

Parents are invited to attend a workshop by internationally respected researcher  
**Dr. Christine Yoshinaga-Itano**, from Colorado University

## Children with cochlear implants: Research results

**Tuesday March 23, 2004 - 7:00-9:00 pm**

**Location:** B.C. Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health – Chan Centre  
950 West 28th Avenue, Vancouver B.C.

*The presentation will be video-conferenced with Kelowna, Victoria and Prince George. If you plan to attend any of these sites, contact Gael Chivas before February 27<sup>th</sup> [gchivas@southslope.sd41.bc.ca](mailto:gchivas@southslope.sd41.bc.ca) (604) 664-8300/ 8308 TTY*

*If you are interested in a car pool from the Fraser Valley, call Janet Les at 794-3772  
Sign Language interpreters will be provided.*

Come to our Spring Workshop...

**"Parents Supporting Parents"** with Susan Lane

Executive director, BC Family Hearing Resource Centre

**Thursday, May 20 - 7:30pm**

B.C. Family Hearing Resource Centre - 15220 92nd Ave, Surrey, BC.

Excellent acoustics and assistive listening equipment for people with a hearing loss

To register, call Nicole Grazier at 604-946-2966 or email [grazier@telus.net](mailto:grazier@telus.net)

**Reserve your camp-site early . . .**

CHHA - BC Parents' Branch

**Second Annual family camping weekend - July 23 to 25**

Monck Park Provincial Campsite - on Nicola Lake

*See page 4 for all the details... and contact information...*

This year, a change . . .

**CHHA - BC Parents' Branch "FAMILY WEEKEND"**

Parent sessions, Teen Konnection, Kidz Konnection, Kiddie Care

- ALL at the beautiful new Surrey Family YMCA

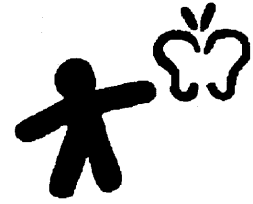
**Mark your calendar - October 22 and 23, 2004**

Details in May and September newsletters... For information or to volunteer your help or donation, call Janet Les (see box at right)

### 2004 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- |              |      |  |
|--------------|------|--|
| Feb 19       | 7:30 | Parent sharing and social time at B.C. Family Hearing Resource Centre (BCFHRC) 15220 92nd Ave, Surrey, BC.<br><b>All parents welcome!</b> Info, call Teresa 604-552-2254 |
| Mar 10       | 7:30 | Family Weekend planning meeting at BCFHRC.   |
| Mar 24       | 7:00 | Cochlear Implants: Research results (details above)  |
| May 20       | 7:30 | Spring Workshop with Susan Lane at BCFHRC  |
| June 25-29   |      | AG Bell convention – Anaheim, CA <a href="http://www.agbell.org">www.agbell.org</a>  |
| July 23 – 25 |      | Family Camp – Monck Park at Nicola Lake, Merritt   |
| August       |      | Family picnic – hosted by Lonn family  |
| Oct 22, 23   |      | CHHA Family Weekend, AGM, children's programs...   |

January 2004



**C**anadian

**H**ard of

**H**earing

**A**ssociation

**B.C.**

**Parents'**

**Branch**

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**Membership:** \$20 annual includes subscription to *Listen/Écouté* magazine and *The Loop* newsletter

# Report from the Pres

by Leila Lolua

## CHHA-BC Conference

The CHHA BC conference held last October in Abbotsford feels like it was so long ago. The crisis of three speakers canceling at the last minute doesn't seem so acute anymore. The strongest memory is the wonderful time of parents and their children who have a hearing loss connecting with old friends and to reaching out to new ones.

## Parents' Branch

It has always seemed to me that the CHHA-BC Parents' Branch has more stature or presence than what I know it to be; a small, dedicated group of parents committed to sharing information and lessons learned with other parents who have a child with a hearing loss. I became involved years ago because I liked the people I met, they were connected and informed, and it was so wonderful and reassuring to have the support of parents experiencing some of the same issues that my family was dealing with. They also happen to be an interesting, fun and social group, too. And despite being over-committed, and wanting to ease up on the pace, here I am with the title of president. The thing that keeps me active with CHHA-BC is my daughter. I know how invaluable it is for her to connect with peers who also have a hearing loss; this is something they share with her that I cannot. The parents who started this group have passed the reins, and over the years many parents have joined us. We need new parents to help carry on the work of this branch. Please be active participants, so we can be stronger together. We have a lot happening, in spite of our efforts to keep things manageable.

