



FEBRUARY 2007

The Family Support Connection FOCUS

—News from Minnesota Hands & Voices—

We have a newsletter Sponsor this month! You can show your support for MN Hands & Voices/Family Support Connection by becoming a sponsor, too. **FOCUS** reaches more than 800 families and professionals. Contact us for more information: fsc@lifetrackresources.org.

Opportunities abound for family involvement

Research has shown that children whose parents spend time working with them on academic and extra-curricular activities are more motivated and have greater academic success. This is especially true for our children who have hearing loss. This doesn't mean that busy moms and dads need to immerse themselves in their kids' lives. We've all seen enough overinvolved parents to realize that isn't good either. Fortunately, the middle road between neglect and overinvolvement is wide—there are plenty of opportunities for families to nurture a child with hearing loss and encourage the child's self-confidence for occasionally going it alone.

In 2000, researchers at Boys Town National Research Hospital published results from their study "Early Intervention and Language Development in Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing." While focused on early intervention, this study has been cited frequently when talking about the impact of family involvement on language development. The study showed that two factors played the biggest role in the language scores of 5-year-olds with hearing loss: family involvement and age of enrollment in an early intervention program.

"The most successful children in this study were those with high levels of family involvement who were enrolled early in intervention services," explained the study's author, Mary Pat Moeller. The complete study is online at pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/106/3/e43.

The level of family involvement has been found to be so important in a child's growth that Gallaudet Univer-

sity's Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center has made family involvement one of its national "missions." Both at the center and through national outreach programs, Clerc Center staff encourage families to be partners in the education of their children. They do this through activities that bring families into the school either during the day as volunteers in the classroom or in the evening for programs like Family Math Night or Shared Reading.

Schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin offer similar opportunities for families to become active in educating their kids. Como Elementary's D/HH Program has been offering monthly Family Literacy Nights for years. At these events, families gather for dinner and see a book "read" aloud in ASL and interpreted into English and Hmong. Then parents and siblings go to sign classes while kids who are deaf or hard of hearing do an activity related to the story. The school uses Clerc Center's Shared Reading program to teach families to read aloud in sign at home. Metro Deaf School offers similar opportunities for families through the school's monthly Family Ed Night.

Outside of school, there are many organizations that offer opportunities for families to share activities—like roller skating with the Family Support Connection last week! Weekend "retreats" also provide the chance for families to learn more about hearing loss issues while making new friends.

If you're looking for opportunities to share activities as a family, page through this month's *FOCUS*. You'll be sure to find something your family can join.

Resources for becoming more involved

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University
<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/FamilyInvolvement/index.html>

Find links to information about family involvement topics such as family-school relationships, program initiatives and the experiences of various schools in their family-school collaborations.

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
www.raisingdeafkids.org

Get help managing issues related to hearing loss in every stage of your child's life—from newborns to transitioning teens.

Hands & Voices National
www.handsandvoices.org

This site has many resources to help parents raise successful children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

What's Happening Around Town

Fridays through
March 30

Shoot hoops during Open Basketball for adults and teens, ages 16+ from 7 to 9 p.m. at Homecroft Recreation Center, 1845 Sheridan Ave. in St. Paul. Cost is \$8 for 10 weeks or \$1 each night. (No basketball on Feb. 2 and March 2.) Sponsored by CSD-MN and St. Paul Parks and Recreation.

Saturday,
Feb. 3

DeafTeen Quest takes teens tubing at Afton Alps from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Cost is \$10 for 2 hours. Bring money for lunch at snack shop. Meet at 10 a.m. at Cedar Valley Church north parking lot, 8600 Bloomington Ave. S, Bloomington. Contact 651-455-0093 or COHDeafOutreach@aol.com to register.

Saturdays,
Feb. 3 & March 3

The St. Paul Public Library presents Deaf Storytime with Estella Bustamante at 10:30 a.m. at the Merriam Park Branch Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. For details, call 651-642-0385 (v) or 651-298-4184 (tty).

