



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™

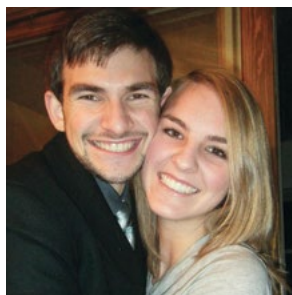
FOCUS

Supporting families with children who are deaf & hard of hearing

Hats Off to Siblings of Children Who are DHH

Thank you to all the siblings of children who are deaf or hard of hearing (dhh) for spontaneously interpreting the answer to questions before they are asked like, "Why is everyone laughing?" And thank you, dear siblings, for all the things you do both big and small; for example being

a continuous source of waiting room entertainment, for offering understanding to what may be an early language



Justin and Molly

attempt, or for all the times you role-modeled appropriate behavior with over 50 percent consistency. For all the times siblings have lent a helping hand or provided comic relief to their overwhelmed parents, we sincerely thank you. Hats off to all siblings, whether you are older, younger, hearing, or are yourself dhh, you definitely have an important role in your families' lives.

Parents can take comfort in the positive results found in studies about siblings of children who are dhh. Siblings of children who are dhh can exhibit many

positive traits, such as a greater level of maturity, empathy, patience, flexibility, and tolerance for differences found in other people. Also, studies show siblings who are helpful to their parents and their brother or sister who is dhh have a great sense of pride. (Atkins, 1987).

"Siblings are the people we practice on, the people who teach us about fairness and cooperation and kindness and caring, quite often the hard way."

— Pamela Dugdale

"Having a sibling who is deaf means that I need to step up to the plate, not only as a sister, but as a means of information and language for my younger brother," explained Anna, an older sister.

The ability for a sibling who is hearing to adapt to a brother or sister who is dhh depends greatly on their

parents' overall attitude, availability, and understanding of the issues involved in raising a child who is dhh. (Cicirelli, 1995; Dyson et al., 1989; Kramer & Bank, 2005; Stoneman & Berman, 1993). If parents are overly protective or preoccupied with their child who is dhh it can have a negative affect on the relationships they



Carina and Jedidiah

Hats Off to Siblings, continued on page 3



The High Five Award is an opportunity for Parents to publicly thank those who do more than expected on behalf of children who are deaf or hard of hearing (dhh).

Parents are invited to nominate another parent, teacher, interpreter, medical provider, community advocate, role model who is dhh, child who is dhh—anyone who inspires your family!

Now through July 1st, MNH&V is accepting one nomination per family from parents. Details on how parents can submit a nomination found on page 2, MNH&V High Five Award.

ASL Summer Classes

Offered by Lifetrack's Deaf Mentor Family Program

Lifetrack's Deaf Mentor Family Program (DMFP) is offering American Sign Language (ASL) classes this summer to any families with a child who is dhh. Beginner and Advance Level ASL classes available online or onsite at Lifetrack, 709 University Ave. W., St. Paul, MN.

Registration is limited. Nine classes each level, cost is \$75 per family of 4, an additional \$5 for each added person.

Beginner Level

On Tuesdays from 5:30 to 7:00 pm
May 30, June 6, 13, 20, 27, July 11, 18, 25, and August 1

Advance Level

On Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:00 pm
May 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28, July 12, 19, 26, and August 2

Contact Danelle Gournaris, by email at DMFP@lifetrack-mn.org
To register or for more information go to www.lifebalancesolutions.org/aslclasses

Registration is Now Open!

Camp Chi-Cue-Go 2017

Camp Chi-Cue-Go, July 20-22, 2017, held at the Illinois School for the Deaf in Jacksonville, IL. Offering a weekend of Cued Speech workshops for all skill levels, speakers, and activities. ASL interpreters and Cued Speech transliterators on hand to ensure communication access for all.

Children and Teen classes offered. Childcare available for children younger than age 3.

For more information go to <http://www.agbms.org/camp-chi-cue-go-2017.html>

MNH&V EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Parent Guide for the Cultural Spanish-Speaking Community

MNH&V is looking for a Parent Guide to continue to serve families in our Spanish-Speaking Community. Candidates should be fluent in Spanish, from the community Latino themselves, and eager to support other parents with a child who is deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. The program for the Spanish-Speaking Community is established, but in need of an individual to continue to provide emotional support, unbiased information, referral resources, and connect parents to other parents.

