

voice

for hearing impaired children

Developing a
Self-Confident Child

A Mother's Letter to
Her Son

Sound Matters

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"I Believe"
VOICE Conference
2012

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WE BELIEVE!



The VOICE Conference, held the first weekend in May each year during Speech and Hearing Month, celebrated its 20th anniversary. We welcomed the Ontario Minister of Health, The Honourable Deb Matthews and her parliamentary assistant, MPP Liz Sandals, and recognized Minister Matthews for her support of Ontario's cochlear implant programs. The VOICE Conference theme this year was "I Believe." The parents who started the VOICE organization more than 45 years ago and VOICE parents, John and Sharon Bergen, who

two decades ago inspired the VOICE Conference, believed their children could learn to hear and speak if supports and services were available for them. Their hope, and the hopes and dreams of parents of children with hearing loss to this day, are reflected in this VOICE organization belief statement:

"VOICE believes in a future where children with hearing loss are fully integrated and independent members of the community, contributing to their fullest potential."

The teens who participated in the Teen Leadership program this year, summed it up well in this spontaneous video filmed live at the Conference and produced by VOICE member, Bill Quesnel, with our thanks. We invite you to take a look at <http://youtu.be/yQdz1WAtEuQ>

The list of VOICE accomplishments over the years are many and too numerous to mention here. Suffice it to say that we have come a long way towards achieving our mission. It may be that because of the tremendous achievements by children with hearing loss to successfully learn to hear and speak, this very success threatens the traditionally available supports for deaf and hard of hearing students in the mainstream. The role of the itinerant teacher of the deaf is critical to their successful achievement. Read more in this issue about the impact of these dedicated teachers with a tribute to one such teacher, as Tina Olmstead retires from a long-standing position with the Ottawa Carlton District School Board (OCDSB). The programs and services for students with hearing loss at the OCDSB have been recognized as exemplary, in large part due to the commitment and passion of teachers like Tina. Regrettably, in some jurisdictions, specialists teachers of the deaf no longer have the board mandate to provide direct support to students. Regrettably, if the expertise of teachers of the deaf is not available to directly support students with hearing loss, student achievement will be compromised. This premise is reflected in the Letter To My Son by VOICE parent and classroom teacher Cherie Stanley.

If you had a chance to attend the Advocacy 101 session at the VOICE Conference, you saw first-hand the passion for our children in the presentation by parents, James Borer and Rhonda Quesnel. If you missed it you will be able to view the video on the VOICE website.

Today, the VOICE programs, mission, and values remain strong. As VOICE families know, we're working towards a day when no child is left out or left behind.

That's why VOICE exists.

But, it will take a virtual village. We'll need to make each voice count, using social media tools as our megaphone. In a few short months, we've found new ways to connect – our Twitter feed alone now has over 1,000 followers (Follow us @VOICE4DEAFKIDS). People are listening to what VOICE has to say as we lead our community into action.

Through our tweets, we can continue to advocate for progressive programs and collaborate with our community partners on a massive scale. With our virtual network, we can connect families living outside our borders to VOICE in Canada, so they can learn and be encouraged through each others' experiences. Through online chat forums, we can figure out how to address challenges and break down barriers together. We can stay in touch between VOICE events and celebrate each individual's journey captured through photos and videos. In 2012 we will be enhancing our website and e-learning opportunities to provide even greater opportunities for you.

Your stories, parents and professionals, are worth sharing. VOICE invites you to take action with us:

- **ENGAGE** with the VOICE online community
- **CONNECT** with others in our virtual village
- Tell your story and **EDUCATE** others that children with hearing loss can talk
- Share your experiences with AV therapy and VOICE professional **TRAINING**
- **SUPPORT** other families in their journey
- Become a vocal **ADVOCATE** for the difference VOICE has made in your child's life

Together we give children with hearing loss a VOICE for life!



<http://www.facebook.com/VOICEforHearingImpairedChildren>



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Sound Matters

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2012 VOICE CONFERENCE IN PICTURES



THANK YOU to The Honourable Minister Deb Matthews for supporting children with hearing loss!



Testimonial

Supportive Hearing Systems has been exhibiting at the VOICE annual conference for the past 15 years and it is always a highlight of the conference season. VOICE is well known for attracting first-rank presenters and for the professionalism with which the conference is run. As a perennial exhibitor we find VOICE a unique conference that brings together professionals and families who are well informed and eager to learn about our assistive technologies. The venue (Rozanski Hall, University of Guelph) is spacious for exhibits and all of the displays are well attended. Our thanks to VOICE for mounting a first-class conference year after year, for the appreciation shown to us as exhibitors, and for a fun day when we get to meet the families who rely on our equipment.

Paul Toner, President,
Supportive Hearing Systems Inc.



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Your child can connect more closely to the world with the Oticon ConnectLine Microphone –the ideal complement to your Safari hearing instruments

Children and teens of all ages want to connect to electronic devices. This can be challenging for children wearing hearing aids. With advances in Bluetooth™ and wireless technology they are now able to get connected. Chatting with friends, listening to music, watching movies and playing computer games can be done with far more ease than before! And with the ConnectLine Mic, listening

performance is dramatically improved – even in places where one-to-one conversations might before have been very difficult or even impossible. The small, discreet wireless microphone is worn by the person speaking and their voice is wirelessly transmitted to the hearing instruments through the Streamer. Whatever they're doing and wherever they go, ConnectLine and Safari keep you in control.



In Memorium Robert "Bob" Harvey Porter

(July 31, 1948 - May 8, 2012)

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Bob Porter on May 8, 2012 at the age of 63. Bob volunteered on the planning committee and participated in the annual VOICE golf tournament fundraiser for many years. He and his wife, Sue, a teacher of the deaf and A-V therapist, were committed to supporting the work of VOICE. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.



VOICE enjoyed a special visit by Bryan Adams. We are grateful for the past support of the Bryan Adams Foundation



VOICE Teen Harry Quesnel had the opportunity to meet Bryan Adams during his visit to the VOICE office. Harry has just received his cochlear implant and you can see his experience pre and post surgery in these youtube clips

Part 1 <http://youtu.be/0x6wY6QRfAM>

Part 2 <http://youtu.be/SKpwjOrrIX4>

VOICE is tremendously grateful for the 30-year-long support of The Masonic Foundation of Ontario. We would particularly like to acknowledge the personal involvement over many years of Masonic Foundation member, Mr. Don Jagger



VOICE news



Congratulations to the Elks of Canada on its 100th anniversary! VOICE is appreciative of the history it has shared with the Elks of Canada and grateful for their long-standing support!



VOICE is pleased to acknowledge Shawna Akerman's Ontario Volunteer Service Award. Many VOICE families know Shawna from VOICE Camp and will recognize her for her tireless energy. Shawna has given her time to VOICE in many ways over the years whether she is wearing her parent hat or teacher of the deaf hat. In her own words ... "I love VOICE and have always believed in what we do."

We love you too Shawna!
CONGRATULATIONS!

VOICE Provides TWO Professional Development Workshops

By Anita Bernstein, LSLS Cert AVT, VOICE Director of Therapy and Training Programs



On May 3rd VOICE conducted its inaugural workshop to Ontario's French Language School Boards on *Supporting Francophone Learners with a Hearing Loss Who Are Listening and Speaking in Mainstream Classrooms*. The workshop was designed to provide information on maximizing success for students with hearing loss who use hearing technology and spoken communication and are learning alongside their typically hearing peers in mainstream settings. Educators, speech-language pathologists and hearing professionals gathered to learn, discuss and share knowledge and experiences in assisting students who are deaf or hard of hearing to learn to listen and speak.

The keynote speaker, Suzanne P. Doucet, a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist/Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapist is the educational supervisor responsible for the training program in education of student with hearing loss in New Brunswick.

