

THE WISCONSIN Communicator

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“What works for your child is what makes the choice right”

ANNUAL STATEWIDE PROFESSIONAL / FAMILY CONFERENCE RECAP

“Renew, Re-energize, Relax”, March 6-9, 2014

**Laurie Nelson, Family Conference Coordinator /
WI Hands & Voices President**

Wisconsin’s Annual Statewide Professional / Family Conference is specifically for families who have children who are deaf/hard of hearing/deafblind and deaf with additional disabilities, and the professionals who serve them. There were nearly 90 families (225 kids) that attended the Family Conference (14 families had a child who was deafblind/deaf+; and 14 were Spanish speaking); 125 professionals attended the Professional Conference and 31 exhibitors!! All communications at the Conference, as well as the Conference workshops, were offered in English, American Sign Language, and Spanish; interpreting and captioning made the Conference accessible to everyone.

“Ecological Assessment: Describing Students and Their Settings” by Melinda Eccarius was the keynote presentation for the Professional Conference. We also had an interpreter strand of workshops “Interpreting Literature: Applying Principles for Literacy Development in Classroom Interpreting” presented by Doug Bowen-Baily and Patty Gordon.

For the Family Conference, Tina Childress and Kasee Stratton were our keynote presenters. Tina’s keynote presentation was entitled “Come. See. Hear. Life as a Deaf Audiologist.” Dr. Kasee Stratton was the keynote presenter for the families with deafblind/deaf+ children. Dr. Stratton’s keynote presentation informed participants of the significance of pain among individuals with a variety of diagnoses. Participants were able to understand how to identify pain non-vocally and intervene for services/treatment.

We offered countless workshops on a variety of topics. The presenters came from all over the nation and their dedication to our professionals / parents / youth was inspiring to all. Networking is one of the key goals at the Conference. Old friendships were renewed, and new friendships were made. There was an exhibit hall with organizations for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind, community and advocacy agencies, technology-related businesses, etc. The diversity in our exhibitors was great to see... Hands AND Voices!!

Please read Wisconsin’s featured article in the next edition of “The Communicator” for a full recap. **SAVE THE DATE:** October 22-25, 2015 for our next Conference! We have changed the date!! We will be collecting workshop proposals for the 2015 conference in the near future. We encourage you to submit a proposal! Please visit <http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/wesp/> to learn how to submit a proposal.

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE
SUCCESS OF THE CONFERENCE!**

TOGETHER, we DID make a difference!

WI Families for
Hands & Voices
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Green Bay, WI 54308
NEW Phone#
920-819-2979

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Email: handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com

MEET MILWAUKEE DAY – A STUDENT-FRIENDLY INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE

by Michelle Pandian

The University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee hosted their annual Meet Milwaukee Day on May 2nd. What a great opportunity it was for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to get a taste of college life! Students were given a preview of specific university colleges and majors, as well as informational sessions on financial aid and affordability options. Special panel discussions and tours of the campus, residence halls, and trolley tours of the city rounded out the day. But the best part of Meet Milwaukee Day was their emphasis and desire to recruit students who are deaf or hard of hearing.



As a DHH teacher in the CESA #4 area, I brought one of my college-bound sophomores, who would like to major in computer software engineering. While this student is interested in universities such as NTID or Gallaudet, which are designed for DHH students, he prefers to attend college closer to home. The three-and-a-half hour drive to Milwaukee was well worth it. From the moment of registration the program was accessible, whether students needed interpreters, captioning, or cued speech. The program counselor for the College of Engineering engaged her audience with descriptions of majors, stories of student internships, and details of the support provided to students to practically guarantee their success upon graduation. Faculty used interactive experiments in the materials lab to pique student interest in various fields of engineering. And a panel of current UW-Milwaukee DHH students shared their academic experiences, use of accommodations, and love of campus life. Panelists' advice to future DHH college students was to practice their self-advocacy skills and develop strong time-management and organizational skills – all of which will serve them well in college.

Mr. Anderson took the time to meet each of the students and get to know their dreams and aspirations for college. He was able to articulate the numerous options for support that are available for DHH students, such as notetakers, captionists, cued speech, use of FM systems, interpreters, and various other accommodations to facilitate communication and accessibility.

UW-Milwaukee has about 60 DHH students and 16 DHH faculty. Clubs and social activities specifically designed for DHH students are available, as well as classes in Deaf culture and ASL. Another awesome resource on campus is their ASL Living and Learning Community – a section within the residence halls where students who use or are learning ASL live and interact on a daily basis. The residence hall is also equipped with accessible fire safety equipment and technology to promote independent living.

All in all, our visit to the Meet Milwaukee Day was an amazing learning experience. It was well worth it to see the campus first hand and get to meet some of the amazing people who make UW-Milwaukee an accessible, academically strong option for college-bound DHH students.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday June 29, 2014

We invite your family to a very special afternoon

A picnic lunch, a fabulous Splash pad and playground, and the opportunity to meet and network with other families who have children with hearing loss.

Lakeview Community Park, Middleton
6300 Mendota Ave (at Allen Ave)

11:30am - 2:30pm at the pavilion by the Splash Pad

The Splash Pad is fully accessible and safe for all ages (view it online at <http://wi-middleton-civicplus.com/gallery.aspx?pid=98>)

Highlights of our Meet Milwaukee experience included meeting Counselor Jason Anderson, who is deaf himself, and coordinates the Deaf and Hard of Hearing services on campus.



