

# THE WISCONSIN COMMUNICATOR



HANDS &  
VOICES

## Hands & Voices Presentation

Hands & Voices will be presenting "A is for Access" at Kennedy School in Green Bay on Feb 22nd at 6:00 pm.

"A is for Access" is a presentation designed to generate greater awareness of communication access issues for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is targeted to professionals as well as parents.

The presentation is being done in partnership with D.E.A.F of Green Bay, an organization that links educators and families in the area.

If you would like more information about this event please contact us at [handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com](mailto:handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com) or 920-437-7370.

## 5TH ANNUAL STATEWIDE PARENT CONFERENCE "FAMILIES: CELEBRATING OUR DIFFERENCES, HONORING OUR CHOICES"

The 5th Annual Statewide Parent Conference is scheduled for March 9-11, 2007 at the Marriott West in Middleton, WI. The goal of the conference is to bring families of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind together in a supportive, educational, and enjoyable atmosphere. The conference offers the opportunity for valuable personal contact with parents and children from around the state of Wisconsin, as well as professionals in the field through workshops,

discussion groups, and vendor exhibits. The conference is designed with many fun, educational activities to support your family's development and growth. The keynote speaker, Susan Elliott, is an experienced teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, and a deaf adult, and she will focus her keynote and breakout sessions on "Raising an Independent Child." Other beginning and advanced level topics are scheduled. A detailed workshop list and registration forms can be



found at  
[www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov](http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov). or  
by contacting Laurie Nelson at 608-266-6438 or [laurie.nelson@wesp-dhh.wi.gov](mailto:laurie.nelson@wesp-dhh.wi.gov).

## INTRODUCTION LETTER BY NEW BOARD MEMBER JEN EVANS

I am so pleased to be serving on the Hands & Voices Board and I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce myself. I married my husband, Scott, eight years ago. Our greatest accomplishment in those years was becoming the proud parents of two sons. Our oldest, Sam is 6 and in the first grade. He is a great student who loves sports and Nintendo. He is also an amazing big brother to our younger son Zachary who is 3 and in our school

district's Early Childhood Program. Zachary is an active little boy who wants to and tries to do EVERYTHING his big brother does, much to the dismay of his parents. Zachary is quickly becoming a great learner like his brother and enjoys school very much. He cries when we leave the house and realizes we are not headed there. Sam is hearing and Zachary is profoundly deaf with a cochlear implant. I am so excited to be part of Hands &

Voices and look forward to the opportunity. I was drawn to their philosophy as an organization and to their desire to help families and Deaf/HH children alike achieve their highest potential. I am a strong believer in advocacy and it's ability to make a positive difference for our children and Hands & Voices commitment to doing that. It is really an honor to be able to be a part of such a wonderful group.

**WI Families for Hands & Voices**

PO Box 9644  
Green Bay, WI 54308  
Phone: 920-437-7370  
Email: [handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com](mailto:handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com)

**We are on the web!**  
[www.handsandvoices.org](http://www.handsandvoices.org)

**Board Members**

Molly Martzke  
President

Laurie Nelson  
Vice President

Connie Breaker  
Treasurer

Carolyn Bossert  
Secretary

Marcy Dicker

Jen Evans

Elizabeth Seeliger

# Parent Support and Advocacy for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## Our Mission:

Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology. 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.

---

## The Guide-By-Your-Side Program

The Guide-By-Your-Side Program links parents of children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind with families of newly diagnosed children with hearing loss.

The Guide-By-Your-Side Program is comprised of approximately 15-20 trained "Parent Guides" representing the five Department of Health and Family Services regions of the state of Wisconsin. Parent Guides will work with parents of newly diagnosed children who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind by providing up to 6 hours of home visits to provide support, answer questions and provide information and resources for the family. When a child is identified with a hearing loss (with the parent's consent), the audiologist will

make a referral (through WE-TRAC, a data and tracking system) to the WESP-DHH Outreach Program and the child's County Birth to 3 Program. The WESP-DHH Outreach Program will link a Parent Guide with the family and Parent Guides will initiate a home visit within 2 weeks of the referral. Parent Guides will also ensure that connections to the County Birth to 3 Program or local school district are made. This service is free-of-charge.

The goal of the Guide-By-Your-Side Program is to provide parents of newly identified children with hearing loss with opportunities to meet with a Parent Guide in order to: 1) provide parents with the opportunity to establish a supportive relationship

with another parent of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing; 2) provide parents with unbiased information regarding communication options for their child; 3) provide parents with an understanding of the unique needs of infants who are deaf/hard of hearing; 4) link parents to resources available locally, regionally and statewide; and 5) to effectively link families to their county Birth to 3 Program or school district.

To make a referral to the Guide-By-Your-Side Program, please contact Laurie Nelson at 608-266-6438 or [laurie.nelson@wesp-dhh.wi.gov](mailto:laurie.nelson@wesp-dhh.wi.gov).