

# REACHING OUT

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE  
**BC FAMILY HEARING RESOURCE SOCIETY**  
FOR FAMILIES WITH DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN,  
SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND OTHERS INVOLVED WITH  
DEAFNESS/HARD OF HEARING ISSUES

February 2022

## FAMILY FEATURE

### Going Forward and Giving Back



When we found out about our first child, Matthew's, hearing difference, we were shocked. As a family who have no history of hearing differences, it was hard for us to accept the news. Since Matthew has mild to moderate sensorineural hearing difference (not hearing the higher frequency sounds such as "s" "sh" "th" "f"), we decided to have him mainly focus on his speech while taking some ASL classes at five months old. He has been wearing hearing aids and we started attending sessions at Children's Hearing & Speech Centre until he showed more interest at around the age of 2½ years old to learn some sign language from a deaf teacher at Deaf Children's Society. Currently he uses mainly speech as his means of communication but knows some ASL signs including alphabets, numbers, and a variety of foods.

*Continued page 2*

**Meet the Mahs!**  
**Rick, Vivian, Matthew and Joshua work with BCFHRC Early Interventionist, Stefanie Macaro, SLP. Vivian shares her family's story of having two children with unique hearing differences.**

#### Upcoming Events

**February 21 Family Day –  
all Centres Closed  
February 26  
Foundations for Professionals**

#### Vancouver Satellite Centre

#262- 3665 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC, V5R 5W2  
PH: 604-428-7949 FAX: 604-428-7950  
EMAIL: [info@bcfamilyhearing.com](mailto: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](mailto:info@bcfamilyhearing.com)  
[www.bcfamilyhearing.com](http://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](mailto:vicinfo@bcfamilyhearing.com)



## FAMILY FEATURE

### The Mah Family continued

Our second child, Joshua, was born premature at 26 weeks. Besides worrying whether he would survive due to critical illness, his hearing level was always at the back of my mind. Would he be like Matthew having some sort of hearing differences? We weren't able to find out until he was closer to his term/due date. The doctors ran genetic tests with bloodwork and, thankfully, found that he does not have the mutation of what Matthew has. That was a relief, until we had Joshua do a full Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) assessment once he reached five months adjusted.

To our surprise, the results came back quite confusing. We were told by the audiologist that he has unilateral ANSD (auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder), a more rare type of hearing loss that needs a lot of research and understanding, unlike the type of hearing difference we were "used to." I researched and tried seeking for answers, but many things were up in the air, especially with the fact that he was a micro preemie and doctors had prepared us a list of possible 'abnormalities.' Knowing Joshua is very much deaf in one ear, we decided to join BC Family Hearing, as they support both speech and ASL. We thought this would be the best fit for Joshua to be exposed to both languages to give him different avenues in expressing himself. We are so grateful to have our SLP Stefanie guide us in this new journey of ANSD and to help Joshua with both speech and sign language.

Our biggest adjustment is probably having to narrate and talk about every action we are doing so our children can get as much language as possible. My husband and I are quieter and more introverted so we are definitely not talkers. Hoping to have the kids absorb as much language as possible, we took the time to read them at least 10 books a day (even if it's the same book) and joined music classes with lyrics so they could follow along. Now they love humming and following along to the songs!



BC Family Hearing Resource Society does an excellent job connecting people and creating community. We never felt alone in our hearing journey as there are many activities we could join and meet families including Bouncy Babies group, seasonal events/gatherings (pre-covid), and many virtual groups that we could join to have our kids feel included. I'm amazed how there are numerous events for families to be involved, including useful facebook groups for when we exhaust our research and are curious what other families have faced.

I've also been following social media accounts/people who are deaf and have been learning lots of single signs. Getting to read about their personal experiences also gave us great insight and understanding of what it means to be deaf and hard of hearing! Social media sure plays a big part in learning more about the hard of hearing and deaf culture.

From two tumultuous pregnancy and birth experiences, and coming from a skincare background, I had the opportunity to start a clean skincare line made for pregnant postpartum moms and babies (for the whole family!). I knew I wanted to somehow give back to the community, especially the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) community and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) that have supported our family immensely. We launched Naetal Skincare this summer 2021, and collaborated on a project with Joy Kinna, a local artist whose child also has hearing differences, in giving back to the three early intervention organizations that support deaf and hard of hearing children and their families (BCFHRS, CHSCBC, and DCS).

Having both children with hearing differences has opened our eyes to a new community. We think it's so important to contribute in any way to the DHH community in order to maintain these services, events, groups, and resources available for families to connect and be inclusive.

