

THE WISCONSIN COMMUNICATOR



HANDS &
VOICES

Hands & Voices Parent Support

To help parents provide support for one another, Hands & Voices is inviting all of its members to participate in our new Parent-to-Parent Matching Program.

By enrolling in the program parents will be able to help others by sharing experiences, frustration, knowledge, and joys. Parents can be matched by a variety of options, such as, degree of loss, communication approach, location and child's age.

To learn more about this program please see the enclosed form or contact us at handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com or 920-437-7370.

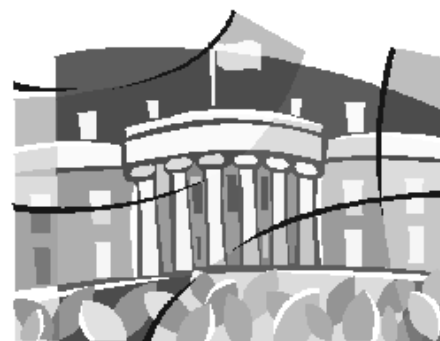
HEARING AID & COCHLEAR IMPLANT LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices has worked closely with State Representative Marlin Schneider to introduce a bill in the State of Wisconsin to have insurance companies cover hearing aids and cochlear implants for children the age of ten and younger. The bill has been assigned the number AB-133 in the assembly and has a companion SB-88 in the state senate.

We need all of the assistance that we can get **NOW** as the Bill has been assigned to the Insurance Committee who tends to see insurance companies and agencies as their primary constituents. We must remind them that they have voters at home who have children who need or support this legislative initiative. Public pressure is the primary method to ensure at least a public hearing and the Bill being voted out of committee. All of the other parliamentary alternative methods will be for naught if we cannot get overwhelming public support like letters, phone calls and e-mails to their legislators. **PLEASE SEND IN YOUR STORIES AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT!!**

The legislators currently on the Insurance Committee are:

Representative Frank Lasee (Chair) - Green Bay
Representative John Nygren (Vice-Chair) - Marinette
Representative Phil Montgomery - Green Bay
Representative Karl Van Roy - Green Bay
Representative Joan Ballweg - Markesan
Representative Terry Moulton - Chippewa Falls
Representative Bill Kramer - Waukesha
Representative David Cullen - Milwaukee
Representative Terese Berceau - Madison
Representative Robert Ziegelbauer - Manitowoc
Representative Joseph Parisi - Madison
Representative Steve Hilgenberg - Dodgeville



The companion legislation in the State Senate should have an easier time getting through, with State Senator Julie Lassa assisting it. The focus needs to be on the State Assembly which has not indicated any support for this initiative -- as it is seen as another governmental mandate. If you or you know anyone living in any of these legislator's district, have them contact their legislator. Even if your Representative is not on the Insurance Committee, still contact them, as they can pressure the insurance committee members to not only move the Bill through, but to hopefully support it.

Please contact us at handsandvoiceswi@yahoo.com or 920-437-7370 if you would like to help us ensure this legislation is a success.

WI Families for Hands & Voices

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We are on the web!
www.handsandvoices.org

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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.

INTRODUCTION LETTER BY NEW BOARD MEMBER HOLLY BAUER

Hello everyone! My name is Holly Bauer, and I am a new member of Hands and Voices. I will be serving as a member on the board. I also happen to be deaf, which will be a great asset to your organization. I am excited to be part of Hands and Voices and can't wait to meet everyone. I have heard this is a great group!

I would like to share a little about myself. I am originally from Chicago, Illinois. My family and I moved to Wisconsin in 1985. I currently live in Columbus with two feline roommates, Trey and Moka. I grew up with all kinds of pets my whole life, but I definitely am a cat person. I had hamsters, gerbils, toads and dogs. I work full-time in the Health

Department of American Family Insurance and have been employed there for almost 7 years.

I was born deaf and grew up with an older, deaf sister who has passed. I miss Heather greatly, and she made a huge impact on my life.

As a child, I was taught sign language. When I entered school I was encouraged to learn to read lips and develop my oral communication skills. I attended a public school while living in Illinois. When my family and I moved to Wisconsin, I attended a deaf school. Both schools impacted me differently; I was inspired to be in "both worlds."

In addition to working full time, I also work as a deaf mentor. It brings me great joy to be able to help deaf and HOH children, and to serve as a positive role model. I love to see parents and their child(ren) communicating with one another, sometimes for the first time. I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve such a vital function in young, deaf children's lives, and I wouldn't give up the experience for anything.

I am proud to have the opportunity to be part of Hands and Voices. I truly believe in the mission at Hands and Voices, and I believe my experiences will serve as a great asset to your fine organization.