



WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES



HANDS & VOICES UPDATE

BY WENDY HEWITT-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This issue is dedicated to our dear, treasured friend and colleague Susan Fischer; a truly amazing woman whose passion, knowledge, and expertise greatly impacted thousands of Wyoming and Colorado children who have hearing loss.

Time just keeps flying by. It's hard to believe we are already two months into 2022. It has already been a very busy year for us at Hands & Voices. We are so excited for this year and the new events we are adding.

We are excited to announce that we have scheduled our 5th Annual Parent Training which will be held in June. We are also adding Virtual Trainings and Social Events. This Spring's virtual trainings will focus on behavior and transitions. Last year's ASTra training was a huge success, so we will be hosting it again on March 25th & 26th. It is packed with so much information to help families advocate for their children. Don't miss out on these opportunities!

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HANDS & VOICES VIRTUAL 5K FUNDRAISER AND FAMILY FUN NIGHT IN GILLETTE

BY MOLLY MCCOLLEY

Families in Gillette were able to get together on a Saturday afternoon in December to get a jump start on celebrating the Make a Run For It, New Year 5K. Traci Larson, teacher of the deaf for elementary aged-students in Campbell County, organized a family fun event for deaf/hard-of-hearing elementary-aged students and their families to gather and walk the 5K around the indoor track at the recreation center.



We were in the festive spirit with balloons and New Year's themed hats and noise makers, as well as snacks and drinks. It was a great afternoon, giving the children an opportunity outside of school to spend time running and playing with their friends and the parents and families and a chance to visit with other families. I always enjoy the family fun events when we are able to have them.

The children had so much fun playing with one another and I think it is great for them to have the chance to build connections with other kids who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Many of the families visited while walking their laps around the track to complete the 5K distance. I always enjoy connecting with the other parents - we often find we are experiencing similar struggles and it is so helpful to be able to talk with others who understand what you are going through.

GREEN ACRES CORN MAZE FAMILY FUN DAY-CASPER, WY

BY KIM REIMANN

On Saturday, October 23, 2021, several families met at Green Acres Corn Maze in Casper, Wyoming, for a Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices Family Fun Event.

Families and kids enjoyed popcorn balls, ghost lollipops, one another's company and listening to *The Sooky Old Tree*. After socializing with one another, families then spent the day enjoying all the amazing amenities Green Acres Corn Maze had to offer: the corn maze, petting zoo, jumping pad, hay bale maze, corn hole, the Windy City FFA students handing out candy to the kids in the corn maze and several Disney Characters and so much more.

A special thank you to Green Acres Corn Maze for offering Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices such a great place to gather. This is a must do activity in Casper during the Fall season!

We also have a great level of respect and appreciation for Braden Mason who provided interpreting services for this event. Braden is awesome! Thank you Braden!



2022 TENNIS CALCUTTA, CASPER WY



BY WYFHV STAFF

On January 28, 2022, the 307 Tennis Club of Casper and Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices joined forces for a fun filled weekend of friendly but competitive tennis play, a silent auction and a night of camaraderie, dinner, and information. This year, four amazing ladies of ages 7 to 22, presented about self-advocacy and what it means for them at the different stages of their lives. Each of them did an amazing job. It may have been scary to present in front of those participating in the Calcutta (more than 60 people), but they showed tremendous poise as they shared what they do to let others know what supports may be needed to help them reach their fullest potential in school, extra-curricular activities, work, and life! ♥ Ladies, thank you so much for your courage and bravery in sharing about your experiences and helping to educate others. You did awesome! Thank you to your families for coming and supporting this too! Be on the look out for these amazing ladies! They are taking their show on the road and will be presenting at WY Families for Hands & Voices' Parent Training, June 24 and 25! You won't want to miss them!

We have so many to thank! Eric and Sarah Nokes and the 307 Tennis Club. Your continuous support for Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices has been tremendous! We would also like to recognize those who participated in the Calcutta and donated! We are incredibly thankful for the local and statewide businesses and individuals who donated items to our silent auction and/or sponsored a court, #unionwireless, #dickssportinggoods, #murdochs, #wyomovies, #letrbuckcarwashes, #walshstorage #307metalworks #scarlett's, #nokes and #jeffzenisekphotography. We are so grateful to you and appreciate your incredible support! Our fundraiser wouldn't have been as successful without you so thank you! Your support helps us to continue sharing our mission of serving families who have a child with hearing loss and helping them to reach their fullest potential!





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"BEHAVIOR AND THE D/HH CHILD"

EDUCATIONAL ZOOM EVENT

By Betsy Tengesdal
March 17th @ 7pm

Information on how to register
will be provided via our social
media platforms, email, and the
Remind App. Be on the lookout!
This event is FREE to attend!!



