



HANDS & VOICES

What works for your child is what makes the choice right!

Volume 5, Issue 2

Spring 2011

Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices



Hands & Voices Update

The school year is winding down once again! Time just keeps flying by. Here at Hands & Voices we have been very busy planning Family Gatherings, and making changes on our website. Most changes are complete but more are coming. Visit www.WyHandsAndVoices.org to view the changes and see what's coming up on the 'Events' page.

In this issue you can read about the awesome Transition Workshop that took place in Sheridan. Also read about the Family Gathering that was held

in Gillette and the upcoming gatherings in Evanston and Cheyenne. **Note -Cheyenne has been changed from May 12th to the 15th.**

Page two also has article about the great time Wyoming students had at the Academic Bowl in Washington DC. Page three has a great article by Sara Mitchell about the 2011 National EHDI Conference. Also learn about the Sound Beginnings Camp that will be held at Utah State University.

In the Kid's Korner, kids can color the

horse and rider. This quarter we are spotlighting Courtney and Josh, they are sister and brother from Green River.

Don't forget to become a part of the Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices facebook page. We have a group page where discussion is limited to members but we also have an Organization page that is linked to our website both are under Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices. Thanks again to everyone who have contributed to our newsletter.

Transition Workshop a Success in Northwestern Wyoming

A Transition Workshop targeting high school students, their parents and the professionals who work with them in Northwestern Wyoming was held on February 18th in Sheridan, Wyoming on the campus of Sheridan College. The weather cooperated, the facilities were exceptional, and the hospitality shown by Sheridan College's personnel was tremendous, which made for a terrific day of sharing and learning!

The event was well attended with more than 40 participants including parents, educators, transition coordinators, and students. This Transition Workshop was in essence a 'pilot workshop' organized by the Outreach Team for Deaf/Hard of Hearing and sponsored by Wyoming Department of Education. This 'pilot workshop' focused on topics related to hearing loss and the transition from high school to vocational school, college, or the work force. A 'pilot workshop' means that it was a practice

event, so to speak, with the attendees as the "test group"! This not only offered a venue for collaboration all in one location, it also gave the outreach team a chance to gauge what students, parents, and educators already knew about transition and what areas of guidance are still needed across the state.

A variety of guest speakers offered their expertise on such topics as: *assistive technology for independent living, services available through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to students/young adults with hearing loss, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), audiograms, working with a college and their disability coordinators*, and so much more!

The highlight of the workshop was without a doubt, the interactive panel of 3 young adults with hearing loss and 2 university disability support staff members who answered questions from the audience for upwards of 90 minutes. It resulted in engaging con-

versation including the posing of such reflective questions as: *Do students in college have IEPs? Who pays for technology devices at college? What happens if an employer fails to make accommodations in the work place? What if a person needs an interpreter in college or on the job? Is a student with hearing loss obligated to inform the college about his/her disability?* These questions were only the tip of the iceberg in what was a terrific sharing of real life experiences and timely information from the panel. By the way...do you know the answers to these questions? If not- maybe you could be a guest at our next Transition Workshop! We hope to organize another one in a different region of the state for the 2011-2012 school year! Be sure to check with one of the outreach consultants for more information or be on the lookout for future email announcements! We hope to see you there at this information filled event!

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Quote of the Quarter:

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning.

Albert Einstein

Family Gatherings

Gillette-

Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices held a Family Gathering on April 27th in Gillette at the Campbell County Library. We would like to thank them for allowing us to use the Wyoming Room. They have a beautiful library facility in Gillette. We had 20 adults and children in attendance, and we enjoyed visiting with all of them. Pizza was served with

brownies for dessert. Jo Otterholt from the WDE Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach Library also brought some books and videos to give families and idea of a few of the things the library has to offer. It was a great opportunity to meet families in that area and a chance to see that corner of the state. The kids had an opportunity to visit and play games. Children at the gathering were able to take home a book from the many we received from a grant written to Scholastic.

Evanston-

The Evanston Family Gathering was held at the Bear Community



Fun in Gillette!

Center in Evanston on Monday, May 2nd from 6:00-8:00 pm during the time the newsletter was sent to print.

Cheyenne-

We will be holding a Family Gathering in Cheyenne on Sunday, May 15th from 5:30-7:30 pm in at the Old Community House near Lions Park at 600 South Lions

Park Drive. **It was originally advertised as the 12th, but changed to the 15th due to events beyond our control.** Please RSVP at 307-782-3276 to let us know how many to expect. Come join us for a great time. Read about the gathering in Evanston and Cheyenne in our Summer Newsletter.