Feb. 14 &
March 14

Advanced Bionics presents free "webinars" (online seminars) about cochlear implants at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Register at www.bionicear.com/support/harmonywebinars.asp.

Tuesday,
Feb. 20

Practice Cue Clutch meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Java Jacks, 818 W. 46th St. in Minneapolis. Directed activities increase cueing fluency. For more information, contact Katherine Burns-Christenson at 952-929-3965 or e-mail kbc29@aol.com.

Friday,
March 2

Open swim for families with members who are deaf or hard of hearing runs from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Arlington High School, 1495 Rice St. in St. Paul. Cost is \$4 for adults, \$3 for children 12 and under, and \$1 for spectators. This pool has areas for diving, swimming and wading. For more information, e-mail Mary.Livingston@ci.stpaul.mn.us or call 651-266-6366 (v), 651-266-6378 (tty).

Saturday,
March 3

Contribute ideas during Cued Speech Association of Minnesota's annual meeting from 10 am - noon at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, 5760 Portland Ave. S. in Minneapolis. RSVP to Katherine Burns-Christenson at 952-929-3965 or e-mail kbc29@aol.com.

Sunday,
March 4

An ASL-interpreted tour of "An American Vision: Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur Museum" (special exhibition admission charged) begins at 2 p.m. in the Target Wing third floor atrium of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. For details, call Visitor and Member Services at 612-870-3131 (v) or 612-870-3132 (tty) or e-mail dhegstro@artsmia.org.

March 9-11

Families in Wisconsin can attend the 5th Annual State-wide Parent Conference: "Families: Celebrating our Differences, Honoring our Choices" at the Marriott West Hotel in Madison. For details see www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/events.asp.

March 23-25

Wisconsin teens with hearing loss head to the Teen Getaway Weekend at Lion's Camp near Rosholt. For more information, see www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/events.asp.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Susannah (subtitled opera)
Thursday, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m.
Loring Playhouse, 1633 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls.; 651-209-6689; www.latteda.org

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Friday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m.
Crosswinds United Methodist Church, 15051 Weaver Lake Rd, Maple Grove; 763-391-ARTS (2787); www.crossplayers.org

The Glass Menagerie
Friday, Feb. 23 & Thursday, Mar. 1, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets: Reduced to \$17.
Guthrie Theater, 818 2nd St. S., Mpls; 612-377-2224; www.guthrietheater.org

Annie Get Your Gun
Friday, Feb. 23 & Sat., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets: \$14 for adults; \$12 seniors
Lyric Arts Main Street Stage, 420 E. Main, Anoka; 763-422-1838; www.lyricarts.org

Murder on the Nile
Saturday, March 3, 1 p.m.
Tickets: \$15 adults, \$12 seniors/students
Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road; 952-563-8587; www.bloomingtonartcenter.com

Orphan Train, the Musical
Sunday, March 18, 2 p.m.
Tickets: Reduced to \$15
History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul; 651-292-4323; www.historytheatre.com

Camelot
Friday, March 16, 8 p.m.
Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington, St. Paul; 651-224-4222, 651-282-3100(tty); www.ordway.org

FOCUS is published by the Family Support Connection at Lifetrack Resources. 709 University Avenue West St. Paul, MN 55104-4804 651-265-2435(v); 651-265-2379(tty) Toll-free: 1-866-DHOHKID (346-4543) Toll-free TTY: 1-866-857-2379 E-mail: fsc@lifetrackresources.org Website: www.familysupportconnection.org

Our mission is to build better lives for children who are deaf or hard of hearing by providing parent-to-parent support.

Newsletter Editor: Audrey Alwell

Information in this newsletter about events, services, or other organizations does not imply endorsement by the Family Support Connection or Lifetrack Resources.

