

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 .**

Winter 2018

FAMILY FEATURE

Our Crazy Year



The Mathesons: Caryn, Annie, Mae and Dan

Caryn's Story:

I'm sitting all cozy at home with a hot cup of tea in hand on a crisp winter morning and feeling so very grateful for all that has been happening in our lives. I've felt compelled to share a little more of our journey.

Our daughter, Annie was born with a chromosomal condition that has led to a number of health issues. Our year began with open heart surgery. Although the surgery was a great success it was a pretty emotional and tiring start to the year with her surgery date changing six times, as well as Annie getting stomach flu on New Years' eve. So we were in a lot of upheaval and it was an intense time.

Continued on page 2

Meet the Mathesons!

Caryn, Dan and Annie (and now Mae) joined our program last year and what a year they have had!

Caryn shares some of their journey and experiences over the past two years. Along the way they have somehow fit in weekly intervention with Zara Gauthier (RSLP), sign language sessions with Suzie Fairweather, attendance at VALS, PALS, Rhythm and Moves and preschool at Deaf Children's Society (DCS)!

Elks and Royal Purple Walkathon

**Note: NEW date and location:
Aldergrove Regional Park
May 27**

**Mingle & Play
August 9, 10, 11**

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FAMILY FEATURE continued

The Matheson Family continued

In February Annie was diagnosed as profoundly deaf with a rare type of hearing loss called ANSD (Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder), and we were called in to do a number of ABR's (Auditory Brain Stem Response) to figure it all out. In March I then found out I was pregnant, which was an absolute joy, but man oh man was I exhausted.

So from April to June we were dealing with pregnancy hormones and tiredness, coping with a myriad of medical appointments, contending with hearing aids, starting to learn sign language, getting introduced to all the supports Annie would need, and we even had a tube surgery (putting grommets in Annie's ears) thrown in there just to add to the fun.

In those same months my husband, Dan, had a huge amount of stress and upheaval at work and was managing a lot on his own with little support. But most importantly through it all, we were grieving.

We were coming to terms with the reality that this was an entirely new picture for our lives. I was buckling under the weight of it all. Buckling under paperwork, decision-making, house chores, isolation and exhaustion. For a month or so, I had an appointment every day of the week - hearing aid fittings, audiologists, speech therapists, midwives, ASL instructors, development specialists, surgeons, physiotherapists and the list goes on.

Then in the summer I embarked on a flight back to South Africa, on my own, heavily pregnant and with a deaf toddler. Not a fun time. It was awful. The reason for my trip was fantastic-my parent's 50th wedding anniversary. But my time there was tough with jet lag exhaustion and stress over some major visa issues. I was pretty worse for wear. And I was still dealing with all that life was offering me and not quite dealing with it, if that makes sense.

Annie was then scheduled to go in for Cochlear Implant (CI) surgery at the end of August, a few weeks after my return from South Africa. Over those same weeks, we were also introduced to the Deaf Children's Society (DCS)



Her first CI surgery... they had already gone right into her right ear and then decided to stop

preschool and were hoping she would be admitted for the Fall.

At the end of August she went in for her CI surgery. We were excited that this was finally happening and felt a relief that it was not going to be near the end of the year when her sister was to arrive on the scene. But on surgery day we got a call from her surgeon to say he had to halt the surgery half way through because of a very rare ear infection. The surgeon then said we had to give her antibiotics a few times a day (which Annie hated!) and again we were to do what we could to keep her from getting sick so as to prevent further infection.

The surgery was then rescheduled for some time in early November, but they were unable to give us an exact date as the hospital was moving into a brand new building. In all of this, one of the biggest things we've had to get used to with Annie's unique medical situation has been how to handle uncertainty. It's been a slow process, but we're getting better at learning how to embrace the unknown.

Annie began with her preschool program at the beginning of September and we spent our time preparing and making sure everything was in place for November. We were so excited to have her in preschool where she would get a whole load of language input that we have felt unable to give her.

Despite contending with a lot of sickness all Fall - our whole family seemed to blossom into something new. A kind of grace entered in. Annie has been thriving in preschool and getting so much more language input which eased a lot of frustration for her.

Both Dan and I transitioned into a greater confidence with our sign language which has not only been good for our communication with Annie, but it's also been a wonderful joy to experience this new language.

What has been even more of an absolute privilege is to be drawn in to a whole new community of incredible people as we have met other deaf families.



Dan signing 'I Love You' with Annie

FAMILY FEATURE continued

The Matheson Family continued

We've seen Annie thriving at school and been amazed at how fantastic her teachers are with her. Annie now has friends who communicate just like she does and it's been so cool to see that happen. We have met some awesome parents who have been so kind and good to us. One of the parents we met over the fall, said to me: "you know, I just know we'll be friends for life." And I felt it too... I've realized that I now have these people in my life who I have this deep connection with. They're walking the same journey as we are. We will always be parents of kids who are deaf and that will always tie our stories together. What a wonderful gift to be given. There are so many people who are yearning for meaningful friendships and despite us having such fantastic friends and community as it is, we found something so unanticipated and unique.



