



WYOMING  
HANDS &  
VOICES™

# WYOMING FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES

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

**Volume 13**  
**Issue 2**  
**Spring**  
**2019**



## NATIONAL EHDI CONFERENCE

Several Wyoming Parents and Professionals were able to attend the Conference in Chicago! See Page 2!

## HANDS & VOICES UPDATE

Here at H&V we are excited to have a new format for our newsletter. We hope that you will enjoy it! In the next few weeks we will also release our new brochure.

The 2019 Parent Training has been our focus for the last few months. It is going to be great. We have excellent speakers lined up and some great panels. There will be a Family Social on Friday, June 28th in the evening at the Outreach Library in Casper that will give opportunities for families to get to know each other better and see what is available for families at the library. There is more information about the training on the Insert and registration is open on our website!! We hope that your family can join us at the training. Once again we will have a parent travel stipend and daycare.

Depending on the age of your child with hearing loss you may have also received a flyer about a CMV Survey. So please take the time to go online and complete this survey. The information you provide can help Wyoming EHDI understand how they can better help families.

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# 2019 NATIONAL EHDI CONFERENCE

By: Betsy Tengesdal

At the beginning of March, I had the opportunity to attend the EHDI conference in Chicago. It was my second year at the conference and I was excited to go once again. As a parent of a daughter with a hearing loss and also a Teacher of Deaf/Hard of Hearing students, my interest in the field of hearing loss is two-fold. I am always looking for information to share with my daughter or to implement into our family and at the same time, I am looking for information to share with coworkers and families.

When I've thought about what the biggest takeaway of EHDI was, I've come up with the following: encouragement. I have been in the field of deaf education for over twenty years (13 as a parent) and I think that the idea that research is still happening, new things are being learned, and new ideas are still being discussed is encouraging. It is exciting to know that knowledge is expanding in the field and new technology being developed every day. Another area of encouragement is the opportunity to meet other parents and share ideas with each other. There are so many different situations where our children's hearing loss can affect them and so many ideas out there to try.

Meeting other Wyoming parents and professionals was also a highlight of my trip. I was excited to learn more about the R.E.A.D. Plus program, Guide By Your Side, and hear new ideas for Family Fun Events around the state.

I am so thankful that I was able to go to EHDI this year and implement what I learned and share the knowledge and tools with other families in our state.



Pictured above:  
David & Donella Holland

## 2019 WYHI

By: Christie Fritz

The annual state-wide social event titled, "WYHI", sponsored by the Wyoming Department of Education's, Outreach for Deaf/Hard of Hearing was held on March, 1, 2019 in Casper, WY. The event was attended by more than 160 people! What is WYHI and why is it so popular? WYHI is an annual event inviting students with hearing loss from around to the state to gather in one location for a day of activities and socialization! WYHI provides valuable opportunities for students with hearing loss to connect with their deaf/hard of hearing peers from other schools across Wyoming.

It was a busy day starting with lunch at Pizza Ranch where students, providers, and parents filled their bellies and visited. After lunch, the group traveled to Casper College where they enjoyed an engaging performance by internationally known Deaf performing artist, Peter Cook. Several participants were even brought up on stage to become part of the show! The group rounded out the day with a variety of activities in the gym including a group dance, bracelet and card making, face painting, a sign language exposure class, and photo booth. Overall it was a fantastic day of laughing, learning, socializing, and making lifelong connections! We look forward to another WYHI event in February 2020. If you have any questions about this WYHI or future events offered by Outreach for Deaf/Hard of Hearing, please contact Christie Fritz at [christie.fritz@wyo.gov](mailto:christie.fritz@wyo.gov) or Janine Cole at [janine.cole@wyo.gov](mailto:janine.cole@wyo.gov).