Doucet described the changing demographics of today's student with hearing loss. Universal Infant Hearing Screening and technological advances has made it possible for over 90% of children with hearing loss to learn to listen and use spoken communication. She discussed the impact of hearing loss on different aspects of the child's life; its implications for learning and the need for specialized intervention. Suzanne Doucet shared the support model, based on auditory-verbal principles, utilized by the New Brunswick Department of Education. These principles are outlined by the AGBell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language (www.agbellacademy.org).

The New Brunswick model of intervention for students with hearing loss includes:

- Services provided to children with hearing loss from preschool, through post secondary education level
- Interventions based on identified needs rather than audiological results
- Programming developed from assessment data
- Intervention goals include: audition, speech articulation, language, cognition/academics, communication and parent guidance for home follow up
- Parent involvement in the intervention and participation in sessions at school
- Collaborative teams of educators and health professionals to

support the needs of these students

In the afternoon presentations focused on francophone training programs for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing and auditory-verbal specialization programs available in Ontario.

1. Roger Gauthier, Coordinator of Professional Development Programs at the University of Ottawa, presented the francophone teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing training program.
2. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick also at the University of Ottawa, described the certificate in auditory-verbal studies available in English and French
3. Nicole Nayman and Muriel Mischook, VOICE mentors, described the VOICE Auditory-Verbal Training and Mentoring Program offered in English and French. Denise Maisonneuve, teacher of the deaf currently participating in the mentorship program, discussed her learning experience and profound change in intervention practice as she develops a specialized skill set to provide services to students who have a hearing loss and are leaning to listen and speak.

The response from attendees has been very positive and further workshops to support professionals who provide intervention to students in French School Boards are being planned.

On May 4th renowned speaker and clinician, Karen Anderson, PhD, conducted a day-long workshop on *Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss*.

Anderson is well known by professionals who provide intervention to children who have hearing loss, as the author of the Screening Instrument For Targeting Educational Risk (SIFTER) in children with hearing loss, the Secondary SIFTER, and the Early Listening Function (ELF), and co-author of the Preschool SIFTER, Listening Instrument For Education (LIFE), Children's Home Inventory of Listening Difficulties (CHILD), and the guidance document Relationship of Hearing Loss to Listening and Learning Needs. She has recently co-authored the publication *Building Skills for School Success in the Fast-Paced Classroom: Optimizing Achievement for Students with Hearing Loss* and launched the online resource website Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss (see www.successforkidswithhearingloss.com).



Anderson summarized her presentation in the article below:

The world of educating students with hearing loss has changed considerably in recent years. Students with hearing loss are now more likely than ever before to be mainstreamed into a typical classroom in their home districts. This means that from kindergarten to 12th grade, a student using hearing aids and/or cochlear implants, more often than not, will be the only student with hearing loss in his

school. This is the “new DHH student” and educators often believe that if language and academics are commensurate with age peers then the student is “fine” and no services are needed. Despite entering school with improved language and listening skills as compared to prior decades, today’s student with hearing loss continues to remain at a disadvantage when learning in a large group setting with fast-paced teacher and peer communication. The advantages of early intervention that provided a headstart to school entry can easily erode as gaps appear in language and knowledge over time.

It is critical for school staff and parents to have an accurate view of how much verbal instruction the student with hearing loss is able to access in the typical classroom setting. Typical class peers are able to perceive 90% or better when speech is presented at a quiet volume in

the presence of an equal level of noise. It comes as no surprise that the student with hearing loss, even with excellent technology, will miss more classroom communication than their peers. Identifying access to verbal instruction and the student’s greatest listening challenges need to be the lens through which consideration of all other needs are based.

Once the listening challenges have been identified it is important for the student’s future success to be able to know how to appropriately advocate for his communication needs. Self-advocacy skill goals should be considered hand-in-hand with classroom accommodations as both are necessary if the student is to achieve equal access to verbal instruction and peer communication.

Students with hearing loss, like all children, are learning who they are in the world and figuring out what society expects of them. Without typical hearing, subtle auditory cues are missed and nonverbal cues can be misinterpreted or ignored. Delays in social skills are typical, as is the tendency for tweens and teens to want to reject their hearing devices. Specific attention to providing words for emotions and linking them to nonverbal cues, social skills and the emotional well-being of students with hearing loss is critical if they are to grow up to feel as though they truly fit in to their peer group as well-liked members.

Dress Loud Day 2012!

A Very LOUD Thank You!

Dress Loud Day 2012

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children would like to give a loud shout-out and thank you to all those who participated in Dress Loud Day this past May. To coincide with Speech and Hearing month, students and business professionals donned their wildest and wackiest attire to raise money for VOICE and raise awareness that children with hearing loss can listen and speak.

VOICE saw its biggest Dress Loud Day yet, with over 120 schools and businesses participating! VOICE is very grateful for the tremendous support that our Dress Loud participants showed, getting in the spirit with outrageous outfits, going above and beyond with their fundraising, and holding assemblies and meetings to teach students and colleagues more about hearing loss. We even had some of our members volunteer to speak at schools to teach students more about hearing loss. Our Dress Loud Day participants are helping us spread the word about children with hearing loss, and we can’t thank them all enough!

VOICE would also like to thank Kernels Popcorn and Sound Listening Environments for donating grand prizes to our winning participating schools. Their support has helped us make this year’s Dress Loud Day an immense success!





**Proud to support
the 20th Annual
Conference I Believe.**

**We're working together with
VOICE for Hearing Impaired
Children to make a difference
in our communities.**





Ingredients for Developing a Self-Confident Child with Hearing Loss

Karen Anderson, PhD, keynote speaker at the VOICE 2012 conference, addressed a series of issues which are on every parent's mind: how do I help my child become a confident communicator, socially competent, knowledgeable about his/her own technological needs and listening challenges and be better able to advocate for him/herself. In a nutshell, how do I raise an independent, self-confident child?

Karen Anderson is an educational audiologist who has worked in clinical, educational, and early intervention settings to address the needs of children with hearing loss. She is currently an educational consultant and has recently launched the online resource website for parents and professionals *Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss* (see www.successforkidswithhearingloss.com) and co-authored the publication *Building Skills for School Success in the Fast-Paced Classroom: Optimizing Achievement for Students with Hearing Loss*.

In her presentation Anderson discussed the key role played by families in building social language and communication confidence. She identified the foundation skills parents can focus on for building confidence and a few are outlined below:

1. Ensure consistent, dependable hearing technology which is in excellent working order and used during all waking hours. The child can then develop confidence and depend on a consistent signal which will provide auditory access to language learning opportunities
2. Encourage and expect independence with hearing technology. To assist parents and professionals to have realistic expectations of children's developing skills, Anderson designed a skill hierarchy – The SEAM (Student Expectations for Advocacy & Monitoring) – which provides expectations for the level of independence a child should have with their hearing devices. It ranges from preschool through to high school
3. Assist your child in developing age appropriate social skills. All children need to be taught how to behave socially. Anderson emphasized that children with hearing loss may require special training because they miss out on auditory and social cues which help inform and guide hearing children on what is socially appropriate behaviour for a variety of situations

Anderson identified three strategies to help shape social skills:

1. TEACH – Explain what the child should do, be aware of, wait for, think about – don't assume he knows!
2. MODEL – Use good social skills yourself, role-play with your child, provide the words for what s/he's feeling.
3. WATCH AND SUPPORT – Reinforce good social behaviours – be specific about what s/he did well!

