



Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS

—supporting families with kids who have hearing loss—

MAY 2007

Find opportunities to build child's confidence, skill as self-advocate

Self-advocacy—the ability to “speak” up for ourselves to have our needs met—is a skill we all need to survive in today’s world. It’s also a skill that’s crucial to develop in children who have hearing loss because their communication needs can be overlooked in a hearing world. We can help kids build confidence in their ability to advocate for themselves by offering them opportunities at every age.

If a child wears a hearing aid or uses a cochlear implant, that device offers a great opportunity for learning self-advocacy. A young child can start by noticing when the device’s battery dies and letting a parent or teacher know it needs to be changed. Melissa McNamer,

our Metro Parent Guide, added that goal to her son’s early intervention plan when he was just 2-and-a-half.

“We’re at age 3.5 (almost) and he’s doing quite well at this,” Melissa said. He sometimes says his hearing aids are not working when they still are. But, he’s still learning that he can be responsible for the job of monitoring his own hearing aids, she said. As her son grows, he’ll take on more responsibility for taking care of his hearing aids, she added.

“It’s hard as a parent of a child with hearing loss to not ‘baby’ them to some degree,” Melissa said. “But, we constantly need to remind ourselves that instilling self advocacy and independence from an early age is especially important for their growth—for our sanity as well!”

Another area where we can encourage our kids to advocate for themselves is with captioning on TV. Even a 3-year-old can learn to switch on the caption mode so she can watch cartoons. She also can learn to turn on the captions on Grandma’s TV (probably easier than Grandma can). It’s likely that her confidence with this task will make it easier for her to ask for captioning at a friend’s house in the future—an easy way to stand up for herself, but also an important piece in her image of herself as a self-advocate.

Simply allowing young children to complete a task—even when you know you could do it much faster—also helps them see themselves as capable.

“I think sometimes as parents, we know full well that it would take less time and energy to actually take action for our kids than to teach our children to advocate for themselves,” said Candace Lindow-Davies, Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator. “We do them a disservice and set them up for hardship later if we forget to take the time now to teach them the skills to speak up for themselves. My son will still look to me to interpret or repeat what someone has said to him,” Candace said about her 11-year-old son.

“I have to tell him to not look at me—ask the speaker to repeat, slow down, look at him.”

Since communication typically is the biggest challenge for kids with hearing loss, this area offers a lot of room to encourage self-advocacy. Experts in child development and hearing loss point out that the first step is to teach your child about his or her hearing loss in a matter-of-fact way. If you are straightforward about the limitations (and expectations) the child faces, the child usually will be, too. At the same time, talk about ways that the child could handle breakdowns in communication. Language professionals call these “repair strategies.” One repair strategy is to have the child repeat what he thinks a speaker/signer/cuer said to make sure he understands. He can start with “Did you say...” Another strategy is for the child to ask you to repeat what you said. Keep in mind that you’ll probably be doing a lot of repeating. And, as annoying as this can get, it’s far better for your child’s self esteem to keep repeating than to wave him off with “never mind.” By repeating until he understands, you’re teaching him that he’s a valued part of the conversation. He’ll learn to stand up for himself if he’s missing out in the future—which is exactly what you want him to do, especially at school.

School provides daily opportunities for a child to exercise skills in self-advocacy. Maybe she needs to scoot up next to the teacher to hear storytime better. She might need to ask the interpreter to move if another child is blocking her view. Or, she might need to tap another child and ask her to repeat something she missed. All of these situations require a child to see what’s wrong and to act to fix it, which is exactly what a self-advocate does.

A good place for children to learn self-advocacy skills at school is in their IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings. According to PACER Center, an

Self-advocacy... continued on Page 4

Oh, the Places You'll Go

Start with a visit to

Tech Expo!

SEE • TOUCH • TRY
all the latest gadgets that make life easier/cooler for kids of all ages who are deaf or hard of hearing. Learn how to use the newest technologies in mini-workshops every half hour.

Saturday, May 5
Open 9:00-noon

Free parking!
Free admission!
Free refreshments!