## CHHA National conference June 2005

An exciting event to look forward to is the CHHA National Conference which will be held in Kelowna in June 2005. CHHA National has always admired the involvement of parents and children in the CHHA-BC conference, so we'll be bringing our input to include parents', children's and teens' programs at the Kelowna conference.

## CHHA-BC Parents' Branch Family Weekend October 22 and 23, 2004

This year we are planning something different, because we don't have the resources to organize the CHHA-BC conference in October and then the National in 2005.

We're planning a fun, casual, weekend for families this fall. Friday night will be a fun social for parents and kids together. Saturday will include Kidz Konnection, Kiddie Kare and Teen Program. The Parents program will include our AGM and 2 workshops. We're booked a tremendous facility in Surrey to hold this event. Costs will be minimal so that more families can afford to attend. Please keep posted for more details and plan on coming to our CHHA-BC Parents' Branch Family Weekend!

CHHA BC Parents' Branch

## 2003-2004 Executive

**President:** Leila Lolua

**Vice President:** Teresa Lonn

**Past President:** Donna Chisholm

**Secretary:** Teresa Kazemir

**Treasurer, Editor:** Janet Les

**Parent Support:** Cathy Chow

**Publicity:** Patricia Barrett

**Email communication:** Cathy Higginson

**Camp coordinator:** Hamish Plommer

**Webmaster:** Steve Kazemir

## A thousand thanks

I extend a huge bouquet of thanks to Teresa Kazemir for taking on the role of President of the Parents' Branch for the past three years. She kept us organized in her quiet and efficient manner, and managed to do it while adding a third child to her family. She continues to be a real asset, and I am counting on her to keep guiding me along. Equal huge thanks go to Teresa Lonn who single-handedly pulls off Kidz Konnection each year. Jamie Mulligan helps with the Kiddie Kare, and all of our spouses and families get thanks for supporting us while we do this work. Janet Les' skill and competence and countless hours goes in to keeping our finances and producing these fabulous newsletters. Cathie Chow has a wealth of contacts, is a long-standing active participant of our group. A thousand thanks to all of you.

*Leila Lolua*

## GOOD NEWS!

### Re: Cochlear Implant Funding

The provincial government has authorized \$1.3 million in additional funding to reduce waiting lists for adult and children's cochlear implants. This is excellent news!

Thanks to all who wrote letters and talked to their MLA...

**You made a difference!**

Remember to send a thank you letter...

## Provincial Committees

CHHA – BC Parents' Branch is represented on provincial committees regarding school amplification systems and cochlear implant support. Leila Lolua meets with the **Auditory Training Equipment Committee** and Teresa Lonn on the **Cochlear Implant Support Program** committee. These Provincial Resource Programs are maintained by the Powell River School District. For information, see <http://www.sd47.bc.ca/provincial.html>

Teresa Kazemir represents the Parents' Branch on the **Council of Service Providers**. We continue to need representation on the **Coalition for Special Education**, which meets monthly in Vancouver. Please call Janet Les if you are interested.

# Hearing Loss: Deal with it strategically...

by Janet Les

*Continuing our series on young adults with hearing loss I interviewed Dr. Jonathan Dawrant and received permission to excerpt from his essay "Barrier Free in the Operating Room," published by the Canadian Hearing Society in 2000. Dr. Dawrant is 29 - a great role model for our kids.*

Many families of children with hearing loss would consider it wonderful to have a young, hard of hearing pediatrician. This could be reality if Dr. Jonathan Dawrant comes to practice in their area.

A third year pediatric resident at Alberta Children's Hospital, Jonathan has a moderate to severe hearing loss since birth. While this presents some challenges, he has a positive attitude and strong motivation to succeed in a demanding profession.

Jonathan believes hearing loss is not a barrier to a career in medicine. He says some areas require no hearing, such as dermatology or radiology. Most communication is not large-group or phone-based but occurs in a quiet room one-on-one with a patient.

