

# The Power of Parent-to-Parent Support

Every family who has a child who is deaf or hard of hearing has a different story to tell, yet we all share a common bond. At Hands & Voices, we understand the power of parents coming together to support and learn from one another.

Families who are just beginning the journey can learn from veteran parents about the challenges, as well as the joys, of raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. For many parents, their only regret in the 'early years' is not connecting to other parents sooner!

*"So many people benefit from what Hands & Voices has and continues to do. I feel empowered to be an advocate for my child and knowing that it's okay if my daughter's journey isn't the same as everyone else's path."*



- NataLee Lindstrom, Parent

## Join GBYS

Enrolling is easy, confidential, and free.

Parents and family members can request services.

Professionals can also request services for staff and/or families they serve (with a faxed consent).

## Contact Info



<https://www.wyhandsandvoices.org/guide-by-your-side-gbys>



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## Guides By Region

Wyoming Parent Guides have journeys as varied and individualistic as your personal experience. Our guides have first-hand experience and knowledge of raising a child with a hearing loss from different perspectives. Guides have children with all levels of hearing loss from mild, moderate, severe, to profound or unilateral (one ear) hearing loss. Some have kids that were diagnosed with a hearing loss at birth, while other Guides' children were diagnosed months or years after they were born, which is known as late onset hearing loss (LOHL).

Our Guides also have experience with Microtia/Atresia; a congenital deformity where the outer ear is underdeveloped, and atresia is the absence or closure of the outer ear. Other Guides are raising a child with other disabilities along with hearing loss, known as Deaf Plus. The communication options they have choose for their child is also varied: hearing aids, cochlear implants, bone conducting hearing aid (BAHA), the use of sign language-American Sign Language - ASL, Signing Exact English -SEE, conceptually signed English.

# Wyoming



## Guide By Your Side

**Provides unbiased emotional support and resources by trained Parent Guides to families with children who have a hearing loss.**



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



## Wyoming GBYS Guides

Rachel Turner  
(Laramie County)

Kim Reimann  
(Natrona County)

Wendy Hewitt  
(Uinta County)

Mandy Bangerter  
(Laramie County)

Betsy O'Neil  
(Natrona County)

Christine Bullinger  
(Park County)

Sarah Nokes  
(Natrona County)

NataLee Lindstrom  
(Natrona County)

Ashley Salmon  
(Campbell County)

## Mission & Vision

Guide By Your Side (GBYS) is a family support program that embodies the mission of Hands & Voices. GBYS provides unbiased parent-to-parent support to families of children who are deaf/hard of hearing. Our guides work directly with families whose child has recently been diagnosed with a hearing loss. This program is free of charge to Wyoming families.

## Our Parent Guides and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Role Models

Our goal is to help engage the circle of support between providers, professionals, teachers, and parents in order to have the best possible outcomes for children and families by offering:

- Unbiased support
- A "Welcome Bag" with connections to state and national resources
- Free membership to WY Families for Hands & Voices
- Guidance for working with professionals
- Practical solutions to everyday challenges
- Experiences with different levels of deafness/hearing loss
- Regional events
- Advocacy for families
- Educational opportunities

D/HH adults who act as role models are uniquely qualified to provide families with a positive and hopeful perspective from their day-to-day, real life experiences as a D/HH person living in a predominantly hearing world.

In sharing these experiences and insights, D/HH role models may be able to articulate what a young child cannot, which brings an important perspective and credibility to discussions of the child's needs.

- Offers experience from Guides who know what it is like to raise a deaf/hard of hearing child.
- Gives the family a chance to connect with others who are traveling along the same path.
- Helps families identify communication options.

## Services Available

We're here for you when YOU are ready! One-on-one conversation over the phone, online, or in person about the topics you want to discuss such as communication options, emotional support, educational choices, sibling and extended family issues, transition to preschool, where to find a pediatric audiologist or sign classes and more.

