

Wavelengths



IDAHO HANDS & VOICES

January 2015

www.idhandsandvoices.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/idhandsandvoices

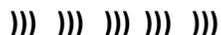
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Have you been to our Facebook page lately? It's by far the easiest place we know to post fliers and other information, and we've recently decided to try to use it more as a means of putting parents in touch with each other, to ask questions and get answers from other parents. Recently there's been a lively exchange, with many of our fans introducing themselves--we look forward to getting to know all of you better!

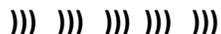


This is also a good time to remind you that your membership may be running out. Check the mailing label on your "Communicator" (the large newsletter from Hands & Voices headquarters that arrives four times a year) for a date. Your membership expires at the end of the year shown. You can renew at our web page. Still not sure? We'll send ONE reminder letter out near the beginning of 2015. Whether or not your membership is current, we will continue to keep you on the list to receive "Wavelengths" and other information via email, unless you opt out.



Here is an opportunity to give hope to families receiving the news that their child has a hearing loss. Andrea Amestoy at Idaho Sound Beginnings is working on a project to display pictures of children (and adults) with hearing loss, along with a bit of information about age, grade level, interests, sports, hobbies, etc in the diagnostic room of audiology offices. Parents of a newly-identified child would know immediately that they are not alone, and you get a portrait of your child. A professional photographer in Boise has agreed to take pictures of children at no cost. Contact Andrea at AmestoyA@dhw.idaho.gov to learn more.

Ryder Amestoy: "When I was born, I referred on my hearing screen. My Mom took me to a pediatric audiologist when I was one month old. I was discovered to have a hearing loss. I got early intervention right away, and I'm doing awesome!" To watch Ryder give his pitch, go to the Facebook page of Idaho Sound Beginnings. His mother, Andrea, would love to post more testimonials from kids on their page. You can "like" and "follow" ISB to learn about what they do and support their efforts to get every kid with a hearing loss a hearing screening at birth and timely follow-up.



Sonny Cabbage as the signing Santa Claus is once more in the news, this time in the Idaho Press-Tribune. He recounts a favorite memory from his twenty years of Santa-hood: "One story that I will never forget — one year I had a meeting here at work a couple days before my Santa event," he said. "The sign language interpreter at the meeting had a deaf kid I knew I would be seeing. She was telling me how a neighbor got locked out of their house and came over to them and asked if their deaf son, a tiny kid, could get in the house through the doggy door and unlock the front door. He got in the house through the doggy door with no problems. I brought that up when the boy sat on my lap at the Santa event a couple days later and told him that my elves told me about it. Told him I was proud of him doing a good deed for his neighbor. The expression on his face was priceless. Every year there's always been something memorable or funny. I always enjoy watching those kids grow up."

Read the full article here:

http://www.idahopress.com/members/here-comes-sonny-claus-deaf-man-brings-santa-to-hearing/article_5030f530-8b38-11e4-a271-fb72a6c6a012.html

Upcoming Events

For fast-breaking news, "follow" our Facebook page.

Bogus Basin Tubing with Idaho Hands & Voices Saturday, February 7, from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Cost is \$6 per person for members, \$12 for non-members. We must have your registration and payment by January 30! You can reserve your tubes and pay at our website, http://www.idhandsandvoices.org/Bogus_Basin_Tubing.html. Tubing rules and directions are also on this page, or call Tara at (208)989-3087 for more information. Note: children less than 36 inches tall are not allowed to go tubing at this venue.

Idaho Hands & Voices Board Meeting March 3 at 6:30 pm, IESDB offices, 3071 E. Franklin Rd, Suite 212, Meridian. Subject to change if too many board members have conflicts! Please let us know if you want to attend.

Idaho Parents Unlimited Webinars are offered the 4th Tuesday of each month, at different times of the day. You can just listen in, or join the discussion and ask questions, all from your home computer. The January 27 topic is "Journey to Adulthood- What Parents Need to Know (Sexuality) " Parents will learn basic information they can use to help their child with a disability understand the physical, emotional, and social changes of puberty and adolescence. This training is geared toward families who have youth within the 12-16 year old age range. The February topic is "Planning for a Healthy Transition." This training prepares youth for transitioning to adulthood with a goal of independent healthcare management. Go to www.ipulidaho.org to register for these webinars.

Idaho Parents Unlimited is also holding a workshop, "Success with the IEP," Monday, January 26 at Journey's DDA, 1177 Call Place, Pocatello, at two different times, 11:00 am to 2:00pm and 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Contact Brandi at (208)342-5884 or brandi@ipulidaho.org for more information.