Visiting at the Gillette Family Gathering

2011 Wyoming Academic Bowl Team Travels to Washington, D.C.

By Jo Otterholt & Christie Fritz

On March 4 - 9, 2011, Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) and each student's individual school districts, supported a 2011 Wyoming Team in the 15th Annual Gallaudet University's National Academic Bowl competition for high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The competition was held this year in Washington, D.C. Wyoming Team members were: Angelina Bellamy - Casper; Jonathan Welde - Lovell; Katie Smith - Cheyenne; and Dianna Brutsman - Cheyenne. Coaches from WDE Outreach Services for the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing were Christie Fritz and Jo Otterholt. This was the 9th year Wyoming's Academic Bowl deaf and hard-of-hearing students have pitted their academia and trivial knowledge in this intense Jeopardy-style, brain-numbing competition against other school teams. Wyoming's team survived the first two-days in their pool of nine games with 8 wins and 1 loss, to continue to play in the National Pool competition on the third day of seven games with 1 win and 6 losses. Mentally and physically

exhausted, Wyoming Team members were disappointed and yet somewhat relieved to be eliminated, so they could have a day for touring Washington, D.C., before watching the Championship play-offs on Tuesday evening. You can see on-line video tapes of the competition at:

www.gallaudetuniversityacademicbowl.org or <http://atweb.gallaudet.edu/video-event/2011/ABnational/>.

Tuesday, March 8, was tour day for the team. After breakfasting, the team boarded a hotel shuttle bus to the nearest Metro station and experienced riding the subway to a stop near the U.S. Capitol. They met and had photos taken with Wyoming's U.S. Senator John Barrasso who then gave them tour passes for the U.S. Capitol. During the tour, they took snap-shots, gazed at, and touched statues, floorings, furnishing, and walls encapsulating the very history of our nation. After the Capitol tour, the team walked to Union Station to eat lunch, using meal tickets provided by Gallaudet University. After lunch, the team walked to the National Mall to visit the Smithsonian Art Gallery Museum. Here they saw several original paintings and works by artists that were referenced to during their competition matches! Foot weary, the team again walked back to Union Station and found the subway back to Gallaudet University for dinner, viewing the Championship Play-offs, and the Awards Ceremony. A final late night trek across Gallaudet University's campus was to KC Hotel and the concluding Social and Farewell



The Academic Bowl Team with Senator Barrasso.

Party until 1:00 AM, of 2011 Academic Bowl.

Every evening while in Washington, D.C., Gallaudet University hosted social events and activity programs so all team members and coaches could have the opportunity to unwind and interact with each other. Stories were shared, friendships were made and contact information was shared with new acquaintances all over the United States. Socializing with deaf and hard-of-hearing students from other schools and states, allows the Wyoming students to feel a camaraderie in relating with their hearing impaired friends and freely communicating in many diverse ways. Quotes gathered from the students were, "...my favorite part would have to be the socializing part!" "Everybody is so friendly with each other; it doesn't matter who your team is!" "Washington, D.C. is fascinating!" "The big city is totally different than Wyoming. We almost got lost in the subway!" And all four seniors echoed, "This will be my best memory of high school!"



2011 National EHDI Conference

By Sara Mitchell

Wow! The EHDI Conference in Atlanta, Georgia was a great trip! I met a ton of wonderful people and listened to many professionals discuss certain topics with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. My favorite topic was "Achieving 6 in the NICU." Because my son, who is deaf with bilateral implants, was in the NICU for two months, I found this very interesting! The presenter was Kelly Baroch, who is a NICU Audiologist from Cincinnati. She discussed how the NICU she works in is trying their hardest to do the infant hearing screening on the babies as soon as they are stable. Most of the babies are in the hospital through their first, and sometimes, even their second birthdays. Once the babies are stable enough, they perform the screening as soon as possible so they are able to get the right people involved. When my son was released from the hospital, they only thing we knew was that he was deaf. The hospital performed the screening two days before discharge. I wasn't able to reach out to the right people at the right time. I was sent home, to research everything on my own. I did receive a few phone calls on what to do next, but the hospital didn't have much for information. I feel like it is my duty to help this particular hospital have a better understanding on "what to do next." One thing that Kelly talked about was a note card they had set out by each baby. After looking at what

they had on this note card, I wish I would have had it while my son was in the NICU. This is what is on that note card: *When you approach me, make sure the light is on your face so I can make out who you are.

*Please call me by my name, not a nickname.

*Speak clearly so I can see your lips moving.

*When waking me up, please start by touching my feet first, then my legs, then my tummy, then to my face where I am the most sensitive.

The last line is my favorite. If you think about it...if someone who can hear is in a dead sleep and you touch them, they tend to panic and freak out a little bit. This is also true to an infant or even a toddler who cannot hear. I remember my son screaming out of his mind, when he was an infant, for a long period of time after being woken up by just picking him up. I definitely would have used this note card in the NICU. I think it is safe to say that most parents will look at that and say "I can use that, still, today!" I know I am!

A lot of states have a protocol on when to test an infant with the hearing screening. Some of them say just before the infant is discharged from the hospital. When listening to Kelly, she made it very clear to get the screening done as soon as possible, rather than waiting just before discharge. Some infants, like Kelly said, are in the hospital for many

months, even years. Early intervention is very crucial for infants and parents. I know from experience, the sooner, the better.

I am so very grateful that I was able to attend the EHDI Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. It was great to just talk to people and to see how many people are so involved with EHDI. Next year the conference is in St. Louis, Missouri and I plan on attending!

The 2011 National Conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia, February 21-22, 2011. We would like to thank Sara for representing Wyoming parents in Atlanta. Sara is from Cody!

