

FOCUS



**HANDS &
VOICES™
MINNESOTA**

Supporting families with children
who are deaf & hard of hearing



Stronger Together in Minnesota by Anne Barlow & Bridget Walde

After years in development, the successful partnership between the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) program and Minnesota Hands & Voices (MNH&V) continues to produce changemaking efforts for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). It is a strong and collaborative partnership that has supported and benefitted many Minnesotans.

In 2007, Minnesota state statute 144.966 was passed, which authorized the Minnesota EHDI program. Part of this statute stated that family support services must be provided to families with children who are DHH; especially through a contract with a nonprofit organization to provide support, unbiased information on communication, educational, and medical options, and assistance to families. MNH&V is the family support grantee in Minnesota, and the EHDI program has been making direct referrals to us for more than ten years. When an infant or child up to age 11 is identified through audiology as DHH in Minnesota, EHDI uses a secure data sharing system to directly refer families to MNH&V. From there, a Guide by Your Side™ parent at MNH&V reaches out to the family, connects with them, and provides information back to EHDI through the same secure data sharing system.

Audiologists are encouraged to make direct referrals to MNH&V after identifying a child as DHH, as this is the fastest way to connect a family to parent support. While some families are referred through multiple sources (self-referral, schools or hospitals/clinics), about 60% of referrals come directly from MDH. Family support is an important aspect of how families of children who are DHH feel supported. Without the direct connection between MDH EHDI and MNH&V, these referrals would be missed. MNH&V averages a rate of 89% in connecting with families at least once.

Families are matched with a local Parent Guide during that first connection, and receive ongoing "passive" support, such as regular e-newsletters, quarterly printed newsletters, social media groups, and access to specific information for their child's journey. We currently provide most of our direct outreach in the first few years after identification and referral. After the first three years of being enrolled, it is up to families to

reach back to us if they want information, resources or support.

The collaborative relationship between EHDI and MNH&V provides not only funding and structure, but also support and opportunities to participate in work groups and other endeavors that improve services for families.

A recent example of collaboration between EHDI and MNH&V was their participation in a learning community of seven entities from across the U.S. and its territories that endeavored to improve surveys of family outcomes. The learning community was facilitated by the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) and national Hands & Voices. Members from both MDH and MNH&V participated, and the result was a bank of questions that any family-based organization can use to assess family outcomes in the realms of knowledge, empowerment and well-being. MNH&V is committed to using this information as a quality improvement measure to update our family surveys so they assess not only family satisfaction but also our impact on family outcomes in these categories.



Evolving Efforts in Family Support

Another collaborative endeavor related to outcomes is an assessment regarding our framework for outreach. EHDI is working with MNH&V to construct a framework for conversations that parent guides will have at each of four transition points.

Stronger Together in Minnesota continued on to the next page.

Stronger Together in Minnesota continued from the front page.

This is based on MNH&V's work groups that identified topics that are most likely to be of interest at each point.

Our intention is to contact families at these four key transition points throughout their child's development and make sure they have access to the information and resources that will help them make decisions as their child grows and changes.

While we anticipate that parent guides will still provide the majority of information and outreach in the initial years from birth to age 5, we will also reach out to families roughly every five years to check in and see how they are doing and offer to send information that is relevant to their current situation. We have heard from many families that the amount of information they received at the very beginning was overwhelming. Our goal is to make sure they have continued support, feel connected and have a sense of community not only at the onset but throughout their journey as parents of a child who is DHH.

One of our services that can have a powerful impact on families is our DHH Guide program. By reaching out to families at specific transition points, we offer a connection to DHH adults when new questions or situations might arise. Being able to talk to an adult role model who uses similar technology or language modality can give insights that help inform decision making, as well as help foster a sense of belonging and connection.

Our DHH Guide program has developed a new framework for facilitating guided conversations with children and families that use "The Hero Within" superpower character traits trading cards. These trading cards were developed by MNH&V seven years ago and have been used across the state.

Another service that may be useful in various ways at different times is the Hands & Voices educational Advocacy Support and Training (ASTra) program. By reaching out at transition times, we can make sure that our trained ASTra advocates are available to support families as their child advances through school and on to adulthood.

Both the DHH Guide and ASTra programs are either relatively recent additions to our mission or have seen evolution and improvement in recent years. By reconnecting with families over time, we have the opportunity to share new resources with them as well as information that we have improved upon — all of which have the potential to help families be empowered to create better outcomes for and with their child. Our state's community of family support sees constant change and improvement as well, and shifting our outreach will help us share not only our own evolved resources, but those throughout the state.

EHDI embraces and encourages innovation and evolution. They provide time, space and resources for MNH&V to grow and improve. Our collaborative relationship is key to our success.