About to hop in the car for school

And so our year ended as crazily it began with a "November to Remember" as our friend put it. Annie had bilateral cochlear implant surgery on the Monday, she was discharged on Tuesday and I went into labour on Wednesday. Her sister Mae was born on Thursday! What a week!

My hope is that hearing about our journey this last year will be a helpful gift to others. I have always carried this burden of thinking that I have to generate the events of my own life. I have a strong pull in me to make life extraordinary but this year, I realized through a lot of hardship that I haven't had to generate anything. Annie's hearing loss has been an extraordinary gift to me. It has deepened me in a way that I could never have imagined. I am in awe of what my life has become and what path I am on. It has been completely unexpected and surprising. And what's really amazing in all of this, is that through this year – what first felt like grief, now honestly feels like absolute delight and for that miraculous process, I'm so very grateful...

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

Craving Connection?

At BC Family Hearing Resource Society we love to connect families with one another. There are lots of ways to connect: through our groups (Bouncy Babies, Butterfly Hands, Partners and Playmates, Rhythm and Moves, PALS, VALS, PEER) through our special events (Family Fun Day, Winter Party, Walkathon, Mingle & Play, Annual General Meeting), or through connections provided by your interventionist or one of our family support parents, through our Parent to Parent Support Network.

Ask your interventionist about getting connected today!

YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

Winter at BCFHRC



YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

**Summer is just around the corner!
Start planning to attend these great events.**



SAVE THE DATE

**FAMILY CAMP: Thurs July 5 to Sun July 9, 2018
(DYT Kids' camp will be July 9 to July 12th)**

**At Tribune Bay Outdoor Education
Centre, Hornby Island**

Flyer & registration – coming soon!

FNDC Winter • 2018



Mingle & Play

Save the date for our annual summer event!
Three days of fun for children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing (0-5 years) and their families. You are welcome to join us for one, two or all three days. Registration information coming soon.



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

- Cache Creek Royal Purple
- Kamloops Elks
- Keremeos Royal Purple
- Lake Cowichan Elks
- Port Coquitlam Royal Purple
- Prince George Royal Purple
- Benevity Community Fund
- CanadaHelps
- Donate a Car Pgm.
- Properties Plus Ltd.
- Surrey Firefighters Charitable Society
- Anita Park
- Emma Liffen
- Fern Dunlop
- Harold & Heather Wiltse
- Joan Ford
- Lily & Frank Price
- Lisa Moody
- Marvel & Ron Hicks
- Obviar Family
- Susan & Gordon Thompson
- Sally & James Hurst
- The Spear Sisters

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

National Volunteer Week

We want to recognize a very important group of people – Our Volunteers!

These wonderful people give generously of their time, knowledge and expertise. We are so grateful to them for assisting us in so many facets of our society. Volunteers can be found helping out in the classrooms, during special events, in our administration area and, of course, on our Board of Directors!

Without their dedicated support, we would struggle to provide many of our programs and services. A Great Big **THANK YOU** to our invaluable volunteers!! You truly are the heart of our organization.



OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

New Vancouver Satellite Office Open House

On the afternoon of February 7th, with the sun shining through the windows of our new Vancouver Satellite Centre, we welcomed a great crowd of people for our Open House event. Families, past and present staff, Board members, community partners and friends all joined us to celebrate this exciting milestone in the growth of our organization. Visitors had the chance to look around the office, share some goodies and spend time socializing together.

Located at the corner of Kingsway and Boundary in Vancouver, our new Centre will allow us to provide more local services to families from Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond and the North Shore. There is space for individual sessions as well as groups and workshops.



*The Vancouver Office Staff
(l to r) Jen Gow, Valerie Marshall, Zara Gauthier, Stefanie Macaro,
Darren Bellamy*



*(l to r) Dr. Laszlo, President,
Mr. Kamarej, landlord-Boundary Plaza,
Dr. Simmons, Executive Director*



Elks and Royal Purple Walkathon - Changes for 2018

The annual Elks and Royal Purple Walkathon will take place **May 27!** Please note the original date was set for July 8th, so please update your calendars- you don't want to miss this fun-filled event!

After many years at Campbell Valley Park, we have outgrown the space, which necessitated a change of venue. [Aldergrove Regional Park](#) is the new setting. We are looking forward to seeing you there! Watch for more details as they become available.



REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY

Children the Heart of the Matter Conference



On January 27th 2018, our Speech Language Pathologists, Zara Gauthier and Valerie Marshall, presented at the 21st annual Children the Heart of the Matter conference. The conference is designed to connect, inform, and support caregivers and Early Childhood Educators working with children under the age of five. Zara and Valerie presented their workshop “*Are Your Children Tuned In? Addressing Noise Issues and Improving Children’s Success*”, to a full house! The workshop covered how to identify noise, understand its impact on adults and children, and equip professionals with strategies to benefit their own health and wellbeing as well as the success of the children they work with.

We were delighted to be invited to present and participate in this great conference.

UBC Students Visit BCFHRC

Twelve students from Dr. Susan Small’s (standing board member) auditory habilitation course within the Audiology Program at the University of British Columbia attended a presentation by Carolyn Hawrish, Listening and Spoken Language Specialist. This annual event is an opportunity for students entering the field of audiology to learn about our programs and services, view our building designed to optimize acoustics, and see our groups and individual sessions in progress as well as all the ways in which we can collaborate on multidisciplinary teams to provide families with comprehensive support. There is time for students to ask questions and to provide feedback on what they learned during their time with us. Students were asked to reflect upon what they gained from their visit.

Students responded with the following comments:

“I did not previously realize the extent of the resources and services available to families of deaf and hard of hearing children including the programs, team members, online resources, events, books, etc.”

“I did not know [before that] there were so many communication options available for kids and their families (visual & auditory language)”

“One thing I would do differently in practice [after having attended this presentation] is to help counsel families more on how to handle hearing aids for younger children.”

“Now in practice I know the supports families can receive and I feel confident to offer [BCFHRC] as a resource.”



GREAT GRADS – WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Sara Marwa Returns to BCFHRC!



Hello! My name is Sara Marwa. I began working part-time with the BC Family Hearing Resource Society in January 2018, as a Sign Language Consultant and Deaf Role Model. I also work part-time for Community Living Society (with deaf adults), and have been there for the past 8 years. I am also a part time student, studying at Douglas College to become a Community Classroom and Support Worker. I will be graduating next year!

My mom was sick with German measles for four months when she was pregnant with me, and my parents didn't know I was deaf until I was about 18 months old. I did not respond to my name or loud noises (my dad took a spoon and banged on a pan, but I couldn't hear it at all). My parents were worried and took me to the doctor. After my deafness was confirmed, my parents were referred to the Elks Family Resource Society (which you now know as BC Family Hearing) in 1988. I attended PALS, and Sharon Neufeld was one of my teachers! My parents and both of my siblings all learned ASL. I met many new friends and their families. My parents felt so comfortable because they met other parents with deaf children – they were not alone.

My parents opened up their home and invited my new friends to come over and play. When my friends came to our house, my mom always made different Indian foods and sweets. My friends' parents invited us into their homes too, for dinner or picnics. We had a great time together and we will never forget that time of our lives.

My friends and I graduated from the Elks program in 1992. I then went to South Slope Elementary (BC School for the Deaf - Burnaby) from Kindergarten to grade 7, and R.E. Mountain Secondary School (Langley) from grade 8 to 12.

Fun facts about me: I enjoy coffee first thing in the morning, going to the gym, taking walks at the park, hiking, traveling, camping and the outdoors. I also love fashion, meeting meet new people, and hanging out with friends and family. My favorite color is purple!

I am very much looking forward to meeting and working with your family!



Sara and her friends at Preschool Graduation, 1992.

BITS & PIECES

Double Duty



Sarah Lau, Speech Language Pathologist, has joined the intervention team at BCFHRC. Sarah is working at our Surrey Early Speech and Language Program, Mondays and Tuesdays. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, she is at our BC Family Hearing Resource Centre Surrey site.

Double Delight



We are tickled pink and blue to announce the most recent additions to our BC Family 'family'. Catherine Albert-Moore, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, husband André and big brother, Stéphane welcomed Geneviève and Alain on January 23rd!



Congratulations - we can't wait to meet you!!

Vancouver Office Events

Families from any of the three intervention agencies (BCFHRC, DCS, CHSCBC) are welcome to attend these events.

The Language of Toys



Wednesday, April 25 10am to 12pm

BC Family Hearing Resource Centre, #262 – 3665 Kingsway, Vancouver

Almost any toy presents an opportunity for listening and communication. Come meet our Vancouver team and connect with other families as we explore how to turn every activity into a learning opportunity.

Bring yourselves, your children, and a couple of your child's favourite toys. We will provide information, ideas, drinks and snacks. ☺

Space is limited- Please RSVP by April 18 to info@bcfamilyhearing.com or call 604-428-7949.

ASL and Spoken Language interpreters available on request.

