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IDAHO HANDS & VOICES March 2011

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

## **NEW! "FIRST YEAR FREE" MEMBERSHIP**

Thanks to Idaho Sound Beginnings, we can now offer families a "first year free" membership in Idaho Hands & Voices. If you have a child under 18 years old who is deaf or hard of hearing, and have been receiving the local newsletter (or no newsletter at all) but are not yet an official member, this is your chance to receive a year's worth of the national newsletter as well. A membership form is attached to the email version of the newsletter. Fill it out and send it in today to start receiving the information-packed "Communicator" and other benefits of membership!

Thank you to everyone who renewed their paid or scholarship memberships for 2011, and in some cases sent us an extra contribution. If this has slipped your mind, it's never too late. Check your next "Communicator" (an issue is on its way) --your membership officially expires/expired in December of the year in the upper right corner of the mailing label.

## **NEW WEB PAGE FOR IDAHO H&V COMING SOON**

For some time our web page has been languishing for lack of a knowledgeable webmaster. Enter Shannon Garlitz (trumpet fanfare) and we expect to have something worth looking at within the next month. The address will not change, but the content will be up-to-date and we expect to add more new features and keep it up-to-date with her help. Thank you Shannon!

## **UPDATE**

In our September issue, we featured an article by Catherine Parker, a Boise-area teen who has been chosen as a member of the United States Deaf Swimming (USDS) National Team, which will be competing at the World Deaf Swimming Championships in Portugal this August. She is the youngest member of the 24-person team, and the only one from Idaho. She has qualified for seven different events and is currently putting in 20,000 yards of practice per week! Because the USDS does not receive any financial support, she needs to raise money to cover her own expenses at this event, \$4000. If you can help her, send a check to US Deaf Swimming Inc., 9310 Topanga Canyon Blvd. Suite 210, Chatsworth CA 91311-5713 and write "Catherine Parker" in the memo line of the check.

## **NEW BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

Jerry Wilding and Richard G. Lee, M. D. are the newest members of the Council for the Deaf and hard of Hearing (CDHH) board. Mr. Wilding is serving as a member who is deaf; he taught science and coached track and field at ISDB for 37 years, and has been active in the Idaho Association for the Deaf and Deaflympics for many years. Dr. Lee is serving as a member who is a physician; he is a pediatric ENT specialist and staff member at Eastern Idaho Medical Center in Idaho Falls, in association with ISU to provide cochlear implant services to the region. He has a special interest in facial plastic and reconstructive surgery.

## **The CDHH is searching for a parent of a child who is deaf to fill the remaining vacancy on the board.**

The Council meets four times annually. The Council pays for travel, lodging and meal expenses. "The position of Council member is one of leadership and includes the power to establish policy and govern. Such leadership implies the acceptance of a high commitment to work for the broad purposes and the objectives of the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. A council member's wisdom, counsel, and support are vital to the success to the mission of the Council." For a full list of Council member responsibilities, please go to the CDHH website ([www.cdhh.idaho.gov](http://www.cdhh.idaho.gov)) and follow the link to the March e-newsletter. This information is on pages 15 and 16. On second thought, go read the newsletter anyway, and sign up to have it delivered to you! There's a lot of information from around the state.

## UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

**Idaho Parents Unlimited** has a monthly support meeting at their offices in Boise at 500 South 8th Street the second Wednesday of each month, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. It's a little too late to get this month's information into this newsletter, and next month's is not yet available, but if you are interested, check the IPUL website at [www.ipulidaho.org](http://www.ipulidaho.org). You can also sign up to get announcements from them directly.

**Elks Hearing and Balance Center Workshop** 510 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Boise, from 6:00 – 7:00 pm. March 15  
A Parent's Perspective: Hints and Tips for Managing Family Life with Hearing Loss, presented by Shannon Garlitz, mother of three children, ages 7, 4 and 2, all of whom have hearing loss. Managing four cochlear implants, two hearing aids, an FM system and all the components and accessories can be quite a challenge. Shannon has found some clever and effective ways to deal with equipment, multiple appointments and challenging listening environments. She'll share her ideas and suggestions on managing it all for travel, school and family outings.

**Deaf Center of Idaho Easter Egg Hunt** Saturday April 16, 10:00 am to noon (hunt starts at 10:30!) Storey Park at Franklin Rd and Main St in Meridian. Signing Easter Bunny! All ages welcome. To donate candy or prizes or help with preparations contact Tara Adams at [tarainboise@yahoo.com](mailto:tarainboise@yahoo.com).

**Idaho Hands & Voices informal meeting** for parents and others interested in helping us revitalize our chapter Thursday, March 10, 6:30 pm at St Lukes Meridian, Paiute Room (basement.) Learn more about H&V, tell us what you'd like to see us doing, and find out how you can help us do it. We'll have pizza! RSVP to Lesa Coleman, 939-3969.