Elmer L. Andersen Building
540 Cedar St. in St. Paul

Call MN Hands & Voices
for details: 651-265-2435.

Here's What's Happening Around Town

- Friday, May 4** **The last open family swim time for the season** 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. For more information, e-mail Mary. Livingston@ci.stpaul.mn.us or call 651-266-6366(v), -6378(tty).
- Saturday, May 5** **The Merriam Park Branch Library presents Deaf Storytime** with Egina Beldon at 10:30 a.m. at 1831 Marshall Ave. This is the last Storytime this season. For details, call 651-642-0385 (v) or 651-298-4184 (tty).
- Saturday, May 5** **Remember to go to Tech Expo! Visit anytime between 9 a.m. and noon at the Elmer L. Andersen Building, 540 Cedar St. near the Capitol. Demos run every half hour. See Page 1.**
- Sundays, May 6 & June 3** **ASL-interpreted tours at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts** begin at 2 p.m. by the Information Desk in the museum lobby. May 6 is "Highlights of the Museum up to 1600." June 3 is "Highlights of the Museum 1600-1900." For details, call Visitor and Member Services at 612-870-3131 (v) or 612-870-3132 (tty) or e-mail dhegstro@artsmia.org.
- Tuesday, May 8** **The 916 Auditory Oral Program Parent Support Group hosts a potluck picnic** from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Parkview Center School in Roseville. Free for 916 district families, \$10 for others. To register, e-mail Barb Young at byoung@nemetrol.k12.mn.us.
- Friday, May 11** **Burst of Sign, an ASL performance** by the ASL students at Chaska High School, goes from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the high school auditorium at 545 Pioneer Trail (west side). Tickets are \$3 for students and \$5 for adults. Refreshments sold during intermission. Proceeds go to CHS ASL Club and Deaf Global Connections. For more information, contact o'keefeg@district112.org.
- Saturday, May 12** **Family Fun Day at Charles Thompson Hall, 1824 Marshall Ave. in St. Paul, includes a craft fair from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., kid's dart tournament with registration at noon and games at 1 p.m., and a family social with games at 7 p.m.** Cost for the dart tournament is \$3 for kids 6 and under, \$5 for kids 7-18 (must bring school ID). Contact Nola Bowman at pepsifreak@tmail.com.
- Sunday, May 13** **ASL interpreters are on hand for "Your Mama,"** a free event celebrating motherhood with an hour of music, poetry and puppetry at 2 p.m. at the Lake Harriet Bandshell. For more details, see www.mombo.org.
- Tuesday, May 15** **Practice Cue Clutch** meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Java Jacks, 818 W. 46th St. in Minneapolis. Contact Katherine Burns-Christenson at 952-929-3965 or e-mail kbc29@aol.com.
- Wednesday, May 23** **A free workshop on Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome** goes from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the University of Minnesota campus on the 8th floor of the Phillip Wangenstein Building, 516 Delaware Street SE, Minneapolis. Sponsored by Minnesota Hands & Voices and the Lions Children's Hearing Center/University of Minnesota. E-mail us for more information: fsc@lifetrackresources.org
- June 2-3** **ASL interpreters are at Flint Hills International Children's Festival** at the Ordway Center, 345 Washington in St. Paul for staged performances plus free events (mimes, art, parade) in Rice Park. For schedule, see www.ordway.org.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Ask for VSA discount!

The Prince & the Pauper

Sunday, May 6, 2 p.m.; Wednesday, May 9 & Thursday, May 10 at 10 a.m.
Hopkins Center for the Arts, 1111 Main-street; 952-979-1111; www.stagestheatre.org

A Lion's Tale - Somali Folktales

Sunday, May 20, 2 p.m.
Landmark Center, 75 W. 5th St., St. Paul; 651-225-9265; www.steppingstonetheatre.org

Molecules of Music

Saturday, May 19, 2 p.m.
Barbara Barker Center for Dance, U of M West Bank, 500 21st Ave. S, Minneapolis; 612-423-3064; www.youngdance.org

Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Sunday, May 20, 2 p.m.
Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, 1900 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis; 612-623-9080; www.youthperformanceco.com

Monkey Magic: Chinese Story Theatre

Sunday, May 20, 2 p.m.
Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road; 952-563-8587; www.bloomingtonartcenter.com

The Green Sheep

Performed by Australian troupe
May 24, noon & May 25, 7 p.m. PLUS

Seussical

May 23, 10:30 a.m. & June 1, 7:30 p.m.
Children's Theatre, 2400 3rd Ave. S., Mpls; 612-874-0400; www.childrenstheatre.org

Grease

Saturday, June 16, 7:30 p.m.
Osseo High School, 317 2nd Ave. NW; 763-391-2787; www.crossplayers.org

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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.

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In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator

I hope you enjoy this issue of the FOCUS about children who are deaf or hard of hearing developing their own advocacy skills. Self-advocacy really is one of the most important lessons we can teach our kids. Starting early is the key.

First, we as parents have to know what our children's rights are—we need to understand what kinds of services and accommodations we should expect. Then, we have to summon the courage to assert those rights. Sometimes this just means pointing out your child's needs. Sometimes, though, you need to arm yourself for a bigger battle.

Please keep in mind that it is not possible to advocate for every issue every time. Sure, we want to fight for our kids' rights, but not every battle can take our attention and energy. So, as in other aspects of parenting, we need to pick our battles, and let some smaller ones go.

Finally, we need to teach our children to take responsibility for their own access to services. They can learn by seeing us advocate for them when they're young. And, we can gradually give them more opportunities to practice this skill. We can give them safe environments to gain confidence as self-advocates.

I had the chance to catch up with one mother at a recent conference, and she shared with me what it has been like to have her son who is deaf go off to college. (The thought of it still makes my head swim.) She shared how completely removed she is from what is happening with her child. This is where self-advocacy is really put to the test. She shared his successes and where he needs to improve. He is learning just how much strength it takes to constantly assert his needs yet still feel like he fits in. And that's the balance.

So, if like you're like me, and the thought of your child with hearing loss going off to college takes your breath away, remember right now is when you can start preparing him or her. Look for those opportunities. I found one recently at church. My son's view of the pastor was blocked by the man in front of him. He turned to me to resolve it. I had to remind him that he was the one who couldn't see, and he needed to overcome his shyness and ask the tall adult to slide to his left or right. He needed to ask, not me.

Building advocacy skills is hard, especially for children who are very shy. But, remember: give a man a fish, feed him today. Teach a man to fish...feed him for a lifetime. This is the essence of self-advocacy.

Unfortunately, discrimination and ignorance still exist. So, as parents, we need to assist our kids in recognizing when they are not being given full access like their hearing peers. Then, we need to give them the tools to remedy it. It is an on-going process. But, it is some of the most important work a parent can ever do.

Have a terrific month! Hope you can go to **Tech Expo!** It's this Saturday from 9 to noon. See Page 1 for details. Also, join us for a workshop on **Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome** May 23. See Page 2.

Congress considers bill for early detection, intervention programs for hearing loss

Federal legislators are working on a bill that will improve the early detection, diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss in young children.

On March 29, Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2007 (S. 1069). A companion bill (H.R. 1198) is in the U.S. House of Representatives. The legislation would reauthorize the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) grant program, which funds programs that screen newborns for hearing loss before they leave the hospital. The legislation also seeks to expand states' ability to enroll identified babies in early intervention programs, offer coordinated support to families of young children with hearing loss and addresses the shortage of trained health providers.

AGBell's website, www.agbell.org, has more details plus a sample letter urging support for the bill.

Bill would fund training for more captioners

Legislators also are considering a bill to support captioning on television.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced "The Training for Realtime Writers Act of 2007," (S. 675), a bill to authorize \$100 million in grants to expand training and job placement for closed captioners. Since the government has required 100% of all new television programming to have closed captioning, the demand for captioners is very high. The measure is a personal priority for the Senator whose brother was deaf.

The Senate passed a similar bill in 2005, but it did not see action in the House. This year, Rep. Ron Kind, (D-WI) has introduced companion legislation (HR 1687).