Save the Date - Outing at New Brighton Park

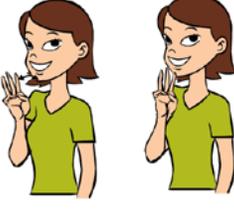
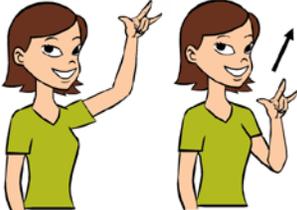
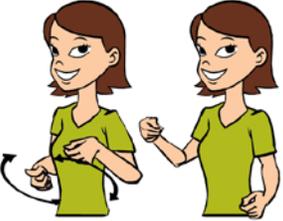
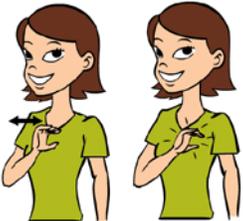
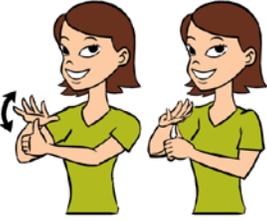
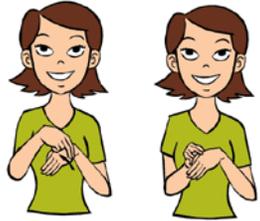
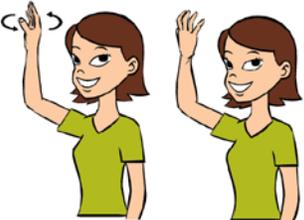
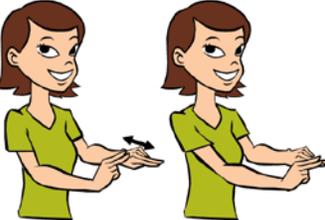
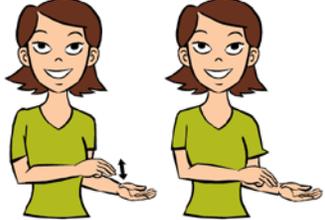
Our Vancouver office is planning a summer event for **July 12th** at New Brighton Park. Watch for more details in the near future.



SIGN LANGUAGE

Community Workers

Sign Language courtesy of Babysigns.com

<p>BOAT</p> 	<p>WATER</p> 	<p>CAR</p> 
<p>AIRPLANE</p> 	<p>TRUCK</p> 	<p>POLICEMAN</p> 
<p>LETTER</p> 	<p>HELICOPTER</p> 	<p>BANDAID</p> 
<p>AMBULANCE</p> 	<p>NURSE</p> 	<p>DOCTOR</p> 

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

Calendar

January

- 1 Happy New Year! – Centre closed
- 10 PEER Session #4
- 17 to March 7 ASL Family Classes – BCFHRC Victoria
- 19-20 Foundation for Families Workshop (Surrey)
- 29 Early Childhood Educators Workshop

February

- 7 Vancouver Satellite Office Open House
- 8 to March 15 ASL Family Sign Language Classes – BCFHRC Surrey
- 12 Family Day - Centre Closed
- 14 **Happy Valentine's Day ♥**
- 14 PEER Session #5
- 19 Family Fun Day-Dogwood Place, Campbell River

March

- 14 PEER Session #6
- 17 **Happy St. Patrick's Day ♣**
- 20 Family Fun Day – BCFHRC Surrey
- 30 Good Friday – Centre Closed

April

- 2 Easter Monday- Centre Closed
- 12 to May 17 ASL Family Classes – BCFHRC Surrey
- 15-21 National Volunteer Week
- 17 Farm Field Trip
- 19-21 3 Day PEER
- 25 The Language of Toys- BCF Vancouver Office

May

- 10 Foundations for Professionals (Kelowna)
- 11-12 Foundations for Families (Kelowna)
- 13 **Mother's Day ☺**
- 21 Victoria Day – Centre Closed
- 27 Elks & Royal Purple Walkathon

June

- 17 **Father's Day I**
- 26 PALS Graduation
- 26 Elks & Royal Purple Appreciation Day

July

- 1 **Happy Canada Day – Centre Closed ★**
- 5 -9 Family Deaf Camp – Hornby Island
- 9-12 DYT Kids Camp – Hornby Island
- 12 New Brighton Park Outing for families- Vancouver Office

August

- 7-8 Foundations for Families (Surrey)
- 9-11 Mingle & Play Summer Program at BCFHRC Surrey



Staff Visits to Communities in BC

January

- Dyan Spear – Chemainus, Duncan, Parksville, Powell River, Victoria
- Sharon Neufeld - Parksville

February

- Carolyn Hawrish - Kamloops, Merritt, Clearwater, Castlegar, Trail, Nelson
- Dyan Spear – Victoria, Cowichan Bay, Courtenay, Campbell River
- Teresa Kazemir – Port Hardy
- Suzie Fairweather – Port Hardy

March

- Dyan Spear – Nanaimo, Chemainus, Parksville, Victoria, Vernon, Kelowna
- Carolyn Hawrish – Cranbrook, Elkford



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Reaching Out

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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.

Newsletter – Mail, Online or Email?

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