

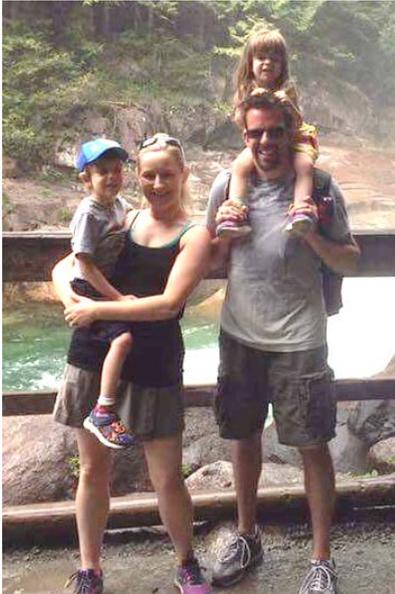
REACHING OUT

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE
BC FAMILY HEARING RESOURCE CENTRE
FOR FAMILIES WITH DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN,
SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND OTHERS INVOLVED WITH HEARING LOSS/
DEAFNESS .

Fall 2017

FAMILY FEATURE

(Almost) All in the Family



Eric has mild-moderate hearing loss in one ear and moderate-severe in the other. He is joined by his youngest sister and dad who all have similar levels of hearing loss.

When Parker was born, he didn't pass his infant hearing screening test in the hospital. We were sent to the health unit for further testing but at that time, he had a cold, so his level of hearing loss was chocked up to his cold. We went for more tests over the next several months, and again, we were assured his hearing loss was due to fluid or colds. He regularly had fluid in his ears, so our family doctor referred us to an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT), Specialist at BC Children's Hospital (BCCH) just before his first birthday. Since the fluid had been affecting his hearing for the first year of his life, his ENT

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Melanie Johnson shares her family's story of navigating the world of raising children with its frustrations and fears, as well as insight and determination.

Hi! We are Eric and Melanie Johnson, Parker (5) and Hailey (3). As far as hearing loss goes, our family is a little unique. I (Melanie), am the only person in our family who doesn't wear hearing aids.

Winter Party
December
11th!

FAMILY FEATURE continued

The Johnson Family continued

wanted to put in tubes as soon as possible and surgery was scheduled for three weeks later. The day of surgery, Parker came home and started dancing to music. It was like he was hearing for the first time. Since he had such a dramatic difference in his hearing after getting tubes, doctors again thought that had been the issue all along.

Parker was babbling things like ‘mama’ at five months old, a time when tests showed his ears had been free of fluid.

Unfortunately, that fluid-free period was short-lived, and his speech didn’t progress. He didn’t learn any new words and we were growing concerned. We went back to BCCH for our regular six-month check-up and the ENT asked the audiologist to do a hearing test. After the test, she asked if we would allow her to do a sedated Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) Test. She spent over three hours testing him and was finally able to diagnose him with mild to moderate mixed loss in his right ear, and mild to moderately severe mixed loss in his left ear. We had never heard of a sedated ABR before that, but we wish we had known then, what we know now, and would’ve pushed for one sooner. It was frustrating that it took two years to diagnose him, knowing that there is a history of hearing loss in the family.

I was eight months pregnant with Hailey at the time, so our team at BCCH ensured we got the ball rolling quickly so that we could get everything Parker needed before she was born. Lori Bell at the BC Early Hearing Program got us in touch with the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre (BCFHRC). Before Hailey’s arrival, Parker received his hearing aids, had a speech therapist and went to his first Partner’s and Playmates (PnP) session at the Centre. Everyone was so accommodating. It was a whirlwind couple of weeks, but with our second baby on the way, we appreciated that BCFHRC worked with us to have everything set up before her arrival.

Our audiologist at BCCH told us that



regardless of the results of Hailey’s infant screening test, she would like to do a sedated ABR to ensure that she was diagnosed early on and we didn’t have the same experience we had with Parker. We hoped and prayed that she would pass the test in the hospital, but unfortunately, she didn’t. Within a couple of weeks, she went for her ABR and was also diagnosed with bilateral moderate mixed hearing loss and received hearing aids about a month later.

