

Family Weekend 2009

September 11-13 at beautiful
Zajac Ranch in Mission, BC



Features

- beautiful country setting
- fun activities for all
- comfortable dorms & washrooms
- visiting and sharing with other hard of hearing families



YOU are invited!

- Hot kids, teens & young adults
- hearing siblings
- mom, dad, grandparents, caregivers



Financial assistance is available,
thanks to the Province of BC



More information and registration details enclosed!

Register TODAY - deadline August 15

group games, high & low ropes, nature trails,
horseback riding, archery, dancing, playing games, etc!!

June 2009



Canadian

Hard of

Hearing

Association

B.C.

Parents'
Branch

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Membership

\$30 annual fee includes
subscription to

Listen/Ecouté magazine
and *The Loop* newsletter

President's Message ..

Hi everyone, I would like to talk about TEAM today. The definition is a set of workers, or players harnessed together in a team or group usually with a mutual game.

The team I refer to in this instance, is your child's team. Your child's team can consist of family, friends, teachers, doctors, therapists, neighbours, coaches or pastors. Depending on your child's disabilities, it can be one or all of these people. Each of these adults plays an important role in supporting and shaping your child. The more positive interactions for your child, the more well rounded they will be.

Here at CHHA, we have an executive team of 6-9 moms who feel passionately about supporting children with hearing loss. Each of these moms contributes something to the team and each one is as vital as the other to making our team strong and productive.

Being with CHHA has made a world of difference to my son Ross and I. Ross and I have made life long friends. He now knows that he is not alone in this world and is not the only one challenged by his hearing loss. I have met some incredible people with so much kindness and understanding. We can be part of your child's team. If you've been wondering what the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association is about, why don't you come and check us out? Now is the time -- join the CHHA team. Sign up today to join us at our annual Family Weekend – being held at beautiful Zajac Ranch in Mission. (registration info enclosed)

On another note, each year the Burnaby Optimist club sponsors a speech contest for deaf and hard of hearing children. Last year, I attended this contest for the first time. I have to tell you, I was really impressed. The speeches were top notch. The topics were on a wide range of subjects but most were from a hearing loss/deaf perspective. The quality and knowledge these children exhibited blew me away. Some of these kids will surely be future leaders to watch out for. If you are looking to be inspired, I highly recommend you come out and hear some of these amazing kids next year.

~ Simone Felker

Johnny to Teacher

Oh Teacher, Ma'am, I'm sorry so
My hearing is not quite good I know.
"Burn your books"? Is what you said?
I'm sure you said something else instead.

"Earn your buck" was that it?
It seems to make more sense, a bit.
Wise words of business, they are true,
But they are not the right words, I wish I knew.

A syllable more, I might have heard
An extra breath, an extra word.
"Ferns in the brook" would then fit.
But what you said? I quite doubt it.

Oh Teacher, Ma'am, I'm sorry so
What you said, I do not know.
I try to listen hard, I do
But sometimes I just have no clue!

Teacher to Johnny

Oh Johnny Dear, I'm sorry so.
Your hearing is not good I know
I'll try to speak more loud, more clear
But ask me if you do not hear.

"Burn your books" and "Earn your buck"
Wow, your hearing is like muck.
These phrases both do sound related
But they are not the words I stated.

A syllable more was there as well
I'm at least glad that you could tell.
"Ferns in the brook"? What is that?
A forest is where your head is at.

Oh Johnny Dear, I'm sorry so
I mumble way too much, I know.
"Turn in your work" I said to them.
Now do it quick and switch on your FM.

*Poem written by Danya Karras, who has a severe hearing loss. She is currently in Grade 11 at Burnaby North High School.
Submitted by her teacher, Beryl Woodrow*

Our **Annual Spring Workshop** was held May 2, 2009. We had a great turnout, an informative session with Dr. Janet Jamieson and good discussion with our teen/young adult panel.

