



DECEMBER 2009

Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS

—supporting families with kids who have hearing loss—

Happy Holidays to everyone in the Hands & Voices community!

On our website, we've posted our list of ideas to make holiday gatherings more comfortable for loved ones with hearing loss. See www.mnhandsandvoices.org/html/Fact%20Sheets.htm.

Or, go to www.mnhandsandvoices.org and click on "Fact Sheets." Then scroll down to "Holiday Tips for Guests with Hearing Loss."

ADHD, not hearing loss, could be reason for child's inattentiveness

By Kris Hemstock, SW Parent Guide

Kids with hearing loss sometimes lose the thread of a conversation or miss what's happening around them. That's one of the challenges of hearing loss. But, when a child often becomes distracted or has difficulty paying attention, hearing loss might not be to blame—it could be ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

"It can be very difficult [for parents] to determine whether or not a child with hearing loss has ADHD," said Nanette McDevitt, PsyD, Med., with the Greater Minnesota Assessment Service (GMAS). "Hearing loss can be like trying to listen on a cell phone when it is cutting in and out. It is very hard to maintain your attention when you can't get all of the information. It can be very hard to attend, and this can look like ADHD."

Dr. McDevitt offered these guidelines to help parents decide if their child might need professional help for ADHD:

- A child is inattentive in two or more settings—such as school and home.
- A child shows hyperactivity going beyond fidgeting, such as moving about and getting up out of a chair frequently.
- These symptoms also must be interfering with either language, academic, or social development to be considered ADHD.

Professional help for ADHD can come from a pediatrician or a psychologist. To help make a diagnosis, the pediatrician or psychologist may do an assessment that includes inventories sent to parents, daycare, and teachers.

"Seeking the opinion and advice of a professional who is familiar with children with hearing loss can be very helpful," said Dr. McDevitt. GMAS works specifically with children and youth to age 21 who have hearing loss. They offer communication-appropriate assessments, follow-up, school and family consultation and training to benefit children in Minnesota who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing and live outside the seven-county metro area. GMAS' services are funded through a state grant under the Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Division.

When a child with hearing loss receives a diagnosis of ADHD,

it can be overwhelming for parents.

"ADHD was the third diagnosis for our son," said one mom in our Hands & Voices community. Her son has physical issues as well as hearing loss. "Finding out he had ADHD was extremely difficult in that it came years later when I thought we knew what we were dealing with. We had established some sense of competency. ADHD meant that his learning and social skills were potentially impacted, and I really felt overwhelmed. I was *very* resistant to using medication, but after trying all kinds of sensory strategies, it was clear he needed more help. I've come to realize that the ADHD will have far more long-term consequences than the physical challenges or the fact that he is deaf. All this being said, this child has since blossomed and excelled in school. I could not be more proud and humbled to be his mother."

Parents can play a big role in their child's management of ADHD.

"Parents often have insights as to what might be most helpful to their child, and also to the type of information their child routinely misses," Dr. McDevitt said. "In addition to this, children can learn to build their own assertiveness skills as they mature. If a child knows they are struggling due to their hearing loss or ADHD, he or she can work with the teacher on making accommodations."

Strategies that can help a child with ADHD maintain attention in the classroom include getting an outline of course material, using visual aids, and spending time with the child after a lesson asking comprehension questions, Dr. McDevitt explained.

**Greater Minnesota Assessment Services (GMAS)
of Lifetrack Resources**

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Here's What's Happening Around Town

**Sunday, Dec. 6,
Thursday, Dec. 10
& Sunday, Jan. 3**

ASL interpretation is included in the **annual tour of holiday traditions in the Period Rooms** at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in Minneapolis. The Dec. 6 tour starts at 1 p.m., and at 7 p.m. on Dec. 10. Tours begin in the Bell Decorative Arts Court, third floor. **Masterworks from the MIA's Permanent Collection** will be the interpreted tour Sunday, Jan. 3 at 1 p.m., beginning in the museum lobby. For details, call 612-870-3131 (v); -3132 (tty) or e-mail dhegstro@artsmia.org.

**Sunday,
Dec. 6 &
Sunday,
Jan. 10**

Naturally Kids, a free, hands-on nature discovery program for parents and children (5 to 12) with any disability, offers "A Winter's Tale," exploring the stories Nature has to tell, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Fort Snelling State Park in St. Paul. "**Stylin' Snowmen**" is the topic Sunday, Jan. 10. Kids will build snowpeople or snowcritters and dress them up in nature's finery—leaves, flower stalks, and more. Learn more at www.naturallykids.org.

