



HANDS &
VOICES™
ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS E.A.R.S

E.A.R.S = EVENTS AND RESOURCES STATEWIDE

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."™



GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™
ILLINOIS

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Two moms who are making a difference! How we recognized their efforts.

PAGE 3

SHARING HER STORY

Lynette shares what it is like living with unilateral hearing loss.

PAGE 2


START HERE

Is your child recently diagnosed? Check out this NEW online resource area to learn more.


PAGE 9



Page 9 | Mom's Night Inn




7:00 - 8:00 PM CST
5/18, 6/15 and 7/20



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Please join us on an informal Zoom meeting to get to know other families with children who have a hearing loss from across the state of Illinois.

PLEASE REGISTER AT THIS LINK
<https://forms.gle/XmWU2PMEKSCQK6TA> OR
USE THE CAMERA OF YOUR SMART PHONE TO SCAN THE QR CODE
TO TAKE YOU DIRECTLY TO THE REGISTRATION LINK.
A ZOOM LINK WILL BE SENT TO YOU 24 HOURS BEFORE THE EVENT.



Page 4 | Join Us!

THIS EVENT IS HOSTED BY OUR ILLINOIS HANDS & VOICES GUIDE BY YOUR SIDE PROGRAM. ALL EVENTS ARE FREE & CUSTOMER SERVICE IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU.

2022 EHDI INNOVATOR AWARD



PRESENTED TO

Connie Thompson

Page 10 | Celebrating EHDI Innovators

FOR BEING AN INNOVATOR WITHIN THE 1-3-6



Page 8 | Family Leadership Award

WHAT “UNI-” MEANS TO ME

BY LYNETTE HERNANDEZ

Think of any word that has the prefix uni. Now think of their meaning. Unicorn; a mythical horse with one horn. Unicycle; a bike with only one wheel. Unified; made as one. I am a 16 year old girl and I have unilateral hearing loss.

When I was 4, I failed my preschool hearing test and that was when my parents took me to an audiologist. It was determined that I have unilateral hearing loss. Many doctors seem to think that my hearing loss was due to the fact that I had intensely high fevers as a child. I didn't start using hearing devices until 2nd grade. That year my parents and I decided that an FM System would be the best thing for me. From 2nd to 5th grade I wore my FM System in school and gave the microphone from teacher to teacher. In 3rd grade, I had gotten my first pair of hearing aids through the Chicago Hearing Society. They were blue with purple and blue swirled molds. I never wanted to wear them in school because I didn't feel responsible enough to have them on. So, once fifth grade rolled around, I felt like it was the perfect time to make the switch—and so I did. I started to wear my hearing aids to school and ditched the FM System.

The switch naturally prompted questions from classmates of mine. For some reason, even though these kids had been a part of my life for the past six years, they somehow thought I needed my hearing aids to hear. Did I miss a fair amount of speech without a hearing device? Yes, of course, but that doesn't mean I couldn't hear at all—which my classmates knew. This was the first time I really felt like questioning why having unilateral hearing loss was such a hard concept for others to grasp.

Uni is a tricky prefix for me. It's always made me confused. Having unilateral hearing loss means that I can only hear out of one ear. Or it means that I can't hear out of one ear. It switches—and that's what bothers me. There's a certain confinement in each way of explaining my hearing situation. When I say I can only hear out of one ear, that means I can still hear relatively well, making me feel as though people believe my hearing struggles aren't valid. When I say that I can't hear out of one ear, I suddenly feel as though people may pity me and actually believe that I struggle with my hearing.

Throughout my struggle attempting to navigate the balance between the hearing world and the deaf/hoh community, I've learned something important—establishment. Establishing myself and voicing my struggles with friends, teachers, and classmates always made my internal struggle a little easier. I've always stood my ground so people don't invalidate what I'm going through. I continue to make it clear that yes—I can still hear, no— I'm not the same as you.

I've come to terms with the fact that I'm inevitably a part of both worlds. I'm always continuing to learn from the two and I think that as I get older, I know that I don't have to pick one or the other. I can make the two worlds collide—I have been since my diagnosis, I just didn't know it. It's a beautiful revelation to have on your own and I'm so lucky that I get to be one of the many people handling this not-so-simple fight.

