

# WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES

A parent driven, non-profit organization that provides unbiased support to families of deaf and hard of hearing children to assist them in reaching their fullest potential.



**WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES WAS STARTED IN MAY 2006 BY CO-DIRECTORS WENDY HEWITT AND DEB HOVDE**

## NUMBER OF MEMBERS

# 225



## FAMILY FUN NIGHTS

# 44



Family Fun Events are hosted by H&V in different regions across the state each year. Each event has a fun activity for kids, such as swimming, ice or roller skating, games, bowling etc.

Educational and social opportunities are offered for parents and children at each event. In our early years, we would host 1-2 events per year. We currently host 5-6 events around the state each year with a total of 39 events since we started Family Fun Events in 2008.

# 225

## NEWSLETTERS

Currently, we send 225 parents and professionals informational newsletters.

Our mailings include a Wyoming specific newsletter, The Communicator from Hands & Voices Headquarters, and a 'Hearing My Way' magazine which is sponsored by the WY EHDI Program.



## PARENT TRAININGS

# 5



In 2017, H&V began hosting a two day Parent Training in Casper. Trainings consist of speakers from H&V Headquarters and Wyoming professionals who have experience, knowledge, and expertise in the Deaf/Hard of Hearing field.

A family social event is held in conjunction with the training, to provide opportunities for families to get to know one another. Over the past five years we've had an average of 70 participants at each training. With several returning families in attendance all five years.

## WEII PLUS PROGRAM

(WYOMING EARLY INTERVENTION INITIATIVE)

THE WYOMING EARLY INTERVENTION INITIATIVE (WEII) PLUS PROGRAM IS A STATEWIDE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL PROVIDED THROUGH THE WYOMING CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS AND IS AVAILABLE AT NO COST TO WYOMING FAMILIES WHO HAVE CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING FROM BIRTH THROUGH TWO YEARS OF AGE.

WEII PLUS CAN POSSIBLY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN AGES THREE TO FIVE UPON REQUEST. THE WEII PLUS PROGRAM EMPOWERS WYOMING EARLY INTERVENTION PROVIDERS AND FAMILIES BY PROVIDING TRAINING, RESOURCES, STRATEGIES, AND COACHING.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROVIDERS AND FAMILIES ARE SUPPORTED IN MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS TO GIVE THE CHILD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL. WEII PLUS IS FAMILY-CENTERED AND FOCUSES ON PARENTS BEING THEIR CHILD'S FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHER.



# WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES GUIDE BY YOUR SIDE PROGRAM

Guide By Your Side (GBYS) provides unbiased support through trained parent guides who also have children with a hearing loss. The program began in Wyoming in June 2018 and is currently serving 37 families of newly diagnosed children.

# 37

These parents work as “Guides” directly with families who have just learned of their child’s hearing loss, or who have older children and are in need of the unique support that comes from someone else who has walked this path him/herself and can share from direct experience and wisdom.

The goal of this program 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.



H&V Staff, Parent Guides, and D/HH Role Models are available to help parents learn to advocate for their kids.

## PARENT ADVOCACY

### WYOMING CHILDREN'S HEARING AID PROGRAM (WYCHAP)

# 175

Since 2012 over 175 Wyoming children have received hearing aids through WYCHAP.



Established in 2012 with the partnership between Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices and the Wyoming Legislature, uninsured and under-insured children birth through 5 were able to receive hearing aids.

Amended in 2015 to include coverage for kids through the end of high school.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PARENTS

In collaboration with the WY EHDI Program, over the past 13 years, 85 parents have had the opportunity to attend one of the following conferences: the H&V Leadership Conference, the EHDI National Conference, and the Family Support Conference.



# 85

## COLLABORATIONS



- Wyoming Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Program
- Wyoming Department of Education Outreach Services for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Wyoming Early Intervention Initiative (WEII)
- Parent Information Center (PIC)
- Hands & Voices Headquarters
- CDC+ Audiology Clinic

## DEAF/HARD OF HEARING ROLE MODELS



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.