

Michigan



HANDS & VOICES™

MI Communicator

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Welcome, New Secretary

Michigan Hands & Voices (MI H&V) is excited to announce that Deborah Love-Peel was recently voted our new Secretary. Deborah is the proud mother of a teen-aged daughter who is deaf. Deborah is very dedicated to the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children, and she devotes her time to several non-profit organizations. She is the Vice-President of Michigan Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and she is very active with various Lions Clubs in the Metro Detroit area. In addition, Deborah is a Parent Guide with the Michigan Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side™ program (GBYS).

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MI Hands & Voices Leadership Retreat Held

On October 23, 2009, MI H&V held its first leadership retreat at Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The retreat was held for the members of the MI H&V Board of Directors and the Parent Guides of GBYS.

Susan McGraw, a nationally-known facilitator and trainer led the board members and Parent Guides in day of activities designed to increase cohesion between the two groups.

The day also included strategic planning and brainstorming on ways GBYS and MI H&V can reach more families and

provide more support to the families we serve.

Ideas include seeking grant funding for MI H&V so that we can hire a PT/FT Executive Director and Regional Outreach Coordinator.

Another idea that came out of the retreat is the use of DVDs, webinars, and other types of technology to provide information/support to families in outlying areas.

Kimberly Gleason, a life coach and mother of children with hearing loss, was our guest speaker. She volunteered to speak to the group about self-care. She reminded the group that it's important to take

time for ourselves, even in the midst of caring for our families. She led the group in a goal-setting exercise and provided helpful information that Parent Guides can share with the families they visit.

Many thanks to Ms. McGraw and Ms. Gleason for an informative and productive retreat. Also, many thanks to all of the Parent Guides and board members who participated.

Parent/Professional Conference and Dinner February 25-26, 2010

The Michigan EHDI Conference will be held on February 25-26, 2010. Next year's conference promises to be the best ever! This statewide annual conference is for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, audiologists, early interventionists, and other professionals who work with children who have hearing loss. The conference will be held at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, Michigan.

NEW THIS YEAR: Michigan Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side will host a pre-conference parent dinner **Thursday, February 25th from 6:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.** This event is **free** with your conference registration or just \$10 per person for non-attendees.

Parent scholarships are available! Contact Laura Scott at (517) 335-8273 or scottL5@michigan.gov.

For more information, visit the EHDI website: www.michigan.gov/ehdi



Michigan Early Hearing Detection
and Intervention Program



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GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™

Deaf Celebration Day A Huge Success!

Deaf Celebration Day was held on September 26, 2009 in Southfield, Michigan. The event was spectacular, and attendance is estimated at well over 1,000. Michigan Hands & Voices Board member Vicky Hovinen exhibited at the affair, distributing information about MI H&V and GBYS. MI H&V Co-Director Rebecca Calaman helped to promote our program and organization as well. Many thanks to both of them! Deaf Celebration Day is held every other year and is sponsored by DEAF C.A.N.!

UPDATES!!

If you are hosting an event or program, just email: HandsandVoices-MI@yahoo.com, and we will forward the information to our listserv!

Meet the “Guide” by Your Side

Hi! I'm Melissa Alford. My husband, Bryce, and I have two children. My son Austin was born in 1996 and my daughter Alexandra was born in 2002. Austin was diagnosed with a moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss at age 2 and ½, which progressed to a severe to profound level by age 7. Alexandra has normal hearing.

When Austin was 2, I became increasingly concerned that his language was not developing at the normal level. Austin was referred to the Sparrow Developmental Center where he went through a series of tests, which identified his hearing loss. I can still remember that day as one of the toughest days of my life. We knew nothing about hearing loss and we looked to people who could help us.

We immediately got hearing aids for Austin and got involved with the Early On program. When he was 4 years old, we enrolled Austin in a program at Discovery Elementary (Williamston Community

Schools) where he continues to be mainstreamed.

In December of 2004, Austin received a cochlear implant (CI) at the University of Michigan. As a family, we have chosen the total communication approach, which includes talking, listening and sign language.

Austin became a teenager this year and is in 7th grade. He plays the trumpet in the school band and loves golf. He uses “C-Print”^{*} in school, which has been tremendously helpful in allowing him to follow the conversation in class as well as providing a useful study tool each night. Although I still have hard days because Austin has to work so hard to learn and keep up in the hearing world, I have learned that his hearing loss makes him a very special person. I believe his hearing loss has taught him some very important life skills that will contribute to his happiness and success in life, and, it has also taught me a lot.

I enjoy being a Guide because I think it is so beneficial to talk to

someone who has been down the same road. I want to make a difference, like so many people have helped me during the past 10 years.



Melissa is a Parent Guide in the MI Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side Program. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Michigan Hands & Voices.

You, too, can be a “Guide”

EHDI is seeking Michigan parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing to serve as Parent Guides in the GBYS program. Parent Guides are paid a stipend for home visits and are reimbursed for mileage. Specifically, EHDI is looking for Guides in the thumb area (Saginaw), northern lower peninsula around Traverse City and Petoskey, central and southwest Michigan.

Spanish speakers, fathers, and parents of children with additional disabilities are also needed. For more information, contact Laura Scott at (517) 335-8273 or scottL5@michigan.gov.