**Tuesday,
Dec. 8**

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS), Metro Office offers a **panel of mental health experts** from 10 a.m. to noon discussing issues experienced by people who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing, and the availability of services. The discussion is open to service providers and community leaders involved with individuals who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. The DHHS office is Suite 105 of the Golden Rule Building, 85 E. 7th Place in St. Paul. For details, contact Marie Koehler at 651-431-5964 (V), 651-964-1514 (VP) or email marie.koehler@state.mn.us.

**Saturday,
Dec. 12**

The Andover Lions Club hosts **the annual Signing Santa Pancake Breakfast** from 9 a.m. to noon. at the Senior Center in the Andover City Hall Complex, 1685 Crosstown Blvd. There is no charge for the pancake breakfast or pictures with Santa (who is deaf for this event). RSVP to Motleyman50@aol.com by Dec. 9.

**Tuesday,
Dec. 15**

Practice Cue Clutch meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Jo Jo's Rise & Wine, 12501 Nicollet Ave. in Burnsville. For more information, email info@cuedspeechminnesota.org.

Dec. 18 & 19

Signing Santa comes to Sertoma Winter Wonderland from 6 to 9 p.m. at Northland Arboretum in Brainerd. See over 60 light displays. Proceeds support Camp Sertoma, and Dreams and Inspirations – Deaf Camps and Retreats. See www.sertomawinterwonderland.com.

**Wednesday,
Jan. 6**

The University of Minnesota Medical Center-Fairview holds a **coffee chat from 10 to 11 a.m. for anyone who has a cochlear implant** or wants to learn about the benefits of an implant. The monthly chat is on the 8th floor of the Phillips Wangenstein Building on the U of M Minneapolis campus. For more information, email jackmaddio@msn.com.

**Thursday,
Jan. 21**

MDS-MNSA (Metro Deaf School-Minnesota North Star Academy) offers **Teen Night** with games, sports, movies and snacks. This event is open to all high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing. More details will be in the next issue of *FOCUS*.



Join us for our annual private party at the Roller Garden in St. Louis Park Sunday, Jan. 31 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Skating and dinner are on us! (Donations are welcome.) RSVP by Jan. 26 to mnhv@lifetrackresources.org.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Request the VSA discount.

Tuna Christmas

Thursday, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.
Bloomington Center for the Arts; 952-563-8575; www.bloomingtonartcenter.com

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!

Sunday, Dec. 13, 3 p.m.
SteppingStone Theatre for Youth, St. Paul; 651-225-9265; www.steppingstonetheatre.org

The Snowy Day

Sun., Jan. 24, 2 p.m. & Thu. Jan. 28, 10 a.m.
Hopkins Center for the Arts; 952-979-1111; www.stagestheatre.org

Dreamgirls

Sunday, Jan. 17, 1 p.m. Historic Orpheum Theatre, Mpls. www.hennepintheatredistrict.org/guestservices/aslad; 612-373-5650

Romeo & Juliet

Thu. Jan. 21, 10:30 a.m.; Fri. Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m.
Guthrie Theater, Mpls.; guthrietheater.org

Junior Claus

Thu., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. & Sun. Dec. 27, 2 p.m.
Burnsville Performing Arts Center, 952-895-4680; www.burnsvillepac.com

Beauty and the Beast

Saturday, Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. & Jan. 2, 2 p.m.
Ordway, St Paul; www.ordway.org/accessibility

The Mousetrap

Saturday, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m. Lyric Arts, Anoka. 763-422-1838; www.lyricarts.org

The Elves & the Shoemaker

Sat., Dec. 19, 4 p.m. Howard Conn Center, Mpls; 612-623-9080; www.youthperformanceco.com

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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 Minnesota Hands & Voices or Lifetrack Resources.

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The View from Here

Central:

Sign Language at the Mall (SLAM), social time in ASL, goes from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 at the Food Court in Crossroads Mall in St. Cloud. Also on Jan. 9.

A Christmas party for families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing features **Signing Santa** and holiday activities from 1-3 p.m. Sat., Dec. 19 at North Junior High in St. Cloud.

Southeast:

The Wizard of Oz is ASL-interpreted Friday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. at Rochester Civic Theatre, 20 Civic Center Drive SE. See www.rochestercivictheatre.org.

The Christmas Contest is ASL-interpreted Saturday, Dec. 12, at 6:30 p.m. at Rochester Assembly Church, 4240 18th Ave NW, Rochester. For tickets, call 507-288-0868.

