

WI Families for Hands & Voices

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

State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Deaf/Hard of Hearing Programs

By Marcy Dicker



HANDS & VOICES

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Just 15 years ago, in 1998, the WESP-DHH Outreach Program was the dream of a committed group of individuals, members of the **State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Deaf/Hard of Hearing Programs**. When I was hired in January of 2003, my charge was to develop and implement this group's dream, using an in-depth and forward-thinking "blueprint," created by the Council, as my compass.

The Advisory Council membership is intended to represent the scope of individuals involved in the education of children with hearing loss. Membership is dictated by bylaws and Council Members are selected by the State Superintendent. Representatives include: Parents, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community Members; Classroom and Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf; Regular Education Teachers; Speech-language Therapists; Educational Interpreters; Educational Audiologists; Special Education Administrators; and, representatives from University Teacher and Interpreter Training Programs.

Although the individual members of this Council change as the three-year terms begin and end, the purpose of the Advisory Council remains the same. This Council advises the State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction, Tony Evers, in matters pertaining to educational services for children and youth who are deaf or hard of hearing. Specifically, this Council carries out this function by identifying and prioritizing the relevant issues and needs of these children and youth, acting as a conduit between professionals in the field of education and the policy bodies of the state. Recommendations are developed that facilitate educational opportunities for children and youth who are deaf and hard of hearing with input from professionals involved in providing educational opportunities, including the membership of the council and non-voting members.

After ten years of work with the incredible volunteers, community members, parents, and educational staff that give their time to this Council, **I want to take a moment to offer up my heartfelt thanks to all of the Council members over the years that have helped to shape the evolution and establishment of the WESP-DHH Outreach program.**

I also want to share with you the work that is currently in progress, as the Advisory Council is involved in a very exciting project! We are in the process of developing web-based Professional Development materials specifically for Special Education Administrators in the districts. The materials are meant to provide critical "just in time" information regarding educating students who are deaf or hard of hearing, to support placement and programming decisions. The work is meaningful and inspiring, and I believe the end-product will provide much-needed information and support for Administrators.

Each year, we seek committed and knowledgeable representatives to replace those whose terms have ended. Do you want to have a voice in determining the direction of the education of students who are deaf and hard of hearing in Wisconsin and the state programs (Outreach and WSD)? Have you considered submitting an application to participate in this worthy Council? For more information, please contact Rita Gietzel at rita.gietzel@dpi.wi.gov.

Lastly, a very special thanks to the current hard-working and committed Advisory Council, for their hard work over the past year/s. You will be hearing from our Chairperson, Andrew Konkel, at the upcoming Professional Conference!

Brian Anderson, Director of Special Education Director
Robin Barnes, Member at Large
Pam Conine, Interpreter Preparation
David Collins, Parent
Theresa Kamenick, Educational Interpreter
Michelle Kihntopf, Parent
Koryn Koneazny, Regular Education Teacher
Andrew Konkel, Member at Large and Chairperson
Beth Larimar, Educational Audiologist
Paula Minix, Speech & Language
Amy Otis-Wilborn, Teacher Preparation
Michelle Pandian, Itinerant D/HH Teacher
Joan-na Cookie Roang, Member at Large
Polly Slappey, D/HH Teacher

Deaf Infusion with Jennifer Koehn

Deaf History - Martha's Vineyard

If you could create a deaf utopia, what would it be like? Everyone would communicate in sign language, both deaf and hearing. Many, if not most, children would be born deaf. Deaf utopia did exist. There actually was such a place once- on the island of Martha's Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts, U.S., from the early 18th century to 1952. Martha's Vineyard Sign Language was used by both deaf and hearing people in the community; consequently, deafness did not become a barrier to participation in public life. Martha's Vineyard Sign Language played a role in the development of American Sign Language.

The language was able to thrive on Martha's Vineyard because of the unusually high percentage of deaf islanders and because deafness was a recessive hereditary trait, which meant that almost anyone might have both deaf and hearing siblings. In 1854, when the island's deaf population peaked, the United States national average was one deaf person in 5,728, while on Martha's Vineyard it was one in 155. In the town of Chilmark, which had the highest concentration of deaf people on the island, the average was 1 in 25; in a section of Chilmark called Squibnocket, as much as a quarter of the population of 60 was deaf.