To support this bill, contact Sen. Harkin at www.harkin.senate.gov, Rep. Kind at www.house.gov/kind, or search by name online for your representatives in Congress.

Stipends provided for national summit

PEPNet-Midwest (Postsecondary Education Programs Network) is offering 10 - 12 stipends of up to \$750 for high school and postsecondary teachers/counselors, transition specialists and outreach staff in the Midwest to attend Transition Summit: Enhancing Postsecondary Educational Success for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students. The summit will be June 25-27 at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, NY.

The summit fee is \$50. The stipends can offset the cost of travel and hotel accommodations.

Applications for stipends are due May 11. Applicants will be notified by May 15. Registration for the summit is due May 21. All of the forms are online at www.netac.rit.edu/TransitionSummit.

Free online seminar tackles bullying

"Bullying Hurts! Helping Your Child Cope and Conquer" is an online seminar presented by the Working Family Resource Center Thursday, May 17, from noon to 1 p.m.

Toni Schutta, MA, a licensed psychologist with Families First Coaching, is the presenter. To register for the free seminar, e-mail your name, phone number, seminar date and title to support@wfrfc.us.



The View from Here

Southeast:

The Goodhue County Education District hosts a **FREE picnic** with Dairy Queen food at Zumbrota's Covered Bridge Park

Monday, May 21 beginning at 5:30 p.m. for families with kids, birth to 21 years, who receive special education services in the district. RSVP to Diane at 651-385-8000 by May 14.

SERTOMA Club funds ASL interpretation for Rochester Repertory Theatre's performance of **Rocket Man** Friday, May 11, at 8 p.m. (Possibly May 25, also.) Tickets are \$15 with a discount for students and seniors at 507-289-1737, BoxOffice@RochesterRep.org or www.RochesterRep.org.

Southwest:

A **lecture series on hearing loss** with Nancy Green of the River Valley Hearing Aid Center in Mankato takes place at Old Main Village May 7, June 11 and July 2. RSVP no later than five days in advance to 507-388-4200. All programs start at 1 p.m. in Old Main Village's Club Room.

Parent, local hospital team up to improve services for people with hearing loss

Amy Deneen, our Southeast Parent Guide, also works part time as an occupational therapist at Fairview Red Wing Medical Center (FRWMC). She has found a couple of opportunities to merge her job at the hospital with her role in Minnesota Hands & Voices as an advocate for families who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

While working on the inpatient floor, she overheard a nurse say she would love to learn some sign language to communicate with patients who are deaf. That got Amy thinking. She approached nursing supervisor Julie Gaitonde about the possibility of offering a sign language class at the hospital for staff. Julie recommended placing a sign-up sheet in the nursing break room to determine if the interest was great enough to set up a class. The sheet quickly filled with names of those interested in learning how to sign. Amy made a few calls and found Lisa Warwick, a local interpreter, to teach the class. Julie set up the rest of the details, and the class began April 11. It will run for 6 weeks with the possibility of being an ongoing class.

Another opportunity for advocacy presented itself after Amy received an e-mail regarding FRWMC's Community Care Program. The program provides financial help for medical treatment for people who can't afford it. Amy was concerned that hearing aids were specifically excluded from the list of acceptable medical expenses covered by this program. After several letters back and forth with Community Care representatives, hearing aids were added to the list.

"Now the people in the Red Wing community have access to hearing aids when they can't afford them," Amy said. "It's through efforts like these by Fairview Red Wing Medical Center that life is improved for the families with deaf and hard of hearing members in our communities. We gratefully acknowledge and thank them for their commitment."

Self-advocacy... continued from Page 1

advocacy resource for families that have children with disabilities, children who are included in the IEP meeting develop the ability to speak up for themselves, and learn teamwork and goal-setting skills. By joining these meetings, kids come to understand the impact their disability has on their education, what accommodations will help them, and who to ask for help getting the tools they need to succeed in school.

