

25 years of making futures bright



BC Family Hearing Resource Society

Reaching Out

A Newsletter from the BC FAMILY HEARING RESOURCE CENTRE for families with deaf and hard of hearing children throughout BRITISH COLUMBIA.



Fall 2008

Family Feature

The Moelikers – Learning & Growing & Sharing



Ryan at his first day of Primary (Kindergarten)

As everyone is settling in to the new school year, we'd like to share with our readers the Moeliker family's story.

Parents Marianne & Arnold and their children Ryan & Regan have recently moved to Nova Scotia where Ryan has begun Kindergarten.

Marianne shares her family's experience from first diagnosis to the first days of school.

Our son Ryan was born in August 2003 before there was a provincial program for early hearing tests. At birth he had several complications including facial paralysis which, for many genetic syndromes, is

accompanied by hearing loss. However, hearing loss was never investigated at the time because Ryan's paralysis was believed to be from a forceps delivery.

Ryan was seen for his facial paralysis by a paediatrician and a neurosurgeon at BC Children's Hospital. By 10 months of age Ryan was vocalizing and babbling but was not using word sounds. At that time, someone at the hospital started to question the origin of the facial paralysis, wondering if it might be related in some way to Ryan's not speaking.

Off we went to Children's for hearing tests. The final diagnosis was a moderately severe, sensorineural hearing loss in the right ear and a profound hearing loss in the left ear. Ryan was fitted with his first hearing aid at the age of 12 months at our local audiology clinic. It was a very stressful Fall in our household, as Ryan also began to wear glasses and was diagnosed with type 1-diabetes.

To be honest, Ryan's hard of hearing diagnosis was almost a relief to me. Before this I had come up with all kinds of explanations for what was happening. I felt that at least the diagnosis meant we knew what we were dealing with. However, we were scared of the unknown and there was so much to learn!

It wasn't until Ryan was 3½ years old that we found out, quite by accident, that a diagnostic test he had

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had over a year before had indicated that Ryan's hearing loss was due to Large Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome (LVAS). We learnt from this experience that it is so important to follow up with every specialist so that nothing is overlooked. You have to advocate for your children because you are the constant in their lives!

I found this was especially true when I was researching Cochlear Implants. I wanted to ensure that I had investigated all the possibilities out there for Ryan so that later in life, no one could say, "Why didn't you do this when Ryan was younger?"

We were very blessed to have supportive grandparents close by who dedicated every free moment learning how to assist us in enriching Ryan's environment with signed and spoken language. We were also lucky to have Frances, a family friend, who babysat Ryan two days a week. She was great; using every opportunity to bring Ryan's attention to sound and to teach him new vocabulary.



Marianne & Regan at the Park

We still had fears about Ryan's future but found that the more deaf and hard of hearing people we met through the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre (BCFHRC) the more we became relaxed and realized that Ryan would be okay. In fact he'd be better than okay; He would be GREAT!

We first heard about BCFHRC from our visit to the audiologist. We received an information binder about all the provincial services available for our hard of hearing child. The binder went untouched for a while simply because we were digesting all the facts and experiencing information overload. When the fog cleared we had decided that we wanted to use sign language. We wanted to help our son learn a communication tool to use so that he was not dependent on his understanding of human voices. We started with basic baby sign language and expanded from there. We took lessons and received

weekly in-home sign language sessions from BCFHRC. We also bought many tools to progress our learning including books and DVDs.

Ryan's first ever sign was "butterfly" and his first spoken word was "No." Other things I remember clearly were when he understood the sign "kiss" around age two. Another time was when he spoke to call me "mommy." These are moments I will cherish forever.

Raising Ryan has been a blessing and a gift and it has come with many difficult moments. We started sign language immediately after diagnosis and by the time Ryan was two he could understand us. His own ability to use

expressive sign language did not explode until he was closer to three so we had lots of temper tantrums due to frustration on his part.

We all grew together and learnt lots of communication techniques and skills from the wonderful staff at the BCFHRC and

from the Abbotsford Child Development Centre. In fact our family grew up with the various staff from each centre. We had lots of home visits and enjoyed our weekly trips to the Centre in Surrey even in the early days when Ryan would scream the whole way 😊

Ryan enjoyed two years in "Partners and Playmates" and then graduated to the "PALS" preschool program which we attended once a week. Ryan also attended our local preschool on other days.

