



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™

FOCUS

Supporting families with children who are deaf & hard of hearing

Consider Becoming a Donor to Our Minnesota Hands & Voices Community

"I am inspired every time I hear another heartwarming story about Minnesota Hands & Voices helping a family dealing with hearing loss," said Wayne Jarvis, Lifetrack Board Member and a parent of a child who is deaf. "My family is proud to support the life changing work of MNH&V and I am honored to have the opportunity to introduce my friends and co-workers to such an incredible organization."

Minnesota Hands & Voices (MNH&V) is a community of families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). MNH&V is a program of Lifetrack, a Minnesota non-profit committed to helping families and individuals become strong, healthy and productive members of the community. Lifetrack partnered with MNH&V over 16 years ago.

"An investment from grateful families and community partners ensures that Lifetrack families are able to receive the supportive services they need to achieve their best and highest potential. Your gift designated to Minnesota Hands & Voices supports our important work together, for families like Wayne's," Angela Garrett, Lifetrack Vice President of Development commented.

MNH&V also receives direct support from Hands & Voices Headquarters (H&V HQ). H&V HQ has chapters throughout the US and Canada, as well as several chapters overseas. They provide MNH&V staff and families with a wide network of families,

professionals, state and federal resources, educational institutions, service providers, and adults who are DHH.

MNH&V provides families with educational opportunities

Throughout the year MNH&V provides social/educational opportunities for parents with professionals presenting on relevant topics of the needs of families with children who are DHH.

The ASTra Educational Advocacy Program helps parents gain advocacy skills and the confidence needed to work collaboratively with their child's educational team. At MNH&V website, you can access worksheets, links, and videos of ASTra Educational Advocacy Training. <https://www.mnhandsandvoices.org/resources-information/astra-educational-advocacy.aspx>. Additional information on the ASTra Educational Advocacy Program can be found at <http://www.handsandvoices.org/astra/index.html>

MNH&V promotes positive social emotional development

At MNH&V family events children who are DHH can meet other children who are DHH just like them. In addition, adult role models who are DHH are available at all MNH&V family events. We understand the critical role adults who are DHH can have in developing a strong self-identity for children who are DHH and help families gain perspective and confidence their child's future.

MNH&V is inclusive of all Families

MNH&V has Cultural Parent Guides to serve families with a child who is DHH and are immigrants from Southeast Asia, Northeast Africa, and Spanish-Speaking countries. In addition, Metro Parent Guides serve the growing number of families in the Twin Cities and surrounding area. Making a timely warm connection with families who have a child who has been newly identified as DHH is important to us.

"Minnesota Hands & Voices embodies the vision of caring families building a greater sense of hope and community within each other's lives," TrixieAnn Golberg, Lifetrack President and MNH&V volunteer said. "Whether that support comes in the form of Welcome Baby gift baskets and blankets, a home visit with a caring Parent Guide or uncovering new tools and resources for your child, its part of the daily difference MNH&V donors, volunteers and families are making."

MNH&V is funded in part through the Minnesota State Legislature, grants and donations from local businesses and private donations. Not only are the families with children who are DHH and professionals who serve them, the soul of the MNH&V community, we are also instrumental in funding many services through our donations. Consider making a charitable donation to MNH&V today at <https://www.mnhandsandvoices.org/about-us/donate.aspx>

Signing Santa Breakfast

Saturday, December 3, 2016

9:00 am to noon, Andover Senior Center, 1685 Crosstown Blvd. NW, Andover, located on the North end of Andover City Hall.

Complementary breakfast including pancakes, sausage, orange juice, and milk, plus free pictures with Signing Santa for families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Hosted by the Andover Lions. Interpreter provided.

RSVP by Friday, November 25
Tom, Candy or Claire Conniff
320-327-2170 voice or 763-639-5984 text
or email: Motleyman50@aol.com

Holiday Luncheon & Signing Santa

Saturday, December 10, 2016

From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, Trollwood, 801 50th Avenue SW, Moorhead, MN.