## FAMILY FEATURE

### The Mah Family continued

All the sessions we have had with our SLP, ASL teacher, and virtual events have helped us so much in supporting our two children's language development.

It may be overwhelming learning your child has hearing differences, but at the same time it's a great opportunity to learn how to dedicate your time to help with your child's needs. I've learnt so much with helping our children's development through BCFHRC including many activity ideas, incorporating sign language while reading and so much more. It's really a blessing in disguise, as it gives me, as a parent, more patience towards my children with their special needs.



*Our Naetal Original Serum is a multi-functional serum that deeply hydrates and soothes even the most irritated skin. We use clean ingredients including colloidal oatmeal, triple hyaluronic acid and organic calendula to create this custom formulation for the whole family, from head-to toe! Perfect as a night-time facial serum also.*

*For each Original Serum sold, 10% of proceeds go towards the three DHH early intervention organizations in BC: BC Family Hearing Resource Centre, Children's Hearing and Speech Centre of BC, and Deaf Children's Society.*

*You can check out Naetal's website to read more about Vivian's journey and giving back:*

<https://naetalskincare.com/pages/joy-kinna-x-naetal-original-body-serum>

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

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## YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILD

### Using the Marco Polo app to stay connected and practice ASL!

***Willow and her family, who live in northeastern BC, work with BCFHRS Interventionist, Stefanie Macaro, SLP. Willow's mom, Cynthia, shared her family's experience using the Marco Polo App.***



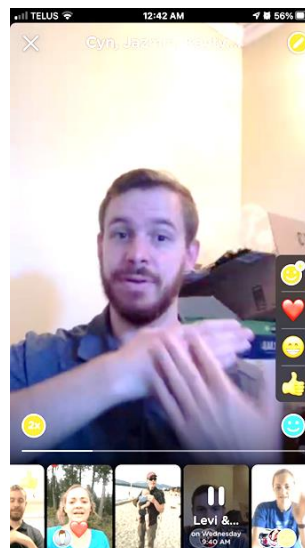
**Marco Polo - Stay in Touch** 4.8  
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When we started with our ASL classes there was a set of introduction lessons which had picture examples of how to sign the word. These worked great for reminders throughout the week as we were incorporating sign into our daily routine. Eventually we started asking for

the signs for different words that were not part of the weekly lessons, but were ones we found ourselves using frequently and wanting to sign them. We realized that everyone in our ASL group had the video messaging app called Marco Polo and added our instructor to a group chat. At first, he would sign the new words we had learned that week that were not part of the lesson diagrams in a message to us after our class that week.

Now it's a way for us to set the time for our next class, ask on the fly what a certain sign is, share family

news, and just have signing conversation for fun and extra practice. We have loved using Marco Polo to help get over that awkwardness of learning a new language (especially a visual one) and feeling supported on this new journey for our family.



## YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILD



# Registration is open!



Bright Futures offers a specialized, bilingual-bicultural curriculum (American Sign Language and English).

Our program is open to Deaf, hard of hearing, Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs), and hearing children.

Spaces available for children aged  
30 months to 5 years.

PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME SPACES AVAILABLE

TO REGISTER, CONTACT 604-584-2827 OR  
DAYCARE@BCFAMILYHEARING.COM.

WWW.BRIGHTFUTURESCILDCARE.CA

## OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### In Appreciation of our Supporters

Since September 15, 2021 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.



#### **Gold Star Donors (\$25,000+)**

- CalDor Foundaton



#### **Silver Star Donors (\$10,000 - \$24,999)**

- The late Dr. Joan Ford and Dr. Cicely Bryce
- The Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children



#### **Bronze Star Donors (\$500 - \$9,999)**

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • ACT/UCT Kelowna West Council | • Lillooet Royal Purple       |
| • Adera Foundation             | • MacAulay, Carla             |
| • Bellamy, Jane                | • Moody, Lisa                 |
| • Burnaby Elks                 | • Properties Plus Limited     |
| • Cache Creek Royal Purple     | • Salmon Arm Elks             |
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| • Firer-Gillespie, Elizabeth   | • Sherriff, Kelsey            |
| • Hundal, Mike                 | • Smithers Royal Purple       |
| • Kamloops Royal Purple        | • Vancity Branch #32 – Surrey |
| • Kinna, Marc                  | • Victoria Foundation         |
| • Laleggia, Joseph             | • Westside Elks               |
| • Langley Elks                 | • White Rock Elks             |
| • Lee, Stella                  | • Yu, Annette                 |