Jonathan earned his MD at Queen's medical school and chose to specialize in pediatrics. "It's interesting, challenging, practiced in close intimate surroundings with kids and parents," he says. Soon after moving to Calgary for his residency in pediatrics, Jonathan was discovered by the audiology department at Children's Hospital. He was invited to present to a parent seminar, which led to invitations to dinner from families and referrals from audiology staff. "I'm a big brother to a bunch of hard of hearing kids in Calgary," he acknowledges.

Jonathan's advice to parents is to deal with hearing loss strategically and not with pity. He suggests, for example, if a parent sees their child bow out of play groups, promote more one-on-one activities. Think about sports – soccer is good for younger kids but hard when older. Choosing sports like track and skiing is good, he feels. Jonathan grew up hating team sports

but later liked it. He now enjoys long distance running, curling, volleyball, lifting weights and racquetball.

Typically, the social aspect was his greatest challenge growing up with a hearing loss. Says Jonathan, "I still feel socially inadequate but it's not the end of the world." He chooses to socialize with one or two people and he is not affiliated with any group concerned with hearing loss - he's just too busy. His friends are all "hearing."

However, while in medical school Jonathan contacted the Kingston branch of the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) for ideas on how to accommodate his hearing loss in the hospital operating room. According to Jonathan, the operating room is in many ways the worst possible situation for a hard of hearing physician. "Everyone wears a mask, obscuring the mouth, and usually looks downward while talking in a subdued voice and using technical language. All the while there are background noises such as the hum of the ventilation system, the beeps of the anesthesia machine and the voices of the nurses."

**"After the fact excuses are not good – it sounds like whining, so I arrange before hand."**

In his usual strategic style, Jonathan began planning for his surgical rotations early on in medical school. He contacted suppliers of surgical masks and found none were transparent enough to enable lip-reading. He considered using an interpreter but felt he could not watch the surgical procedure intently as well as the face of an oral interpreter. This left him with his trusted FM system but contact with the manufacturer ruled out dual transmission as it could result in interference and poor signals.

With help from an enthusiastic CHS counsellor, Jonathan worked out a system where he uses two separate FM systems on different frequencies. Over the years he has found that surgeons are willing to wear the FM transmitter. "In fact, most find it flattering that I am so eager to hear their every word!" he says.

Jonathan finds that people are generally willing to help but he doesn't

like to inconvenience anyone so he works to make communication as easy as possible. "I sell it to them so they don't get irked," he says. He doesn't just assume people will help him. "After the fact excuses are not good – it sounds like whining, so I arrange before hand."

In university, Jonathan used an FM system, consulted with the disability services center, and occasionally used note takers. He was offered extra time to write exams but turned it down as "my writing speed is not a problem!" All through school Jonathan relied much on textbook learning. He didn't trust what he heard - one word missed could change the chemical equation. Sometimes he chose to miss a lecture and read instead but he missed the people, the social aspect of classes so he tried to always do both. He states, "I studied more so I know the material better."

Jonathan uses an electronic amplified stethoscope with his behind-the-ear analog hearing aids. He also wears a regular stethoscope – useful to hold his ID card and a child's toy. An FM system and vibrating pager and alarm complete his accessibility needs.

According to colleague Dr. Ed Les, "Jonathan is popular with everyone and the best pediatric resident; we aim to keep him here." With a brand new Alberta Children's Hospital currently under construction, it may be hard to lure Jonathan away from Calgary. But wherever he comes to practice, he surely will continue to mentor hard of hearing kids and be an encouragement for their parents.

Thank you to **CHHA-BC** from the Parents' Branch for a great 2003 Conference. Thanks also to the **Jeremy Chiao Foundation** who provided a \$1500 grant to assist 11 families to attend the conference. Thanks to **volunteers and attendees** - the conference was educational & inspirational!!

# Second Annual CHHA B.C. Parent's Branch

Camping Weekend!!!

Whoopeeee!!!

Where? **Monck Park Provincial Campsite - about 15 miles from Merritt on Nicola Lake (a three hour + drive from Vancouver)**

When? **Friday night July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, Sunday morning, July 25.**

Why? **So kids and parents from the Coast and the Interior can connect and have a good time. Also so that the parents can, once again, thrash those pesky kids in a historic soccer rematch.**



What if your family needs more information?

**If you are not completely sold on the idea of a camping weekend after reading the article on the next page, please contact Hamish Plommer in the evening, at: (250)554-9616.**

**Or e-mail: [hplommer@telus.net](mailto:hplommer@telus.net)**

What if your family wants to sign up right now?

