

WaveLengths))))))))))))))))))))))))))))))

IDAHO HANDS & VOICES January 2012

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Hands & Voices in Motion!

Treasure Valley Hands & Voices families were quite active during December, with a visit to Bodies In Motion (A little H&V member in motion, at right.) A report of two more events from Andrea Amestoy:

A small group of Hands and Voices members rendezvoused for some Christmas cheer over the holiday. We painted ornaments, sipped cider and snacked on treats while listening to Christmas music. The adults and children imbibed in good old fashioned conversation.

The children did some creative painting and we all realized how relaxing it is to recreate and paint. After we were finished decorating our ornaments, we headed over to the family reading series at The Morrison Center. There we took in Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol". True to tradition, old English was in use as the actors did a phenomenal job performing this classic. Afterwards, we were fortunate enough to get a picture with these class act actors. This proved to be a festive holiday activity. As 2012 presses on, I'm personally looking forward to it again next Christmas!



Thanks to our very successful golf scramble, we have funds to help support family activities in other parts of the state. Our need is for a few volunteers to organize events! Please contact us if you're willing to help.

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Looking Forward to 2012

by Shannon Garlitz, IDHV President

Idaho Hands & Voices had a busy 2011. With the addition of four new board members last Spring, we were able to implement the rollout of a new website, begin a series of monthly family events in the Treasure Valley and recruit new members from all around the State. One particular highlight we were very excited about was the success of our First Annual Golf Scramble fundraiser.

The benefits received from the Scramble will allow us to approach 2012 with a whole new perspective ... money in the bank!

Thanks to the generosity of Idaho Sound Beginnings - EHDI offering a First Year FREE (FYF) family membership, we had 29 new families sign up last year. Twenty of those in the last three months! With the continuation of the FYF program and implementation of a renewal campaign, we are sure to grow our membership to new highs in 2012.

There will be a IDHV board meeting on Jan 18th to vote on our 2012 budget and to discuss a new Regional Activity Plan (RAP) for the year. Each regional will be allocated money based on membership numbers for family activities.

My family was able to travel to North Idaho this past November to connect with other families in Regions 1 & 2. Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf (IESDB) outreach consultants Regina Ochs and Emily Donaldson helped coordinate events. We had a great turnout and the kids, per the usual, had a blast! I hope to make it back up there at least once this year as well as over to Idaho Falls.

If you have a need for a family event or a parent meeting and don't see one on the calendar in your area, PLEASE let us know. Outreach and membership are two of our biggest goals for 2012. We'll be working on connecting with our parent consultants which are located in each region of the state and develop Regional

Activity Contacts (RAC) who will help coordinate regional activities. Even if you just want to talk one-on-one with another parent but don't know where to find one, we can help set that up!

Hands & Voices is far reaching. There are more than 40 chapters in and outside of the United States. The H&V National/International Conference will be held in Hood River, Oregon on June 22 - 24th this year. I can't stress enough what a WONDERFUL experience it is to gather with, share stories, laugh and maybe even cry a little with parents of children with hearing loss from all different backgrounds, cultures, communication modes and methodology. It can be a very powerful two days out of out of a busy year to stop, reflect and rejoice about the decisions you've made for your child(ren) and learn more about what others around the country are doing for theirs.

Did you know Hood River is only about at six hour drive from Boise? Or, an even faster airline flight from Spokane or Idaho Falls? Hood River also happens to be one of the most beautiful places in the world -- this coming from someone who tries to stay in and around the Pacific Northwest as much as possible. But still, if you've never been... it's a must see and experience type of place. We can help send you there! Let me know if you are interested in joining me and others from Idaho or want to learn more about an unforgettable experience at the H&V Conference.

If you can't tell, I am very excited for what 2012 is going to bring for our H&V chapter. As always, my family and I look forward to meeting new members and re-connecting with ones who (are not old) have been around awhile.

Help close the gaps in early identification--several opportunities for parent involvement:

Idaho Sound Beginnings (ISB), Idaho's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (EHDl), is looking for a few good men and women throughout the state to be parent ambassadors and educators.

It may be hard to believe, but there are still hearing screening staff who believe that their job is to ensure all babies 'pass' the screening (so as not to worry parents) and there are health care providers who tell parents "not to worry", or "there isn't anything that can be done now anyway"!

In 2010, 41 infants were diagnosed with hearing loss in the state of Idaho directly from newborn hearing screening, but almost 400 other infants who "referred" never received audiologic testing. These are the babies that ISB works to find.

Each year, ISB travels to various regions throughout the state to conduct trainings for hospital and midwife screening staff, early intervention personnel and physicians. We would be delighted to have regional parents of children with hearing loss participate in these in-services. Your valuable input, experience and stories have a profound and lasting impact on these healthcare providers. Having a parent at these training opportunities brings meaning, relevancy and real life experiences to the newborn hearing screening they do on a daily basis.

