



More than 100 people came to the Family Support Connection's picnic Aug. 5 at Como Park. Families enjoyed chatting, eating and carnival games for the kids.

5-year-old Paige waits patiently to see what Cesar has painted on her face.

Teen finds mix of captioning, interpreting helps her make the grade

High school senior Marja Poulsen takes advantage of technology to ensure she doesn't miss a thing in her mainstream classes.

The Minnetonka High School student is deaf and has a cochlear implant. But, the implant alone doesn't give her enough information to understand teachers' lectures. For that, she relies on her interpreter, Barbara Athloff. Barbara goes to every class with Marja, but she doesn't always sign—sometimes she types.

Barbara uses a captioning system called C-Print to transcribe classroom discussions. C-Print was developed several years ago by the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) to improve the classroom experience for deaf high school and college students. C-Print provides printed text of spoken English displayed in real time.

Using a laptop computer, Barbara sits in the classroom and types what the teacher and students say. As she types, the information appears on another laptop on Marja's desk. Because it would be impossible for Barbara to type as quickly as people speak, she uses abbreviations that C-Print's software understands—a kind of computerized shorthand. Still, Marja says Barbara types "pretty fast," which keeps

*Captioning the classroom...
continued on Page 4*

Here's What's Happening

- Friday, Sept. 10 and Friday, Oct. 1** **CSD sponsors Swim Night for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community** from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Oxford Pool, 1079 Iglehart, St. Paul. \$3 kids/\$4 adults. For more information, contact Linda M. Pressley-Ford, CSD of Minnesota, 651-487-8872(tty) or lpressleyford@c-s-d.org.
- Saturday, September 11** **Shows at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival** are ASL-interpreted. The festival goes from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Shakopee. For information about the festival, see www.renaissancefest.com.
- Sept. 17-19** **Rejuvenate at the Family Support Connection's Parent Retreat** at Ruttger's Bay Lodge in the Brainerd Lakes Area. Registration deadline is Sept. 10. See the registration materials at the end of this edition of *FOCUS* for details.
- Sunday, September 19** **Exercise for a good cause at the 2004 Deaf Awareness Walk.** See Page 5 for details.
- Tuesday, September 21** **"Left and Right and Somewhere in the Middle" is the Deaf Culture Salon** in ASL from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Paul College Auditorium, 235 Marshall Ave. Trudy Suggs discusses voting and the candidates. Cost is \$3.
- Saturday, September 25** **The Cued Speech Association of Minnesota hosts a free Fall Festival** featuring games, crafts and other fun for cuing families from 3 to 5 p.m. at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, 5760 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis.
- Saturday, October 2** **Deaf storyteller Estella Bustamante signs stories** for kids ages 3 to 7 at 10:30 a.m., Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., St. Paul, 651-642-0385(v), 651-298-4184(tty).
- Sunday, Oct. 3 and Thursday, Oct. 14** **"Cherchez la Femme: Women and Art" is the ASL-interpreted tour at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.** The tour begins at 2 p.m. and is free, but there is a museum entrance fee. "Mysteries in the Museum: A Family Tour" is offered Oct. 14 at 3 p.m. For details, call 612-870-3131(v), 612-870-3132(tty) or e-mail dhegstro@artsmia.org.
- Wednesday, October 6** **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, e-mail LSenechal@mn.rr.com.
- Saturday, October 9** **Head over to the Aware Fair for fun and information.** The free event features booths by organizations that serve people who are deaf or hard of hearing, along with activities and performances for the whole family. This year, there will be a deaf balloon artist, a caricaturist, Miss Deaf Minnesota and more. The fair runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Brookdale Center in Brooklyn Center. For a flyer and map, see www.tcdeaf.com.
- Saturday, Oct. 23** **Meet other parents at the Family Support Connection's Coffee Chat** from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Como Park Pavilion in St. Paul. Reserve your spot by calling 651-265-2435(v), -2379(tty), or e-mail fsc@lifetrackresources.org.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Hansel & Gretel

Friday, Sept. 17, 7:30 p.m.,
Wednesday, Sept. 22, 10:30 a.m.
Tickets: Reduced
Children's Theatre Co., 2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, 612-874-0400,
www.childrenstheatre.org.

