

WaveLengths



IDAHO HANDS & VOICES

March 2015

www.idhandsandvoices.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/idhandsandvoices

PO Box 9617, Boise ID 83707

Email: idahohandsandvoices@gmail.com

If it's spring, it's legislature time: **Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Legislation** is making its way through this year's state legislature. While the Idaho Educational Interpreter Act serves to ensure that educational interpreters meet certain standards, there are no such safeguards for adults who receive interpreter services. HB 152 passed the House March 5; the next step is to pass the Senate. Some objections have been raised, but it is worth noting that both the Deaf community of Idaho and the interpreting profession are behind this legislation. The Idaho Association of the Deaf has been keeping interested parties up to date on their Facebook page, and you can also check out this or any other legislation at www.legislature.idaho.gov.

And at the national level, the **Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EDHI)** program is up for re-authorization. We've recently forwarded an email from Hands & Voices Headquarters with information about how parents can support this at this time. Take a moment to contact the Idaho congressmen, Raul Labrador and Mike Simpson, and ask them to become co-sponsors. Funds and guidelines provided by EHDI are what support newborn hearing screening and tracking to follow up on screening to ensure children with hearing loss get the services they need as early as possible.



The Deaf Center Of Idaho (DCI) was formed several years ago with the mission of raising funds to support the establishment of a center for education, support services and social events like those found in several other states. Recently they transitioned all responsibilities, records and funds to the Idaho Association of the Deaf, which will continue to pursue this dream.



Upcoming Events

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

Idaho Hands & Voices Board Meeting April 7 at 6:30 pm, location to be arranged. Subject to change if too many board members have conflicts! Please let us know if you want to attend, and we'll confirm date, time and location.

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. March 31 topics are "Getting and Keeping the First Job" and "Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?" April 28 there will be two sessions featuring a panel of experienced parents addressing the topic "I Wish I Knew Then What I Know Now," with opportunities for questions and sharing among the participants. Go to www.ipulidaho.org for further details and to register for these webinars.

Idaho Parents Unlimited is also holding their **Mid Week Mini Conference** April 14-16, at the Clarion Inn in Pocatello. This is free to families, with some limited lodging scholarships available. More details, including a complete agenda, are at www.ipulidaho.org, or call (208)342-5884. Registration deadline is April 1.

Signing Easter Bunny Friday April 3 at the Barnes & Noble book store at 1239 Pole Line Rd East, Twin Falls; plan on arriving before 6:30, when the event will begin. Sponsored by Region 5 IESDB and Barnes & Noble. Contact Janice Finch at (208)539-2936 or janice.finch@iesdb.org.

Annual Deaf Community Easter Egg Hunt 10:30 am, Saturday, April 4, at Storey Park, 205 E Franklin Rd, Meridian. Free!

Teen Transition Night Friday, April 24, 3:00-5:00 pm, at the College of Southern Idaho, Taylor Building, Room 272. Snacks, Beverages, and talk about transition--steps to take, available services, choosing a career, supports and accommodations, self-sufficiency. Sponsored by IESDB Post-Secondary Transition Services. Contact Ann Flannery at (208)732-6257 or ann.flannery@iesdb.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	August 26	The Secret Garden
July 8	Dial M for Murder	September 8	The Fantasticks
August 19	King Lear		

Idaho Hands & Voices Family Camp McCall, August 28-30; more details to come.

Something exciting coming to Boise April 21! (We're not allowed to say more at this time, but you might want to mark your calendar.)

Also see the article following this calendar for more Eastern Idaho events!

)))))))))))))))

Eastern Idaho ASL Enrichment Day

by Audrey Weekes

Wow! We had an amazing turn out to our first ever ASL Enrichment Day in Blackfoot. Regions 6 and 7 were invited and we had 21 ranging from babies to high school students. We even had a few ISDB alumni as honored guests! Lots of parents, siblings, interpreters and outreach staff made for a great turn out! Mikkel and April Nelson and Steve Birkby led the activities and kept the kids busy learning about how we hear and what parts of the ear are involved when we don't hear right. The kids also learned about self-advocacy and why it's important to help people understand what you need to be successful.

