



Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS

—supporting families with kids who have hearing loss—

MARCH 2009



Now's the time to sign up for summer camp! See Page 5 for camps and contact information.

Current Legislation that affects people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- **Bill to amend the 2008 Minnesota Type III Bus Driver Law so that drivers who are deaf can drive school vehicles and transport students**
- **Bill that will require the Department of Education to report outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing students**
- **Bill that sets standards for state websites, including captioning, so everyone has full access to e-government**

Register now to attend the 2009 Lobby Day by going to www.mncdhh.org/legislative-day. If you can't go to Lobby Day, but still want to weigh in on these issues, you'll find a link to your state representatives at www.mncdhh.org/take-action.

Lobby Day offers chance to connect with legislators about hearing loss issues

"Yes we can" make a difference, and we have. Thanks in part to members of the Minnesota Hands & Voices community, laws are in place that provide coverage for hearing aids for children and ensure that newborns have their hearing screened before they leave the hospital. These and other successes show that we can influence public policy by stepping up, contacting our state representatives and speaking out about the issues that matter to us.

It's really not as intimidating as it sounds. In fact, the Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans (MCDHH) makes it easy to meet with state representatives by hosting Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Lobby Day at the Capitol every other year. The day starts with a training session to help participants understand current issues and to show them how to conduct a meeting with their representatives. That session is followed by a rally at the Capitol and time to meet with the appropriate representatives. MCDHH even sets up appointments so participants are sure to meet with the right representatives. **MCDHH's next Lobby Day happens this coming Wednesday (March 4) starting at 8:30 a.m.** (See registration link in blue box.)

Mary Hartnett, Executive Director of MCDHH, explained why it's important to attend this Lobby Day: "Why should you take off work, arrange for day care, drop everything on March 4th? Because so much is at stake. Because some of the funding that we fought so hard to get is at risk. Because we have bills that will make a big difference for kids and adults who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing," Mary said. "All of you have heard about how bad the budget is. In January the Governor had to 'unallot' money that had been put into the budget for fiscal year 2009 because we were taking in \$400 million less than anticipated. Most deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing programs were cut 2% to 3%. In May, he may have to cut another \$300 to \$400 million. This time we may not be so lucky."

Funding for Minnesota Hands & Voices sunsets this June, but we have received support to continue services, such as our Parent Guides, for another year through support from the Minnesota Department of Health, explained Candace Lindow-Davies, Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator.

"With our current economic climate, grant funding is down in general, and Minnesota Hands & Voices has already felt the hit from that," Candace said. "It's a year to be visible so that programs are not forgotten. What the Commission worked so hard to build needs to be protected. Each piece of legislation plays an important role in creating the net of services each child requires to be successful." (Mary Hartnett shared that Candace will be among the awardees at the Capitol rally, receiving an Exemplary Community Organizer award for the work she has done to found the local chapter of Hands & Voices. Al Franken also will get an award for having the most accessible campaign.)

Lobby Day gives all of us in the Hands & Voices community (and beyond) the chance to tell legislators why programs like our Parent Guides should be maintained. This day also lets us show support for current legislation. (See the box for information on bills that affect our community.)

One member of the Hands & Voices community who's had firsthand experience influencing legislation is Nicole Mathes. Nicole's testimony helped make early hearing detection and intervention mandatory in Minnesota.

"At first, testifying was a little intimidating because you are in front of all of these people that influence the decision-making of laws," Nicole said. "Once I started, I was able to relax and tell 'my story' and what it means to me." Nicole's sons both have a bilateral low-frequency hearing loss. The oldest wasn't diagnosed until he was 3, while the youngest was diagnosed at birth in a hospital that provided newborn screening before it was mandated. "I was told that they

Lobby...continued on Page 3

Here's What's Happening Around Town

Saturday,
March 7

The Cued Speech Association of Minnesota holds its annual board meeting, which is open to the public, from 10 a.m. to noon at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, 5760 Portland Ave S. in Minneapolis. For details, see www.cuedspeechminnesota.org.

Saturday,
March 7

Reduced-price tickets to see Sweet Honey in the Rock at 8 p.m. at O'Shaughnessy Auditorium at the College of St. Catherine are available from Liz Brown at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, 130 E. 7th St., St. Paul until March 2. The \$59 tickets are \$21 for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information, email Liz.G.Brown@state.mn.us.