Anne Barlow, Director MNH&V and Bridget Walde, MPH

MN Hands & Voices High Five Awards Recipients

Congratulations to this year's MNH&V High Five award recipients. They were all nominated with submissions of 200 words or less by parents or care providers of children who are DHH. The submissions were then reviewed by our team and selected by the MNH&V Advisory Board. The High Five award was created as a way for parents to publicly recognize individuals who have gone above and beyond on behalf of children who are DHH. Past recipients represent a diverse group of parents, teachers, students, interpreters, providers, advocates, volunteers, and role models.

One of our 2023 recipients was Jennifer Duncan. She was nominated by Tony and Eileen Kamp. Jennifer is a teacher of deaf and hard of hearing students within Edina schools. She has helped many families build DHH connections and understanding of Deaf culture. Her impact is exponentially greater due to what she has done for others in the DHH community due to those special connections to people with similar challenges.

Another 2023 High Five award recipient was Meghan Morrow. She was nominated by Jodi Tervo Roberts. Meghan is a former ASL interpreter and the founder and lead teacher at the Secret Forest Playschool in Duluth, Minnesota. She is praised for her efforts to make inclusion simple for preschoolers who are deaf and hard of hearing.



Left to right: Picture: Tony Kamp, Wyatt Kamp (red shirt). Jennifer Duncan, Eileen Kamp and Savannah Kamp.



Left to right: Allsion Pank Meghan Morrow presented with the High Five Award by NE Parent Guide Marie Pank.

Therapeutic Services' Program

Hello! My name is Lori Vigesaa, and I am the clinical supervisor for the Therapeutic Services Agency (TSA) Deaf/Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind (DHHDB) Mental Health Program. I am a native Minnesotan, proud Coda, and have a wonderful husband that I have been married to for 23 years. We have four children and three grandchildren that we adore! In my spare time I enjoy traveling, reading and spending time with my family. Therapeutic Services' mental health program provides culturally affirmative mental health services to children (birth to 22 years) and their families that are experiencing difficulties due to emotional and/or behavioral struggles. These services include varying therapeutic and rehabilitative levels of intervention and combine psychotherapy(individual, family, group) with skills training (individual, family, group) to help strengthen the emotional, behavioral and social functioning of the children and families we serve.

The therapists in this program have a broad range of understanding related to the mental health challenges and needs of children who have mild to profound hearing loss. They understand how these needs influence behavior, school performance, family life and social relationships. They are well-versed in addressing communication needs and language barriers, and all our therapists are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and are familiar with Deaf culture.

IN YOUR CORNER

with Lori Vigesaa

“The handicap of deafness is not in the ear; it is in the mind.”

Marlee Matlin



Left to right: Lori Vigesaa with husband Pete Billodeau

TSA is a community provider; therapists meet with children and families in their schools, communities, homes, and our office locations (Mankato, Moorhead and Coon Rapids). In some situations, the use of telemedicine may be available. Therapists also provide presentations and consultation on various topics surrounding mental health, interventions, our services and issues impacting DHHDB children to a variety of stakeholders and groups. Our therapists have presented these topics in their regions and at the state and national levels.

Currently, we are working on developing parent support programing that will meet virtually starting this fall. Stay tuned! If you have any questions or would like to connect with me, call 218.343.8792 or email lvigesaa@tsapc.net.

Lori Vigesaa MS, LPCC, NCC, CI/CT Clinical Supervisor/Mental Health Professional Website: visit hoperealized.com to find printable referral forms. Referrals: call 320.629.7600 or email info@tsapc.net to ask for the intake forms.



For more information on TSA, use the QR code.

CONTACT

- 651.265.2435
- mnhv@lssmn.org
- mnhandandvoices.org
- @MNHandsandVoic-
- @mnhandsand-

DEAF EXPERIENCE

with Allison Pank

Gallaudet University is located in Washington D.C. and was federally chartered in 1864. It is a bilingual, diverse and multicultural institution of higher education that ensures the intellectual and professional advancement of deaf and hard of hearing individuals through ASL and English. Gallaudet maintains a proud tradition of research and scholarly activity and prepares its graduates for career opportunities in a highly competitive, technological and rapidly changing world.

Immerse into ASL

Gallaudet University offers youth programs from summer camps to competitions during the school year. The programs and competitions are open to students in grades 2-12 and support children and youth in developing their identity, knowledge, leadership and self-confidence. They also help young people develop skills and challenge themselves while forming relationships with their peers. Gallaudet's youth summer camps allow middle and high school students to experience stimulating learning and activities in an ASL/English environment, just minutes from the U.S. Capitol.

