



HANDS &
VOICES™
MINNESOTA

Supporting families
with children who are
deaf & hard of hearing

November-December 2019

FOCUS

Congratulations to the 2019 H&VMN High Five Award Recipients

Congratulations to this year's Hands & Voices of Minnesota (H&VMN) High Five Award recipients, from the metro area; Cassie Haga, Natalie Kuramoto, and Emily Manson, and from greater Minnesota; Krystal Anderson and Cheryl Minor. All of the High Five Award recipients were nominated by families or care providers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing (dhh).

The H&VMN community would like to thank all of the award nominees and winners for their dedicated service. The H&VMN 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.

Nominations for next year's 2020 H&VMN High Five Award will be accepted from May 1 to July 1, 2020. To nominate someone simply write a 200 word or less explanation of 1) what the nominee has done above and beyond what is typical for their role and 2) how this individual has made an impact on a child and/or the community. At least one specific example is very helpful. Email your nomination to mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org and include in the subject line "High Five Award". Please submit only one nomination per family per year. H&VMN High Five Award submissions information can be found at



Cassie Haga received her award at the H&VMN Metro Family Picnic from Lanae Philaphon and her daughter www.mnhandsandvoices.org.

Cassie Haga

Cassie Haga, DHH Teacher for Intermediate School District 287, was nominated by Lanae Philaphon who is a mother of one of Cassie's students. A few years ago Cassie started working with Lanae's daughter as her early intervention teacher. She provided home visits, resources, and encouragement,

but then went above and beyond by supporting her daughter's first experiences away from mom, including language access through sign language during classroom time. For mom it was a great comfort and very motivating to watch as her daughter used her receptive and expressive signing skills with someone other than herself.

"We couldn't have asked for a more incredible and dedicated teacher," wrote Lanae. "Cassie truly gave her all and made each day an exciting and unique learning experience for the kids."

This school year Cassie took on an even bigger role as Lanae's daughter's DHH Preschool Teacher. The family will treasure the several take-home books with photos from the classroom activities.

"Now, life has us moving onto something new but Cassie will always hold a special place in our hearts with so many wonderful memories," added Lanae.

Her daughter adds, "Cassie is a nice teacher and she is kind. I love her."

Natalie Kuramoto *(not pictured)*

Natalie Kuramoto, DHH Teacher for the Minnetonka School District, was nominated by Dana Levinson who has two daughters who are dhh and in 4th grade last school year.

"Natalie is a very responsive and intuitive

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High Five Award Recipients continued from page 1

teacher, helping students learn about their needs, rights and equipment, and advocate for themselves,” wrote Dana. “She also teaches them important social and functional skills to thrive in the school environment.”

Dana notes that even though Natalie had a challenging year dealing with personal losses, she still went above and beyond her job requirement. Natalie identified issues and provided creative and proactive solutions to issues her students were having related to the FM system setup in the classroom and offered other types of testing support they might need.

“Additionally, she has planned wonderful school-day gatherings for dhh students and their parents to meet each other and hear from role models and experts,” said Dana. “She has provided a fun environment and facilitated transportation for these events.”



Emily Manson with Laura Godfrey at the H&VMN Metro Family Picnic

Emily Manson

Emily Manson, Saint Paul Public Schools Itinerant DHH Teacher, was nominated by, not one, but two families. Both families agree that Emily’s support has definitely

made a difference in their children’s lives and the lives of many other students who are deaf or hard of hearing (dhh).

“She goes above and beyond to strategize methods to make her students work and feel rewarded for their works,” wrote Sai Chang, one of the nominating parents. “She’s a strong pillar of support for many struggling students with hearing loss.”

In addition to supporting her students in their classrooms, Emily champions for closed-captioning on all videos and apps used for assignments. Sai Chang’s nominating letter lists other ways Emily is an advocate in the community such as presenting at many statewide educational conferences, she leads summer sports camps for students who are dhh, and she was on the team that organized the 2018 Health and Wellness Summit for Learners who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

“She is able to make students feel at home and safe and comfortable in her classrooms,” Sai Chang adds. “She has made even the toughest of students open up and develop genuine connections with her students.”

In another letter, written by Ka Lia Yang, she writes, “Before my daughter knew Emily, she barely understood English and was very shy to ask for help. Now my daughter is a stronger person who steps up for what she wants.”

The letter continues to explain how Emily’s extra effort was above and beyond what an Individual Education Plan (IEP) Manager would normally do to insure her daughter would be successful.

“Emily helped my daughter more than any other teacher/staff I’ve known,” Ka Lia Yang wrote. “At the moment my daughter is a Post Secondary Education Enrollment Option (PSEO) student, she is

very successful, top ten, work[ing] and balancing her independent life.”



Krystal Anderson with two of her students who attended Moorhead Public Schools.

Krystal Anderson

“Krystal holds our children to a high standard, not allowing them to use their hearing status as an excuse,” wrote Rhonda Kitch who nominated Krystal.

Krystal Anderson, DHH Teacher for Moorhead Public Schools, taught Ronda’s two children who are dhh. Both children have been in Moorhead’s school system since early intervention and Krystal has been involved with one or both of them the past six years. Rhonda’s son recently graduated from Moorhead High School and her daughter is in seventh grade.