For everyone who could not attend, our administrator has summarized the day for you:

"Let's Talk About Fitting In"

Our annual Spring Workshop was held on May 2nd and we were thrilled to see some new parents and of course the "old" – experienced - parents as well. Socialization among our hard of hearing children is very important. When my son was diagnosed at the age of three years my first reaction was; Will he have friends? Will he fit in or be made fun of? How will he manage? Dr. Janet Jamieson, a professor from the UBC Department of Education who has worked with hard of hearing children and their families for 30 years, spoke about the research and her experiences in this area.

Janet's focus for this workshop was on HOH children in elementary school, their social challenges and social resilience. The most important factor for a parent to remember is that a five year old child, is a five year old child first, and a seven year old, is a seven year old first, etc. Hearing loss just adds another layer of complexity to the developmental stages that all children experience.

Brain research shows that when a person is emotionally upset, the logical thought part of the brain shuts down. This means that when your child is upset, forget about trying to teach them. The most maturing in brain development occurs from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and involves making emotional connections. As children start to learn more about themselves they begin to establish a self-identity. HOH children incorporate being HOH along with their other attributes that become part of their identity.

Prior to Kindergarten, the developmental pattern for all children is developing a primary attachment with an adult. Friendship for this age group is simply having a handy playmate - whoever is there. Playing is concrete and activity based and is initiated just by saying 'Hi' or 'let's play.' In Kindergarten to Grade 2, for all children the teacher is very often involved in resolution of social difficulties. Children are developing social skills and learning expected classroom behaviour. They are also learning to encode and interpret social behaviour.

For hard of hearing kids at this age it is very difficult for them to hear social cues. Their group entry skills are often not developed and they may begin to either withdraw socially or enter into groups inappropriately.

It is very important to intervene to teach children appropriate social skills at this young age as it gets more difficult as the HOH children get older. If a group of Kindergarten children is playing and one child is withdrawn but wants to play, it is very common to tell them "just go ask if you can play". Dr. Jamieson suggests at this age don't give the kids the option of saying "no". Tell the child to just go and play or ask the teacher to help the HOH child integrate into the group.

From Grade 3 until around Grade 5, friendship is based more on mutual trust and assistance. Partners respond to each other's needs and desires and an element of like and dislike of character begins. Play is usually initiated by an offer or invitation and friendship can be terminated by a serious violation of trust, but is resumed with an apology. Children are learning to interpret social cues and accurately generate possible problem-solving strategies. Children want to make their own playdates and no longer want parents making arrangements without their approval.

For HOH children, there can be difficulties when adults are not present. They may establish patterns as a loner. In the classroom, they will often follow the lead of other students because they have missed an instruction from the teacher. The classroom teacher expects self-reliance in terms of hearing aids, FM's, etc. and doesn't always realize that the HOH child has missed something, which perpetuates the pattern of taking the lead from other students. Teachers and the HOH student need to check-in regularly with each other to ensure that the HOH child is hearing all oral communication in the classroom.

As children enter grades five and six, friendship becomes more intimate and is based on mutual understanding. Peers become very important and children begin consolidating some aspects of their identity, for example, I am Children share their innermost thoughts and feelings with their friends, and friendships begin to endure over time. Friendship can be terminated by a serious breach during this stage.

HOH children start to reject the outward signs that set them apart from their hearing peers at this age. They no longer want to wear their FM system, will grow their hair longer to cover the hearing aids or

wear their hair down when they used to put it up or even stop wearing their hearing aids. At this stage, they are struggling with incorporating their hearing loss into their identity. Most students experience something called 'the 5th grade slump.' For HOH children, this can last longer and be more intense. However, HOH students, also may be more resilient to this experience. They sometimes have more peripheral friendships and do not really have any close friends. Some friendships begin to form with other kids that are also on the periphery, for example, other children who are marginalized because of a learning disability, behaviour issues, etc.

It is very important to have one-on-one playdates for your HOH child, starting at a young age. HOH children have a much easier time one-on-one rather than in group situations.