When children are in elementary grades, they might not want to sit through the entire meeting. PACER suggests having kids join the group at least for the opening introductions, which gives them the chance to see all the IEP team members and to become comfortable in a meeting setting.

Our Southeast Parent Guide, Amy Deneen, has seen the value of including her son, Matt, in his IEP meetings. She recalls how in second grade, the school psychologist asked Matt to leave the room so she could discuss the results of her assessment.

"Matt dug in his heels and said, 'No, I want to stay,'" Amy said. When the psychologist tried to pry him from his chair, Matt held on firmly repeating he would stay. "I told her that he had always attended his IEP meetings, and if there were things to be said without him in the room, it needed to happen in a meeting other than his IEP meeting," Amy explained. After the meeting, Amy praised her son for advocating for himself.

Praise and encouragement go a long way in raising kids who can advocate for themselves. Teaching by example works well, too, as Candace has found.

"We have to teach them about the Americans with Disabilities Act and talk about it while we're educating ourselves so they know there are laws to protect them in life," Candace said. "I share with my son when I have to remind someone that they need to provide access for him so it's not all done out of his view. He needs to know that with advocacy comes success."

Resources for encouraging self-advocacy

www.wrightslaw.com

This website offers help with understanding rights provided by legislation such as IDEA and the ADA.

www.nad.org

The National Association of the Deaf has tips on how to be a good self-advocate. Go to Info & FAQs > Advocacy > Self-advocacy. The NAD's website also explains the legal rights of people who are deaf.

www.pacer.org/articles/index.htm

PACER Center has several publication sheets with practical ideas for encouraging a child who has a disability to advocate for him or herself. Scroll down to find:

- 6 - IEP: Involving the student
- 77 - How Can My Child Be Involved in the IEP Process?
- 95 - Help Your Child Learn to Be a Good Self Advocate
- 116 - Be Your Own Best Advocate

www.cmhn.org/publications.htm

The Minnesota Statewide Family Network has written ACTips for Teens: Use Your IEP Meetings to Learn How to Advocate for Yourself.

www.fvkasa.org

Kids as Self Advocates has helpful resources by kids on topics such as education, health, and dating.

CSD gives away Twins tickets

CSD is offering free tickets to Minnesota Twins Games at the Metrodome again this season. The dates are:

- May 12 (Detroit)
- June 9 (Washington)
- July 14 (Oakland)
- August 18 (Texas)

For game times, see www.twins.mlb.com. These tickets go fast. To reserve yours, contact: Jessica Lynn "Jessalyn" Frank at jfrank@c-s-d.org.

Group hosts online homework help for deaf students

LifeLinks VRS, a New York-based video relay service, now offers free homework help for students who are deaf and sign.

"Tutoring Solutions" is a non-profit public service designed to assist students in elementary, middle and high school complete school assignments. All the tutors are either deaf or hearing and fluent in ASL.

To use the service, students must have a computer with a high-speed Internet connection and a webcam. After downloading free software, students can click on the link on the LifeLinks website to contact a tutor in a specific subject area. At the start of each session, a parent or guardian must give consent. Tutors are available Sunday through Thursday from 5 to 7:15 p.m.

For detailed instructions on accessing tutors, go to www.Lifelinkstutors-foundation.com.

Contest encourages young artists who have disabilities

VSA arts and Volkswagen announce a call for entries in "Driven," a juried art exhibition for young artists (16-25) who have disabilities.

Entrants must live in the U.S. and have a physical, cognitive, or mental disability. The entry deadline is July 6.

Entries must be an original artwork completed in the last three years. Eligible media include paintings and drawings, fine art prints, photography, computer-generated prints, and two-dimensional mixed media.

Prizes are a \$20,000 Grand Prize, a First Award of \$10,000; a Second Award of \$6,000; and 12 Awards of Excellence for \$2,000 each.

See www.vsarts.org for more information and entry instructions.



A Little Grin

A reader sent in this Grin about a friend when she was little. Sometimes a self-advocate just has to wing it!