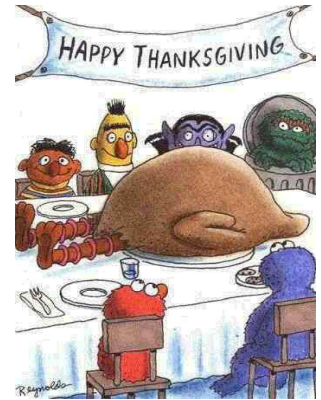
***C-Print** is a computer-aided speech-to-text system that can be used by deaf or hard of hearing students who are in mainstream educational settings. It involves the use of a transcriber who types the words of the teacher and students and provides a real-time display of the discussion on a monitor for the student. The text of the discussion is also saved on a file for later use by the student. For more information, visit: www.ntid.rit.edu/CPrint.



Holiday Communication Reminders

— by Laura Scott

With the holiday season upon us, many of us will be spending time with extended family members and friends we do not see very often. Below is a list of communication tips and reminders you can share with family members and friends to help them better communicate with your child who has hearing loss. You might want to consider writing a loving, sincere note to your loved ones and friends prior to the holiday gathering to remind them of these helpful tips.



REMINDERS FOR FAMILY/FRIENDS

Hearing Aids are Not Like Glasses

Many people who are not familiar with hearing loss often think that hearing aids take care of all hearing loss, much like glasses result in 20/20 vision. They may think that if your child is wearing his/her hearing aids, your child can hear as well as a person without hearing loss. You may have to let them know that is not the case and remind them that your child may still have difficulty hearing under certain circumstances.

Speak Clearly (and not too fast)

Remind people that they should speak one at a time and that they should not speak loudly or shout. Give them some communication strategies, such as repeating and rephrasing when your child does not understand.

Minimize Background Noise

The amount of background noise can significantly affect a child with hearing loss. Hearing aids amplify *all* sound. Background noises such as side conversations, appliances, televisions and radios can make it difficult for a child with hearing loss to hear when someone is speaking.

Maintain Eye Contact

Many children with hearing loss are learning to read speech and can gain more understanding by observing facial expressions. Let them know that they should face your child and keep their hands away from the face when speaking to your child.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUR CHILD

Encourage your child to express his/her specific communication needs by using phrases like:

- Please repeat that more slowly.
- Can you say that another way?
- Can you spell that slowly?
- I heard you say "-----," but I did not understand the rest.
- Does that begin with "b" as in baseball?
- Let's move into another room/ area where it's quieter.
- It is difficult for me to lipread/ speechread when your hand covers your mouth.
- Would you please turn that up?

To learn more about communication strategies, visit www.handsandvoices.org.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are looking for a way to become involved and to make a difference in the lives of deaf and hard of hearing children and their families, MI H&V needs you. Whether you have a lot of time or just a little, whether you know how you would like to be involved or not, please contact Laura Scott at (517) 335-8131 or scottL5@michigan.gov.

Regional Outreach

Several persons needed throughout the state to plan and host **one** networking/social event per year in your area (examples include: movies, museums, scrapbooking events, etc. . .)



Special Event Committees

Advocacy Training (will be held in the Oakland County in 2010)

Annual Summer Picnic

Pre-Conference Parent Dinner (new event to be held at the EHDI Conference)

Mom's Night Inn (new event--hotel stay, spa treatment, and workshops for Moms)

Dad's Outing (new event) (men, we need you to plan an outing just for Dads!)

Holiday Party (beginning in 2010)

**Just 1 hour of your time can
make a difference**

Ongoing Committees

Newsletter (soliciting articles and article ideas)

Website updates (current events & information)

Website design (ad hoc committee that will work over upcoming months with a professional web designer to redesign our website)

Have You Joined Our Listserv?

Our listserv is one of the most active Hands & Voices listservs in the country. It is a wonderful way to get connected directly to other families in the deaf/hard of hearing community both locally and nationally. Our listserv is the place where parents and professionals share information and provide immediate support. Sign up today. It's quick, free and easy! Just go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handsandvoices-mi>

**MI H&V Board
Members**

Laura Scott — Director
Rebecca Calaman — Co-Director
Lindsay Shields — Treasurer
Deborah Love-Peel — Secretary
Sonya Adams
Melissa Alford
Janna Bennett
Jill Elfenbein
Vicky Hovinen
Ellen Milne
Linda Wright

Newsletter Editor

Laura Scott

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We Need All of Your HANDS & VOICES!

If you or your child/student talks or signs...if you talk and sign, or cue, or care, we need you. If you are directly, indirectly or potentially involved with children who are deaf /hard of hearing and their families, we need you. We need to be united by our hands and/or voices. We are parents, professionals, adult mentors, consumers and others who are connected to a cause and to each other through the deaf/hard-of-hearing communities. We are Hands & Voices. We invite you to become a member of Michigan Hands & Voices. For more information on membership, please email us at info@mihandsandvoices.org or by calling Laura Scott at: (517) 335-8273.

OUR MISSION:

Michigan Hands & Voices is dedicated to non-biased support of families who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We are a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Our outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration, and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling deaf and hard-of-hearing children to reach their highest potential.

We believe that families will make the best choices for their child if they have access to good information and support. Our organization represents people who use varying approaches to communication and assistive technology—from American Sign Language to cochlear implants.

**JOIN MICHIGAN HANDS & VOICES
TODAY!**

*Michigan Hands & Voices is partially funded by a grant through
Michigan Department of Community Health and HRSA*



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