

FSC's staff, advisory group cover spectrum of communication modes

The Family Support Connection has several new staff members and some new members on its Parent Advisory Committee.

Robin Coninx recently was hired as a Family Support Specialist. Robin's family includes her husband, Patrick, and kids: Spencer, 15, Adam, 13, Natalie, 9 and Steven, 7. Natalie is deaf and recently switched to Metro Deaf School. Robin's family uses sign language and some Cued Speech to communicate.

The other new staff member is Linda Werness-Jaroszewski. Linda is now the Administrative Assistant to both the Family Support Connection and the Greater MN Assessment Service at Lifetrack Resources. Linda and her husband, Brian, have four children in their family: Michael, 15, Lexi, 13, Sean, 11, and, Madeline, 9. Lexi is deaf and attends Metro Deaf School. At home, the family communicates with Lexi through a mix of English, ASL and Pigeon Signed English.

The staff also includes Candace Lindow-Davies who has been with the Family Support Connection since its inception nearly four years ago. Candace is the Family Support Coordinator. She and her husband, Ron, have two children: Luke, 9, and Morgan, 5. Luke is deaf and goes to Como Park Elementary. Candace and her family get along by signing, speaking, and cueing—"different modes for different situations!"

Beth DesMarais, who has been a Family Support Specialist for almost two years, is leaving the staff but will continue to advocate for families through the Parent Advisory Committee.

"We are grateful for all her work and pleased to be able to continue to tap her expertise," Candace said.

Beth and her husband, Marvin, are the grandparents of Maya, who is nearly 6 and deaf, and Marcus, who is 9 and hearing. Beth has learned to Cue with Maya.

Along with Beth, another former FSC staff member, Laura Himes Iversen, will soon join the Parent Advisory Committee. Laura and her husband, Paul, live in White Bear Lake with their children: Peter, 16, Emily, 15, and Elizabeth, 12. Peter is hard of hearing and wears hearing aids which help him understand speech. He'll be taking his first sign class in high school next fall, Laura said. Laura hopes to represent the hard of hearing perspective on the committee.

The other members of the Parent Advisory Committee are Liz McDevitt, Kendra Stevens, Beckie Perkins,

Winston Lane, Jr., Suzy Downs and Katherine Burns-Christensen.

Liz' family includes her husband, Justin, and daughters Maura, 8, and Maeve, 5. Maeve is deaf and has a cochlear implant so Liz says they first try to communicate orally and, if that doesn't work, try signing or even a little Cued Speech—"whatever it takes."

Kendra and her husband, Josh, have two boys, Quinton, 6 and Mason, 4. Quinton is deaf and has been using a cochlear implant for 3.5 years. Kendra says they experimented with ASL and cueing but now are completely oral. Quinton attends Northern Voices.

**Parent Advisory Committee ...
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New staff members Linda Werness-Jaroszewski and Robin Coninx (back row, left to right) met with parents at the FSC's Coffee/Chat last month with Audiologist Kirsten Coverstone (front left). Some of the parents at the Coffee are pictured here: Stacy Riddering (back right), and the McNamer family: Mark, 5-month-old Connor, and Melissa (front row).