Having a toddler and a brand-new baby is tough enough but now we were trying to juggle the usual woes of have a new baby in the house, along with trying to arrange speech therapy sessions. We felt like we were making up for two years of lost time. Parker had his first development assessment done and when we were told the results, I was in tears. The results were to be expected, considering he had barely been able to hear for the first two years of his life, but I felt like a failure. As a mom, we want to protect our children and we never want to hear that we’ve done something wrong as a parent. Not that I had, and nobody said that I had, but when we were read the results of that first assessment, we were told it wouldn’t be likely that he would be able to catch up to the average five year old by the time he would start Kindergarten.

I took that personally and went through all the realms of emotions, beginning with anger and then sadness. It didn’t take long though before we simply became determined to give him the resources and help he needed to advance him as far as we could. Alex Lay, Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), was our interventionist at the time and she was wonderful to work with. She got to know all of us and knew the best ways to connect with Parker so that she could keep him engaged and develop his speech. She always made the sessions fun for him and he looked forward to her visits.

Hailey was still a baby at this time so the speech sessions were mostly focused around Parker at this point. Hailey wore her hearing aids like a champ and was engaging with the world around her. Unfortunately, as she got a

FAMILY FEATURE continued

The Johnson Family continued

little older, she started pulling them out and it was a fight to keep them in. We got her some headbands that held them in, but it didn't take her long before she figured out how to push them aside and grab onto the hearing aid. It became a daily struggle and unfortunately, she hardly ever wore them. Shortly after Hailey turned two, she finally started to realize the difference her hearing aids made and she actually wanted to wear them. She went from rarely ever having them in to asking for them the moment she woke up in the morning and wearing them for all waking hours.

As we were nearing this past September, we started to grow more and more nervous about Parker starting Kindergarten. The one thing that was reassuring is there was a team of Kindergarten teachers who had children with hearing loss in their class for the two years preceding Parker. As we had imagined, he got those teachers and they were so well prepared for him! They've done this before and it gave us a lot of peace of mind. Emily Black, SLP, who has been our interventionist for about the last year, had been really focusing on Parker's development before he started school and we felt confident that we had done everything we could to prepare him for the transition ahead. While there has certainly been challenges, he has transitioned fairly well. Hearing loss or not, starting Kindergarten is a big change for all children.

It's a little different in our house than a lot of families with children with hearing loss. Our kids have never really thought that they're



any different because in our house, mom is the one who's different. We've had other kids ask, "What are those on his/her ears?" The first time I was asked the question, I immediately felt defensive. I was a little nervous and my "mama bear" instincts kicked in. I had never thought about what I would say when someone asked. It's amazing how many thoughts can run through your head over the course of one second, but I quickly realized this little girl was just curious about what were on Parker's ears. I quickly thought of what I saw as the simplest way to explain to someone so young. I explained that just like how some people wear glasses to

help them see, Parker wears hearing aids to help him hear. She simply looked at me and said, "Oh, okay," and carried on, playing. Simple as that. I've used that explanation for every little child who has asked and they've always been content with it. They're only asking because it's something new to them and they're curious.

We try to teach our kids to advocate for themselves, as best they can at this age, and we try to be their biggest advocates. We both work full time so we rarely get to participate in events at BCFHRC, but the support we've received from our SLPs has been amazing and they are an incredible resource with all of their knowledge. Even though hearing loss isn't new to all of us, it's so nice to know we have support when we need it. Our SLPs have just become a regular part of our lives and the kids look forward to the next time they'll see Emily. As we were nearing Thanksgiving, Parker was listing off family members to ask if they were coming or not and even asked if Emily was coming. I guess that just makes her part of the family now!

***Would you like to share your family's story? We would love to hear from you!
Please advise your interventionist or contact our Centre.***

GREAT GRADS – WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Meet Janelle!

We are thrilled to have our Great Grad, Janelle, volunteering with us. She is such an enthusiastic and inspiring person. Her positive nature and smiling face are a pleasure to have at the Centre.



Hello everyone!

My name is Janelle Milne, I have a Cochlear Implant (CI) on my right ear. I am 18 years old and I recently graduated from high school at Regent Christian Academy last June! I got implanted when I was 1½ years old, and my CI was activated when I was two years old. I got continuous help as I grew up having a CI. At BC Family Hearing Resource Centre (BCFHRC) with my mom for speech therapy until I was five, and then through grade one to six, I had a speech therapist that came to my school. I had lots of hearing appointments and lastly I got tons of love, support and guidance from my amazing parents. Sharon was actually my teacher when I went and she is still teaching there today! She makes such a great difference in the kids' lives and she inspires me all the time. This program itself has a lot of amazing people that have changed my life, it is such a great, loving and energetic place to be at.

