



WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES

"What works for your child is what makes the choice right"™

15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY



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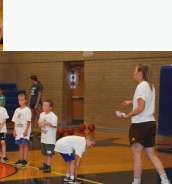
Hands & Voices Update

by Wendy Hewitt, Executive Director

Happy Fall! We hope you all had a great start to the school year and all that it entails!! We have been busy since the Parent Training ended in June. McKinley Bradshaw, an alumni of Lyman High School and a current women's basketball player at the University of Wyoming approached us in July about doing a basketball camp to fundraise for our organization. It was very successful. We had tremendous community support!!

In August, our amazing board members Traci Larson and Molly McColley spearheaded a fundraising event held at their local community pool in Gillette which involved selling concessions. This fundraiser was very successful as well. We want to thank our members in Gillette and Bridger Valley for all of your help and support. Also, we would like to thank members of the Lyman High School Girl's basketball team, McKinley and our local businesses for volunteering your time and donations on behalf of Hands & Voices!

In September, Wendy, Kim and Tiffany attended the National Hands & Voices Leadership Conference in Franklin, Tennessee. It was great to be back with everyone after not having a 2020 Leadership Conference. Our Wyoming team came away refreshed, motivated and remembering why we do what we do. If you are interested in becoming more involved with Hands & Voices please let us know!





WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES CELEBRATING 15 YEARS



by Wendy Hewitt, Executive Director

When my two younger children were born with severe to profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, I had a lot of questions. Many of those questions could be answered by the professionals that were working with my kids, but there were some that could only be answered by other parents. The professionals would give me phone numbers of families with a similar situation. Their knowledge and input were so valuable to me. In 2006, several professionals brought a few parents together to talk to them about a parent driven organization called Hands & Voices that originated in Colorado. We learned that many states had started their own chapter of H&V. After several meetings and a lot of discussion the Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices chapter began to take shape in May of 2006 with co-directors -Wendy Hewitt and Deb Hovde who both lived in southwest Wyoming. We attended our first Hands & Voices Leadership Conference in the summer of 2006 at the Peaceful Valley Ranch in Colorado. By September 2006 we had completed our application process and received our 501c3 non-profit status, and there has been no looking back since. In 2017, I accepted a position to be the Region 7 & 8 Coordinator for H&V Headquarters while still maintaining my role as Wyoming director.

Throughout the years there has been a lot of changes in Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices. In the fall of 2009 Deb Hovde stepped down as co-director. Kelly Monroe, was the assistant director from January 2010-June 2011, at which time Kim Reimann took over that position until the spring of 2015. At that time Mashell Englet, who was our fundraising coordinator became the new assistant director until August of 2018. Mandy Bangerter then started as the assistant director and Tiffany Hamblin joined us in 2018 as our tech specialist. In June of 2018 we added the Guide by Your Side program, (GBYS) with Kim Reimann as our GBYS Coordinator. We started with eight Parent Guides and in June of 2021 we added four D/HH Guides.

In 2007 we started a membership list for parents and professionals. We had 17 members, eight parents and nine professionals. In 2008 we added 14 more. Today our membership is approximately 220. We continue to send out our Wyoming newsletter, The Communicator and the Hearing Our Way magazine (sponsored by EHDI).

Family Fun Events started in Cheyenne with games and a picnic in the park in August of 2008. There were 35 parents and professionals in attendance. Over the years we have held 41 Family Events in ten different cities around Wyoming. Casper wins with 17 events in that area. We have done everything from bowling, roller skating, ice skating, crafts, a variety of games, bouncy houses, swimming and even a Mom's Night facial and a signing Santa. Game nights and swimming are the top for events and pizza is typically the main course for a family event. As you can guess we haven't done many events since February of 2020 because of the pandemic, but we are working on getting a few scheduled around the state.

In 2012 Hands & Voices went to our legislators for funding to help pay for hearing aids. We were given \$30,000 for children birth-five. In 2015 we were able to get \$50,000 to help kids birth to 21. At this time this funding has been able to get hearing aids for 164 Wyoming kids.

In the spring of 2013 we were contacted by the Olive Osmond Foundation about hosting a Hear in the Dark 5k. In May 2017 we spent two days in Casper with Justin Osmond and Lezhai Gulbransen finding sponsors for the race. In 2014-2017 we did the race on our own and had a lot support and great times. In 2021 we have been searching for new fundraiser ideas which included May Day Baskets, a basketball camp and concessions at local swimming pools.

