

# WaveLengths



IDAHO HANDS & VOICES

March 2009

[www.idhandsandvoices.org](http://www.idhandsandvoices.org)

## **A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR IDAHO PARENTS!**

For the past several years, Hands & Voices National has organized a Leadership Conference in Colorado. As the national organization has grown, they've had to look for a venue that can accommodate a larger crowd, and have decided to start moving this meeting to other areas of the country. Because they have some grant money available to help state chapters send members to this conference, we've been able to send one or two of us each year. Those of us who have gone have not only come back with ideas to help us improve Idaho Hands & Voices; we also came back personally energized from hearing new information about raising kids who are deaf or hard of hearing and visiting with other parents from across the country.

This next summer Idaho parents have a golden opportunity to go to this conference. Not only is it being held at Lake Tahoe, a moderate day's drive from Boise, but Hands & Voices National is encouraging states to send more than one or two board members, opening it up to general Hands & Voices membership. The conference will take place June 18-20 (there will be one or two pre-sessions as well) and the registration fee of \$325 will include meals and lodging. There is no children's program, and if you want to make it a family vacation, just be sure that one spouse or other child care provider can disappear with the kids for a couple of days so that the parent(s) attending the conference can do so without distractions. If you want to go but don't have the \$325 or the gas money, we should be able to find funding for a couple of people—first priority to parents who would like to take on leadership positions in the Idaho chapter, because this conference is the best way to get started. Please let Lorna Irwin know *just as soon as possible*—we also want to try to organize a carpool to Lake Tahoe to save travel costs and share the driving. Call (208) 324-7544 or email [niwri2@msn.com](mailto:niwri2@msn.com).

## **PROPOSED LEGISLATION WOULD CHANGE OVERSIGHT OF DEAF & BLIND EDUCATION**

February 19 we sent out an email to those of you on our distribution list to alert you to Senate Bill 1074. This has now reached the Senate floor and may well have been voted on by the time this newsletter gets out, after which it will go to the House. If enacted, it would take oversight of programs for education of students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired away from the State Board of Education and establish an Idaho Bureau of Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind (IBESDB) with its own board of directors. (The Board of Education would still be responsible for setting broad policy.) Later in February, the bill was amended to change the make-up of the board of directors to give seats to more stakeholders. The board would be chaired by the Superintendent of Education and the other members would be as follows: one specialist in deaf or blind education; one special education director; two citizens at large; one parent; one adult who is deaf or hard of hearing; and one adult who is blind or visually impaired. We urge you to go to [www.legislature.idaho.gov](http://www.legislature.idaho.gov) to read more about this bill and track its progress (type S1074 in the search box) and contact your legislators about it.

## **QUEST 4 ARTS POSTPONED**

Quest 4 Arts, a week-long arts experience for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, will be rescheduled for fall 2009. The organizing committee ran into unforeseen logistical problems and the economic downturn complicated matters further.

## ISDB SUMMER CAMPS CANCELLED

Like every other Idaho agency, ISDB faces a large budget cut due to the current economic problems. Much to the disappointment of staff and dismay of students, both deaf and blind components of the summer camp have been cancelled, as well as the summer skills development program for younger blind/vi students. ISDB has put in a request to the governor's office for some of those federal stimulus dollars, along with every other agency in the state. Superintendent Mary Dunne says that while ISDB hated to see these programs suspended, they will be the easiest to put back into place when the funding becomes available again. (That could even happen this summer if they get a huge miracle surprise windfall, but they're not counting on it.)

In the meantime, there is a low-cost out of state alternative for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Last summer Holly Thomas Mowery's son spent a week at Camp Taloali in Stayton, Oregon and she was very impressed with the program there:

### CAMP TALOALI - A MUST-DO!

from Holly Thomas-Mowery

We took a leap of faith last summer and sent Jordan off to his first deaf/hard of hearing summer camp experience at the tender age of six. To top it off, our camp of choice was all the way in Stayton, Oregon, right outside of Portland. We had heard such positive things from past campers, parents and staffers of Camp Taloali that we felt this venture was worth making happen for our son.

Week-long camp story short: Jordan had a blast. It was an incredible experience. He's talked about going back ever since. What makes Camp Taloali so unique is that it is completely open to ages 6-18 *who sign only, kids who speak only, kids who speak and who sign, kids who cue, AND to hearing siblings and friends*. Talk about an inclusive environment! The activities are great - including rock climbing, indoor swimming and totem-pole carving. The counselors are themselves deaf, hard of hearing or CODAs who are great role models in independence, creativity, and positive life choices. The counselors receive intensive training and are fully engaged in the kids' activities. Jordan's counselor's name was "Panther."