The Parent Guide for the MNH&V Spanish-speaking Community is responsible for organizing events, sustaining, and reporting activities related to these events. This person represents MNH&V in the community and participates in family support activities. The work schedule is flexible and 10 hours a week.

For a full outline of duties and application go to: www.lifetrack-mn.org/about/careers/parent-guide-10-hours-week

Thanks for your contribution!

We rely on your generous support to build better lives for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Make a tax-deductible donation today.

DONATE

Continued from page 1, MNH&V High Five Award

To submit a nomination for the MNH&V High Five Award we ask parents to reply to the questions below in 200 words or less by July 1, 2017.

- 1) What has the nominee done above and beyond what is typical for their role or profession?
- 2) How has this individual made an impact on your child and/or the community? Please include at least one specific example of their service.

Email your nomination to mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org and include in the subject line "High Five Award".

To assist our Advisory Board when choosing recipients, we ask for only one nomination per family per year.

MNH&V staff will compile and forward the submissions to our Advisory Board who will select one or more winners to be announced at the metro MNH&V Family Picnic on August 3th, 2017. If a nominee and/or family nominating is from outside the Metro area and therefore not attending the picnic, recognition will take place in that community if they are selected.

Hats Off to Siblings, continued from page 1

have with their other children. Harmony between siblings is possible when parents are able to set fair boundaries, allow honest sharing of feelings, and encourage their children to ask as many questions as they need about their sibling's experience.

"As a selfish teen I felt it was a lot of work to include my brother in conversations and help him learn language. While first learning language meant he would sometimes make a series of shrieks and outbursts, I sometimes felt embarrassed," admitted brother, 8 years older than his sibling. "However, as an adult I now realize how important my role was back then in helping him learn language."

Surprisingly, very little research has been done on the effects of growing up with a sibling who is dhh on those with typical hearing. However, researchers offer the following list of questions families can use as a guide:

- Is the parent's attention often diverted to the needs of the child who is dhh?
- Are siblings who are typically hearing struggling to get a word in, because all communication is geared towards the child who is dhh?
- Is the responsibility for "helping" placed too early or too often on the shoulders of the child with typical hearing?
- Are siblings needing to take on the role of "protector" for their brother or sister at school or around the neighborhood?
- Are there enough opportunities for siblings with typical hearing to just be themselves rather than the brother or sister of a child who is dhh?

For this tribute to siblings article a questionnaire went out to area young

adults who are siblings in families from our MNH&V community. They are either a brother or sister who is older or younger than their sibling who is dhh. Unfortunately, there is not enough room in this newsletter to include all of the heart-felt, thoughtful, and respectful replies. Many of their responses were surprisingly similar.

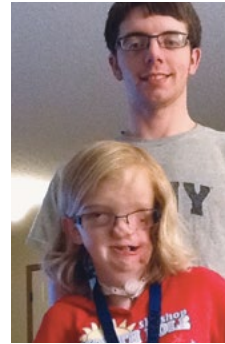
For the most part, their experiences of growing up with a sibling who is dhh was not defined as unique or different from other families they knew. One reoccurring theme was their sibling was just their sibling and they could not imagine a life without them.

"I was too young to notice a difference in having a brother who is deaf. I did get use to throwing small soft objects at him to get his attention, especially in the mornings and at night when his hear gear was off. He was just like my other brother, only he couldn't hear," said James who is 22 months older than his brother.

"At the time when my younger brother was first identified as hard of hearing, I was young and it did not hold a significant meaning to me personally. It wasn't something I spent much time reflecting on, it was just a normal part of my family's life — and for me, a part of growing up," added Carina who is 6 years older than her brother.

"Being the younger sibling, having a Deaf brother was always part of my life. That part of his identity was naturally part of our life as a family. Every car trip, every family vacation, every dinner, all of our experiences illustrates living with a Deaf sibling," said Molly, a younger sister.

Molly's reply reflects her respect for her brother by opening her comments with, "I understand your newsletter is written in a person-first format, but my brother very much identifies as a Deaf man, so my answers are all written according to his preference."