Pinocchio

Sunday, Sept. 19, 2 p.m.
Tickets: \$14, \$11 children (age 2-17) & seniors (age 60+)
Hopkins Center for the Arts Mainstage, 1111 Mainstreet, Hopkins, 952-979-1111, www.stagestheatre.org.

Junie B. Jones: A Little Monkey Business

Sunday, Oct. 10, 2 p.m.
Tickets: Reduced to half-price
Youth Performance Company, Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, 1900 Nicollet Ave. Mpls, 612-623-9080,
www.youthperformanceco.com.

Bat Boy: the Musical

Sunday, Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m.
Hennepin Stages, 824 Hennepin Ave., Mpls., 612-673-0404,
www.aboutmmt.org.
This musical horror spoof has a hilarious plot, surprising twists, and a lesson in being different and accepting yourself.

Go, Dog. Go!

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 10:30 a.m.,
Friday, Oct. 15, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets: Reduced
Children's Theatre Co., 2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, 612-874-0400,
www.childrenstheatre.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.

© 2004 Lifetrack Resources

In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies,
Family Support Coordinator

As our kids head back to school, we're busy setting up meetings with our school districts, scheduling speech therapy appointments, and yes, worrying about how our children will do this school year. Fortunately, there's a wealth of new technology to help them out. This issue of *FOCUS* explores some of the "technologically cool" stuff you might consider for your child.

For many of us, technology is part of our kids everyday lives in the form of hearing aids or a cochlear implant. Our family came face-to-face with the growing popularity of implants when we vacationed last month in South Dakota. It really was remarkable.

Early in the trip, we were staying in the Badlands. One night, while interpreting for my son during a naturalist's talk, another family arrived late and sat down. I overheard the mother say to her husband, "Oh, good! An interpreter!" I leaned over and corrected her by saying I was only a mother doing her best, and we soon figured out that we both had kids with implants. We spent that evening with Heidi and her family from Pennsylvania and exchanged e-mail addresses. It was great to see our son just slip into a card game so naturally with another child his age who signed and spoke. As we parted, I heard Heidi say, "That was cool!" She's right!

Later, while at Devil's Tower in Wyoming, a grandmother came up to us and excitedly explained that her granddaughter who was with her also had an implant. "Have you heard of cueing?" she asked us. Once again, we spent time talking to this family and sharing stories. And, I subjected the poor young girl to my slow and inaccurate cueing.

Now, we thought that was so unusual to run into two young kids our son's age who had implants, and one who even cued. Well, then we went to Crazy Horse back in South Dakota. While we were looking at the exhibits, a mother ran over very excited and said, "Your son has an implant! My son has an implant, too." So, we got to meet Ben and his family from Boston. Another kid my son's age.

Then it really struck us. There are so many more children with implants today than even a few years ago. And, there are so many more people who know about hearing loss, cochlear implants, sign language, cued speech and the like. This is great! This means that our kids will grow up in communities where people are more educated about hearing loss and are interacting more frequently with children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing so they're more accepting. It also means our children will have more and more access to better technology like voice recognition software for captioning and video relay and so on. Who knows what amazing things our kids will be using as adults. The sky's the limit.

I had to chuckle when on our vacation my daughter complained, "Luke keeps meeting his deaf friends, and I haven't made friends with a hearing friend yet!" That night, she easily found a hearing friend to make pretend campfires with outside our cabin. I just know I had been thrilled to have the situation reversed for once.

Family Support Connection hosts activities at Aware Fair

The Family Support Connection will host an activity area at the Aware Fair next month where families can take a break from touring the booths and have a little hands-on fun.

The activity area is designed for families to use together. It will include face-painting, temporary tatoos, crafts, captioned videos and books. There will be rocking chairs for nursing mothers, too. The area will be staffed with volunteers who can sign or cue. Storytimes also may be offered.

The Aware Fair runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 9 at Brookdale in Brooklyn Center. If you'd like to volunteer to help out for an hour or two in the activity area, contact the Family Support Connection at 651-265-2435(v), -2379(tty), or e-mail fsc@lifetrackresources.org.

ASL interpreters on hand at Raptor Release event

The Fall Raptor Release Saturday, Sept. 18 at Gale Woods Farm in Minnetrista will be ASL-interpreted.

The event is free and runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with releases of rehabilitated raptors at 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Cosponsors are Three Rivers Park District and The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota.