The Lions Club of Oregon (and I think this year the Lions Club of Idaho too) donates generously so that camp is affordable. For just \$30 (thirty dollars!), your child can enjoy a weeklong adventure in the Oregon forest. Camp Taloali has three sessions: August 2-8, August 9-15, and August 16-22. Children may attend one, two or all three sessions. Please visit Camp Taloali's website at [www.taloali.us](http://www.taloali.us) or email Sylvia at [camptaloali@comcast.net](mailto:camptaloali@comcast.net).

Logistics: we drove to Portland on a Friday and spent the night, then dropped off Jordan the next morning to start his first full day. Gratefully, Jordan's grandparents (Ron's folks) drove to pick up Jordan at the end of his week and bring him back. If there were enough Idaho families interested, we could arrange carpooling to and from camp! Feel free to contact us at [holly.thomasmowery@gmail.com](mailto:holly.thomasmowery@gmail.com).

(It's been about 15 years since my daughter (and hearing son) attended Camp Taloali. It was a great experience then, too. The totem pole carving is at least partially to blame for her garage full of woodworking projects. Alternative logistics: Drop your kid at camp and spend a week yourself camping in the mountains or at the beach. -Lorna Irwin)

## THEATRICAL DOINGS

Deaf Center of Idaho has partnered with Music Theater of Idaho and the Idaho Shakespeare Festival to increase the number of theatrical sign language interpreters, and thus the number of interpreted performances. They will be setting up teams of experienced and inexperienced (but nationally certified or equivalent) interpreters who will work together at several performances this summer. You can visit

[www.mtionline.org](http://www.mtionline.org) and [www.idahoshakespeare.org](http://www.idahoshakespeare.org) to learn more about the plays planned and (later) which ones will be interpreted.

Not content with audience and/or interpreter roles, Holly Thomas-Mowery and Davina Snow are climbing up on stage with the Alley Repertory Company for "Love Person." A co-production with East Indian Follies Theater Company, "Love Person" brings two couples and three cultures together, and uses English, Sanskrit, American Sign Language and projected e-mail to explore how love transcends sexual orientation, physical attraction and social structure, and rests instead on the ways in which people communicate. The play opens on March 20 and runs March 21, 22, 25, 26, 27 and 28. All performances begin at 8 pm with doors open at 7:00 at Visual Arts Collective (VaC), 3638 Osage Street, Garden City, behind Woman of Steel Gallery, one block north of Chinden. Tickets are \$18 and can be reserved on ART's new website, [www.alleyrep.org](http://www.alleyrep.org) (launching in early March), or by calling 208.388.4ART. Advanced tickets are available through TicketLeap at [www.visualartscollective.com](http://www.visualartscollective.com), or can be purchased at the door. VaC is a 21 and older venue and valid IDs are required. Beer, wine and snacks are available. There will be a special preview performance at no charge on March 19<sup>th</sup> for the Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Deaf Center of Idaho and the communities they serve, with a hosted talk-back session after the play, interpreted by ASL interpreter, LaVona Andrew.

Keith Wann, a comic who specializes in storytelling and comedy geared to the deaf culture, will come to the College of Southern Idaho Fine Arts Theater at 7 p.m. Monday, April 6. Born as a hearing person to deaf parents, Wann grew up experiencing both the hearing and deaf worlds, hence the title of his show "Watching Two Worlds Collide." CSI Sign Language instructor and program facilitator Dawnette Reis describes the one-man show as entertaining for both deaf and hearing audience members. CSI students with current ID are welcome to attend at no charge. Tickets for the community will be available at the door for \$5 each. For more information, contact Reis at 732-6881 or at [dries@csi.edu](mailto:dries@csi.edu). More information about Keith Wann is available at his website, [www.keithwann.com](http://www.keithwann.com).

## ACTIVITY REPORTS

February 28 it was "Hands and Tales" in Boise, featuring "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" using cued speech transliteration, ASL interpretation, and even a couple of young men using props to help with the storytelling. Children had the chance to make their own books to take home to practice retelling the story. Seven families attended as well as several high school students who are currently enrolled in a ASL class. Thank you to Idaho Community Foundation and the Garden City Library for making the event possible. We plan to have another "Hands and Tales" in April or May.

Region 5 had a Valentine party at the Jerome Library February 14. Seventeen kids made valentines and frosted and decorated cookies as parents looked on and visited with each other. ISDB Parent Liaison Renee Higbee is extending her event-planning reach to the Magic Valley, so we hope to have some joint ISDB/Hands & Voices gatherings in the near future.

We'll continue to email news of family events to everyone on the distribution list, just in case you're planning a visit to another area of the state or get so excited about our plans that you decide to drive on over. If you don't have email and want to be notified of happenings in your area, let Lorna (208 324-7544) know and she will call you.

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*This issue of "Wavelengths" will be mailed along with the "Communicator" to all our members. If you have not been getting "Wavelengths," let us know. You may have signed up to receive it via email and for some reason that delivery is not happening. Email is generally faster, if you have a reliable address that you check regularly. Let us know how you prefer to receive "Wavelengths."*