Idaho Sound Beginnings provides screening equipment, updates, data management, screening training and follow up reports to Idaho birthing hospitals and midwifery centers. In addition, we follow up with those parents of babies who refer, those diagnosed with a hearing loss and those who may have certain risk factors that put them at a higher risk for late onset hearing loss. Idaho Sound Beginnings works closely with hospitals, midwives, audiologists and early intervention specialists to ensure that every baby born in Idaho is screened for hearing loss at birth and if diagnosed, are given appropriate intervention opportunities and support.

"The Reason to Screen is to Intervene"

Stipends are available to compensate travel costs and food. Please contact Andrea Amestoy at 208-866-5180 if interested.

Idaho Sound Beginnings is also in need of a parent representative to serve on the Advisory Board (quarterly meetings beginning Jan 17, approximately 2 hour meetings) and is hoping to identify a parent who can participate in the National EHDl conference on March 5-6 in St. Louis. All reasonable travel expenses will be covered, i.e. food, shuttle, airfare-just not first class.) \$475 will be available for travel expenses prior to the conference and the remainder of the expenses can be submitted for reimbursement.

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.)

Idaho Hands & Voices Board Meeting Wednesday, January 18, 7:00 - 9:00 pm, Elks Hearing and Balance Center, 510 N 2nd St, Suite 201, Boise. This meeting will focus on budget and calendar year planning for 2012. Please contact us if you are interested in coming.

The Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is sponsoring a legislative breakfast Thursday, January 19, to acquaint legislators with the Council and the issues that are faced by persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Idaho Hands & Voices will be one of the organizations to have an exhibit table in the Capitol Rotunda that morning from 8:00 until noon.

Under Construction: High School Day February 29, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm at the College of Southern Idaho. Sponsored by CSI and the Magic Valley Transition Team, this event is designed for students who want to learn more about how to get and use the accommodations needed in higher education; this would include students using a 504 plan to support their access to K-12 education. There will also be an information session for parents, teachers and counselors of students getting ready to transition into college. Application deadline February 1. For more information, contact Ann Flannery at (208)732-6257 or ann.flannery@iesdb.org, or Sandy Hacking at (208)735-2500 or Sandy.hacking@labor.idaho.gov.

Idaho Assistive Technology Project: Tools for Life Fair March 5 and 6, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at Wallace High School in Wallace, Idaho. More information and registration at www.idahoat.org. Registration is \$75 (includes lunch both days) or \$50 early bird registration before January 15. Stipends are available for high school students. Tools for Life is for anyone who has an interest in supporting individuals with disabilities as they transition from school to life. This includes secondary educators, post-secondary educators, special educators, therapists, counselors, service providers, job developers, other rehabilitation specialists, and especially secondary students with disabilities and their families. Throughout the two-day event, there will be presentations by regional and national experts on issues surrounding secondary transition and assistive technology. An Exhibitor Hall will be open both days to allow agencies and vendors the opportunity to promote their organizations, share resources, and showcase their newest products. (This event is coming to Boise in 2013.)

Upcoming IPUL Workshops:

January 11 Monthly Support Group 6 – 8 pm "What is a Medical Home?" at the Boise Office, 500 South 8th Street

February 18 "Success with an IEP" 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Sandpoint. Contact Lorisa Wellock (208-305-7511 or lorisa@ipulidaho.org) for more information.

Elks Hearing & Balance Center Parent Education Series held the second Tuesday of each month; RSVP (208) 489-4999.

"Listening and Spoken Language Strategies to Maximize Hearing with a Cochlear Implant" January 17, 6:00 - 7:00 pm, 510 N 2nd St, Suite 201, Boise; also February 21, 6:00 - 7:00 pm, 172 2nd St N, Nampa.

Panel discussion with cochlear implant users--"How hearing loss affects me" March 20, 6:00 - 7:00 pm, 510 N 2nd St, Suite 201, Boise.

Treasure Valley Hands & Voices Family Events

Play Time at Just Kid'n Around, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, 2374 E Cinema Drive, Meridian, Saturday, January 21. (Bogus Basin tubing originally scheduled for this date, but they have no snow yet!) If we get RSVPs by the 20th for ten kids or more, we can get the group rate of \$4.75 per child. Otherwise prices are higher and

depend on the age of the child; see the website at www.justkidnaround.net. Help get the lower price by emailing Laura at ljbainbridge@gmail.com if you plan to come.

