

Communication . . . is a family affair

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.

Summer 2019

FAMILY FEATURE

A Reflection on a Journey with BC Family Hearing



(L to r) Hassan, Ahmed, Rabab, Mostafa & Salma

Salma and her family are on to the next phase of their journey – Kindergarten! Along the way they have participated in many programs and services available to them to support this journey, primarily working with Valerie Marshall, SLP. Rabab, Salma's mom, shares her family's story and perspective as new Canadians; always grateful for what was offered to them. We wish them well as they move on and look forward to a continued friendship and to learning what their future brings!

Deaf Gain

by Rabab Elbaharia

'Deaf Gain' was first published by BC Hands & Voices on September 24th, 2018, and has been reprinted with permission from the author and BC Hands & Voices."

The first time I heard the expression "Deaf Gain" I did not understand it. When I asked various people to help explain the phrase, I received answers such "You can talk while your mouth is full by using your hands," or "You can chat from a distance in a very loud room." Deaf Gain as a term counters the idea of deafness as some kind of "loss." Instead, Deaf gain focuses on the many benefits to deafness such as improved visual abilities and important contributions to society in different fields (science, sports, medicine, art, etc.).

Continued on page 2



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FAMILY FEATURE

A Reflection....continued

Today, when I reflect on my family, I find the Deaf Gain expression very much resonates. We are a family of new immigrants and 2018 marks our third year in Canada. My daughter was born with microtia and moderate to severe deafness on her left side.

Our first deaf gain experience was probably our connection to the Hands & Voices Guide By Your Side program (GBYS). As a mom exploring all the mixed feelings that came with the news of my daughter's hearing difference, I was very happy to learn about the program and that I would be connected to a parent of a child with a similar hearing difference. With the first call I received from our Parent Guide, I felt security in knowing we wouldn't be navigating the new situation alone.

More blessings arrived as we started early intervention services. We loved going to the early intervention agency which was a home away from home to us. From early on, our family has been involved in many programs offered through the centre, and not only did our involvement help our hard-of-hearing daughter, it helped the whole family to feel connected to the new community we had chosen to live in.

Being new to Canada with very limited friends and no family members around, I can say that our involvement in the programs and activities has really protected us from experiencing the social isolation that can come with being immigrants. It gave us an invaluable chance to connect physically and emotionally with other parents who we consider today as true friends. With our involvement came the opportunity for us to get to know the deaf/hard-ofhearing community and to see how amazing a deaf person can be in every aspect. As a mother of a daughter with a single-sided deafness or unilateral hearing, I had always asked myself "what if she loses her hearing on the other side?" Now, I am not particularly concerned after getting to know how capable a deaf person can be.

In regards to the concept of Deaf Gain, I must also mention the number of activities and positive experiences that we as a family now look forward to every year, such as the annual family camp which takes place on a local island, three days of fun-filled

activities every August at our service agency, and lots of gatherings, outings and picnics throughout the year. These mean a lot to us as a new family trying to build connections with our new community and create that very important feeling of belonging.

Although it may sound funny, I have to say attending the groups and activities with my daughter were icebreaking opportunities. They allowed me to test my language, feel that I am safe, understand people around me and be understood. Deaf Gain is not only a blessing received by a person who is deaf; in our case it is also an enormous benefit that extended to include my whole family.

Turning Five – A Look Back as Our Daughter Graduates from Early Intervention Service by: Rabab Elbaha

Intervention Service by: Rabab Elbaharia
Turning Five was originally published by BC Hands and Voices
September 20, 2019 and reprinted with permission from the author and
BC Hands & Voices

My lovely daughter has turned five this year. At this age she has graduated from early intervention services, and after all the graduation excitement and the thrill of starting a new chapter of her life, I thought it would be a good time to stop



and look back on our family journey so far.

Looking back, I feel we were lucky and well supported. The fact that she was identified at birth was a blessing. While at that time it was maybe more of a worry and a confusion, I truly wish that I could have seen then what I am seeing today — a happy blooming child that is full of potential. Salma was the first person with a hearing difference whom I had a direct relationship with in my life. I remember holding her for the first time and immediately noticing her smaller, different left ear (she has left microtia). As a mom, I had millions of questions and thoughts racing through my head and heart. Having the phone call with our guide was another

FAMILY FEATURE

A Reflection....continued

tremendous blessing (Guide by your Side is a program where you are matched with another parent of a child of a similar hearing difference to your child). Knowing that there is another parent out there that went through what you are going through and that can say it's going to be okay was such a comfort.