*Two Worlds
Collide*





REGISTER NOW



HANDS & VOICES

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
FAIRPORT, NEW YORK

SUNDAY - TUESDAY :: SEPT 18 - 20, 2022

LEADERSHIP: MORE THAN A STATE OF MIND

2022 Hands & Voices Leadership Conference
"Leadership: More Than a State of Mind"
Sunday September 18th, 2022- Tuesday September 20th, 2022



Parent Achievement Award

2022 Awardees

Congratulations





Kelley Hemesath



Diane Heimlich

On April 24th, we recognized Kelley and Diane for their extraordinary work in assisting families with children who are deaf/hard of hearing (DHH) in IL. Kelley and Diane are both moms of teens who have a hearing loss. Thank you, Kelley and Diane, for helping other families navigate their way through raising a child who is DHH.





7:00 - 8:00 PM CST
5/18, 6/15 and 7/20

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Please join us on an informal Zoom meeting to get to know other families with children who have a hearing loss from across the state of Illinois.

PLEASE REGISTER AT THIS LINK:
[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/XN4W2P1MEBXCVPKF6](https://forms.gle/XN4W2P1MEBXCVPKF6) OR
USE THE CAMERA OF YOUR SMART PHONE TO SCAN THE QR CODE
TO TAKE YOU DIRECTLY TO THE REGISTRATION LINK.
A ZOOM LINK WILL BE SENT TO YOU 24 HOURS BEFORE THE EVENT.



THIS EVENT IS HOSTED BY OUR ILLINOIS HANDS & VOICES GUIDE BY YOUR SIDE PROGRAM. ALL FAMILIES WHO HAVE A CHILD THAT HAS ANY TYPE OR DEGREE OF HEARING LOSS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THIS EVENT.

"WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR CHILD IS WHAT MAKES THE CHOICE RIGHT."®



BINGO!

Bingo night was a great success! We had 7 families attend from all around the state! We played 4 games of bingo which the winners won prizes for. In between each round we also had some fun facts we learned about each other as we made new connections and got to know each other! It was a fun time by all! We hope to see a lot of you at future family events!



VIRTUAL MEET UPS

BY RAMONA MARTIN

The purpose of our Getting to Know You zooms are to connect families with other families who may be able to share their personal knowledge of resources and/or information related to our kids. The event is open to any family in Illinois.

Please continue to watch your email and the Facebook regional groups for upcoming Getting to Know You zoom meetings. These meetings will be taking place monthly during 2022, so please feel free to register and join any and all that you are able. Please email Ramona Martin at rmartin.gbys@gmail.com with any questions or comments about this event.

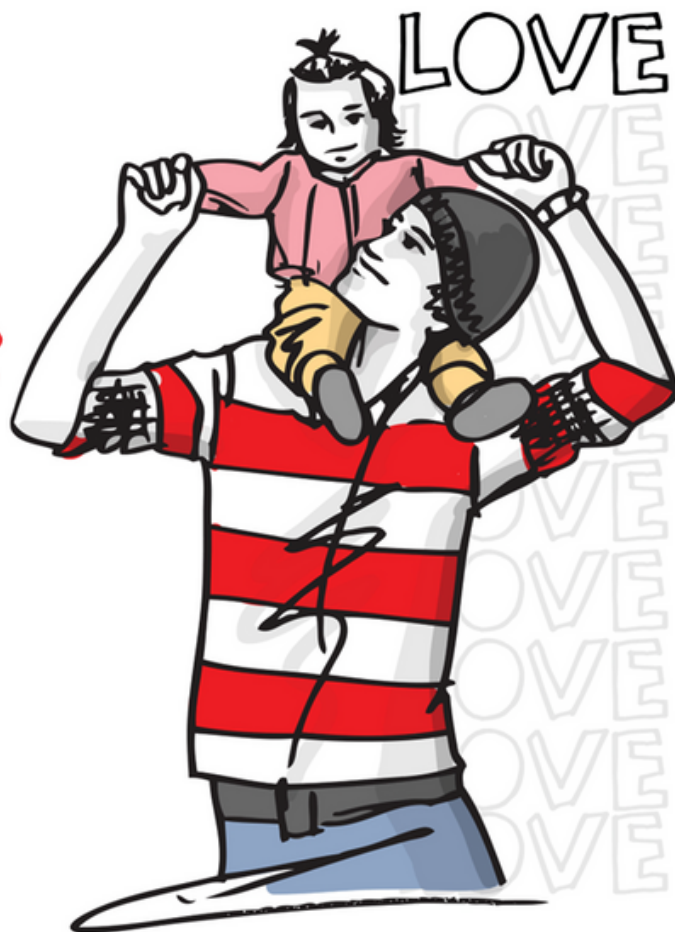
WE WANT YOU!

