

**Newborn Hearing Screening program announced for B.C.! See page 3**

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association National Conference



Thursday evening through Saturday evening  
June 2 to 4, 2005  
Grand Okanagan Hotel – Kelowna, BC

Excellent workshops, trade show, programs for all ages...  
Refer to web-site for full information  
[www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca)

**Still time to reserve your camp-site**

Third Annual family camping weekend  
**July 22 to 24**



Monck Park Provincial Campsite - on Nicola Lake  
*See page 2 for information...*

**Mark your Calendars for the CHHA Family Picnic**

Where: Bo & Teresa, Nolan & Nathan Lonn

20058 Fernridge Crescent - Langley (22nd Avenue off 200th Street)

**When: Saturday August 27, 2005 - 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm**

Potluck Picnic Supper at 5:30 pm. Let Teresa know what you are bringing. The Lonns will provide hamburgers and hotdogs. Bring the whole family for games, food and fun! (Bring lawn chairs and extra clothes for the kids)

**RSVP: Teresa Lonn by August 22 at 604-533-9878 or lonns@primus.ca**

**EDITOR: Unless you are on our email list THIS IS YOUR ONLY NOTICE! Don't miss this popular annual event – Good time guaranteed!**

**"2005 FAMILY WEEKEND"**

Parent sessions, Teen Konnection, Kidz Konnection, Kiddie Care  
- ALL at the beautiful YMCA in Surrey!

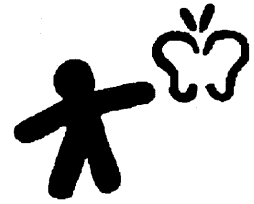
Friday eve. October 21, Saturday October 22

See page 3 for information

Registration form will be in September newsletter  
and on web-site... [www.chhaparents.bc.ca](http://www.chhaparents.bc.ca)



May 2005



**C**anadian

**H**ard of

**H**earing

**A**ssociation

**B.C.**

**Parents'**

**Branch**

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**Membership:** \$30 annual  
includes subscription to  
*Listen/Écouté* magazine and  
*The Loop* newsletter

## President's message. . .

by Leila Lolua

### *Student became the teacher*

What a delight it was to read the editor's commentary in my local paper (April 20, 2005.) The *NewsLeader* (Burnaby/New West) works with local high schools to provide students who are interested in journalism an opportunity to experience their craft.

Editor David Weir wrote "...few of my past experiences prepared me for the lessons I was going to be taught by a Grade 11 student from the B.C Provincial School for the Deaf at Burnaby South secondary...And every once in a while, we meet a student that inspires us as journalists and reinvigorates our passion for the job.

*But few of us were prepared for Rosalind Ho to walk through our front doors. Rosalind is profoundly deaf and uses a cochlear implant to help her hear. (see story p,7 .)*

*I'll admit I was nervous about the idea of taking a deaf student for a one-week work experience placement, especially since she was coming in during March Break and her ... interpreter was only going to be with her on her first day here...Then I met her and my fears disappeared almost instantly. I realized that not only was she one of those students with a real desire to learn, but she's the type of person that inspires us to be better.*

*Rosalind does read lips, so as long as you face her when you talk and speak ...at a normal pace, being sure to enunciate your words, she can understand you.*

*Sounds simple, right? But I soon realized how infrequently I face people when we talk to them, or that I'm not always careful to enunciate my words. Meeting Rosalind forced me to re-examine how I address people and she pushed me to work on my weaknesses, which I continue to do one month after meeting her.*

## Monck Park Camping Weekend Update

Lots of us are getting ready for another great camping weekend which takes place at Monck Park, near Merritt, between Friday July 22 and Sunday, July 24. Monck Park is a beautiful provincial park, nestled in some classic Okanagan-style dryland forest.

Traditionally, several families don't sign up for the camping weekend until the last minute. And this year is no different! As of April 25, eight families had registered. Luckily ten sites have been reserved. So if you haven't signed up, please phone Hamish Plommer, the camping weekend's "registrar", at 250-554-9616 or e-mail him at [plommer@telus.net](mailto:plommer@telus.net) to check if there is still room. If there *is* still room, please send in the application form that is on our web-site at [www.chhaparents.bc.ca](http://www.chhaparents.bc.ca) Another option, that at least one family is planning, is to stay in Merritt and drive up to Monck Park during the day.