Carol was being introduced to some important company (when you are little, all of your parents' guests are important) and was trying her best to be the polite, big-girl kind of person that the social situation demanded. She shook hands, and the guest asked her a question. She didn't hear what the person said, but knew from experience it had to be either "How are you?" or "How old are you?" Since she was 5 years old at the time and also quite fine, she simply replied "Fi." It did the job.

Research projects study Cueing

A couple of new research projects dealing with Cued Speech are looking for participants.

First, researchers at Gallaudet University are studying the language acquisition and development of deaf children who have cochlear implants and use Cued Speech. Participants should be children ages 7-11 who are prelingually deaf with a severe to profound hearing loss. They should have started using Cued Speech and received their implant at a young age, preferably before 2. For more details, contact Claire Klossner at claire.klossner@gallaudet.edu or 240-353-8840.

Second, researchers at the University of South Florida are studying the role of Cued Speech in the lives of deaf adults who were raised cueing. Participants are asked to complete three separate online surveys (approximately 40, 20 and 15 minutes each). To request the surveys' online addresses, contact the lead investigator, Kelly Lamar Crain at kcraim@cas.usf.edu.

DeafNation Junior Golf Classic July 5-6 in Maryland is FREE for D/HH kids ages 8-18. See www.deafnation.com. Enter by June 6.

Rec program offers golf class

Kids ages 8 to 15 who are deaf or hard of hearing and their siblings can sign up to learn to play golf this summer through CSD-MN and St. Paul Parks and Recreation.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Junior Golf Lessons will be taught by PGA and LPGA members. ASL interpreters will be provided for each class. Deaf adult golfers also are being recruited to help students learn the basics of the game. Class size will be between 5 and 20 kids. Cost is \$15. Students can bring their own clubs or use those provided. Range-building classes will be at Highland Golf Course, 1403 Montreal in St. Paul. Golfing will be at Highland's 9-hole course, 1797 Edgcombe Road in St. Paul.

Class 1: June 19 - 22, 1 - 2 p.m.
Register by Friday, June 8.

Class 2: July 9 - 11, 8:45 - 10:15 a.m.
Register by Friday June 29.

Class 3: July 30, Aug. 6 & 13, 8:45 - 10:15 a.m. Register by Friday, July 20.

For registration information, contact Mary Livingston at 651-266-6366 (v), 651-266-6378 (tty) or mary.livingston@ci.stpaul.mn.us or Jessalyn Frank at 651-487-8872 (tty) or jfrank@c-s-d.org

Northern Voices wins Timberwolves' grant

Northern Voices, an oral school in Roseville for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, has won the \$10,000 Timberwolves Fastbreak Foundation grant that called for online voting last month from the school's supporters.

The basketball team chose to award \$10,000 to both Northern Voices and Camp Heartland, a camp for kids with HIV, since the votes were so close. Northern Voices' award is being matched by the Oberkotter Foundation, netting the school a total of \$20,000.

The school has more details about the award, plus a YouTube video of the kids, at www.northernvoices.org.

Deaf interpreter course set

The University of Vermont in Burlington is offering a Certified Deaf Interpreter prep course June 25-29 for students who are deaf. The course covers the role of a deaf interpreter and how to find jobs, set prices and file taxes. The class fulfills RID's 8 hours of interpreting practices and Code of Ethics training required prior to taking the CDI written exam. For more information, e-mail kogrizov@uvm.edu.

North Star hosts prom

Students in grades 8-12 who are deaf or hard of hearing can attend prom from 6:30 to 11 p.m. Friday, May 11 at Minnesota North Star Academy, 1669 Arcade St. in St. Paul. The prom theme is "Hollywood Nights," and costs \$20/person or \$30/couple. For more information, e-mail info@mnnorthstaracademy.org.

DeafNation holds contest

DeafNation, the company behind the Deaf news website and nationwide DeafNation expos, is holding a contest to design the art for the company's RV that travels around the country to the expos.

The contest winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize. The design must incorporate DeafNation's motto: Language, Culture and Pride. The contest ends May 12. For entry instructions, go to www.deafnation.com.