Use these ingredients to develop a self-confident communicator:

- Provide exposure to vocabulary used by peers
- Provide plenty of opportunities for children to interact with others – social language is mainly learned through exposure in social settings. Make sure your child has strong connections with other children with hearing loss
- Talk about feelings! Actively problem solve social issues
- Model and discuss ways to deal with challenging listening situations
- Problem solve and role play ahead of time what kinds of listening challenges can happen and what the child can do if he doesn't hear what another child says



feature

By Sheila Duke

Member of The Fabulous Five



Tribute to Tina!

The invitation told us the party colours were black and white, with a splash of red. My favourite colours, what could be easier! A splash of red, for this event, one item and only one item would do, a red feather boa, special for me, because of the special people it represents. The party was in honour of one of those people, Tina Olmstead. Tina and her colleague, Penny Cumbaa, gave me the boa as a present for a very special birthday many years ago.

Tina, itinerant teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), will be retiring after 32 years of teaching in the Ottawa area, her colleagues were giving her a party and we were all invited. For several years, Tina played a very significant role in my family's life as itinerant teacher for my daughter Carolyn and afterwards she continues to be a dear friend.

The invitation was also special because I don't usually receive invitations to this type of event, a retirement party given by the itinerant teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing for a colleague. Current students and families, let alone former students and their families aren't usually invited.

But this time it was different – all of us were invited. Very special person, very special event, it was to be a reunion of all of Tina's families, of everyone connected with Tina for the past 32 years.

Special it was. The room was packed with about 120 people: a huge celebration of friendship, love, respect, gratitude, and thanks, a celebration with happiness and joy, laughter, and even a few tears. As a warm-up act, Katya Kogan, one of Tina's graduating students, performed an energetic swing dance number with her dance partner. Christine Pugh then began by announcing that Tina has won the Ronald K. Lynch Award for outstanding and significant contribution reflecting a sustained compassionate and dedicated commitment by a teacher in the special education field in the OCDSB for 2012. That really says it all. How can anyone top that? But they tried with their personal stories and tributes and by their very presence at the event.

Tina asked to speak first. She quoted Helen Keller: "Life is a daring adventure, or nothing," and said the motto at the weekly teachers meeting is: "Let's make it happen." She described herself as an ordinary person who has had extraordinary opportunities. How fortunate for us, all parents of hearing impaired children! She said that the party was a chance for her to express her gratitude and appreciation to all for all that has happened in her life. I am sure the feeling was reciprocal for everyone in the audience.

Judy Simser related how that when she left the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) for Taiwan, she knew her families would be

in good hands when Tina took over their care. Later, when Judy needed help developing an auditory-verbal center in Taipei and in training therapists, she called on Tina. Judy and Tina entertained us with a hilarious impromptu rendition of their 6 A.M. fan dancing (sans fans) in the local park in Taipei.

The itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, all 11 of them, presented a short skit where each teacher wore a hat with a different label, representing Tina's qualities – ambassador for auditory-verbal therapy, mentor, professor, auditory-verbal therapist and consultant, teacher, colleague, social worker, diplomat, parent guidance specialist, friend, and inspiration. At the end of the skit, Tina was wearing all 11 hats.

When she first came to Ottawa, she had five families on her caseload, the Simsers, the Ruddicks, the Iveys, the Hamiltons, and the Dukes. The mothers called themselves "The Fabulous Five," fondly self-named by member, Judy Simser. The five students were tweens and teens, all profoundly deaf, all in their various neighbourhood schools, all with similar yet different needs. She had the ingenious idea to get the kids together on a regular basis to share experiences and ideas, have fun and help support each other. All these students are in their 40s now.

My personal memories, in addition to her friendship and dedication, are of her persistence, determination, and creativity. At that time she thought the best thing for my daughter, Carolyn, might be to attend one of the mini-enrichment courses for middle grade students run by the universities. She suggested that Carolyn be nominated by her local school. When that didn't happen, she asked her boss, Superintendent of Special Services, Dr. John Jarrett, to nominate her. To his credit, Dr. Jarrett said that if Tina wanted it, that was good enough for him. As a result, that year Carolyn attended the first of several mini-enrichment courses. Thank you, Tina for believing in us, believing it can be done and for making it happen. Thank you for kindling the spark.

Tina was more than a teacher to the parents. She became our trusted friend and part of our families in a very real sense. She was invited to our parties and events over the years. I babysat her first child, Brett, and Tina attended fitness classes conducted by Maggie Hamilton, a member of The Fabulous Five.

Nathan Owen-Going, who has a PhD in environmental biology, works for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as a risk manager and is the national chair for Persons with Disabilities in the federal government. He had Tina as his itinerant teacher in high school. Nathan told us of Tina's tremendous support, friendship, and kindness, that they shared the same sense of humour and imagination, so it was easy for them to

relate to each other. He credits her for much of his success.

Scott Simser, now a lawyer and tax analyst, offered his memories to tell *Sound Matters*: he remembers Tina as his itinerant teacher for five years, from grade 8 until the end of high school. He says she was the best! The lessons were at lunch hour. He says that she must have been so good for him to look forward to her lessons while his friends were outside having fun.

Before the event, Tina took some moments from her busy schedule to tell *Sound Matters* a bit about herself. Tina grew up in Canton, Ohio. Her connection with hearing impairment goes back to her own childhood. Her grandmother's sister had a daughter, Betty, who was deaf. Her grandmother often talked about Betty but Tina did not meet her until she was 12. At that time, Betty was married and had three children who had normal hearing. Betty and her husband went to Clarke School for the Deaf and had learned to speak without any type of amplification. At the age of 12, Tina was curious about how these two people could speak but could not hear. Then when Tina was 16, her neighbours adopted a baby who at age two was diagnosed as profoundly deaf and was fitted with hearing aids. Tina became her babysitter and when she practice-taught, the little girl was actually in her class. Tina saw her periodically whenever she would visit her family during Christmas holidays. She is married now and has a daughter. When it was time for Tina to go off to University, her mother's best friend, who was supervisor of the Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, invited her to visit the program and sit in on some classes. That sealed her fate and she was hooked. Lucky for us, Tina went into education knowing that she would come out as a teacher of the deaf.

Her route to Ottawa was via Montreal and Dr. Daniel Ling's program in Communication Disorders at McGill University. In 1974, Tina attended her first AG Bell Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. She heard Dr. Ling speak and was immediately impressed by his knowledge, skills, and magic with children. She saw him again in 1976 at the AG Bell Convention in Washington, DC. He was offering a colloquium on teaching speech to deaf children in Montreal in August 1976 so she decided to attend. It was there that she heard Judy Simser's presentation and was so enthralled with all that Dan Ling and Nan Philips were doing that she wanted to come to McGill to study under Dr. Ling. Although Dr. Ling's opinion was that his program was geared to regular teachers and not teachers of the deaf, he left the door open by saying, "Write me a letter and tell me why you want to come!" She wrote the letter immediately upon her return to Ohio. Long story short, Tina ended up doing a research degree in communication disorders and could take any courses she wanted. When she announced to Eric, her boyfriend of eight years, that she was moving to Canada, it precipitated a marriage proposal.

Tina and Eric moved to Montreal where Tina learned all about "Learning to Listen" and teaching speech to deaf children from a master teacher and Eric pursued audiology, after a chat with Dr. Ling acting as his career counsellor. Tina was in regular communication with Judy Simser and Dr. Andr  e Durieux-Smith, who obtained her PhD at McGill and was chief of audiology at CHEO. In 1980, a position opened up in Ottawa, Tina became that teacher in the school boards

under contract from CHEO and Eric was hired as an audiologist at the Civic Hospital. Tina and Eric had planned to stay for two years, gain experience and then return to Ohio but they loved their new friends and their jobs and they loved Ottawa. Ohio's loss was Ottawa's gain. Canadians are often accused of exporting our homegrown talent, but this time we imported Ohio's homegrown talent.