I really enjoyed the parent group and education sessions. They were always helpful and informative. Sharing with new families is a great way to help others see the "light at the end of the tunnel". In particular I remember a chance encounter at a nearby Burger King where another mom recognized us from the Centre. She was there with her son who was eight at the time. Seeing him communicate and interact with the other kids and helping Ryan on the



Ryan & dad Arnold at Preschool Graduation

slide was extremely heart warming; especially when we learnt from his mom that he did not start to talk until he was four years old. The connection to other parents through the Centre allowed us to learn that other children also had temper tantrums and problems sleeping alone at night. When we first attended classes with other families we thought we'd never be as good at signing as them but a few years later we were the more experienced parents in the group.

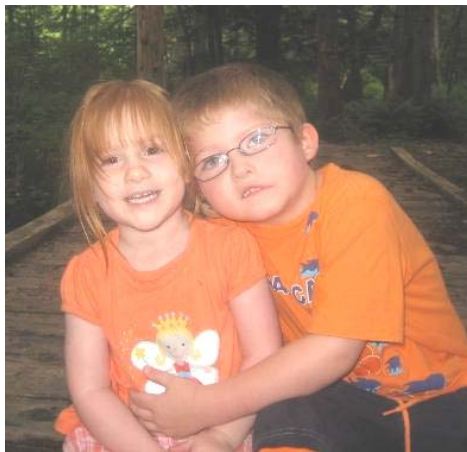
Advocating for Ryan seems to be the major theme of his entry into Kindergarten. We received our strength and information from the team at BCFHRC via weekly therapy sessions, parent groups and education sessions related to the transition into Kindergarten.

Our school district in BC had never heard of all-day Kindergarten for a hard of hearing student. It was suggested to us that he might attend a morning class at our catchment school and an afternoon class at another school. That was not our ideal; as we had hoped that repeating the morning Kindergarten program in the afternoon would help Ryan better understand the routines and the language due to repetition. We also worked hard advocating for Ryan to have an educational interpreter to assist him in his classroom.

Recently our family made the decision to move back to Nova Scotia. The initial decision to do so was based on being close to family, escaping the hectic life of the lower mainland and commuting on a daily basis. We had thought of doing this in 2006 but our research at that time had indicated that we would not have been eligible to receive the same in-home

services that we benefited from through BCFHRC.

Ryan now attends Coldbrook District School in Nova Scotia. Primary, as Kindergarten is called here, is an all day program from 8:25 am-2:45 pm. He has a full time educational assistant and receives an hour a day one-on-one intervention with his itinerant teacher from the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA). We are thrilled with this model and are happy that Ryan is receiving so much support in the classroom now!



Regan & Ryan

A combination of signed and spoken language is used in Ryan's classroom and at home by our family. Ryan now tends to think that sign language was something he did as a baby. Ryan's ability to use spoken language has exploded

over the last few years.

Babble became simple words and those grew into word combinations and then into sentences. It is incredible to now have a full conversation with Ryan using spoken language. Signing sure does come in handy though, when we are in a loud environment or in the bath tub. Ryan also knows that mom means business when I'm talking and signing at the same time☺.

It has been 4 years since Ryan was first diagnosed and we probably would have relaxed a bit more and not worried so much if we had fast forwarded to today. We hope Ryan's journey will spark a few memories for our BCFHRC family and bring hope and comfort to new families meeting Ryan for the first time.



Special Feature

Learn Sign Language via Webcam - Virtual Hearing Resource Centre

by Suzie Fairweather, Sign Language Instructor

I have chosen to write an article about the Virtual Hearing Resource Centre available through BCFHRC based on the positive experience I had while introducing the service last year. I also want to indicate that even if you used the service before, there are some exciting new developments I'd like to introduce which I'm sure will enrich your experience with the overall service.

As you may know, BCFHRC is always exploring more effective ways to serve families, especially to improve access for families who otherwise have difficulty obtaining service due to schedule or home environment limitations. So, why not try the web's Virtual Hearing Resource?

Firstly, if you did make an attempt to try the web service last year and encountered some challenges (or delays). I can assure you that we have made progress at improving the delivery of the service. Or, if you have not signed up because of technological concerns, either due to your equipment or abilities with the internet, Ivana – who is our program assistant – can quickly put that to rest with a short demonstration to get you started. It really is not all that involved or complicated. So, no need to be shy. Just send Ivana or me an email, indicating your interest and leave the rest to us. You'll be ready to go in no time.

