

Spring Workshop

"Supports for your Mainstream Student"
*Learn what services are available for your child
within the school systems*



**Saturday
May 3, 2008
10 am**

BC Family
Hearing Resource Centre
15220 - 92nd Avenue,
Surrey, BC

*Presented by CHHA
B.C. Parents' Branch*

Mark you calendar - more information to follow soon!

Invitation

The BC Provincial School for the Deaf will be hosting an OPEN HOUSE on March 6, 2008 at South Slope Elementary School Library. The school is located at 4446 Watling Street in Burnaby. Parents and Professionals are welcome to attend. A brief overview of the program and services will be presented and a tour of the school will be offered.

Please contact Myrna Ziola, Vice Principal BCSD/South Slope for more information. Myrna.Ziola@sd41.bc.ca, 604-664-8300. Accommodation may be available for families visiting from areas outside the Lower Mainland.

Upcoming Events:

March 6 - BC Provincial School for the Deaf Open House

May 3 - Spring Workshop

April 15 - Scholarship entry deadline

July 2-6 - CHHA & IFHOH Congress 2008

October 3-5 - Family Weekend



February 2008



Canadian
Hard of
Hearing
Association
B.C.
Parents'
Branch

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Membership: \$30 annual
includes subscription to
Listen/Écouté magazine and
The Loop newsletter

President's Message ...

By Simone Felker

Leila Lolua has been our President for the past five years and before we officially let her step down as President, I would like to say a few things. Leila is articulate, passionate, organized, thorough and very humble. Leila has a great gift for listening as well as being very warm and welcoming when you're the new kid on the block. Leila has been very supportive as well as insightful when it comes to giving advice about hearing loss. We are fortunate that although she has stepped down as President, she will continue to be on the executive as Vice-President. So, we aren't losing Leila but gaining a very knowledgeable Vice President and Mom. Thank you Leila for your hard work and continued commitment to C.H.H.A. - B.C. Parents' Branch.

I would also like to recognize another very important person within our organization, Janet Les. Janet has been invaluable to us at Parents' Branch. Janet is one of the founding members and she took on a multitude of tasks throughout the years. Some of those tasks include putting together workshops and Family Weekends, balancing the books and making sure everyone is paid and the enormous job of writing and editing our newsletter. This newsletter is very important in reaching as many families as possible with hearing loss. Janet is highly organized, resourceful and very crafty with the computer. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Janet for her huge contributions to Parents' Branch.

I would like to tell you a little of my story and how I became involved with C.H.H.A.-B.C. Parents' Branch. My son Ross was a late diagnosis at 5 years old, with a mild to moderate hearing loss. There were two things that helped us discover Ross' hearing loss. Firstly, my son's kindergarten teacher, Madame Lalonde, who is an excellent educator, picked up on the fact that something wasn't right. Secondly, the mobile hearing screening test program that is done for our children at age five, when the children go to kindergarten.

I've always been a loud speaker and when reading to my kids, they were always next to me. Ross was a little behind with his ABC's but when I called the school with my concerns, they said, "Don't worry about it, he'll catch up in kindergarten". So, I just went on my merry way, thinking everything was just fine.

So now, I'm asked to take Ross for the HEARING TEST at age 5 years old. Boy, what a surprise when I went to take Ross for his official hearing test and I find out he's hard of hearing. Excuse me, did I hear you right? This can't be. I think my first reaction was shock and disbelief,

and then came a little denial. Then came the, "Did I do something wrong during my pregnancy?" No, I knew that wasn't so, but why is this happening to me? Finally after the grief and mild depression, came acceptance. I have to say probably most of us have been through these stages, if not all of the stages then some of them.

C.H.H.A. - Parents' Branch has really helped me through this journey. I've learned along the way that Ross' hearing loss does not define who he is, but adds another dimension to his incredible personality. Ross has taught us so much. His quiet resolve to overcome his obstacles inspires me.

Ross is now 12 years old and he has a brother named Michael who is ten, soon to be eleven. Wayne is my other half and we have been married for 13 years. Yep, thirteen years of ups and downs and we're still together. Ross' favorite word is "What?" Sometimes, Ross likes to use his hearing loss to his advantage. "What, I didn't hear you tell me to take the garbage out." See what I mean!

I really have to be thankful to C.H.H.A.-B.C. Parents' Branch (C.H.H.A. stands for Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, for those who do not know this). It's provided me with education and support, which in turn has enabled me to support Ross and understand his challenges better. Parents are an invaluable source of information. The parents at C.H.H.A.-Parents' Branch understand your struggles best. If you have not come to our get-togethers, I encourage you to do so. Don't be alone in your journey, we are here to help. We, as parents, can direct you to the resources that you may need.