Upper Northwest:

Sertoma Winter Wonderland, from 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 18 and 19 at Northland Arboretum in Brainerd, has over 60 light displays plus a **signing Santa**. Nearby Confidence Learning Center offers a snow tubing party. Both benefit Camp Sertoma and Dreams and Inspirations Retreats. See www.sertomawinterwonderland.com.

Plains Art Museum in Fargo features a monthly, free art-making opportunity for families called **Kid Quest**. An interpreter can be requested by calling 701-232-3821. Saturday, Jan. 2, the Kid Quest topic will be “The Weaver’s Song,” with basketry and weaving techniques. March 6, the museum hosts the **Great Art Free-for-All with deaf performer Toni Faribanks**.

Camp offers retreats for deaf, families

Dreams and Inspirations Deaf Camps and Retreats is offering several camp opportunities this winter at Camp Confidence near Brainerd with activities such as snow tubing, snow shoeing, ice fishing, broom ball, and crafts, plus plenty of hot cocoa.

Sibling Camp, Jan. 29-31, gives kids who are hearing the chance to go to camp with their siblings who are deaf or hard of hearing. The subsidized camp fee is \$50/child. Registration is due by Jan. 8.

KODA (Kids of Deaf Adults) Family Retreat will happen Feb. 5-7. This retreat brings together families with deaf parents and hearing kids to forge a better understanding of the two worlds in which the children live. It also gives KODAs the chance to meet others who have the same experiences.

Later that month (Feb. 26-28) the camp will bring together families with children who are hard of hearing.

To register for any of these camps, contact Emily Smith-Lundberg, Camp Director, at emily@dreamsandinspirations.com or 866-948-9063.

Kids can enter contest on Internet safety

Minnesota students in grades K-8 can submit entries for the state’s “Kids Safe Online” poster contest showing the safe use of the Internet or mobile devices.

All participants will receive public recognition from the State of Minnesota. Three winners from each grade group (K-5, 6-8) will be submitted to the National Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) Cyber Security Awareness Calendar Contest. We handed out the 2010 calendar to participants at our “Be Cool, Be Safe” event, which was co-sponsored by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and the Minneapolis Police.

Entry forms and hand-drawn posters must be submitted by Feb. 26 to: Kids Safe Online Poster Contest, Office of Enterprise Technology, Enterprise Security Office, 658 Cedar Street, St Paul, MN 55155. To request an entry form and contest rules, email Rick.Ensenbach@state.mn.us.

The Minnesota Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) has contracted with Deaf MD to provide updates in ASL on H1N1 Flu. When the Minnesota Department of Health has new information, it will be posted in ASL on the Deaf MD website, www.deafmd.org/content/news/index.cfm.

The Cued Speech Association of Minnesota recently announced a couple of upcoming events: Tom Shull will be coming to the Twin Cities to teach a cueing mechanics class Feb. 6-7; and, there will be a retreat for families and others interested in Cued Speech April 9-11 at Camp Confidence near Brainerd. For more information, see www.cuedspeechminnesota.org.

The application for the \$1,000 Dr. R. Orin Cornett Scholarship for deaf or hard-of-hearing students who cue is now available online at www.cuedspeech.org/sub/resources/scholarships.asp. Application deadline is March 15.

The City of Minneapolis is looking for an Access and Outreach Specialist who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). The city also needs specialists who are fluent in Hmong, Somali, or Spanish. These specialists work with the city’s Neighborhood and Community Relations Department. Applications are on the city’s website: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/jobs. They are due by Monday, Dec. 14. For more information, email jennifer.thoreson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Just in time for holiday giving: Arkansas Hands & Voices has created a chart of toys that promote listening skills. For a copy of this chart, email us at mnhv@lifetrackresources.org.

ASL classes offered in St. Paul

Metro Deaf School-Minnesota North Star Academy (MDS-MNSA) in St. Paul is offering several levels of ASL classes beginning in January. You don't need to have a child enrolled at MDS-MNSA to join a class.

ASL Level 2 is for students who know some sign and are ready to increase their skills. The class runs from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Thursdays from Jan. 7 to March 25. ASL Level 4 is for students who are comfortable signing, but want to improve their proficiency in ASL. The class runs from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays from Jan. 5 to March 23.

Class fee is \$50 for students over age 8 and adults. The instructor is Michelle Fenton. Registration deadline is Dec. 18. Call MDS-MNSA at 651-224-3995 to register.

Interpreted ski lessons offered

The Midwest Sport/Ski Council is again offering lessons for beginning and intermediate skiers in the Twin Cities who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Volunteer interpreters are available to provide assistance during the lessons, which run from 10 to 11:30 a.m. five Sunday mornings, Jan. 10 – Feb. 7. Minimum age for participants is 6 years for skiing and 8 years for snowboarding.

