

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.**

October 2020

FAMILY FEATURE

Keeping Up With the Kendalls



Meet the Kendalls!
Parents Justine and Adam, and their children, Colton (5½), and Frankie (4). They have been working with BCFHRC SLP, Valerie Marshall.

Justine shares her family's unique experience with single-sided deafness and making the most of their highs and lows.

“When I learned that my first-born child (Colton) had failed his newborn hearing, I assumed the test was wrong. We had no hard of hearing relatives in either of our families. When we made the trek down to the city from our hometown of Squamish, I thought the test would be completed quickly and we would learn that our son had perfect hearing and go out for a nice lunch. After two long hours, we learned he had ‘permanent unilateral hearing loss.’ I was in shock and lost. I don’t think I had met a deaf person in my life. My mind went to the worst-case possible, wondering if Colton would ever be able to live up to the beautiful life I envisioned for him.

Continued on page 2

UPCOMING ONLINE EVENTS

**FOUNDATIONS FOR FAMILIES
NOVEMBER 5TH & 6TH**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOVEMBER 25TH

Vancouver Satellite Centre

#262- 3665 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC, V5R 5W2
PH: 604-428-7949 FAX: 604-428-7950
EMAIL: info@bcfamilyhearing.com

Main Surrey Centre

15220 - 92nd Avenue, Surrey, BC, V3R 2T8
PH: 604-584-2827 FAX: 604-584-2800
Toll Free: 1-877-584-2827
EMAIL: info@bcfamilyhearing.com
www.bcfamilyhearing.com

Victoria Satellite Centre

#320-702 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1H2
PH: 778-265-8909 FAX: 778-265-8908
EMAIL: vicinfo@bcfamilyhearing.com



FAMILY FEATURE

The Kendalls continued

As time went on I went through a grieving process. This was and is an ongoing process. I dived deep into learning more about Deaf Culture, aiding solutions, and causes of hearing loss. I personally needed to know why my son had hearing loss and wanted to make sure it wasn't those glasses of wine I had before I knew I was pregnant.

Our daughter Frances (Frankie) was born just 18 months after Colton and she was also identified through the Early Hearing Program screening. Once again I was in shock as I had been told by the genetic counselor that single-sided deafness was not commonly genetic. I started the grieving process again.

After extensive research, many medical appointments, and several medical-related trips, I was able to get the answer I was looking for. My children have Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct (EVA) Syndrome. It is a genetic progressive hearing loss, which is inherited from my husband and me (we are both asymptomatic carriers).

Colton uses a single hearing aid and FM system while at Montessori Daycare. Frankie's unilateral hearing loss progressed much quicker and the hearing aid was not an option for her. After much debate, my husband and I decided we would participate in a study, which took place at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children, which implants single-sided deaf children with cochlear implants. We had to privately fund the device and completed eight trips to Toronto.

When we first learned that the children's hearing levels were dropping (as EVA is known to progress to profoundly deaf) my

biggest fears were: What if they become 100% deaf? What if they need a cochlear implant? What if they need to use sign language?

I can tell you now, my biggest fears have become my areas of strength and growth. Frankie *did* become 100% deaf in her left ear and that is what makes her unique. She *did* get the cochlear implant and it is the most amazing gift. She can listen to her favorite songs through Bluetooth and hear a whisper. We *do* use sign language to communicate and it has opened a whole new world for our family. It has given us the gift to connect with a new community and opened our eyes to what an amazing world American Sign Language (ASL) and the Deaf culture is. ASL is fun for us to learn and I hope one day it will help Frankie and Colton feel connected to their own community.



We do not have many hard of hearing kids in our small town but have made an effort to connect with the one older teenager we know of. I have also used social media as an outlet to connect with other moms of hard of hearing kids. I have two moms who have hard of hearing kids (one in Texas and one in Victoria BC) who I have never met and would consider close friends I could call on if I needed help. It is absolutely amazing to feel connected with other parents who are on a similar journey. We do our best to help our kids connect with other hard of hearing kids by attending events put on in the city and participating in the PEER course.

Colton will be starting kindergarten in September and enjoyed the PEER online course this year. We are now used to virtual Zoom meetings with our SLP, as it is not always easy for her to come up to Squamish. Now with COVID 19 all our sessions are online. My secret for success is bribing the kids with chocolate chips!

