



FOCUS

January 2023



Supporting families with children who are deaf, deafblind & hard of hearing

HANDS & VOICES™
MINNESOTA

Deaf Youth and Summer Programs: The Why

OVERVIEW

For many young adults, summer programs such as camp provide a respite from the humdrum of everyday life, a hiatus from the watchful eye of parents and teachers, and the opportunity to try something new and forge long-lasting friendships. At first glance, camp might appear to be all fun and games, but research has demonstrated that camps can have a positive impact on youth development outcomes related to independence, leadership, self-esteem, problem-solving, and feelings of empowerment. Summer camp can also provide opportunities to develop personal and professional relationships outside of the constraints of the school environment. This document provides a summary of why summer programs are important for all youth and specifically for deaf youth.

Why are Summer Programs Important?

Summer programs can contribute to a wide range of outcomes. As a result of attending summer camps and programs, youth are likely to demonstrate growth in three areas: youth development, academic development, and career development.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Youth camps have been found to strengthen self-esteem and self-confidence, especially for younger campers and economically disadvantaged youth.
- Youth with disabilities benefit from peer role modeling in summer camp environments, which can strengthen an understanding of their capacity.
- Summer camps can support the development of social skills and friendship skills.
- Camp experience can also contribute to the development of identity, values, and spirituality.

- Youth who attend summer camps demonstrate independence, self-reliance, adventure and exploration skills, and leadership skills.
- Youth demonstrate stronger environmental stewardship as a result of attending camp.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Summer programs can contribute to increased enrollment in college-track curricula, likelihood that youth will attend college, and motivation to complete college.
- Summer camps and learning programs can contribute to gains in reading achievement and reading enjoyment.
- Summer camps and learning programs can also contribute to gains in math achievement.
- Youth who attend summer camps may be more likely to attend college, stay in college, and use support services while in college.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Attitudes about career choices and thinking about a field of study can be positively affected through summer programming.
- Programs with an internship component can improve students' career decision-making skills.

Summer Programs for Deaf Youth

Summer programs and camps are unique educational opportunities that can play a prominent role in youth development and act as a catalyst for growth and skills development for all students.

Deaf Youth and Summer Programs: The Why continued on the next page.

Deaf Youth and Summer Programs: The Why continued from the front

Deaf youth summer camps are unique in that they bring together deaf students, many of whom are not in regular contact with other deaf students or adults. Research shows that youth with disabilities benefit from attending camps that are disability-specific because such camps reduce feelings of isolation and inadequacy. The opportunity to learn from and alongside other similarly disabled individuals can be a powerful experience for youth. The focus of summer programs for deaf youth include, for example, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) content, college and career readiness, language development and youth development. Many sources of anecdotal evidence, as well as a few research studies, show the positive impact of deaf youth summer camps.

Why Are Deaf Youth Summer Programs Important?

- Deaf summer programs can have a positive impact on youth social skills and social acceptance.
- Deaf camp environments where youth engage with deaf peers and staff members contribute to a better understanding of Deaf culture and the youth's identity.
- Younger deaf students' interaction with older deaf students at summer programs provides mentorship opportunities and benefits.
- Summer programs can contribute to improvements in language skills for deaf youth.

Summer programs and camps can make a strong contribution to youth, academic, and career development. For deaf youth, summer programs have the additional benefit of reducing isolation, strengthening social skills, and serving as an opportunity to connect with deaf peers and role models. A wide variety of deaf youth summer camps and programs exist across the country, though there may not be enough to meet the needs of all deaf youth. Given their potential to make a significant impact on the lives of deaf youth, summer programs are important and should be considered a strategy to support deaf youth as they prepare for life after high school.

Deaf Youth and Summer Programs: The Why and the How taken in part from © 2019 National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes Deaf Youth and Summer Programs licensed under Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 International. View the article and references at <https://nationaldeafcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Deaf-Youth-and-Summer-Programs-The-Why-and-How.pdf>

What is "Fostering Joy"?

Fostering Joy is a family/professional effort celebrating the joy of raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Fostering Joy provides support and resources for families and professionals to positively help the growth and development of a child who is DHH. Loving and supportive families provide a strong base for social and emotional health and well-being. Focusing on special moments that bring joy helps families put aside concerns and focus on their natural and loving parent-child connections.

