

# Michigan



## HANDS & VOICES™

# MI Communicator

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## Free IEP Workshop: Register Now!

Michigan Hands & Voices (H&V), in collaboration with Michigan Alliance for Families, will host its annual advocacy workshop on **Saturday, March 20, 2010**, at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland (44405 Woodward Avenue Pontiac, MI 48341) from 9 am to 12 pm. The workshop will be led by Sandee Koski, of Michigan Alliance for Families, and will offer tips to a better IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

For more information, please contact H&V Co-Director Rebecca Calaman at: [calamanr@michigan.gov](mailto:calamanr@michigan.gov) or 810-257-1486.

There will be a craft room for children of parents attending the workshop. **This event is free, but prior registration is required!**



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## **EHDI Conference Boasts Record Parent Turnout!**

On February 25, 2010, H&V Guide By Your Side (GBYS) hosted its first pre-conference parent dinner. The dinner was held on the eve of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program's annual conference. Over 30 parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, representing all modes of communication, were in attendance. Guest speaker Dr. Robert Baldwin spoke on supporting siblings and other family members.

ence, where families were able to learn more about H&V and GBYS.

A webcast of the EHDI conference will be available soon at: [www.michigan.gov/ehdi](http://www.michigan.gov/ehdi)

Many thanks to Cassie Baron, Shon Haulacka, Becky Calaman, Deborah Love-Peel, and Jaime Brisco for their work on the parent gift bags and H&V promotional items.

The following day, over 70 parents attended the EHDI conference—more than double the number of parent attendees last year! H&V hosted a table at the confer-

## H&V Launches DVD for Parents

National Hands & Voices recently debuted an educational video for parents whose babies have been referred for more testing after failing the initial hospital screen. Michigan is one of seven states to sponsor and participate in the national project. Michigan's participation is made possible through federal grant funds obtained by EHDI—which spearheaded the effort.

The video was designed to educate parents on the importance of early follow up. Many families learn that their baby may have hearing loss after a hospital screening, but for a variety of reasons, they don't follow through with more testing. As a result, many babies who are deaf or hard of hearing

go undiagnosed for months (and sometimes years).

The video uses the Hands & Voices parent-to-parent model to educate parents on the importance of getting a full hearing test right away. In the video, parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing share stories of finding out about their child's hearing loss and offer encouragement. They stress the importance of following through on testing and services and "knowing for sure." The video closes with clear direction on how to take the next steps for testing and how to connect with H&V/GBYS (in the event of hearing loss).



EHDI plans to distribute the video to hospitals, doctor's offices and other venues. For more information, visit the EHDI website:

[www.michigan.gov/ehdi](http://www.michigan.gov/ehdi).



## New Washtenaw/Livingston Regional Group

Michigan Hands & Voices is pleased to announce a new regional group in the Washtenaw/Livingston/Western Oakland county area. The group will host playgroups this spring in Hartland and Dexter. The playgroup is free, and siblings are welcome!

- **Monday, March 15th & Monday, April 19th** 10 am - 11:30 am  
Dexter District Library (3255 Alpine St., Dexter, MI 48130)
- **Saturday, March 27th** 10 am - 11:30 am  
Cromaine Library in the Village (3688 Hartland Rd., Hartland, MI 48353).

To RSVP or for more information, contact Regional Outreach Coordinators:

Karen Eisel (734) 426-4539, [kareneisel@att.net](mailto:kareneisel@att.net) or Karen Wisinski (810) 229-6663, [mzwizland@gmail.com](mailto:mzwizland@gmail.com).

## Organize an event in your Area!

Regional groups are a great way to connect with other families of children with hearing loss who live near you. For more information on how you can get a group started in your area, contact Laura Scott at (517) 335-8273 or [scottL5@michigan.gov](mailto:scottL5@michigan.gov).