FAMILY FEATURE

The Kendalls continued

The lows I have experienced through this journey are contrasted with highs. I am so proud of my children for everything they accomplish. They amaze me every day with how they overcome challenges and keep a positive mindset. I would never change anything about them for the world. They are perfect. I was the one who had to go through the personal growth process to see that this is their journey and they will thrive no matter what.”



*Would you like to share your family's story?
Please advise your interventionist or contact our Centre.*

Foundations Workshops for Families and Professionals



We are pleased to offer our popular Foundations Workshops again this year! Workshops will be provided online.

Foundations for Families workshop covers a wide range of topics relating to a child's hearing/deafness, including:

- Different ways to communicate
- Communication strategies
- Creating optimal learning environments
- Describing your child's audiograms
- Equipment options & strategies to keep them on
- Language development (visual and spoken)
- Hearing and vision development
- Speech sound and signing development
- Tips for successful audiology appointments

Families currently receiving services from BC Family Hearing Resource Centre can participate free of charge. Otherwise the workshop fee is \$250. Full details about Foundations for Families are provided on our website.

Foundations for Professionals will cover the topics above and the opportunity to:

- Experience what it might be like to be deaf or hard of hearing during classroom activities
- Discuss listening through different hearing equipment
- Adapt activities and rooms to create better learning environments

Professionals currently working with a child receiving services from BC Family Hearing Resource Centre can participate free of charge. Otherwise, the workshop fee is \$500. Full details about Foundations for Professionals are provided on our website.

YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

Programs and Services for Fall 2020

The Pandemic has affected all of our lives in many ways and the programs and services at BC Family Hearing Resource Centres (BCFHRC) are no exception. Since March, when we decided to cease in-person services and pivot to online services, our staff and families quickly adapted to a new way of providing and receiving services.

As we begin the Fall session of programs and services, we have had to continue to adapt to the restrictions imposed by COVID 19. While some group programs are not taking place at this time, we are happy to report that the following programs will continue, albeit in a different format.

- **Bouncy Babies Group** for children 0 to 18 months will run virtually from September to December.
- **PEER Program** for children who will enter Kindergarten in September 2021. This program of monthly sessions featuring specific topics is designed to educate parents about how to effectively advocate for their child's specific communication and access needs in school settings. It also provides a 3 day workshop at the end of the program, in April, bringing parents and children together. All sessions are online.
- **Education Fair** for families to learn about what educational (preschool and kindergarten) options are available for their deaf or hard of hearing child. Provided online Saturday, October 17 1pm to 3 pm
- **Beginner and Intermediate Sign Language Classes** – These sessions are provided online. Priority is given to families who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Foundations Workshops for Families and Professionals** Provided online. See previous page for details.



Willow is off to Kindergarten on Vancouver Island.

**Follow our social media channels
([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#))
or check the [calendar](#) on our website
for the most up-to-date information
on what's happening!**

A Letter from our President and Executive Director

Dear Families and Community Service Professionals,

Over the past several weeks much has happened in the world that has brought racism, discrimination and violence to the forefront and has caused anger, grief and sadness to us. We want to reassure you both personally and on behalf of the BC Family Hearing Resource Society (BCFHRS) that we condemn any sort of racism, discrimination and bias toward any individual or group from any race, cultural background, sexual or individual identities.

As we listen to, advocate for, and give voices to our clients and families who may not be able to communicate we ask that each of us strive to denounce any form of systemic and institutionalized injustices so that they can be heard, respected, and valued just the same as all community members. BCFHRS supports equality, equity, diversity, peace, and justice for all.

We are proud with how we serve our diverse clients and families, work collaboratively with community service professionals and interact with our staff. At BCFHRS there is no room for racism or discrimination and these are embodied in our principles and practices.

BCFHRS will be taking several initiatives aimed at enhancing our learning and working environment to provide opportunities for staff, families and community service providers to feel duly valued and respected. More information will be available on our website and social media in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Charles Laszlo, CM, OBC, Ph.D.,
President
BCFHRS



Noreen R. Simmons, Ph. D., RSLP
Executive Director
BCFHRS

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.



- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Alan Black | • Darlene Doucette | • Kamal Parbhakar |
| • Alia Kallo | • Daryl Nelson | • Karen Armitage |
| • Allysa Robinson | • Denise Harrison | • Katherine Anderchek |
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| | • Kailey Spear | |

OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In Appreciation of our Supporters *continued*



- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Dess • Phebe Hunter • Phyllis Sadler • Properties Plus Limited • Provincial EES Community Services Fund • Raveen Chung • Rebecca Keizer • Richard Nelson • Riaz Virani • Rick & Marcy Buell • Rina Dulku • Richard Campbell • Rob McKittrick • Robert Brecher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Groves • Robert & Fern Dunlop • Rona Gow • Ross McDonald • Ruth Brecher • Sally & James Hurst • Salmon Arm Royal Purple • Sam Spear • Sarah Lau • Sharon Marcus • Shona Dyck • Stefaie Macaro • Stephanie Schiffmacher • Stewart Marshall • Susan Alexander | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Munro • Suzanne Allen • Teresa Kazemir • Teresa Koetsier • Tina Parbhakar • Tom Manz • Tracy Seibert • Valerie Marshall • Veronica Marek • Warren Franklin • Watchorn Family • Wilbur & Yvonne Couling • Zara Gauthier • Zen Tharani |
|--|--|---|

We operate in partnership with:

***Ministry of Children and Family Development, Government of BC
BC Early Hearing Program – Provincial Health Services Authority***

We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia

Thank you to our founders and long-time supporters:

Elks & Royal Purple lodges in British Columbia and across Canada



OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Walkathon 2020

Our annual Walkathon was scheduled this year for May 31st. But like countless other events this year it was cancelled due to limitations on large group gatherings. Instead we hosted the first ever **Virtual Walk for Bright Futures!** Families, alumni and supporters joined us all over the province to walk in their neighbourhoods and community on the morning of May 31st. We also came together online to connect and warm-up and again after the walk for a virtual concert with The Kwerks. Participants in this fundraising event raised \$12,700 for BC Family Hearing Resource Society! Thank you to all who were a part of this “new” event and we look forward to having you join us at next year’s walk.



Giving Tuesday



Mark your calendar - we will be a part of **Giving Tuesday** again on **December 1st, 2020**. Watch your inbox and our social media channels for ways to participate!

Birthday Bonus

BCF is extending a big thank you to Callie Wilson. For her birthday this year, Callie coordinated a fundraiser for BC Family Hearing on Facebook. The fundraiser raised \$880! Wow! Thank you to Callie, friends and family for your generous donations!

When you give a gift, you allow us to ensure that every child who is deaf or hard of hearing that is a part of our Society receives effective and meaningful intervention and support. A donation from you to us is a donation directly into the lives of children and their futures.



Callie and her daughter, Violet, who receives services from BCFHRC

Wish List

Often individuals and agencies prefer to gift items instead of monetary donations. For this reason, we have a “Wish List” of items that are needed from time to time. If you wish to make a non-monetary donation, please consider gifting our Centres an item from the list:



- Dollhouse and accessories
- Switch adaptors (to make our iPad(s) accessible for our children with additional physical challenges)
- Video-conferencing camera
- Book: The King of Kindergarten by Derrick Barnes

Please contact info@bcfamilyhearing.com if you would like to provide a wish list item.

REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY

Spotlight on Vernon

Dyan Spear, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and BCFHRC Outreach Service Provider, has been providing support to the Okanagan region for a number of years. During this time, she has forged many friendships in the various communities that make up this part of our beautiful province. Time brings change and retirement and with change, new faces!

Recently, the Vernon Health Centre bid a fond farewell to Speech Language Pathologists Lisa Coley-Donahue and Lynn Hestler. We would like to join them in welcoming Megan Lam and Jaslyn Dunger, who will take their places, in addition to Jessica Neimela, who is the newest pediatric audiologist to join the Centre.



l to r: Jessica Niemela, Audiologist; Irma Lipski, Audiology Technician; retiring SLPs Lisa Coley-Donohue and Lynne Hestler; with Christina El Gazzar, Speech Pathology Provincial Practice Leader and Megan Lam, SLP at a farewell luncheon for Lisa and Lynne.