There were games, stories, and even a few ASL songs and jokes. Parents had a chance to meet other parents, and share stories and experiences about having a child with hearing loss while the interpreters also got to know each other and network. After lunch the kids got certificates of completion in self-advocacy and hearing loss lessons.

If you missed the event there will be two more in Eastern Idaho before the school year is over! The next one is April 24 and the last one will be May 22. Contact your regional consultant or call IESDB Outreach at (208) 934-4457 for more details. We'd love to see you there!

)))))))))))))))

Acting Up

by Lorna Irwin

Many years ago (I won't say exactly how many) my parents enrolled my sister and me in the Tucson Children's Theater. We thought they did it so we would have fun--and we did! Each week, we had poetry or pieces of plays to memorize and present, with feedback from Mrs. MacMurtrie. We'd have a recital for our parents in December, and start working on a full-length play to present to the public in May. While I did not continue with drama, I gained a lot of self-confidence about getting up in front of a group and speaking. It's easy to do when you're pretending to be someone else!

Well after my own children were grown, I learned that my parents had an ulterior motive. My younger sister was struggling with reading. She could easily and accurately read a passage out loud, but was not able to tell what it all meant after she'd finished. What better way to connect words with their meaning than oral interpretation of poetry and acting out scenes from plays?

I then remembered how my daughter's teachers at ISDB had frequently staged little plays in class, acting out familiar fables, fairy tales, and stories from history. Sometimes the kids themselves would "write" the play, by telling the teacher what they wanted to include. Drama and reading went hand in hand. Thinking back even further, I remembered reading books to my daughter and then acting out the stories together. By the age of four, she was an accomplished mime. One professional advised that we discourage this, lest it interfere with formal sign language acquisition. I'm happy to say this particular bit of professional advice was not followed, and her formal language, signed and written, has developed very nicely, with mime a useful supplementary tool for communicating with hearing people.

While I was not able to enroll her in a theater group for deaf children, we found many other ways to slip drama into life. A relative sent us a very early-model video camera and we made movies. She joined a 4-H club, getting her first public speaking experience doing project demonstrations. One summer she was able to actually participate in a drama workshop with other deaf teens, though we had to send her out of state for that one. She's become a confident and effective public speaker who makes a presentation her own, even though it is voiced by an interpreter.

Through Hands & Voices, I've met a couple of other families whose children are involved in dramatic activities, and have asked them to add what they've learned about the benefits of theater for kids with hearing loss. Here are their thoughts:

All the World's a Stage: Learning about language and life from the audience

Holly Thomas-Mowery is a sign language interpreter in the Boise area who has appeared at many a theatrical production there, usually as interpreter and on at least one occasion as an actor. Thanks to her, we get early notice of the Idaho Shakespeare Festival schedule of interpreted performances.

Holly is also the mother of Jordan, who is deaf. Jordan's on-stage experience is limited (he's a shy kid when it comes to acting, says Holly), but he has some experience in public speaking, including signed story competitions, narrating for a couple deaf drama productions at camp, and he also likes to lip-sync songs. His most extensive experience, however, is as an audience member. Holly recently shared with me some tips for parents who want to introduce their kids to live theater, plus the benefits of the experience itself.

Watching live theater is different from going to see a movie. At the movies, you don't expect to know the plot, and want to be surprised by the ending—no "spoilers," please. At the theater, the plot may be well-known; you go to watch the staging and interpretation in this particular production. We all know that Romeo and Juliet are doomed; therefore there is nothing wrong with front-loading information about the play and providing a scaffold for understanding. Get a script. Find a video version on NetFlix or elsewhere. For Signing Shakespeare, you can view synopses of the five current plays signed by deaf actors at <http://idahoshakespeare.org/community-education/>. Additionally, there may be more than one version of a play available. Shakespeare in particular is often staged as happening at any location and time period. Analyzing these variations in interpretation has helped Jordan understand concepts such as plot and voice, which has carried over to literature analysis in English class.