Out of all the blessings, our enrollment at one of the early intervention service providers was a game changer. Nothing shed the light on assuring the future of our child like getting to meet Deaf and hard-of-hearing role models. Add to it the warm, kind smiles we were always welcomed with from the centre's employees, the amazing and varied age appropriate programs, and the opportunity to involve all the family members. Salma's siblings and extended family were always welcome which played a major role for everyone finding peace with her diagnosis.

During our family journey, many of Salma's care providers were truly shining stars. As a mom, I owe a big part of any success my daughter achieves in the future to our speech language pathologist (SLP). What a miracle she has created! She started working with Salma when she had so few words that they could be counted on one hand and now Salma is graduating a chatterbox. Our SLP has constantly gone above and beyond our expectations. For example, she visited Salma's community daycare to observe her and suggest strategies to the teacher to give her the best opportunities, and, she travelled to the children's hospital to attend our ENT appointment when needed. The time she spent advocating for Salma to ensure that she received what she thought was essential to her progress amazed me. Not to mention her dedication to Salma's sessions. She is truly passionate about her job and has filled our journey with knowledge and joy. Another shining star is our audiologist who always came up with tailored innovative solutions to accommodate Salma's small ear.

The thing that helped our family the most was getting involved with the Deaf and hard- of-hearing community and building relationships with other

families of Deaf and hard-of-hearing children. This gave Salma the chance to grow up seeing many others with a whole spectrum of hearing differences, using different kinds of equipment and adapting using various modes of communication. That allowed her to grow fierce and confident and gave her the invaluable sense of belonging.

Salma is the only child in our neighbourhood, at her preschool, and in our circle of friends and relatives who is using a hearing aid. I cannot imagine how emotionally vulnerable she would be if not for her involvement with the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

The support we received did not stop there but extended to include many workshops offered to prepare us for the kindergarten transition. The workshops offered by different agencies were very helpful to let us know what to expect and how to support our child and advocate for her.

Again, our SLP was dedicated to help us explore all of Salma's options from attending a mainstream school to a specialized school and she supported our family decision, one which we could not have made without her help. And as usual, she extended her help to even attend our first IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meeting.

Things have been challenging on occasion, and sometimes juggling between attending our other kids' events, work, and the commitment to regularly appear for Salma's appointments and events seemed impossible. However, seeing her progress helped us prioritize her services, and today, I can say that every effort made was really worth it.

They always say what works for your child makes the choice right and reflecting back I would recommend to each family of a child with hearing difference to explore the supports available and make use of what works for them.

Our professionals said it was hard for them to say goodbye to our family as Salma graduates. Our reply was: we will definitely keep returning and participating at the different events you hold; our relationship with you is a lifetime partnership.

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

YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

Mingle & Play at the Surrey Centre

















YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILD

Vancouver Island



Dyan Spear, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, (left) and Stefanie Macaro, SLP (3rd from left) and Sharon Neufeld (hiding between two children in front) with families from Nanaimo, Parksville, Port Alberni and Courtenay in Parksville for the last Butterfly Hands (Sharon's ASL group) session on July 18th.

Sharon has officially retired now and this was her final visit to Vancouver Island. Community Service Providers Pearl Morin, SLP from Courtenay and Alex Walker from Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing were also in attendance.

We wish Sharon well as she embarks on the next chapter of her life, enjoying retirement!



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.



- Anita Park
- BC Royal Purple Association
- Beebe Cline
- Boston Pizza Guildford
- Brianne Chinery
- Burnaby Elks
- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – BC Chapter
- Chilliwack Elks Lodge
- Chris Ren
- Cloverdale Elks
- Dan McQuillan
- Douglas & Tanya Grange
- Elks & Royal Purple Fund for Children
- Emma Liffen
- Erin Chernenkoff
- First West Foundation
- Jennifer Lagesoe

- Jim & Sally Hurst
- Jason Low
- Jim McGregor
- Karen Armitage
- Kelowna Royal Purple
- Keremeos Royal Purple
- Kyle Luciak
- Langley Elks Lodge
- Lexie's Child Care
- Monique Preer
- Nicola Wealth Private Giving Foundation
- North Kamloops Royal Purple
- Obviar Family
- PayPal Giving Fund Canada
- Prince George Royal Purple
- Properties Plus Ltd.

- Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
- Robert & Fern Dunlop
- Salmon Arm Royal Purple
- Smithers Royal Purple
- Smithers Elks
- Steven & Teresa Kazemir
- Subway Guildford
- Vancouver Elks
- Vancouver Whitecaps FC
- Vernon Royal Purple
- Westside Elks
- White Rock Elks
- Williams Lake Royal Purple
- In memory of Donna Walker:
 - Carolyn Standerwick
 - o Leah McDougall
 - o Reta Herunter
 - o Rita Palmer







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





We want to acknowledge with gratitude the **First West Foundation** (of Envision Financial) for their generous grant of \$10,000 which will be used for Sign Language Instructor training. This will benefit all our families learning and using American Sign Language (ASL).

OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Elks and Royal Purple Walkathon 2019

The final donations have been counted and we are pleased to report that almost \$20,000 was raised! Here is a complete summary of donations. Thank you to everyone who participated in any way to making this event a successful fundraiser for programs and services of the BC Family Hearing Resource Society! Many thanks to Barbara Gee and the Langley Elks, and the Walkathon Committee for making it possible for all to enjoy. We look forward to seeing you at Walkathon 2020!

Cara Adams Cindy & Darrell Adams Sheila Adams Allan Aicken Lesley Alagar Catherine Albert Moore Katherine Anderchek Barbara Andrews Gail Armitage Karen Armitage Jatinderpal Attri Barb Aven Andrea Baga **BC** Lions Peter Beaubier Kelly Bentley Walter & Diane Berezuk Flizabeth Beutel Shaveta Bhalla Opinder Bhathal Agnes Bierwirth Leonard Bierwirth Alan Black **Emily Black**

David Bonnett

Heather Braun

Nicole Brolund **Gentry Bruce** Bach Nga Bui Xuan Bui Lisa Cable Rod & Linda Cable Yong Yi Cao Francine Charlton Stephanie Charlton Harriet & Jacques Chave **David Chiang** Mavis Chisholm **Evageline Chong Grace Chong** Janice Chong Connie Chow Pamela Chung Raveen Chung TJ Conwi **Thomas Corless**

Senga Cowie

Fisher Crockett Cathy Cruickshank Kawalieet Dhaliwal Sandy DiLovic Lyn Dixon Lvnn Downie Joanne Drysdale Rina Dulku D'anh Duong Judy Duong Emma Ebina Al Edwards Juvy Enova **Daniel Esterreicher** Maggie Fan Sean Flood

Four Points Hotel Sheraton Guildford Melissa Gamblin George Garrett Barbara Gee Mona Gilbert Deidre Gill Jerry Gill Iris & Jim Goodlet Jen Gow Kelly Halfnights Carolyn Hawrish Danny Hayre Sue Heer **Brett Henderson** Kelly Henshaw

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Sue Smith
Mark Snyder
S. Southen

Robert & Dyan Spear

Deborah Sproule

Jasmeet Kaur Sraon

Sportchek

Shirley Stewart Beverley Symchych Hamond Tai Kavi Takhar David Tang Richard Teves Navneet K. Thind **Icy Ting** Dannielle Tinker Ginene Toews **Ike Toews** Levi Traxler Raymond Tsui Rubinder Ubhi Vancouver Canucks Nishant Vasdev Carole Walker Christina Walker Chen-Yuan Wang Ann Wilkie Kathy Willows Eileen Wojtas Phylis Woitas Ray Wojtas

Judy & Herman Wong Linda Wong Steve Wood Jenine Wright Maralyn Young Kevin Zwar

Tara Wojtas

REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY

Telepractice-To Boldly Go Where No Service Providers Have Gone Before!

by Carolyn Hawrish, Listening & Spoken Language Specialist

Having grown up in the 1980s and 1990s I watched my fair share of reruns of the original television series "Star Trek" and later became enchanted with "Star Trek: The Next Generation" starring Patrick Stewart. Part of my amazement was the technology. Not only did I think it was marvelous that the medical officers had full body scanners and that people could transport to other worlds, I dreamt of being able to call my friends by "video phone" and having a conversation while I could see what they were doing. At the time it seemed like light years away and well beyond my reach! Fast forward to 2019 and I am astonished that my dreams have come true so quickly within my lifetime.