Jessica Niemela, Pediatric Audiologist, graduated from the University of BC's Master of Science Program in Audiology in 2019. Jessica's previous career was as a registered nurse, most of which she spent in the emergency department at Surrey Memorial Hospital. As a person living with hearing loss, Jessica is a proud member of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) and is also on their board of directors. She is the Okanagan event coordinator for CHHA-BC's Youth Peer Support Program, all of which are volunteer positions. Jessica is a recipient of the Speech and Audiology Canada (SAC) National Certification Exam Award, given to the member in each profession (Speech & Audiology) who attains the highest score on the Clinical Certification Exam.



Association (CHHA) and is also on their board of directors. She is the Okanagan event coordinator for CHHA-BC's Youth Peer Support Program, all of which are volunteer positions. Jessica is a recipient of the Speech and Audiology Canada (SAC) National Certification Exam Award, given to the member in each profession (Speech & Audiology) who attains the highest score on the Clinical Certification Exam.

Megan Lam, Early Childhood Development Speech Language Pathology, was born and raised in Surrey, BC and completed her bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of British Columbia. She began her Speech Language Pathology career in Vernon in 2018, working at the Vernon Jubilee Hospital, in private practice, as well as providing many casual shifts at the Vernon Health Centre (where her youngest clients thoroughly enjoyed chatting about her sock collection!). Megan enjoys trail running, hiking and camping – her happy place is being in the woods, on top of a mountain, or in a lake!



The team at the Vernon Health Centre wouldn't be complete without mentioning Cara Hofer, Audiometric Technician and Sherry Essington, Administration Support Clerk. BCFHRC looks forward to a long and continued working relationship with the Vernon team.

**Wear your costume and
join us for an online**



HALLOWE'EN PARTY

**Science
Experiment!**

**Songs
and
Stories**

October 29th, 2020

10:00-11:15am

To RSVP:

<http://bit.ly/BCFHalloween>

**Families from any of the three early
intervention agencies (BCF, CHSC,
DCS) are welcome to attend.**












**Event will be conducted in
spoken English and ASL**



SIGN LANGUAGE

Signs of a Pandemic

featuring Levi Traxler

<p>Coronavirus</p> 	<p>Cough</p> 	<p>Recover</p> 
<p>Vaccine</p> 	<p>Mask</p> 	<p>Wash Hands</p> 
<p>Isolated</p> 	<p>Physical Distance</p> 	<p>Spread</p> 
<p>Lockdown</p> 	<p>Transmission</p> 	<p>Sick</p> 

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

Calendar

September

- 7 **Labour Day – All Centres Closed**
- 21 – 25 International Week of the Deaf
- 21 Virtual Bouncy Babies Group begins
- 21 Basic ASL Class begins (online) 8 weeks
- 22 Intermediate ASL Class begins (online) 8 weeks

October

- 3 Foundations for Professionals (online)
- 6 PEER Session #1 7pm (online)
- 12 **Thanksgiving - All Centres Closed**
- 17 Education Fair 1pm
- 21 PEER Action Evening
- 23/24 Speech & Hearing BC Annual Conference (Virtual)
- 23 CAEDHH Annual Conference (Virtual)
- 29 Virtual Halloween Party 10am

November

- 2 Bouncy Babies Group cancelled
- 3 PEER Session #2 7pm (online)
- 5 & 6 Foundations for Families (online)
- 11 **Remembrance Day- All Centres Closed** 🇨🇦
- 17 PEER- Considerations for Children with Additional Needs 7pm (online)
- 25 Annual General Meeting (online)

December

- 1 PEER Session #3 7pm (online)–Access: What is it & how is it achieved? (Part 1)
- 25 Christmas Day - All Centres Closed**
- 26 Boxing Day**
- 28 All Centres Closed in lieu of Boxing Day

2021

January

- 1 **Happy New Year! All Centres Closed**
- 5 PEER Session #4 7pm (online)

February

- 2 PEER Session #5 7pm (online)
- 14 Happy Valentine's Day ♥
- 26 Foundations for Professionals (online)
- 27 Foundations for Families (and March 6) (online)

March

- 6 Foundations for Families (online) continuation of Feb 27th

Staff Visits to Communities in BC and Yukon!

In light of COVID – 19, travel to various communities across BC have been temporarily suspended. Online services will be provided to ensure continuity of services.



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Reaching Out

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Dr. Noreen Simmons
Editor: Cindy Adams

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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