Some of the families who have registered so far are "regulars", but some are first-timers too. It's a good time for Coastal and Interior people to mingle. Be aware that the weekend is a really informal event. If you want to come and just camp and play with the kids or watch the kids play, that's great. If you want to network with parents and kids to gather information or pass on your family's experience with hearing loss, that's great too. Hope to see you there...*Hamish Plommer*

*Have I mentioned her desire to learn? ...here was a high school student who would ask you to repeat something so she could be sure to get it right in her notes.*

*And there was her ability to spot typos in the newspaper, which she took great pride in sharing with us, even after the paper was published... In the end, many of us believe Rosalind taught us more than we were able to teach her. For that reason, we're all grateful to have met her."*

What a wonderful profile. Well done, Rosalind, and congratulations on your efforts and tenacity to achieve. And honourable mention to all the teachers and her parents, who mentored and worked with Rosalind, to help her succeed in her studies, and who helped her to cope with all of the extra challenges.

How timely this article was, shortly after the Parents' Branch sponsored a Spring Workshop at Burnaby South High School as a way to try and educate parents and Hard of Hearing students about options available to them. See page 5 for more details.

The program for the National CHHA conference being held in Kelowna June 2-5, 2005, is packed with interesting topics and speakers. My vehicle will be packed with four moms and three kids as we convoy to Kelowna. If you have never attended this event before, now is the time to try and make it happen.

Consider coming camping to Monck Park, (or stay in a real bed in nearby Merritt... We won't mention any names.) It's a gem of a park, and you will be welcomed to join the fun. Once the kids have been there, believe me, they will hound you to go again. The Lonns are again hosting a picnic – on August 27 – hope to see many of you there as well!



### NATIONAL CONFERENCE

For those of you wanting last minute details about the CHHA National Conference in June, they are now on the web!!! If you go to the website ([www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca)), and go to "conference" at the top of the page, you will find lots of good information. "Conference Information" lists the agenda, times, etc., and "Keynote Speaker and Workshops" gives more details. It looks like a really great program, with a choice of 5 workshops offered at a time!! Details about the kids programs are not posted yet, but they include a visit to the art museum, a double decker bus ride, bowling, soccer, sandcastle building, a scavenger hunt, and more!!!

Hope to see you there!  
Teresa Kazemir

# 2005 Family Weekend - October 21 and 22

Plans are well underway for our second annual Family Weekend in October! It will again be at the YMCA in Surrey with a better room for parent sessions and our usual mix of great programs for parents, teens and children. We are recruiting sponsors for the conference so that cost to families will be minimal. Mark your calendar and plan to join us for a time of education, inspiration, good fellowship, food and fun!

**We have three excellent speakers lined up already.** You might start thinking about some questions to ask them!

**Dr. Jonathan Dawrant** is a young pediatrician at Alberta Children's Hospital. He was born with a moderate to severe hearing loss for which he wears two hearing aids. Over the years he has used multiple assistive devices from FM systems to amplified stethoscopes. He has spoken to parent groups many times on the topic of his firsthand experiences as a hard of hearing person negotiating adolescence, school, university and the work world. Jonathan was featured in our January 2004 newsletter ([www.chhaparents.bc.ca/newsletter](http://www.chhaparents.bc.ca/newsletter)) in an interview "*Hearing Loss: Deal with it Strategically.*" We look forward to hearing about Jonathan's strategies

"firsthand!" as he shares with parents and Teen Konnection.

**Sandra Vandenhoff** is an audiologist with a severe to profound hearing loss. Sandra presently works for Phonak Canada in the area of FM systems. Prior to working for Phonak, Sandra used FM systems in her work setting as a manager of a private practice audiology clinic in Kamloops for 10 years. Sandra will speak to parents on "Using Technology to Foster Independence." She will also do a workshop with the Teen Konnection group on using FM systems, telephones, and other assistive listening devices. We look forward to Sandra answering audiology related questions and her expertise on FM systems as a professional as well as user!