Have you wondered how you can help other families with children who are deaf/hard of hearing?

Maybe you want to help plan events for families to gather? Serving as an Illinois Hands & Voices Board member is a wonderful way to connect with other like minded individuals while helping others. The board is looking for professionals, parents and deaf adults. Find more information at ilhandsandvoices.org.

Illinois Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side

DAD'S MEETING OTHER DAD'S



Wednesday June 1, 2022

8:00PM — 9:00PM

Join us for an informal Zoom meeting to get to meet other dads of children who are deaf/hard of hearing across Illinois.

All dad's or father figures of children who are deaf/hard of hearing are welcome to join this safe space to talk about you and your kids.

REGISTER TODAY:



<https://fs4.formsite.com/rh1RZR/q2oivmj8ux/index.html>

You must register to receive a zoom link to attend the event. ADA requests must be made within 1 week of the event, **don't delay — register today!**



Illinois Hands & Voices is a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization EIN 06-1724201

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."™



DADS ONLY...

On Wednesday, April 27, Illinois Hands and Voices hosted a dad's Zoom meet up. There were 3 men associated with IL H & V who facilitated the meeting (Wilson Hernandez and Oracio Esparza—both are fathers; and myself, a professional with family members that are deaf/hard of hearing); and then 4 fathers who joined us. We had never done this before, so there was a little bit of nervousness as to how it would go. We started with basic guidelines, namely the philosophy of Hands and Voices: "What works for your child is what makes the choice right." We decided to go with this in an effort to be as inclusive and encouraging as possible. And, to avoid the meetup becoming a controversial philosophical argument! 😊 After introductions we opened the floor to what the dads wanted to talk about. I was very pleased with how the conversation went. I was very impressed with the sincerity of the fathers, and the support offered to each other. The diversity of their children was wide; nonetheless, it was very interesting to see the fathers able to connect with each other. We covered topics such as: handling tantrums since communication with a child may not always be easy; the challenges of learning sign language; dealing with people who are not very tolerant or understanding of our d/hh children, and, how to channel the anger and frustration we experience when such situations arise. All the dads acknowledged how grateful they were to their spouses for the love and commitment shown for their children, and how it inspired the fathers to do their best to pitch in. We also talked about the value/need to meet up with more d/hh adults, to learn from them how they handled the challenges of life while growing up. All the dads expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet, and to be able to share their experiences. Wilson summed up our meeting and encouraged the dads to focus on one thing they can try to do to continue be a good dad for their children.

We agreed to meet again, and that meeting is set for June 1, @ 8:00 p.m. Plans are in the work for a Spanish speaking dad's zoom meet up as well, as Oracio and Wilson are bilingual, and willing to host such an event. We'll keep you posted!

WELCOME!

NEW ILLINOIS HANDS & VOICES JUNIOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

We are very pleased to announce that we have a new Junior Board of Directors for IL Hands & Voices! These amazing teens filled out an application and went through an interview process. They are an intelligent and dedicated group of kids and passed the interview process with flying colors! Our new Junior Board of Directors will help plan and coordinate teen events for those children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. They will also have scheduled meetings, actively participate within our IL Hands & Voices events, work as a team for group decision-making, develop project ideas and fundraising skills. They are a bright group of teens that have worked immensely on advocating for themselves and now want to be able to help others do the same. Please join us in welcoming our members! Know someone who may be interested in applying? See page 7 for more information!

