jingle Bells, along with the Alphabet and Bah Bah Black Sheep. We have a set of songs that we constantly sing. And on the days I don't feel like singing along, I remind myself how blessed I am to be able to sing along with my girls, even if I am singing Jingle Bells in July. She'll be well prepared for next Christmas!

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Hands & Voices of Oregon | 8316 N. Lombard, #381 | Portland | OR | 97203