**Rosalie Yaremko** is a certified Auditory-Verbal Therapist and has worked at the Vancouver Oral Centre since 1997. Prior to this, she coordinated a children's cochlear implant program in Australia. Rosalie provides speech therapy to children from pre-schoolers to teens and is a strong proponent of family-centred approach. She says "when parents become great advocates, I've done my job!" Many local parents know Rosalie as a gifted therapist and we welcome the opportunity to get ideas and have questions

Dr. Dawrant will speak to parents and teens about his firsthand experiences as a hard of hearing person negotiating adolescence, school, university and the work world.

answered regarding our children's speech challenges.

**Family Weekend planners welcome your ideas for our 2005 event!** Also, if you know a corporation or organization who may be interested in providing sponsorship, please contact Janet Les (604-794-3772 or email [janetles@canada.com](mailto:janetles@canada.com))

Family Weekend registration forms will be inserted in our September newsletter and will also be on our web-site soon! **We look forward to another great turnout!**

**\*\* NOTE – Friday, October 21 is a province wide professional day, so families can travel to Surrey from outlying areas... travel assistance may be available – apply early.**

## Newborn Hearing Screening Program for B.C. announced!

CHHA-BC Parents' Branch is very excited to share some news with you...on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the B.C. Government officially announced that it will fund a comprehensive infant hearing program including **universal newborn hearing screening, diagnostics, and intervention**. This means that every baby born in B.C. will be screened for hearing loss!

Newborn hearing screening is already happening in many places in the world, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and several provinces in Canada. It has been found to be very effective in detecting hearing loss, and means that families can start intervention while the baby is still young, and potentially avoid or minimize delays in speech and language development.

Some very dedicated professionals have been working towards this goal for 12 long years. We owe a huge thank-you to Laurie Usher, Susan Lane, Dr. Janet Jamieson, Ann Marie Newroth, Anne Caufield, and Dr. Brian Westerberg. There are many more people that have joined the effort more recently, and are now hard at work developing the "A Sound Start" program. Three of our CHHA-BC parents are involved in this process - Cathy Chow, Amy Ho, and Teresa Kazemir. Thanks also to all you parents who have advocated for this in one way or another...

\$19 million will be spent to phase in "A Sound Start" over the next three years. This is part of the \$73 million announcement, which will fund programs to detect hearing, vision, and dental problems for every child in the province under the age of 6 years.

For more information, see the government news release at:

[http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm\\_news\\_releases/2005HSER0022-000241.htm](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm_news_releases/2005HSER0022-000241.htm)

## New Book

### **Exceptional Children--Ordinary Schools: Getting the Education You Want For Your Special Needs Child**

by Dr. Norm Forman (available at bookstores across Canada)

Seeking to improve the educational experience of exceptional or special needs children can be both frustrating and disheartening for most parents says educational psychologist, Dr. Norm Forman.

And with recent studies suggesting that upwards of 10% of all school-aged children have a learning disability or some other special need, the Administrator of Parent's Advocacy in the School feels that these special needs too often fall outside the all-too-common, one-size-fits-all approach taken in our schools today.

In his just published book, *Exceptional Children - Ordinary Schools*, Dr. Forman says that all children deserve the best possible education and offers practical advice for parents who want to make it happen.

The book examines the ins and outs of school bureaucracies and offers parents the tools and communication techniques required for dealing with them.

As well as presenting readers with an overview of the different tests and assessments that special needs children routinely face, *Exceptional Children - Ordinary Schools* includes a special section on Special Education legislation to help parents fully understand their child's legal and educational rights.

The author of two previous books, Dr. Forman has been an educational psychologist for more than twenty-five years. For more than five years he has been the Administrator of Parent's Advocacy in the School, providing advocacy assistance to parents of children with special needs.

To Contact Dr. Forman: 416-429-8511; visit [www.parentsadvocacy.com](http://www.parentsadvocacy.com)

## Safeway commends one of our own

Canada Safeway's employee publication, "Shelf talk!" recently had an article about one of our own... Good for you Rui! You are an inspiration for our kids.