Meet Vivian 9th grade

1. **Why did you want to be a part of our Junior Board of Directors?**

I wanted to be a part of the board because I think sharing my experiences as a deaf person who wears cochlear implants could motivate and inspire people who are also struggling with similar situations to mine!

2. **Describe yourself in 5 words or less.**

Kind, music-lover, athletic, lively!

3. **What are some of your hobbies/things you like to do for fun?**

I love softball and volleyball, playing piano, and reading.

4. **What is your favorite food?**

French toast

5. **What are 3 small victories that you've had in the last few days that you're proud of?**

In the last few days, I've ended my school year with good grades, passed my driver's ed final, and finished up a few books I've been reading! :)

6. **If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?**

I would travel to Italy, because there's a ton of beautiful sights to see there, and I think that would be a really fun experience to visit it.



Meet Lynette 9th grade

1. Why did you want to be a part of our Junior Board of Directors?

I wanted to be a part of the Junior Board of Directors because I want to be a part of the behind-the-scenes aspect of H & V as well as get the opportunity to work with teens my age who are struggling with being Deaf/HOH.

2. Describe yourself in 5 words or less.

Determined, passionate, and excited!

3. What are some of your hobbies/things you like to do for fun?

In my free time I like to play guitar, read, and listen to music!

4. What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is popcorn.

5. What are 3 small victories that you've had in the last few days that you're proud of?

3 small victories I've had are making my friends laugh super hard, finishing my schoolwork early, and finally learning a hard part of a song on the guitar.

6. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

I'd love to travel to Barcelona because of the culture in Spain! There's beautiful architecture and food and wonderful music over there!



Meet Brooke 10th grade

1. Why did you want to be a part of our Junior Board of Directors?

I wanted to join Junior Board of Directors because I wanted to help parents, people, and others that have someone that is deaf/hard of hearing or are deaf/hard of hearing.

2. Describe yourself in 5 words or less.

If I had to describe myself in 5 words or less, I would say patient, kind, hardworking, and organized.

3. What are some of your hobbies/things you like to do for fun?

Some of the things I do in my free time is dancing, singing, acting, taking hikes, and many more.

4. What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is Fettucine Alfredo.

5. What are 3 small victories that you've had in the last few days that you're proud of?

Three small victories I had this week was finishing my freshmen year of high school. I got to help out with a food drive for PADS. Also, I made dinner for my family.

6. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

If I could go anywhere in the world I would go to Italy and try to learn how to make Fettucine Alfredo from scratch and see all the amazing sights.



Meet Aparajita (Appu) Gunturu 11th grade

1. Why did you want to be a part of our Junior Board of Directors?

I have been part of few volunteer opportunities before and also active in school clubs. I want to contribute to IL Hands and Voices at a broader level utilizing my past experiences. I want to make an impact on the community and also enhance myself. I am looking forward to this opportunity and thankful to IL Hands and Voices.

2. Describe yourself in 5 words or less.

Hardworking, motivated, passionate and a fun-loving teenager.

3. What are some of your hobbies/things you like to do for fun?

Watching TV, biking in summer, playing video games, photography.

4. What is your favorite food?

Chicken dishes

5. What are 3 small victories that you've had in the last few days that you're proud of?

Completed my school projects including an accounting project. I also got more screen time for summer.

6. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

I would like to go to California because it is warm and sunny with lots of beaches.



Join our Junior Board!



What is it?

The junior board of IL Hands & Voices will grow to be a group of enthusiastic individuals ages 13 through 18 working together to promote our mission. Members of the Junior Board will draw upon their expertise, personal and professional networks, and creativity to provide additional organizational, advocacy and financial support to fulfill the organization's mission.

This is the first Junior Board for IL Hands & Voices. The Junior Board's self-determined mission will be to energize IL Hands & Voices through advocacy, community engagement, and fundraising.



GIVE SUPPORT TO KIDS WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING IN ILLINOIS



GIVE BACK BY VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS.



