

New Officers for Idaho Hands & Voices

Our President, Shannon Garlitz, moved to Oregon some time ago and has been valiantly trying to fulfill her responsibilities from there. She's frequently in Boise for her kids' appointments, and the internet brings us all close together, but Oregon has been discovering her talents and demanding more of her time. Our Vice President, Laura Bainbridge, recently had a baby AND started graduate school, and for some reason didn't think she'd have time to take over the position. At our last meeting we talked two of our newer board members, Diana Collins and Alyssa Frahm, into taking over the offices of President and Vice President. Shannon and Laura will continue to provide support during the transition period, and Lorna Irwin and Tara Pichette will continue as Secretary and Treasurer for the sake of continuity.

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We've enjoyed some well-attended family events this fall. North Idaho H&V partnered with IESDB and the Coeur d'Alene school district for a Halloween party that was a smashing success! We enjoyed pizza and lots of crazy zombie style games! Thanks North Idaho families for joining in on the scary fun. Magic Valley H&V had the usual pumpkin-painting party, and more pizza was consumed at this one. At both events the kids had fun while the adults got a chance to visit with each other.

The second annual golf scramble was another big success! Thanks to everyone who helped organize it, donated raffle items and worked the day of the scramble. Thank you also to all the sponsors and golfers! This fund-raiser will allow us to do even more, so if you've been thinking about volunteering your time to help make events happen for families in your region (or even if you haven't been thinking about it), contact us now. We're especially in need of volunteers in the eastern part of the state.

Idaho H&V partnered with IESDB, Idaho Parents Unlimited and the Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to hold an advocacy workshop for parents, to learn about advocating for your child during an IEP or 504 meeting, November 8. IESDB is planning to take this workshop to other areas of the state; we'll keep you updated via our calendar and Face Book page.

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Captions Start to Catch up with Technology

Virtually all television broadcasts are now close-captioned, and now those captions must also appear when programs are distributed on the internet (web-only programming, or clips edited for the web are not covered under the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act.) The deadline set by the FCC was September 30 of this year; providers argued that they needed more time, but the FCC is sticking with the original deadline, with one exception. Distributors of TV content will have to render basic closed captions, but they won't have to provide the raw captioning data to the web video player to allow for further customization. The original FCC rule included a mandate that would have allowed consumers to change the font size and color of captions to improve readability. These requirements now have been postponed until January of 2014.

Book Review

The Parenting Journey: Raising Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

As the mother of a deaf toddler, I read everything I could find. I read scholarly articles, trying to glean the "best way" from the research being done. From there I turned to books full of professional advice and conference workshops. I wanted to do everything I could for my child--and often felt I was falling short. I read the personal stories that other parents and deaf adults had written, which often carried a strong message about the success experienced with this method or that.

The Parenting Journey is a book I wish I'd had as a young parent. Many of us who've attended national Hands & Voices Leadership Conferences have met Deaf Mom/H&V national board member/barefoot waterskiier/author Karen Putz, or attended one of her workshops, and it will come as no surprise to find her new book very enjoyable and infused with the Hands & Voices spirit. While she tells her own story of raising three children with hearing loss, she incorporates the stories of many other parents, making it clear that all children are different, even within the same family, and that there is more than one "right way." There are no diagrams of the ear, no explanations of the audiogram, no analysis of communication choices. This is a book about parenting, and the issues we all face, no matter what communication mode we favor or what kind of educational program our child attends.

It's also not about ideal parenting, but the realities--the piles of unwashed laundry and children bouncing off the walls, the unrecognized problems, the choices that didn't lead to success, denial, guilt, stress, and joy, love and humor. You'll recognize your own experiences as you read this book, and be better able to appreciate what you've done right, as opposed to where you've fallen short. As Karen says, "*Don't sweat the small stuff.* And remember to laugh in the process." (Available at amazon.com)

--Lorna Irwin

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UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

(detailed information about many of these events can be found on the calendar on our webpage; also check the calendar for events that may not be publicized yet.)

North Idaho Deaf Club has a number of upcoming events. Some take place at short notice, so to be sure not to miss any, contact Darcy Sinsley (darcysinsley@yahoo.com) for more information and/or to get on the email list for notifications. There will be bowling December 1 in Spokane, and a Christmas party co-sponsored by the Hearing Loss Center of Spokane and the N. Idaho Deaf Club.

Interpreted performances of "Hamlet" at the Spartan Theater on the Spokane Falls Community College campus, Friday November 16 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, November 18 at 2:00 pm; donation of \$8 at the door, box office opens 1/2 hour before the performance.

Annual Holiday Party for families of children with hearing loss, Saturday, December 8, 10:00 am to Noon, Elks Rehabilitation Hospital, Boise - 4th Floor Bitterroot Room. Crafts, snacks and caroling! RSVP to 489-4999; let us know if you would like an interpreter present.

LIBRARY! Preschool Storytime In partnership with the public libraries, Mikkel Nelson with IESDB will be offering sign support while the librarian reads stories to 3-5/preschool age groups. A language craft activity will be provided after the storytime. All families are welcome!

Meridian Library, 1326 W. Cherry Ln: November 15 and 28, 10:00 am

Nampa Library, 101 11th Ave S: December 5 and 12, 2:15 pm

Boise Library at Collister, 4724 W. State St: January 9, 16 and 23, 10:30 am

Idaho Parents Unlimited (IPUL) workshops and webinars: For more information and to register, go to www.ipulidaho.org or call (208)342-5884. Keep up with IPUL events at their website and Facebook page.

Is Your Child the Target of Bullying? This workshop is designed to introduce parents and professionals to a range of intervention strategies that can be used by the parent, child, family and school. Statewide webinar Wednesday, November 14 9:00 - 10:00 am; workshop Wednesday, November 28 in Lewiston, 4:00 - 5:30 pm, location to be determined.