Left: professionals and students having fun in the photo booth. Above: Artist Peter Cook



# COMFORTING BLANKETS

By: Kim Reimann

It was a labor of love and a way to give back to the Wyoming community! Sophomore, Melissa Bullinger, from Burlington dedicated over 30 hours, 3 sewing machines, and a new sewing machine motor to sew over 24 baby blankets to be donated to Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices' Guide By Your Side (GBYS) Program. These blankets will be provided as part of a Welcome Basket to parents whose infant has been newly diagnosed with a hearing loss. Each blanket is lovingly crafted with the softest of fabric of contrasting patterns on each side, finished off with a simple border. On one side is a tag with the Hands & Voices and Guide By Your Side Logo, motto, and a heart (see inset).

Melissa's family is well aware of the support provided to families by Hands & Voices. Her older brother has a hearing loss and her family received support and resources through Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices. In the years since, her mom, Christine, has been on the Hands & Voices Board for 6 years and is now a Parent Guide with the newly formed Guide By Your Side Program that started in Wyoming in July 2018. Because of the support provided to her family, Melissa chose to do a meaningful project for her FCCLA (Future Career and Community Leaders of America) Project and give back to Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices. When families first find out that their child does not have typical hearing like other newborns, this can come as quite a shock. This news may be met with many emotions. These blankets are meant to be a symbol of comfort and hope for both the parent and the baby.

We cannot begin to express our gratitude to Melissa for all her care, love, and support going out to families in Wyoming. It can only be imagined that these blankets will become a coveted and prized possession – a family heirloom that will bring hope and happiness to families for the years to come. Thank you, Melissa Bullinger, what a thoughtful gift that says so much without saying a single word.



Top: Melissa and her blankets.  
Bottom left: A close-up of the blankets. Bottom right: Items in the GBYS Welcome Basket.



WYOMING  
HANDS & VOICES

Presents



**What?** A Family Fun day featuring Jrs Laser Tag, Pizza, games, and a craft!

**Who?** Families that have children with hearing loss.

**When?** Saturday May 11, 2019 11am-3pm

**Where?** Pronghorn Elementary Gymnasium  
3005 Oakcrest Dr, Gillette, WY 82718

**Cost?** FREE

Please RSVP to Whitney Davies text/call 215-519-9081 no later than Monday May 6 so we can make sure we have enough pizza and supplies.



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

# A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

By: Kim Reimann

On February 28th, a blustery, windy night in Casper, Wyoming approximately 70 people met at the West Side Studio City Theater (WYO Movies) to share a meal, friendship, and to watch the newest release of *How to Train Your Dragon 3: The Hidden World*. I felt this endearing movie was the best of the trilogy, so far. What made this movie even better was that it was open captioned! This means that the words were on the screen for all to read.

What is open captioned and how is it different from closed captioned? According to Ai-Media blog: Open captions are always visible because they are "burnt" (a permanent feature) into the video. They are most commonly used for movies displayed in cinemas.

Closed captions give the viewer the option to turn them on or off while watching a video. They are the most common form of captioning and can be identified by the [CC] symbol. Closed Captions are most commonly used on television and sites like Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo and can be found on many DVDs. Both Open Captioned and Closed Captioning make (spoken) content available to the audience.

When Wyoming Family for Hands & Voices holds a Family Fun event we always like to include an educational component. Knowledge is power. Right? Ben Smith, the manager at the west side theater, informed all of us about the two different kinds of assistive listening devices available at the theater. The first was a set of head phones that amplifies sound. It also provides audio description, which describes anything from the characters or the room to messages or subtitles displayed on the screen. The description is generally given in between dialogue. The second assistive device - CaptiView- is like a personal closed captioning device. The device is secured in the cup holder and has an adjustable, flexible arm which the user adjusts to the right angle for them to see the captions. Once the movie begins, the captions will appear on the screen and should only be visible to the user. Be sure to ask at the concession stands or where tickets are purchased to use these devices.

We are so thankful to WYOMovies.com for their kindness and generosity to accommodate all of us at Hands & Voices by providing a larger than originally planned theater, and giving us extra time to eat before the movie, and for taking the time to educate us on the assistive listening devices available for Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals when attending the theater. Be sure to check with your local theater about available accommodations..