#### **Thank you to the following donors who have chosen to support us through regular, ongoing gifts:**

- |                         |                        |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Armitage, Karen       | • Ghashghaee, Cindy    | • Kazemir, Teresa       | • Park, Anita             |
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#### Bright Star Donors (\$1 - \$499)

- |                      |                           |                                   |                      |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Adams, Cindy       | • Ellaschuk, Asia         | • Lane, Susan                     | • Palmer, Rita       |
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| • Bellamy, Darren    | • Golling, Kris           | • Ma, Raymond                     | • Railton, George    |
| • Bhabraj, N.        | • Golling, Cindy          | • Macaro, Stefanie                | • Rainer, Melanie    |
| • Bishop, Kate       | • Golling, Sherry         | • Makhoul, Hassan                 | • Rosario, Elaine    |
| • Black, Emily       | • Gwin, Sue               | • Marshall, Barbara               | • Simon, Mandy       |
| • Bonn, Ann          | • Hicks, Ronald           | • Marshall, Brian                 | • Singleton, Chad    |
| • Booth, Allan       | • Ho, Amy                 | • Marshall, Valerie               | • Symchych, Beverly  |
| • Bourdon, Ashley    | • Ho, Rosalind            | • Matthews, Val                   | • Takhar, Kavi       |
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| • Cheng, Katie       | • Irwin, Lizzy            | • McNeil, Wendy                   | • Trenker, Kathleen  |
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| • Dulku, Rina        | • Lam, Vivian             | • O'Callaghan, Sinead             |                      |
| • Dupont, Michelle   |                           |                                   |                      |

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**

## GIVING TUESDAY

Once again, we participated in the global Giving Tuesday event on November 30<sup>th</sup>. We are excited to announce that we raised over \$7,000! Thank you to all the generous donors and community partners that continue to support us and the work we do at BC Family Hearing Resource Society. We want to take a moment to say how much we appreciate the many members of our BC Family Hearing community and the wonderful support they have provided over our 39 years. We wish every one of you happy new year.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Saying Farewell to Dr. Susan Small



We wish to acknowledge the recent passing of a valued member of our community, Dr. Susan Small. Dr. Small was on our BC Family Hearing Resource Society Board of Directors from 2014 until her passing in January, 2022. As well as serving for many years on our Board, she was also an important part of our research and student practicum programs. She regularly brought her UBC Audiology students to visit our Surrey Centre for observations and training, as well as inviting various members of our team to speak to her classes. She was also an integral part of research projects undertaken together with our staff. Dr. Small's exuberant personality and professional insight will be missed by everyone at our organization. We offer our sincerest

condolences to her family, friends and colleagues.

You can learn more about this remarkable woman [HERE](#).

### Help Catherine's Family Secure Their Future

One of our team, Catherine Albert-Moore, has recently been diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer. It has spread to her bones, resulting in the fracture of her femur bone and double surgery to insert metal rods. Catherine has been in hospital since November, and is currently undergoing both radiation and chemotherapy. While maneuvering through this incredibly difficult time, Catherine's cheerful disposition and fabulous sense of humour have remained intact.

One of our other team members has setup a GoFundMe page to support Catherine and her husband and three small children. If you wish to learn more information or make a donation you can visit it here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-catherines-family-secure-their-future>.

If you wish to send along a message to Catherine, please forward it to the Society and we will ensure it reaches her and her family.



*Catherine and her husband, Andre*



## REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY



### Speech and Hearing BC

The annual Speech and Hearing BC conference was held in Whistler this year over two days in late October. The conference was eagerly anticipated as it was the first in-person conference since the pandemic shutdown. Some apprehension lingered as participants began to arrive and discover what the new normal was for conference attendance. Apprehension led to familiar ease as colleagues from near and far reacquainted themselves and settled into a busy and engaging conference schedule.

Speech-Language Pathologists from BC Family Hearing Resource Society in attendance included Zara Gauthier, Valerie Marshall, Alex Lay, Sarah Lau, Emily Black, Charmaine Francis, and Rina Dulku. In addition to attending the conference, Zara Gauthier and Valerie Marshall delivered a presentation entitled ***Access to Language In Our Modern World: Breaking Down Barriers to Community Participation***. Staff members left Whistler feeling pleased with the event, and keen to share what they learned with our team.