In addition to her teaching duties, Tina generously devoted much of her time to helping the Ottawa chapter of VOICE, sitting on the board of VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children and on the board of Auditory/Verbal International, Inc. (now integrated into AG Bell), and presenting at conferences around the world.

In retirement, she will continue to be active in the academic field. This year she will be teaching a section of a certificate course in auditory-verbal studies at the University of Ottawa. Tina and Eric love to spend as much time as possible with their three children and grandson who live nearby. To celebrate the beginning of her new lifestyle, she and four colleagues plan a trip to Greece this summer.

She said that her job has changed over the years but the underlying principles remain the same – the focus on listening, speech and language, with the family as still the most significant member of the team!

She warns that it is easy to get complacent and think that all children with hearing loss receive the type of instruction that our students receive but there are many places in Canada and around the world that lack specialized teachers and services. She adds that we need to examine teacher of the deaf preparation programs and ensure that courses prepare teachers who are knowledgeable and highly skilled; that without good educators in the schools, some children may not reach their full potential. Assistive listening technology such as FM systems is constantly changing and teachers need to be current so that school environments are accessible.

Tina cherishes the friendships she has made over the years and from the warm atmosphere in the room it was obvious the feeling is mutual.

Good luck, Tina! Happy Retirement!

Tina Olmstead
Ch"ear"s to you
On your retirement!

My Life with Hearing Aids

Matthew is a VOICE Alumna representative on the VOICE Board of Directors and a committed VOICE volunteer

Hello, my name is Matthew Wren. At the age of 1 1/2, I was diagnosed hard-of-hearing and received my first pair of hearing aids. At the time, my mom unknowingly questioned the audiologist and asked “How long will he have to wear them for?” and 25 years later, I’m still wearing them and will for the rest of my life. Therefore, I’ve had many experiences with my hearing aids, both good and bad in my life. This includes experiences at school as I’m currently attending University of Guelph for Hotel and Food Administration and plan to graduate in 2015. Thus, please allow me to share some of my experiences with my hearing aids and my experiences with a hearing loss.

When people say to you “I have good news and bad news, which do you want first?” What do you choose? Personally, I want the bad news first so that it is out of the way. With that being said, I can recall many “bad” incidents where ignorant people feel the need to comment on my hearing aids and my “deafness.” It is especially frustrating when people feel overly sympathetic towards me because I am deaf. For example, I was recently sitting at Williams Café at the University of Guelph in between classes trying to study for mid-terms like a “normal” student. I had sat down for about five minutes when a girl, whom I’ve never met before, sat down on the opposite end of the couch. I acknowledged her with a gentle nod and went about my reading. She initiated a conversation by asking what I was reading. I responded that I was catching up on my business course material and was reviewing for an upcoming quiz. After a few minutes of small talk, she noticed that I wore hearing aids and abruptly asked “So, what happened? The way she asked was so unexpected and very offensive. I was in disbelief but I responded by stating that I was born with a hearing loss and then I received the sympathetic “Ohhhh” from her. Although it does not happen often, “bad” incidents do happen. Thankfully, confident in myself and my hearing loss, I politely stated that I had to go back to my reading, took out my hearing aids and proceeded to read in my silent world.

Fortunately, for every example of bad news, there is always some good



news. I have had many incidents where my hearing loss and wearing hearing aids has been beneficial for me. For example, I have been able to use my hearing loss in many situations as an ice breaker to meet new people. When I was at Niagara College for Culinary Management, I was a part of a close group of five guys that were just that – a group of college guys hanging out and doing normal college activities. In fact, I often used my hearing loss as a punch line with them and we made many jokes but overall, they treated me like any other person and not someone with hearing aids. One of my favourite things or lines to say when something goes wrong is, “Sure, blame it on the deaf guy” Or when people complain that something is too loud, I jokingly point to my hearing aids and say “You have nothing on me.” It’s moments like these that I live for because it’s always fun to see how people react. Almost all the time, people laugh along but part of them feels guilty for laughing. I always assure them that it’s okay to laugh and we laugh even more. Laughter is the best medicine for so many situations and laughter with good friends has made my hearing loss and wearing hearing aids a much easier situation.

Living with a hearing loss and wearing hearing aids has been and always will be a challenge. There are days that I’m grateful for my hearing aids and of course, there are many days when I wish I didn’t have them. It is usually a love-hate battle but overall, I am happy with myself and I am happy with wearing hearing aids. But this was not always the case. When I was much younger, I used to think that if I ever got the chance to be granted one wish, I would use it to be able to hear without my hearing aids – just for a day. I wanted to hear and see what it would be like. However, as I continue to grow up, I realize that I do not want that wish anymore. My hearing aids have made me who I am today and I’m very confident with who I am and wouldn’t change my life with a hearing loss.

Moreover, education is a very important value and aspect in my life. In fact, there are eight teachers in my extended family. Likewise, my nuclear family is very academically focused. My father is a successful doctor of environmental science and recently finished writing a text book for Laurentian University where he is a part-time professor and does consulting to other business on the side. My mother has been a successful language teacher at a local high school for the last 35 years

and is continually taking courses to learn. And my older sister is currently working on her PhD in nutrition at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. Thus, even after completing four years of culinary school and working as a chef in various kitchens, I knew that I wanted to continue learning and studying. To that extent, I applied to go back to school and was thrilled when I was accepted at the University of Guelph where I am currently completing a business degree.

I’ve always believed that you have to work hard to get where you want in life. There are no substitutes for hard work. In terms of my future culinary and business career goals, I would like to open a restaurant of my own. It would be tasty food at affordable prices in a pub-like setting. This is because I love to interact with people and a pub setting would allow me to fulfill this dream. Further, I am also very creative and appreciate the arts. Thus, because I like writing in my spare time, I would love to publish a book. Over the past couple of years, I’ve written a culinary murder novel and I’ve started writing a series of short stories. I also enjoy doing photography. It is great to capture special moments with a camera. In fact, I’ve already achieved one of my life goals by selling my photos and I was able to donate the proceedings to VOICE. It is great when I am able to use my talents and passions to give back to the special deaf community that I am a part of in life.

In conclusion, I am very happy where I am in my life right now living with my hearing loss and wearing hearing aids. I’m in a successful relationship with my girlfriend for almost two years, studying at one of the best universities in Canada and I have been keeping busy with my hobbies in writing, reading and photography. I will never stop being myself to please someone else, including people that do not accept me because of my hearing loss. I do not have time for negative behaviour and negative attitudes – life is too short. Living with a hearing loss and wearing hearing aids is just one part of my life and does not define who I am as a person. I have many gifts and talents to offer the world and thus I live every day by this motto “Hear only the things you should hear – be deaf to others.” *Ford Frick*





Shane, Cherie
and Rory.

Children with Hearing Loss Can Hear You. Do You Hear Them?

A Mother's Letter to Her Son

Dear Shane,

It is almost the end of the school year and I sit here looking at you awestruck. You, my dear son, will have completed grade 1 in a matter of weeks!

I have to tell you, that when you were just a little baby boy and you were diagnosed profoundly hearing impaired at the age of one month old, I had no idea how we were going to get this far. Your daddy and I were terrified for you, and in all honesty, for ourselves. We loved you. We loved every little bit of you. But we were scared.

We did not know very much about hearing impairments and deafness. We did not live in a community with a school for deaf children. We wanted you to be able to hear and to speak so you could access the world around you just like your sister could. We wanted you to have every advantage that she had. We did not know what to do.

Your daddy was strong but I cried a lot. I blamed myself. I got angry sometimes. I got desperately sad sometimes.

Then we were introduced to auditory-verbal therapy and cochlear implant technology.