GAIN EXPERIENCE IN NON-PROFIT WHILE EARNING SERVICE HOURS



COLLABORATIVELY DEVELOP AN ALL NEW JUNIOR BOARD FROM THE GROUND UP

Who should apply?

We are looking for members who are deaf or hard of hearing, a sibling of someone who is deaf/hard of hearing or individuals with an interest in audiology, interpreting or deaf education. No previous experience in non-profit work is required. If you are passionate about growing your own skills, empowering Illinois children and communities who are deaf/hard of hearing and working collaboratively to support our organization's mission, we want to hear from you!

Board Member Expectations

- Actively contribute skills and experiences to various Junior Board efforts.
- Attend monthly meetings (1 hour, via online platform) and social events.
- Develop events and opportunities that further serve our youth and families.
- Design volunteer and engagement opportunities for teens in our community.
- Serve as an ambassador for IL Hands & Voices, its families and its mission.
- Commit to a one-year term to ensure smooth transitions and productive campaigns.
- Accomplish individually-set goals of attending events, fundraising, recruitment, etc.



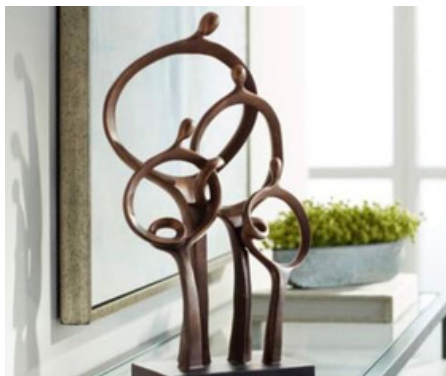
Interested?

Email Lydia at

Lydia.Hernandez@ilhandsandvoices.com

ILLINOIS HANDS & VOICES
501C3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right."
<https://www.ilhandsandvoices.org/>



2022 EHDI Family Leadership Award

We are so excited to announce that Carrie Balian, our IL H&V GBYS Coordinator, was awarded the 2022 Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Family Leadership Award in March during the national EHDI conference.



During the last several decades, it has become increasingly clear that EHDI only exists to improve the well-being of babies and families. Symbiotically, engaged families are central to the success of EHDI programs and, more specifically, to the success of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This award honors a parent or family member of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing for providing exemplary leadership in their state EHDI system and whose leadership has led to improved outcomes. The recipient is selected by NCHAM's Family Advisory Committee. This year, ten nominees were submitted for the award. Carrie is the fifth recipient of the EHDI Family Leadership Award.

Outstanding Leadership

This Spring, two of our Parent Guides promoted within our Leveled Recognition Program (LRP). It was just last fall when Ramona Martin promoted to a Lead Parent Guide within our Guide By Your Side program and here she is doing it again! Ramona has now reached our top level of the LRP by achieving the Senior level. Amy Keslinke promoted to a Lead Guide and then right on to a Senior Guide all within the same month! Incredible work ladies! The LRP focuses on developing leadership skills while encouraging involvement within our community and is used by all Guide By Your Side programs. Congratulations Amy & Ramona on your promotions! The Leveled Recognition Program (LRP) levels are Guide, Lead and Senior. The guides can promote to the next level by participating in certain activities such as being a member on local and national committees, mentoring guides and presenting at conferences just to name a few. Guides can work on tasks, activities and commitments on all levels simultaneously. Each level in our IL LRP program provides a new pay rate in addition to recognition for their outstanding achievement.



Ramona



Amy

Illinois Hands & Voices, Guide By Your Side does not support or endorse any specific organization, communication or amplification choice. The information in this newsletter is to simply share with families and professionals the resources and events available to them.



What will you find on the Welcome Family Page?

- Love YOUR Child
- Educate YOURself
- Take Action
- Seek out Experts
- Trust YOUR Instincts
- Gather Perspectives
- Celebrate YOUR Child's Innate Strengths

A special welcome to you from Hands & Voices HQ, we welcome your family as you start your journey with your child who is deaf or hard of hearing. This community was founded by parents for parents just like you! Whether your child was recently identified as a baby or an older child/young adult, Hands & Voices would like to extend the offer to walk alongside you and provide support. We are a vast network of diverse experienced parents who are eager to help.