Spencer and Natalie

When asked how they found out or when it first dawned on them how unique it is to have a sibling who is dhh the responses were varied depending on their age and birth order.

"My parents sat my brother and I down to explain a myriad of complications my sister would be facing in life and it

means the same today as it did then. I just have to talk to her a little differently than I do most other people," said Spencer, older brother of Natalie who has Goldenhar Syndrome and is DeafBlind.

"I think I understood my sister was dhh when I was in 1st grade and she was in 5th grade. Her interpreter would give me some lessons so I could learn to communicate with her more," added Ashlee who is a younger sister.

"Brothers and sisters are as close as hands and feet."

— Vietnamese Proverb

"I remember going through a period of time in which how we did things as a family changed. I remember our mom having new 'rules' that we had to get used to

like anything else. For example, always having the captioning on the television," Carina remembers.

For children who are dhh their siblings are often their best role model, their greatest support, their toughest competition, their biggest motivation, and their strongest advocate. For the most part siblings in general are uniquely equipped with a natural ability to be the greatest asset in each other's lives.



Sarah, Anna, Luke, Joe, and James

SignIt! FREE Online American Sign Language Lessons

SignIt! is an online curriculum for learning American Sign Language (ASL). Instructors are professional actors, both deaf and hearing, who are fluent in ASL. Lessons are interactive and include opportunities to practice what is learned, quizzes providing feedback, videos showing conversational ASL, interviews with celebrities who are deaf, ASL grammar and Deaf culture.

Parents of children, 36 months of age or younger, who are deaf or hard of hearing can use the curriculum free of charge!

To apply or learn more go to <https://www.infantheating.org/signit/>

Hear to Learn Free Online Resource

Hear to Learn is a learning resource to help parents of children who are dhh and support spoken language development.

- Content is easily accessible (e.g., short video tutorial segments that are narrated and captioned).
- Download easy to follow language activities.
- Parents can share their story, ask questions, attend webinars, and find relevant research.

Hear to Learn is free and available in two language versions.

English version
<http://www.heartolearn.org> <http://www.heartolearn.org/>

Spanish version
<http://www.oirparaaprender.org> <http://www.oirparaaprender.org/>

Hear to Learn can also be found at the NCHAM website, <http://infantheating.org>

The View from Greater Minnesota

Raising Readers Charting C's

Raising Readers Event held on April 22, in Alexandria, MN. *Very Hungry Caterpillar*, read aloud by Joann Papke and in ASL by Kelsey Olson. Families with children who are dhh played the Very Hungry Caterpillar Game, enjoyed a caterpillar snack, and worked on a butterfly craft. Other guests included Anna Paulson, Brenda Ackerson, Mary Cashman-Bakken, and Adult Role Models.





Congratulations to Laura Godfrey, Interim MNH&V Manager

Laura Godfrey has humbly accepted the position of Interim Manager at Minnesota Hands & Voices (MNH&V). The MNH&V Program Manager position was recently vacated by Candace Lindow-Davies (Candace's story found on page 5). Laura, formerly the Guide By Your Side Coordinator, has been with MNH&V since 2006, overseeing the daily operations as new families with children who are newly identified as deaf or hard of hearing (dhh) are referred to MNH&V. Parent Guides share information and resources that help families explore the full range of choices and what works best for them.

Laura believes in the power of networking families with other families who share their same experiences. Laura, also a parent of a child who is dhh, knows first-hand just how important MNH&V mission is to so many families at every stage, from the time their child is first identified through adulthood. Her son, now a teenager, was first identified at three months of age as hard of hearing in the high frequency range.

Contact Laura Godfrey by email at LauraG@lifetrack-mn.org or call at 651-265-2372.



Candace Lindow-Davies

Candace has moved on from MNH&V to accept an exciting opportunity as the Director of Outreach for Hands & Voices Headquarters (H&VHQ). Candace may be gone from the everyday dealings at MNH&V, but in her new role at H&VHQ she can continue to be a positive force for families with children who are dhh. One of her new responsibilities will be to help roll out Hands & Voices' newly awarded project, "Family Leadership in Language and Learning": <http://www.handsandvoices.org/fl3/press-release2017.html>. Candace's passion for supporting families will continue to be felt both nationally and internationally.