© 2007 Lifetrack Resources

In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Family Support Coordinator

February has ushered in a change of weather. As January drew to an end, so did our mild temperatures. But the cold is something we are used to in Minnesota. We make peace with our winters; celebrate it, brag about it. After all, we have a lot to be proud of in this state... tough and hardy people, top-notch education, strong health care, and superior quality of life are just a few attributes we like to talk about.

You would expect that such a progressive, forward-thinking state would lead the country in support for a strong newborn hearing screening program and surveillance system. Right now, Minnesota has a voluntary screening system which, under the direction of dedicated professionals, has been successful in screening the majority of our children. However, a state-wide mandate would ensure all babies screened are reported to the Department of Health. Then, the State could report the actual incidence of hearing loss to the federal government, and could monitor to ensure that appropriate follow-up takes place. Without that, Minnesota is viewed as one of the bottom 4 or 5 states in the country. How can we tolerate this in our state? How can we claim to be cutting edge in the care of all our children? We cannot, and it is time to demand change.

In the coming weeks, you will be asked to get involved in the movement to push for a mandate so the departments of Health and Education can establish the necessary system to provide our children with the earliest identification, follow-up and best intervention possible. Everyone's help will be needed. If you are not signed up to receive our periodic e-mail updates, we invite you to contact us to do so. This is a critical time for everyone to participate in this effort. And, it does not have to require a large time commitment. Your legislators, friends and family are only a few keyboard strokes away. For more information, please visit the MN Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing People's website at www.mncdhh.com or e-mail Kelly.Murphy@state.mn.us.

As MN Hands & Voices/Family Support Connection assists in this effort, we also will be supporting other legislation that can make a difference in the lives of our youth who are deaf or hard of hearing. Included in this will be the pursuit of legislation to financially support our own program. (See the "Lobby Day" story to the right.) We feel parent-to-parent support is an integral part of the services families need in order to make sound decisions for their children. We deliver information about choices for communication and educational placement from an unbiased, independent perspective, cutting across district lines. We could use your help to make state legislators aware of the need for our services and those of our trained Parent Guides in Greater Minnesota. So, stay tuned as we keep you updated about how you can help with this effort. We appreciate your support!

Kit helps parents participate in IEP

The Department of Education has just released a Parent Tool Kit to help parents work with schools to ensure that their children are receiving a quality education.

The Parent Tool Kit has materials that augment the previously released Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities. The Parent version offers information on subjects such as assessment, instructional practices, behavior and accommodations. Materials included in the new Parent Tool Kit provide information that will help them become active and informed participants in IEP discussions and other decision-making meetings that support students with disabilities and their families.

Parents can find these materials on the website www.osepideasthatwork.org/index.asp.

Lobby Day focuses on hearing loss issues

The annual Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind Lobby Day will take place March 8 at the Capitol.

The day includes training on how to work with lawmakers as well as scheduled appointment times with legislators. Training will run from 9 to 11 a.m. There will be a rally at noon, followed by appointments with legislators.

Several potential bills in the State Legislature deal with issues tied to hearing loss: newborn hearing screening and intervention; funding for transitioning from high school; funding to provide interpreters for Driver's Education; and, funding to attend Gallaudet University. In addition, **a bill that would provide financial support for the Family Support Connection/MN Hands & Voices is being considered.** Representatives Murphy, E., Otremba, Abeler and Fritz introduced H. F. 0462 in the House. This bill would appropriate money for support services for families with children who are deaf or who have a hearing loss. A similar bill should be written soon for the Senate.

For more about Lobby Day, e-mail Mary.Hartnett@state.mn.us or call 651-297-7305 (v), 888-206-2001 (tty).

FOCUS
Sponsor:



WhiteSpace
DESIGN

Mary Stadelman
952.894.0470
mstadelman@earthlink.net

Quality art direction
and graphic design.



The View from Here

Upper Northwest:

Cabin Fever Event at Seven Clans Water Park in Thief River Falls will be Feb. 22 - 23. Registration and hotel is \$20. Contact Karen Dvergsten at 218-874-8215.

