

THE WISCONSIN COMMUNICATOR



HANDS &
VOICES

HA/CI Legislation

It is time to take action on Senate Bill 88 – the bill that would require insurance coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants for children under the age of 11. The bill has not been put up for a hearing, and without a hearing the bill will die in committee. So, we need people to write Senator Breske and the other members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Insurance **to tell them to schedule a hearing on the bill.**

The letter should be written and mailed to Senator Roger Breske. If you are able, it would also be great to send a copy of your letter to the rest of the Committee members.

You can find the State Senators contact information at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us>. Click on Senate Committees and then on the committee for Transportation, Tourism, and Insurance.

Coffee Clutches

By Laurie Nelson, GBYS Co-Coordinator

Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices and the Guide-By-Your-Side (GBYS) Program invite you to join us for a cup of java and a spoonful of friendship.

Learning of your child's hearing loss can leave you with a ton of questions, right? Sure, you can ask an audiologist, ENT, or pediatrician, but sometimes you may not even know what to ask. Do you feel overwhelmed? Do you ever wish there was another parent you could talk to? ABSOLUTELY! I have been a Parent Guide with the Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices Guide-By-Your-Side (GBYS) Program for the last four years. The GBYS Program is a parent to parent matching program for families with children who are diagnosed with hearing loss. This position has given me numerous opportunities to talk with families of newly diagnosed children and I am so often asked, "what does your child look like?", "how do you communicate with your child?", "can your child talk?", "what should I do?", etc. Parents have a natural desire to glimpse at their child's future by meeting other children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing.

We are happy to be able to offer families throughout the state opportunities to meet, learn from, and share experiences of raising well adjusted successful kids. Parent Guides and Hands & Voices members are joining together to organize regional, informal events called Coffee Clutches. Each event will have its own flavor. Whether you prefer your coffee black or loaded with cream and sugar, or will choose lemonade instead, these events are for you! We will have representation from families of children of all ages and stages to talk about the thrills and challenges of raising our incredible children.

Look for more information about dates, times, and locations of events in your area to be posted soon on our website at www.handsandvoiceswi.org.

Wisconsin may be known for its hot summers and cold winters, but I am proud to be raising my hard of hearing daughter in a state that is so supportive of families like ours!



GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE

What Do Parents Need to Know About Recommended Practices in Deaf Education?

What if... you could easily find out what instructional practices are recommended in deaf education? What if...there were efforts in your region to bring these practices to the attention of more parents and teachers? What if...you could help the website designers to make this information more user friendly for parents and teachers?

That very thing is happening with Project CHOICES, through funding from the Join-Together Grant at Michigan State University. Join-Together project director Dr. Harold Johnson spoke

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We are on the web!
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at the H&V National Parent Leadership conference in July. Twenty-two Hands & Voices parent leaders in thirteen states, including WI, are participating in a short-term blitz to bring this information to more and more families and teachers, as well as give feedback to Dr. Johnson and others on the Join-Together Project website materials at www.deafed.net.

To quote the overall project description:

“The primary problem of students who are deaf or hard of hearing is not too little hearing, but too much isolation from peers, meaningful learning opportunities and high expectations for academic performance.”

“The primary problem of preschool through high school deaf ed teachers is not too little effort, but too much difficulty in collaborating with peers, in sharing effective instructional practices, and accessing needed learning resources.”

“The primary problem of deaf ed teacher preparation is not too little innovations, but too much theory that is not grounded in the day to day instructional practices of the nation’s most effective teachers (i.e. Master Teachers) of students who are deaf/hh.”

The CHOICES project along with other Join-Together activities are designed to address the problems of isolation and collaboration through sharing successful methods with computer based, Internet linked technologies to establish a virtual school for professional development.

How can you get involved? Start by joining the www.deafed.net website as a registered user, and click on the “Resources” page to look for the links to recommended practices and see the information for yourself. Maybe you’ll find a new strategy that will reach your child or students, and maybe you’ll learn a name for a practice that you are already successfully implementing.

Let us know what you did with the information you found!

INTRODUCTION LETTER BY NEW BOARD ALICIA BOEHME

Hi. I am pleased to be the newest member of the Hands and Voices Board.

I want to introduce myself. My name is Alicia, and among other things, I am a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend and an employee. I am originally from Ohio, but moved to Wisconsin over 10 years ago thinking I would only stay here a few years. Well, I’m still here and love this wonderful state and the people I have met.

The two most important people in my life are my husband, Janko, and my son, Oliver. Janko and I have been married for 3 years. Oliver was born a year ago and is a delightful little boy. He is in the process of mastering the skill of walking and loves to play hide and seek. Oliver failed his hearing screening test at birth and was diagnosed with bilateral mild to moderate hearing loss.

I work part-time as an advocate for Disability Rights Wisconsin. I focus on a variety of civil rights discrimination issues such as employment discrimination, housing discrimination, voting rights, and access. I believe that the world is made a more interesting place with diversity, and that people should focus on abilities rather than disabilities.

I know that I will learn from the Hands and Voices community and plan to give my all as a board member.