**Well then they can just fill in the form below and send Hamish a cheque (Payable to Hamish Plommer) before April 15!!! We need to know, at least roughly, who is going to come so that we can reserve the appropriate number of sites in advance. Please make sure to fill out all of the information on the form (even if you have to make some of it up) because those Parks people just love detail.**

Please mail the cheque to Hamish at: #12 – 1697 Greenfield Ave., Kamloops, B.C., V2B 4N5.

Cancellation Policy (the small print) If you cancel, and we are able to fill your site with another family, we will refund all of your money. If we have to cancel a site with the Parks, and it is more than 7 days ahead, then we will refund a portion of the fees according to the rules of the Parks. If you cancel less than 7 days ahead, your money will not be refunded.

----- (copy or clip form . . . ) -----

## Official camping weekend registration form

Family name \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of all parents, guardians and kids

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide at least one way to get in touch with you in case of problems or changes:**

Mailing Address

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

What Type of vehicle will you bring? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the overall length of your vehicles? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name, height, weight and s.i.n # of your family pet?

(just kidding)

Check the Nights you'll camp: Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \$25.00 per night per family (\$50 for both nights) – (if this ends up being a bit more than the Parks actually charge this year, the overpayment will be reimbursed)

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Nicola Lake Camping!

Last year the Camping weekend was just wonderful. At least 8 families attended. You've probably read an article about it in newsletters last year. But just to make the point...for anyone who wasn't there...

Monck Park is a beautiful site with a view across to Douglas Lake Cattle Country. There's a sandy beach on a beautiful little point, complete with sculpted Ponderosa pines. Several small picnic shelters are right beside the beach. The water is a great temperature. Lots of folks even went swimming at night last year. There's a big grass field for soccer, bocce, frisbee and whatever else. (On the field there are a couple of big depressions, which are likely camping places constructed by first nations folks hundreds of years ago.) A short distance away there's a good boat launch ramp and some smaller beaches that the water-skiers and wake boarders can take off.



The adjoining hillside is great for hiking. There are some huge boulders that have calved from the overhanging hill. And the roads through the campsite are great for cycling, even skateboarding.

There are real washrooms ... and showers, ... well, the lake.

Last year we had a potluck dinner on Friday night, soccer games on both evenings, a scavenger hunt, an egg-toss, great water-skiing Saturday afternoon, perfect campfires both nights. Most of us are going to have to dust off a ghost story or two for this year.

You can come and be pretty private and do your own thing. Or you can be in the middle of lots of people. And the kids just love it! A piece of advice: Bring wood or you'll have to pay an arm and a leg for it. But *don't bring too much wood* or the official campsite manager will get you to clean it up and take it back home with you. Maybe we could think of some new and wonderful way to get his goat this year! Ideas kids?

If you are coming from Vancouver, turn right onto Highway 5a. That's the second "Merritt" exit. But don't go to Merritt. Stay right. You'll go 7 or 8 kilometers (I'm guessing) before reaching the Nicola Ranch. Soon after that you'll turn left on a good paved road which has a sign on it directing you to Monck Park. You'll follow that good paved road along through the rolling hayfields and then waaaay up above the lake. A piece of advice: don't close your eyes or get too involved in one of those legendary-long-distance-family-car-travel-conflicts when you're driving above the lake. Just keep your act together *for five more minutes* and you'll be there....

Anyway: come one, come all, come along! Beautiful clear dawns and days. Long balmy dusk. Minimal mosquitoes. A nice balance between chaos and calm. A time when a lot of memories are made.

Submitted by Hamish Plomer

## My Experience with ALACD Youth Exchange Program

by Jessica

My name is Jessica and I am a 15-year-old girl who is hard of hearing. In the summer of 2003 I participated in a youth exchange program with the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD). It would be a summer of "firsts" for me. The first time I would ever go away on my own without my parents, the first time I would ever go on an airplane, the first time I would travel to eastern Canada. It was exciting for me but at the same time I felt a little nervous about taking this big step on my own. Before I left on my trip I met with my chaperone and some of the others who would be taking the trip with me. We were a group of kids with many different types of disabilities. After getting to know my group, I felt a little more confident about taking this trip on my own. The ALACD took care of all of my travel and accommodation arrangements and kept my family well informed about all of the details of my trip. I was ready to go!