Friday,
March 13

A free dance for all high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing runs from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Humboldt Senior High School in St. Paul. Casual dress. DJ, pizza, pop and prizes provided. Valid high school ID required. Contact Rachel.Schultz@spps.org with questions.

Through
March 15

A Look in the Mirror, The Memoir of a Deaf Performer (in ASL with voice interpretation) tells the life story of Twin Cities' performer Nic Zapko. (Recommended for ages 13+.) Shows run Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. at Dreamland Arts, 677 N. Hamline Ave. in St. Paul. Tickets are \$13; \$10 for students. Call 651-645-5506 or see www.dreamlandarts.com.

Monday,
March 16

Parents and professionals can take part in an **online webinar from national Hands & Voices** on ways to ensure students who are deaf or hard of hearing are receiving an appropriate, accessible education. "The Power is in the Paper: Effective Advocacy through the IEP Process" includes tools parents can use in the IEP meeting. It runs from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Cost is \$25/parents, \$45/professionals (.15 CEUs available). To register, go to leadershipinstitute.webex.com.

Tuesday,
March 17

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.

March 27-28

The statewide Minnesota Hard of Hearing Conference takes place at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud. Tickets are \$40 each/\$70 per couple/\$100 per family. To register, email dhhs.stcloud@state.mn.us.

Sunday,
April 5

An ASL-interpreted tour "Noble Dreams and Simple Pleasures: American Masterworks from Minnesota Collections" begins at 1 p.m. in the lobby of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. (Special exhibition admission charged.) For details, call 612-870-3131 (v); -3132 (tty) or e-mail dhegstro@artsmia.org.

April 17-19

A Cued Speech retreat for families/professionals takes place being at Confidence Learning Center (near Brainerd) through Dreams and Inspirations. See www.cuedspeechminnesota.org.

Saturday,
April 5

Better Communication; Better Health, a one-day conference from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, brings together the Deaf Community, interpreters and health care professionals. Cost is \$25 and includes lunch. For details, see www.cancerplanmn.org/Better_Communication_for_Better_Health.html.

Tuesday,
April 28

The Disabled Student Cultural Center at the University of Minnesota hosts a **free dinner from 6 to 8 p.m. for students with disabilities** who are considering college. ASL interpreters are provided. Learn about scholarships, housing options, student life, accommodations, enrollment, and more. For more information or to reserve a spot, contact Laura Zimmerman at zimme447@umn.edu.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Request the VSA discount.

How Can You Run with a Shell on Your Back

Sunday, Mar. 15, 2 p.m., Wed., Mar. 18, 10 a.m. Hopkins Center for the Arts, 1111 Main-street; 952-979-1111 www.stagetheatre.org

Streetcar! Twin Cities Bound

Friday, Mar. 20, 7 p.m. SteppingStone Theatre, 55 Victoria St. N, St. Paul; www.steppingstonetheatre.org

State Fair

Friday, Mar. 20, 7:30 p.m. Performed by River Valley Theatre Company. Shakopee Senior High, 100 11th Ave. W; 952-451-9956; www.rivervalleytheatrecompany.com

Baseball Saved Us

Sunday, March 22, 2 p.m. Wednesday, March 25, 10: a.m. Performed by Stages Theatre Company & Mu Performing Arts at Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. 4th St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6131; www.mixedblood.com

The Secret Garden

Sunday, March 22, 7:30 p.m. Performed by Minneapolis Musical Theatre. Illusion Theatre, Hennepin Center for the Arts, 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis. www.aboutmmt.org

Rent

Sunday, Mar. 29, 1 p.m. Historic Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-373-5639; www.hennepintheatredistrict.org

FOCUS is published by Minnesota Hands & Voices 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: mnhv@lifetrackresources.org Website: www.mnhandsandvoices.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 Minnesota Hands & Voices or Lifetrack Resources.