Bogus Basin tubing on Saturday, February 18, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm. Members can enjoy the Bogus Basin tubing hill at a discounted price. The cost is \$5 per person for Hands & Voices members/families. The tubing hill offers an 800 foot downhill slide with a tow rope to take you back up to the top! This is one fun winter experience you won't want to miss! Tickets must be purchased in advance by Thursday, February 9. Do not register online at Bogus, as we already have tickets reserved through Hands & Voices. Please RSVP to Tara Pichette at (208)989-3087 or mypic@cableone.net (Bogus Basin Tubing Event in subject line, names of those coming in body of message.) Then mail your check to Idaho Hands & Voices, PO Box 9617, Boise, ID 83707.

The tubing hill is only reserved in two hour blocks of time. Please make sure your family arrives on time to enjoy the most of our available time. The Tube Hill ticket office, Nordic lodge and alpine lodges have snacks and drinks available for purchase. Feel free to bring along your own snacks as well. For more information about the Bogus Basin Pepsi Goldrush Tube Hill, including rules and suggested apparel, see their website: <http://www.bogusbasin.org/tubing/index.aspx>. Remember, you need to RSVP by February 9! Just email us to let us know you're interested. Come join the fun!

Second Saturday Series at the Foothills Learning Center, 3188 Sunset Peak Rd, Boise. These are hands-on learning sessions for families, no admission charge, all ages welcome, Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Hands & Voices will meet at the big dandelion sculpture out front at 9:50, so as to start at the beginning; then each family can stay as long or short as they like.

February 11: "Cold Play" Learn how birds and game animals adapt to the challenges of a harsh Idaho winter. Compare the pelts of deer in summer and winter. Find out how animals are adapted to the changing season.

March 10: "It's the End of the World as We Know It!" Hands-on activities showing the causes and effects of geologic hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and more. It will be fun for all ages to explore the tremendous power of earth's unstoppable forces.

Magic Valley Hands & Voices annual Valentine party at the Jerome Library, 100 1st Ave E in Jerome, Saturday February 11, 2:00 - 4:00 pm. Watch for a postcard or contact Lorna (324-7544, niwri2@msn.com) for more information. Depending on what we come up with for a craft project, we may need an RSVP and you may want to dress the kids in clothes that don't matter.

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Go TELL it on the mountain!

Andrea Amestoy and Amy Hardy

My four year old Ryder bounded out of the car and sped up the stairs with eager anticipation. Right behind him, I'm trying to keep up while schlepping my one year old Kylie. Was it an Elmo or Justin Beiber concert we were going to? No, it was TELL! Both Ryder and Kylie are hearing challenged (as I like to put it) and participated in the TELL program this past fall.

TELL or Toddler Early Language Learning is a fantastic program that we are so fortunate to have in the Treasure Valley. Taught by graduate students in the speech therapy program and managed by a speech therapist, TELL met twice a week for 1½ hours at the Idaho State University campus in Meridian. Each morning commenced with a half hour of speech therapy followed by an interactive play group where therapy was seamlessly intertwined with play. My children had no idea they were learning so much! Four children total participated in the program and each session brimmed with songs, dances, crafts, snack and activities that all encompassed listening, learning and speaking. This is Ryder's fourth session in TELL and I'm looking forward to many more with Kylie as Ryder segues into kindergarten next fall. --Andrea

Toddler Early Language Learning (TELL) group at Idaho State University (ISU) provides a high-quality program that offers children a structured preschool environment with directed and non-directed activities.

This balanced program contains developmentally appropriate activities that foster speech/language skills, social-emotional, intellectual, and creative growth. Children are seen for group sessions and then seen individually by our supervised student clinicians. This preschool group focuses on children with cochlear implants, hearing impairments and speech/language delays. Please call Cally Stone at 373-1723 or Amy Hardy at 373-1724 for questions about the program. --Amy

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Book Review

***Listening Closely: A Journal to Bilateral Hearing* by Arlene Romoff**

Arlene Romoff experienced progressive hearing loss as an adult, ultimately leading to deafness that hearing aids could no longer amplify. Her first book, *Hear Again: Back to Life with a Cochlear Implant*, highlighted her journey toward obtaining a cochlear implant. This, her second book, describes the struggles she faced when her single implant had an internal failure after 10 years of use.

Romoff journals the heartbreak of knowing her device had failed, the struggles associated with her weeks of returned silence, and the process of obtaining an internal component replacement. What evolves from this experience is her decision to go with bilateral implants.

The author shares her thought processes and personal pros/cons of going through an elective surgery to obtain this second implant. As a parent of a child with bilateral implants, it was easy to relate to the same decisional struggles, the questions, the “what ifs.” But what Romanoff does so well is highlight the slow progression of changes she experiences when given access to sound bilaterally. She is truly brought further into the hearing world in both subtle and significant ways with bilateral implants.