Northeast:

Duluth Get Together for conversational signers meets at 5 p.m. Feb. 15 at Sammy's Pizza and Restaurant, 103 West 1st St. For more information, contact Cheryl Blue, DHHS~NE, TTY: 218-723-4961 or 1-888-723-3344; Voice: 218-723-4962 or 1-888-234-1322 or e-mail: cheryl.blue@state.mn.us.

A free Family Weekend For Families Who Have a Child Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing takes place March 10 - 11 at Laurentian Environmental Center in Britt. Register by Feb. 15 by contacting Kathleen Jacklen at the Northeast Service Cooperative, 218-748-7615 or kjacklen@nesc.k12.mn.us.

Southwest:

Barnes & Noble in Mankato hosts **ASL Storytime** at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 3 with Kari Sipple.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest will be ASL-interpreted at Mankato State University on Saturday, Feb. 10 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$9-13. Call 507-389-6661 or see www.MSUTheatre.com.

East/West Central:

Snowtube Feb. 17 at Powder Ridge, 15015 93rd Ave. in Kimball. Cost is \$13 to tube from 5 to 7 p.m. Meet in the Chalet for social time from 3 to 5 p.m.

Swim with friends and family from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22 at Becker Community Center, 11500 Sherburne Ave., Becker. If 30 people sign up, cost will be \$5 each. Lifeguards will be on duty. A concession stand will be open to purchase pizza, hot dogs, nachos, soft pretzels and drinks. Plus swimmers can win prizes! RSVP by Feb. 15 to Kim.Konerza@monticello.k12.mn.us or call 763-271-0533.

Southwest & Central:

DHHS Cross Cultural Ice Skating Event will be at Redwood Falls Area Community Center on Wednesday, Feb. 7 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Games, crafts, skates and juice boxes will be provided—bring a sack lunch. Sponsored by both Mankato and St. Cloud DHHS offices. RVSP to Diane Leonard at 866-274-5884 (tty), 800-456-3690 (v), or diane.leonard@state.mn.us.

Relax, learn, and connect with other families who can relate to your experiences at the **Amazing Family Retreat Feb. 23-24** at the AmericInn Lodge and Suites, 1406 E Lyon St. in Marshall. Registration fee is \$50 and includes overnight in the hotel, entertainment, pizza, swimming, youth activities and parent sessions. Register by Feb. 9. Contact Wendy Fricke, 507-537-2269(V) or e-mail wendy.fricke@swsc.org. The retreat brochure also is online at http://66.115.207.203/ClassLibrary/Page/Information/DataInstances/560/Files/3526/Family_Retreat_Flyer.pdf.



Rockin' around the roller rink!

Skaters Zoe, Gabby, and Paige help each other navigate the rink. The girls were among 200 guests last Sunday when MN Hands & Voices/ Family Support Connection hosted our annual Family Skating event. Hope to see you again next year!

Workshop teaches non-manual signals in ASL

A workshop for ASL interpreters or advanced signers will be offered March 17 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Cragun's Resort on Gull Lake.

"Face Painting' with Non-Manual Signals in ASL" will focus on developing accurate non-manual signals and markers as used in ASL. Demonstrations of each category of facial behaviors and head movements will be shown in context. Practice exercises will be offered.

Registration is \$45 by March 1 or \$55 at the door. The workshop will be presented in ASL; a voice interpreter will not be provided. Lunch is on your own. For more information contact Info@trixbruce.com.

Captions pushed in St. Paul

Advocates are pushing for a "Closed-Captioning Enabled Ordinance" in St. Paul. The ordinance would require the closed-captioning feature (when available) to be enabled on all TVs at all times in public indoor and outdoor places. The city council will meet on this Wednesday, Feb. 7. To learn more, contact sonnyjames@yahoo.com.

Science, writing contests for deaf MS/HS students

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is holding a National Science Fair for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Students in grades 6-8 and 9-11 can submit projects for a cash award, a plaque and other prizes.