I sat up night after night watching videos provided by the Infant Hearing Program. I watched as baby Jacob and his family went through cochlear implant surgery and A-V therapy on a Cochlear DVD. I also watched Cecilia's Story unfold as presented on the DVD supplied by Advanced Bionics.

These families and these children became my hope and my inspiration. Their stories became the story that I wanted to see unfold for you.

As soon as we could possibly fit you for hearing aids we wanted to get them. I so desperately wanted you to hear my voice. To hear something. To hear anything. At 11 weeks old, just two days before Christmas, my first wish came true. You got your hearing aids!

With your hearing aids, you could hear low pitches that were very loud and close to your ears. You could not hear full sentences. You could not even hear full words. But your daddy, your sister, and I talked and talked

and talked and talked to you. We talked to you all the time. We were just so thrilled that you could hear our voices!

Then when you were 9 months old we received the most exciting and wonderful news. You were most definitely a candidate for a cochlear implant and it would be coming soon!

A month and a half later, at just 10 1/2 months old, I went on the most emotional roller coaster ride of my life. It was the day of your implant surgery. A day of excitement for what future had in store. A day of complete helplessness as we handed our baby over for surgery. A day of sheer joy and relief when we saw you in recovery. A night of wonder as we watched you sleep. Would it work? After all of this would it work?

So many emotions coming and going in the span of hours. Hours that felt like days. Just as the days leading up to this one had felt like weeks and the weeks had felt like months. And the months ... had felt like ... years.

Another very emotional day was seven weeks later when your cochlear implant was activated. It was the day before your first birthday. I took the day off from school and told my little grade 2 students all about what I was going to be doing. They were all very excited for you. I remember one little boy in tears saying to me, "Mrs. Stanley, I sure hope that Shane gets to hear you say that you love him on his birthday." It still brings me to tears when I remember it.

Your daddy, your sister, and I were all there with you when your cochlear implant was activated. We each had tears streaming down our cheeks when you were startled by the sound of the beeps and confused by the sound of our voices. YOU COULD HEAR US! And, my first words were indeed, "I love you Shane! Happy Birthday, Sweet Boy!"

Next it was time for the really hard work. Teaching you how to learn to listen and to speak.

It all started with "Ahhhh." The sound for an airplane. "Buh, buh, buh." The sound for boat. Hour after hour. Day after day. Week after week. We worked and we worked waiting for you to say something, anything, that sounded similar. All the while, we constantly pointed to our ears and said, "I hear that! That is a dog barking. Woof! Woof!" or "I hear that! That is the telephone ringing. Ring! Ring!"

Continuous. All day. Non-stop. Talking, talking, talking, and more talking.

Thank goodness we were not alone. Thank goodness we had your amazingly, wonderful A-V therapist to guide us and to council us and to care for us through this learning journey. Without the hours and hours and hours of A-V therapy sessions we took part in over six years you would not be where you are today. Without her, your daddy, your sister, and I would not have been able to help you the way we did.

After years of learning to listen and to speak with the help of an A-V therapist and your fabulous private tutor, here you are, almost finished grade 1 with friends and classmates that are your same age peers!

You, Shane, amaze me!

Surgery. Many, many tears. Sleepless nights. A lot of hard work. Emotional roller coaster after emotional roller coaster. But a miracle really! That my deaf boy has learned how to listen and how to speak. I will be forever grateful!

It has not always been easy to get here. There have been some potholes, bumps in the road, and times when we felt it was all up hill.

When we were undergoing A-V therapy at the hospital, we had a family of support around us. When you were discharged at the beginning of the school year, I have to admit, I was scared to death because we were not going to be in the care of the support network that we had wrapped around us since you were just one month old. I had feared the year of the "grade one discharge!" We knew it was going to happen one day and when it did, I was not prepared for how hard it was!

While we celebrated that you had come so far, it was scary that we would have to continue your journey of learning to listen and speak, and maintaining the listening and speaking skills you had developed, without you're A-V therapist and everyone in audiology at the hospital.

Friends and family tried to convince me that because I am a school teacher, I would be able to continue the support that you need. They were convinced that I had what it took because I am a certified teacher who has been in the classroom for over 15 years.

The problem with their theory was that I am not a specialist in teaching deaf children. I have not been trained to do what an A-V therapist or a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing is professionally educated to do. Even as a classroom teacher, if I had a deaf child in my class, or a child with hearing loss in my class, I would need their specialized support to provide for that student.

It is likely needless to say, that even though so many people around us were confident in my abilities, I was not feeling as confident as they were.

Then came the start of grade one and with it, you had an amazing team

to support you. Your grade one teacher, the school support teacher, your Principal, and your teacher of the deaf. And in no time at all, they became the direct support network that has wrapped itself around you.

Your dad and I are so grateful that you were provided with the support that you needed to be successful at school this year. We have seen you grow up in so many ways and we are so proud of you.

But we are still scared.

Sometimes, it is easy to forget that you, and other deaf children using cochlear implants, are deaf and that you are still learning how to listen and how to speak. Sometimes, it is easy to forget that you have special needs that require support and accommodations.

The Ministry of Health, Infant Hearing Program, VOICE, and your hospital invests so much in deaf infants and children, like you, to prepare you all for school. When you and other deaf children, or children with hearing loss, arrive at school, you have had hours and hours and hours of formal therapy, continuous home therapy, and sometimes, as in your case, tutoring. Not only have you, and other deaf children, learned how to listen and to speak, you have learned how to be learners. It is no wonder, that it is sometimes easy to overlook your disability.

But, you, and other children with hearing loss, wearing hearing aids or cochlear implants, do have a disability. You have a disability that requires specialized support to ensure that you do not lose the skills and abilities that you, and so many others, have worked so hard to help you develop. A disability, that makes accessing the curriculum, more difficult as each school year passes because of the accelerated pace, the increased requirement for independent learning, the increased complexity of content and language and, the increase in class sizes.

While I will be forever grateful for the support you received this school year. I hope, I pray, and I wish on falling stars, that you, and all hearing impaired children, will receive, or continue to receive, the support you need to be your most successful at school for many, many, many years to come.

I know that you and other children with hearing loss can hear us. I just hope that we, your parents, grandparents, educators, policy makers, sisters, brothers, and friends can hear you!

You have worked hard my dear son. You have been through so much. I am so very, very proud of you. You do everything that we ask you to do to make the most of the miracle you were granted. I will try to do everything I can to help you.

I love you so much!

Love,
Mom

An Update from Ottawa's Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children is currently involved in several research initiatives in Canada as knowledge users. The following article showcases the work of the Audiology Research Lab at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute.

Our research team has conducted multi-disciplinary auditory research for close to 30 years. Led by Dr. Andrée Durieux-Smith and Dr. Terry Picton, early research on methods for the early identification of hearing loss in infants led to CHEO being one of the first hospitals to use evoked potentials to assess hearing in newborns. Related to this was research on the age of diagnosis of hearing loss for babies and children identified with and without hearing screening. This provided important evidence to support the development of newborn hearing screening programs. Currently, CHEO is the major diagnostic center for the Ontario Infant Hearing Screening Program in Eastern Ontario as well as one of three provincial cochlear implant centers.

Our research lab at CHEO functions with a team of researchers, experienced staff, and the participation of graduate students. A close working relationship with the CHEO Audiology Clinic, provincial and local parent support groups, as well as the Audiology and Speech Language Pathology Program at the University of Ottawa provides a rich source of clinical expertise and research questions. Our current research team includes specialists in audiologic rehabilitation (Elizabeth Fitzpatrick and Deirdre Neuss), psychology (Janet Olds) and neuro-otology (Dr. David Schramm).