Here's What's Happening

- Saturday, May 1** **Deaf storyteller Estella Bustamante signs stories** for kids at 10:30 a.m., Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., St. Paul, 651-642-0385(v), 651-298-4184(tty).
- Sunday, May 2** **"Porcelain for the Dragon Throne"** is the ASL-interpreted tour at 2 p.m. at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The free tour starts at the round bench in the museum lobby. For details, call 612-870-3131(v), -3132(tty) or email dhegstro@artsmia.org.
- Wednesday, May 5** **Cochlear Implant Club Minnesota's monthly coffee** for potential CI users starts at 10 a.m. on the 8th floor of the Phillips-Wangensteen Building at the University of Minnesota. For information, email LSenechal@mn.rr.com.
- Friday, May 7** **CSD sponsors Family Swim Night**, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., at Oxford Pool, 1079 Iglehart, St. Paul. \$3.50 kids/\$4 adults.
- Friday, May 7** **"Doors For Sale: Audism and the Deaf World"** features Ben Bahan, ASL storyteller and author, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Saint Paul College Auditorium, 235 Marshall Ave., St. Paul. Tickets are \$10 for students, \$15 for others.
- Saturday, May 15** **Community of Hope's annual Community Carnival & Volunteer Appreciation Day** runs from noon to 4 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church, 7160 S. Robert Trail in Inver Grove Heights (2 miles south of Hwy 494). Activities include face painting, crafts, games, and prizes. For information, contact Laurie A. Johnson at 651-455-0093 (v/tty) or COHDeafOutreach@aol.com.
- Saturday, May 15** **Self Help for the Hard of Hearing (SHHH) meets** at Courage Center, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley from 10 to noon.
- Tuesday, May 18** **The Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing** hosts a training session from 1 to 3:30 p.m. for people interested in being election advocates for the deaf. For more information, contact Terry.Schwankl@state.mn.org.
- Wednesday, May 19** **Global Deaf Connection presents Deaf actor Nic Zapko** storytelling using Visual Vernacular (gestures instead of voice or sign). The evening starts at 7 p.m. with a wine and cheese reception, followed by a Global Deaf presentation and the performance at 8:30 at Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. Fourth St., Minneapolis. Tickets are \$12 and can be ordered via email: travel@deafconnection.org.
- Saturday, June 5** **The DeafBlind Services Expo** goes from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Kelly Inn near the Capitol in St. Paul. The free Expo offers the chance to meet with providers and gather information about services available for deafblind consumers. Interpreters will be available. For more information, contact Paul Deeming, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division, 651-297-1384 (v/tty) or Paul.Deeming@state.mn.us.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

The Fabulous Fable Factory

Saturday, May 15, 7 p.m. \$7
Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd, 952-563-8587, www.bloomingtonartcenter.com.

Cassie the Crab and Rosita the Island Girl

Sunday, May 16, 2 p.m. \$6-9
Landmark Center lower auditorium, 75 W. 5th St., St Paul, 651-225-9265, www.steppingstonetheatre.org.

The Magic Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle

Friday, May 21, 7:30 p.m.,
Wednesday, May 26, 10 a.m.
Children's Theatre Co., 2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, 612-874-0400, www.childrenstheatre.org.

Miss Nelson is Missing

Performed by Omaha Theater Co.
Friday, May 21, 7:30 p.m. \$5-10
Benedicta Arts Center, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, 320-363-5777, www.csbsju.edu/finearts.

The Pirates of Penzance

Thursday, June 10, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, June 11 or 25, 7:30 p.m. \$16
Guthrie Theater, 725 Vineland, Minneapolis, 612-377-2224, -6626 (tty), www.guthrietheater.org.

Les Miserables

Saturday, June 26, 2 p.m.
Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington, St. Paul, 651-224-4222, 651-282-3100 (tty); www.ordway.org.

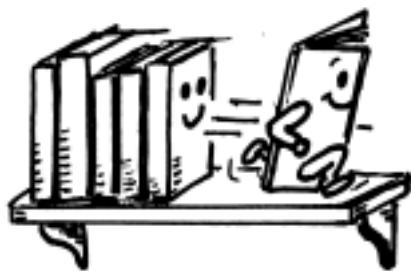
FOCUS is published by the Family Support Connection at Lifetrack Resources. Submissions are welcome and can be sent to the editor via email.

Newsletter Editor:
Audrey Alwell
herwell@wwt.net

Please note that information about events, services, or other organizations does not imply endorsement by the Family Support Connection.

The Family Support Connection's mission is to build better lives for children who are deaf and hard of hearing by providing parent-to-parent support to families. Please visit our website at www.familysupportconnection.org.

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Off The Shelf

By Beth DesMarais, FSC Specialist

“Cochlear Implants in Children: Ethics and Choices” by John B. Christiansen and Irene W. Leigh (Gallaudet University Press, 2002)

Parents’ experiences surrounding the sensitive decision to implant a child are the focus of this book. Surveys and interviews with parents provided the authors with first-hand information on everything from how parents reacted to the discovery that their child was deaf to how well their child acquired language after receiving an implant. Introductory chapters cover the history and the technology behind cochlear implants, and later chapters discuss the debate in the Deaf community about their use.