Immerse into ASL is a 24/7 ASL immersion camp designed for new signers who are at the beginner or intermediate level. Two different course levels are offered, ensuring that each camper receives instruction appropriate to their skill level. In addition to experiencing Deaf culture and history, campers have the opportunity to explore Washington D.C., attend social events, and take several field trips to explore attractions including the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, the Smithsonian, the Holocaust Museum, Union Station, Six Flags and many others.

Allison Pank is a senior in high school in northeastern Minnesota and attended the Immerse into ASL youth summer camp offered by Gallaudet University in June. Allison uses listening and spoken language as well as ASL and has bilateral cochlear implants (CI). She is the daughter of Bill and Marie Pank. MNH&V asked Allison several questions about her experience while attending the Immerse into ASL youth camp.

Q: Why did you want to go to the camp?

A: Because I had been thinking about Gallaudet for a while,

and this was my last summer to go to one. I attended one from them virtually, but this one was much better. It was more engaging to be in person, in my opinion.

Q: What was your favorite thing about the camp?

A: The access to language. I could communicate with the other kids, and I could take off my CIs and still not have to worry about missing information.

Q: What is something funny that happened during camp?

A: One thing that was funny that happened during camp was when I was signing during a meal. I knocked over my cup and thankfully it was empty! During the camp we watched a video of things Deaf people do that hearing people don't typically do and the same accident was on there.



Pictured left to right in front of the Gallaudet University sign is Kealey Pank, Allison Pank and Marie Pank.

Q: What kinds of activities did you do there?

A: There were three camps going on at the same time, Immerse into ASL, Gen-Cyber, and Career and College. We all ate meals together and did some of the bigger things together, like going to the Smithsonian Museum and visiting the national mall. After breakfast, some days we would split up into our camps and do some ASL, Deaf history, and Deaf culture classes.

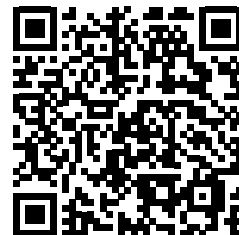
Q: Was anything about the camp challenging?

A: Not knowing what to expect was challenging. This was all new to me.

Q: What advice would you give a student who is considering going to the camp?

A: Gather information about the camps they offer and pick the best fit for you. It was a good opportunity for me, and I was sad when it ended.

For more information on the Gallaudet Youth Programs, use the QR code.



Las Alegrías de Criar A Niños Sordos O Hipoacúsicos

Consejos para la Familia

Fostering Joy es un esfuerzo familiar/profesional que celebra la alegría de criar a un hijo(a) sordo o Hipoacúsico (D/HH). Fostering Joy proporciona recursos para familias y profesionales para apoyar el crecimiento y el desarrollo de un niño(a) que es D/HH.

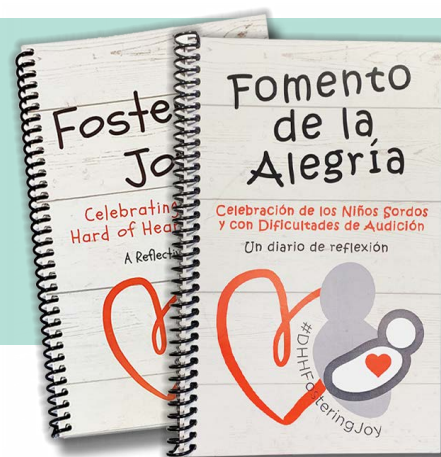
Familias amorosas y que brindan apoyo proporcionan una base sólida para la salud y el bienestar social y emocional. Enfocarse en momentos especiales que traen alegría ayuda a familias a dejar de lado preocupaciones y centrarse en conexiones positivas entre padres e hijos.

Tomar breves descansos de las tensiones de la vida diaria ayuda a familias a explorar y apreciar momentos alegres que vienen con la crianza de sus hijos. Aquí están algunos consejos, ofrecidos por familias, para encontrar alegría todos los días - tomarse tiempo para celebrar logros, conectarse con sus hijos y dejar que la luz de su amor brille