On Thursday, April 20, Lifetrack and MNH&V's staff and friends hosted a send-off party in honor of Candace and her many years of service. Tuesday, April 25, was Candace's last day with MNH&V.

Contact Candace Lindow-Davies by email at Candace@handsandvoices.org or call H&VHQ at 866-422-0422.

Parent-to-Parent POINTERS



Follow a Family Routine

Faithfully maintain a routine for your family. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing (dhh) need additional attention and time to practice their communication skills. A daily routine that includes prioritizing time with parents and siblings will improve their skills and make communication a positive experience. Once a routine is established your children will know and trust they will have an opportunity everyday to share their hopes, dreams, and concerns.

As parents we need to commit to the family routine and prioritize our responsibilities in order to create an environment for communication to take place. It is easy to get distracted by electronic devices buzzing, beeping, and flashing. If possible put away any electronics and establish a set time when your family is otherwise occupied to respond to messages. Inform extended family, friends, and work colleagues when you are available to best respond. Over time the people in your life will adjust to your family routine as well.

Language time, especially for your child who is dhh, is critical and requires time. Language-rich moments are when your family is the busiest, such as after school, during meals, and bedtime. Downtime creates a low-pressure environment for your child to share more in-depth information about their day, listen, and ask questions about your day, too. Facilitate communication between siblings and other family members to encourage those relationships. Take the necessary time needed for communication and strengthen your family's bond.

It's OK to hold off other things to play with your child. Playing is a great opportunity to use language together!

Deafblind Intervener Training, 2017-2018

A Deafblind Intervener is a trained professional who works one-on-one with a child who is deafblind. Deafblindness creates very unique and complex challenges caused by the combined effect of both vision and hearing loss. These challenges are mainly in the area of communication, concept development, and social emotional issues. An intervener responds to these challenges by serving as a bridge to the world for the individual who is deafblind.

Intervener Training is for six weekends starting on Fridays, 5:00 to 9:00 pm (dinner provided at 4:30 pm), and Saturdays, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm (lunch included). Training is held at the Holiday Inn, 8511 Hudson Blvd., Lake Elmo, MN. Limited space available, cost is \$400 per person for all six weekend sessions.

Weekend Training:

October 27 & 28

Introduction to DeafBlindness and Intervention

November 17 & 18

Hearing and Vision Loss, Impact of DeafBlindness

January 26 & 27

Communication and the Learner who is DeafBlind

February 9 & 10

Concept Development

March 9 & 10

The Importance of Touch

April 6 & 7, Self Determination and Positive Behavior Supports

The DeafBlind Project will make all hotel reservations for double occupancy. To register for Intervener Training or receive more information contact Cathy Lyle at 612.638.1526 or cathy.lyle@metrocsu.org.

Hearing Aid Headbands by HearStyling

These headbands take all worry out of wearing hearing aids. Stretchy enough to comfortably fit all head shapes with adjustable tabs to attach hearing aids. Headbands are available in a variety of styles or extremely thin unisex style for those who want their headband to blend into their hair.

All headbands are handmade in the U.S. and held to a high standard. Taxes, shipping, and handling fees are included in the pricing for U.S. customers. Find out more at <https://www.hearstyling.com>.

Available Online Video, 2016 AG Bell Research Symposium on Neuroimaging

Online videos, available in English and Spanish, of the 2016 AG Bell Research Symposium. World-renowned scientists share their findings in Neuroimaging as well as discoveries leading to a deeper understanding of the complex and interrelated neurological processes that result in the comprehension, production and use of human languages.

Sponsored by the National Institutes of Health - National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

Go to <https://agbellconvention.com/research-symposium/>



Save the Date!

Bowling Event for Students With a Combined Hearing and Vision Loss

Students, ages 14 to 21, with a combined hearing and vision loss are invited to bowl, lunch, connect with other students, and meet mentors who will share their experiences growing up with a combined hearing and vision loss.

Saturday, October 7, 2017, from 12:00 to 2:00 pm at Pinz Bowling Lanes, 7520 32nd St N, Oakdale, MN.

