



# WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES

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

Volume 14  
Issue 3  
Summer  
2020

**Save the Date!**  
Parent Training Rescheduled For:  
**June 25th & 26th, 2021**  
Ramkota Hotel in Casper, WY

## COVID-19 STRIKES AGAIN!

**2020 PARENT TRAINING CANCELED!**  
We look forward to our 2021 Parent Training being bigger and better than ever before! Hope to see you there!

## HANDS & VOICES UPDATE

Here we are once again with summer flying by. Yet with our kids being home since March it has been the longest summer break any of us have ever had. By now most Wyoming schools have their plans in place for the 2020-21 school year. Of course we are all worried about how it is going to go for our D/HH kids with everyone wearing masks. We have included an insert created by Hands & Voices Headquarters with information for teachers and other educational providers. Be sure to share them with those that will be working with your children. We have also included some information on page three. Remember you are always the best advocate for your child.

We are working toward having an ASTra training in Wyoming. At this time the training is being held virtually and we are looking at November. So be watching our website and social media for more information. This program has helped so many families become stronger advocates for their kids.

Many families around the state know Jo Otterholt as the D/HH Library Specialist in Casper. Jo retired at the end of this school year. We are sad to see her go, but hope she will enjoy her free time. Jo spent many years sending out books to families all over Wyoming. She will never know how much it meant to all of us. Jo was instrumental in sending many teams to the Academic Bowl each year. The fall newsletter will have an article about Jo, and all that she did for

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# THE HANDS & VOICES ADVOCACY, SUPPORT, AND TRAINING (ASTRA) PROGRAM

## *By Hands & Voices Headquarters*

*Wyoming Families for Hands and Voices is in the process of bringing the ASTra program to the State of Wyoming. Training dates and times to be announced soon.*

*ASTra is a replicable Deaf and Hard of Hearing Educational Advocacy Program that embodies the mission and vision of Hands & Voices, which is to provide support to families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) without a bias around communication mode, method, and educational setting so that every child who is D/HH has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. ASTra content is derived from years of direct advocacy experience working with families in schools, attending advocacy trainings from legal experts, providing trainings, and the Hands & Voices Educational Advocacy Guidebook (©2013).*

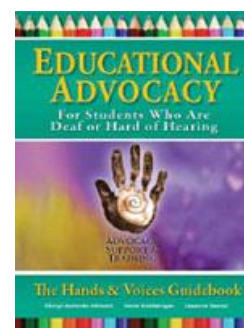


## *Hands & Voices Educational Advocacy Support to Families*

*Many families struggle in their attempts to improve educational programs for their children, and the support they find is usually not experienced with the unique issues facing deaf or hard of hearing kids. Hands & Voices is often asked to provide educational advocacy support to families (and professionals) who have questions about special education law and its applicability to students who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

*In our H&V chapters, it's not at all uncommon to find an H&V trained advocate supporting a family who is struggling with their child's educational services and communication access. H&V chapters can provide families with advocacy resources, support, and in some cases, attend an IEP meeting with a family. While we're not attorneys, and we can't give legal advice, we do feel strongly that experienced parents can be great assets to other families new to educational advocacy.*

*The H&V Guidebook is the essential book for families, advocates, and professionals who support the education of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Can also serve as a textbook for students in the field.*



Available to Purchase  
Online for \$34.90  
Includes Shipping and  
Handling

<http://handsandvoices.org/resources/product.s.htm#astra>

## *Testimonial From A Parent Receiving Advocacy Support*

*"I cannot thank you enough for the support and quick education you gave me last week. Since then, I've been able to learn the basics (at a minimum) on how to best advocate for my son. I have been able to make decisions for moving forward and request things for him that I didn't even know existed. We're still working through a few details like the qualifications of the deaf educator (listening and spoken language person in their minds) but overall the corporation is working with me so far (thankfully). Once again, thank you! Having people like you available for advice is a tremendous blessing to those of us just starting the journey. I know you have a busy schedule and am forever appreciative of you taking time out for my family. I'll be sure to pay it forward whenever possible."*

*April – mom to a son with bi-lateral cochlear implants*

Visit <http://www.handsandvoices.org/astra/index.html> to view more resources on the ASTra program which includes links to videos, articles, tools for advocacy and much more.



# UPCOMING VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

## TRAUMA INFORMED CARE INFUSED WITH DEAF CULTURE

SEPTEMBER 11, 2020 | 12PM EASTERN



Little Creek  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

CBS  
CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL  
SOLUTIONS  
unlocking opportunity

To learn more about this conference, visit our Facebook page and website (click on the news & events tab). To register, go to [my.demio.com/ref/xtNBGP4iNLL2qqTH](https://my.demio.com/ref/xtNBGP4iNLL2qqTH)



Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss  
2021 Virtual Conference

January 15<sup>th</sup> – March 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

Early Bird Registration Opens September 2020

To learn more about this conference and to register visit:

<https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/supporting-success-publishing/2021-sschl-conference/>

or on our Facebook page and website  
(click on the news & events tabs).

## Back to School Word Search Contest!

Enter to Win a Amazon Gift Card!