Better Together

After a 3 year hiatus, Mom's Night Inn was back in person and we couldn't be happier! The theme, "Better Together", was the perfect way to describe the event after canceling in 2020 and holding a virtual event in 2021. The moms and female caregivers had the opportunity to hear Dana Reindl, a social worker in U-46, share her story of growing up with hearing loss. The evening program consisted of activities including jewelry making, chocolate tasting and yoga. The moms were also treated to chair massages. The Sunday morning panel included 4 teens who shared their school experiences with the audience. It was wonderful to learn from these amazing young adults. While there were many bright spots during the weekend, the highlight was talking and sharing stories with each other. We truly are "better together".

Learning Among Friends

The EHDI (Early Hearing Detection & Intervention) Conference took place virtually for 2022. Between March 12th and March 15th professionals and families worldwide logged in to learn from experts on topics surrounding infants and toddlers who are deaf/hard of hearing. This year's conference marked the 21st year that NCHAM has been hosting this event. Typically, at an in-person EHDI conference you can expect to see over 850 participants from near and far, this year's virtual conference saw over 1250. Our Chapter has attended this conference for over 10 years and presented at least one session at each one.

This conference boasts well over 100 sessions, 3 plenary sessions, award ceremonies and numerous vendors to visit virtually between sessions. Our chapter was well represented with over 10 sessions being presented by individuals within our IL Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side Team. Good job team! Our topics included: Special Education Law and Advocacy, Cytomegalovirus (CMV), SNIPPETS, Direct Referrals, Deaf with Disabilities, and socialization to name a few.

Did I mention awards? One of the awards presented during each annual EHDI Conference is the EHDI Family Leadership Award. This award is given to individuals who truly go above and beyond in the Early Hearing & Intervention System. Our very own Carrie Balian was one of this year's recipients. We are sincerely proud of her and happy that she was given this year's award. Families and professionals in Illinois are fortunate that she has gone above and beyond for Early Hearing & Detection in Illinois.



The IL H&V GBYS and Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) programs partnered to recognize those in the field who are making an impact within the EHDI goals of 1-3-6.

These goals ensure babies have their hearing screened by 1 month of age, receive a diagnostic hearing evaluation no later than 3 months of age and that all infants with hearing loss enroll in Early Intervention no later than 6 months of age. During this quarter, we had the pleasure of recognizing Dr. Dawn Violetto, Randi Winston-Gerson, Ann Freiburg, Andrea Marwah and Connie Thompson for their ability to create change and improvement within these benchmarks.



2022
EHDI
Innovators



MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE!



Hunter Martin of Illiopolis is among three outstanding individuals with hearing loss honored by the 2021 Oticon Focus on People Awards in the Student Category. The national competition celebrates hearing-impaired students, adults and advocacy volunteers who have demonstrated through their accomplishments that hearing loss does not limit a person's ability to make a positive difference in the world. People from across the US cast a record-breaking 15,000+ votes online at www.Oticon.com/FOP to determine this year's winners.

"We are always amazed by how much our youngest honorees, like Hunter, have managed to accomplish in such a short period of time," said Nancy Palmere, Director of Consumer Marketing and Public Relations for Oticon, Inc. who heads the awards program. "This year's Student Category winners have each found a unique way to make the world a better place -- for others with hearing loss and for all of us."

Thirteen-year-old Hunter is a shining example of what one small voice can accomplish for so many. At age 7, he began working with legislators to advocate for insurance to cover hearing aids for all children in Illinois. Three years later, he proudly stood with the Governor when the landmark bill requiring insurance providers to cover new hearing aids for children 18 and under every three years was signed into law. Hunter's crusade continues. When he discovered that some companies used a loophole in the law to avoid offering coverage, he began writing letters and meeting with CEOs and human resource directors to encourage them to add hearing aid coverage to their policies.