Participants can observe and photograph at close range the Raptor Center's resident eagles, falcons, hawks and owls. Activities include a puppet show, the "Riot of Raptors" stage show, face-painting and making raptor masks and gliders along with other creative activities that help children learn about the habitat and life of raptors. Visitors to the farm also can tour the barn and see the farm animals. Horse-drawn hayrides, the canoes on Whaletail Lake, and the Park District's climbing wall will be available for a small fee.

Gale Woods Farm is located at 7210 County Road 110 in Minnetrista. For more information, see www.ThreeRiversParkDistrict.org.

Captioning the classroom... continued from Page 1

Marja on top of what's being said in the classroom.

"I really love captioning," Marja said. "It's a wonderful thing to have in school, especially in classes where there are a lot of lectures."

C-Print also helps Marja study the information discussed in class because everything that is typed can be saved and referred to later. Because of that, the captionist doesn't use students' names.

"I think it's a privacy thing," Marja added. The transcript just says something like "Female Student" when a girl in class speaks. To know who's speaking, Marja needs to look around the room.

When Marja has a question, she doesn't type it into her laptop, although she could. She simply voices it for herself. If she needs help making herself understood, she signs to Barbara, who voices for her.

One of the biggest advantages of C-Print is that it allows Marja to take her own notes on paper while she's reading the captioning on her laptop.

"It's easier to take notes because I

know the computer is keeping up with the lecture," she explained. In classes where Barbara interprets in sign, Marja requests the teacher's notes in advance.

"It's too hard to take notes when I'm watching the interpreter," Marja said, which is a common complaint among students in high school who use interpreters.

C-Print also gives Marja an extra edge in the classroom. She can lean over and talk to a friend, knowing her laptop is continuing to keep track of everything the teacher says.

"It gives me a little more freedom," she added. "If I have to leave to go to the bathroom or if I fall asleep—which really rarely happens—I can look back and see what I missed." It sounds like something every sleep-deprived high school student could use.

Marja and Barbara decide at the start of each school year the classes they'll caption with C-Print and those that will be interpreted in sign. This year, Marja uses C-Print in her Sociology class and might try using it for Biology, too. Last year, she used it for English and History. She found it really helped her learn vocabulary.

"If there's a lot of talking in the class, a lot of lectures, then the interpreter prefers to caption," Marja explained.

The C-Print system includes the two laptops and the special software. Barbara collects the laptops and puts everything in a suitcase on rollers to transport from class to class. She had to be trained to operate the C-Print system. NTID offers training online.

Another classroom captioning option is the iCommunicator, a voice-recognition program that changes spoken word to text and text back to speech. With the iCommunicator, the teachers wear a microphone that transmits what they say to a laptop computer outfitted with voice-recognition software. For the system to work, each teacher must "teach" the computer to recognize his or her voice. The student needs to carry the laptop plus the teachers' microphone from class to class.

Marja has heard of the iCommunicator, but says she prefers C-Print because it's so easy for her to use.

For more information about C-Print, see www.ntid.rit.edu/cprint. For information about iCommunicator, see www.mycommunicator.com.

Move over TTYs: Communicating in type has gone mobile with new pagers

Cell phones with short message service (SMS) capabilities, phones with instant messaging (IM) and now pagers with Internet, e-mail and IM services are changing the way hearing and deaf people keep in touch.

Most people are familiar with cell phones and the numeric keys that also have letters on them. To use SMS or IM on a cell phone, the user presses the keys to spell words. Because it's cumbersome to scroll through the letters to arrive at the right one, users abbreviate words and shorten their conversations. But with the new generation of pagers, users can carry on typed conversations anywhere just as easily as on a TTY.

"It's amazing!" Mark Mikkelson said of his Sidekick pager. "I don't think I could live without it. It's like heaven to me. It's almost like carrying my own personal computer with me everywhere I go. I can check my daily AOL e-mail,

send and receive text messages from my kids' cell phones, check the Internet if I need some info, use the calendar, calculator, etc." Mikkelson, who is deaf and works for HB Fuller, uses his Sidekick at work, too.

"I now rarely use the phone or TTY anymore because the majority of my hearing impaired friends have pagers," he said.