I am a very athletic person and I like to be busy! I love going for walks, running, playing any sports and doing anything that's athletic. I played volleyball on my high school team and also on a team outside of school. I love photography - I try to capture exciting moments or memories and edit them - it's my favorite thing to do! I also do a bit of painting on the side, of landscapes or animals. My passions are art, photography and children. I love being around children and I like how they are so blunt and honest. I also love to travel. As a graduation gift, my mom and I traveled across America by train in seven days. It was such an amazing and memorable experience, I would do it all over again! I also like being with my friends all the time. Another thing I enjoy is having dinners and game nights with my family. We always hangout all the time and I love it! My parents are the most fantastic, generous and awesome people I know.

After I graduated from high school, my original plan was to go to Kwantlen Polytechnic University for four years to study Fine Arts and then open up my own art store and teach art to children. But during the summer, I had a change of heart. I started to think a lot of my early memories being a deaf child. All I could remember that there were a lot of people who were so diligent to help me succeed. I want to be like that, able to encourage, inspire and support deaf children. I decided to take a whole year off to get experience in preschools with children. Right now, I am volunteering here at BCFHRC in PALS! The kids are so adorable and I absolutely love it here, I also recently started working at another preschool. I am very excited for what my future holds. Next fall of 2018 I will start at Douglas College to study Early Childhood Education (ECE). My future dream is once I finish my ECE at Douglas, I hope to work here at BCFHRC! It is honestly the best place ever and it is filled with amazing people!



Janelle with her mom, Natalie, at BCFHRC as a young child.

This is one of Janelle's favourite quotes

"Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

YOU AND YOUR DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

Fall at BCFHRC



OVER 35 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



ELKS OF
CANADA

Elks & Royal Purple Fund
for Children \$20, 000
annually



Elks, Royal Purple Lodges and Individuals & Organizations

- Clearwater Elks
- Lillooet Royal Purple
- Smithers Royal Purple
- Williams Lake Royal Purple
- Salmon Arm Elks
- ACT/UCT Kelowna West Council
- CHHA Parents Branch
- United Way of the Lower Mainland

Donations in honor of William Humphries Birthday:

- Michelle Louie
- Chrstiana & Trevor Morris
- Stefan Glover
- Eleanor Thibadau



- Agatha Cluff
- Anita Park
- Bob & Lynn Moore
- Brecher Family
- C. Park
- Caldor Foundation
- Christian Leung
- Clement/Dupont Family
- Connie Kush
- Dan & Brenda Moore
- Dan McQuillan
- Doug Klassen
- Dr. R. Swain
- E. Moi
- Fern Dunlop
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- Henry Pierce
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- John & Joanne McKitrick
- Karen Armitage
- Ken & Jamie Mulligan
- Kimberly Turmel
- Marguerite Ford
- Mrs. Lily Price
- Obviar Family
- Sally & James Hurst
- Sun Family
- V. Chan



We acknowledge the financial support provided by:
The Ministry of Children and Development – Provincial Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
The BC Early Hearing Program – Provincial Health Services Authority
The Province of British Columbia



A special Thank You to Ron and Pam Tamis, owners of Rondriso Farms.

Thank you for hosting our groups over the years and for donating this extra large pumpkin to our Centre.

The kids (and staff and parents) had fun cleaning and carving it!



OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Annual General Meeting 2017

Our Annual General Meeting was held on November 22nd this year. The AGM is our opportunity to share our accomplishments of the past year, the news for the future and to establish our Board of Directors for the next term.

Ron Moody, from our accounting firm d'Abadie Moody, reported results from their audit which is conducted annually, in September. We introduced our annual report and our new comprehensive brochure/booklet that encompasses many documents into one. We also announced our newest satellite location to be opened in January 2018, in Vancouver! After presentations from the Board President, Dr. Charles Laszlo and Executive Director, Dr. Noreen Simmons, the Board of Directors were elected for the 2017 – 2018 term.



We acknowledged our generous donors and supporters by lighting up our rooftop with a colourful display.