The book is filled with quotes from parents along with their personal experiences making this book a useful introduction for parents considering a cochlear implant for their child.

The Family Support Connection Library has many other books about cochlear implants, including “The Parents’ Guide to Cochlear Implants,” books with personal stories and advice like “Wired for Sound” and “Hear Again,” and, books such as “The Journey Begins: 101 Language Activities for Young Children with Cochlear Implants” with ideas for stimulating listening skills.

You can review the complete list of materials available at our website: www.familysupportconnection.org. Click on “Lending Library.”

Camp explores college, careers

High school juniors who are deaf or hard of hearing can attend the National Technical Institute for the Deaf’s “Explore Your Future” program this summer to get a glimpse of college life and learn about careers in engineering, business and computers. Two sessions will be offered—one from July 17-22 and the other from July 24-29. For an application or more information, contact the program coordinator at 585-475-2087 (voice/TTY) or email ambnes@rit.edu. Application deadline is June 1.

New camp reaches students in 9th, 10th grades

Camp Lakodia in South Dakota has added a new camp experience to its roster: the National Leadership and Literacy Camp (NLLC) from July 22 to Aug. 2 for students in 9th and 10th grades. Camp Lakodia also hosts the National Middlers Leadership and Literacy Camp for 5th through 8th graders from July 6 to 19.

The new NLLC expands the concepts of the Middlers’ camp, including the SPICE philosophy which focuses on Social, Physical, Intellectual, Communicative and Emotional growth. The camp experience encourages artistic sensibility, technological astuteness and the development of strong literacy skills.

The NLLC is open to hearing and deaf students who have good signing skills. Registration is due by May 12. Cost is \$350. For registration information, see www.c-s-d.org.

Interpreting camp offered

Camp ASL, a full-immersion silent weekend, will be offered for ASL interpreters and interpreting students May 14 through 16 at Camp Courage North in Lake George, Minn.

Cost is \$115 for students, \$120 for MRID members and \$145 for others. Registration must be post-marked by Mar. 3.

Contact Kimberly Johnson at jokimba@hotmail.com.

Parent Child Institute gives families time to learn, play together

“Communication: It’s the Name of the Game” is the theme of the annual Parent Child Institute June 4 through 6 at Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) in Faribault.

The Institute is open to all families in Minnesota that have children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Families attend workshops, socialize and have fun.

The cost is \$30/family for lodging, meals, daycare and activities. The event is sponsored by MSAD, the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the MN Dept. of Health’s Early Intervention and Detection Program.

For more information, contact Lola Brand at MSAD, 800-657-3996 or see the website www.msad.state.mn.us.

Workshop offered in North

Socialization Day for families, teachers and interpreters in the Upper Red River Valley will be Friday, May 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Our Saviors Lutheran Church in East Grand Forks.

Group activities and small-group sessions with guest speakers will offer the latest information on deaf and hard of hearing issues. Candace Lindow-Davies of the Family Support Connection will be one of the guest speakers.

For more information, contact Sue Eisenzimmer at 218-773-0315 or email seisenzi@asec.net.

Moog Center offers workshop

The Moog Center for Deaf Education in St. Louis, Missouri presents “Helping Your Child Learn to Talk” July 14 to 18 for parents of children ages 2 to 6 who are deaf. Cost is \$150. For more information, contact Betsy Brooks at 314-692-7172, bbrooks@moogcenter.org or see www.oraldeafed.org/schools/moog.

In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Family Support Coordinator

“Why do you run?” “What are you running from?” I’ve been asked this a lot lately. And, I’m sure you’re wondering, “Why is she talking about running in a newsletter for families who have children who are deaf and hard of hearing? Has Candace completely lost her mind?” That might be the logical conclusion, but bear with me a minute.

Just last week, Linda Werness-Jaroszewski, a new staff member asked me a very good question: “Do we ever tell parents just to take time for themselves?” My answer to her was, yes, we do. In fact, our 2002 Mom’s Retreat was called “Time for Me.” But then, I got to thinking. We haven’t said it lately, and summer is coming. That can mean schedules are thrown off with kids out of school, family vacations, outdoor activities, and summer camps/programs.