Register now for PCI

The Parent Child Institute (PCI) takes place June 8-10 at Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf in Faribault. This weekend workshop, "ABC, Come Write With Me: Literacy through Writing," costs \$50 per family and includes workshops, lodging at MSAD, meals, and daycare/children's sessions. It 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.

New book looks at ASL

A new book/DVD combination examines American Sign Language literature.

"Signing the Body Poetic: Essays on American Sign Language Literature" features critical analysis, interviews and creative works of ASL. According to the publishers, "Together, the book and DVD provide new insight into the history, culture, and creative achievements of the deaf community while expanding the scope of the visual and performing arts, literary criticism, and comparative literature." The set has been edited by faculty from Gallaudet University. It sells for \$29.95 on Amazon.com, which offers a look at the contents.



Off the Shelf

By Laura Godfrey

This month's cover story on encouraging self-advocacy in our kids recommends including the kids in IEP meetings. With that in mind, I'm recommending these resources from our library. The first two books were mentioned last month, but they apply to this topic as well.

"From Emotions to Advocacy, The Special Education Survival Guide" by Peter and Pam Wright looks at how to plan, prepare, organize and get quality special education services. It is very user friendly and shows what to expect at an IEP meeting.

Attorney Lawrence M. Siegel, Director of the National Deaf Education Project, wrote "The Complete IEP Guide." It offers help with special-education law, identifying your child's needs, preparing for meetings, developing the IEP and resolving disputes.

We also have a couple of books with topics that I think fall under teaching self-advocacy skills:

"Teaching Social Skills to Hearing-Impaired Students" shows how to increase a child's ability to interact with hearing peers.

"Raising and Educating a Deaf Child" is a guide to the choices, controversies and decisions faced by parents and educators.

"The Language of Toys. Teaching Communication Skills to Special Needs Children" shows parents and teachers how to use toys in activities that stimulate language development.

To make a library request, go to www.familysupportconnection.org or call 651-265-2372 or 1-866-346-4543.

In addition to checking out our library resources, you can find information on advocacy skills at the National Hands & Voices website, www.handsandvoices.org. Scroll over the "Resources" tab to "Topics" and choose "Advocacy." You'll find a long list of helpful documents.

Webinar explains new CI

Advanced Bionics, a cochlear implant manufacturer, hosts periodic webinars (online seminars) to introduce the company's new Harmony processor. The next webinar is Wednesday, May 9 at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. While the webinar is free, registration is required. To register, go to www.BionicEar.com/support/Harmonywebinars.asp. Past webinars are available at www.BionicEar.com.

Deaf conference offers CEUs

"Hands Across Minnesota," Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens' 57th Biennial Conference, takes place June 29-30 at the Radisson Hotel in Minneapolis. Teachers and interpreters can get CEUs for attending. For registration details, see www.minndeaf.org.

Miss Deaf Minnesota pageant set for July 14

The 17th Biennial Miss Deaf Minnesota Pageant will take place the evening of Saturday, July 14 at Minneapolis Community & Technical College's Whitney Fine Arts Theatre, 1501 Hennepin Ave. (www.minneapolis.edu). Tickets are \$35 + \$2.50 for parking. Contact Lala Schmit at 320-363-1171 (VP) or laschmit@tmail.com. For a flyer with details about the event, see www.minndeaf.org.

Website helps kids listen

Advanced Bionics, the maker of Clarion and Harmony cochlear implants, recently launched a free online aural rehabilitation program called "The Listening Room for Kids." The program was developed by a certified auditory-verbal therapist to help parents and professionals maximize the hearing potential of children who have cochlear implants. The Listening Room is at www.HearingJourney.com.

Foreign exchange wanted

An Australian student who is deaf is hoping to become an exchange student in America and wants to find a family with a child who is deaf to host her. She knows Auslan, some ASL and can voice and lipread. She would need an ASL interpreter at school.

The student wants to come to America in August 2008 during her sophomore year for six months. If your family is interested in this opportunity, contact Minnesota Hands & Voices at 651-265-2372 (v), 651-265-2379 (tty) or toll-free 1-866-346-4543 (v), 1-866-857-2379 (tty).