Plays serve as a springboard for Holly and Jordan to discuss various aspects of the human condition; for example, betrayal in Othello. Portrayals of racism on stage have led to an understanding of audism and the barriers Jordan will face. And of course, the theater is also a rich language experience. Even Elizabethan language does not freak out Jordan!

Holly is currently involved in the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's Idaho Theater for Youth production of "Maggie Lumiere and the Ghost Train," touring elementary schools around the state February 23-May 9. This play, she says, is all about trust--in yourself, your friends and in your parents and that they know the best for you. The title character, Maggie, is deaf and played by Deaf actor, Lia Chapman from ABC Family's "Switched at Birth." Check with your local elementary school to see if a performance has been booked.

During our interview, Holly and I briefly discussed "theory of mind" and its relevance to theater. Theory of mind is the concept that other people are experiencing life through their own senses and interpreting it in ways which may be different from your own. The classic test is to have a child watch Person A hide an object and leave the room; then Person B comes in, finds the object, and hides it in a different place, and leaves. When Person A returns, where will he look for the object? Very small children think he will look in Person B's hiding place; as children grow older, they are able to correctly predict that he will look in the place where he originally hid the object, not having the information about what Person B did with it. Theory of mind appears to be tied to language development, as well as age; children who are deaf or hard of hearing often show a delay in the ability to pass this and other tests of theory of mind.

Acting out scenes means putting yourself in another's place and trying to think as they would; understanding a play as an audience member requires much the same. This is the foundation for social skills and empathy, and much of what makes us members of the human race. While I can't find any scholarly studies about theory of mind and theater, both Holly and I feel there's a positive connection!

Musical Theater for a Deaf Child? Why?

by Karen Hunt

Kimberly Hunt, now age 12, received bi-lateral implants at age 3. She had absolutely no oral language. I have always gained so much life enrichment from the performing arts and desired for all my children to access this life enrichment as well. Kimberly's first experience with the arts, three months following implantation, was her participation in a music appreciation class that included pitch, rhythm and voice training along with piano. She also began ballet, jazz, tap and gymnastics classes. People thought it was strange and questioned why I would enroll a deaf child in music and dance classes. Kimberly's older sister was participating in our local children's theater community. As soon as Kimberly was old enough she too desired to audition and perform in the theater. Our local children's theater produces Broadway-type musicals so it was necessary for Kimberly to learn to sing on key. She took voice lessons to meet this challenge. She auditioned several times, learned to experience and process disappointment, before she finally earned her first role. She has since performed yearly in multiple productions. This year Kimberly auditioned for and received a spot on the Expressions School of Performing Arts Dance Team.

Why would I enroll a deaf child in all of the auditory-based creative arts activities? Following ten years of expressive arts education you may still ask --why encourage a deaf child in such pursuits? Theater and dance have provided a wonderful opportunity for Kimberly to learn so many things about life and overcoming obstacles. She has learned the value of hard work by persistently working towards developing the skills to perform on stage. Participating in theater productions has given her the opportunity to learn self confidence and poise. She has learned that there are many different ways to communicate thoughts and emotions. She understands projection of her voice, utilization of body language, the importance of communication and advocating for oneself. She has developed determination in pursuing her interests regardless of the talent others naturally possess. Most importantly she has learned to be proud of who she is. One of my fondest memories of Kimberly is when we created a shirt that she wore to auditions that read PROUD TO BE DEAF and Blessed with Cochlear Implants. Encourage your children to participate in the Creative Arts--there is so much to learn and accomplish. Definitely never let your deaf or hard of hearing child settle for less than their dreams!

)))))))))))))))

So...read to your kid, act out the stories! Encourage them to act out stories themselves (even if "only" as mime) and engage in pretend play. As they get older, take them to plays that are accessible and if possible find outlets for their own self-expression. Language learning, self-confidence, and a greater understanding of the world and the people in it await your child.

And while we're at it--express yourself! We're always looking for help with this newsletter. Share your stories and let us know about upcoming events, good books you've read, and resources you can share with other families. Send material or ideas to Lorna Irwin, niwri2@msn.com, or (208)324-7544.