Planning for a Healthy Transition (Support group) Monday, November 19, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, 500 S 8th St, Boise.

IPUL Mini-conference planned for Coeur d'Alene, March 19-20. Northern Idaho families, mark your calendars!

WOW! Idaho Hands & Voices is planning a weekend Family Camp for next September. We are in the process of securing a camp in the McCall area so travel will be easy for both the north and south members. This will be a Friday and Saturday night stay with each family staying in their own family room or cabin. We will spend lots of time getting to know each other and comparing notes on how to raise a child with hearing loss. We also will have to opportunity to improve family bonds by participation in ropes courses, canoeing, archery and more! Stay tuned; more information will be coming out soon.

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My Journey into Hands & Voices

by Diana Collins

As a mother of three-week-old baby girl, who had just been diagnosed with a moderate to severe hearing loss, I spent the next few months in somewhat of a dream state. Aside from all of the typical stresses of having a newborn (lack of sleep, reacquainting myself with changing diapers and that little blue bulb thing for sucking out boogers, dealing with two other small children, keeping up with the mounds of laundry, and did I mention lack of sleep?!), I was also dealing with a wide range of emotions stemming from the diagnosis: guilt, sorrow, fear and inadequacy. It wasn't long before I got over a few of those emotions, but feeling inadequate and overwhelmed stuck around for a while.

There is such a plethora of information available for families with hearing loss. From the very beginning, I remember being so confused about what was best for Adelaide. I heard what felt like a THOUSAND acronyms and unfamiliar terms. There was talk of Regions, Service Coordinators, Outreach Consultants, Audiologists, Pediatric ENTs, Infant Toddler, ISDB (and JUST when I got that one down, they changed it to IESDB), IFSP, and IEPs. The terms HH, D/HH, ASL, Signed English, Cued Speech, AO and TC were thrown in weekly, it seemed. Was it any wonder that I missed H&V?

I didn't become familiar with Hands & Voices until about a year and a half ago. I'd heard from a few professionals that worked with Adelaide that I ought to get involved in the organization. I'd met Shannon when Adelaide was less than a year old, so when I heard that she was President, I was excited to see what this was all about. I attended a few board meetings and was impressed with the goals of the organization; they just made sense: "What works for your child is what makes the choice right." I think that most of us have experienced some type of bias at one time or another in our lives; when that bias is directed towards choices that you feel you are making in the best interest of your child, it feels ten times worse. I loved that the founders of Hands and Voices recognized that, and created a parent-driven organization where families can find support and understanding, regardless of the communication mode used.

Although I wasn't a board member yet, Idaho Hands & Voices had funds available for me to go to the Leadership Conference held in Hood River, Oregon in June. Aside from the gorgeous scenery, and the fantastic company (Shannon Garlitz, Laura Bainbridge and Karrie Pargman were all in attendance), I was

so impressed by the conference. From the minute we arrived, I knew this was something special. There were people there from all walks of life, using all different types of communication, but that didn't **stop** the communication. Hands & Voices says they are an unbiased group, and after attending the conference, I definitely believe they are. There were hearing, hard of hearing, and deaf presenters that used a combination of Signed English, ASL, Cued Speech, or had interpreters.

I attended classes on the fundamental values and beliefs of Hands & Voices, learning how to support families without bias, and sat through a very interesting lecture on progressive hearing loss by Dr. Christine Yoshinaga Itano, a professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder. I also met several other parents, each with a different story to tell, but each sharing a common bond: having a child or children with hearing loss. It was fascinating to listen to each story, and learn about what worked for their child, and how that differed 180 degrees from another parent's story, and yet see both parties come away with a greater appreciation of the different choices that are available to all of us in this challenging (and rewarding!) experience of raising a child with hearing loss.

I joined the board shortly after I returned from the Leadership Conference, only to be roped into the presidency four short months later! I don't know what happened, either! All joking aside, I'm humbled at the opportunity and excited to work with our great families across the state. And now I need help from you, dear reader! What would you like from us, as a board? What types of activities would you like us to organize? What kind of services would you like us to offer? How can we best serve you, and your family? Please know that we LOVE any and all feedback! We are a quick e-mail message or phone call away, so please don't hesitate to let us know if we can do anything for you. On that note, we'd like to send each of you the very warmest holiday greetings, and wish you the very best for the year to come.

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Health insurance policies generally do not cover hearing aids, which is one of the more unpleasant surprises many of us encounter early in our experiences as parent of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. Several states have responded to lobbying by parents of children with hearing loss by mandating that hearing aids be covered, at least for children (there are generally some limits on that coverage, but something is better than nothing, and may greatly reduce the hit to the family finances.) One of our members, Andrea Amestoy, is exploring the possibility of getting a bill of this sort introduced in the Idaho Legislature. One thing she knows she will need is stories--evidence that the need is there--so she would like for anyone who's been in this bind to contact her with his or her story. You can contact her at andrea_corn@yahoo.com or (208)866-5180.

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You, too can contribute to "Wavelengths!" Send material to niwri2@msn.com, or call Lorna at 324-7544. We love stories, anecdotes, tips, book and product reviews, announcements of upcoming events, whatever you have to share. Don't like to write? We can interview you and write an article, subject to your approval.

And while we're in the announcement business, check the mailing label on your last "Communicator." There should be a date in the corner. If that date is 2012, your membership in Idaho Hands & Voices is about to expire! All memberships expire at the end of the last full year after they begin. Make sure you continue to get the "Communicator" by renewing now, before you forget. You can do this easily by going to idhandsandvoices.org, or call Lorna at (208)324-7544. Thanks! You just saved me the work of sending out a renewal notice!