Pagers like the Sidekick are small enough to slip in a pocket, yet offer a full QWERTY keyboard instead of numeric keys like a cell phone. Mikkelson said it takes experience to get used to typing on such a small keyboard, but it's a minor drawback. He said he appreciates the color screen that lights up in the dark along with the keys so he never has trouble seeing it. However, he cautioned that the Sidekick can break easily, especially if it's dropped.

Harris Communications, a compa-

ny based in Eden Prairie and online that specializes in products for deaf and hard of hearing clients, sells several pager models, including the Sidekick, Blackberry and Treo.

"There's a lot to consider (in choosing a pager)," said Cindy Graf, customer service manager at Harris. "But first check coverage—that may narrow your choice." Graf said retailers can tell you which model has coverage in your area.

Pagers are sold like cell phones, with a charge for the device, activation and monthly services. And, like cell phones, there are bargains out there.

"Check around for the best deal," Graf advised. Keep in mind you'll be dealing with the seller more than just one time. "We have awesome customer service here at Harris," she added.

To see the pagers Harris offers, visit www.harriscomm.com.

Walk supports Deaf groups

A fundraising walk to support organizations that serve deaf and hard of hearing people will take place from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 19 around Lake Phalen.

The 5k walk will begin at Minnesota North Star Academy, the new charter high school for deaf and hard of hearing students. The event serves as a kick-off to Deaf Awareness Week, a week-long celebration of the culture, heritage, and language unique to Deaf people around the world. Walkers are invited to a lunch afterwards.

The walk is organized by Global Deaf Connection (GDC). For more information or to make a donation, see GDC's website, gdc.kintera.org/deaf-awarenesswalk.

Omni movie captioned

The documentary, "Forces of Nature," now showing at the Science Museum of Minnesota, had captions added last month. Patrons can request devices to view the rear-window captions. The documentary shows the spectacle of tornadoes, floods, erupting volcanoes, hurricanes and their aftermath. Scientists show what they are doing to predict and prepare for these natural events and to minimize damage in the future.

Cue classes offered

The Cued Speech Association of Minnesota offers 8-week classes starting Sept. 20 to teach beginning and intermediate Cued English.

The classes run from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays through Nov. 8 at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. The classes are \$80 for professionals and \$60 for family members.

The beginning class will introduce the basic cue hand shapes and vowel placements. The intermediate class will build skills for cueing words, phrases and sentences.

For a registration form, contact Katherine Burns-Christenson at 952-929-3965 or KBC29@aol.com or Amy Voorhees at 651-423-3298 or aandjvoorhees@charter.net.



A Little Grin

Technology is wonderful as this mother's story proves. An "FM boot" is a device attached to the behind-the-ear (BTE) portion of hearing aids or, as in this child's case, a cochlear implant. It feeds sounds from a microphone worn by the teacher directly to the child's processor, eliminating most background noise.

By Theresa Koenig, Duluth

My daughter, Kaity, age 8, wears FM boots on her implant BTE at school. One day, Kaity was asked by her mainstream teacher to carry something upstairs to the office. As Kaity disappeared out the door heading in the wrong direction, her teacher spoke softly into the FM microphone, "Kaity, it's the other direction!" Seconds later Kaity's smiling face passed by the classroom as she headed off again—this time in the correct direction.

Kaity's mainstream teacher loves the FM and wishes she had one for all her students!

Meeting explores deaf+ needs

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and CSD will hold a meeting Tuesday, Sept. 14 to assess the need for recreation programs for persons who are deaf and also have other special needs.

The meeting will be from 7 to 8 p.m. at Hazel Park Recreation Center, 945 N. Hazel Ave. An ASL interpreter will be on hand. Reservations are needed by Sept. 10.

Contact Mary Livingston at 651-266-6366 (v), 651-266-6378 (tty), mary.livingston@ci.stpaul.mn.us or Linda Pressley-Ford at 651-487-8872 (tty), or e-mail lpresleyford@c-s-d.org.

Study of hearing loss in children seeks participants

Participants are needed for a major national study to determine how to best help children born with hearing loss.

The study, conducted by Utah State University and funded by the National Institute of Health, needs 150 children with hearing loss and 50 children with normal hearing between ages 1 and 4 1/2 years. Participants will be tested on their speech, language, cognitive, and social development. Children are given standard tests of language and reasoning, while parents are interviewed and asked to complete standard checklists concerning their child's behavior. Participants are expected to perform a three-hour test every six months and will be paid \$50 for each session. A test site has been set up in Minneapolis.