If you would prefer to get messages via
text about future events, sign up on the
remind app with our class code: @wyhv

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Save the Date
2022 PARENT TRAINING
JUNE 24 & 25TH
CASPER WY



Advocacy Support & Training (ASTRA) March 25 & 26, 2022

Add to your IEP and 504 knowledge for your
child or student. Training topics will include the
following:

- Introduction to Special Education, IDEA and ADA
- Eligibility Considerations
- Procedural Safeguards, Assessments & Evaluation
- Positive meeting tools and strategies
- Each session builds upon content from previous session
- Free to attend for both parents & professionals



More information coming soon



IN MEMORY OF *Susan Fischer*



It is with heavy hearts that we share with you that our beloved friend, colleague, mentor, R.E.A.D. (Reading Early Accelerated Development) Plus Program Creator and Coordinator, and Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices Early Intervention Specialist, Susan Fischer passed away on February 8th, 2022, just shy of her 53 birthday. Susan was an integral part of our Hands & Voices team. Her work and influence with our deaf/ hard of hearing children spanned over 20 plus years. She will be forever missed.

Susan's beautifully written obituary expresses everything we wanted to highlight about her. We were granted permission to include parts of this in our tribute. "Susan attended the University of Wyoming, where she excelled academically earning her Master's degree in Speech Language Pathology. Shortly after finishing school, Susan joined STRIDE Learning Center in Cheyenne launching her career in pediatric speech therapy. During her years at STRIDE Learning Center, she found her passion for working with children. It soon became clear how naturally gifted Susan was in her ability to connect with children and families. As her career progressed her focus shifted to working with children with hearing loss.

Her gift continued to grow, and she became not only a teacher but a mentor for professionals, an advocate for families and a leader in her field. Susan innately understood children and dedicated her career to improving the standard of care for infants and children with hearing loss in the state of Wyoming. Through her work in preschool classrooms, in families' homes, at the Department of Education's Deaf & Heard of Hearing Outreach, at The Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EDHI) Program, and at Wyoming Family for Hands & Voices / READ Plus Program, she directly impacted the lives of thousands of children and families throughout Wyoming and Colorado.

Susan formed lifelong friendships with many of her colleagues and families over the course of her 27 years in the field. Her work was her calling, it was her passion, it was what she was born to do, and this translated into a genuine and authentic desire to see children and their parents thrive. Those who have worked with Susan closely describe the "Susan Effect," which illustrates the incredible impact she made on families' lives time and time again. She just had a way a making people feel cared for and respected while simultaneously guiding them and empowering them!

Susan leaves behind the culmination of her life's work, the READ Plus Program, which provides free books, education, and video meetings to empower parents with strategies to support their child's speech and language development through Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices. Susan's READ plus program will live on through the Wyoming Early Intervention Initiative (WEII). Her colleagues' goal is to continue Susan's incredible practices by permanently implementing them state-wide and ensuring that high-quality early intervention services are provided to children."



TEEN SCENESPOTLIGHT

MaiZe Tengesdal

WORDS OF ADVICE FROM ONE TEEN HEARING AID USER TO ANOTHER!

Hi-

My name is Mazie. I'm 15 and I go to Sheridan High School (SHS). I'm in 10th grade, and I've used hearing aids in both ears my whole life.

My Teacher of the Deaf told me that you don't want to use your hearing aid right now and I get it. I used to hate having a hearing loss too. I still don't like that I need something special just so that I can have a normal conversation. But, your hearing aid is not something to be ashamed of.

I know you might think that people judge you for needing one. I thought so too, for a really long time. Honestly, people don't care the way you think they do. They do care, but it's because they want you to be able to understand them and they want to connect with you.

I love to be around people and my friends, and I've noticed that when I used to refuse to use my hearing aids, I always felt really left out and ignored. I won't lie, it gets annoying to constantly have to remind people that we can't hear them. It gets tiring, and I know sometimes it's easier to get discouraged and shut down but that only makes it harder for us.

When I don't use my hearing aids, I get so much more tired and it's difficult to focus. Without our hearing aids, it takes so much work, just to understand people. When we use our hearing aids, we can only benefit. It not only helps us, but it helps other people too. People want to talk to you and your hearing aid is a tool that is there to help you with that. And, it's perfectly fine to say "I can't hear you, can you say that again please?"

Having hearing aids doesn't mean we can't do things, or that other people are better than us. We are just as capable as people who don't use hearing aids. We just need a little extra help, and there is nothing wrong with admitting that.

You're Not Alone!

Your friend,
Mazie