## STAFF UPDATES

### New Faces!

*Please join us in welcoming the newest members of the BCFHRS Team!*



**Leonor Johnson**

Leonor is working out of our Vancouver office as a Sign Language Instructor. She was born profoundly deaf and began attending Vancouver Oral Centre (now known as Children's Hearing & Speech Centre of BC) when she was two years old. Leonor has been teaching American Sign Language (ASL) since 2001, at different organizations in the lower mainland, including BC Family Hearing back in 2005!



**Annie Kudjerski** is working out of our Vancouver office as a Sign Language Instructor. She was born in Serbia and raised in Toronto, Ontario. She studied at and graduated from National Technical Institute for the Deaf and Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. Annie has worked as an educational assistant, a residential counsellor, a community living adult support worker, a literacy instructor, and an ASL instructor the University of BC, and in deaf communities in Ontario and British Columbia.



**Rebecca O'Neill** is working as an Early Childhood Educator Assistant (ECE-A) in the Bright Futures Specialized Childcare at the Surrey Centre. Rebecca graduated from Simon Fraser University with a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Psychology in 2020 and certified as an ECE-A in 2021. She is taking American Sign Language classes at Vancouver Community College. She has lots of experience working with children but is excited to work alongside a team that teaches children with a bilingual approach.



**Arlene Brenner** has been hired for the Okanagan region as a Sign Language Instructor and Deaf role model. Arlene has been Deaf since birth. She has been teaching families and students ASL and sharing about her Deaf life for over 28 years. Arlene is actively into biking, hiking and fishing. She has been drawn to art in its many forms all her life and enjoys photography. Arlene is excited to work with BC Family Hearing families, children and the community that it serves.

## BITS & PIECES

### Student Practicums



**Jen Andersen** is completing her master's degree with UBC's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education program and spent the month of November with BCFHRC for a practicum placement. It was upon meeting a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDHH) two years ago and discovering more about this role that she decided to pursue it. Having taught and assisted students as a Career Facilitator in the Surrey School District for many years, she combined a curiosity of her own hearing loss in her early 30s, with her passion for supporting students. Jen now works as a TDHH and loves comparing technology and hearing equipment with her students, even though her hearing aids don't have the same exciting colours!



**Catherine Alepante** joins us for two months on a practicum placement from her Human Resources Payroll Coordinator Program at CDI College. She is grateful for the opportunity for hands-on experience since all of her education has been online, thus far. At our Centre in Surrey, she is learning to apply the knowledge she's obtained at school in a 'real world' setting.





## BITS & PIECES

### Kindness Week

Kindness Week (January 20–24, 2022) was an opportunity for BC Family Hearing Resource Society staff, families and partners to celebrate acts of kindness and to open a dialogue about inclusion, equity and diversity.

Every day had a specific theme and we shared stories and resources related to that theme. Check out the newsletters for each day by clicking on the themes below.

- Monday – [Being Kind to Yourself](#)
- Tuesday – [Being Kind by Celebrating Deaf/Hard of Hearing Gain](#)
- Wednesday – [Being Kind through Inclusion](#)
- Thursday – [Being Kind by Celebrating Diversity](#)
- Friday – [Being Kind in the Community](#)

You can also check out the Kindness Week posts on our 3 social media channels (just search #KindnessWeek2022):

Facebook: [@bcfhrrs](#)

Instagram: [@bcfamilyhearing](#)

Twitter: [@bcfamilyhearing](#)

#### What was the purpose of Kindness Week?

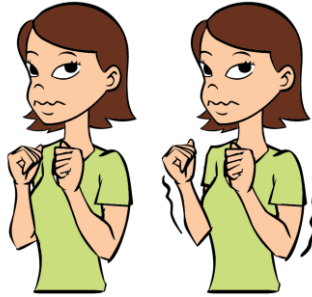
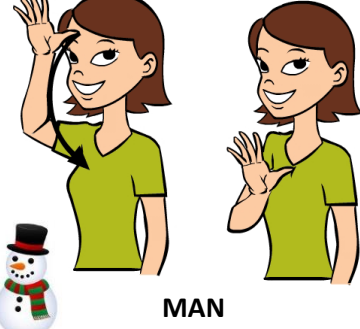
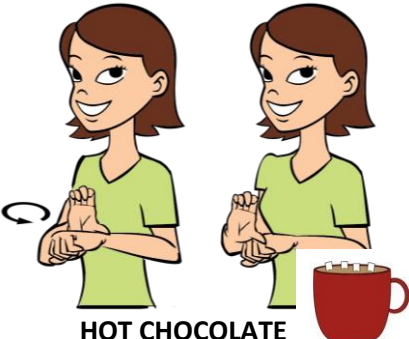
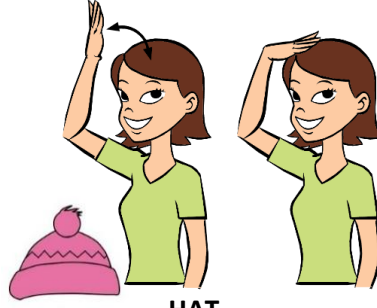
During the year there are many different holidays, cultural celebrations, and days of remembrance of significance. It was a challenge to ensure that we were recognizing all of these important days; but also to do so in a way that was meaningful. Over the past year, as a team, we have been talking about diversity and inclusion and what that means for our organization. The families and partners that we work with are incredibly diverse in many ways. But the one commonality we share is that our priority is our children who are deaf and hard of hearing.