Enjoy fun activities for the whole family, sleigh rides, and more for families with children who are DHH. Sponsored by Quota International of Fargo INC and the Fargo-Moorhead Sertoma Club

RSVP by email at slhs@mnstate.edu

Santa is Coming to Charles Thompson Memorial Hall

Saturday, December 17, 2016

Beginning at 1:00 pm, Charles Thompson Memorial Hall, 1824 Marshall Ave., St. Paul.

Children's crafts, plus cookies and milk will be provided for families with children who are DHH. Hosted by the Charles Thompson Memorial Hall House Committee.

Email questions to Joy Cady,
Chairperson@thdeafclub.com

MNH&V EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

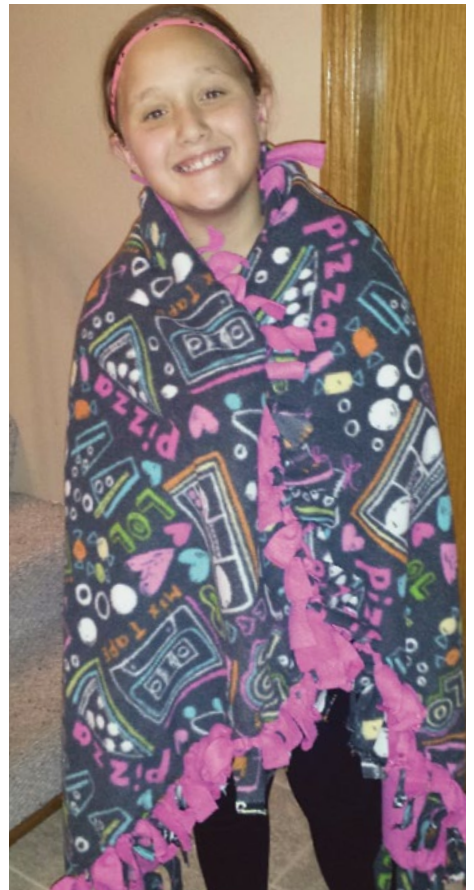
Parent Guide for the Cultural Spanish-Speaking Community

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

The View from Greater Minnesota



Macy loves her music-themed welcome blanket given to her by a MNH&V Parent Guide while visiting her family.

Coffee & ASL

Do you like coffee? Do you sign?

Visit the small coffee shop open since July 5, 2016, in the historic Charles Thompson Memorial Hall. Volunteers fluent in ASL run and operate the coffee shop. The coffee is mountain grown and locally roasted from Morningstar.

Coffee Shop hours:
10:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday thru Friday
CLOSED Saturday and Sunday

www.thdeafclub.com/coffee/index.html

Congratulations to Katie Michaelson, MNH&V 2016 High Five Award Recipient



Katie Michaelson, donated her award to Charge it for Charge in honor of her friend Cora (pictured).

VSA Minnesota for Accessible Movies, Arts, & Performances

Opportunities for accessible art experiences and listings of age-appropriate captioned movies for children who are DHH can be found on the VSA Minnesota's website. Some performances offer reduced admission prices for the patron and one companion through VSA Minnesota's Access to Performing Arts Project.

Parents can sign-up for a monthly email list of accessible art experiences at VSA Minnesota "Go Green Form"
http://www.vsamn.org/go_green.html

For more information about VSA Minnesota visit vsamn.org.

FCC Adopted Program DeafBlind Equipment Distribution Program

The Federal Communications Commission adopted a program that provides communications equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind. Initially the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), also known as "iCanConnect," was a FCC pilot program started in 2012. Since then, the program has provided up to \$10 million annually to support programs that distribute communications equipment, helping people become more independent.

Through iCanConnect, consumers who are deaf-blind and who meet income guidelines can receive free equipment designed to make telecommunications, Internet access, and advanced communications services accessible. Installation, training, and other technical support are also available. Individuals with combined hearing and vision loss now have a better means to socially interact, acquire information, and the skills and training to become employed.

Full article can be found at www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-makes-national-deaf-blind-equipment-program-permanent

MN AG Bell Chapter Meeting Topic: IDEA Law

On December 14, 2016, Minnesota AG Bell Chapter will have a meeting on the topic of IDEA law. The meeting is at 6:30 pm at the Fairview Family Library.