This year, everyone who attended the meeting was entered into a prize draw. Congratulations to Xiaomei Yang! She won a \$200 restaurant gift card generously donated by Schill Insurance.

After the formalities, everyone enjoyed refreshments and casual socializing.

Here are the Board of Directors for 2017 – 2018

Dr. Charles Laszlo, President

Dr. Graham Bryce, Vice President

Rick Moore, Past President

Agatha Cluff, Treasurer

Alia Kallo, Director

Barbara Gee, Director

Doug Klassen, Director

Dr. Susan Small, Director

Joan Popovich, Director

Ken Mulligan, Director

Ray Hunt, Director

Rosalind Ho, Director



YOU AND YOUR DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

Rhythm and Moves

This fall we launched a new music group called Rhythm and Moves, for children aged 12-24 months. We had so much fun enjoying music and songs together! We had a chance to play around with different instruments such as drums, bells, egg shakers, and the family of frog guiros was one of our favorites.



A family of guiro frogs: a type of percussion instrument

We were lucky to have Chris Hamilton, a children's musician (and past parent!) join us with his acoustic and bass guitars, mandolin and musical talents. It was wonderful to have a live musician playing for us, and to experience his music with our ears, eyes, and hands - feeling the vibrations from the instruments.



We experimented with different tempos, high and low pitched sounds, quiet and loud volumes, happy, mad, sad and silly ways to sing, and also developed our sound detection skills and appreciation of music. We had a chance to dance and shake our sillies out too!

We look forward to starting up again in the New Year. If you are interested in joining us, talk to your early interventionist about registering for our next block. We'd love to see you there.



REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY

Foundations Workshops for Families and Professionals

In November, Speech Language Pathologists, Stefanie Macaro and Valerie Marshall travelled to Victoria to present our Foundations for Families workshop. The goals of the Foundations workshop are to inform parents/caregivers on various topics to support their child who is deaf/hard-of-hearing, as well as connect families in the same area. Thank you to the families for sharing your experiences, questions, and knowledge!



Families shared that after the 2-day workshop they felt more informed and empowered on their child's communication needs, what risks to look out for, and how to advocate for their child's access. Some families commented that they appreciated reviewing information that they had learned about before, but could apply from a new perspective now that their child is older.

It was also great to connect with other professionals in the Victoria area for the half-day Foundations for Professionals workshop. Thank you to the Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs), Occupational Therapists (OTs), Physio Therapists (PTs), Infant Development Program Consultants (IDPs), Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), and Social Workers (SWs) who joined us and shared your great questions and experiences.

Keep your eye out for more Foundations workshops:

2-day Family workshop (register at <https://goo.gl/M8S65D>):

- January 19-20th 2018, in Surrey (also available online for outreach families)
- May 11-12th 2018, in Kelowna
- August 7-8th 2018, in Surrey (also available online). This is the same week as Mingle & Play. Outreach families can contact us regarding accommodations for the week.

Half-day Professional workshop (register at <https://goo.gl/gRW7ym>):

- May 10 2018, in Kelowna

Quote from a parent who recently participated in the workshop:

"This workshop is so important. So much information that gets missed because of our busy life gets addressed in this workshop and excellent tools to improve the situation is presented."

BITS & PIECES

New Satellite Office in Vancouver

We are growing!

BC Family Hearing Resource Society is very excited to announce the establishment of a new Satellite Centre located in Vancouver, BC. While our main Surrey Centre will continue to provide services to all of our families, this new office will allow families in Vancouver and the surrounding cities to have a location closer to home. The new office is located at the corner of Kingsway and Boundary at **#262 – 3665 Kingsway, Vancouver**. There will be three full-time Speech & Language Pathologists, as well as administrative support at this location. Our Family Support Parents and Sign Language Consultants will also be available at this new Centre. We plan to open the office for families in early 2018.

An “Open House” event will be held on the afternoon of Wednesday, February 7th to welcome everyone to our newest Centre. We look forward to continuing the excellent services provided to all of our families: in Surrey, in Victoria, in our new office in Vancouver and all around the province.

ASL Evening Classes



We are happy to announce ASL Evening classes for parents this year. In November and February a block of sessions will be provided weekly by **Amar Mangat**, Sign Language Instructor, at our Centre on Thursday evenings. These popular sessions fill up quickly. If you weren't able to participate in November sessions, you will be given priority for the February sessions. Please call or email the Centre to sign up.