The program takes place at Hyland Hills Ski Area in Bloomington. Equipment and lift tickets are provided for students at a minimal cost — \$75 for skiing and \$85 for snowboarding (space limited).

The people involved in this program donate their time. Parents can volunteer to instruct or interpret in the program (with students other than their own child), once they have participated in training.

To learn more or to register for the program, email mcsdeafhoh@midwestfun.org or call Jerry Schuster at 952-888-0860.

Dance classes open to DHH kids

In The Company of Kids Creative Arts Center in Burnsville has an ASL-interpreted theater/dance class for kids ages 5-17. The class, offered Thursdays, already has a student who is deaf enrolled in it.

The center's dance program has been nominated by Nickelodeon's Parents' Picks Award for Best Dance Company. ASL interpreters can be requested for other classes. To learn more, call 952-736-3644 or see www.cokartscenter.com.



Off the Shelf

You can find holiday entertainment in our lending library FREE for the MN Hands & Voices community. To browse our library online go to www.mnhandsandvoices.org and click on "Lending Library." Type in the search words "holiday" or "Christmas." Here are some highlights:

- "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" video is signed in ASL and narrated in English. This story is part 3 of the Boys Town National Research Hospital "Read with Me" series.
- "Christmas Stories" video features ASL storytellers signing holiday favorites.
- "The Night Before Christmas" book includes drawings in Signed English.
- "Simple Signing for the Holidays" (Signing Exact English) video is captioned and voiced and comes with a guide book.
- "Sing 'n Sign Holiday Time" DVD has 14 songs for celebrating Christmas, Kwanzaa and Hanukkah.

We will mail library materials to you with a postage-paid return envelope to make it easy to return materials by their due date. If you don't have Internet access, you can request one of these holiday books/videos by calling 651-265-2372 or 1-866-346-4543. You can also make library requests by emailing your request to us at mnhv@lifetrackresources.org.

Save the date: The annual national convention of Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) comes to Milwaukee, Wis. June 17-20. Keynote speaker is explorer Bill Berkeley, who is deafblind. Early-bird registration is open now at www.hearingloss.org/convention.

Seminar to focus on ways to encourage spoken language

Cochlear Americas teams with Fairview to host a one-day seminar March 15 for early intervention and educational professionals and parents on "Facilitating Spoken Language Development for Young Children with Hearing Loss."

The seminar will be at the Earl Brown Continuing Education Center in St. Paul. Topics include current research, new technologies, and rehabilitation techniques.

Registration, which includes morning coffee, lunch and conference materials, is \$80 for professionals, \$35 for parents, and \$30 for full-time students. For more information or to register, go to www.regonline.com/hopeEI.

Documentary looks at religious opportunities for disabled

A new documentary, *A Place For All: Faith & Community for Persons with Disabilities*, explores how various religious groups are serving the one out of five Americans who have a disability. The documentary includes details about services for the Deaf.

A Place for All airs on ABC-TV affiliates nationwide beginning Dec. 6. In the Twin Cities, KSTP will run the show at 5 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 13. Southern Minnesota's KAAL airs it at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20.

The documentary is presented by the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, a coalition of Jewish, Muslim, Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic faith groups, as part of ABC's 2009 Vision and Values series. A trailer is on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwCM2vtx42Q. The documentary also is for sale at www.divacommunications.com/aplace/.

New summer camp opens

Deaf Youth Camp of Color, a new camp for deaf or hard of hearing high school students of color, will be offered June 13-24 at Camp Taoli in Stayton, Oregon.

Campers can stay on to attend the Deaf People of Color Conference in nearby Portland June 25-27. The program fee per person is \$1,500 (including Deaf People of Color Conference registration). It does not cover travel to/from Portland, Oregon.

The camp currently is taking applications for campers as well as staff and volunteers. For details, see www.dycc.org.



Dad's Viewpoint

By Curt Leitz, NE Parent Guide

Thanksgiving came about a week early for us this year. The Friday prior to the holiday, we planned to escape to Iowa for family, food, and a football game. We'd packed the car for a road

trip (books, snacks, music, and a thermos of coffee); we'd prepared for a traditional feast (our contributions were potatoes, stuffing, and a couple of pies); and we'd arranged to leave town immediately after picking up the kids up at their schools.

Outside our elder daughter's school, a couple dozen busses lined the streets. Scores of parents circled in cars, waiting to pick up their children. I slipped into a space across the street, set the parking brake, and began to wait. In the periphery of my vision, a red truck approached along the row of busses, between us and the school. Then, a crunching thud. A scream...I know that scream.

