



# WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES

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

**Volume 13  
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2019**



## 2019 PARENT TRAINING

*Several Wyoming parents and professionals were able to attend the Parent Training held June 28th & 29th at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper. See Page 2 for more details!*

## HANDS & VOICES UPDATE

Once again summer is flying by and here we are getting ready for school to start again. This summer we held our 3rd Annual Hands & Voices Parent Training in Casper. It was a great weekend filled with informational and inspiring speakers and opportunities to meet new families. Karen Putz from H&V Headquarters was able to share with all of us the perspective of being a D/HH adult and the mom of three children with hearing loss. She is an amazing lady. We had a fun family social at the Outreach Library and it was a great time for families to get to know each other better. We are already working on the 2020 training that will be held in June 26 & 27, 2020 so Save the Date!! This time we will add sessions for high school students for transitioning to life after high school! So be watching for more information in our fall newsletter.

We have updated our H&V brochure and created a brochure for the R.E.A.D Plus program. You can view them on our website. A Guide By Your Side brochure is in the works. Plans are being made for various Family Fun Events around the state so be watching for more information on those!!

Good luck to you and your families as the new school year starts. If you have concerns or questions about their accommodations and services please let us know. If we can't help you we can find someone that can. We are not alone on this hearing loss journey!



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# 2019 PARENT TRAINING FROM A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Molly McColley

"I feel so fortunate to be able to attend the Parent Training Conferences and that Wyoming Families for Hands and Voices has had them for parents and families. From learning new things, meeting other parents who have similar experiences, sharing tips and info with one another, to watching your child make friends with other children who are deaf/hard of hearing the experience is invaluable!"



By: Ashley Salmon

My family has attended the H&V parent training now for 2 years in Casper, WY. Our son, Hunter, is a four year old with a bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and is aided. The parent training has made a huge impact in our home. Each year we have grown and evolved in our understanding, knowledge and love for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Our first year was full of an incredible amount of information. We learned about all of the resources available to us as a family regarding each stage of our child's life. We learned about the amazing technology that is available to help our son navigate as he grows. We also took away valuable information regarding how to go about walking through the education system with Hunter. We now feel equipped to help Hunter as he advocates through his journey with hearing loss. Though we obtained a wealth of valuable knowledge, what really hit home for our family was meeting all of the other families dealing with hearing loss. We had just met these people but felt connected to them, we could relate to them. We shared our stories of frustration, tears, laughter and joy. My husband and I no longer felt alone on this journey. This gave us hope. We felt validated that we are not just a mom and dad trying to raise our hard of hearing child, we were a completely educated family full of so much to offer Hunter. We met our village of people that will help raise our son to become the best version of himself.

This last June at the parent conference we experienced all of the same great events and educational opportunities, but this time Karen Putz was a speaker for the conference. She engaged us as parents and helped us unwrap just how lucky we are to have these children in our lives. She motivated us to be the best version of ourselves so that we can help our kids see that in themselves. Karen brought a special touch to the conference and left my family walking away proud to be who and where we are in this life. Aside from being gifted with Karen's presence, something that changed from last year was Hunter's ability to socialize with his peers at the conference. He was older and extremely excited to be around others just like him. The joy that gave him was life changing. Hunter established relationships I hope he has for a life time. Each year they also hold a parent/child panel, which is a opportunity for families who have walked the walk to share their stories and advice. I can't personally describe how uplifting and encouraging this time with them is. They have put so many of our families fears and worries to rest.

I don't have near enough space in this article to tell you just how wonderful our Wyoming H&V chapter is and what a fantastic opportunity the parent conference provides your family. These women work so hard to make this a very special weekend, full of education and fun. We can't begin to express our gratitude to the professionals (there are so many of you) who put everything together to help us figure out this journey. We need all of you, professionals and parents. My husband and I can't, and will not do this alone, Hunter needs all of you! I strongly encourage you to attend the parent training if you have not, it's life changing.

**Bottom:**  
Hunter Salmon



**Above L to R: Ashley, Hunter and Cody Salmon.**

**Bottom:**  
Parent Panel discussion at the parent training. L to R: Interpreter Trena Franck, Kim and Larry Reimann & Donella and David Holland



**Above: Children along with their parents attended our parent training family social at the Outreach Library for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Casper, WY**



By: Melody Lehman

My name is Melody Lehman. My son is 8 months old and he was born with Microtia of the left ear. I have worked in Special Education for 12 years and have been at Deaf/Hard of Hearing training's as a professional, but this past Hands and Voices Parent Training was my first experience as a parent. I was very excited and nervous to attend. Thankfully my husband was also to attend.

We really liked learning about the access to technology from Department of Vocation Rehab. We very much enjoyed meeting all the families at the D/HH Library. Most of all we loved hearing from our guest note speaker, Karen Putz. She was so inspiring to listen to. Her journey as a person that is D/HH and as a parent really was so amazing to hear. We loved how much she focused on hearing deafness as a gift.

We really enjoyed hearing stories from other families, all the resources, and support from everyone around us.