Jason Anderson meets with the student.



Liam with his “box of objects” game.

DEAF INFUSION: INFORMATION SHARING

by Jennifer Koehn

It is not unusual for Deaf people to be open and comfortable discussing personal issues such as health, salary, relationships, and mortgage even with people they don't know well.

Information sharing is valued in the Deaf culture; it is not considered rude to ask questions that hearing people may find overly personal.

Why this difference?

Hearing culture is generally individualist with emphasis on privacy, personal space, and doing your own thing. In contrast, Deaf culture is collectivist, with Deaf people seeing themselves as part of a close-knit and interconnected group. Sharing information is an important aspect of cultures that value this kind of interconnectedness.

DEAFBLIND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

by Jodi Anderson

The goal of the intervention process for students who are deafblind is to provide access to the world supplying the information that is not available through vision and hearing. Four key intervention methods exist when working with a deafblind individual. These methods are 1) anticipation; 2) motivation; 3) communication; and, 4) confirmation. These methods will be discussed in reference to an activity that I often do with my son, Liam.

An activity that I often do with my son is the “box of objects” game. We have several items in a plastic box and he enjoys taking the items out of the box and handing them to me as I place them in a similar container that is empty. Once my box is full, we exchange the boxes and start the process all over again. We sit very close on the couch as we play this game and he enjoys the activity immensely.

I facilitate anticipation for the game with Liam in several ways. One item that is always in the box is a plastic hen-shaped whistle. I use this item as an object cue for the game. Once he feels the object, he knows the game will start soon and goes to the couch to await the beginning of the activity. I also use a sound cue by blowing on the whistle. He may be in a different room and will come to play the game. He has associated that sound with the game as well.

Motivation is developed by the fun we have in playing the game together. Liam loves music and loves to listen to my husband and I sing to him. I usually sing a little silly song to Liam while we play the game. I repeat the song as we play. Some of the items in the box can vibrate so I will move them over his face as well as his feet. He loves the silliness of this play and laughs and laughs. I make the experience fun for the both of us and he will laugh whenever I laugh.

Communication is emphasized during this shared activity. I label every item as he hands the object to me. This strategy increases his language and vocabulary. I also change some of the items in the box periodically so he is constantly learning the names of different items. I model appropriate expressive language for him to help him choose when the activity is completed. I give him the choice to proceed after each time the box is filled.

Liam receives continuous feedback from me to enable the method of confirmation. I verbally tell him that he is doing well, tactually sign “good job,” as well as pat him on the back to demonstrate his success. Occasionally he misses handing me an item and the object falls on the couch. I tell him that the object fell and together we find the object and put the item back in the box. I tell him both auditorily and in tactile sign, his two methods of receptive communication.

(Continued on page 4)

Our Mission:

Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families statewide who have children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind without bias around communication modes or methodology. We are a parent-driven organization providing families with the resources, networking and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Our outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind children to reach their highest potential.

(Deafblind Intervention Strategies, cont.)

The four methods of effective intervention are used in playing the “box of objects” game with my son Liam. I cue him both with an object and auditorily to anticipate the activity, I motivate him to play by making the activity fun and enjoyable, I develop his communication by increasing his vocabulary and constantly talking to him as we play, and I provide him with confirmation so he is aware of his success in the game. These strategies help connect Liam to his environment, develop his communication ability, and enhance his social and emotional well-being so that effective intervention can occur.



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT VICE PRESIDENT KRISTY SCHINDLER:

Hello, my name is Kristy Schindler and I just joined the WI Hands & Voices Board. I am married to my husband, Michael, and we have three children: Kylie, 11; Emilee, 8; and Dylan, 5. Kylie and Emilee are hearing and Dylan is deaf and bilaterally implanted. I am going to school to pursue a degree in Psychology, with an emphasis in crisis counseling and also Christian Counseling. I was inducted into the Tau Sigma National Honor Society at the end of March, so that was a huge accomplishment for me. I am very active in my church, a hospice volunteer, as well as a PTO president. I love to read and go for walks. Our family loves to spend time together with interests in camping, swimming, touring museums, and much more.

I joined the WI Hands & Voices Board because I want to help other families and be a support system. I know I have had great support in our journey and I want to give back. I am willing and wanting to do what I can for others.

HELP OTHERS BY DONATING USED HEARING AIDS!

WI Families for Hands & Voices is now accepting hearing aids donations as part of a partnership with Starkey. If you have hearing aids that are not being used and would like to make a charitable donation to help WI Families for Hands & Voices....

Recycle now! Contact Hands & Voices at handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com
for a self-addressed, stamped envelope

**Renew Your
Membership or
become a
member today!**

2014 Hands & Voices WI Membership

Please circle one of the following

Parent of a deaf/HH child	\$25.00
Deaf /HH Adult	\$25.00
Student	\$25.00
Professional	\$40.00
Organization/agency	\$75.00
Additional Donation	\$_____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Method of Payment

Check Scholarship

**Become a Member/Renew
Online!**

Credit Card Payment NOW
Accepted!

Please Visit:
<http://www.handsandvoiceswi.org/>

Or clip and mail to:

**WI Families for Hands & Voices
PO Box 9644
Green Bay, WI 54308**



**Alone we can do we
little; together we can
do so much ~ Helen
Keller**