The Idaho Shakespeare Festival has set the dates for their 2015 sign language interpreted performances. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for more details:

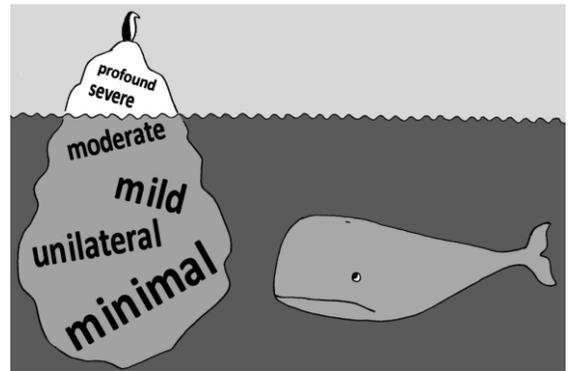
June 17	The Tempest
July 8	Dial M for Murder
August 19	King Lear
August 26	The Secret Garden
September 8	The Fantasticks

We've also set the date for our next Idaho Hands & Voices Family Camp! It will be in McCall, August 28-30. Again, mark your calendar; more details to come.

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It's a rather chilly analogy for this time of year, but find yourself a warm corner and consider this: the incidence of hearing loss in children is rather like an iceberg. That is, many more children have milder hearing losses, but most of our attention is focused on those whose audiograms put them into the "severe" and "profound" ranges. Yet we ignore or trivialize the underwater portion of the iceberg at our peril.

Indeed, these children are often invisible. Newborn screening detects hearing losses of 35-40 dB, in the upper portion of the range generally labeled as "mild," but children with losses in the 16-25 dB range ("minimal" loss) can have difficulty understanding faint or distant speech, miss subtle conversational cues, appear inattentive or respond inappropriately and show delays in speech and language development. They may be misdiagnosed as having learning disabilities or attention deficit disorder. Children with unilateral losses have difficulty localizing sound and hearing in noisy environments, with similar outcomes possible. Both groups need remedial help in school and/or need to repeat a grade far more often than the general school population.



When a representative sample of school-age children was tested, 15% of them had a hearing loss of 16 dB or greater in one or both ears. While most losses were less than 25 dB, and some were temporary due to otitis media or ear canals blocked by cerumen, it is interesting to note that only 10% of these children had been previously identified as having a hearing loss.

If a child appears to hear, even a documented hearing loss may not motivate the adults around him into providing support. Many a parent has a tale to tell of the FM unit that gathered dust in the corner of the classroom because the teacher didn't think it made any difference, or the struggle to have an interpreter provided for the child who was doing "just fine" without one. These can also be problems faced by parents of children for whom cochlear implants or hearing aids work well; indeed, the old categories of hearing impairment as marked off by decibel ranges are becoming blurry due to new technologies and the individual variation among the children using them.

So, what can a parent do? While your child is small, learn all you can about his hearing loss, its impact on what he can hear, and possible consequences. Don't assume everything will be okay, just because he can hear through one ear, or his hearing loss is "so small." Take advantage of the help offered by Idaho Infant-Toddler and Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind (IESDB.) Children with hearing losses as small as 20 dB in one or both ears are eligible for services. And, the entire menu of communication methods used by parents of children with greater hearing losses is also available to you; you may find Cued Speech helpful for cuing sounds that are difficult for your child, and a bit of sign language may boost their language development (it does so for children without hearing loss) and give you a tool to use when distance or background noise get in the way of verbal communication. Experiment, and see what works for your child.

Once they are in school, work with whatever professionals your school district has on staff--educational audiologist, teacher of the deaf, etc--to make sure your child's classroom is a good listening environment for him and his teacher understands his communication needs and meets them. IESDB Outreach also can help with this, and provide expertise the school district may not have. If he is not eligible for an IEP, a 504 plan can be used to specify which accommodations are required. Teachers and classmates will probably need to be "educated" on a yearly basis. Some parents offer to come in and do a "show-and-tell" about hearing aids; sometimes the child can help with this, especially as he grows older. There are some great materials for parents and teachers, covering all degrees and different kinds of hearing loss at www.successforkidswithhearingloss.com.

Which brings us to the older child--just from talking with other parents, it seems generally agreed that middle school is a difficult time, and difficulties may persist into high school. Kids want to fit in, not be different, not ask for help, just about the time that the school decides that because they are older and moving from class to class,

they can now take charge of their FM system and its transportation, and reminding teachers to use it. FM use goes way down during middle school! Sorry, you now have a teenager, or near teenager, and they need to work out a lot of things for themselves. It helps if you've been open about the hearing loss, done the show-and-tell routine in elementary school, and otherwise made it clear to your child that having a hearing loss is okay. It also helps if your child has had a chance to meet other adults and children with hearing loss, to know that he is not the only one, and to exchange stories, frustrations and solutions. But you're bound to experience some ups and downs as your child figures out "who" he is.

For yourself, find some other parents--you, too, are not alone! If there is no active Hands & Voices group in your area, you may be the one who needs to make it happen; contact us for help. If you're in a far corner of the state, come find us on Facebook, email us, or give us a call.

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It's a short newsletter--January is always a challenge. Help make the March newsletter fatter--send in your stories, tips, hints, activity announcements, product and book reviews. Contact Lorna at (208) 324-7544 or niwri2@msn.com if you'd like for her to do the writing, or if you have an idea for an article.