*Family Weekend 2007 was a huge success:
Kidz Konnection drumming workshop*

If you are not receiving our email updates,
please let us know at
info@CHHApents.bc.ca
Email is our most cost-effective way to
give you information. Thank you!

Hear to Learn Family Weekend 2007

On October 12th and 13th 2007, CHHA-B.C. Parents' Branch held our annual Family Weekend. We had a large turnout this year of over 100 people and offered fun programming for children from 0-20 years old and informative workshops for parents. Friday night started off with a wonderful buffet dinner and the spirited entertainment of Alexander the clown. The kids were mesmerized by Alexander and his antics. This was a wonderful beginning to the weekend and a great way to meet other families.

On Saturday morning we sent our kids off to their programs. This year we had a preschool program run by Karen Jackson, a children's program run by Wendi Graves and a teen program run by Kelsie Grazier. The kids all



had a great time getting to know each other and doing fun activities.

The parents went to the workshop room where the day was

started by Melanie Thomas. Melanie who is a teacher, spoke about her journey from hearing to deafness and back. Melanie lost her hearing and had her first audiogram when she was 20 years old and she described how hard it was to adjust to this new life being deaf. She was in denial and in University would devise her own coping skills. She would find someone in class with big handwriting and sit beside them and try to copy. She eventually accepted her deafness and got help and did become a teacher. Three years ago she received a cochlear implant which changed her life again. With the implant she has very good quality hearing and would recommend it to anyone who is considering it. What an incredible journey she has had!

After Melanie's inspiring story we were treated to another inspirational story by Idelle Beauchesne. Idelle's story was very different from Melanie's. She was diagnosed with severe to profound hearing loss in both ears at 6 months old. This is the only life she has known. She went to the Oral Deaf School in Regina and tried to minimize her hearing loss. She had many social problems growing up and was taught to advocate for herself. Her Hard of Hearing teacher influenced her immensely and it made her want to become a HOH teacher herself. She found it very difficult to find jobs and had to work twice as hard in school as anybody else. But she persevered and with support became the teacher she wanted to be and got a

teaching job which she loves. Idelle's story shows that if you want something bad enough you can do it!

Up next was Dr. Janet Jamieson who is the program director of the UBC Master's Program for Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Dr. Jamieson spoke about hard of hearing families and how the family works as a system. She asked the question, "How does a child who is HOH affect the family?"

When talking about HOH families there are many variables: information, emotional support, financial support, parenting and education. All of these factors affect the HOH family. Dr. Jamieson was very informative.



We then broke for lunch and some social time. After lunch was the annual general meeting where many changes were made to the board of directors and some new people came on board.

Following the AGM was Audiologist Dan Paccioretti who led a technology panel featuring some of the HOH teens. This was extremely informative and fun. Curtis Les told us about the Smartlink which is a wireless FM system, but also has many other features which have changed his life. Tasha Cox presented the wireless neckloop which can be plugged into phones, TV's, DVD & CD players. All you have to do is switch on the t-coil on the hearing aids. Also discussed was the Yakker Trakker. This is an amazing tool for HOH children's classrooms. It looks like a stoplight but you can set the decibel level on it. When the children are below the decibel level the light is green, as the noise increases the light turns yellow and when the noise level is above the set level the light goes red and a siren will go off (this can be turned off). This is a



great way for children to self-monitor their noise level. The Yakker Trakker can be purchased from

www.superduper.com.

This company offers many interesting learning tools and offers free delivery to Canada.

The 2007 Family Weekend was a great success where many HOH families got to meet each other and learn from each other. The planning for Family Weekend 2008 has already begun with many exciting changes.

Speech-Language Pathology at the BC Provincial School for the Deaf

By Helen Armstrong

The speech-language pathology program at BCSD provides service to students from kindergarten to grade twelve. The primary goal of the program is to provide assistance so that students become effective communicators. Communication is a multi-faceted activity and all modes of communication are respected. Services include several components.

- **Assessment and review** of students' Spoken English, speechreading, use of residual hearing for communication, receptive and expressive Spoken English/Sign and assistance gathering information regarding a student's proficiency with American Sign Language. Assessment is a **team** effort with input from parents, classroom teachers, the Audiologist, the Occupational Therapist, the Visual Language Interpreters, the ASL Specialist and outside agencies if required.
- **Individual Education Plan:** once students' skills have been evaluated, proficiency in each mode of communication is reviewed with the team and an overall plan is developed that reflects the prioritized goals. This is a collaborative effort involving many members of the team.
- **Service:** students are taught during individual sessions, in small groups or skill development may occur by the classroom teacher and speech-language pathologist working together in the classroom. Whenever possible, the speech-language pathologist uses materials from the student's regular subjects to reinforce concepts being taught in class.