The Vancouver group attending the exchange all met at the airport on June 28<sup>th</sup>. We said goodbye to our families (Dad almost cried... Mom said "off you go and have fun"). Our adventure began!

The flight was long but we arrived safely in Ottawa. Our first stop was Carleton University where we would be staying in the dormitories. We were assigned our own rooms with a shared bathroom. We had cleaning service for our rooms so we didn't even have to make our beds. There was a big cafeteria where we all ate together and if we got hungry between meals we had a small fridge in our room filled with snacks and drinks. I loved it!

The best part of my trip was making so many new friends. We shared more than just our trip and our time in Ottawa. We shared information about our disabilities and how we get along our everyday lives. I taught my friends some sign language and they taught me that I'm not the only one that has to work hard to overcome the challenges in my life because of my disability. I still keep in touch with my new friends and with one of them, I will be going to high schools and community events to talk about the ALACD program and how much we enjoyed it and learned from the experience.

I would strongly recommend this program to anyone who lives with a disability because it teaches you to have confidence in yourself and that if you work hard you can accomplish anything.

Submitted by: *Laurel Jensen*

*Hearing Resource Teacher, Delta School District*

EDITOR: For information on this program and organization, visit [www.ala.ca](http://www.ala.ca) Application forms are also available on the web-site. Sponsoring organizations and government cover the costs of travel and accommodation.

## My BAHA hearing aid *by Jesse Kazemir*

Hello readers. My name is Jesse Nicholas James Kazemir. I am 8 years old and I am hard of hearing.

I wear a Bone Anchored Hearing Aid (B.A.H.A.). The BAHA itself clips right on to a screw in my head. I had to have two surgeries to put it in my head. The first surgery the doctors had to put in a screw. The second surgery the doctors had to put in an abutment, which clipped right on to the screw.

First, I'd like to tell you that my second BAHA hearing aid is a bit "buzzy." The first BAHA hearing aid was a bit "buzzy" too. Now that I've been wearing it for awhile, it doesn't seem as "buzzy." In fact, it sounds great!

My violin, with my second BAHA, didn't sound as good as when I had my first BAHA because the second BAHA cuts off loud sounds and turns up quiet sounds. My violin is loud, so my hearing aid cut off the loud sound of my violin, and it didn't sound so good. (It sounds pretty good now that I'm used to it.)

I turn off my hearing aid when Ethan (my brother) is annoying me or when something is so loud that it annoys me or when Tori (my sister) is crying loud.

An F.M. system helps me hear at school. When I went to the audiologist's office, we tried putting on the new FM on my first BAHA. It wasn't working, so we thought that this hearing aid didn't work with the FM. So we tried the second BAHA, and it worked with the FM. The FM is a small boot-like thing that has three prongs sticking out the top, and they go right into three small holes in the BAHA.

I wish my hearing aid was waterproof, because then I could swim and hear under water because I've never done that. Once I wore my first hearing aid in the bathtub. The water went in the microphone, so we had to put it in a drying kit, and we had to wait for awhile before it was dried out.

A few days ago, when my class went for a field trip to the ice rink, it felt like my hearing aid was falling out a bit, so I pushed it back in with my glove (this was on the ice). Of course my glove had ice on it, so the ice probably melted and got into the microphone. So later it was making a funny car-horn-like sound. Then when Mom listened to it, she heard nothing! But then when I put it on again, it sounded normal. A few days later, there was a few popping noises, but that was the last weird sound since.

Now I think that my second BAHA is the best hearing aid. Bye! p.s. I hope you had a good Christmas!

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it de-  
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iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit  
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raed ervey lteer by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Pettry  
amzanig huh?

*Ethan Kazemir dictated this letter to his Mom Teresa about how it is to have a brother who is hard of hearing. These are his own words...*

I am six years old. I am quite smart and I know quite a bit about hearing aids because my brother has one.

It's annoying when Jesse doesn't listen to me. It's because he is hard of hearing, so his ears don't work right. I wish that he wasn't hard of hearing because then he could hear me better, and he couldn't turn off his hearing aid because then he would always be able to hear me. TOO BAD!

He always doesn't look at me but he has to, because then he could listen to me, and that's what Mommy says, but I don't know why he doesn't look at me. TOO BAD!