The Minnesota AG Bell Chapter has meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Meetings are open to families with children who are DHH and to professionals working with our families. Sign up for emailed updates about upcoming Minnesota AG Bell Chapter meetings and play dates by contacting Angie Mucci or Kristi Musser at agbellmn@gmail.com.



Sharon Faber holding a baby wrap she made and donated to MNH&V

Give a hand to Sharon Faber who graciously donated 14 fleece blankets, 3 quilted blankets, 2 breast feeding covers, net for toys, and 6 baby wraps to MNH&V.

Sharon looked for an organization who could use her creative and prolific sewing skills, thankfully she found MNH&V. She does not have a family member or friend who is DHH, but is happy to know MNH&V will put her donations to good use to welcome our newest MNH&V families.

Brenda Hommerding, Central MN Parent Guide, met with Sharon after she had contacted the Metro Office. Sharon mentioned she was glad to have found an organization to make her donation before winter. Adding, she has more fleece and a plan to teach her oldest granddaughter how to sew and tie the blankets, too.

Thank you, Sharon, for your generosity!

Here's to a Happy Holiday Season that is

Many of us look forward to the holiday season and all the memory-making activities that go along with family gatherings. Whether your tradition is to gather as a big group with extended family and friends combined, or a smaller intimate group; there are ways to create an inclusive and accessible environment for children and guests who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH).

Many parents who have a child who is DHH have watched them struggle to track the conversations at family gatherings. We trust relationships will develop naturally over time, but in that moment it can be heart breaking. Communication modalities such as: listening and spoken language, manual communication (cued speech or sign language), bi-lingual approach using American Sign Language (ASL), or a mix of all of the above, does not lessen the impact of these experiences. Holiday gatherings are a call to action for parents to help bridge the communication gap between our child who is growing up with the unique experience of being DHH and other individuals who are part of our traditional group.

There are many creative ways to make holiday gatherings feel more inclusive and accessible to people who are DHH. Listed here are just a few ideas you can try or adapt for your own family's needs.

Before the Gathering

- Ask your child or guest who is DHH for ideas on how to make the holiday gathering more accessible. Many accommodations can be arranged before the event.
- Share the guest list with your child or guest who is DHH. For young children draw a simple family tree to show which guests are related and which are friends. If possible label photos of the guests with their names and relation.
- If your child uses hearing gear make sure to have back-up batteries with you ready to use for longer holiday gatherings. Even if their gear has a long battery life it is always good to have back-up batteries.
- Electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and laptops can facilitate communication between guests who are DHH and hearing guests. Set up a charging station in a convenient area or remember to bring your device chargers to the gathering.

Parents: BEFORE the event discuss with your child who is DHH your rules of etiquette about using devices at events.

- Captioning please! If a TV is on during a gathering make sure the captioning is on, too. Whether your guest who is DHH is watching or not they will appreciate having access without needing to ask.

Set the Stage

- Nametags and place cards at the table are a great way to make the connection between a person's face and their name.
- Turn down the noise! Background music, televisions, appliances, pets, plus multiple conversations at once, all make it difficult to pick up the sounds of speech even with the latest hearing technology. Minimize as much of the "extra" sounds as possible.
- Keep plenty of note pads and pens handy for anyone who wants to communicate through writing or drawing. Save on paper and make it fun by keeping Magna-Doodles near by!
- Natural light can shadow a speaker's face if their back is facing the window. Position guests, furniture and window treatments to optimize lighting on individual's faces as well as avoid seating guests who are DHH where they would be facing bright windows.

- Turn up the lights! Dim lighting can make it difficult for individuals who are DHH to communicate. Good lighting is essential to read lips, see body language, facial expressions, signs, cues, interpreters, or transliterators. Try to illuminate areas of your home that are too dark to communicate.

Set the Stage for Listening

- For children who are DHH and use an FM system, strategically place the microphone on the table as close to the center as possible. Then at mealtime it will be easy to position the microphone in an optimal spot to pick up speech.
- Have a set of "conversation starters" cards at the table for your guests and your child who is DHH to chat about a topic your child is more familiar with.
- Many children who are DHH can be responsible to ask speakers to wear the FM system for better access. Before the gathering role-play how to make a request to wear the FM system and ways to advocate for themselves.