Currently, our research is examining multiple aspects of the development of children with hearing loss including listening, language and literacy, as well as social and emotional functioning. In addition to our current grants, base infrastructure funding has been provided by the Help-2-Hear program of the Masonic Foundation of Ontario since 2001 and the CHEO Department of Surgery since 2009.

Toward Understanding the Consequences of Mild Bilateral and Unilateral Hearing Loss in Preschool Children

The goal of this study is to achieve a better understanding of the effect of mild and unilateral hearing loss (MUHL) in children up to 4 years of age. We will use parent questionnaires and other tests to measure listening and language abilities. We will also explore the factors, such as the degree of hearing loss, the age of diagnosis, and hearing aid use that might affect how children do. We will also explore what is important to parents in caring for children with hearing loss.

Children with mild bilateral and unilateral hearing loss have not been as well studied as children with more severe hearing loss. We know that

up to 40% of children diagnosed with a hearing loss have a mild hearing loss in both ears or a hearing loss in one ear only. The best available evidence suggests that school aged children with mild bilateral and unilateral hearing loss are at risk for difficulties. The children in our study will be followed annually until 4 years of age; parents will complete a package of questionnaires once a year. We will also do an assessment of listening, language, and speech with each child at 4 years of age.

Beyond Screening: Towards Understanding the Effects of Mild Bilateral and Unilateral Hearing Loss on Children in the Early School Years

This study is related to the first study; the goal is to examine if school aged children, aged 5 to 8 years, with mild forms of hearing loss, develop their listening and language skills similar to hearing children. Before newborn hearing screening, mild, and unilateral hearing losses were usually identified at age 4 to 5 years. Many older children with these mild forms of hearing loss develop listening and language skills similar to children who hear normally. However, we know that some children experience some difficulties with listening, language, and learning.

We do not know enough to predict if children identified with this degree of hearing loss when they are babies will have difficulties with listening, language, or learning. We also need to learn more about the best support (for example, hearing aids or therapy) for the child and the family. Children who participate will be asked to take part in an assessment session where a number of tasks which measure language and literacy skills will be administered.

Transitioning from Pediatric to Adult Services for Patients with Cochlear Implants

The goal of this study is to understand the transition from the pediatric hospital setting at CHEO to adult services at the Ottawa Hospital for young people with cochlear implants. We would like to learn more about what helps young people and their families make the transition from the paediatric hospital setting to an adult hospital setting and what gets in the way. This understanding will help us to create a plan to help young people and their families make the transition to adult care as easily possible. Participants, aged 15 to 22 years, are being asked to participate in an interview to tell the researchers about their experiences and thoughts.

Development of the Children's Hospital (Eastern Ontario) Inventory of Skills in Audition, Language and Speech (CHISALS) – Part 2

The goal of this study is to continue work on the development of a checklist designed to measure the listening, speech, and language development in very young children who have received their cochlear implants by one year of age. Parents of very young children who have received a cochlear implant are often anxious to know whether their children are “on track.” They want to know if their children are developing spoken language as compared to other children at a similar “hearing age.”

Although we have tests that can be administered to children 3 years of age and older, our tools for younger children are more limited. In the first phase of our research, we created an inventory of skills for children who have received a CI at one year of age and who have used their CI for two years. In this second phase, we are seeking to refine this tool to ensure that it is relevant and useful for small children.

Therapists across Ontario are being asked to pilot the CHISALS with some of their clients. Also, the therapists will complete a questionnaire about how easy it is to administer the CHISALS, and their satisfaction with the information obtained.

Beyond Hearing: Outcomes and Needs in School-Age Children with Cochlear Implants

Over the past 10 years we have done a series of studies with children who have moderate to profound hearing loss and who use hearing aids or cochlear implants. These studies have provided a broad examination of language, literacy, memory, and cognition through individual assessment.

We are currently completing a second set of studies examining communication, academic and psychosocial functioning of school-aged children with cochlear implants. The study is designed to better understand how children with cochlear implants function in areas beyond hearing, including understanding their learning at school, as well as their communication, social, and emotional functioning.

The goal of this research is to provide information that would help in identifying what services are needed to best support children and their families. These studies include not only individual assessment but also the viewpoints of children and their parents. As well, teachers specialized in working with children with hearing loss across Ontario have been asked for their ideas.

Mental Health and Pediatric Hearing Loss

We are currently conducting a review of research which has investigated mental health in children with hearing loss. This review is using a systematic review methodology which will assist in evaluating published research. The review will identify areas for future research as well as provide information to inform current delivery of services. This summer,

we will be conducting a survey of Canadian cochlear implant centres about the mental health services that are provided to children and youth with cochlear implants, and what, if any, specific areas need to be addressed.

Long-Term Auditory Abilities in Children with Cochlear Implants and Additional Disabilities

The goal of this study is to examine the long term impact of cochlear implants in a group of children with additional disabilities. Studies of benefits in children with profound hearing loss and additional disabilities who receive cochlear implants have generally shown that it is necessary to adjust expectations for listening and communication development. These children may also require additional services and resources both in terms of candidacy decisions, as well as audiologic and rehabilitative care.

The study is a retrospective review to determine if children with additional disabilities continue to use their cochlear implants and what long-term auditory skills they are able to develop. In addition, parents have been interviewed to learn about their perspectives of their child's outcome.

Economic Analysis of Bilateral Cochlear Implantation in Children: The Value of a Second Cochlear Implant

The goal of this research is to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of providing bilateral cochlear implants for children from a Canadian perspective. A cost benefit analysis is a technique designed to examine the costs of interventions relative to the benefits that they produce. Many provinces fund bilateral implantation in children. However, access to bilateral cochlear implants is not consistent across Canada. A cost-benefit analysis of pediatric bilateral cochlear implantation will provide data allowing provincial health authorities to make an evidence-based decision on funding this expensive procedure.

For More Information

If you are interested in learning more about our research the investigators would be happy to answer any questions. For more information please contact our research coordinator, JoAnne Whittingham at 613-738-3907 or by e-mail at jwhittingham@cheo.on.ca.

Investigators

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The Big Movement Towards Accessibility and Diversity



Over the past 20 years the accommodations for work involving individuals with disability were much more dependent on the people involved, and many individuals with a disability were not able to participate in all the job tasks required by employers. Today there is a movement not only towards diversity but also to engage individuals in promoting diversity by advocacy. Many opportunities have emerged for those living with disability to connect with society in better ways and create awareness through individual leadership and promotion of awareness through

relation of personal life experiences. Organizations have started to become more inclusive, and government legislation including acts such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) which have been implemented to improve the workplace. In spite of the changes being made, there is still a long way to go. According to Statistics Canada (2011), 15.9% of Canadians have a disability and is staggering 49% of adults who have a disability are not in the workforce.

The AODA was passed in 2005, and will be completely enacted by 2025. As recently as 2009, the AODA legislation was passed requiring all public organizations to conform to regulations or face consequences, and as of January 2012 private organizations have been included as well. These organizations must accommodate for individuals with disability according to strict guidelines, or face fines up to \$100,000 a day. For more information on the AODA please see www.AODA.ca.

Although organizations such as VOICE make available supports to families and youth who are deaf or hard of hearing, there are many other types of disability. Some disabilities may be more obvious, such as physical impairments requiring handicap access, while some may be much less visible and are thus termed 'invisible disabilities', including mood and anxiety disorders. While all fall under the umbrella of disability, it is important to recognize that there is a wide range of disability and thus a diverse range of supports that are needed to support inclusivity.

In my experience since early infancy living with a hearing impairment I have witnessed and experienced both frustrating barriers and strong support in several different workplace environments. These experiences have fueled my ambition and given me hope in finding a place as a part of the movement towards inclusivity, and I have found a career in human resources in which I intend to gear towards helping others manage their disability in the workplace. I am part of a young

generation in which more and more incidence of disability is found, and am witness to the changes that organizations have made in accommodating various disabilities. I have been able to participate in sports, volunteering, an internship, and various activities in the workplace by increasing awareness of those around me and utilizing the supports that I have been able to access. I can only imagine how difficult a life this would have been for me to realize 20 years ago.