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In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator

I want to start out my column this month by thanking our readers who contacted me regarding the story I shared last month about my son's go-karting accident. Evidently, I'm not the only slightly overprotective mother walking about. Those who know me well or know my son had a keen appreciation of how it must have felt. My husband, on the other hand, wants me to share with you that our son's leg fracture came only weeks after my husband slipped on our stairs while carrying laundry and cracked two ribs. So, when the cat had to be rushed to the vet for some issues (I'll pass on mentioning details), we hoped that was the third bout of bad luck (superstition says bad things happen in threes!), and we were done. Can't tell you how concerned my daughter was to spend two days off from school to have a "special day" with mom. We opted for some safe shopping and avoided icy patches in the parking lots. But I digress... my son is healing very well, and next week, the protective boot comes off. Thanks again for the well wishes.

Minnesota Hands & Voices continues to be very busy. The big excitement around here has been the success of the February 7th kick-off to a series of events in support of Spanish-speaking families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We had 15 families attend—61 participants total. It was so successful that we have outgrown the space generously donated by Centro in Minneapolis, so the next group on March 7th will meet here at Lifetrack Resources in St. Paul. We are very excited to offer children's activities while the parents listen to a presentation by Jesus Villasenor inspiring them to become advocates. Please share this information and the attached flyer to any family you feel might benefit.

We are looking forward to coordinating another webinar/in-person workshop with the Lions Children's Hearing Center at the University of Minnesota/Fairview location about Auditory Neuropathy on April 30th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Please stay tuned for more information.

Hope to see you all up at the Capitol on March 4th for the Legislative Lobby Day for Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind issues. This will be an important year to protect the critical services we have in place.

Petition encourages passage of access bill

A group that promotes equal access to media through captioning has an online petition to show support for the federal bill "21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act."

The goal of the legislation is to establish new safeguards for disability access to ensure that people with disabilities are not left behind as technology changes and the United States migrates to the next generation of Internet-based and digital communication technologies. Currently, technology such as iPhones and other handheld devices are not required to have captions. In addition, many Internet websites are not accessible.

The group behind the petition, the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT), explains the bill and has a link to the petition at www.coataccess.org.

Lobby...continued from Page 1

were considered 'text book' examples of why it would be important to mandate," she added.

"I have now testified three times in front of Congress on different topics having to do with hearing impairment," Nicole said. "I enjoy it. When you work with the right senators, they can help you accomplish so much."

Parents aren't the only ones influencing legislators. Allison Porter, a junior at Minnesota North Star Academy, recently testified in support of changing a law passed last year that had the unintended consequence of preventing school staff who are deaf or hard of hearing from driving students to school activities. (*For details about the law, see www.mncdbh.org/current-legislation.)* Allison said she got involved with this issue because she has seen its effects. While she felt nervous signing before legislators, she said she's glad she could make a difference. "After all (was done), I felt proud of myself doing this," she added.

MCDHH has asked Allison to share her experience by being one of the trainers at the morning session on Lobby Day. The other trainers and a schedule of the day's events are listed online at www.mncdbh.org/legislative-day.

Job open for state EHDI planner

The state has a job opening for a senior planner who would help coordinate the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Community Collaborative Grant. This planner will work with collaborative partners to increase timely connections to resources for families with infants diagnosed with hearing loss. For a complete job description and application information, see <https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/47ae936c70060339892e16fc5498fe50/View>.

Grupo la Fortaleza

Una serie de actividades de apoyo para familias de habla hispana que tienen niños con pérdida auditiva total o parcial.

Sábado 7 de marzo
De 1:00 a 3:00 p.m.

Lifetrack Resources
709 University Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55104



Acompáñenos a divertirnos

Jesús Villasenor
Abogacía para Padres, PACER Center

Jesús compartirá su historia con el grupo y la importancia de abogar por sus hijos
Programa en español con intérpretes disponibles

¡Todas las familias son bienvenidas!

Bocadillos y actividades

Conozca a los representantes de diferentes organizaciones comunitarias

Para mayor información llame a:

Español/Inglés
Carmen DiPrima
Early Childhood Information and Referral of Ramsey Co.
651-604-3718
Llame si necesita transportación

En inglés únicamente
Candace Lindow-Davies
Minnesota Hands & Voices
651-265-2435



I am MINNESOTA HANDS & VOICES

**Lexi,
Kindergarten chica**

By Jennifer Halpaus

My daughter, Alexandra (Lexi), who has mild to moderate bilateral hearing loss, is attending Kindergarten at Lakes International Language Academy, a Spanish-immersion elementary charter school in Forest Lake. (www.lakesinternational.org) She had attended Northern Voices, an early childhood and preschool program for children with hearing loss to learn to communicate through spoken language.