Under the title "Diversity in the Workplace":

Rui Domingues

Meat Production Clerk, Store #148

Rui Domingues wants to be a meat cutter with Safeway and he's well on his way. He began at Store #148 in Burnaby, BC as a work experience student. He was hired on as a meat production clerk in January 2001. Rui's keen interest in learning impressed his mentor and Meat Manager Rick Brown to continually challenge Rui's potential. He eventually extended his duties. Rui was still not satisfied and asked Rick to teach him to cut meat and Rick readily agreed. "He produces a product better than some that have been cutting for 18 to 20 months. I wouldn't hesitate to take him with me to any store in the company," says Rick. Meat wrapper Gayle Michaud adds, "Rui cuts exactly to strict company standards. He's doing an excellent job."

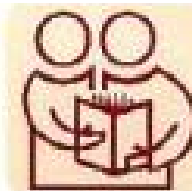
What makes Rui even more special? Rui is hearing impaired. As an infant, Meningitis left Rui with 0% hearing in his left ear and 50% in his right (with hearing aids worn). The high school that promoted Rui's work experience was Burnaby South Secondary Provincial School for the Deaf. And the rest has been up to Rui! In addition to the support of the staff at Store #148, Store Manager Donna Nixon has arranged for a light to be installed so customers can alert Rui to a service call on the sales floor when he's in the cutting room.

The relationship between mentee and mentor has been a learning experience for both. Rick has learned to communicate with Rui through trial and error. Rui mainly lip reads, but did tell Rick that speaking loudly and directly at him using short words also helps. Rick also has paid particular attention to maintaining Rui's focus while on the job. "I don't let him get away with anything, he wants to learn, so I usually let him make the mistake and then have him correct it so that he sees the error."

It's obvious that there's quite a bond between Rick and Rui, but Rick insists that Rui has excelled because of his desire to learn. He's truly an inspiration. Good luck Rui!

## How Does Literacy Impact Socialization?

As children learn to listen, they also learn to foster relationship with their families, at their schools and in other social settings. They learn appropriate social and cultural responses, and gather the important background knowledge necessary to relate socially. Socializing with others who have already developed mature language capabilities or with peers who are in the process of developing language spurs language development in children with hearing loss. Daily interaction with others is foundational to the language development necessary for literacy growth in areas of content knowledge and knowledge of language structures and uses. Emerging literacy, in turn, is helpful to learning new cultural



knowledge and relating with others in a text-rich environment. The child who reads books, knows about the current movies and games, and can participate in writing notes and doing schoolwork with other children will be able to facilitate relationships with their peers, as well as learn a great deal. The child who does none of these things or who only does them with a special teacher will miss out on these essential interactions that underpin literacy.

Excerpted from *Life, Literacy & Socialization* by Denise Wray, PhD and Lyn Robertson, PhD. *Volta Voices*, Jan/Feb 2005

# Educational Options for High School Kids

By Leila Lolua

Do you know what options are available in high school for your child with a hearing loss? Parents, elementary students and Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDHH) joined together for our Spring Workshop - an information sharing evening with staff from the Provincial Resource Program, and my notes from that evening follow.

Each school district is responsible for the education of children in their district. If the school district feels that they cannot provide an adequate program within the district, through itinerant or TDHH or by setting up resource programs, the school district can refer the student to the Provincial Resource Program (PRP) for Oral students. Parents, you can initiate this referral, as well.

This PRP is based at Burnaby South High School, along with the PRP for Deaf Students and the regular high school. Essentially there are three schools within one building, the BC School for the Deaf, the Oral Program and Burnaby South High School. Susan van Gorp is the Vice-Principal of the BC Provincial School for the Deaf which includes the Oral Program.

There are currently about 20 students enrolled in the Oral Program, from grades 8 to 12. Staff teach the regular curriculum, but in much smaller classrooms, with two to eight students per class. Teachers have more time for 1-on-1 instruction. Some classes are adapted, as required based on each student's individual need. It was noted that 'no student can hide. We know when they don't know, therefore we can tailor lessons to each student.' If students have undiagnosed learning difficulties, they can help figure out what the problem is and implement strategies to promote effective learning. Students also have the invaluable assistance of interpreters, who help with note-taking and ensuring that students understand vocabulary and instruction in classes taken in the regular high school.