**Above: Keynote Speaker, Karen Putz holding Davis Lehman**



**Top: Davis Lehman  
Bottom: Melody & Andrew Lehman**



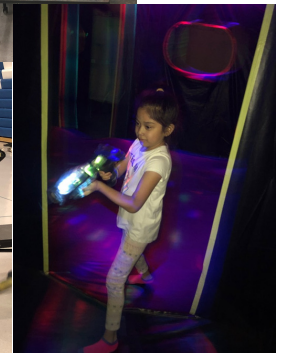
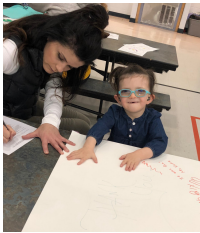
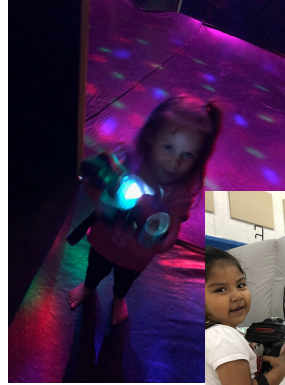


# GILLETTE FAMILY FUN DAY

By: Traci Larson

On May 11th, 2019, families came together for the Wyoming Families for Hands and Voices Family Fun Night in Gillette, WY. We had 15 families join us for an afternoon of Laser Tag, Safe Archery, crafts and Pizza. Laser Tag and Safe Archery were donated by JR's Laser Tag.

The kids enjoyed the competitive nature of team against team. Our craft was "i Love you" hand monsters. The kids were creative with their designs and made door hangers for their bedrooms.



## ACCESS PASS - DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!

By Wendy Hewitt,

When my kids were younger we made the journey to Estes Park for the Annual Cochlear Kids Camp. We were able to drive through the beautiful Rocky Mountain National Park to get to Estes. Prior to our trip we had heard about the Access Pass for individuals with permanent disabilities. So we made sure to take the letter from their ENT stating that they had permanent sensorineural hearing loss and their birth certificates, because at 6 and 4 they didn't have a photo ID just yet. At the park entrance we were able to get them both a lifetime pass. We don't travel a lot, but recently we traveled to Panguitch, Utah for a weekend of high school rodeo events. Well for those of you who have ever been to Southern Utah you know there are 4 National Parks/Monuments with in a short driving distance from Panguitch. So I was excited to visit some of the Parks in our spare time there. As we headed to Bryce Canyon I realized the Access Passes had not been moved from my old wallet to the new one that I got back in May. This oversight on my part cost us \$70. So with over 2,000 Federal recreation sites - Don't leave home without your Access Pass, you never know when you might be able to use it to make some family memories and save a little money!!

### About the Access Pass

\*A free, lifetime pass, available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. that have been medically determined to have a permanent disability (does not have to be a 100% disability) - that provides admittance to more than 2,000 recreation sites managed by five Federal agencies.

\*Provides entrance or access to pass owner and accompanying passengers in a single, private, non-commercial vehicle at Federal operated recreation sites across the country.

\*Photo identification may be required to verify ownership.

\*What you need:

\*A copy of ID issued by an authorized U.S. agency such as your driver's license, passport, or state issued ID & Documentation that proves permanent disability such as:

\*Statement by a licensed physician (Statement must include: that the individual has a PERMANENT disability, that limits one or more aspects of their daily life, and the nature of those limitations.);

\*Document issued by Federal agency such as the Veteran's Administration, Social Security Disability Income, or Supplemental Security Income; or a Document issued by a State agency such as a vocational rehabilitation agency

\*Passes are NON-REFUNDABLE, NON-TRANSFERABLE, and cannot be replaced if lost or stolen.

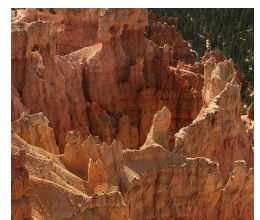
\*Passes may also be obtained:

\*Free in person at a federal recreation site.

\*Online -The cost of obtaining a pass online is \$10 for processing the application. At <https://store.usgs.gov/access-pass>. Applicants must provide documentation proof of residency and documentation of permanent disability.

\*Mail- Using the paper application and enclosing documentation proof of residency and documentation of permanent disability and the \$10 processing fee..

More information can be found at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)



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

## TEEN SCENE - ADDY TURNER

By: Addy Turner

Hi! My name is Addy Turner and I'm from Cheyenne, Wyoming. I have lived here for almost nine years now and will be a senior at East High School this Fall. I'm very athletic and unfortunately, can only find time to play three sports. I like tennis, indoor track and outdoor track. My favorite event is the high jump. I have placed 5th, 4th and 2nd so far at the state competitions. This year, I'm going for gold! I also love to read, volunteer at the library and hang out with my brothers.

After high school, I plan to go to our community college for my general courses. Then I plan on going to a four-year college for my bachelor's in my future career when I figure out what it is!

When I was born, I had meningitis at two weeks old. My parents did not get a diagnosis of hearing loss until I was almost two years old. My mom noticed I wasn't responding to sound like I should have been.

We went to the audiologist and found I had a moderate to profound hearing loss. I was quickly given hearing aids and started school at the CCHAT Center in Sacramento, California. I did really well there and entered public school kindergarten when I was five and have attended public school ever since.

About a year and a half ago, I received my cochlear implant. It took a while to adjust to, but it has been totally worth it! I hear more sound now and it makes conversations a lot easier.

For me, being deaf is a gift. I have been given opportunities that other students don't have. I have met really awesome people and gotten to participate in great things like the academic bowl. My advice to families and parents is to give your child every opportunity to learn and grow such as sign language, spoken language and life experiences. Also, when your kids reach high school, get involved with the academic bowl! This is a great opportunity to meet other kids with hearing loss, enhance their knowledge, learn sign language and travel. I love to share my story with others. It can be awkward or weird at first, but then I realize this is a part of who I am. I've learned not to let hearing loss limit me in what I can accomplish!



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