Secondly, whether or not you have participated in web-based instruction before, I'd like to assure you that the format is very comfortable. Admittedly, when we first started providing web-based lessons, it was just as new to us as it may have been to some of you, but with a year under our belt, we have developed a more effective way to run the sessions, making the online experience more enjoyable overall. One way we can do the lessons is to work through a practical hands-on text – which I will be introducing early on – and I will also draw from themes related to home routines and useful everyday

vocabulary. Either way, we will settle on a style of instruction that works for you, making sure time is also available to hear of your progress concerns or other communication-based needs.



Thirdly, we are taking steps to provide group-based web instruction in the near future, so stay tuned for this exciting new development. There are many reasons why this service will be helpful. For one, you may find shared lessons to be more enjoyable as others are learning the same things at the same time (a more dynamic feel, like a classroom). Also, I anticipate that parents will enjoy the feeling of just being connected to other parents faced with similar challenges. I look forward to the upcoming possibilities and will keep you updated.

Finally, allow me to share a few comments by parents who have found the web-service advantageous.

"...this is such a useful tool and such an important part of our child's communication. The lessons that I had were easy (non - complicated) and such a pleasure knowing that I could learn at our convenience so that I can pass on my teaching to our deaf child."

"... this is an absolutely amazing tool and I would hate for anyone to miss out on this privilege."

"... thank you for being patient with me.. I'm sure as I get used to the webcam it will be smoother each time we meet."

"...it's exciting to work through this time of learning...signing is not as hard as we first thought.."

For information on how you can get started, please contact Ivana at ikranjec@bcfamilyhearing.com.

I can also be reached at sfairweather@bcfamilyhearing.com.

Reaching Out to Community Service Providers (CSPs)

On The Road Again - Outreach Throughout BC



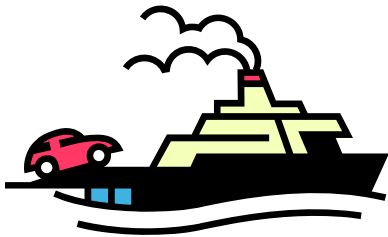
Most communities outside the lower mainland of BC do not have the opportunity to provide specialized resources to families of deaf and hard of hearing children.

Our Outreach Program offers contact with families who share similar experiences, and with professionals who specialize in working with these families.

Our consultants, who include Speech & Language Pathologists and Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, work together with community service providers (CSPs) to provide a continuity of services.

A visit from our consultant could include community support and education eg. workshops, in-services, professional training and resources. It also includes family support and education by monitoring and follow-up with the community team.

These services are additional to the services available at our Centre to all families and their CSPs including: Advanced Professional Training for Speech & Language Pathologists and Audiologists; Cochlear Implant Training; Parent-to-Parent Support Network; Reaching Out Newsletter; Sign Language Instruction; Virtual Hearing Resource Centre (webcam services); and coordination with other agencies.



The Fall has been busy for all our Outreach Consultants as they travel to see families and their CSPs throughout the province. As new staff have joined our Centre, we have adjusted service regions as follows:

- Judy Chrastina – North Coast/Cariboo/Interior
- Nicola Swain – South, East and West Vancouver Island
- Noreen Simmons - Kootenays
- Tamara Pelletier – Coast Garibaldi – Northern Vancouver Island
- Zara Newnham -Kamloops & Prince George
- Kristyn Payne- Northern BC
- Dyan Spear – North, South & Central Okanagan
- Cathy Chow – Family Support Parent (Province-Wide Outreach)

Reaching Out to Community Service Providers (CSPs)

Focus on the Okanagan

Dyan Spear is the **Outreach Consultant** for the **North, South and Central Okanagan**. Recent trips included Kelowna, Vernon, Lumby, Enderby and Salmon Arm. During visits to these communities this September, her services to the families and CSPs included:

Coordination with Community Teams

At the Vernon Health Unit, Dyan met with the community Audiologist, Technicians and SLPs. She also provided consultation, training and education of CSPs in assessments, programming and follow up for the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children and their families.



Vernon Health Unit staff: l to r: Irma Lipski, tech, Lisa Coley-Donahue, SLP, (standing), Lynne Ivanoff, tech, Barry Hunks, Audiologist, Mary Edgar, tech & Lynn Hetsler, SLP

Visits with Families

Coordination and consultation with families and their CSPs occur in the family home, at the health unit or a family's preferred location.

Dyan spent the afternoon with the Edney family to monitor Madison's auditory speech and sign language development. During the evening, Dyan met with the family and their Sign Language Instructor. Dyan provided complementary resources such as books, videos and DVDs that are available for families and CSPs from the BCFHRC library.