Why Fostering Joy?

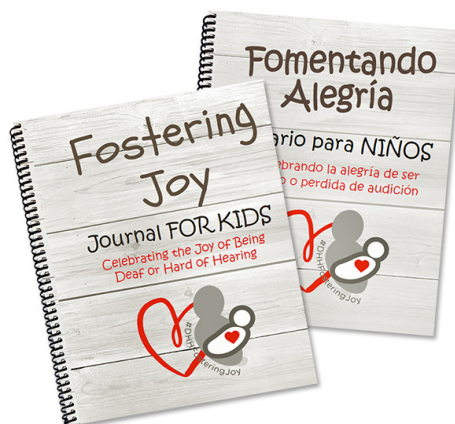
Because we know what it means to be the family of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. You may be overwhelmed, feel alone, worry about your child's communication and what you need to do next. AND as parents, we know how important it is to just celebrate your child! To see all the many gifts your child brings, to take time to enjoy each other, and to share your joy with others that understand. THAT is what we mean by Fostering Joy!

How Can I Foster Joy?

Connecting with other families to celebrate the joys of raising our amazing kids is a great place to start! Join our Joy Community of Families on Facebook!

The Hands & Voices Fostering Joy Journals are available in both English and Spanish and were created for parents and caregivers to help aid families in focusing on the strengths and gifts of their DHH child. An additional feature of the journal are the whimsical drawings by a young artist who is DHH.

This Journal is designed for kids who are DHH to journal about their joys and accomplishments with a grown-up, the journal is a place where kids can capture all the great things they have done, to celebrate how special they are, and to share with their families that their story is so much more than their hearing difference. Check out all of the Fostering Joy Journals by using the QR Code here;



MN DeafBlind Project

Hello! My name is Brandy Johanson Sebera and I am the family engagement coordinator with the Minnesota DeafBlind Project (MNDBP). I live in the Mankato area with my partner and our four children, ages 12, 10, 8, and 4. As a family, we love to bake together, getting some of our inspiration from the Great British Baking Show!

I have worked in the field of serving individuals with disabilities for more than 20 years. I began working in group homes and went on to become a special education teacher. I taught students who had multiple and complex needs in the St. Cloud area. I was fortunate to attend Intervener Training with the MNDBP during the 2017-2018 school year, and it changed the trajectory of my career. I consider myself a lifelong learner, so I am continuing to take courses and trainings in visual impairments, cortical visual impairments and understanding hearing differences. Also, I am slowly learning American Sign Language.

Having a combined vision and hearing loss is a unique disability that presents unique challenges. The Minnesota DeafBlind Project provides support and resources for both families and school teams for children from birth to age 21. The MNDBP offers parents one-to-one support. We also provide information, resources and training on various topics for families. Information is dispersed through a variety of platforms including email, social media and electronic newsletters.

IN YOUR CORNER

with Brandy Johanson Sebera

“Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.”
Helen Keller.



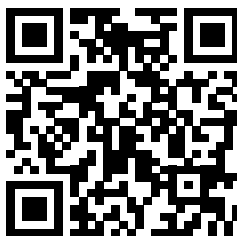
Beginning in January 2023, we will host a virtual monthly Family Learning Community, during which families who have deafblind children can come together to connect with other families and learn about topics of interest to them, such as communication development, interveners and adapted literacy. Additionally, the Minnesota DeafBlind Project hosts family events to provide opportunities for families and children to meet others with deafblindness in Minnesota. Those events include the annual Family & Intervener Appreciation

Picnic (the first Saturday of June), a mom’s weekend (stay tuned for more details coming soon), a winter party, bowling and more. These resources and events are free for families who have deafblind children. I am thrilled to be in this role with the Minnesota DeafBlind Project to continue supporting families in their journeys. I strive to meet families where they are and provide targeted support and resources for their unique needs.


If you have questions or would like to connect with me, feel free to reach out.

Brandy Johanson Sebera

Family Engagement Coordinator
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..... CONTACT

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DEAF EXPERIENCE

with Rosa Cruz

Advocating for my Children's Education

Hello, my name is Rosa Cruz. My family is made up of my husband Severino López and my six children: Erica, Karley, Bryan, Jennifer, Rosey and Alexander López Cruz.