Star Trek still courtesy of Paramount Pictures

The term that we use for service delivery via video technology is "tele-practice" regardless of the specific platform. For at least the past decade, many professionals in the health and education sectors have been seeking the use of tele-practice to provide service to clients who might otherwise have to travel long distances to access their expertise.

In the pursuit of providing equitable service delivery to families all over the province, BCFHRC has strived to make this possible through the use of tele-practice. As you may know, BCFHRC first began using tele-practice through the Virtual Hearing Resource Centre in 2007. In 2015, we received the generous support of the Rotary Hearing, and Caldor Foundations to purchase our own Telehealth Unit, enabling our staff to use a network of similar units within different health authorities to meet with families who attend their local hospital or clinic.

Currently, BCFHRC also provides early intervention and sign language services through other types of video conferencing directly into clients' homes through the use of iPads, and we employ various web platforms to deliver workshops to families and professionals all around the province of BC as well as to the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Our staff have even connected with clients travelling in Mexico and South Africa!

In 2018, BCFHRC invited local families to participate in their sessions via tele-practice in an attempt to ensure that services are even more accessible and efficient to clients in the Lower Mainland. While many are used to in-person sessions, this change can spark concerns in both parents and early interventionist as to whether the intervention will be as effective.

The prospect of meeting a service provider over a screen may be daunting for some, or many may be puzzled about how a therapist can work with their child through a screen. Indeed, many practitioners have had their own reservations about how they might provide equitable service to a family when they can't touch and feel the same toys or get down on the carpet to explore the perspective of their young client.

On July 8th of this year, Dr. Arlene Stredler-Brown of University of Colorado-Boulder, met with our staff to discuss her experience with tele-practice. Throughout her career, Dr. Stredler-Brown has focused extensively on providing services to young deaf and hardof-hearing children through Family Centred Early Intervention (FCEI) and more recently through the use of tele-practice.

FCEI is at the heart of Dr. Stredler-Brown's work and is also the primary value around which all other services at BCFHRC follows. FCEI can be defined as a philosophy and method of service delivery that recognizes parents as the experts on their child's needs, promotes partnerships between parents and service providers and supports the family's role in decision making about services for their child.

Dr. Stredler-Brown shared with BCFHRC therapy staff her knowledge on how tele-practice can make FCEI more effective, how to structure a good tele-practice session and attempted to dispel some of the myths that emanate from a fear of moving from in-person sessions to tele-practice sessions.

Dr. Stredler-Brown reported the findings of her own study from 2017 which compared several factors between in-peson and tele-practice sessions.

While the study showed that there was slightly more direct instruction to the child from the therapist, all other areas analyzed indicated that there was a significantly higher occurrence of coaching behaviours used in tele-practice as compared to inperson sessions. Moreover, a study in 2018 looked at the language outcomes of children who were seen via tele-practice as compared to in-person and found that there was NO significant effect of the type of therapy used.

As I personally have continued to use the various technologies available to us now in my work, I am confident that everyone should try it at least once as a way of connecting with professionals such as their early interventionist even if it may seem futuristic and even "alien." I can safely say that tele-practice has helped me hone my skills in FCEI in a way that, "I have boldly gone where I never thought I would go before."

For more information on using tele-practice as an alternative to in-person sessions please discuss with your Early Interventionist about setting this up.

GREAT GRADS ...WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Liam Kindree Has Scores of Ambition and Goals

As summer comes to a close school is back in session, and so is hockey season! We are happy to have a connection to the Western Hockey League (WHL) through one of our Great Grads, **Liam Kindree.** Liam was drafted by the Kelowna Rockets in 2015, and began his rookie season with the club in 2017, playing right wing. Click here to read an article about Liam, from the team.

Liam and his family received services from the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre from 2003 – 2005, primarily working with Lori Bell, Speech Language Pathologist. During their time with us, the Kindrees were also a feature family in this newsletter. Click here to read the Kindrees story from 2003, when Liam was just three years old. The story is prophetic, as Liam's future plans at that time



Liam Kindree -photo courtesy of Marissa Baecker

included 'trying for a hat trick/shut out every game'! Since that time, Liam graduated high school in June 2018 and just started his third season with the Kelowna Rockets.