What is the impact of gender on all children versus HOH children? For boys, play is largely physical. It begins as solitary play in early years and develops into group play as children develop. Group membership is often achieved through group teams. For HOH boys, team play is usually with parent involvement in the early years. Rules for team play are constant and it is important to begin team sports at an early age. Group interaction for girls tends to be verbal, and they just need one good friend. There are strong social consequences for not affiliating to a group for girls. HOH girls often don't hear the social information or cues and can be left out of groups and be described as lonely or rejected.

Dr. Jamieson discussed how well classroom teachers understand hearing loss. It's important to realize that teachers are dealing with many children in a class with many different issues and are doing the best that they can. That being said, most teachers are unclear about what it means to be hard of hearing. They attribute behaviour problems to personality and don't always consider the effect of missing social and educational information as contributing to the behaviour. They can also be unclear as to the role of supporting professionals, such as Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. It is important to have team meetings and meetings with the teacher to give them as much information as possible to understand the special needs of children who have a hearing loss.

Following this discussion, Janet introduced who she called "the real experts", the Panel: Nikki Carter (grade 10), Tasha Cox (grade 11),

Nolan Lonn (grade 9) and Curtis Les (young adult). This was an opportunity for parents to ask questions about what these young people have gone through and what's worked for them and what hasn't, with Janet facilitating.

One of the questions asked of the panel was if they have any close friends who are HOH? Nikki and Tasha are in the Provincial Oral Program at Burnaby South Secondary School. They have friends who are HOH, as well as hearing friends. Nolan's friends are mostly hearing, but he has met other HOH friends through CHHA-BC Parents' Branch programs. He is very happy to see these friends at workshops and Family Weekends. Curtis has made more HOH friends during his late teens and early twenties through his involvement with Canadian Hard of Hearing Association events. He said that this involvement changed his life. Most of their friends are really good at repeating information and usually don't get frustrated with them asking to repeat themselves. The group all find that when they are in a quieter situation it is easier, especially when it is one-on-one. In noisy situations, they usually deal with it by asking people to repeat information, slow down and by lip reading. Curtis said that he still goes to restaurants and clubs at times and finds that it is so noisy he sometimes has an advantage over hearing friends because they can't hear either but don't know how to lip read.

Although all the panelists have experienced frustration and difficulties in their lives because of being hard of hearing, they have all found situations that work for them. They are involved in sports, music, volunteering and other activities. They all have supportive families. They seem to be very happy in their lives and are all doing extremely well.

We watched an amazing video that Tasha had taken part in about disabilities. You can find it on YouTube *Open-i "More Than You Think"* It was a wonderful day of information and sharing.



Deaf student defies the odds

By Marianne Meadahl, Assistant Director, External SFU Public Affairs and Media Relations
Reprinted with permission

Born profoundly deaf and told she may never speak, Monique Guterres has never been one to stay silent. The honours criminology student grew up embracing challenges, learning to communicate orally instead of signing and attending the mainstream school system.

"My parents... wanted me to be able to communicate as fully as possible," says Guterres. "It wasn't until Grade 5 that I first remember having the feeling that I was different."

Guterres adapted to hearing aids, but she was self-conscious of her speech and demeanour. She initially declined a surgical cochlear implant. But at 17, amid peer pressure and despite doubts, she went through with it.

"For six months I hated it—I couldn't hear anything, just waves in my head," she recalls. "Sounds were so amplified and foreign. I had to re-learn how to hear—and I still am learning how to hear, seven years later. It was one of the most alienating experiences of my life."

Eventually her speech improved and she was able to process what she was hearing. "The most beautiful sounds I have ever heard are the waves of the ocean," she says.

At SFU, Guterres switched from science to criminology at the suggestion of Gail Anderson, a forensic entomologist in the School of Criminology.

She was drawn to environmental criminology and plans to pursue graduate work in the field. "Monique is a remarkable student and she is intent on doing great things," says Anderson.