Details and entry forms are online at www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/science. The entry deadline is March 2. Winning projects will be displayed at RIT during National Science Fair April 27-29.

The deadline for RIT's writing contest for high school sophomores and juniors with hearing loss has been extended to March 2.

Winners of the second annual SpiRIT Writing Contest will have their choice of a scholarship and paid travel expenses to a week-long summer career exploration program at RIT for students with hearing loss, or a \$500 cash prize and all-expenses-paid two-day visit with a parent to RIT. For contest guidelines and entry information, go to www.rit.edu/NTID/WritingContest.



A Little Grin

By Melissa McNamer

This month's issue of *FOCUS* is on family involvement, and the Family Support Connection just had our first event of the year last weekend at the Roller Gardens. We had a nice turnout of nearly 200 people. We were able to meet so many of the new families we've spoken to on the phone over the last year and were encouraged by their participation and attendance at our event.

There are so many great workshops for families with children who have hearing loss. Going to these can make you a better advocate for your child, and you might meet some fun people along the way! That was certainly the case at our skating event.

As a member of the FSC staff, I looked forward to going skating. However, the rest of my family was not so excited—since that would mean my husband trying to help a 5- and 3-year-old (let alone, himself!) skate single-handedly. But, when Uncle Greg volunteered to help corral the kiddies, they ventured out and had a GREAT time.

Connor, our 3-year-old with hearing loss, didn't strap on his skates right away, but let it all soak in for a bit. Right after observing the Chicken Dance and all of the other kids and teens on their skates, he was brave enough to get out there, too!

We encourage each of you to "strap on your skates" and take in an event or two in the community this year. Enjoy the diversity that we all bring to the table and who knows, you might even meet some friends along the way!

St. Mark's Catholic Church,
2001 Dayton Ave. in St. Paul, provides
ASL interpretation at its Saturday 5
p.m. mass. For more information, call
651-645-5717.

MDS moves to new site

Metro Deaf School (MDS) has moved to a newly renovated building at 1471 Brewster Street in St. Paul.

The building is about 85% completed, according to Director Dyan Sherwood. There are several finishing touches left, such as window blinds and minor painting. Exterior painting is on hold until Spring. The School Board is planning an open house sometime in February. For more details, see www.metrodeafschool.org.

Basketball, cheerleading competitions at MSAD

Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) in Faribault hosts the 18th Annual Great Plains Schools for the Deaf Basketball Tournament and Cheerleading Competition Feb. 8 - 10.

Schools involved in the tournament include MSAD, Iowa; Missouri; Kansas; Oklahoma; Colorado; New Mexico; and, Arkansas.

Tournament Combo Tickets are \$25; one-day admission is \$10. For more information, call 507-332-5400 or e-mail msad@msad.state.mn.us.

Minnesota's other high school for students with hearing loss is Minnesota North Star Academy in St. Paul. That school's basketball team recently competed in the Central States Schools for the Deaf basketball tournament at Michigan School for the Deaf.

Parent Child Institute set

The Parent Child Institute runs June 8-10 at Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) in Faribault.

This weekend workshop, "ABC, Come Write With Me: Literacy through Writing," will show parents how to use reading and play times to improve a child's writing skills.

Cost is \$50 per family and includes registration, lodging at MSAD, meals, and daycare/children's sessions. This institute is open to all Minnesota parents, grandparents, caregivers and guardians of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is sponsored by the Minnesota departments of Health and Education, MSAD, and the Minnesota Resource Center for the Deaf/HH. For more information or to register, contact Lola Brand at 800-657-3996 or e-mail lola.brand@msad.state.mn.us.



Off the Shelf

By Laura Godfrey

As we focus on family involvement this month, I wanted to find some books that help to explain the importance of parent involvement in raising successful, well adjusted adults. Research has shown that the more involved a parent is in their child's life, the better the child does in school. I found some books that may help you build a better understanding of your child's needs and how best to support them.