Teachers have time to deal with social issues, as well as academics, and maintain lots of contact with the student's parents. Teens socialize by talk-

ing, so that social skills are a very important aspect of life at Burnaby South. Students have a peer group within the Oral Program, and as a group they participate in events like the Dance Council. Students often have friends who are deaf, hard of hearing and normal hearing.



Students can choose to take classes within the regular high school or within the Oral Program. Students have the option to be integrated, or if the pace is too fast, they can be placed in smaller classes in the Oral Program. English is broken into reading and writing in two blocks, to allow more teaching time. This means that students lose one elective each year, however, students have the option to take two years in grade eleven. The extra year allows students to pick up extra credits, and learn at a more manageable pace.

Teachers in the Oral Program are obviously dedicated to their students, and all of them, (including Michelle Slaney who was on maternity leave) put in a long day to help explain their role and answer questions about the Oral Program.

Students benefit from the services of an Audiologist who has access to a sound booth, tests hearing aids, makes ear molds, trouble shoots equipment problems, etc. A Speech Language Pathologist also works with students on site, a wonderful service to help with speech and articulation issues.

To attend the Oral Program, students must be referred to the Provincial Education Review Committee, which is chaired by Karen Taylor. The committee reviews information from various sources including reports from schools, medical information, audiograms, etc. Karen Taylor is an educator at the BCSD. In addition to her role on the PERC, Karen consults with school districts to provide support to districts that provide their own services to deaf and hard of hearing students. Karen provides her expertise at the invitation of the various school districts. To access Karen's services, she can be contacted at [bcsd.outreach.bc.ca](mailto:bcsd.outreach.bc.ca).

If you think that your child would benefit from these valuable services, contact Susan van Gorp or Karen Taylor to learn more. It's my view that not enough information is shared with parents about this program, in the belief that the student would not meet the eligibility criteria. I would insist that my child be referred, to see if in fact they are eligible to access the resources that are concentrated in this PRP.

Victory Hill is a dormitory that is located within walking distance of Burnaby South High School. Staff provides supervision for out of district students who commute each week from their homes around the province to access the services provided by this PRP. Victory Hill is a fabulous facility of townhouses in a home-like environment. It must be a huge decision for families to make, to send their teenager away to attend high school, one that is weighed against the benefit of having education that truly is accessible, and designed to meet their needs.

A heartfelt thanks to all of the staff who participated in this workshop. The information was invaluable, and your efforts on behalf of the students and families you work with are so appreciated.

**"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."**

--- Albert Schweitzer, 1875-1965

## Parents and Kids Share . . .

*Jesse was one of 6 grade four kids in his school who were chosen to read their speeches in front of a panel of judges and parents in the gym. He did a good job, and we were very proud of him! Teresa Kazemir*

What? I didn't hear you. To parents, teachers, fellow students and honorable judges. I'm Jesse (sign name) and I have a hearing aid. When I was born I didn't have any ear canals. (I'm still missing them now.) I am not totally deaf but I can't hear too well without my hearing aid either.

I got my first hearing aid two months after I was born. When I was 8 years old I got my BAHA when I went to Edmonton. A BAHA is a Bone Anchored Hearing Aid. I had two surgeries to get the screw in my head to clip my hearing aid on. The screw is anchored on to my skull. When the hearing aid vibrates it vibrates my skull which starts the middle ear bones vibrating which starts the whole process.

Another piece of equipment I use is the F.M. The teacher wears the transmitter and I wear the receiver. The F.M. is attached to my hearing aid. The transmitter transmits the teacher's voice to the receiver that I'm wearing. That way I can hear the teacher from a distance.

Wearing a hearing aid is great in some ways. My hearing aid helps me by letting me hear sounds almost as good as you can. Since I have a hearing aid I get to learn sign language. I'll show you one right now. Hook your index finger over your ear like this. That's hearing aid. Another great thing is when something's loud I can turn my hearing aid off. When something's quiet I can turn it up. In the mornings and when I go to bed it's easy to put on and take off.