“Krystal has taught and continues to teach our children exceptional advocacy skills,” added Rhonda. “Those skills aren’t developed overnight.”

Krystal’s intentional guidance payed off last fall while touring colleges with her son. He asked the accessibility services directors extensive questions about accommodations, services, staffing, expectations, and more. He impressed the

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High Five Award Recipients continued from page 2

accessibility service directors so much that they both remarked about his exceptional self-advocacy skills and how seriously he understood the need for services.

“We are truly grateful for how [Natalie] makes our kids feel like they are the only ones in her classroom, but we know she cares about and teaches each child with that same passion and as though they are her only student.”

Cheryl Minor

Katie Lein who is a mother with a son who is dhh and has a cochlear implant nominated Cheryl Minor, DHH Teacher for the Meeker and Wright Special Education Cooperative (MAWSECO).

“She goes above and beyond her role as a DHH teacher everyday to impact the lives of students and families living in our community,” Katie wrote. “For my son, she has modeled and educated his in-home daycare provider on how to provide intervention services, attended Audiology appointments to support him, and made education books for him.”

Katie’s letter includes Cheryl’s great work throughout the MAWSECO districts and all the students she serves.



Cheryl Minor with Katie Lein and her son.

MNH&V Events

ALL MNH&V Family Events are open to ALL Minnesota families who have a child who is dhh. Siblings are always welcome!

Sunday, February 23

Let’s Roll! Roller Skating Family Event

5:00 to 7:00 pm

Roller Garden
5622 West Lake Street
St. Louis Park

Find more details on page 8

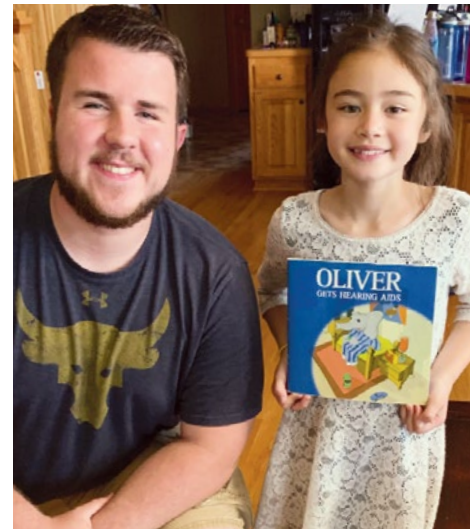
To register for this event go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/minnesota-hands-amp-voices-atlifetrack-9882223703>

2020 Events Calendar

The 2020 H&VMN Events Calendar has not yet been posted at this printing. Over 30 H&VMN family events are planned for the coming year across the state of Minnesota. Please visit our website for event updates at www.mnhandsandvoices.org/news-events or find events and registration on our FaceBook page or sign up to receive the **H&VMN Weekly SOURCE**, an email offering the latest news and events in the H&VMN community and other community organizations of importance to families who have a child who is dhh. Send your email address to www.mnhandsandvoices.org.



One of our H&VMN families from the Spanish-Speaking community invited DHH Guide Supervisor, Heidi Liz Nazario who speaks Spanish, over for a visit.



Kobe Schroeder, DHH Guide, reading books during a home visit with the family.

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



The View from Greater Minnesota

NE Region Family Fun Night at Pottery Burn Studio, Thursday, August 29, 2019
 Children who are dhh and their siblings painted a "good eats" item to keep and visit with Deaf Mentors and DHH Guides. Parents learned more about Lifetrack's Deaf Mentor Family Program and H&VMN's DHH Guide program. Pottery Burn Studio is located in Superior, WI.



The View from Greater Minnesota

Brainerd, MN, our 5th Annual H&VMN Spooktacular Trunk-or-Treat, Saturday, October 26, 2019
 Thank You to Adam Rademacher for providing the venue at Paul Bunyan Land. Also, a big Thank You to the volunteers from the CLC ASL PAHS Club, Brainerd High School ASL Club, and Advisors Tanya Hoting-Mrazek and Jody Hoting Converse. There were 20 decorated vehicles, a scavenger hunt, hot chocolate, and sweet treats served inside.

H&VMN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

H&VMN Parent Guide for the Northeast African Communities

The H&VMN NE African Communities Parent Guide position offers 10 flexible hours a week, some evenings and weekends, and a family-friendly work environment.

H&VMN Parent Guides receive specific training and team support. Parent Guides are responsible for the initial and follow-up connections critical to families who have a newly identified child who is deaf or hard of hearing (dhh). They work closely with the H&VMN team and learn the best way to support our H&VMN families. They organize and lead family events, represent H&VMN in the community, and participate in family support activities. Your personal experience of the challenges and joys of parenting a child who is dhh helps support other parents who are just starting their journey. Candidate for this position must be fluent in Somali.