Well, I’ve learned the hard way that with all my effort to keep everyone busy, learning, and happy, I have to do something for me—or everyone suffers. (Ask my husband.) So, I’m not saying everyone should head out the door to jog. That’s just the way I’ve found to burn off stress, chat with friends, and do something that’s just...mine. (Although anyone looking to join our little running group, let me know!) Instead, I hope each one of you has something you do just for yourself. Whether that’s reading a good novel, doing a craft, fishing, singing in a choir, playing on a softball league...whatever you do, I hope you do it just for yourself—not to benefit anyone except you. And, I hope you schedule that time just like an audiology appointment or a school conference, with the same weight and importance as you would other commitments.

After all, it’s easy to get overwhelmed and over-scheduled. We all do it. But your life doesn’t stop because you have a child with hearing loss. Hobbies or interests you loved before you had kids or before the diagnosis have even more meaning now.

So, as you pull out the calendar and pencil in all your summer plans, please add some time for just you. I guarantee. Your child and your family will benefit.

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Parent Advisory Committee ... continued from Page 1

Beckie and her husband, Bob, have a 10-year-old daughter, Mollie, who is deaf and goes to Anne Sullivan. Mollie has a brother, Jonathan, who is 12, and two step-brothers: Bryan, 25, and Bret, 23. At home, the family uses ASL, the Rochester Method (fingerspelling), and some Cued English. Beckie also is deaf.

Winston and his wife, Joan, have two children: Winston III, who is 8, and Alaysia, age 5. The younger Winston is deaf and goes to Anne Sullivan. He has a cochlear implant and is oral with sign support.

Suzy’s family includes Jeffrey, 11, Lydia, 9, and Victoria, 6. Lydia is deaf and attends Metro Deaf School. They use ASL. Suzy offers the perspectives of both a mother and a professional since she is just completing her licensure in d/hh education. She also represents the Family Support Connection’s Parent Advisory Committee on PACER’s Board of Directors.

Katherine and her husband, Keith, have two daughters: Paige, 5, and Brooke, 2. Paige is deaf and in a mainstream classroom. Their family uses Cued English.

The Parent Advisory Committee meets four to five times a year to plan and implement social events and give valuable parent input to the Family Support Connection staff regarding services. Committee members say their role also offers them a chance to learn from the experiences of other families in similar circumstances. Many say they appreciate the support they received when their kids were babies and want to do their part now. They like that the Family Support Connection includes all families regardless of their communication method. Plus, they add, they have a good time while getting the job done.

If you’d like to learn more about joining the Family Support Connection’s Parent Advisory Committee, contact Candace at 651-265-2435 (v), 651-265-2379 (tty), or candaced@lifetrackresources.org.

New technology allows users to make phone calls in ASL

Video relay services are making it easier than ever for people who are deaf to call people who are hearing.

With video relay, an interpreter at a call center relays the conversation between a deaf caller who signs and a hearing person. The deaf caller uses either a special videophone or a personal computer with a Webcam and a high-speed Internet connection to reach a video relay service (VRS) call center. At the call center, a certified ASL interpreter can see what the caller signs and voices it for the hearing person. Whatever the hearing person says, the interpreter signs back to the deaf caller.

When it was first introduced a few years ago, VRS offered choppy, delayed images. Now, the images transmit faster and appear much more natural.

Several companies operate VRS call centers, including CSD, Hamilton Relay, AT&T and Sorenson Media, which opened a large call center in St. Paul earlier this Spring. Sorenson just came out with new software, Sorenson EnVision SL software, that allows deaf and hard-of-hearing users who can speak to voice their responses to the hearing party via a telephone as they conduct a video relay call. The software also enables deaf callers to reach each other directly, without going through a call center.

To learn more about VRS, see www.sorensonvrs.com or c-s-d.org.

