

WI Families for Hands & Voices

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"What works for your child is what makes the choice right"



HANDS & VOICES

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Parents Forum:

Tips and Guidance from Real World Situations for Parents of DHH Children

By Beth Hall

Recently, at a board meeting for Hands & Voices Wisconsin I was asked to write some tips for parents of DHH kids in our publication. To be truthful, at first I was hesitant. Granted, I am a mother of two (my daughter is deaf and wears cochlear implants and my son is hearing) and I love my kids; but admittedly I am not always the most patient or insightful as I wish I could be with my children. I felt unqualified in giving other parents advice when I by no means possessed all the answers to parenting. However, upon reflection I realized I have learned some valuable things along the way and feel my family has gained successes and experienced surprises that were worth sharing with others.

One insight I have gained that I feel is worth sharing is that sometimes, as a parent, you have to allow yourself to be humbled a little in order to best advocate for your child's needs. Recently, my daughter (who is almost four) had a mapping appointment with her audiological team. I had already come to realize that Johanna was missing some of the conversation in the room at these appointments when both of her CI's were disabled during the mapping process. It was obvious from Johanna's behavior in other situations that she would become anxious when both of her CI's were removed and she couldn't hear spoken conversation going on around her. Johanna and I discussed this prior to her mapping and agreed that an

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DHH Event Schedule

Date	Event	Location	Information
Wednesday, June 20, 2012	Hand-N-Hand - Mulberry Lane Farm Trip	Hilbert, WI	www.hnhnew.org/calendar/index.html
Saturday, June 23, 2012	Day with the Experts: Cochlear Implants	Madison, WI	www.waisman.wisc.edu/events/experts/cochlear.html
7/8/12 - 7/21/12	Gallaudet University - Knowledge for College - For Deaf and Hard of Hearing College-Bound 10th - 12th Graders	Carterville, IL	www.jalc.edu/gurc
7/8/12 - 7/21/12 and 7/15/12 - 7/28/12	Gallaudet University - Immerse into ASL! - For deaf, hard of hearing and hearing college-bound 10th-12th graders	Carterville, IL	www.jalc.edu/gurc
7/8/12 - 7/21/12	Gallaudet University - The Play's the Thing - For deaf and hard of hearing middle school students (ages 12-14)	Carterville, IL	www.jalc.edu/gurc
Thursday, July 12, 2012	Hand-N-Hand - Waterboard Warriors Water Ski Show	Wrightstown, WI	www.hnhnew.org/calendar/index.html
7/15/12 - 7/28/12	Gallaudet University - Life after High School - For deaf and hard of hearing college bound 10th - 12th Graders	Carterville, IL	www.jalc.edu/gurc
Monday, July 16, 2012	Hand-N-Hand - Baybeach Amusement Park Trip	Green Bay, WI	www.hnhnew.org/calendar/index.html
Thursday, July 26, 2012	Aural Rehabilitation Activities for Birth-Teen, with Dave Sindrey	Greenfield, WI	
Monday, August 06, 2012	Hand-N-Hand - Bullfrogs Baseball Game	Green Bay, WI	www.hnhnew.org/calendar/index.html
Sunday, August 12, 2012	WI H&V Summer Picnic - Goose Island Park	La Crosse, WI	http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/cms_files/event_attach/354866/2012_H&V_Summer_Picnic_Flyer_LaCrosse.pdf
Monday, August 20, 2012	Hand-N-Hand - HNH and H&V Picnic at Pamperin Park	Green Bay, WI	http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/cms_files/event_attach/354867/2012_H&V_Summer_Picnic_Flyer_GreenBay.pdf
8/24/2012 - 8/26/2012	Family Learning Vacation Sponsored by Center for Communication: Hearing & Deafness	Rosholt, WI	http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/cms_files/event_attach/354875/2012_FLV_Registration_Packet.pdf
Sunday, August 26th, 2012	WI H&V Summer Picnic - Centennial Park	Dodgeville, WI	http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/cms_files/event_attach/354868/2012_H&V_Summer_Picnic_Flyer_Dodgeville.pdf
Saturday, October 06, 2012	FACETS Volunteer Parent Orientation	TBA	
Saturday, November 03, 2012	Parent Leader Conference	TBA	

Board Member Spotlight: Jennifer Koehn



My name is Jennifer Koehn and I am a board member of Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices. My husband and I are Deaf, and we have two children. Our daughter Emily is 4 years old and Deaf. She just finished her first year of preschool at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf. Our son Brady, who is hearing, is 2 1/2 years old. I grew up in Eau Claire and was mainstreamed with a

sign language interpreter until I graduated high school. I received my bachelor's degree in psychology and criminal justice from Winona State University. I obtained my master's degree in community counseling from UW-Milwaukee. During college, I enjoyed teaching community sign language classes. I currently work for the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as a statewide Deaf Disability Benefit Specialist. Through my work, I am able to provide free service and counseling to Deaf and hard of hearing people to solve their problems related to Social Security, Medicare, health insurance and other public and private benefits. Also, a part of my job is to ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals have equal opportunities, access, and communication available to them. When I am not working, I enjoy reading, walking, and spending time with my family and friends.

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2012

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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 old hearing aids that are not being used and would like to make a charitable donation to help WI Hands & Voices....



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Call Michelle Kihntopf at 920-609-7815 for a self-addressed, stamped envelope to send to Starkey.



Recycle Old Hearing Aids Now!

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interpreter, to help her “not miss out on anything,” would ease her anxiousness and arranged for an ASL interpreter at her next audiologist appointment (our family communicates with spoken English and ASL). At the audiologist, the interpreter being present did ease Johanna’s anxiousness about removing both of her CI’s simultaneously (she looked as if she might cry but calmed down when we assured her the interpreter would sign what everyone in the room was saying). After the appointment, we had additional appointments at the clinic as well (Speech and Language, etc.) and I told the interpreter, having been scheduled with Johanna for the whole day, that she didn’t need to come with because Johanna would have her CI’s on for those appointments. The interpreter then bypassed me and asked Johanna if she would like her to continue to sign for her that day – and Johanna said YES!

It had never occurred to me before that audiological and speech and language tests that require intensive listening all day are exhausting for a kid with hearing loss, even while wearing cochlear implants! As I discovered throughout the day, having someone there to help Johanna communicate visually in conjunction with communicating orally greatly helped her. I had taken for granted that because she can speak and listen well, that it was easy all the time for her. I had also neglected to take into consideration how she communicates at home (with ASL and spoken English) and apply that to how she would best communicate within the community. Not only did I gain a better understanding of my daughter’s communication needs, but I now could more successfully advocate for her in the future. As parents, we tend to know what is best for our children. But my suggestion is, be willing as a parent to consider ideas from others with an outside perspective. To your surprise, as was to mine, those ideas might be worth consideration.

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 Deaf-Blind 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 Deaf-Blind children to reach their highest potential.