LATINO CULTURES

with H & V

Fomento de la Alegría



Consejos

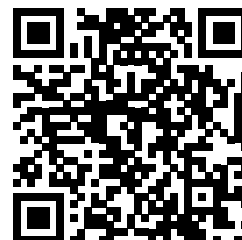
- Encuentre algo por lo que estar agradecido todos los días.
- Tómese unos minutos cada día para respirar profundamente, disfrutar de una risa y acurrucarse con su hijo(a).
- Ver el mundo a través de los ojos de su hijo(a) - note la maravilla, la emoción, y el amor!
- Comparta algo con su hijo(a) que le hizo sonreír, que se sintió como un éxito y renovó su esperanza.
- Buscar el equilibrio y despejar su mente: Juntos pueden dar un paseo por la naturaleza, hacer "yoga de bebé", o leer un libro divertido.
- Conecte una cita o sesión de terapia con un regalo o aventura.
- Confiar en que hacer espacio para fomentar alegría conducirá a un mayor aprendizaje y conexiones más profundas entre usted y su hijo(a).
- Documente el viaje de su familia juntos a través de imágenes, videos, redes sociales o diarios. (¡Unas pocas frases serán suficientes!)
- Tómese tiempo regularmente para revisar la historia de su hijo(a) y su familia y así poder reflexionar sobre lo lejos que han llegado.
- Dejar de lado su lista de "cosas que hacer" y haga algo que le gustaría a su hijo(a): Den un paseo, soplen burbujas, cocinen juntos, jueguen peek-a-boo, bailen.
- ¡Apreciarse a si mismo y todo lo que está haciendo para apoyar y defender a su hijo!

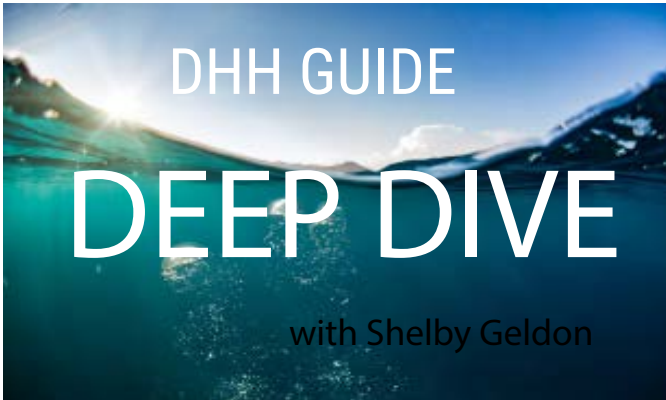
Actualizado 7/11/2020

Traducción al idioma español por: Griselle Ramirez



Para obtener más información sobre cómo fomentar la alegría, utilice el código QR a continuación.





they will show me the question so I can read it and write the answers. I remind my family to face me when they are talking to me so I can hear them better. I also like to bring along a deck of cards to play with a family member one-to-one, making it easier to communicate. If there is music playing or a TV is on, I tell them to turn it down because it makes conversations hard to hear. Above all, I am thankful for the patience my family and I have for each other. My siblings are learning ASL and how to communicate with me more, and I am working on communicating my needs better to participate in our family gatherings.

When attending family get-togethers, I look forward to seeing my family, but I feel nervous navigating large group conversations. To prepare for family gatherings, I find out who will be there by asking another family member to text me a list of names. Sometimes I forget people's names so having a list helps me remember and feel more comfortable knowing who is who.

“Meet positive role models who share their own experiences about growing up.”

During the holidays or any family gathering, I bring my FM system and make sure to charge my phone so I can use my speech-to-text application. When sitting together, I like to sit with someone who I enjoy talking to one-to-one. When my family is all talking together it can be difficult to follow the conversation. I prefer to talk with one person using my FM system so I will focus on talking to people near me. If we are having dinner as a family, I will sit near my siblings, and they will repeat what was said.

I love playing games with my family. It helps me feel really connected to them without needing to hear the conversation. If it is a trivia-type game where they need to read and say the answers,



Pictured above is DHH Guide Shelby Geldon.

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



.. Childrens Museum ..



.. Let's Go to the Zoo! ..



... Ice Cream Social ...



... Somali Family ...



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



MNH&V EVENTS

STATEWIDE



Metro Picnic



EVENTS

IN-PERSON

- Wilderness Inquiry - Itasca State Park
- Somali Family St Paul
- Ice Cream Social Moorhead
- Metro Picnic St Paul

ONLINE

- Q&A Drop-in Session
- THANK YOU for helping make these events possible!
DHS, FM Sertoma Club, Minnesota Humanities Center, DQ, Premium Water, MN Superheroes United



HANDS & VOICES™ MINNESOTA

709 University Avenue West
Saint Paul, MN 55104

FOCUS

NEWSLETTER



Hands and Voices Minnesota
is a program of
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

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

October 2023

Save the Date!

- September 11
- October 9
- November 6
- December 4
- 2023 -

Use the QR code below to register for the next Q & A Drop In Session



Online Sessions

- 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM CST
- 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM EST



Hands & Voices AStra™ Advocates will answer your Questions.

An on-line Zoom event where parents are encouraged to sign up to chat about their educational questions for their DHH kids with AStra Advocates from Region 5.

AStra: Advocacy Support & Trainings