Criminologists Paul and Patricia Brantingham agree. Guterres works with the pair as a research assistant in the school's Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies and has been instrumental in drafting a soon-to-be released report on crime in one Vancouver community.

She'll spend part of the summer at a cultural gathering in Macau where her parents were born. Her father, a former travel agent with SFU's Travel CUTS, has enabled her to travel widely abroad.

At home, Guterres volunteers with several community groups and is the B.C. youth director of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. She is also creating a website to remedy a lack of Canadian information on accessing technology and peer support.



Upcoming Events

July

Intermediate ASL classes (page 2)

August

Board Meeting (contact us for date)

September 11-13

Family Weekend at Zajac Ranch
(Registration info enclosed)



Island Deaf & Hard of Hearing Summer Celebration for Families

June 20th - Noon to 3:30pm

Queen Alexandra Centre, 2400 Arbutus Road,
Victoria (Garden Activity Centre)
BBQ lunch (noon to 1:30),
games, face painting, crafts



Questions?

Email Jenny jenny@idhhc.ca
or Sheila sheila@idhhc.ca

The **CHHA National Conference** was held in Newfoundland in May.

Curtis Les attended and shares this summary:

An earsplitting bagpipe ceremony started off the Technology CHHA conference. Off to a great start, hard of hearing people from across the country enjoyed each other's company, renewed old friendships and started new ones, learned new things and discussed issues in many workshops and plenary sessions, all while enjoying the sights of St. John's, Newfoundland.

Flying into the beautiful town of St. John's on Thursday afternoon, the blue skies and warm weather gave a hint of things to come. The 2009 CHHA conference was just starting and in spite of the long overnight trip from Vancouver, I was wide awake and ready for another CHHA conference.

The conference took place in the heart of St. John's at the beautiful Sheraton hotel, within walking distance of the viewpoint of Signal Hill and the attractions of George Street. We had enough free time before, during and after the conference to see at least these two famous parts of Newfoundland!

I want to highlight some of the conference items that I really enjoyed this year:

- The inspiring opening plenary was from TA Loeffler, a mountaineer whose dream is to climb the seven highest peaks in the world. She has attempted Everest and plans to do so again in 2010.
- An informal discussion workshop about "Discovering Your Inner Butterfly" bounced everyday issues around the room, with people offering their solutions to problems that hard of hearing people experience. It was really nice seeing how people do not let a disability stop them from doing what they want.
- Bluffing 101 was rather entertaining, and it was a little surprising to hear that all the hearing people in the room also bluff!
- A concert on Friday night by Randy Rutherford, a hard of hearing musician and painter who told us part of his life story was a great prelude to a night out on George Street.



The closing banquet was spectacular, featuring an amazing Newfoundland and Labrador meal, and an invitation to Sudbury for the 2010 CHHA Conference, to be held in May. I hope to see many of you there!

We sincerely thank the Province of B.C. for their funding support for our Newsletter publication and Family Weekend.



Also, thank you to friends of the Parents' Branch who are donating via United Way!

(Our charity number is 86215 7302 RR0001)



Donations can also be sent directly to us; donations over \$20 will receive a charitable tax receipt.

Online Resources

Parents' Branch website:

<http://www.chhaparents.bc.ca/>

CHHA BC website:

<http://www.chha-bc.org/>

CHHA national website:

<http://www.chha.ca/>



Please join us this year for our annual conference - **Family Weekend at Zajac Ranch!** We have many fond memories from camp last year... I remember Leila and Tasha quietly slipping into our dorm room late at night.

Tasha (HoH, trying to whisper)

"Mom, what time do we have to get up in the morning?"

Leila

"Tasha, be quiet! People are trying to sleep"

Tasha (loudly)

"What???"

Leila

"SHHH!!"

We found out in the morning that the only people sleeping in the room were hard of hearing and didn't hear a thing! What a good laugh we all had...

You and your family will have a wonderful time making new friends - REGISTER today!