Alexandra's speech and language are within the range where no services are required. They are on the lower side, but she compensates with great skills in class and with her peers during playtime. Her teachers say that her performance does not give them reason to be concerned about her learning in Spanish all day long. Next year at Lakes International Language Academy will be the true test when the children are required to speak only in Spanish at school.



As her mother, I still practice language modeling in the home for both of my children because English is their first language. This practice is preached heavily in the immersion education setting. The school handles the Spanish, the family handles the English.

I have been amazed on the days my little girl has come home to share new Spanish words and songs with me. I am just really proud of my child, Lakes International, and Northern Voices.

Contest lets kids define new *Arthur* character

The PBS television series *Arthur* has teamed up with CVS Caremark All Kids Can for the *Arthur*/All Kids Can Character Search. Now through March 31, *Arthur* fans ages 6-12 can submit their ideas for a new character that has a unique ability, character trait, or disability that might make life a little different but no less fun. The contest winner will introduce the character on the live-action segment on *Arthur*, and will receive a visit from *Arthur* creator and author Marc Brown at school, the local library, or a PBS member station. See pbskids.org/Arthur/allkidscan for the entry form.



The View from Here

East/West Central:

Families with children of all ages who have hearing loss are invited to swim, play in the gym, make crafts and share supper Sunday, Mar. 15 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Monticello Community Center, 505 Walnut St. Cost is \$3 for students, \$4 for adults (rock wall climbing is extra). Bring a dish to share. RSVP to JoLynn Larson at mjkk4@charter.net or 612-968-0644.

See the ASL movie "Legend of the Mountain Man" Friday, May 8 at 7 p.m. at Monticello Middle School, 800 E. Broadway, Monticello. \$10 admission. The movie is rated PG. For a synopsis, see www.aslfilms.com.

The April 16 workshop in St. Cloud on hearing loss topics is being rescheduled.

The fourth Minnesota Hard of Hearing Conference takes place March 27-28 in St. Cloud. For details, see Page 2.

Sign Language at the Mall (SLAM) goes from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Mar. 21 at Crossroads Mall in St. Cloud.

North Junior High School in St. Cloud has an ASL-interpreted performance of *Pirates of Penzance* at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 1.

Southwest:

Attend the family getaway in Mankato March 13-14 for families with deaf or hard of hearing children receiving special education services in Region 9. For details, contact Parent Guide Kris Hemstock at 888-214-0660.

Storytelling is interpreted in ASL Saturday, Mar. 7 from 10 to 11 a.m. at the South Central Service Cooperative, 2075 Lookout Drive, North Mankato. The last story time of the school year is Saturday, April 4.

Northeast:

Limited seating is available for a free performance of *Sign Stage on Tour: Dr. Doolittle* in English and ASL, a Deaf Theatre adaptation, at 1 p.m. March 6 at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth. Tickets are \$8 for the 7:30 p.m. show. Call 218-723-7000 to reserve a seat.

Join us for a free workshop, "Identity, Self-Esteem and Resiliency: An Overview of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Identity Development," from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 25 at Secondary Technical Center, 802 E Central Entrance, Duluth. Mental health counselor Alison L. Aubrecht, M.A., NCC, DCC, LPC, will talk about identity development and the importance of healthy self-esteem. The workshop includes supper followed by the presentation and crafts for children. Register by March 20 by contacting NE Parent Guide Curt Leitz at 866-750-4421 or curtl@lifetrackresources.org



Summer Camps 2009

Register now for your summer camp experience.

Nearby Camps



Camp Sertoma

Brainerd Lakes Area
Grades 1-7: July 5-10
Grades 8-10: July 12-17

For more information or registration forms, call 218-828-2344.
www.campconfidence.com

Courage North

Lake George
Ages 7-17: July 27-Aug. 3
Format has changed. Optional 5-day BWCA trip Aug. 3-7. Scholarships available. See www.couragecenter.org:80/images/documents/Camp%20Catalog%2009.pdf or call 218-266-3658 (voice and video phone) or 1-866-276-3631.