*Recently Sara and her son, Talan, traveled to the University of Wisconsin in Madison for a Cochlear Implant Study where they are studying the development of sound localization in young children who use cochlear implants. They are currently looking for children under the age of 3 years who use unilateral or bilateral cochlear implants to participate in their study. All travel costs are covered by the University. If you are interested in finding out more about the study contact Shelly Godar at godar@waisman.wisc.edu. If you have any questions about their experience you can contact Sara at 307-587-3335 or at saramitchell2010@gmail.com.



Sound Beginnings 2011 Summer Camp



The Sound Beginnings camp theme is a Hollywood- movie star theme.

'Sound Beginnings Studios' is the theme for the 2011 Summer Camp that will be held at the Sound Beginnings School at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. The camp will be June 9-10, 2011. This

camp is for families with children who have hearing loss ages 3-13 who use listening and spoken language.

Parents will attend several educational classes while the children have the opportunity to participate in fun-filled activities based around the movie star theme. Parents will interact with professionals and other parents in classes relating to hearing loss and hearing technology. The cost is \$100 for a fam-

ily of 4 and \$25 for each additional family member. Scholarships are available to those who qualify. The cost of the room is not included but discounted rates are available at the University Inn if you mention the camp.

To register or to find out more information contact Mandy Adams at 435-797-9234 or mandy.adams@usu.edu. You can also visit their website at www.soundbeginnings.usu.edu.

Parent Hearing Aid Survey

Karen Munoz from the Department of Communicative Disorders at Utah State University is conducting a survey to find out more about parents' experiences in getting hearing aids when their infant or young child is diagnosed with hearing loss.

She is interested in the challenges parents' face in getting hearing aids and also using the aids. The survey is enclosed in this edition of 'The Communicator'.

There is instructions for mailing in the survey or taking the survey online. Please,

take the time to fill out the survey. Your answers may lead to training and other actions that could improve services for parents in the future. Please complete and return the survey by June 1st.

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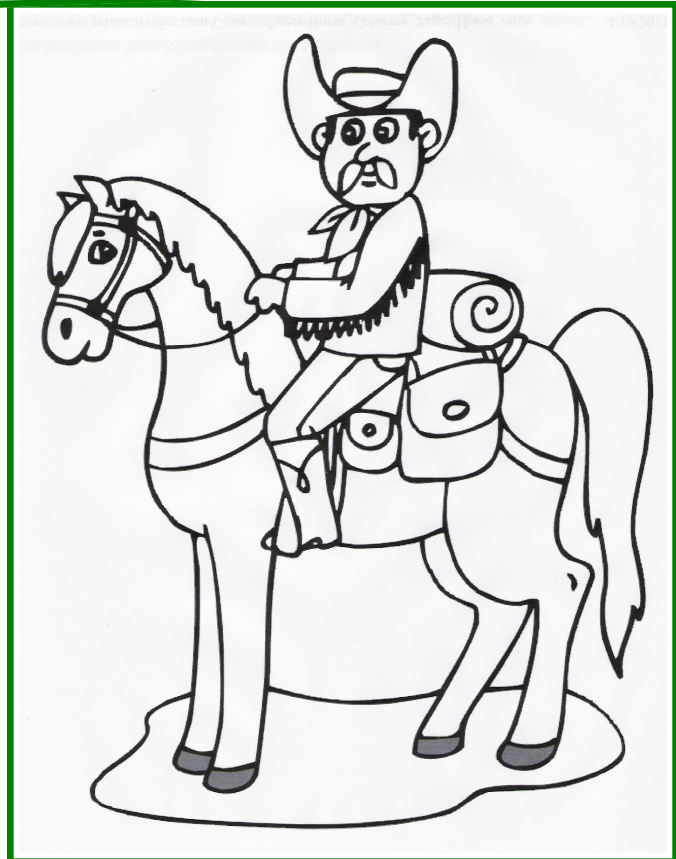
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Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

www.WyHandsAndVoices.org



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Kid's Korner



Joshua and Courtney

The Graves family is well blended. There are two girls and two boys; three hard of hearing and three with good hearing (Deane [pronounced Dean], Courtney and Joshua's dad, is also hard of hearing). Courtney Graves is the oldest of the four. She is now 20 and is in her second year at Southwest Baptist University studying Biology in Missouri. She loves horses and spending time with her family and friends. She was diagnosed with a moderate to severe hearing loss at the age of 12. Courtney is very energetic, happy, and dedicated to things she is involved in.

Joshua Graves is the youngest of four. At the age of 3, like his oldest sister, Joshua was diagnosed with moderate to severe hearing loss. Joshua is in the 6th grade and attends school at Monroe Int. School. Joshua's favorite sport is soccer. This summer he suffered a broken ankle and this was the first time in 7 years he wasn't able to play. All healed up, he is ready to start the spring season with a "kick."

Joshua's mom, Kim, is currently attending Western Wyoming Community College and one of her classes that she takes is ASL. Guess who gets to go with her? Joshua. Deane is unable to attend but Joshua is teaching his dad to sign. The Graves family live in Green River.