This year, there are several exciting speech-language therapy projects underway. The projects rely on the support and input of

many professionals. The intermediate students are involved in publishing a student newsletter. They are learning many key communication skills and organizational strategies. The plan is to have three publications per year. The first newsletter was published in November.

Another project is a music program for many of the students once per week. A practicum student from Capilano College is working with students individually and in small groups. The curriculum being used is "Keys to Music with Deaf Children" from England. She is collaborating with the Music Teacher at South Slope and the SLP.

Some intermediate students are preparing and presenting stories to the Deaf Children's Society Preschool using both spoken language and sign language. The Deaf Children's Society Preschool is an independent program but is located in the same building as BCSD-South Slope Elementary.

Collaboration with outside agencies is an important aspect of the speech-language therapy program. The BC Children's Hospital Cochlear Implant Team hosted a meeting with some BCSD staff members last year and BCSD recently had a turn as host. The Sunny Hill Hospital Hearing Loss Team is also another agency working closely with BCSD. SET-BC provides augmentative communication options for a limited number of students. Finally, the Provincial Outreach Programs continue to team with BCSD to provide professional development opportunities focusing on the most up-to-date research in deaf education.

It is a pleasure to work with the outstanding staff and families of the students at BCSD.

Helen Armstrong, M.Sc. S-LP (C), CCC
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FAMILY WEEKEND 2008

Mark your calendars!

CHHA-B.C. Parents' Branch will be holding our annual Family Weekend from October 3-5, 2008.

This year we are planning a new adventure! We will be holding Family Weekend at Zajac Ranch for Children.



It will be a whole weekend of learning, sharing and getting to know each other in a beautiful setting with many exciting outdoor activities. Zajac Ranch is a wonderful place for children with chronic illnesses or disabilities. The Ranch offers two night accommodations and all meals as well as many exciting activities for the children & is located in Mission, BC.

We are in the process of raising funds to bring the costs down so that as many families as possible will be able to attend.

Please check our next newsletter for more information!

If you would like to learn more about the Zajac Ranch please visit www.zajacranch.com. "Out here we raise spirits."



What to do if your child has been diagnosed with a hearing loss

Early, full-time use of a hearing device (hearing aids, cochlear implant) is very important for the development of spoken language. The most important thing you can do to help your child's speech and listening development is to encourage your child to use his hearing aids throughout the day, every day.



Children with hearing loss can fall behind in their speech and language development. If your child has a hearing loss he may benefit from early intervention services from a communication specialist (speech/language pathologist, teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing, auditory verbal therapist, or from an infant development consultant). These early intervention services can help you to better understand your child's hearing loss and speech language development and can provide you with ideas to try at home.

Working with your baby at home

Even babies try to communicate:

They may use smiling, crying, pointing, vocalizing, or gestures to try to get their message across to you.

- Pay attention to your child's attempts to communicate and try to understand what he/she might be trying to tell you, then respond as though you understood!
- Example: Your baby smiles when his father walks into the room. You can say something like: "Hi Daddy!", "Daddy is here.", "Come and play with Daddy."

Get rid of background noise:

Your child has a better chance of learning through listening if you eliminate background noise. Here are some typical sources of noise in a home:

- Television, radio
- Dishwasher, microwave, washing machine
- Other conversations happening nearby as you are talking with your child

Help your child become aware of sound:

Bring your child's attention to sounds in his world. Here are just some sounds you can alert your child to:

- Knocking on the door
- Voices of family members
- Car horn or the "beep beep" of toy cars
- Sounds of animals (eg. meow, moo)
- Someone calling child's name

Parent-to-Parent Support Network

Do you know about the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre's Parent-to-Parent Support Network for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families throughout BC?

Why a Support Network?

When a child is diagnosed with a hearing loss, parents often want to talk with other parents of deaf and hard of hearing children. This is sometimes more difficult when a family's first language is not English or in communities outside the Lower Mainland because of the small numbers of deaf and hard of hearing children. Through the support network, the BCFHRC helps parents across BC contact one another to share experiences, concerns and ideas with families in similar situations and with similar language and cultural backgrounds.