Wisconsin Lions Camp

Rosholt, Wisconsin
Free for Wisconsin residents. Non-residents can attend with minimal fee if space allows. See www.wisconsinlionscamp.com.

National Leadership and Literacy Camp

Camp Lakodia, South Dakota
Leadership-building program to spur intellectual and personal growth. Also field trips to Mount Rushmore and the Black Hills.
Grades 9-12: June 28-July 10 (\$525)
Grades 5-8: July 12-24 (\$425)
See www.nllcamp.com.

Faraway Camps

Aspen Camp of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Rocky Mountains, Colorado
Camps for 3 age groups + one for KODAs.
www.aspencamp.org/summercamps.htm



Camp Isola Bella

Berkshire Mountains, Conn.
www.asd-1817.org

Camp Taloali

Cascade Mountains, Ore.
www.taloali.org

Sports Camps

Gallaudet University Sports Camps

Volleyball Setters: June 25-27
Volleyball: June 27-July 2
Girls'/Boys' Soccer: June 27-July 2
Girls' Shooting: July 2-4
Girls' Basketball: July 5-9
Football: July 5-9
Boys' Shooting: July 9-11
Boys' Basketball: July 11-16
www.gallaudetathletics.com/insideathletics/SummerCamp



Summer Tennis Program

St. Paul Academy & Summit School
Classes for all ages available in ASL.
June 15-July 24
Call 651-696-1355(v).

Educational Camps

Summer Literacy Camp

Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf
Grades K-8: July 12-24
Day or residential camp.
www.msad.state.mn.us/Admissions/summer-programs/summerliteracycamp.asp

PASS Program 2008

Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf
Grades 7-12: July 12-24 Apply by May 1.
Aids students in passing the required state exams, also offer Driver Education.
www.msad.state.mn.us/Admissions/summer-programs/pass.asp

EX.I.T.E. (Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering)

Minneapolis & Rochester (days only)
Grade 6-9 girls: Aug. 6-20
FREE, five-day camp for girls who have disabilities to learn about science.
www.pacer.org/stc/exite/Camp.asp

NAD's Youth Leadership Camp

Camp Taloali, Oregon
Grades 10-11: June 25-July 22
Early deadline: Mar. 2. www.nad.org/site/pp.asp?c=foINKQMBF&b=2294527

Explore Your Future

National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester, New York
Grades 10-11: July 18-23 or 25-30
Explore careers in information technology, computers, engineering, business, science and art while sampling college life. April 30 deadline. www.rit.edu/NTID/EYF

TechGirlz

National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester, New York
Girls entering Grades 7-9: Aug. 2-8
Learn about careers in science, technology, engineering and math through hands-on activities. May 31 deadline.
www.rit.edu/NTID/TechGirlz

Steps to Success

National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester, New York
Grades 7-9: Aug. 7-9
African-American, Latino, and Native American students explore occupations. May 31 deadline. www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/steps/

Summer at Gallaudet University

Washington, DC
Gallaudet has 7 camps this year with topics such as ASL, self-esteem, college prep, and lifeguarding. http://summer.gallaudet.edu/Summer_Programs_Home/High_School_Youth_Programs.html

2009 LOFT Program

Washington, D.C.
Ages 15-18: July 5-9
AG Bell's Leadership Opportunities for Teens. May 1 deadline. www.agbell.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?p=Leadership_Opportunities_for_Teens

Family Camps

CNI Cochlear Kids Camps

Estes Park, Colorado
For families/kids with cochlear implants
June 25-28 or July 30-Aug. 2
Both camp sessions are full this summer, but keep this camp in mind for next year.
www.thecni.org/hearing/kidscamp.htm

CueCamps

Several camps are offered around the country. For a list, see www.cuedspeech.org, scroll over "Resources" and click on "Cue Camps."





Dad's Viewpoint

By Curt Leitz, NE Parent Guide

Last month, I shared some tips on how to make reading fun; this month I have some ways to make reading practical and powerful. These techniques—games, really—are loads of fun because they help

kids gain control over their environments. Since preschoolers want to be in charge anyway, why not use that motivation to help them develop literacy?