Complete the school days word search, take a picture, include your full name and text it to Wendy at 307-780-6476

**Entries Due By September 18th, 2020**

Winners will be notified by text and on Facebook

## IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WHILE WEARING A MASK

[www.ListenWithLindsay.com](http://www.ListenWithLindsay.com)



Communication is a 2-way street between the talker and the listener. Wearing masks and social distancing has made it more difficult for even people with normal hearing to communicate, let alone people with hearing loss! Here's some good communication strategies for both the talker and the listener aka everyone:

- **USE VISUALS**
- **GESTURE AND POINT**
- **WRITE IT DOWN**
- **USE CONTEXT CLUES**
- **REPEAT THE PART YOU HEARD**
- **BE PATIENT**
- **CLARIFY IF UNSURE**
- **REPHRASE INSTEAD OF REPEATING**
- **MOVE AWAY FROM NOISE**
- **USE VISUALS:** Hold up the object you're talking about or pull up a photo on your phone
- **GESTURE AND POINT:** Act it out or show what you're talking about by pointing
- **WRITE IT DOWN:** If you're really struggling a pen and a pad might help. I'd recommend a fat sharpie and white paper and writing in big letters so the other person can read it from 6 feet away.
- **USE CONTEXT CLUES:** The day after Mother's Day someone's probably asking 'how's your mum?' not 'how's your rum?'
- **REPEAT THE PART YOU HEARD:** Show that you're trying by repeating what you thought you heard so the other person only needs to say the missing target word.
- **BE PATIENT:** Our brains are all experiencing more stress which makes it more difficult to process any information- speech included. Expect to have to repeat yourself.
- **CLARIFY IF UNSURE:** "Did you say 15 one-five or 50 five-oh?" is a common one I ask on the phone.
- **REPHRASE INSTEAD OF REPEATING:** Don't keep saying the same sentence the same way if it's not working- re-word and add more context to make your message more clear.
- **MOVE AWAY FROM NOISE:** You already have a degraded speech signal and distance making it harder to hear, extra noise will make things that much harder.

## SCHOOL DAYS Word Search Puzzle



B	I	N	D	E	R	S	C	H	O	O	L	B	U	S	D	C
L	B	X	O	C	U	B	D	P	X	J	U	Z	X	V	S	T
A	T	A	L	T	L	X	R	R	X	C	K	C	L	H	A	L
C	W	P	C	H	E	A	A	I	E	J	S	S	U	W	Y	O
K	O	R	R	K	G	B	S	O	S	A	E	C	N	Y	B	L
B	F	I	T	R	P	W	O	S	C	E	D	D	C	U	S	R
O	U	N	E	T	E	A	M	O	R	B	Z	I	H	T	N	E
A	W	C	A	S	O	S	C	J	K	O	X	G	N	T	D	C
R	F	I	C	V	S	S	Q	K	I	W	O	E	J	G	E	E
D	R	P	H	H	T	H	M	R	G	T	D	M	F	A	S	S
P	I	A	E	P	U	V	O	O	O	U	B	R	C	S	K	S
D	E	L	R	W	D	K	E	M	T	X	F	L	R	Y	K	Y
D	N	N	R	C	Y	U	X	S	E	U	L	Z	E	O	X	P
D	D	W	C	U	H	B	A	Z	E	W	P	Q	O	A	A	J
O	S	T	Q	I	L	A	M	A	R	S	O	B	U	X	R	F
P	H	Y	L	E	L	E	L	I	B	R	A	R	Y	I	V	N
A	W	M	T	B	I	S	R	K	Z	I	M	T	K	Q	Z	X



BACKPACK  
BINDER  
BLACKBOARD  
BOOKS  
CHALK  
CLASSROOM  
DESK  
EXAM

FRIENDS  
HOMEWORK  
LEARN  
LIBRARY  
LUNCH  
NOTEBOOK  
PENCILS  
PRINCIPAL

QUIZ  
READING  
RECESS  
RULER  
SCHOOL BUS  
STUDENTS  
STUDY  
TEACHER

Follow us on  
Facebook,  
Twitter and  
Instagram



## Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices Contact Information

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

# TEEN SCENE - GABRIEL HEUER

*Hello to the Wyoming Hands & Voices Family!*

*My name is Gabriel Heuer, and I am a 2020 high school graduate with hearing loss. I have had moderate-severe hearing loss since I was four years old and have worn hearing aids since then (as long as I can remember). Since my Sophomore year, I have been a member of the Wyoming Deaf and Hard of Hearing Academic Bowl Team, and it was a blast! Academic Bowl consists of two teams competing in a jeopardy-style tournament with questions ranging from pop culture to mathematics. Approximately 15 teams compete against each other at regional competitions, vying for a chance to compete against other teams at the national level. Only the top teams get to move on to compete in the national competition which is hosted at Gallaudet University.*

*All of the team members are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and so sign language is more prevalent there than I was used to. I was able to meet other deaf/hard-of-hearing teens just like me from all around the state, and all across the country, too. During my time on the team, we traveled to Illinois, Washington, D.C., Arizona, and Hawaii. Through the Academic Bowl Team, I was able to visit with other teens with hearing loss and share experiences and tips for navigating a hearing world. In high school, apart from the Academic Bowl, I enjoyed playing the trombone in the Kelly Walsh band, Nordic skiing, and playing tennis. I also love to read books, play video games with my friends, and listen to music.*

*Now that I am out of high school, I am working a full-time job at Menards in the lumber yard during the summer, and I will be attending Casper College in the fall. At Casper College, I plan to major in pre-med, and then transfer to the University of Wyoming. Hopefully medical school will be in my future.*

*My advice for any kids in school is to advocate for yourself. If you can learn self-advocacy at a young age, you will have a much easier time functioning in the "real world" (working jobs or any day-to-day interactions with community members). When I started my summer job this year, I found out it was a lot different from high school, and what I was used to. In the K-12 grades, you are most likely provided with accommodations to help you succeed, with people there making sure the accommodations are working along the way. However, once you get a job where you don't know anyone, it is completely your own responsibility to let others know you have hearing loss, and what they can do to help you do your best work. Self-accommodation in school may be as simple as reminding your teacher to turn on the closed-captions, sit you at the front of the class, or switch on their microphone. If you can master these skills, then the world outside of school will be a lot easier to manage.*



Academic Bowl Teammates in Hawaii