You can obtain more information and/or an application form from: Cathy Chow, Parent-to-Parent Coordinator at the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre
Phone toll-free 1-877-584-2827 or
email cchow@bcfamilyhearing.com

Families communicate with their deaf and hard of hearing children in a variety of ways:

You may want to learn as much as possible about the different communication approaches and then make a decision based on what you think is best for your child at this moment in time.

Then, continue to monitor your child's progress and make changes in your approach, if necessary.

Follow your baby's lead and talk about his/her interests:

Watch your child, notice what he or she is experiencing or paying attention to and match your words or signs.

For instance, if he accidentally knocks his cup of milk off of his high-chair tray and watches it fall to the floor – you can say "Uh-oh! Your cup fell down!" If he becomes

excited when he sees his father come in the front door, you could say "Daddy's home! Hi Daddy!"



Encourage your baby to take turns:

Encourage your baby to take a turn by pausing during the "conversation" and waiting to give your baby a chance to take a turn. Your baby might take a turn by smiling, gesturing, making sounds, signing, or saying a word.

Hearing Loss has its Advantages

For my doctoral study I explored the experiences of students who are hard of hearing in university and developed a list of questions including one that asked about the difficulties of having a hearing loss. My thesis advisor said I should also ask about the advantages of being hard of hearing. I looked at her sceptically as if she was way off-base. Are you kidding? Advantages? Of course, we don't have to endure loud noises in some situations such as a husband's snoring (sorry dear spouse) but I really didn't equate that with being thesis material. A little too trite. I was looking for the profound, the dramatic.

Guess what? Now I realize that my advisor was right. The huge advantage of my hearing loss is that as a result I have friendships and connections with other hard of hearing persons, and with hearing persons about hearing loss. I have been fortunate to have been involved with hard of hearing groups at the local and national level for some time and have been blessed, as many others have, to have formed deep and lasting friendships.

As in any situation, there are individuals with whom one just "clicks." The rapport is an indescribable high. There are others who are also friends in a different way and, over time, they have become almost members of a second family. This is how I feel when I go to a Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) conference; I feel as if I am connecting with a second family.

More recently, I have become involved at the international level with the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH), and I have an international second family.

Between face-to-face meetings, we exchange electronic messages. Recently, I commiserated when a friend's dog died (my dog is 14 years and I am so grateful he's still around). Another had a cochlear implant and so I was very keen to hear of the result. These personal connections make for an easy rapport when we meet and spend days in business meetings.

I am thrilled that July 2-6, 2008 all of us will have an opportunity to connect with long-time friends from across the country and to make new friends with national and international registrants from around the world. CHHA is joining with IFHOH to host the first international consumer-driven congress in North America in Vancouver at the first-class Sheraton Wall Centre. To make it even easier for us to connect with international conference registrants, the Congress organizing committee has developed a Buddy Program whereby Canadian registrants can be linked up to international visitors to personally connect with them and extend a warm welcome throughout the Congress.

More details about the Buddy Program will be available on the Congress website of www.chha-ifhohcongress2008.com or e-mail congress2008@chha.ca for more information.

Remember, Congress 2008 could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience the international while at home so don't miss it. Registration information is also available on the Congress website.

Ruth Warick

Reprinted with permission from LISTEN

Hands-On: Radio for the deaf

LAS VEGAS—Talk radio may soon get a whole new audience: the deaf. At a pre-CES briefing in Las Vegas, radio transmitter manufacturer Harris Technology demonstrated a technology that would enable the deaf to "read" talk radio broadcasts in real time. Radio for the deaf and hard of hearing is close to reality thanks to a public-private consortium that will provide closed captioning on car LCD displays.

The system works a lot like close captioning does for television. The company will piggy-back a data stream on the standard audio signal. The text can then be read on radio fitted with a display. The system will only work with digital broadcasts, but the company says an Internet-based solution is possible.

What's in it for deaf people? Cheryl Heppner, executive director of the North Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Person, who lost her hearing at 6, recalls driving with her husband, Fred, and wondering what made him laugh listening to the radio. With real time closed captions, she said, "I could know why ... Fred is always laughing so uproariously when he listens to Car Talk while driving." Or, she says, "I could annoy him by singing along, badly, to the lyrics of his favorite songs. I can't wait!"

A tabletop radio would be available first, probably this fall, from Radiosophy. Getting into a car would take longer because of automakers' longer lead times.



Sources: <http://www.pcmag.com> & <http://www.extremetech.com/>



The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association is proud to join with the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People in hosting the eighth International Hard of Hearing Congress in Vancouver, Canada.