Emoti-Chair Delivers Good Vibration

For Ellen Hibbard music has never really meant very much. Deaf from birth, she would only be able to experience a tune by placing her hands on a flat wooden surface near the stereo or radio, or directly on the amplifier. But now that's all changed. And for the first time she has an understanding of why people love music – be it rock and roll, jazz or classical.

Hibbard has tested an experimental Emoti-Chair, which with the help of a computer translates music into a series of tactile sensations, including rocking and vibrating. Think of it as a kind of full-body vibrator triggered by the frequency of individual notes in a musical composition or even random sounds.

From the very first time Hibbard sat in the chair she was overwhelmed by the sensations and vibrations her body felt. "I grew up in an environment of hearing people who had a relationship with sound and emotions that I never fully could understand because I could not experience it first-hand," she said.

But the chair has revealed a whole new world to her. It was like "feeling the emotions (of the music) dance across my skin," said the Hibbard. "I never really thought about 'bad' and 'good' feelings with vibrations," she wrote in an email interview. "This experience has helped me to understand why hearing people have strong feelings when they listen to music. I never could really get it before. Now, I do. When I'm sitting in the chair and the chair is producing distinct vibrations for different components of music, I feel like I'm getting more information about music than I could just by my sense of touch alone. When the vibrations are fast-paced and irregular, it makes me feel anxious but when the vibrations are strong, even and slow, it makes me feel relaxed and think of my own heart beating."



Conceived and designed by a team at Ryerson University's Centre for Learning Technologies and a Canada Council artist, the Emoti-Chair is just in the experimental stage, but its developers hope that it will have practical applications – perhaps one day being used at the movies or rock concerts.

The leader of the project, Deborah Fels, has spent much of her career studying ways technology can help the sick or disabled. The chair is an offshoot of her work with the deaf, which includes the study of closed-captioning. The idea for the chair came out of Fels's work with closed-captioning. She noticed there really wasn't a way to convey the musical information contained in movies or television shows. That music usually has an important emotional purpose that sets the mood, she explained. "If you don't have access to that it means you're missing something." So Fels and her team set out to design something to allow the deaf to feel this missing element.

Last year's Family Weekend at Zajac Ranch was an amazing experience for everyone who attended!

Highlights included

- seeing young ones come out of their shell - starting the weekend sticking close to mom and dad but soon running off to play with new friends
- spontaneous dance party on Saturday night - everyone joined in, kids in PJ's, teens and parents
- parents visiting, learning from each other and exchanging contact information
- teens mentoring and playing with the younger kids

This year we are inviting HoH young adults to join us, too - hope to see you all there! REGISTER today!

Summer ASL Immersion

Intermediate American Sign Language classes are being offered this summer.

Week One: July 7, 8 & 9

Week Two: July 14, 15 & 16

Week Three: July 21, 22 & 23

Time: 5:30pm to 8:30pm

At: #208-7355 Canada Way, Burnaby (at Edmonds)

Cost: \$100.00 Per Person (for 9 classes, 3 hours each = 27 hrs)

Instructor: Bev Charlton **Contact:** 604-525-6056 or email: bcharlton@deafchildren.bc.ca

Beginner classes available - contact for dates.



If you are not receiving our email updates, please send your address to info@CHHAparents.bc.ca
Email is our most cost-effective way to give you important information on a regular basis...
we send out a few emails between newsletter publications - don't miss out!

If your mailing address changes, please let us know via email or phone to avoid returned mail.

We love to hear from our families. If you have any suggestions regarding events, newsletters, issues you need help with, etc., please contact us!

If you have an article to share in our newsletter, please email it to us. **We also welcome visitors and parents to our board meetings - contact us for details.** Thank you!

Membership is open to any individual or Organization. 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 RR001.
Thank you! Your support benefits hard-of-hearing children in BC...

Payable to: CHHA B.C. Parents' Branch – c/o 10150 Gillanders Road; Chilliwack, BC V2P 6H4 - Phone: 604-819-5312