New website features female, deaf basketball star

A new website features stories about the basketball star Ronda Jo Miller, who is from Minnesota and is the only player who is deaf on the National Womens Basketball League. A former star at Gallaudet University, Miller just joined the Dallas Fury.

The website, rondajosports.com, has news stories about Miller's career along with a forum, a shop for sports apparel, and links to other basketball-related sites. Its creators hope to add information about children's basketball camps and related deaf articles and topics.

Miller will be back in Minnesota later this month to promote the website and her involvement with the US volleyball team that will compete in the Deaflympics in Australia in 2005. A party with a DJ and prizes will be from 7:30 p.m. to midnight Saturday, May 22, at Stephano's, 11849 Millpond Ave. in Burnsville.

Plans continue for ASL town

So far 33 families have expressed interest in living in the planned ASL community of Laurent, South Dakota.

The community is under development, although no ground has been broken yet. The planning group has received support from McCook County and is working on acquiring land.

Background information about Laurent is on the website www.LaurentSD.com. The site also offers a subscription to the Laurent Town Crier, which gives updates on the project.

Right now, planners are creating The Laurent Institute Advisory Board and hope to find signers (deaf or hearing) in these areas of expertise: Education, Arts, Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, City Government/Management, Agriculture, Telecommunications, Public Works and Economic Development. To make a recommendation, contact M.E. Barwacz at barwacz@laurentsd.com, or Marvin Miller at marvmiller@laurentsd.com.



A Little Grin

By a FOCUS Reader

Just this past week, a new student from another district was joining a program for deaf and hard of hearing children. The teacher was spending a lot of time with her students to describe the newcomer and how she might be feeling.

"Remember, class, this student is new here. She hasn't been to school here before, and she may be very shy. She might not feel like joining in the group right away, and she might prefer just to be by herself. We can try to help her by understanding how it feels to be a new student in a strange place."

When the time came for the new student to arrive, the class eagerly awaited the shy little girl. Well, the new student entered with big "hellos" for everyone in the group, and joined right in—like it was her home away from home.

The lesson here: "School Transition" is more for the parents and professionals than it is for the student!

Give others a little grin by sending stories about your child to fsc@lifetrackresources.org.

College scholarships offered

Sertoma International is offering 13 scholarships of \$1,000 each to college-bound students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The students must have a documented hearing loss and be enrolled in a four-year bachelor's degree program in any college in the U.S. or Canada. In addition, they must have a minimum 3.2 GPA in high school or college.

To apply, contact Sertoma at 816-333-8300 or see www.sertoma.org.

Get free Twins tickets

CSD is offering free tickets to "Deaf Night" at Minnesota Twins baseball games this summer.

A limited number of tickets are available for the game with the New York Mets Thursday, June 10 at 7:10 p.m., the game against Detroit Saturday, July 10 at 6:10 p.m., and with Oakland at 12:10 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 7.

To reserve tickets, contact CSD of Minnesota's Linda M. Pressley-Ford at 651-487-8867 (tty) or email lpresleyford@c-s-d.org.

'Deaf Day' comes to Valleyfair

Deaf Day at Valleyfair Amusement Park will be Saturday, June 19 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Tickets are \$24 for adults and \$12 for children less than 48" tall, but older than age 3. Tickets can be purchased at Valleyfair on Deaf Day or in advance at CSD of Minnesota, 2055 Rice St., St. Paul.

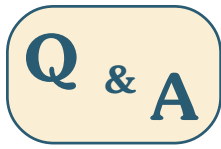
Day Deaf is sponsored by CSD of Minnesota. For more information, contact Linda M. Pressley-Ford at 651-487-8867 (tty) or email lpresleyford@c-s-d.org.

Captioned movies shown



Two movies for families and teens will show with open captions this month. Lindsay Lohan's new teen movie, "Mean Girls," rated PG-13, shows May 10 and 11 at the Kerasotes Show-

place in Coon Rapids, 612-757-6608, and May 12 and 13 in Inver Grove Heights, 651-453-1016. "Scooby Doo 2," rated PG, will be open-captioned at the theater in Coon Rapids May 24 and 25, and in Inver Grove Heights May 26 and 27. Call the theaters for showtimes. For a schedule of rear-window captioned movies, see www.mnocfilms.org.