It is at least good that he is not totally deaf 'cuz then he won't even use a hearing aid and it won't work with a hearing aid. THAT'S GOOD!

When we go to Edmonton, it is fun to me but it is not fun for Jesse, because he has to have a surgery done (*for a Bone Anchored Hearing Aid*), but I don't. So that's not fair. TOO BAD AND TOO GOOD!

I wish that he didn't have to get a surgery done because he doesn't like them.

I had lots of things to say! By Ethan

## You could win an ASL quilt!

The Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre, Nanaimo, B.C., is a non-profit United Way Agency offering a variety of services to individuals living with hearing loss.

The success of our agency would not be possible without the help of our very dedicated group of volunteers, who help with fundraising and special projects.

Currently our volunteers are working on a very special project. This group has recently completed sewing a beautiful **American Sign Language (ASL) quilt**. Each embroidered block represents one letter of the ASL alphabet. This unique quilt is now on display in our office in Nanaimo. It will be raffled off on March 17, 2004, along with several prizes including a return trip for 2 to Vancouver, courtesy of Harbour Air Seaplanes. **Tickets are a bargain at \$2.00 each or 3/\$5.00.** Proceeds of this fundraiser will go towards much needed technical aids and our library.

**We will gladly mail tickets to you.** Simply send us a cheque for number of tickets you require, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and we will mail your tickets to you upon receipt. Our office is located at #205-55 Victoria Road, Nanaimo, B.C., V9R 5N9. For more information please call toll-free 1-877-424-3323, or (250)753-0999. We sincerely thank you for your support.

# Advocating in the Classroom

By Leila Lolua

My daughter is in grade seven, and has a bilateral moderate to severe hearing loss. In September, her Hearing Resource Teacher assigned her the task of writing a speech about her hearing loss, and how her classmates could assist her to hear better. She was told to do this independently, and not get help from her parents. She worked on this alone, and with her Resource Teacher.

Tasha has talked about her hearing loss in class in previous years, and thus she thought that the students would be bored because they had heard it all before. Tasha gave the speech to her class, and then the Resource Teacher talked about various aspects of hearing loss. It was a surprise to her that the children were interested, and did learn information, even though some of it was previously presented. Best of all, the next week some of Tasha's classmates checked in with her during group work to make sure she could hear, and another student provided her with a written copy of a speech so that Tasha could follow it more easily. Advocacy with positive results; a lesson well learned. This is Tasha's speech:

## My Hearing Loss by Tasha Cox

Did you know that the three smallest bones in your body are in your ear?

I was born with a hearing loss because the smallest bone in my ear, the stapes, does not move properly. I had an operation once to try and fix it but the doctors thought it was too risky because it might damage my inner ear.



The kind of hearing loss I have is called a conductive hearing loss. A conductive hearing loss is caused when there is a problem with sounds travelling through the middle ear. When you have a cold sometimes your hearing drops and it is harder for you to hear. That is what it is like for me all of the time.

My hearing aids are very powerful. They conduct the sound through my stapes so I can hear better. Even though hearing aids help me to hear better, it is not the same as if I didn't have a hearing loss.

Did you know that there are some ways that you can help me in class?

It would really help me if you are facing me so that I can speech read or read your lips. It would help me if you speak at a normal volume, not too loudly or not too softly. It helps me if there is no background noise when someone is talking. If I don't understand something, it is more helpful for me if you rephrase rather than repeat sentences. It is also very helpful for me if information is written on the blackboard because if I don't hear it, then I can read it.

I wear an FM system in class so that I can hear the teacher's voice more clearly. If the teacher forgets to turn off the microphone, I can hear what she says, even if she is twenty metres away. Once I heard Ms. Jackson talking in the teacher's lunchroom.

Thank-you for your attention. Are there any comments or questions?

*The following is excerpted from Hearing Health Summer 2002 "123 Reasons (for not wearing hearing aids)" by Richard Wagner. Mr. Wagener is a psychotherapist who has been hard of hearing since age four and deaf since about 1980.*

Many folks actually believe that life is supposed to be fair. If life were really fair, there would be no major health problems for anyone who takes good care of their bodies. Unfortunately, life experience tells us that we get different gifts and face different challenges and losses. It is up to us to determine how we let those affect us. What happens to us does not make us who we are; how we handle what happens is what creates who we are.