One of the things that made a huge impact is my enthusiasm to beat stereotypes and include others in understanding how to cooperate with me. In school, in work, and even with family and friends, it has been vital to let everyone know how best to interact with me. This has not been easy, but has been a valuable skill to learn, and has helped inform my practice in relating this to others. In my experience and education I have come up with a list of important things to keep in mind for youth in school and work.

Katie's Top 5 Tips for Youth in School and Work

- 1 Take the Initiative! It's great to have support, but don't let others do everything for you
- 2 Develop a Plan! Research into organizations and agencies that will help you
- 3 Be Aware! Find and use resources that are available to you
- 4 Expand Your Support Network! Help teachers, colleagues, and friends interact with you more effectively
- 5 Challenge Yourself! Face your fears and get involved with extracurricular activities and groups

Many individuals live with disabilities daily and can have varying degrees of trouble participating in everyday activities. However, more and more young people are overcoming their difficulties and becoming role models for a new generation. While many individuals and organizations in our society have made great strides and come a long way, it's also important to recognize how much more work there is to be done to implement fair and inclusive policies in the workplace. I hope that this article inspires you to help create an inclusive society, and inspires youth to be part of the movement for change. Below is a list of resources/tools that you may find useful:

Disability & the Duty to Accommodate Your Rights and Responsibilities, Ontario Human Rights Commission (Brochure Publication) Additional information also available at www.ohrc.on.ca

Assistive Technology Links At-Links - www.at-links.gc.ca

Learn about assistive technologies, programs and services.
Extensive information also available on a range of disabilities and devices in addition to the Accessible Procurement Tool Kit.

Accessibility Directory - www.accessibilitydirectory.ca

One stop resource of service providers in Ontario that can help make your business accessible. Categories include: assessment, design, direct services, equipment, recreation, resources and training.

AccessOn- www.AccessON.ca

Site by Ontario government for employers to assist in making

their sites and workplaces accessible

Ministry of Community and Social Services

www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/index

Ontario government website detailing policies, procedures, explanation about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 including information on accessibility standards in the 5 key areas: Customer Service, Transportation, Information and Communications, Built Environment and Employment.

Individual Education Plan Parent Guide

This comprehensive 20 page guide assists parents with their child's Individual Education Plan *The IEP Guide* walks parents through the required components of an Individual Education Plan, contains **VOICE Tips for Parents**, a **Parent IEP Checklist**, and space for personal **Notes**. It will provide insights, suggestions, and examples of accommodations and programming that will benefit your child in the classroom. The guide is available in English and in French. To order your copy call the VOICE office at 416-487-7719 or complete the order form below and mail to:

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, 161 Eglinton Ave E., Suite 704, Toronto, ON M4P 1J5
IEP Guide for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Members: \$10

Non- Members : \$25

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A Big Thank You



“I am writing to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the tickets for the Marlies game yesterday. I had a wonderful time with my son, Emir, who is Deaf and all the people I met in the suite at the game. The camaraderie, excitement and overall joy made yesterday a most enjoyable way to spend a Sunday afternoon.”

It all started with a simple idea! Back in 1999, Kids Up Front founder, John Dalziel, was at a sporting event in Calgary and found himself surrounded by empty seats. He thought, “Geez, those seats are probably paid for, what a shame to let them go empty! Wouldn’t it be neat, if somehow, those seats could be given to kids that wouldn’t normally have the opportunity to attend?!”

Today, John’s simple idea continues to yield powerful results for kids across Canada! Kids Up Front Foundations are located in four major Canadian cities: Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Toronto, and together, they have granted more than 785,500 donated event tickets valued at 22 million dollars! Thanks, John, for not letting your brilliant light bulb moment go dim!

VOICE would like to sincerely thank Kids Up Front for its generous, ongoing support of VOICE families. Over the last year VOICE has received tickets with a combined value of over \$5,700 for local sports events, cultural attractions, and concerts. Parents and children were thrilled to attend hockey games, visit the Ontario Science Centre, see the Nutcracker ballet, concerts and more! Thanks to Kids Up Front, VOICE families have many happy memories.

“My gang and I LOVED the (Marlies) game – especially the incredible box seating.”

Go Marlies!



At the Nutcracker ballet.



Carolyn Cook with Avril Lavigne.





Emily Akerman at The Addams Family.



A Big Thank You to the Kids Up Front Foundation

“WOW, is what this production was. My parents, Aaron and myself were thrilled and very entertained. (Addam's Family Musical)”

“Thanks so much for the tickets! Please forward our gratitude to the sponsor(Kids Up Front): it was a perfect Christmas gift! We went to the Science Centre on the last day of 2011 and it was a blast. All 3 kids had great time and stayed awake all day.”

“The Avril Lavigne concert was amazing! I was so lucky that I was able to go! I have been a fan of hers for the last 10 years (since she first came out) and it was pretty special to finally see her live.”



The Paul family at the Ontario Science Centre.

“It was amazing. We LOVED it (the Carrie Underwood concert)! ; Please pass on our big “THANKS” to Kids Up Front. The kids are thrilled about going, especially to meet one of the players. (Marlies Game)”

Harnessing Today's Technology with App-Ability

What You Need To Know before You Click the BUY NOW Button

Along with the flood of mobile devices like smart phones, iPods, and iPads, "App Fever" has come upon us like a tidal wave. It seems that everyone has Apps, and that everyone has an App to recommend. As a mobile device user and owner of Apps, how many Apps do you have stored on one, or all of your devices? What is the average cost of your Apps? What percentage of your Apps do you use regularly? We informally polled friends, colleagues and parents with these very same questions. What we discovered, was astounding!

Some of us have as many as 500 Apps installed on one device! When many of us started buying Apps, the average cost was between \$.99 and \$1.99. Lately, maybe you have noticed that the average cost of an App is creeping up to be between \$1.99 and \$2.99? Finally, when we actually thought about the percentage of Apps that we use regularly, many of us guessed that we used only 10%. This means that as a group, we have spent a great deal of money on Apps that we are not using.

Our goal at the presentation on Apps for the 2012 May conference was to bring some order to this chaos and answer the following questions:

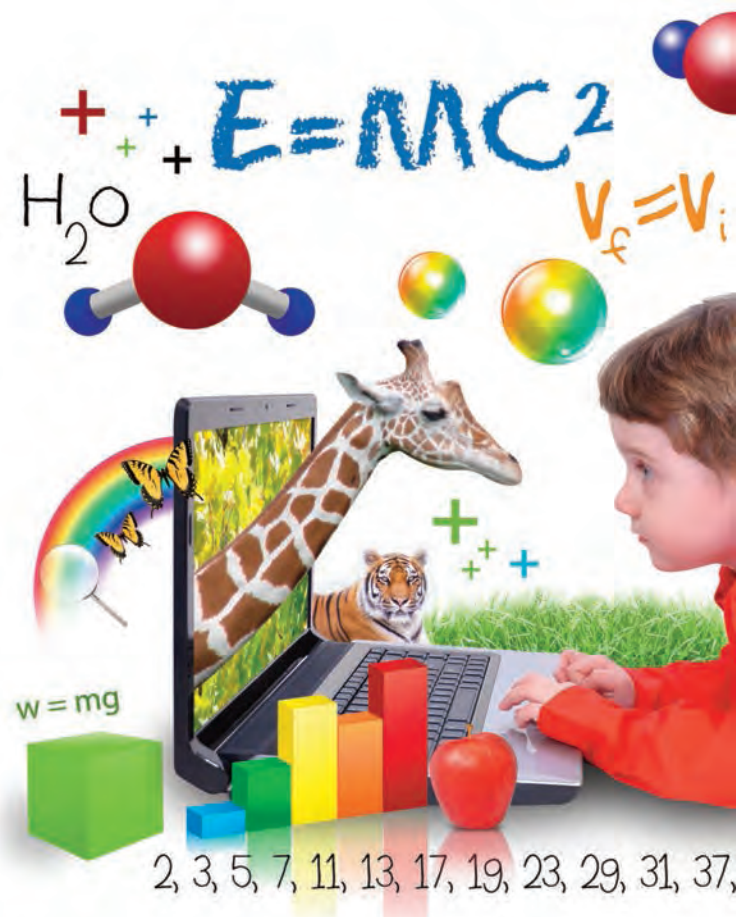
- What is behind this App Fever?
- Why are so many Apps not being used?
- What is unique about Apps and the App experience?
- How do we optimize the App experience for children?