The Oticon Focus on People Awards program was created in 1997 by Oticon, Inc., one of the world's oldest and most respected hearing technology manufacturers. By celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of individuals with hearing loss, Oticon, Inc. aims to call attention to common misconceptions about hearing loss and motivate people with hearing loss to take advantage of the help that is available to them. The company's goal is to reach the 80 percent of an estimated 48 million Americans who could benefit from hearing solutions, but who fail to seek professional help.

For more information about the 2021 Oticon Focus on People Awards, visit www.Oticon.com/FOP.

Moraine Valley Community College

FREE FAMILY SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Yes, you read that right!

FREE to family with Deaf and hard of hearing children birth through high school.

Extended family members are welcome.

Level 1: Tuesdays, May 10 – June 14 (For anyone who is new to sign language)

Level 2: Tuesdays, June 21 – July 26 (For anyone who knows some sign language)

6:30pm – 7:30pm

All classes will be held via ZOOM.

The classes are taught by Deaf Instructors in sign language and written English.

Please email ASL@morainevalley.edu for more information and intake forms.

All participants will be required to fill out an intake form for data purposes.

Please hurry! Space is limited.



9000 W. College Parkway, Palos Hills, IL 60465-2478 / (708) 974-4300 / morainevalley.edu

IL HANDS & VOICES GUIDE BY YOUR SIDE

Family Picnic

July 9, 2022 — 11:00AM to 2:00PM

<https://www.ilhandsandvoices.org/family-fun-picnic>



HANDS &
VOICES™
ILLINOIS



COME JOIN US

Frankfort, Illinois



- Pack a lunch
- Pack a picnic blanket
- Bring the whole gang
- Be ready for fun

We will provide dessert and fun games.

ADA requests must be made 2 weeks prior to the event

REGISTER TODAY:



Illinois Families for Hands & Voices is a 501c3 Non-Profit | EIN: 07-1624201
PO Box 9366, Naperville IL 60567 | <https://www.ilhandsandvoices.org/>



SUMMERTIME STRUGGLES

BY CRYSTAL JOHNSON

With summer quickly approaching, all the fun summertime stuff and excitement comes too: Trips to take, getting the pool ready, trips to the zoo, Magic house, just to name a few. We began to book weekends here and there and our vacation. Plans for the kids while we are at work and with that also came the anxiety and worry for my son. My son will be 6 in July. He is what our family calls deaf plus! Meaning he has a severe hearing loss in both ears but also has additional diagnoses like Down Syndrome, seizures, a heart condition, an instability of his neck, asthma, plus some other not as severe needs. He wears bilateral BAHA's and uses ASL to communicate since he is nonverbal.

He currently attends school all day. He spends his mornings in a blended preschool classroom with a one-on-one aid that has her interpreter license as he is nonverbal and uses ASL to communicate. Then in the afternoons he goes to the DHH classroom where they also use ASL to communicate. He loves school and is thriving in school. But summer is upon us and school will soon be over. Sure, there is half day summer school for a couple weeks but what about the other half of the day?

The questions start to float into my head. What will summer look like for him? My husband and I still work. I am a special ed teacher but between teaching summer school all of June and doing summer screenings for preschool, workshops, and then back at it in August for a different group of summer school, He will need daycare all of June some of July and all of August. How will he communicate with them? Will they be able to communicate with him? Will they make sure his BAHA's are on and working so he has some access? It's so hard going from all the supports and access he has in place now to knowing that at daycare he will not have all of that. The staff at his daycare are great and they love and take care of him wonderfully but it's hard when they don't speak ASL. I started researching and reaching out to agencies. There are no requirements at that level to provide him an interpreter. There is no funding for daycares to pay for an interpreter either.

So, for our family, Summertime is a struggle. A struggle to make sure he can be as successful as possible without becoming frustrated. A struggle to help teachers be able to communicate with him. A struggle to get him what he needs. A struggle to know he is going to be frustrated at times. All we can do is try to help alleviate these struggles. I have had meetings with daycare and know he will be safe, and they know a few signs to help get by but also knowing 2 months without full access is so hard. My takeaway is, we have got to get better funding and opportunities for summer programs for our kiddos that are deaf /hard of hearing for them to have access. We need to be able to work and provide access for our kids. We all want what is best for our kids as they grow but the struggles creep in when there is something they need, and no one has it.