One thing that isn't too good about my hearing aid is that I can't hear at night (I take it off when I go to sleep). Another bad thing is when I change my hearing aid batteries. It's not fun taking off my F.M. all the time. It's too bad that I have to change my hearing aid when I go to gym. Sometimes it's hard to hear people when it's noisy or if they are whispering. It's also difficult because I have had to become very responsible for myself. I need to remember to remind teachers to wear the F.M. I have to also remember to turn my F.M. on every morning. As well, I have to remember to take the F.M. to assemblies and computers. So it's a lot to think about.

You probably didn't know about hearing aids yesterday but now you know a bit. Over all I think it's pretty fun having a hearing aid. Thank you.

## MAY is speech and Hearing Awareness Month

Join in the campaign by educating others about the communication needs of your child.

## Keeping Hearing Aids in Place

We have a 10-week old with profound hearing loss, and he's been fitted with aids. Keeping the darn things on is a nightmare! The bit of toupee tape keeps them on for a minute or two, and Huggies (along with putting in the molds) is frustrating as it can be.

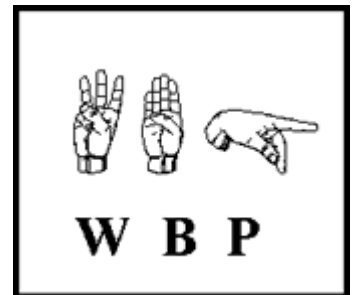
We found a "body adhesive" called "It Stays". We got it from <http://www.supportshop.com/itstays.htm>

It's a water-soluble material that sticks to the aid and the baby's head, doesn't irritate his skin, and the darn things will stay in place for 4 hours... It's easy to put on, and easy to take off.

Perhaps this will help someone else too. *John Elwood*

## NEED HELP?

### Try the Well-Being Program



A parent asked us to promote the Well-Being Program as she benefited from their services and you might also.

The Well-Being Program provides safe, confidential therapeutic services in order to assist people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind to improve and enhance their lives. It is a government funded service working in partnership with other community service providers throughout B.C. All services are confidential and free. They include

- Therapy by psychologists, social workers and counselors as well as assessment when needed.
- Support in the way of life skills development, advocacy, community liaison, etc.
- Interpreting for clients attending therapy session.
- Education and Training workshops on subjects such as anger management, communication, assertiveness, health issues
- Support and Discussion Groups for consumers and professionals
- Services Directory
- Videotapes

#### Contact Information:

Well-Being Program  
#200 – 1070 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6H 1E7  
Phone: 604-732-7689  
TTY: 604-732-7549 or 1-800-949-1155  
Fax: 604-732-5042

Well-Being Program Web-site: <http://www.vch.ca/wbp/>

# Not easy being deaf in a hearing school...

By Rosalind Ho

*Burnaby NewsLeader - Apr 19 2005*

English 10/11 combination class last year, one of my classmates took notes for me.

*The following is condensed from an article published in the Burnaby NewsLeader. Congratulations Rosalind on your many achievements! For complete article, visit [www.burnabynewsleader.com](http://www.burnabynewsleader.com) or contact our office.*

Loud chatter echoes from the back of the classroom. My eyes dart to the notes on the board, then I duck my head to scribble them down.

I raise my head again to listen to the teacher, but it is nearly impossible to hear him with the din behind me. So my eyes flick to the interpreter, but the noise is also making it difficult for her to hear the teacher, meaning we may be missing key information I need to know.

A few minutes later as students bend over the schoolwork, the classroom is still as noisy as ever. Suddenly, I hear a loud crash, and I shoot my head up.

My name is Rosalind Ho. I am a deaf student attending the British Columbia Provincial School for the Deaf (BCSD). Several BCSD students, including myself, are also mainstreamed into regular academic classes at Burnaby South secondary.

The elementary grades of the BCSD (kindergarten through Grade 7) are housed at South Slope elementary and the secondary grades at Burnaby South so BCSD students can enjoy the benefits of more challenging courses with the aid of an ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter without having to attend school elsewhere.