**PARTNERS Now! Conference** sponsored by Idaho Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Idaho Association of the Deaf, Deaf Center of Idaho and Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing August 11-13 in Boise. "People and Resources Together: Nurturing, Empowering, Respecting & Succeeding." For more information, go to [www.idahorid.org/conference](http://www.idahorid.org/conference). More details will be available later this spring.

**Idaho Shakespeare Festival** is once more offering sign language interpreted performances. (They also have an assistive listening system.) These dates are not yet marked on their calendar, but come to us courtesy of Holly Thomas Mowery. Mark your calendar--individual tickets go on sale March 30. More information, call 208-429-9908 or go to [www.idahoshakespeare.org](http://www.idahoshakespeare.org).

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| June 14   | <i>The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged</i> 8:00 pm |
| July 12   | <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> 8:00 pm                            |
| July 26   | <i>Cabaret</i> 8:00 pm  |
| August 10 | <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> 8:00 pm                            |
| Sept 14   | <i>The 39 Steps</i> 7:30 pm                                       |

**Deaf Awareness Day at Roaring Springs Water Park** July 23 2011, 400 W Overland Rd, Meridian. This is another "mark your calendar" event. We should have more information in our May newsletter.

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## IDAHO PARENT AT THE EHDI CONFERENCE

by Shannon Garlitz

The Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was held in Atlanta, GA on the 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2011. As the mother of three late-identified children with hearing loss, I had the honor of attending the conference representing the parents of Idaho's children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

My children (six, five and two years old) all passed their newborn hearing screens. I was initially hesitant about attending the conference simply because my only knowledge of EHDI was that they provided the basic infrastructure and support to hospitals for newborn screenings. Since we were past that phase it was unclear to me what my family could bring to the table for EHDI and the State of Idaho. Not to mention, our newborn screenings happened to be the best and most unquestionable experiences we had in our hearing loss journeys.

Luckily, prior to attending the conference, I had the opportunity to meet and receive input from other Idaho parents who had devastating newborn screen result experiences. I then realized that parents of children with hearing loss not only have a special need in common, they have a diagnosis story as well. A story that no matter how different leaves every parent with the exact same emotional response – devastation faced with the immediate question of what next?

At the conference, I learned there are a small handful of professionals, referred to as “Giants” in the EHDI world, who have dedicated their lives to making sure parents receive devastating diagnoses at the time of birth rather than three, four or five years later. Even though my news did in fact come later (first at two years old, then at four months of age, and finally again at 3.5 years old), at least I had a baseline because of the newborn screenings. I am grateful beyond words for the persistent arm-twisting of those “Giants” and continued efforts of others who follow in their footsteps.

Nothing can eliminate the harsh realities of what a parent feels at the time of diagnosis. However, “what next?” lasts much longer than that initial emotional impact and has the greatest influence on the future of our children. I don’t think a lot of parents know or understand how much of a role EHDI currently plays (or CAN play) in helping with those “what next” questions. The biggest surprise to me was the number of people out there committed to ensuring the success of our children with hearing loss. It was exciting to see the changes and progress that have been made over the last 10, 20 & 50 years in terms of identifying and providing early intervention services to deaf and hard of hearing infants and children. As much as it doesn’t feel like it sometimes, our children are very lucky! There is much more opportunity for them to meet their full academic potential than ever before.

We, as parents, are also lucky because we have an opportunity to embrace the hard work and dedication that has taken place before us, a movement that continues to strive for excellence daily. Again, as much as it doesn’t feel like it, we are truly not alone. EHDI’s mission is to set standards, establish goals to shape the future, and to help guide the “what next?”. Parent input and participation are invaluable components to this process.

For example, now that a family receives the diagnosis within an appropriate time period, how can the information be delivered in an effective manner without traumatizing the family before leaving the hospital? How can the nursing staff or pertinent service providers relay the extreme relevance of follow-up testing on babies with high risk factors? How can parents be told a mild hearing loss doesn’t necessarily mean it will have a “mild” impact on their child’s academic future? Or, just because a child failed a hearing test does NOT mean THEY (or the parents) are a failure. Parents who have experienced these situations are the keys in answering the questions.

Howard Rosenblum, the CEO of the National Association for the Deaf (NAD), eloquently suggested that expectations should not be lowered for children with hearing loss. Success has no boundaries if limits are not placed. Instill dreams and confidence will follow. I would also urge parents to not lower expectations for themselves. Step out of your comfort zone and get involved. Whether it’s as simple as joining a local/national association (such as Hands & Voices) or as complex as organizing a parent get-together and/or attending an EHDI conference, networking and educating yourself will go a long way in shaping expectations and outcomes.

As I learned at the conference, EHDI does not end with identification. It is a stepping-stone in developing partnerships and building long lasting family support, which ultimately will lead to the success of our children.

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The next issue of *Wavelengths* will appear sometime in early May. Please send in stories, book reviews, helpful hints, whatever you have to share. To contact Lorna Irwin (editor) for any reason: niwri2@msn.com or (208) 324-7544. We're still looking to contributions to our series "Fun Stuff to Do with Your Kids."

**AND DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**