Set the Stage for ASL

- For children who are DHH and use ASL place a few American Sign Language books out on the coffee table and around the house. Make it easy for your guests who are intrigued and want to learn more about the language.

Set the Stage for Cued English

- For children who are DHH and use Cued English leave a handful of Cued English charts set out around the house for any guests interested in trying the visual system of English phonemes.

During the Gathering

- People who are DHH understand the need to get their attention to communicate. Polite ways to do this is to tap their shoulder or give a quick hand wave to catch their eye. To make an announcement from across the room quickly flick the light switch.

Inclusive & Accessible for You & Yours!

- When someone who is DHH asks, “What?” DO NOT dismiss their question with, “Never mind,” “Oh, nothing,” or “It’s not important.” Even if you think it is extraneous, let them be the judge. Out of respect always take the time to repeat what was missed.
- If there is some doubt in your mind whether your guest who is DHH understood you, rephrase your comment, rather than repeat. Vice versa, if you do not understand ask for clarification until you do. Communication only happens when both parties understand each other.

During the Gathering for Listening

- Make sure guests understand the importance of using the FM system to access conversations for your child who is DHH. If need be give a quick demonstration on how to properly wear or place the FM microphone.
- You and your family might feel self-conscious being the only people passing around the FM system or wearing it. Focus on optimal access to the sounds of speech and the long-term benefits for your child and it will get easier to do.

During the Gathering for Cued English

- Assign family members to take turns transliterating for your child who is DHH so they are included in the conversation. Cueing for your child who is DHH will not only provide access, but also act as a great language model. If your transliterating skills are not proficient what better way to practice!
- You and your family might feel self-conscious cueing in a room full of people who do not use the system. It is important to work through your feelings for the greater good of providing access.
- Consider hiring a transliterator for your holiday gatherings. They could provide continuous access for your child.

During the Gathering for ASL

- Assign family members to take turns interpreting for your child who is DHH so they can be included in conversations. Even if you are not an ASL interpreter do your best.. Eventually your child may be able to take the topic and join in conversations.
- You and your family might feel self-conscious if you are the only family using ASL in a room full of hearing people. It’s important to get passed how you feel for the greater good of providing language access to your child.
- Consider hiring an ASL interpreter for your holiday gatherings. As your child who is DHH becomes older, there is a need for a higher level of language. An ASL interpreter can facilitate in-depth conversations between your child and guests who do not know ASL.
- If you are just learning ASL and you are addressing a person who is fluent in ASL remember to RELAX. Be courteous, but not overly anxious about making mistakes. Allow yourself to be corrected so the individual understands the full meaning of your comments. Do not debate sign vocabulary with a person who is DHH, just except the beauty and diversity of ASL and move on.

Inclusive Activities

- Play games that encourage turn taking, which are fun for everyone! In contrast games where you need to shout out the answer first for points puts guests who are DHH at a disadvantage.
- Children of all ages and abilities can appreciate each other by doing activities with little conversation needed. Building toys, marble run, puzzles, logic games, coloring books, craft projects, and many more activities are enjoyable to work on as a group or side-by-side.

Good to Know for Hearing Folks

- No need to shout! Hearing gear is calibrated to normal voice levels; shouting will just distort the words.
- Persons who communicate well one-on-one may have a hard time with two or more speakers, especially if there are many interruptions and interjections.
- Gatherings where everyone else is hearing can be very exhausting, and especially unbearable for teens that are DHH. Discuss an appropriate backup plan when they need a break, such as reading a book, watching a movie, or playing games on a mobile phone.
- Speak in a normal manner. In general people, who are DHH or hearing, watch other’s lips for clues as they speak to help them understand. Chewing food, gum, smoking, long facial hair, or obscuring your mouth with your hands makes it difficult to understand speech.
- Not all people who are DHH read-lips. Lip-reading to the level of a reliable communication mode takes years to develop and mastery of English. Children should not be expected to lip-read before they have language. An estimated 30% of speech sounds are not distinguishable by sight.
- Not all people who are DHH use ASL. American Sign language is NOT another form of English; it is an official language and the foundation of Deaf culture with its own grammar, contexts and rules.
- Not all people who are DHH are familiar with Cued English, also known as Cued Speech. Cued English is a visual representation of all the phonemes or sounds of the English language using 7 hand shapes and 4 vowel positions.