Sadly, the scene I've described was all too common in some of my classes a few years ago. The rowdy students in the back row and all the chatting kids were difficult for the teacher to keep under control. Even the most serious and hardworking hearing students found it hard to learn under the circumstances.

I am profoundly deaf and I use a cochlear implant to help me hear... But the cochlear implant doesn't allow me to hear as well as a person with normal hearing. It is hard to understand a person who mumbles badly or has a thick accent. I find it extremely difficult to understand people in crowds, noisy classrooms, and other similar situations. People who wear hearing aids face the same problems.

Hard of hearing people find it hard to localize where sound is coming from. This is especially true for people who have only one "ear." Because I can only hear with the cochlear implant in my left ear, I can't tell which direction the sound is coming from.

The best way to get the attention of a hard of hearing or deaf person is to tap them on the shoulder and say their name in a normal voice. Don't yell - loud sounds are high-pitched and difficult to understand. If the scene is reasonably quiet, and the person I am talking to is facing me and is speaking clearly - not too slowly and not too fast - then I can hear all or most of what is said.

Contrary to popular belief, not all hard of hearing or deaf people can read lips. Only 35 per cent of the consonants in the English language can be lip-read. For example, the sounds 'k' and 'g' are made in the back of the throat. The lip and tongue shape is the same for both sounds. The difference lies in the fact that 'k' is silent and only involves a clicking of the tongue. 'G' is made the same way and a sound is also produced. Because I couldn't hear the difference between the two sounds, it took me years to understand and master them.

To make sure that I don't miss out on too much in my regular classes, I have an ASL interpreter who signs what my teacher or classmates are saying. I always sit at the front of every classroom so that I can see the teacher and the interpreter clearly. If the room is quiet, I can usually hear most of what the teacher is saying. But I still like to watch the interpreter to make sure I don't miss anything, and I still have to take notes at the same time.

Even on a good day, keeping my attention split between three different information sources is a delicate three-way balancing act. If the class is noisy; I'm tired out from a late night of homework; or even if the teacher is just talking a bit too fast or moving around writing and erasing notes too much, then it's difficult for me to catch everything that I need to know.

To help, I sometimes use a FM system that brings the teacher's voice directly to me. The teacher wears a microphone that sends his or her voice to the receiver plugged into my speech processor. The problem with the FM system is if the mike isn't passed around from person to person, I can't hear what the other students are saying that well, and I have to watch the interpreter to get that information. But I can miss things during a fast-paced class discussion or when the teacher is answering questions while explaining the lesson to the class. If this happens, I ask my classmates to speak a bit louder. But sometimes they still don't speak loud enough or their voices are unfamiliar so it is still difficult for me to hear everything.

Sometimes, if the teacher speaks too fast and the lecture is content-rich, then it can be difficult for even the interpreter to keep up. At such times, a note-taker can help. In my

It helps if the teacher gives out prepared notes. Some of my previous teachers as well as my current pre-AP Biology 11 teacher always gives out notes in cloze format, which leaves out key words and diagrams. This forces the students to pay attention to the lesson and focus on the high points of the lecture. I just have to focus on what he is saying and copy down a few words in the blank spaces.

Normally, I have to swivel my head between the teacher and interpreter, jot down notes at high speed, and look up again. I tend to worry that I might miss something important while I am busy writing my notes. My friend and classmate Tania Karan said: "it's hard for us [hearing students], I wonder how hard it is for you, you have to watch the interpreter and get diagrams."

I love learning and I always relish a challenge, so I take all my academic courses... I have done volunteer work at the Burnaby South school library and have also been re-elected as secretary on the BCSD Student Council since Grade 9...

The BCSD is unique in Canada because it is the only provincial school for the deaf that is housed in the same building as a hearing school. Deaf kids can be a part of the larger community if they want to. On the other hand, hearing kids have a great opportunity to get to know other kids who are different from them. Deaf students can take classes with other Burnaby South students if they are academically capable and hearing students can learn ASL in classes taught by BCSD teachers.