Hearing people sometimes signed even when there were no deaf people present: children signed behind a schoolteacher's back; adults signed to one another during church sermons; and farmers signed to their children across the wide field, where the spoken word would not carry.

Deaf Infusion — What's Coming in the Spring Edition:

What Accommodations Really Mean:

Sometimes people believe that treating everyone the same is the only fair way to deal with others. That to do something different, is somehow giving an advantage. However, there is a big difference between the terms "same" and "fair" when it comes to accommodations.

Board Member Spotlight: Jodi Anderson

My name is Jodi Anderson and I am the newest member of the Wisconsin Hands and Voices Board. I am very excited to be representing the voice of the parents of children with dual sensory impairments. My husband Marcus and I live in Fond du Lac and have 2 sons. Graham is 4 and Liam is 6. At the age of three, Liam contracted bacterial meningitis with a stroke, leaving him both profoundly deaf and blind. The last three years, I have learned more than I ever thought I could, thanks in large part to wonderful professionals and supportive families.



This past July, I had the privilege of representing Wisconsin at the 2012 National Family Association for Deafblind. Raising a child with a sensory impairment can be overwhelming but with support, it doesn't have to be as challenging or scary as it initially seems. As a parent, I know how important it is to feel confident that our children are living good lives and receiving appropriate services. I enjoy learning and working with others in the on-going effort to improve the quality of life for those who are deafblind and deaf.

Renew Your Membership or become a member today!

2013

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 _____

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Please Visit:

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Or clip and mail to:

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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.

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....



Recycle now!

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



Recycle Old Hearing Aids Now!



11th ANNUAL STATEWIDE FAMILY CONFERENCE

For families of children who are hard of hearing, deaf,
deaf-blind, and deaf with additional
disabilities

“iSuperhero! Real Superheroes are not Superhuman”

Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, **MARCH 8-10, 2013**

The 11th WESP-DHH Outreach Annual Statewide Family Conference will be held March 8-10, 2013 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton. We are proud of this event as it is offered specifically FOR families of children with hearing loss and is planned BY family members.

Our theme this year is “**iSuperhero! Real Superheroes are not Superhuman.**” Dr. Joseph M. Valente is our keynote presenter. Dr. Valente is an Assistant Professor of Education at Pennsylvania State University and the Co-Director of the Center for Disability Studies and faculty in the Comparative and International Education Program. Dr. Valente is also the author of the research novel "d/Deaf and d/Dumb: A Portrait of a Deaf Kid as a Young Superhero."

One of the key goals of Dr. Valente's session is to use the theme of "real superheroes are not superhuman" as a way to show children and adults how common comic narratives (such as those by Marvel and DC Comics) often have two kinds of superheroes - those with typical or superhuman alter egos. Dr. Valente will explain how those comic book myths connect to his own story growing up Deaf and becoming a superhero storyteller. Dr. Valente will use the superhero theme to illustrate that while we may accomplish superhero feats, we are still human; to expect perfection is not only unrealistic but also unhealthy and even harmful. Both children and their parents need to know that real superheroes are not superhuman, **real superheroes are human!** We are all superheroes, every day, doing our best in whatever way we can. To learn more, visit his website: <http://www.joevalente.net/>.

Beginning and advanced level breakout sessions and discussion groups on practical topics are scheduled and tentatively include:

- Getting to Know You Discussion Groups
- Early Relationships Matter: What Does this Mean for Learning to Communicate?
- Discovering Schemata: Powerful Potential for Child, Parent, Professional
- IFSP/IEP Personalities Toolbox
- Bullying in the Halls of Academia
- What Every Employer Wants: Soft Skills
- Intervener Workshop—What Does this Mean for Your Deaf-Blind Child
- Yes, Your Child CAN!
- WSD: Q&A
- Good G.R.I.E.F.
- Your Child's Access: Extra-Curricular/Sporting/Public Events
- iAccommodate
- Uncommon Beauty: Crisis Parenting From Day One
- Embedding Self-Actualization Opportunities with Infants/Children
- Go Both Ways: Exploring Options to Empower Children
- ACS Captioning

If you have any questions or need help in registering, please contact

Laurie Nelson at 608-822-3756 or leave a message at 1-888-656-8556

or email laurie.nelson@wesp-dhh.wi.gov.

We look forward to seeing your family in March!