Annual Satisfaction Surveys

And the winners are....

Thank you to everyone for completing our annual satisfaction survey. As promised, here are the winners of the draw for a \$50 gift card from Chapters Indigo. Congratulations!

For Local Families: Pauline Chen



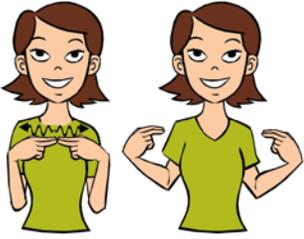
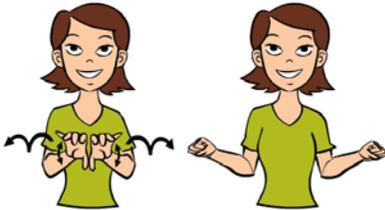
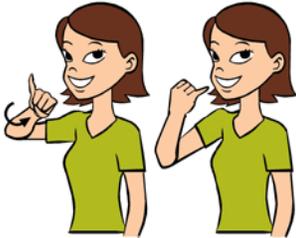
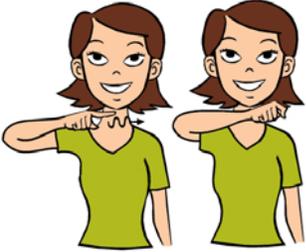
For Outreach Families: Sage Kuzminksi

The information received from the surveys is analyzed carefully. We determine our future planning and consider ways to improve our services, based on your responses. We are always open to and welcome your feedback.

SIGN LANGUAGE

BREAKFAST

Sign Language courtesy of Babysigns.com

 <p>BREAKFAST</p>	 <p>EGGS</p>	 <p>BACON</p>
 <p>SAUSAGE</p>	 <p>POTATOS (HASHBROWN)</p>	 <p>JUICE</p>
 <p>CEREAL</p>	 <p>CHEESE</p>	 <p>BREAD</p>
 <p>BANANA</p>	 <p>PANCAKE</p>	 <p>MUFFIN</p>

Check out this website to see signs 'in person' <http://www.handspeak.com>

Calendar

October

- 9 **Thanksgiving** – Centre closed
- 11 PEER Session #1 7pm
- 12 ECE Workshop presented by BCFHRC
- 14 Galey Farms Field Trip (Victoria)
- 16 Pumpkin Patch field trip for all families
- 20 Canadian Assoc. of Educators of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Conference
- 20-21 BC Association of Speech Language Pathologists & Audiologists Conference
- 26-27 Sign Language Instructor Training
- 31 **Happy Halloween!**

November

- 11 Remembrance Day ☹️
- 13 Centre closed in lieu of Remembrance Day
- 13 – 17 No Groups this week
- 15 PEER Session #2 7pm
- 16 Foundations for Professionals (Victoria)
- 17-18 Foundations for Families (Victoria)
- 22 BCFHRS Annual General Meeting 6:00 pm

December

- 3 PEER Session #3 7pm
- 11 Winter Party for all families ❄️
- 25/26 Christmas Day & Boxing Day – Centre closed

January

- 1 Happy New Year! – Centre closed

February

- 7 Vancouver Satellite Office Open House



Staff Visits to Communities in BC

September

- Carolyn Hawrish – Ft. St. John, Dawson Creek, Kamloops
- Dyan Spear – Victoria, Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Chemainus, Courtenay/Comox
- Jen Gow - Victoria

October

- Dyan Spear- Winnipeg, Vernon, Mara Lake, Kelowna, Victoria, Summerland, Campbell River, Comox, Nanaimo, Prince George
- Carolyn Hawrish- Cranbrook, Nelson
- Jen Gow – Victoria
- Teresa Kazemir – Port Hardy
- Suzie Fairweather – Vernon, Mara Lake, Kelowna, Cranbrook

November

- Dyan Spear – Victoria, Parksville, Nanaimo, Penticton, Summerland
- Carolyn Hawrish – Terrace
- Emily Black – Bella Bella/Bella Coola
- Charmaine Francis – Williams Lake

December

- Dyan Spear – Victoria, Parksville

Reaching Out

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Dr. Noreen Simmons
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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.

Reference to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the BC Family Hearing Resource Society.

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.



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