Our last two children were born with microtia, in which the ear and ear canal do not finish developing. Because of this, they were born with a hearing difference called a conductive hearing difference. They both wear Bone Anchored Hearing Aides (BAHA), which help them hear better.

When my first child with hearing loss was born, it was very hard for me and the entire family. I remember when they gave us the news, my mind went blank. It was as if the light had been turned off. Yes, that's how I felt for me. It took a long time for me to process everything and

accept that life or God had sent me a challenge.

After a while I thought; do I feel sad when look at my daughter all my life, or do I do something to help her? I started searching the internet to educate myself so that I would have the necessary information instead of just waiting for the doctors to give me all the answers.

I share my experience from the bottom of my heart, hoping that my story will help other moms and families going through a similar situation. It is very important that as parents we inform ourselves and educate ourselves to better help our children. There are many organizations willing to help us with information, resources and connections to other families. It is important not to settle for one opinion from the medical or educational staff.

Now that my children are in school, I feel prepared to advocate for them to get the help and support they need. Culturally speaking, it can be intimidating and challenging, but we as parents have the right to decide what is best for our children. Professionals such as teachers, doctors and therapists are there to help and guide us, not to make decisions for our kids. Information gives you power, and in this case, the power to better help our children.

Let's always advocate for our little ones.

Take a look at Rosa and her family in the photograph on the next page within the Latino Cultures column.

2023 DEAF CAMPS

There are online and in-person camps available. Registration information is listed with each camp.

JUNE

Camp Onomia – Deaf and Hard of Hearing Family Camp (Onomia, MN)
mndhhffc@gmail.com
camponomia.campbrainregistration.com
Text:507.384.7575

Camp UBU (Sioux Falls, SD)
campubu@gmail.com

“Summer Youth Webinars”
Camp Catch Them Young
www.gallaudet.edu

Pathways to Life Summer Transition Program (Online)
msa.state.mn.us/1/content2/summer-transition-program
Gallaudet University

JULY

Camp Sertoma (Brainerd, MN)
greatplainscampsertoma@gmail.com
campsertoma.com

AUGUST

PACER's EX.I.T.E. Camp (Online)
(Exploring interests in Technology and Engineering)
www.pacer.org/students/exile.asp

Kids on Campus rit.edu/k12
Rochester Institute of Technology

Minnesota Conservation Corps hires 15-18-year-old deaf and hard of hearing youth from all over the United States to do environmental work in state and national parks.
conservationcorps.org
651.209.9900

¿Abogando por la Educación de mis hijos?

LATINO CULTURES

with Rosa Cruz

Hola mi nombre es Rosa Cruz mi familia está compuesta por mi esposo Severino López y mis 6 hijos 4 mujeres y 2 niños Erica, Karley, Bryan, Jennifer, Rosey, Alexander López Cruz.

Nuestros dos últimos hijos, una niña y un niño nacieron con microtia que es cuando no se les termina de desarrollar la oreja y el canal auditivo por lo tanto nacieron con pérdida de audición. Se llama conducted bone hearing loss. Ellos usan aparatos auditivos llamados BAHA conducted bone hearing aids lo que les ayuda a escuchar mejor.



¡Cuando nació la primera niña con pérdida auditiva fue muy fuerte para mí y toda la familia recuerdo que cuando nos dieron la noticia me quede en silencio mi mente quedo en blanco, como si hubieran apagado la Luz, si! Así sentí. Paso mucho tiempo para que pudiera asimilar todo y aceptar que la vida o Dios me había mandado, un reto maravilloso.

Después de un tiempo pensé “¿me quedo triste sentada y mirando a mi hija toda la vida? o ¿hago algo para ayudarla?” entonces me puse a buscar en internet para informarme o educarme para así tener la información necesaria y no solo esperar que los doctores me informaran o dieran todas las respuestas.

Les comparto mi experiencia desde el fondo de mi corazón, esperando que mi historia ayude a otras Mamas o familias que pasan por una situación similar. Es muy importante que como padres nos informemos y nos eduquemos para ayudar mejor a nuestros hijos. Hay muchas

organizaciones dispuestas a ayudarnos con información, recursos y conexiones con otras familias. Es importante no quedarse con una sola opinión en el sentido médico o educativo.