Pictured at left, Lanie Edney and daughter Madison with Debbie Perry-Deaf Mentor (centre) contracted through Deaf Children's Society

Dyan also met with the Salmon Arm Health unit SLP, Julie Lewis to continue their ongoing collaboration. Dyan had the opportunity to meet with the Puffer family, in person, for the first time. Dyan and Cathy Chow, BCFHRC Family Support Parent, have been communicating by phone and email prior to this visit.



Dyan spent the afternoon in a wonderful and supportive preschool program in Salmon Arm. The Ladybug preschool staff and educational assistant met with Dyan to

discuss appropriate support for a deaf child in the classroom. Dyan modelled language facilitation techniques to use during playtime and circle time.



l to r: Julie Lewis, SLP with mom, Fernanda, son Miguel and dad, Rob Puffer

Reaching Out to Community Service Providers (CSPs)

Partners for Success



Two of our staff members have been tirelessly updating the *Partnerships Program in Supporting Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*. This is an 18 hour workshop

intended for professionals working with children who have hearing loss. The curriculum consists mostly of hands-on activities, discussions and some lecture.

Some of the highlights are:

- types of hearing loss
- how to read an audiogram
- hearing loss simulation
- opportunities to troubleshoot hearing aids, cochlear implants and FM systems (thanks to generous equipment donations made my Phonak Canada and Cochlear Corporation of Canada)
- community resources in BC for families of children who have hearing loss

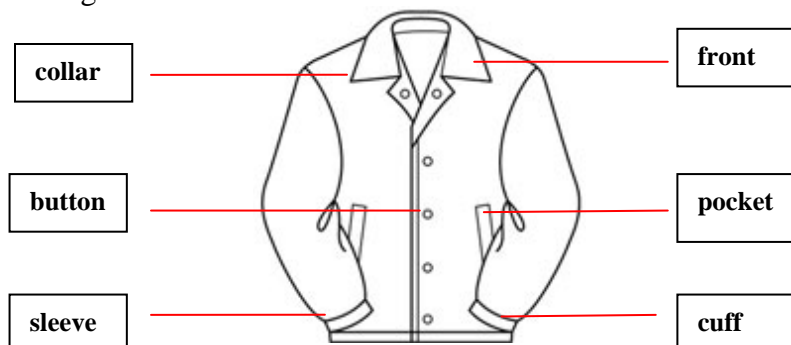
- the importance of non-biased presentation of information about communication methodologies
- effects of hearing loss on development
- inclusion of the child with hearing loss
- how to adapt the home or preschool environment to make it more accessible to a child with hearing loss

Special thanks to the 15 participants who attended the pilot of the new curriculum at the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre and provided valuable feedback on how we could improve each section. A second pilot is planned for **October 2008 in the Fraser Valley**. Please check our website for updates on specific dates and times or contact Tamara Pelletier or Kristyn Payne at (604) 584-2827 for more information. These workshops will now be available to you too. Please coordinate with your outreach consultant to have a Partnerships workshop in your area!

On the Fly...Hints for Home

5 Minute Literacy Learning Activity - Name the Parts

The best readers have big vocabularies. You can help your child get ready to read by building their vocabulary! When you and your child are putting your jackets on, try naming the parts! Possible words include: *collar, zipper, sleeve, cuff, button, buttonhole, lapel, belt, belt loop, pockets, front and back*. Repeat this activity with other articles of clothing. Instead of using real clothes you could write labels on photographs of clothing articles.



You and Your Deaf or Hard of Hearing Child

Fall Programs at Our Centre

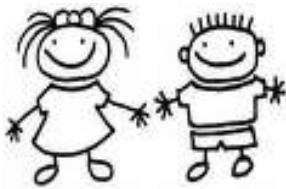
We have begun our programs for the Fall session. All programs are designed so that parents learn to encourage communication, social skills and play skills with their child in a fun environment. They also provide opportunities for children to develop early communication with basic routines and by exploring new things. After careful planning and consideration our teaching and therapy staff have decided on the following programs.

Bouncy Babies



This new program, for parents and their babies aged birth to 18 months, is running from September to November 2008. There are 10 sessions on Monday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00pm. Refer to our website for dates and times for January 2009 programming.

PALS

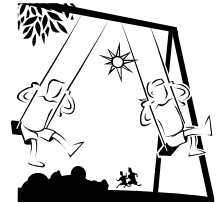


for children aged 3 to 5 years. Parent participation is required.

