



**Our Mission:**

Guide By Your Side provides unbiased, emotional support and resources by trained Parent Guides to families with children who have a hearing loss.

Through IL Hands & Voices fundraising, personal donations and funding through the Illinois Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program; Illinois Hands & Voices, Guide By Your Side is able to provide free services to families. Families can be referred to the program from providers or call directly to participate.

If you would like to refer a family, request brochures or make a donation please contact the GBYS Program Coordinator, Carrie Balian.

**Program Information:**

- 1 Program Coordinator
- 16 Parent Guides (PG)
  - Located throughout the state
  - Backgrounds vary in communication and amplification opportunities
  - Guides who are native Spanish speakers
  - Parent Guide who is Deaf

**Comparison of ages of children enrolled in GBYS from Apr – June vs. July – Sept 2020**

	<u>Apr - June</u>	<u>July-Sept.</u>
<b>Birth-1 year old</b>	72%	89%
<b>1-2 years old</b>	14%	4%
<b>2-3 years old</b>	0%	5%
<b>3-6 years old</b>	14%	2%
<b>6 years and older</b>	0%	0%

*During this pandemic many of us found ourselves managing situations and questions that we were unprepared for and with no prior experience. As we continue to move forward please note that we are here ready to serve families and help them navigate this unusual time. If you are looking for resources, please reach out.*

Did you ever have a hope or dream that seemed so far-fetched that it seemed as if it was really from the land of rainbows and unicorns? Over 10 years ago when we started IL Guide By Your Side (GBYS) our goal was to provide parent to parent support for families with children who were deaf and hard of hearing. We really didn't have the funding that we needed to support the program, but we believed that if we would build it, it would all fall in to place. How lucky were we that right before we officially kicked off the program the stars aligned and we were written into a contract that shared funding



Carrie Balian, Andrea Marwah and Ginger Mullin celebrate the new partnership.

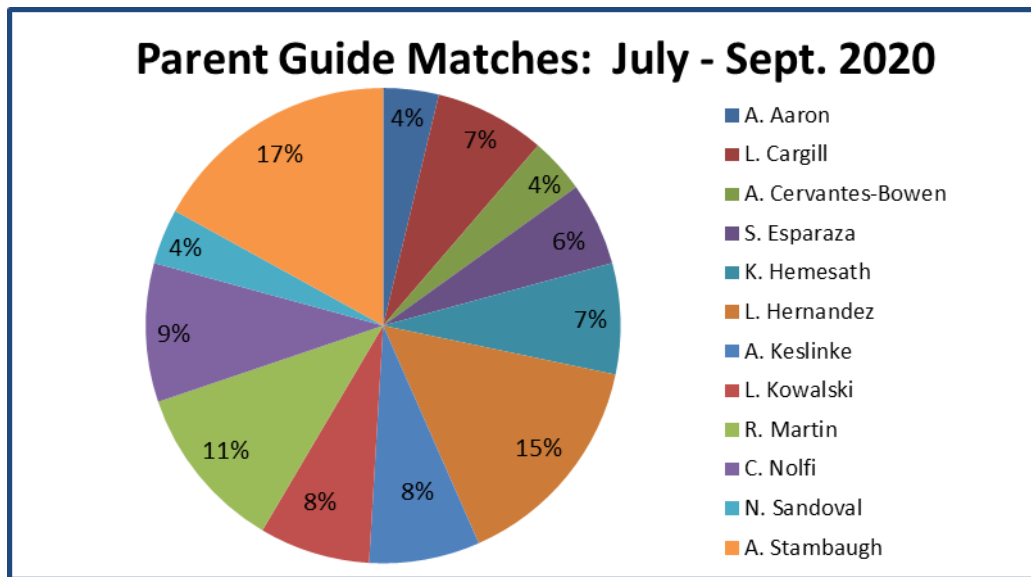
from a grant that our Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) program received! Over the years we continued to build the program and serve families but there was another rainbows & unicorns dream that we couldn't quite make happen — until this past spring. Till then, our GBYS program was an opt-in program, meaning that families would have to find us through providers, word of mouth or their own search and request to work with one of our Parent Guides. In March of this year, we signed a business agreement with our Public Health EHDI program allowing us to partner with them to provide parent to parent support to families with a child who was recently diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing. This agreement allows us to follow up with families and connect them with parent to parent support through one of our GBYS Parent Guides, help them navigate the services and providers available to them and also meet the goal that was set by the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) for EHDI programs to enroll newly diagnosed families in parent to parent support no later than 6 months of age. We are so excited to help families connect even earlier and that we are reaching even more families. Most importantly we are providing them all with unbiased support from another parent who understands the questions, needs and concerns of raising a child that is deaf or hard of hearing. It may take longer than you hope but, never give up on those rainbows & unicorn dreams!



### Quarter Reporting for: July 2020 – Sept. 2020

- 98 Families referred; 53 Families matched  
32 unable to reach;  
12 not interested;  
1 no hearing loss  
Families referred may opt out of participating or we may still be in the process of trying to reach them to enroll them within GBYS.
- Age of children enrolled in GBYS:
  - 89% Birth-1 year old
  - 4% 1-2 years old
  - 5% 2-3 years old
  - 2% 3-6 years old
  - 0% 6 years and older
- Primary Language in the home:
  - English – 41 families
  - Spanish – 5 families
  - Other – 2 families
  - Dual – 5 families

- Gender of children enrolled in GBYS:
  - 33 males and 20 females
- Medical History suggestive of:
  - Condition assoc. with a hearing loss, 22 children
  - No known syndrome or etiology - 28 children
  - Hereditary – 3 children
- Unilateral vs. Bilateral hearing loss:
  - Bilateral – 37 children
  - Unilateral – 14 children
  - Auditory Neuropathy – 2 children
- Amplification Status at time of enrollment in GBYS:
  - Has amplification – 25 families
  - No amplification at enrollment – 28 families
- EI Status at time of enrollment in GBYS:
  - Enrolled in EI – 20 families
  - Not enrolled in EI – 10 families
  - Pending enrollment – 23 families
 Pending enrollment refers to the family has had contact with EI and is working through the enrollment process.



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