Our first Parent Training was held in June of 2017 at the Ramkota in Casper. We received some additional funding that allowed us to bring parents and professionals from around the state to have a training in Casper. It was a huge success and we have received the funding each year since that has allowed us to host a training each year. With the exception of the 2020 Covid year. Speakers at our training have included presenters from Hands & Voices Headquarters, EHDI, Department of ED, DVR, and the Parent Information Center. Wyoming has sent parents to the H&V Leadership Conference each year. In 2018 Wyoming hosted the conference at Little America in Cheyenne. We have worked closely with each of these organizations in many ways throughout the years. We have had WY H&V representation at WDE WYHI events and Transition meetings, EHDI State & National Conferences and provided support to the Academic Bowl Team.





NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE "THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR LEADING" FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE SEPTEMBER 17TH-19TH, 2021

By: Wendy Hewitt, Kim Reimann and Tiff Hamblin

This year's National Hands & Voices Leadership Conference held in Franklin Tennessee had us literally asking ourselves "Why" we are here. In our first leadership only session on Friday, September 17th, We were enriched with an amazing presentation on this topic to kick the conference off. Everyone was sitting at tables according to geographical regions. Each of us had an opportunity to share with one another our "Why's" as it pertained to our involvement with Hands & Voices. Here is a sampling of what we shared with with our Region.

Wendy -

'Remember the Why' was the discussion at the leadership meeting on the opening day of the conference. My why started out by me talking to other parents about things that they had done with their kids and what worked for them and what hadn't. When you have a child with any degree of hearing loss there are so many options with amplification and what communication mode should we use. What works for one family is different for another family. The one thing we have in common is that we want what is best for our child and we can learn new strategies and ideas from every family.

Kim -

It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with Wyoming families for the past years. My "Why" for working with Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices is because somewhere along the journey of raising my three kids, my oldest whom has a hearing loss, I realized that it takes a village. I had so many wonderful professionals and parents help me along the way – all whom have become dear friends. There was so much I didn't know, I didn't know about raising a child with a hearing loss. These wonderful people imparted their wisdom and knowledge and helped my child and family tremendously. My hope is that families can have a similar positive experience as I – or at least know that there is another family out there who has had similar struggles and to know that they are not alone in their triumphs and victories and their struggles. We can lift each other up and help one another.

Tiff -

My "Why" with Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices has evolved over the past 11 years. Initially, I was just a friend going to family fun events with Wendy so she wasn't traveling long distances alone while completing post graduate work in Deaf Education which lead to me working side by side with Wendy & Kim in a supporting role. Geez this sounds like a part in a movie or something ha ha. But really "Why" I am involved is because I have always had a sincere desire to help others improve their lives and I have loved associating with all of you!






DHH/Language Virtual Preschool by Stride in Cheyenne

WHEN:
MONDAYS 1PM-2PM
SEPT 2021- MAY 2022

WHERE:
ZOOM



WHO:
CHILDREN
AGES 2-6



Contact Janine Cole
 Phone: 307-632-2991
 Email: janinec@stridekids.com

Follow us on
Facebook,
Twitter, YouTube
Instagram



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Hands & Voices New Year Virtual 5k! Friday, December 31, 2021 - Sunday, January 2, 2022

Join our group!!! (Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices)
When registering it will ask for a password. It is: Wyoming

Please share with anyone who might be interested and who like to support a great organization!

Run. Walk. Bike. Hike. Roll. Crawl.
Whatever your mode, join us to make our year!

General Registration: October 16 - December 15 = \$30
Late Registration*: December 16 - January 2 = \$35

All Registrants will receive a race t-shirt.

*Your t-shirt will not arrive prior to the event if you do late registration.

Proceeds from this race will go directly to participating chapters of Hands & Voices throughout the United States. Hands & Voices is an international organization with 43 chapters that provides support to families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

www.handsandvoices.org

Here is the link to register:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/CO/Boulder/HandsVoicesNewYear5K>



Save the Date Transition Workshop Monday, December 6th, 2021



Choose Your Own Adventure-
Transitioning to Life

Who: Students with Hearing Loss Ages 12-21,
parents and providers

Where: Casper College, Gateway Building

Parent stipend will be available.
More details to come.



Registration information and more coming soon!

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In conjunction with the Wyoming
Department of Education/Deaf-Hard
of Hearing Outreach