The theme for Congress 2008 is **A Global Community of Communications** and reflects the growing momentum to recognizing the significance of hearing loss as a major health and socioeconomic concern. Presenters from around the world will share their knowledge, perspectives and research on the following five Congress themes:

- Global Challenges and Issues
- Quality of Life Issues for Persons with Hearing Loss
- Technology and Technical Advances
- Education and Employment Issues
- Early Childhood Intervention and Development Programs.

The Congress will be held at the Sheraton Wall Centre in Vancouver July 2 – 6, 2008. For more information, please visit www.chha-ifhohcongress2008.com.

Scholarship Opportunity!

Would you like to attend Congress 2008 to meet and network with hard of hearing people from around the world?

Congress 2008 will feature special workshops for young people including:

Students with Hearing Loss: Post-Secondary Voices and Universal Design for Learning

Putting Numbers and Words on the Problems Young People with Hearing Loss Face in Their Everyday Life

Power Me Up! – An Hour of Empowerment for Young Adults

We have student registration scholarship opportunities for you.

To apply to be considered for a scholarship, email us an essay describing why you want to go to Congress 2008, how you think you will benefit, and what you think you can bring to the discussions.

Submit your entry to info@CHHAparents.bc.ca
Entry deadline: April 15, 2008

For more information on the Congress schedule and workshops, please visit www.chha-ifhohcongress2008.com

Note: You must be a full-time student to apply - a copy of your student ID is required by Congress organizers.

The Internet is one of the most helpful resources.

Websites parents have found helpful include:

Alexander Graham Bell Association	www.agbell.org
American Society for Deaf Children	www.deafchildren.org
Auditory Verbal International	www.auditory-verbal.org
BC Family Hearing Resource Centre	www.bcfamilyhearing.com
Beginnings for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing	www.beginningssvcs.com
Boystown National Research Hospital	www.babyhearing.org
Canadian Hearing Society Starting Point	www.chs.ca
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Parents' Branch	www.chhaparents.bc.ca
Clerc Center at Gallaudet	www.clerccenter.gallaudet.edu
Family Network for Deaf Children	www.fndc.ca
Hands and Voices	www.handsandvoices.org
John Tracy Clinic	www.johntracyclinic.org
National Centre for Hearing Assessment and Management	www.infantheating.org

To Which World Do You Belong?

By Michael Gergley

To which world do you belong, the hearing or the deaf? When asked this question I would have to say, "Neither. I'm between two worlds. I'm hard of hearing." And although my primary means of communication is oral, I don't identify with the hearing world. Alternately, although I have a severe hearing loss and use assistive listening devices such as a hearing aid, my residual hearing leaves me feeling I don't belong in the deaf community, either. So I'm left as the lyrics to a favorite song of mine say to ponder, "Where do I belong?"

Ironically enough, I have 'heard' the answer, not in some lecture or after reading some book on hearing loss. Nor was it a one-time happening where a tiny light bulb went on in my head, revealing in full color and sound where indeed I DID and DO belong. It HAS and WILL continue to be a process of self-discovery for me.

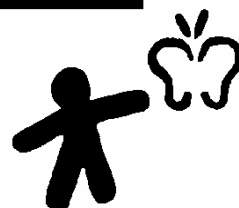
So what does all this mean for my everyday challenges to find answers and have my unique needs met? Perhaps the best personal experience I can share was during a discussion on hearing loss during my graduate degree studies working towards my Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Many hearing loss related issues were spoken about, but some, like being deaf and being hard of hearing, were grouped together as if their needs were the same. I took advantage of this opportunity to educate others about my unique world. And though I still sometimes feel between two worlds and I seem to always have to educate somebody else, in my world is where I belong.

(Our apologies for the mis-print of this article in the September 2007 newsletter.)



CHHA - B.C. Parents' Branch

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association



Membership is open to any individual or organization that supports our objectives. Annual membership fee is \$30. Membership in the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association entitles you to vote on any CHHA matter, and subscriptions to *LISTEN* magazine, CHHA-BC's newsletter *The Loop* and the Parents' Branch newsletter.

NAME(s) _____ Parent(s) Professional Other

MAILING ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

H of H Child(ren):

New Membership (\$30 annually)

Renewal (\$30 annually)

Donation \$ _____

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please consider donating to CHHA BC Parents' Branch via United Way – our charity number is 86215 7302 RR0001.

Thank you! Your support benefits deaf and hard-of-hearing children in BC...

Payable to: CHHA B.C. Parents' Branch – c/o 10150 Gillanders Road; Chilliwack, BC V2P 6H4 - Phone: 604-794-3772