- *Kid-Friendly Parenting with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children*
By Daria Medwid and Denise Chapman Weston
- *The Silent Garden: Raising your Deaf Child*
By Paul W. Ogden
- *When Your Child is Deaf: A Guide for Parents*
By David M. Luteran
- *Keys to Raising a Deaf Child*
By Virginia Frazier-Maiwald and Lenore M. Williams

You'll find these books on our website (www.familysupportconnection.org). You can also request library materials by calling us at 651-265-2372 (local) or 1-866-346-4543 (toll free).

Robert Davila, Ph.D., Vice President Emeritus-RIT, Former Assistant Secretary-U.S. Department of Education, began his new job as interim president of Gallaudet University last month when I. King Jordan retired. For details, see www.gufssa.com.

TV documentary follows history of deaf in America

"Through Deaf Eyes," a two-hour PBS documentary on the lives of Americans who are deaf, is scheduled to air Wednesday, March 21 on PBS (channel 2 in the Twin Cities).

The film shows what it's like to be deaf in this country. It features interviews with community leaders, historians, and people who are deaf and have diverse views on language use, technology and identity. The documentary also weaves in shorter films by deaf filmmakers who give their own perspectives on living with deafness.

"Through Deaf Eyes" shows U.S. history intersecting with the experiences of people who are deaf. The film traces deaf education from the founding of the first school for the deaf in 1817 and the 1864 chartering of Gallaudet University, the only place that deaf people could earn a college degree in a signing environment, to the late-20th century "mainstreaming" movement. Central to this history is the debate over how to teach children who are deaf.

The film also explores the issues surrounding cochlear implants, showing frank conversations with deaf people who use cochlear implants and those who do not, and with parents who struggle to make the best decisions for their deaf children.

This documentary was inspired by the exhibition "History Through Deaf Eyes" at Gallaudet University. For more information about the exhibition, visit the History Through Deaf Eyes website at <http://depts.gallaudet.edu/deafeyes>. Materials for teachers related to the exhibit are available at <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/DPN/history-through.htm>.

PBS will host a website connected to the documentary at www.pbs.org (it's not up yet). The site will include interviews with the deaf filmmakers whose work is featured in the documentary, while also inviting viewers to submit their own stories, photographs, and films. These will become part of the archival collection of Gallaudet University. The university also is publishing a companion book for the documentary.

Website tells history of deaf in World War II

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf has created a website to tell the experiences of deaf people during World War II.

The site (www.rit.edu/deafww2) features video clips, testimonies, articles, scripts, artwork, books and related links. It grew out of several years of research, and preserves firsthand information from an aging group of survivors. The site includes a 25-minute documentary, "Exodus: A Deaf Jewish Family Escapes Nazi Europe," in ASL with English voice-over and subtitles.

Deaflympics news, events shown on Internet

Deaf athletes from all over the world are competing this month at the 16th Winter Deaflympics in Salt Lake City.

The 2007 Deaflympics run Feb. 1-10 and have a total of 584 athletes with hearing loss and officials from 24 countries participating. The major categories of events are alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding, ice hockey and curling.

The US team includes a large contingent from Minnesota: alpine skiing—Jonas Virnig; snowboarding—Matt Gustafson; ice hockey—Jon Dickson, Benjamin Johnson, Ryan Krajewski, and Stephen Wangberg; curling—Herman Fuechtmann, Valerie Fuechtmann, Elizabeth Matthews, and Calvin Rausch.

While the games won't be shown on television, you can keep track on several websites—some even offer live video or video clips of the games. The official website for the games is www.2007Deaflympics.com. Daily results and highlights can be viewed at www.deaflympics.tv and at deafnation.com. Coverage of the US team specifically can be found at 2007.usdeafsports.org/events.htm. To get a sense of how well competitors are doing, you can compare this year's winners with past records at www.deaflympics.com/athletes.

Teachers who want to use the Deaflympics as an educational tool can get lesson plans from the website clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/deaflympics. (Look under "Educators' Lounge.") The website also explains the history and value of Deaflympics.