We were concerned that if we attempted to capture all the days of significance to our diverse community we would risk missing some or not being able to reflect on each day in a meaningful way. And so, we have created Kindness Week. We wanted something that would allow us to celebrate all the wonderful diversity that exists in our population through a deaf and hard of hearing lens. This week is our way of sharing the values that are important to BC Family Hearing Resource Society, to embrace the diversity and uniqueness of our population and to celebrate the things that bring us together as a community.

# SIGN LANGUAGE

## Signs of the Season

 <p>WINTER (COLD)</p>	 <p>SNOW</p>	 <p>MAN</p>
 <p>BALL</p>	 <p>SLED</p>	 <p>MITTENS (put on)</p>
 <p>COAT</p>	 <p>HOT CHOCOLATE</p>	 <p>HAT</p>
 <p>SCARF</p>		

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

[www.babysigns.com](http://www.babysigns.com)  
[www.lifeprint.com](http://www.lifeprint.com)  
 By Karen Jackson 2020

## Calendar

### 2022

#### January

- 1 Happy 2022!
- 3 Centres closed in lieu of New Year's Day
- 11 PEER Session #6
- 13 Cochlear Implant Workshop Session 1
- 20 Cochlear Implant Workshop Session 2
- 24 -28 Kindness Week
- 27 Cochlear Implant Workshop Session 3
- 27 Monthly ASL Session 7:30pm

#### February

- 1 PEER Session #7
- 3 Cochlear Implant Workshop Session 4
- 21 Family Day – Centres closed
- 24 Monthly ASL Session 7:30pm
- 26 Foundations for Professionals

#### March

- 1 PEER Session #8
- 19 Family Fun Day (tentative)
- 24 Monthly ASL Session

#### April

- 5 PEER Session #9
- 15 Good Friday – Centres closed
- 18 Easter Monday – Centres closed
- 23–24 PEER Children's Program
- 28 Monthly ASL Session 7:30pm

#### May

- 4 Farm Field Trip
- 7&14 Foundations for Families
- 23 Victoria Day – Centres closed
- 26 Monthly ASL Session
- 29 Bright Futures Walkathon

#### June

- 11 Fraser Valley get-together
- 15 Vancouver get-together
- 17 Victoria Family Fun Day
- 29 Annual General Meeting
- 30 Monthly ASL Session

#### July

- 1 Canada Day- Centres closed

#### August

- 1 BC Day – Centres closed
- 6-7 Mingle & Play

#### Reaching Out

Newsletter published quarterly by BC Family Hearing Resource Centre  
15220 – 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
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Toll Free: 1-877-584-2827  
Phone (604)584-2827(voice),  
(604)584-9108 (tty),  
(604)584-2800 (fax)

Executive Director:  
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.

## Staff Visits to Communities in BC, Yukon and Northwest Territories!

**Between September and mid December travel restrictions eased and Outreach travel resumed. New restrictions imposed from mid December have resulted in travel being suspended until February 15, 2022.**

- Dyan Spear – Victoria, Nanaimo, Salt Spring Island, Courtenay, Comox, Campbell River, Parksville, Powell River, Sechelt, Duncan
- Carolyn Hawrish – Fort St. John, Kamloops, Merritt, Kelowna, Penticton, Summerland, Salmon Arm, Sicamous, Lake Country, Vernon, Armstrong
- Valerie Marshall – Rossland, Grand Forks, Nelson, Greenwood
- Teresa Kazemir – Port Hardy
- Stefanie Macaro – Cranbrook, Kimberley

**Newsletter via Email** - In our efforts to “Go Green” we now **only offer an electronic distribution** option. If you would like to be added to our emailing list, simply message [info@bcfamilyhearing.com](mailto:info@bcfamilyhearing.com) with the email address you would like the newsletter sent to. Newsletters are also available on our [website](#).



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