## Meet the “Guide” by Your Side



Hi, my name is Janel Frost. I live with my husband, Korey, and our four beautiful children in Troy, Michigan. Prior to giving birth to my first child, I worked as a

director for a child development center in Birmingham, Michigan. Since then, I have stayed at home to raise our children. Allyson was born in September, 1998 and Logan was born January 2000.

Our family was the typical family, and we were all growing nicely together. In the spring of 2001, I became pregnant with our third child, Mason. At birth, Mason looked perfect. But weighing in at 1 pound, 12 ounces, he had many complications. Mason spent the first 4 months in the hospital and before coming home, he had 6 surgeries. There were many sleepless nights when the doctors did not know if he would survive. It is hard to say, but we believe Mason may have lost his hearing when he was 2 months old. He developed a very bad blood infection and we think it was either the sickness or the medication used to treat the infection that may have caused his deafness. Either way, he

was alive! It wasn't until Mason was 4 months old, that we found out that he did not pass the baby hearing screening twice and that he may have a hearing loss. I was told from the nurses taking care of him that this was the least of my worries and that there are many things they can do for him if he can't hear. I remember thinking to myself, "What do I do? I don't know anything about having a deaf child." I felt very alone and confused for quite awhile. It wasn't until Mason was 10 months old that we were able to pin-point his hearing loss and he was fitted with hearing aids at 12 months old.

Mason is now 8 years old and is fully mainstreamed into a second grade class. He attends a school that is able to teach him ASL (American Sign Language), and he is able to spend time with other deaf and hard of hearing children. He is a very smart, fun child who brightens the day of everyone he meets.

I feel honored to be a Guide for the Guide By Your Side program. I know from experience how badly I needed and wanted someone to talk to who knew what I was going through. I hope to be able to help others feel a little less alone and confused when faced

with the fact that their little baby is deaf or hard of hearing.

I recently gave birth to our fourth child this January. Peyton Riley was born on January 22nd. It was such a pleasure to watch him get his hearing test done at the hospital and to know that if there was a loss we would have help right away.

*—Janel is a Parent Guide in the MI Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side Program.*

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## Would You Like to be a Parent Guide? Apply today!

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, signers, fathers, and parents of children with additional disabilities are especially needed. For more information, contact Laura Scott at (517) 335-8273 or [scottL5@michigan.gov](mailto:scottL5@michigan.gov).

# Volunteer TODAY!

## Regional Outreach

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

## Special Event Committees

Advocacy Training

Summer Picnic

EHDI Pre-Conference Parent Dinner

Mom’s Night Inn *New*

(Hotel stay, spa treatment, and workshops for Moms)

Dad’s Outing *New*

(Men, we need you to plan an outing just for Dads!)

Holiday Party *New*



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

## Ongoing Committees

Newsletter (soliciting articles and article ideas)

Website (current events & information)



Have an idea or an article for the newsletter?  
Is there something you would like to see H&V offer? We would LOVE to hear from you!!!

Contact Laura Scott at (517) 335-8273 or [scottL5@michigan.gov](mailto:scottL5@michigan.gov).

## WHO WE ARE

Michigan Hands & Voices is a chapter of the nationwide non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as the professionals who serve them. We are a parent-driven, parent/professional collaborative group that is unbiased towards communication modes and methods.

We are parents, teachers, audiologists, and interpreters — just to name a few! Our diverse membership includes those who communicate orally, with signs, with cued speech, and/or combined methods.



## OUR MISSION

Michigan Hands & Voices is dedicated to unbiased support of families who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing. We believe that families will make the best choices for their child if they have access to good information and support. Whether we're at work locally or nationally, Hands & Voices continues to be driven by the need to improve educational outcomes and the quality of life for children with hearing loss. We exist to help our children reach their highest potential!

### Board Members

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

**Newsletter Editor** — Laura Scott

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**We're on the WEB!**



### Website:

[www.mihandsandvoices.org](http://www.mihandsandvoices.org)

### Yahoo Listserv:

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

### Facebook:

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

(Search "Michigan Hands & Voices" under Groups)

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