The PALS program runs from September 2008 to June 2009 on Monday and Tuesday from 9:30 am to 11:45pm. PALS is a language enhanced program

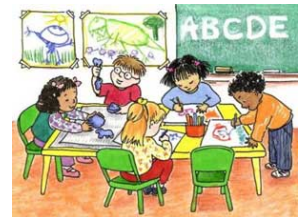
Partners and Playmates

This popular program for parents and toddlers (under the age of 3 years) starts on October 2 and runs until December 4 for the Fall session. Sessions are on Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:00am.



PEER Group

The PEER group will be available in the Spring for one week from April 27 to May 1 2009 – Monday to Friday 10:00am to 3:00pm. This program is for preschoolers who will be transitioning to Kindergarten in Sept 2009. Please keep these dates in mind if your deaf or hard of hearing child will begin Kindergarten next September.



Mingle and Play Summer Program Review

You may have read about our Mingle and Play summer program in our June newsletter. We had 30 families during the week of August 11-15th for a total of 220 people served including grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters. The weather was beautiful so we were able to spend most of the time in our garden. The daily entertainment was a wonderful way to get the

children to come together. Dads and moms prepared the lunches and we had a team of superb volunteers to assist us with supervision and activities.

We had outreach families from Squamish, Vancouver Island and Quesnel as well as lots of families from the lower mainland. Overall the one week program was a huge success.

Here are some comments from families

- *Very welcoming environment, Thanks so much!"*
- *"...the story telling time that includes dramatization and usage of instruments for the sounds; it was a great way to really encourage the kids to participate while learning."*
- *"The setting was really helpful...sitting on the floor with my son and the other families, in a relaxed setting"*
- *"The event is well-planned. I like the activities, such as obstacle course, bike riding and sand-playing, etc."*

We hope that this program becomes a yearly event so see you there next summer!

25 Years of Making A Difference

In Appreciation of our Supporters

Since our last issue, the following individuals and organizations have continued to make a difference in the lives of our children and their families by generously donating to our Centre either monetarily or through goods and services.



Elks & Royal Purple Fund for Children

\$120,000 annually!



Elks

- Cloverdale
- Langley
- North Surrey

Royal Purple

- Smithers
- Williams Lake

Individuals & Organizations

- Jatinder Bir Memorial Fund in memory of Bakhshish & Dilbag Badh
 - London Drugs
 - Mary & Keith Mills
- Canada Helps Organization
- Canada Safeway
- Cochlear Corporation of Canada
- Hugh Curtis
- Gary & Barb Gee
- Kim Houlihan
- Sally & James Hurst
- Joan Ford Society
- Peterson Family
- Phonak Canada
- RHF Hearing Foundation
- Andrea Sharpe
- Elizabeth South
- Telus-Dollars for Dollars
- United Way – Employees of Vancouver Airport Authority
- Anne Wolverton



Annual General Meeting 2008



BC Family Hearing Resource Society
Invites you to attend our

Annual General Meeting
Wednesday November 26 2008 at 6:30pm
15220 92nd Avenue Surrey BC

Please join us as we celebrate bright futures for children and recognize our donors by lighting up our Centre.

Please RSVP to 604-584-2827 or 1-877-584-2827
or to info@bcfamilyhearing.com

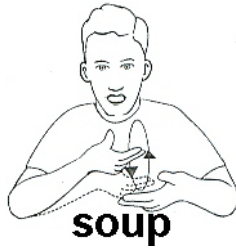


Seasonal Sign Language

Let's make Soup!



make



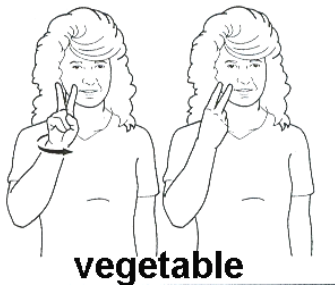
soup



pot



put (in)



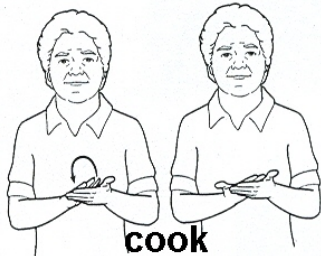
vegetable



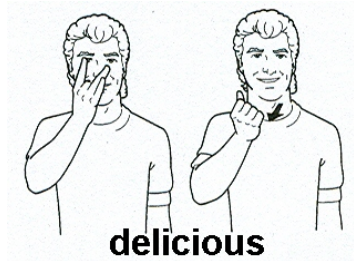
potato



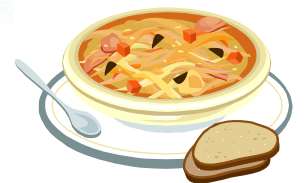
tomato



cook



delicious



*Sign Language from The Canadian Dictionary of ASL
Carole Sue Bailey & Kathy Dolby, eds.
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Bits & Pieces