Ahora que mis niños están en la escuela yo me siento mejor preparada para abogar por ellos para que les den la ayuda y el soporte que necesitan. Yo veo que culturalmente hablando puede ser intimidante y retador, pero nosotros como padres tenemos el derecho de decidir lo mejor para nuestros niños, los profesionales (maestros, doctores, terapeutas, etc.) están para ayudarnos y orientarnos, no para tomar decisiones por nuestros niños. “La información te da poder” ...y este caso el poder de ayudar mejor a nuestros hijos.

Aboguemos por nuestros pequeños siempre.



I have been living in Minnesota for almost five years. When I first moved here, I was unsure how I would make friends, because I was in a whole new environment. During the first year, I was working two jobs that were employing deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) individuals. Minnesota Hands and Voices was one of those jobs.



Through these two jobs, I was able to engage more with DHH individuals and even make friends with hearing individuals, who would learn American Sign Language (ASL) along the way.

By being involved with social media and having coworker with connections to DHH individuals, I was able to find out about all the upcoming events that were happening in the cities. One summer, I read about an ASL canoeing day with Wilderness Inquiry, which I decided to attend.

I met up with a lot of DHH individuals and became friends with a few of them.

The individuals I met at the ASL canoe day created a group chat on Facebook and would add new friends who wanted to get together and do activities. What was awesome about that group chat was how diverse it was - many were deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, and hearing. We would communicate via ASL. I have also started to attend ASL climbing at Minneapolis Bouldering Project, which has individuals that are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf blind, hearing but know ASL, and hearing individuals who want to learn ASL.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Eventbrite, TikTok, Instagram, and are great ways to network and to make connections.

Minnesota Hands and Voices is also a great way to make connections when there are events for deaf and hard of hearing families occurring. Their social media pages will always present all events and activities that are happening throughout the state of Minnesota.

Sophia has a profound hearing loss on her right ear and a severe hearing loss on her left. She identifies herself as deaf. Sophia uses spoken English and ASL.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Guide program focuses exclusively on the needs of families and their children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH). A diverse group of DHH adults with a wide range of experiences related to individual hearing levels and all who use different modes of communication and may or may not use technology. Families can meet positive role models who share their own experiences growing up. Learn more about the DHH Guide Program by using this QR Code, or contact:

Heidy Nazario
DHH Guide Supervisor
Phone: 612.297.6603 (TEXT ONLY)
Email: heidy.nazario@lssmn.org



• Dia de Los Muertos •



•• PBL Trunk or Treat ••



•• Let it Snow ••



•• Book Club ••



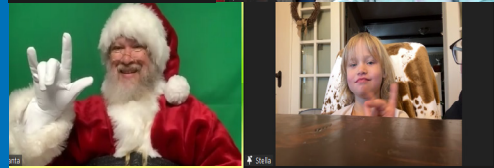
Find a current list of MNH&V Family Events online, for more information and to registration scan QR Code below



MNH&V EVENTS

STATEWIDE

•• Cocoa w/Santa ••



•••• EVENTS ••••

IN-PERSON

- Dia de Los Muertos Saint Paul
- Trunk or Treat Brainerd
- Let it Snow Around the Globe Saint Paul

ONLINE

- Book Club - The Words in my Hands
 - HO! HO! HO! Cocoa with Santa
- THANK YOU for helping make these events possible! Paul Bunyan Land, Brainerd ASL 'PAH' Club at Central Lakes College, Brainerd High School ASL Club and Deaf Santa



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MINNESOTA

709 University Avenue West
Saint Paul, MN 55104

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NEWSLETTER



of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota

FOCUS | Supporting families with children who are deaf, deafblind & hard of hearing

January 2023



Q & A
DROP-IN SESSIONS
Advocating for your DHH Child/Students



Save the dates!

Sep 12	Dec 5
Oct 3	Jan 9
Nov 7	Feb 6

INDIANA HANDS & VOICES

HANDS & VOICES™ MICHIGAN

HANDS & VOICES™ MINNESOTA

Hands & Voices **ASTra™** Advocates will answer your questions.

8pm - 9pm EST

7pm - 8pm CST

For Spanish language, contact astra@inhv.org



For more information contact ASTra Coordinator Shannon Hohrman at shannon.hohrman@lssmn.org or 218.205.2165