It is a pleasure for us to maintain contact with past families. We love to learn about what you are up to and appreciate your efforts to keep in touch.

We look forward to reading and watching more from Liam as he moves through the ranks of hockey and life. In the 2003 newsletter article, we noted that we would again feature Liam in 2023 as a Great Grad. Well it's only 2019, but we look forward to 2023, and to what surprises Liam has in store for us!



Liam - 3rd from right with his family: parents Dave and Darby and brother Sawyer

BITS & PIECES

A New Face



Please join us in welcoming **Dr. Kat Mumford**. Kat is from the United Kingdom. She has a Master's degree in Speech and Language Therapy (SLP) and a Doctorate in Psychology. Kat is filling a maternity leave position for Amanda Lemay, SLP, at our Victoria Satellite Centre. She is very excited to be joining the team and is looking forward to meeting all the families.

Annual Satisfaction Surveys-

As promised, in appreciation of your family's time completing our annual satisfaction survey, we offered a chance to ${\bf win~a~\$50}$





Chapters Gift Card! And the winners are:
Local Families: Hanna Park
Outreach Families: Lacey Scott

Congratulations to the winners and **Thank you** to all for your participation. We welcome and appreciate your feedback at any time.

CARF Accreditation is coming to the BC Family Hearing Resource Society

From **November 4-6th**, BC Family Hearing Resource Society will undergo our 6th CARF Accreditation. **CARF** stands for **C**ommission on **A**ccreditation of **R**ehabilitation **F**acilities.



Any agency that receives funds from the Ministry of Children and Family Development is required to undergo this process. CARF provides this explanation of what accreditation is:

"Accreditation is a process that demonstrates a provider has met standards for the quality of its services. CARF International establishes these standards to guide providers in offering their services and also uses the standards to evaluate how well a provider is serving people and how it can improve."

Accreditation can be awarded for one or three years, based on the surveyors'

review. Our agency has always been awarded 3 year accreditation. Information about the results of the survey will provided in the next newsletter.

The Shining Stars of BCFHRC

ATTENTION current and alumni families: we are looking for your "Shining Stars!" Tell us why your deaf or hard-of-hearing child is a "Shining Star" and we will share it on our social media channels! If you wish to participate, contact us by email or on our website.

SIGN LANGUAGE

Exclamations!



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

Calendar

September

- 1 Labour Day All Centres Closed
- 16 Fall Groups begin
- 20 Welcome Day- 10am Vancouver Satellite Ctr

October

- 5 Foundations for Professionals Vancouver Centre
- 9 PEER Evening Session #1 Surrey Centre 7pm
- 14 Thanksgiving All Centres closed
- 23 PEER In Action Evening 7pm Surrey Centre (PEER 2018-19)
- 23 Pumpkin Patch Field Trip Galey Farms Victoria
- 28 Pumpkin Patch Fieldtrip Rondriso Farm –Surrey ALL WELCOME!
- 31 Happy Halloween
- 31 Neighbourhood Trick or Treat

November

- 4-6 CARF Accreditation
- 11 **Remembrance Day -** All Centres closed
- 12-15 No Groups this week
- 13 PEER Evening Session #2 Main Surrey Centre 7pm
- 13-15 It Takes Two to Talk Workshop
- 20 Annual General Meeting 6pm Surrey Centre

December

- 4 PEER Session #3 Surrey Centre 7pm
- Winter Party Surrey Centre ALL WELCOME!
- 18 to Jan 5 Holiday Break- No Groups at Surrey Centre
- 25 Merry Christmas! All Centres closed
- 26 Boxing Day All Centres closed

Staff Visits to Communities in BC

July to October

Carolyn Hawrish-Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Kamloops, Pouce Coupe, Spence's Bridge

Dyan Spear – Campbell River, Courtney, Duncan, Kelowna, Lake Country, Nanaimo, Parksville, Penticton, Port Alberni, Powell River, Summerland, Vernon, Victoria

Teresa Kazemir - Port Hardy

Alex Lay - Prince George

Stefanie Macaro – Cranbrook, Duncan, Kimberley, Nanaimo, Parksville, Port Alberni

Valerie Marshall - Nelson, Rossland

Charmaine Francis - Quesnel Sharon Neufeld - Parksville

Suzie Fairweather – Port Hardy

Karen Jackson – Prince George





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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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