Satisfaction Surveys

This year we implemented a new, shortened version of our Satisfaction Survey. We want to thank everyone who took the time to complete the surveys. We hope you found the format less cumbersome and the online option easy to use.

We greatly value your input. From your responses, future planning decisions are made. Although a formal survey is done every year, we encourage your feedback at any time throughout the year, whether favourable or not.

Here is a selection of positive comments we received:

From a family living in the lower mainland:

“Great Support and services from the staff here. Thank you very much.”

From a family living outside the lower mainland:

“We look forward to meeting and visiting the centre upon our first visit to BCCH - But up to this point we are VERY pleased and thankful for all help and services offered to us! A very huge thank you.”

From a family in the Surrey Early Speech & Language Program:

“I am so impressed with the therapist and the way she interacts with my child. She is also very knowledgeable and professional when explaining things to the parents. My daughters have both responded so well to therapy in large part due to her warm, yet disciplined approach.”

From a Community Service Provider:

“BCFHRC is great! I appreciate all the support I have always received. Everyone I have come in contact with has been very effective and responsive to the needs of the clients we share.”

One of the common threads was that parents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt included in their child’s services and they felt more confident in helping their child with communication abilities.

In addition to the above comments, we were given suggestions to consider. For instance, one family would like Sign Language workshops available. Another family from outside the lower mainland suggested arranging a community support group.

While there was high praise from parents involved in the Surrey Early Speech and Language Program for services received, many were displeased with the long waiting list.

We appreciate your responses as ALL feedback is beneficial and we strive to improve and maintain services where necessary.





Calendar

October	
3 – 5	CHHA-BC Parent's Branch Family Weekend 2008 - Connections
13	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
24	CAEDHH – BC Conference 2008
Oct 27 to Nov 7	Speech Language Pathology Advanced Professional Training Our Centre welcomes: Charles McLash–Interior Health, 100 Mile House & Kamloops Giselle Maier–Central Okanagan Child Dev. Centre; Kelowna Barb Kuhl–Northern Health, Prince Rupert
November	
11	Remembrance Day Holiday
26	Annual General Meeting

Our Outreach Consultants visits to Communities Throughout BC

August	Zara Newnham – Prince George Noreen Simmons – Fruitvale, Rossland
September	Dyan Spear – Vernon & Salmon Arm Noreen Simmons & Cathy Chow – Kaslo Zara Newnham – Prince George Nicola Swain – Duncan & Courtenay
October	Judy Chrastina & Kristyn Payne – Fort St. John Judy Chrastina – Bella Coola Nicola Swain & Tamara Pelletier – Campbell River & Gold River Nicola Swain - Port Alberni Noreen Simmons & Suzie Fairweather – Fruitvale & Trail
November	Nicola Swain & Cathy Chow – Duncan

Newsletter - Mail, On-Line or Email?

Would you prefer to receive our newsletter emailed to you? Are you aware that our newsletters are posted on our website? In our efforts to "Go Green" we would like to offer the electronic distribution option to those interested.

To receive your newsletter this way, simply email info@bcfamilyhearing.com with the email address you would like the newsletter sent to AND the current name and address it is being sent to by mail in order to have your name removed from the list.



Reaching Out

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Ellen Peterson
Editors: Cindy Adams & Carolyn
Trengrave

We are a family-centered early intervention Provincial Resource Program committed to individual communication choices. We provide support and resources throughout BC to deaf and hard of hearing children, their families and Community Service Providers.

The purpose of the Reaching Out Newsletter is to provide information and support to our readers.

Articles and ideas are welcome! The opinions expressed therefore are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board of Directors, or the staff. We reserve the right to edit contributions for brevity and clarity.

There is no fee for the Reaching Out newsletter, however, donations are gratefully accepted.

Sign Language from the Canadian Dictionary of ASL, Carol Sue Bailey & Kathy Dolby, Editors. Used with Permission from the University of Alberta Press.

To all our readers –
Welcome to the Fall Session!