To find out more or to apply and send a resume, please visit Lifetrack at <https://recruiting.paylocity.com/Recruiting/Jobs/Details/117452>

Hands & Voices New Graphic Standards Policy

Nearly 30 years ago Hands & Voices (H&V) began as a non-profit, parent-driven organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Minnesota adopted their unbiased approach to serving families and became a Hands & Voices Chapter in May of 2007.

Today, H&V membership continues to grow with new chapters emerging across the U.S., as well as in other countries. As H&V becomes more widely recognized their brand identity needs to be unified from state to state. As families move or travel or connect with other families across the country it is important for H&V be easy to find.

Working with H&V Headquarters Graphic Standards Policy our Minnesota Chapter, known as Minnesota Hands & Voices or abbreviated MNH&V or MNHV, will be changed to Hands & Voices of Minnesota or abbreviated H&VMN or HVMN.

This change will take place as responsibly as possible and over a period of time as we run out of materials and need to reprint. It may be confusing for families at first to see the new logo, H&VMN, along side the old logo, MNH&V, but we hope families will continue to feel confident that we are the same organization dedicated to supporting them.



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OLD LOGO

HANDS &
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MINNESOTA
NEW LOGO

H&VMN Introduces Sophia Barr, DHH Guide



Sophia Barr, H&VMN DHH Guide

Sophia Barr has been working at H&VMN as a DHH Guide since this summer. Originally from Wisconsin, Sophia did not grow up attending H&VMN events with her family as a child, but she likes being a part of a team supporting families, a positive role model for children who are dhh, and visiting with families.

“My position as DHH Guide is to meet with families and share my experience with them,” Sophia said. “Supporting their decisions on what is right for their child in an unbiased way.”

Sophia is hard of hearing and knows firsthand what it’s like to be the only one in her family with a hearing difference. She has three older siblings, two sisters and one brother, and her parents who are all hearing. Sophia can relate to challenges faced by children who are dhh and has a great deal of respect for the choices families make.

“Just listen, be patient, and respectful,” said Sophia, when asked what advice she would offer families. “Give out the right information and as much information you can offer.”

Contact Sophia at 612-999-2517 (VP) or email at SophiaB@Lifetrack-mn.org.

H&VMN Introduces Shelby Geldon, DHH Guide



Shelby Geldon, H&VMN DHH Guide

Selby Geldon joined the team earlier year as a H&VMN DHH Guide. Her work with H&VMN provides her many opportunities to meet with parents and children who are dhh which is in line with her career interest. Currently she is studying to become a DHH Teacher and she knows her experiences working at H&VMN with

families will help provide her with a solid framework and insight.

Selby, who is dhh, grew up just north of the twin cities. She is the youngest of five children, three brothers and one sister with typical hearing. She has fond memories of her father who unfortunately past away when she was young. Her mother is very hard working and has always been a great support and great role model to her.

Shelby loves being outdoors and hiking with her dog. She is active in sports; softball, volleyball, and hockey are her favorites. In her spare time she enjoys swing dancing, reading books, and making ceramics.

“Don’t look too far ahead in the future that you can’t see whats right in front of you,” offered Selby when asked about advice for parents. “Focus on what you can do now not what you can’t do later.”

Contact Selby by text at 612-354-1483 or email at ShelbyG@lifetrack-mn.org.



YouTube Videos to Introduce the H&VMN DHH Guide Program and Staff

Learn more about the DHH Guide Program and each of our H&VMN DHH Guides on YouTube. DHH Guides are available to share their experiences growing up with a hearing differences and offer support to families with a child who is dhh. Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGs48dUF_Xc&t=2s&utm_

For more information about the DHH Guide Program contact Heidy Liz Nazario, DHH Guide Supervisor, at 651-789-0363 or email at HeidyN@Lifetrack-mn.org



Diane Aase & Family

In memory of her husband Reverend Charles Aase, Diane Aase made a very generous memorial donation to Hands & Voices of Minnesota. Diane explained that her husband had become hard of hearing in his later years and the family had agreed a memorial donation to a non-profit organization that supports families with children who are dhh would be appropriate. We are honored to be selected by the family for the donation and moved by their thoughtfulness.



Mary Stadelman, Metro Parent Guide; Mee Vang, Parent Guide for the SE Asian Community; Laura Godfrey, H&VMN Director; Diane Aase; Heidy Nazario, DHH Guide Supervisor; Anne Barlow, H&VMN Events Coordinator; Elena Miranda, Parent Guide for the Spanish-Speaking Community; and Brenda Hommerding, Guide By Your Side Manager

2019 Hands & Voices of Minnesota Metro Family Picnic Photo Highlights





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709 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104

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NEWSLETTER

Hands & Voices of Minnesota FOCUS Newsletter

November-December

2020 H&VMN Roller Skating Event for Families with Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

LET'S ROLL!

The Roller Garden will be closed to the general public, great for H&VMN families to meet and greet new friends!
Free entrance, skate rental, and a light dinner of a hot dog, chips, and pop.

When: Sunday, February 23
Time: 5:00 to 7:00 pm
Where: Roller Garden
5622 West Lake Street
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

REGISTER ONLINE

www.eventbrite.com/e/mnhv-roller-skating-family-event-at-the-roller-garden-st-louis-park-tickets-70330044055