This event is a joint collaboration between the DB Committee at State Services for the Blind, The Minnesota DeafBlind Project and DeafBlind Services Minnesota.

Registration information will be posted later in the summer.

For information contact Brianna Mehr, 651-554-6246, brianna.mehr@state.mn.us, or Cathy Lyle, 612-638-1526 cathy.lyle@metrocsu.org

Midwest Conference On Deaf Education

The Midwest Conference on Deaf Education (MWCDE) is open to parents, teachers, interpreters, administrators, audiologists, and college students who work with children who are dhh. The conference will be from June 8 to 9, 2017, and held at South Dakota School for the Deaf, 2001 East 8th Street, Sioux Falls, SD

The mission of the MWCDE is to provide professional development opportunities to individuals who work with youth who are dhh, from birth to 21. The conference will cover topics on early childhood intervention, hearing technology, mental health, classroom strategies, and more.

For more information go to MWDeafConference.org



ISDs 196 & 917 Students

Students and staff of Intermediate School Districts 196 and 917 volunteered their time to make MNH&V welcome blankets at their Annual District 196 and 917 Students' Night Out. Robin Coninx,

MNH&V Metro Parent Guide, was on hand for support and to share more information about MNH&V welcome blanket program.

A special thanks to Quota International of Minneapolis for generously donating money for the blanket material.

Help Replenish MNH&V Welcome Blanket Supply Given to New Families at the First Home Visit

Our MNH&V Parent Guides bring a hand-tied fleece blanket when they first visit a family with a child newly identified as deaf or hard of hearing. It's our way of extending a "warm" welcome and giving them a constant reminder they are a valued member of our wonderful and caring MNH&V community.

Blankets have been generously donated from area businesses, volunteer groups, school district staff and students, religious organizations, scout troops, families, and friends all wanting to share their time and talent. Also, many businesses,

organizations, and individuals have donated the finances needed to provide blanket materials for groups interested in making blankets as their service project. Our Parent Guides have distributed many of the welcome blankets we have had available and we are asking for your help to replenish our supply.

For more information or to offer your help to replenish our welcome blanket supply by volunteering to make blankets or by donating funds or fleece material contact MNH&V by phone at 651-265-2435 or email at mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org.

VSA Minnesota for Accessible Movies, Arts, & Performances

The VSA Minnesota has helped to make the arts accessible to individuals with disabilities for over three decades. Originally Very Special Arts Minnesota, then VSA Arts of Minnesota, and now VSA Minnesota have had a reputation for their quality programs and services. Browse the VSA Minnesota website to learn how they create communities where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in, and access the arts in our community <http://vsamn.org>.

Parents can sign-up for a monthly VSA Minnesota email calendar of accessible art experiences at <http://vsamn.org/community/calendar/>

DCMP Membership for Accessible Videos

Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) provides equal access through described and captioned educational media. They support and improve the academic achievement of students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.

Free membership to DCMP is offered to parents, teachers and other professionals who work with students who are dhh, blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind. There are no costs associated with any DCMP services.

DCMP makes streaming a wide variety of accessible videos at home or at school convenient. Not all YouTube videos are accessible, for this reason DCMP members can use their DCMP YouTube channel for accessible videos or for a 4-minute preview when available. Full accessible videos are available at the DCMP website.

Find membership registration at dcmp.org DCMP Youtube Channel www.youtube.com/user/dcmpnad

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MINNESOTA
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Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS Newsletter

May-June 2017

FAMILY PICNIC

2017 Annual ★ Minnesota Hands & Voices ★ Metro

Date: Thursday, August 3rd

Time: 5:00-8:30 pm (rain or shine)

Where: Como Park Midway Pavilion
1199 Midway Pkwy, St Paul, MN

Free for Families:

- ★ Dinner
- ★ Fun Games
- ★ Entertainment
- ★ Face Painting
- ★ Door Prizes!

Dilly Bars
graciously
provided by



HANDS & VOICES LEAGUE OF HEROES SUPERPOWERS WITHIN™



*Calling all the Superheroes in the MNH&V Community!
Dust off your superhero costume or come as you are to join our Hands & Voices' League of Heroes!*

Find more details online at www.mnhandsandvoices.org/news-events/current-news-events.aspx