This is a great quick read to gain insight into what one experiences with the implant/re-implant process. It has helped me re-appreciate the benefits of hearing bilaterally, which I often overlook. And it is reassuring from a parental aspect to hear an adult’s perspective on the miracle of the cochlear implant. I recommend this book to those debating implantation for themselves or for a loved one.

review by Laura Bainbridge, IDHV Vice President

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Remembrances

by Mike and Andrea Amestoy

Oscar Wilde once said that “memory...is the diary we all carry about with us”. The Elks provided a fabulous opportunity to put these special memories into a book this past November. Ryder enjoyed a wonderful evening with Susie, Jennifer and Dad cutting out pictures to create memory book.

Each of these books provided relevant and meaningful language immersion and experience starring our children! We walked away with some new and creative ideas to use with Ryder and Kylie as we strengthen and broaden their vocabulary. Ryder took advantage of his communication skills, skills that Susie has helped develop, by talking everybody’s ears off. In the end, we had a wonderful evening together binding some memories while creating more.

Some ideas for other memory or experience book we would like to make include Ryder’s preschool at River Valley, hiking in the Boise foothills, the store, neighborhood, pool, bike riding on the Greenbelt, relatives in Montana, grandma’s house, doctor’s office, audiologist office and the staff that help him, camping, hunting, Ryder’s friends, boating and fishing, cooking and meals, bath time, Ling sounds (picture of kids with airplane, ghost, mouse, etc.), getting dressed and ready in the morning and getting ready for bed.

One of my favorite lyrics is from the song Bookends by Simon and Garfunkel that says “Time it was, and what a time it was, it was. A time of innocence, a time of confidences. Long ago, it must be, I have a photograph. Preserve your memories, they're all that's left you.” These memory books are but a small way to encapsulate if only for a moment this sweet time in your child’s life.

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The promised coming of "The Hobbit" to the big screen had our family remembering how Mom left Tolkien reeling in his grave after reading it aloud with on-the-fly simultaneous signed English translation (more later.) The hearing kid (now adult) who was subjected to this imperfect rendering remarked that "Reading time was glorious."

Reading time! That hour or so before bedtime when I read to my kids, everything from simple picture books to longer classic children's literature. For my deaf daughter, it was a chance to introduce new vocabulary, new concepts and information, as well as for entertainment. It was a means for me to learn new vocabulary, too; I'd do my homework ahead of time with a sign language dictionary and write tiny notes to myself (on post-it notes if the book was from the library, and once the book returned to the library, the post-it notes went up on the kitchen cupboards for review.) We've all heard or read about the myriad benefits of reading to children; there are also benefits for the parent, and more so for the parent whose child is deaf or hard of hearing. A simple children's book provides a script for practicing your own communication skills, whatever approach you are using with your child; it also gives you a chance to introduce modes of communication you may not use in daily conversation. Your child will ask for reruns of favorite books, so you'll get even more practice.

Some things I learned along the way: Preparation helps! Even for a straight read-aloud in your native language, being familiar with the story before you start enhances your rendition... and it helps to anticipate where you can stop and know that the kids will be able to fall asleep, but still be eager to find out what happens next. (Leave them at a real cliff-hanger, and they may be spotted reading the book for themselves. This is not a bad thing.)

Keep on reading as long as you can; don't stop when they are reading for themselves. They still enjoy it. (One week sometime after we'd finally ended nightly reading sessions, we had one of my daughter's classmates staying with us. She was visually-impaired and did not have with her any of her specialized equipment for reading, so I did what I could to alleviate boredom for her by reading a couple of books aloud. I noticed my hearing son sitting quietly behind my chair, listening to books I wouldn't have thought would be of the slightest interest to a ten-year-old boy.)

You never know what literature will appeal to your children, so read widely. It took me a long time to recognize that my daughter truly enjoyed non-fiction; an early clue was the "Eskimo village" (pile of scrap lumber) she erected in the back yard after a book about the far north. One of the biggest hits of my career in reading was *The Plant That Ate Dirty Socks*, which is just as silly as it sounds. I was ready to move on to something with more substance, but my kids demanded the sequel.

Make use of true-to-the-story film adaptations (captioned if possible!) of books, and books written to follow the film script (Disney is particularly good at this, putting out kids' books at more than one reading level.) I once used a pause button to sign the captions of an entire PBS kids' series to my just-beginning-to-read daughter.

And a final word about Tolkien: The first chapters were fine. Then we met the elves and the language got more complex, the sentence structure inverted, and the going got rough. We persevered until the end, whereupon Mom announced that both kids really ought to read this one for themselves as she'd made a total hash of it, and that there was a long sequel she wasn't even going to attempt. They both read their way back to the Lonely Mountain, then took the much longer journey to Mordor.

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The next issue of *Wavelengths* will appear in early March. 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. Ideas: "Fun Stuff to Do with Your Kids;" more preschool tales like the one Andrea submitted to this issue; tales of challenges met and triumphs experienced; humorous anecdotes.

Check out our website for the "pretty" edition of this newsletter, with links to more detailed information, and more pictures!