Ask a Professional

By Janet Poulsen, MA CCC-SLP, CCC-A,
Speech clinician at A Chance To Grow

Question: When should we use Cued English with our deaf child?

Answer: Whenever English language development is delayed, an “immersion” environment can accelerate language learning and improve a child’s academic potential. Cued English, which is a sound-based visual communication system, can provide an English immersion environment regardless of a child’s hearing level.

A language-delayed deaf or hard of hearing child will often make two to three years of language progress per year in an immersion classroom with a fluently cueing teacher or transliterator. Given complete access to English in a visual form, deaf children can develop English skills on par with their hearing peers, and gifted deaf children can function at much higher levels.

How do you know if your child’s language level is delayed? Standardized language tests can measure English proficiency levels. Unfortunately, it is not possible to administer these tests in sign language and get a valid result for English language levels. However, it is probably safe to assume that, in most cases, a deaf child below fourth grade who is learning English only through print will have a delayed English language level.

A child’s *language* level typically does not correspond to his *reading* level until about age 10 or the fourth grade. For example, to read at the first grade level, a child must have a two to three-year-old English language level. A child with a four-year-old language level may be reading at a second grade level. A child with a seven-year-old language level may be reading at a third grade level. In order to get to a fourth grade reading level, a child must develop English language skills to a 10-year-old level. So, a deaf child who begins second grade reading at grade level (which corresponds to a four-year-old *language* level), would need to make three years of English language progress that school year and again in third grade in order to catch up to the 10-year-old language level needed for reading in fourth grade. With Cued English, a child’s language levels can make that jump so in fourth grade he can join his hearing peers who are finished learning to read and now are reading to learn.

For more information contact me at jpoulsen@actg.org or 952-474-2665 (v).

Have a question for this column? Contact fsc@lifetrackresources.org, 651-265-2435 (v) or -2379 (tty).

Websites, camp offer help with Cued English

Cued English is a visual communication system that uses eight handshapes in specific locations (“cues”) along with the natural mouth movements of speech to make all the sounds of spoken language visible. Cues represent each distinctive speech sound rather than complete words.

There are a number of resources available to parents who are trying to learn Cued English. The National Cued Speech Association has a website with information about Cued Speech (the broader term). Go to www.cuedspeech.org and click on “Cued Speech Discovery” in the left-hand column. The site also has a store that sells manuals, software and lessons on video.

New England Cued Speech Services has a website (web7.mit.edu/CuedSpeech/cue_lesson.html) that includes information on how to cue. Under the heading “The Art of Cueing,” there are Quicktime videos of words being cued. Clicking on the words listed makes the video pop up and offers a good glimpse of what Cued English looks like.

More thorough instruction can be found at weekend workshops. The Cued Speech Association of Minnesota is sponsoring Cue Camp Minnesota next month at St. John’s University in Collegeville. The camp runs from June 24 to 27, with a May 15 registration deadline. For more information, email CSAMJO@aol.com or call 612-929-0904.

There also is an online manual for gaining proficiency in Cued Speech at www.uri.edu/comm_service/cued_speech. The manual has information for people who are just starting out, but may be better suited to those who’ve had a workshop and are looking to hone their skills.

New organization focuses on healthy hearing worldwide

May is Better Speech and Hearing Month and a relatively new organization, the World Council on Hearing Health (WCHH), is taking this opportunity to launch a global initiative to combat hearing loss.

WCHH has created a new website (www.WCHH.com) that offers information on hearing loss and its detection, prevention and treatments. The site also describes the various projects of the council, including its new Hearing Healthy Vans that provide free hearing tests and will be dispatched to cities throughout the world. The current schedule for the vans is listed on the site. During Better Speech and Hearing Month, the vans will be in five major U.S. cities (Chicago is the nearest site to the Twin Cities).

WCHH is the public education and advocacy arm of the Deafness Research Foundation, the largest private organization that funds hearing research. The foundation’s grants have been behind the development of the cochlear implant, implantable hearing aid, new treatments for middle ear infections, and current research into regeneration of inner ear hair cells in humans.