All of MNH&V wishes you and your family a fun-filled holiday season! Please email your ideas to add to this list for next year, mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org, subject: Holiday.

Save the Date**NCSA Cued Speech Courses, Workshops & Meeting Out-of-State****April 21 to 23, 2017****InsCert Workshop**

Friday and Saturday, 8:30 to 4:30 pm

Beginner Cued Speech Workshop (Free)

Saturday and Sunday, 8:30 to 4:30 pm

Beyond Beginner CS Workshop (Free)

Saturday and Sunday, 8:30 to 4:30 pm

NCSA Board Meeting

Friday and Saturday, 9:00 to 5:00 pm

Located at the University of Michigan Union building, 530 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Find more information at www.cuedspeech.org/events

Save the Date**Moog Center 1st Biennial Conference Out-of-State****June 22 to 23, 2017**

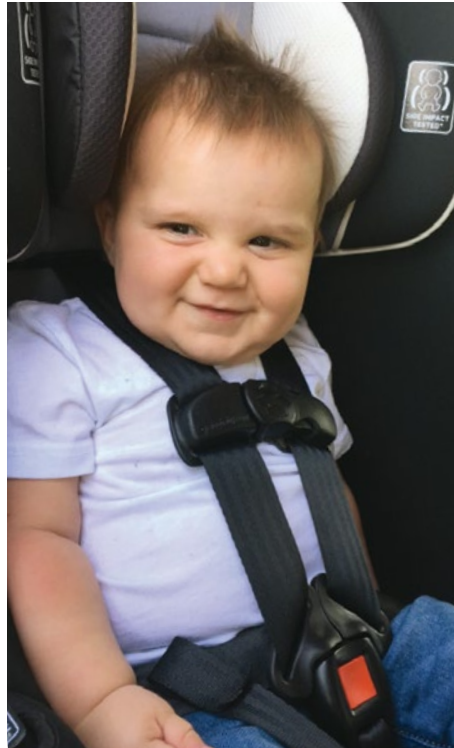
The Moog Center for Deaf Education is hosting its 1st Biennial Conference.

More information about this event at <http://www.moogcenter.org>

Save the Date**AG Bell Listening & Spoken Language Symposium Out-of-State****June 29 to July 1, 2017**

The AG Bell Listening and Spoken Language Symposium provides speech and language professionals with annual updates and continuing education credit.

More information about this event at <http://agbellsymposium.com>



"Leo had a hearing test today... All smiles! Still holding strong at 30% loss!" Cassie Ramerth, Southwest Parent Guide, received this text and photo and was given permission to share with our MNH&V's families.

Accommodations are the Gateway to Equal Learning

The primary difference between students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) and typically hearing peers is that they do not access speech fully. Accommodations are truly the gateway to students who are DHH being able to achieve and progress as effectively as hearing peers.

Learning issues are the direct result of decreased access to verbal information and accommodations, including appropriate auxiliary aids and services. Accommodations essential and need to be considered carefully, discussed thoroughly, implemented consistently, and then monitored to ensure they are providing equal access to all classroom instructions and communication.

In the US, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires schools to ensure that communication for students who are DHH is as effective as communication for all other students. Accommodations, specifically auxiliary aids and services, must be provided to students who are DHH to have an equal opportunity and reach the same level of achievement as is provided to their hearing peers.