What We Learned from the Research about Apps Found In the iTunes Store

- Since 2009, of all categories in the iTunes store, the Education Category has seen the greatest increase in Apps
- Most Apps have been developed for children ages 2–8
- There are no standards – how do we know that a given App "delivers" the learning that developers, marketers and reviewers claim?
- Many Apps have been converted from print media, not originally created for mobile devices
- Educational Apps can be divided into three groups: games,

eBooks, and creations

- The majority of Apps are Drill/Skill, leading to solitary play rather than joint activity
- When children are exposed to great Apps by age 8: they move quickly from novice to mastery; they develop language and vocabulary of the digital system, they acquire mobile device and App navigation schemas, and they develop knowledge of game schema, game technologies, and game play



What You Need To Know about Apps and How Apps are Marketed

With so many Apps on the market, come many, many inexperienced App developers. Just about anyone can develop an App. As a result many Apps are being developed by "hobbyists". How can you separate the serious developer from the hobbyist?

- Test the links to the developer and go to the website. Check on the developer's experience – is this the first App made? Does the developer have knowledge about child development, literacy, etc?
- Check to see that the App has been updated within the last six months
- Look at how the developer has used the screen "real estate" to showcase the App in the iTunes store. The iTunes store allows the developer to show 5 screen shots of the App. The experienced developer will use every bit of advertising space to show case the App

What You Need To Know, before You Click the BUY NOW Button

Many people buy Apps based on:

1. Recommendations from friends and family. The advantages of

this method of selection is that these individuals may know what you are looking for, and they might even be able to show you how the App works before you buy

2. Reviews on the internet, Blogs, Content Curation sites or Professional Review sites as well as recommendations in the iTunes store. The advantage of reading all these reviews is that you can cross-check the opinion of a variety of consumers. Disadvantages of the review method include:
 - On many sites anyone can review and recommend Apps – all you need to do to "qualify" as a reviewer "is have an iPad and experience with Apps"
 - Be aware that review sites are often monetized, meaning that people are getting paid to bring Internet traffic to their site
 - Some well respected professional review sites cannot keep up with the sheer volume of Apps and you will note the same reviews carried over from other sites
 - The review criteria and the evaluation process used by the reviewers are vague and uninformative even on sites with a lot of internet traffic. An example of a review written for an App for children reads "the design of each App is nicely done: the colour, graphics, music and sound is well balanced"

Let's Look At An App

Parenting's Birthday Party Playtime by Toca Boca. The developer included some quotations from other reviewers, one which said, "Perfectly conceived and executed." In the consumer reviews section some were negative and described the app as "really boring," "ok," and "no good." Others described it as "sweet," and "my daughter can't get enough of this." Who to believe?

We love this app. Why? For example, it follows the familiar theme of a birthday party that most children remember and enjoy. Illustrations are simple and realistic. It encourages conversation. Children can become immersed in the App as part of a shared activity.

We'll discuss more apps in a future article.

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41, 43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73, 79, 83, 89, 97.

Doremi's CaptiView Closed Caption Viewing System for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Movie Audiences

Now Playing at Cineplex Entertainment Theatres Across Canada



The global film industry is embarking on a tremendous and exciting change to the way in which movies are exhibited. Analogue film prints (or 35 mm films) have been the mainstay of the industry for almost 100 years. However, with the development of digital projection systems, 35 mm films will become obsolete as motion picture exhibitors around the world begin transitioning to new digital technology. The benefit to movie goers is the pristine quality of digital images on the screen. With film, the image quality diminishes with every pass through the projector. However, with digital, the image quality remains pristine whether it is the first or the 500th pass through the projector. Digital projection also enables the opportunity to add 3-D, which has become very popular in the past few years. Another added benefit is the ability to expand the content shown beyond movies to include other forms of entertainment such as live concerts, operas, ballet and Broadway plays to name a few.

In 2001, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) began work on developing an international set of guidelines to standardize practices for the digital distribution and exhibition of television and motion pictures (the Standards). The Standards were finalized in the spring of 2010. Special effort was made to ensure that features were addressed, including captioning for deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing viewers as well as narrative audio for blind and low vision audiences. SMPTE standardized the communication of closed captioning content between the digital cinema servers and third party closed captioning systems. As a result, new closed caption systems for digital cinema began to emerge.

Before the development of digital projection systems and the introduction of the Standards, the only widely available captioning system for the motion picture exhibition industry was Rear Window Captioning (RWC). The RWC system consists of a display unit which is mounted on the rear wall of the auditorium and displays the captions in mirror image. The backwards image is transmitted from the display unit onto a reflector panel, which is mounted into the cup holder at the guest's seat.

Doremi's CaptiView Closed Caption Viewing System for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Movie Audiences Now Playing at Cineplex Entertainment Theatres Across Canada

To provide a better overall experience for our guests who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, senior executives at Cineplex Entertainment worked with numerous organizations to ensure that we could provide the highest quality captioning technology that is compatible with digital projection systems. While it has taken several years and a significant amount of work, these efforts have paid off.

Cineplex Entertainment is pleased to offer its guests CaptiView, a digitally compatible closed captioning viewing system, created by Doremi Cinema. The CaptiView system consists of a small captioning display unit with a flexible support arm that fits into the theatre seat's cup holder. The high contrast onscreen display is easy to read and comes with a privacy visor so it can be positioned directly in front of the theatre guest with minimal impact or distraction to neighbouring guests.

Once the CaptiView system is in place, it will provide guests who are deaf, deafened, or have hearing loss, with more viewing options, including the ability to sit in any seat in an auditorium, receive captioning in up to four different languages (provided that such

captioning is made available by the movie distributor or studio) and the ability to watch movies in 3-D with captioning. The captioning display unit operates using a wireless system, which means there is no interruption in the display of the captions if a guest stands up behind the viewer. More importantly, the new digital technology will allow Cineplex Entertainment to provide captioning in any auditorium in the theatre, giving theatre-goers a greater selection in the movies they wish to see.

As Cineplex Entertainment replaces its existing 35 mm film projection systems with Christie digital projectors supported by Doremi servers, new CaptiView systems will be installed in most of our 130 theatres. This process is currently underway and we anticipate that conversion will be completed in approximately 24 months. A list of movies and showtimes near you can be found at Cineplex.com. Movies offering this service are displayed with the "CC" designation in the film's title.

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Reason No. 568:

"Ever since I first got Naída a few months ago, I've been able to hear my professors and peers in University with a life-changing clarity I never thought I'd experience again since I lost my hearing."

Laurel C., United States, user

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"To allow my 3 year old to hear me say 'I love you'... and even more to hear him say it back."

Cherie, Canada, parent of Naída user

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Arthur S., United Kingdom, Naída user



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