For information about participating in this study, call the Early Development of Children with Hearing Loss research project at 866-236-9164.

Training sessions encourage special interest groups to head to polls in November

The Minnesota Participation Project launches "an unprecedented, nonpartisan, nonprofit Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) drive" Sept. 13 to encourage special interest groups such as people who are deaf to make their votes count on Nov. 2.

Trainings are from 1 to 4 p.m. at these locations:

Duluth: Holiday Inn

Mankato: Blue Earth County Library

St. Cloud: Bremer Bank

Rochester: Rochester Public Health Department

Moorhead: City Hall, City Council Chambers

Marshall: Marshall/Lyon County Library

For more information, contact James Hagggar, 651-645-2433, or email james@grassrootsolutions.com.



Off The Shelf

By Robin Coninx, FSC Specialist

I toured through the library for a book that uses technology in a personal child to adult experience. I found a collage of interesting stories in the biography “Voices of the Oral Deaf” by Jim Reisler.

These adult individuals give a straightforward synopsis of their years of growing up and how it has impacted their life now as adults.

Kristin Buehl addresses the use of Real Time Captioning that really helped her understand all of her lectures in her classroom.

Tom Fields tells how he had to pursue technology that facilitated his ability to do his job. Although his experience began in the 1970s, it gives a little background information on how it was using a TTY and fax machines at first to help communication in his job. Now he utilizes instant messaging, e-mail and a cochlear implant.

Karen Kirby gives the description on body aids— hearing aids in both ears that are connected by a cord to a FM transmitter worn on the chest. She shares how she came to understand why she had to wear them.

This book is short but interesting. It really gives a personal but broad scope of how people who are deaf or hard of hearing live daily, and how they see life from their perspective.

To request this book or another that focuses on the ways technology can improve the lives of people who are deaf or hard of hearing visit our website at www.familysupportconnection.org.

New mentorships help interpreters prepare for national, state certification

Recent graduates from interpreter training programs now will have help gaining the experience and skills they need to become certified interpreters.

CSD (Communication Service for the Deaf) has established a mentorship program for interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing in Minnesota. Deaf people and experienced, qualified interpreters will work with recent graduates to hone their skills.

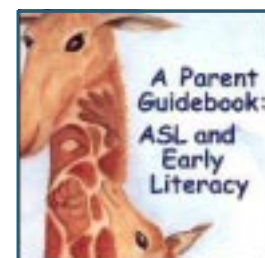
For more information on how to join the program as either a mentor or interpreter-in-training, please contact Aimee Whyte Solomon, Mentorship Coordinator/Deaf Mentor at awhyte@c-s-d.org.

New book teaches tots through ASL

A new book shows how to use games and storytelling as tools to increase a child’s skills in American Sign Language.

“A Parent Guidebook: ASL and Early Literacy” is full of ideas for fun activities that parents can play with their children to improve language learning. It is geared toward babies and preschoolers.

The book is available for \$14.99 with a DVD or video for an additional \$10 at www.dovtech.com.



Online courses bring ASL classes home

As you pack the kids off to school this month, you might consider taking a course yourself. Online courses make it easy to learn to sign—without ever leaving home.

Two Michigan State University professors created www.signingonline.com, which offers four levels of instruction in ASL. The signs are shown using either Quicktime or Flash. The website lets unregistered users glimpse how the courses are taught so you can see if the program will work for you.

Each course costs \$49.95, which gives the student access to the online lessons for three months. Discounts are available for registering for multiple courses. It takes about 15 hours to complete each level. At the end of the four levels, students have about an 800-sign vocabulary.

Another online ASL course is the ASL University at www.lifeprint.com. At this site, the courses are free unless you’re looking for university credit. The course was developed by an interpreter/teacher who is hard of hearing. The website also is funded by sales of the instructor’s book, “Sign Me Up!”

CSD improves its website

CSD has updated its website as part of an overall change in the organization’s “brand identity.”

The website, which features CSD’s various services and products, is at www.c-s-d.org. The site includes information about CSD’s Literacy Camp for Middle School students plus news about the signing community. It also details employment opportunities and social service programs for the deaf and hard of hearing that CSD offers.