Full article can be found in *Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss (SSCHL), Late September Update 2016*, written by Karen L. Anderson, PhD, Director and Update Editor

Sign up to receive emails from Success for Children with Hearing Loss of their bimonthly publication written for DHH educators and parents of a children who are DHH. Each issue is filled with relevant information and resources, easy to understand, and put to practical to use. <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com>

Transition**Guide to Adult Services**

This online guide from the University of Minnesota is for young adults who are DHH (and their parents) to learn about and access adult services that are available statewide. It includes guiding questions and links to adult service providers within eight categories: Housing & Services, Employment, Lifelong Learning & Education, Transportation, Health Care and Healthy Living, Advocacy & Self-Advocacy, Financial Supports, and Independent Living Supports. The guide is not regionally specific or exhaustive, but goes far to provide young adults with relevant information and a good start.

<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/dhh-resources/Transition-Guide/Adult-Services.html>



National Literary Competition

ASL, Writing, or Both

The National Literary Competition is open to ALL students who are DHH in any school or program in the United States and Canada. The competition is a collaboration between Gallaudet University and Phi Kappa Zeta with the purpose to give students who are DHH the opportunity to showcase their abilities, as well as instill pride and ownership in their work.

Students compete as individuals only, there are no teams. For the ASL category, students in the 2nd through 12th grades can participate. The ASL categories are in ASL Poetry, Storytelling, and Presentation. For the Writing category, students in the 6th through 12th grades can participate. The Writing categories are in Poetry, Creative Writing, and Essay.

Registration and submissions are all done online from November 1 through 18, 2016. Winners will be announced on December 15, 2016.

For more information www.gallaudet.edu/outreach-programs/youth-programs/national-literary-competition.html

If you have any questions email youthprograms@gallaudet.edu

Pediatric Clinic Focused on Accessible Care for Patients and their Families Who Are DHH

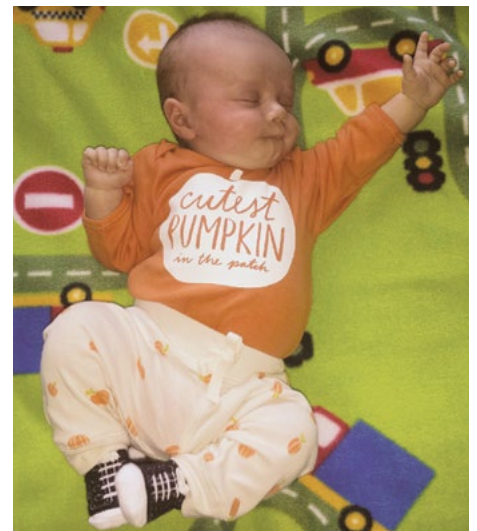
A new pediatric clinic in Maple Grove focused on accessibility for patients and their families who are DHH is accepting new patients. American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter requests are integrated into the clinic scheduling system, as well as staff on hand with knowledge of ASL. The clinic uses convenient check-in kiosks for established patients and pocket-talkers for those who are hard of hearing.

Dr. Meuser-Herr studied ASL in college and he is sensitive to the needs and communication barriers in healthcare for children and their families who are DHH. As the primary care pediatrician at the new clinic he has reached out to PACER and MN Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Metro Office to get input on how to best integrate resources in the area. Dr. Meuser-Herr uses ASL directly with his patients along side an interpreter to ensure clear communication.

The North Memorial Clinic - Maple Grove Pediatrics provides care for patients from newborn to 18 years of age. They are a full-service clinic with an on-site lab, imaging, and pharmacy as well as a close connection to an urgent care, emergency room, and pediatric inpatient unit. The clinic is located in the Maple Grove Medical Office Bldg., 9855 Hospital Drive in Maple Grove. Find out more at www.northmemorial.com/pediatrics



The View from Greater Minnesota



Happy welcome blanket recipients from greater Minnesota, just in time for colder weather!

Lifetrack
709 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104-4804



MINNESOTA
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Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS Newsletter

November-December 2016

Family Event

MNH&V Annual Metro Roller Skating Family Event

Winter 2016

Date: Sunday, January 29, 2017

Time: 5:00 to 7:00 pm

Where: Roller Garden, 5622 W. Lake Street, St. Louis Park

FREE!

Plus, receive a coupon for a free hotdog, bag of chips & a pop!

The Roller Garden will be closed to the general public so this is a great way to test your skating skills, socialize, and meet new friends!

For more information visit our website at www.mnhandsandvoices.org