I'm out of our car and around the truck and our daughter is on the street, rolling and screaming. I kneel at her side and lock eyes with her. A voice behind my shoulder: "Try to keep her from moving that leg." I look down. The shin extends to a rounded protuberance, below which four inches of mushy flesh lie askew between the leg and the foot. Gingerly, I grasp the leg and foot and try to hold them in line.

"I think my leg is broken!" she wails, rolling in pain.

"Your leg is broken, but you're going to be fine," I say firmly. "Now don't move your left leg."

And thus a trip to Iowa became a trip to the hospital. One surgery, three days, and countless pain medications later, we returned home—in time for the actual Thanksgiving holiday. It'd be just the four of us, but together we'd have turkey and mashed potatoes and gravy and all the other things that trim the table. Together, as a family.

I don't care if it sounds trite: this was our most thankful Thanksgiving ever. Our daughter's leg was smashed, but an orthopedic trauma surgeon can do wonders with plates, screws, and a young, healthy patient. Thus, when our daughter retired for an after-dinner nap, it was the most satisfying Thanksgiving Day rest I've ever witnessed, despite the fact that I had to clear the table myself.

In the last few years, I've come to realize that Thanksgiving is clearly the best holiday of the year. There's no pressure to choose the right gifts. There's no obligatory visit to every remote branch of the family. There's no need to deal with drunken coworkers at company parties. The significance of Thanksgiving has always been both simple and clear to me: relaxed, unashamed gluttony.

This year, however, I gave real thanks. For all our infirmities and challenges, we were together as a family. I was reminded of the time when our younger daughter was diagnosed with hearing loss. After the initial shock, after fear of the unknown, after sadness, and finally after acceptance, came hope—even happiness. We could live with hearing loss. She could live with hearing loss. The same is true for our elder daughter—she'll be fine. And, we're all more thankful, this year and going forward.

Researchers find gene responsible for age-related hearing loss

Research published in the Nov. 9 edition of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* identifies the genetic cause of age-related hearing loss, which affects about 40 percent of seniors in the US. The study also showed how antioxidants can help slow the process.

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that the gene "Bak" is essential to age-related hearing loss, a condition marked by loss of sensory hair cells and spiral ganglion neurons in the inner ear. Their study, "Age-related hearing loss in C57BL/6J mice is mediated by Bak-dependent mitochondrial apoptosis," involved mice from which they removed the Bak gene. These mice did not show signs of hearing loss as they aged, while the mice with the gene did. They used a hearing test similar to newborn hearing screening to test hearing in the mice.

The researchers also found that antioxidant supplements, such as coenzyme Q10, fed to the mice helped reduce the activity of Bak, slowing the development and progression of age-related hearing loss. They speculated that Bak may play a role in other age-related conditions such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's diseases.

The study is online at www.pnas.org/content/106/46/19432.

Research shows link between touch, hearing

The Nov. 26 edition of the science journal *Nature* includes an article showing the connection between the senses of touch and hearing, which could influence research into technologies for people who are deaf.

The article, "Aero-tactile integration in speech perception," describes how researchers influenced what study subjects thought they were hearing by delivering puffs of air to the back of the subjects' hands or their necks. The researchers used the puffs of air to mimic the air expelled when a speaker says "pa" or "ta." Then they played the sounds "pa" or "ba" and "ta" or "da." (Saying "ba" and "da" don't require the speaker to expel air.) The subjects randomly felt a puff of air on the back of their hand or neck as they were listening to these sounds. The researchers found that when the puff of air was paired with "pa" or "ta," subjects had an easier time identifying the sound. When the puff of air was paired with "ba" or "da," accuracy declined. In other words, the additional tactile stimulation affected how well the subjects could distinguish sounds.

The authors of the *Nature* article are Bryan Gick and Donald Derrick of the Department of Linguistics at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Gick also is a senior scientist at Haskins Laboratories, a speech research think tank in New Haven, Conn.

Captioning becomes automated on YouTube

The Internet giant, Google, recently announced it will automatically caption videos uploaded to YouTube, making content accessible to viewers with hearing loss.

Google has offered user-generated captions for the past three years, meaning users could choose to add captions manually to the videos they upload. Manual captioning is time-consuming, which meant that few videos on YouTube had captions.

Google's new offering uses speech-recognition software to automatically generate captions for all videos. The captions also make it easier to search the site for specific content.

Since speech-recognition technology has not been perfected, the captions might not always be accurate. Google expects to get feedback from both viewers and video creators.