Typically, non-hearing people are in denial as to how much they are missing. To their loved ones, friends and co-workers, the solution seems obvious: Get hearing assistance. In reality, though, the most important factors for these individuals are adjusting their attitudes, improving self-image and choosing strategies to hear better.

### Arrogant Assumptions About Hearing Loss

1. No one except me can really understand what I go through every day.

2. I'm the one who counts as important. The needs of other folks aren't important to me. Your words are unimportant to me.
3. I know what I hear always, exactly and no one is going to tell me differently!
4. My comfort is more important to me than my fuller participation in the world.
5. My stress level is more important than truth or effectiveness.
6. Feeling good about my image is more important than my real image.
7. I really know how well I can and cannot hear in any situation.
8. I believe that I can fool other people most of the time; nobody notices whether or not I'm wearing my hearing aids.
9. No one really communicates well so what difference does it make?
10. It's just not fair! Why do I have to work harder than everybody else to understand?

Editor: Of course, none of our kids have these attitudes... Let's keep it that way ☺



**Membership** is open to any individual or organization that supports our objectives. Annual membership fee is \$20. Donations are welcome and needed by CHHA - BC Parents' Branch.

**Membership** in the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association entitles you to vote on any CHHA matter, and to receive a subscription to LISTEN magazine, CHHA-BC's newsletter *The Loop* and the Parents' Branch newsletter.

NAME

Parent(s)     Professional     Other

MAILING ADDRESS

H of H Child(ren)

PHONE

FAX - if applicable

Name

Birthdate

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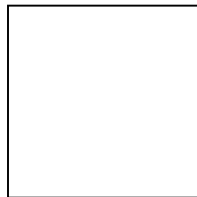
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## Impact of a Hearing Loss in School, Work and Everyday Life

Reviewed by Leila Lolua

At the October 2003 CHHA BC conference, Dr. Ruth Warick presented some of the results from her PhD thesis: *The Impact of a Hearing Loss in School, Work and Everyday Life*. Ruth has a moderate to severe hearing loss, and to her, these words that describe her hearing loss don't fit. To Ruth, her hearing loss is profound. To me, her words are profound.



Telephone messages were identified as being very difficult. Disclosure can help prevent the chance of unintentional misunderstanding, but in every day life, disclosure is situational.

Ruth spoke about 'Identity Dimensions' of undergraduate and graduate students who have a hearing loss. They see themselves as being the same as and also different from hearing persons. They don't have a sense of being part of the hard of hearing community. They are not easily recognizable to each other and the public. They expressed a shyness to be part of the group. She found that their identity was not linked to their speech, even when the students had speech difficulty. Identity Dimensions included individual make-up, age of onset of hearing loss, degree of hearing loss, the extent of support services, prevalence of other disabilities and ethnicity.

The students disclosed their hearing loss when there was a benefit to be gained.

As expected, students found participation to be easier in one on one situations. In classrooms, where the instructor was dominant, students did okay. Learning situations that posed increased challenges included classrooms where there were multiple speakers and hearing other students. Conversational lag is experienced because of a delay in hearing to process sound and to 'fill in the gaps.' Students noted that everyone seemed to be going at a faster pace, and they 'had to play catch-up to get into the conversation.' This is a real concern because hard of hearing persons are not full participants because of difficulty hearing other students and conversational lag experiences. This experience of difficulty getting into the conversation can happen at work and in every day life. Students need strategies to overcome these difficulties such as raising hands, state two to three issues once you've got the floor, and prefacing comments with

'This may have already been said, but...'' One strategy to get into a conversation is to ask the first question.

Students can make academic choices based on their hearing loss. Classes may be selected because of the quality of the instructor's voice, a lecture format versus a discussion course, room acoustics, etc. Some students took reduced course loads to cope.

Hearing loss is more than a physical condition; it affects social relationships. Students expressed feelings of loneliness at times because 'you can't just go over and start talking. You don't know if they'll accommodate me.' We need to recognize the psycho-social dimensions of hearing loss. Strategies that help include recognizing that you are not alone, belonging to a group to discuss feelings, maximize supports to improve hearing conditions and educate others about what you need.

As always, this was a thoughtful and insightful presentation. Dr. Warick can be reached at [ruth.warick@ubc.ca](mailto:ruth.warick@ubc.ca)