Remember we all have some struggles but if we work together and reach out to others we may come up with ideas or just encouragement to just keep going, keep trying and do your best. After all the best you can do is your best no one can fault you for that. I leave you with my favorite inspirational quote, "Reach for the Moon, even if you miss, you'll land among the stars" -Les Brown



2022 EARLY INTERVENTION Vision & Hearing Conference



FREE

Conference for professionals working
with children who have hearing and/or
vision concerns and their families

WHEN:

June 23, 2022

WHERE:

IL State University Alumni Center
1101 N. Main Street
Normal, IL 61761

COMBINED TOPICS:

Drugs in the Home
Office Greg Lindemulder

Agency Updates
Limitless Grant
IL EHDI
IL Early Intervention

Parent Panel
Families share their stories

DSCC Today
Updates

HEARING TOPICS:

Audiology Now:
Lurie Children's Hospital

VISION TOPICS:

Assessments

QUESTIONS:

Andrea.marwah@illinois.gov

331-702-8944

HOTEL ROOM BLOCK:

**Courtyard Marriot
Bloomington/Normal**

\$109

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Must book by June 1

**Holiday Inn
Bloomington/Normal**

\$119

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Input dates, choose IL Hearing and Vision
Conference for rate

Must book by May 23

EI AND PD CREDIT:

*EI Credit applied for. ISBE PD Credit Approved.
Credit Information will be updated and available on the
EITP Website <https://eitp.education.illinois.edu/>.*

ADA ACCOMMODATIONS:

*ADA requests must be received at least 3 weeks prior to the event
date, the committee will do it's best to grant reasonable requests.*

REGISTRATION:

<https://forms.office.com/g/RWiK8PrK27>

Or scan QR code:





Get paid for your input!



We need Illinois parents of children who are deaf/hard of hearing to help review parent materials

Review meetings will be held in the evening and some work will be done on your own beforehand.

Only 5 participants needed, 3 hours a month, 3 consecutive month commitment.



Scan the QR code. It will take you to the google form with more information and to submit your name as a potential participant.

IS THIS FOR YOU?

This year, as part of the grant funding for Guide By Your Side, we have started a quality improvement (QI) project by establishing parent workgroups. Our first QI workgroup consisted of five parents, our GBYS program coordinator, and a parent guide. This group met monthly during the first quarter of the year. For each meeting, the parents were assigned documents used in the GBYS program to review and provide honest feedback on. We received great, thoughtful feedback on the documents, including everything from the design to the content to the links provided for additional information. Our second QI workgroup started meeting in April with new documents to review and will meet through the end of the quarter. Our goal for creating each parent group is for it to be made up of parents with a variety of diverse cultural, geographic, linguistic, etc. backgrounds as well as those with children of various ages and type/level of hearing differences.

We expect to continue this QI project and are looking for parents who are willing to participate. The monthly time commitment is 1.5 hours of material review and 1.5 hours on Zoom sharing feedback, and parents are paid for this time. Groups typically meet once a month for three months on Thursday evenings, but can shift based on the group members' common availability. If you are interested, please use the QR code above to apply:

Support for Teachers

Illinois is fortunate to have an organization, The Illinois Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ITDHH), that supports our children's teachers. The main purpose of ITDHH is to provide information and support to teachers and other organizations related to the field of Deafness. To better service our members, ITDHH is broken into twelve areas across the state. Each area has at least one area chairperson who is responsible for relaying information from executive board meetings to the general membership.

This organization hosts an annual conference to support teachers in this field. This year's conference was held in Springfield, IL with a hybrid option for those who were unable to attend in person. IL Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side was well represented. Three individuals presented at this year's conference. Our entire Parent Guide Team attended virtually and our chapter Executive Director, Chapter Vice President and Guide By Your Side Coordinator attended in person.

Our very own Executive Director, Andrea Marwah, along with Illinois past Early Intervention Bureau Chief, Ann Freiburg, were awarded with an EHDI Innovator Award. This award is intended to recognize individuals in the field who are making a difference within the EHDI goals of 1-3-6. Congratulations ladies!

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