These games utilize environmental language, the words that are all around us and which help us navigate our environments. I used such games to teach both English and ASL vocabulary; to teach the manual alphabet and fingerspelling; and to teach reading both by whole-word recognition and by phonics. None of these games is a formula—each is infinitely adaptable to your child's abilities, to the literacy skills you want to teach, and to the ways in which you want to teach them. Before long, you'll have your own set of favorite games to play!

The Navigation Game: This game simply involves asking your child to help guide you through whatever errands or daily tasks you might do together. When outside a store, look for signs saying "open" or "closed." Let your kids connect meaning to these concepts by trying a locked door with a "closed" sign, or by asking them to find the "open" sign on a store you need to visit. Similarly, look for pairs of signs such as "enter" and "exit," or "men's" and "women's." Your kids will quickly start to use clues such as colors, symbols, and other people's actions to decode the words they're seeing, and you'll be amazed how quickly they learn to navigate their world.

I Spy: This time-honored game can easily become a stealth reading lesson. If you're driving, you can see road signs coming long before your kids can, so usually it's simple enough to give them an attainable task such as finding a sign with the number "5." As their skills increase, raise the bar a bit: ask them to find a word that begins with the letter "n," for example, or ask them to find the word "north." Pretend you need a bit of help finding the "exit," or knowing when you've arrived in "Blaine." Most kids will have a clear sense of pride and power when their "I Spy" finds seem to determine how you operate the vehicle!

The Grocery-Store Scavenger Hunt: On those days when you can allow some extra time for shopping, the grocery store is a limitless opportunity for environmental language games. Show your child your shopping list, pointing out a word like "apples"; Let your child find the apples, then challenge him or her to find the word "apples" on the display. I love the grocery store as a place for language learning because there are so many ways that you can make the games simpler or more challenging, according to your child's abilities. Perhaps your daughter can't read "diced tomatoes," but she might be able to identify a picture of tomatoes on a label, and you can point out the word that starts with "t." Obviously you won't always have time to play this game, or to play the game through the entire shopping list, but when you do play I bet both you and your kids will enjoy the task more!

Language is power; make it empowering for your children, and they'll embrace it at a very early age. Have fun playing!

New technology tracks child's language development in natural environment

A newly established non-profit, the LENA Foundation, is developing advanced technology tools for the diagnosis and treatment of language delay and disorders.

The LENA (Language ENvironment Analysis) System, is the world's first automatic language collection and analysis tool. It consists of a portable digital recorder that a young child (ages 2-48 months) wears at home to collect information in his natural environment. The recording is uploaded to a computer program that analyzes and charts the data. Researchers can use the system to study how factors such as TV viewing, birth order, autism and other disorders affect language development. The system provides more than 25 measurements, including the number of adult interactions with the child, conversational turns, and a child's vocalizations. To see a demonstration of LENA, go to www.lenafoundation.org.

Courage North adds camp for adults

Courage North, which offers camp experiences for youth who have hearing loss, will offer a new session this summer just for adults who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"A Mini Vacation for Adults" will take place August 7-12 at Courage North near Lake George. The camp will provide a variety of traditional camp activities such as fishing, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, biking, hiking and visits to Itasca State Park. Staff members will all be skilled in ASL.

For more information, contact Courage North at 218-266-3658 (v/video phone), 866-276-3631 (toll free) or email couragenorth@couragecenter.org

Metro Deaf School in St. Paul has opened ASL classes to the public. ASL Level 3 runs from 6:30 to 8 p.m. March 16 to May 11. ASL Specialized Signs runs from 6:30 to 8 p.m. March 18 to May 13. Classes are \$50. Register by March 6. Email contact. us@metrodeafschool.org or call MDS at 651-224-3995.

The research topic on the Hands & Voices online forum Feb. 23 to Mar. 8 is "Word-Learning Abilities." Parents and professionals can register to review this topic and post suggestions at www.wiki.educ.msu.edu.

The ASDC Conference June 24 to 28 at the Oklahoma School for the Deaf will have a State Fair theme, complete with food stands, native dancers, and a petting zoo. To register, see www.deafchildren.org.

Rear projection captioning is available for the Science Museum of Minnesota's Omnifest March 6 through April 12 with showings of five giant screen films. For showtimes and ticket information, see www.smm.org/omnifest.

Read about one family's search for the right school for their child in the January 30 newsletter from California School for the Deaf at www.csdf.k12.ca.us/outreach/calnews.html.