I agree with Tania that it is "a great thing because it gives [deaf students] the chance to socialize with [hearing kids] and it teaches [hearing kids] patience because [they] can't just babble on and on."

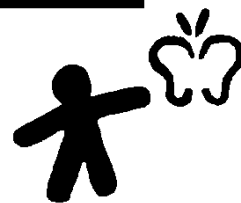
The BCSD provides supportive teachers who understand their students' special needs, and helpful professionals that include a speech and language pathologist as well as a trained audiologist. Given the proper tools, understanding teachers, self-motivation, and a supportive environment at home and at school, a deaf kid can overcome the many hurdles to communication and learning in his or her path to success.

...I don't think I could have come this far and been so confident in myself without what BCSD and Burnaby South has done for me.



# CHHA - B.C. Parents' Branch

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association



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## Wear it loud and wear it proud

by Tracey Sweetapple and Lisa Cecile, Vernon School District

Condensed from Teacher Newsmagazine- Oct 2004

Covering up—nodding yes—faking it—avoiding eye contact. Trying to fit in. Forgetting hearing aids. Saying the batteries are dead. Offering an endless list of excuses to appear to be hearing and therefore "normal." Trying to fit in with the larger, hearing, mainstream population can be tiring, overwhelming, and anxiety inducing.

That is the message students learned from the deaf and hard of hearing (d&hh) adults who presented at the Second Annual Conference for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students at Okanagan University College, May 26–28, 2004. Students were reminded of the need to connect with others who understand hearing loss in order to develop a healthy identity.

"This was an amazing opportunity for all of the d&hh youth to network, learn from one another, and develop new friendships. It was obvious that the students really enjoyed themselves!" – *Melissa Campbell* (presenter)

Students with hearing loss, typically educated without d&hh peers, often feel they must mesh with the hearing world, rather than the other way around. The conference, implemented to support the academic, social, and emotional needs of the d&hh students, provides them with a sense of community that is not always possible in their daily lives. With the support of their hearing resource teachers, d&hh students from Vernon planned and fundraised for months to develop a con-

ference program that would be educational and fun.

On May 26, students checked in at the Similkameen dorms at the OUC North Kelowna Campus. The evening was paced with activities to get the 27 students working together, building team spirit, and creating a lively sense of adventure. Students, divided into house teams, had to find members of their team by sporting the team scarf from their conference registration package. Instructed to "Wear it loud, and wear it proud!" students did just that. Team relay races were held outside, and then a Karaoke machine, connected with a PowerPoint projector and Radium Soundfield system, was given a workout. Students received points for their team by being positive, supportive, helpful, and brave enough to sing.

"The conference was a huge success. Our students had the time of their lives!" – *Melanie Thomas, Don McVicar* (teachers)

Presentations the next day included audiograms, a hands-on FM session, assistive listening technology (ASL), hearing-assist dogs, and early childhood education and signing for babies.

For the final session of the day, students took a workshop on makeup, pedicure, fly-fishing, guitar-playing, or soccer. It was a tremendous way to cap off the day, and the response from students was enthusiastic. The evening's activities included another round of

Karaoke and viewing *Cheaper* by the Dozen shown on the wall with the use of a Power-Point projector, DVD player in a laptop computer connected with a Radium Soundfield System.

"Thanks a lot to all of the teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. We love you all. It's been nice and means a lot." – *Victoria Natrall* (student)

"Thank you very much for a wonderful time." – *Kimberley Browett* (student)

On the last morning of the conference, Sandra Vandenhoff, from Phonak, spoke about her life as a hard-of-hearing person and offered personal words of advice for students. The session concluded with a panel discussion by four d&hh adults, who freely gave of themselves and their experiences.

It is amazing how, through this one event, students' perceptions could be changed. One student said she realized she was hurting only herself by not wearing her hearing aids and FM; that she should not be embarrassed or ashamed to ask others to support her listening needs. Another student said that the experience had changed her life and that she now knew what she wanted to be. Yet another seemed to undergo an overnight transformation from shy and withdrawn to animated and involved. The power of numbers and the strength derived from others who have similar needs is what inclusion is all about.

