

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

June 2022

FAMILY FEATURE

Starting a New Life in Canada Amid a Global Pandemic



Avina, Milad and Neda

Neda shares her journey to Canada with her husband, Milad, and their experiences raising their hard of hearing daughter, Avina.

When I was leaving the Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) department of the hospital with my mum who had my one-month-old daughter (Avina) in her arms, in a vague silence I could hear my footsteps as if I was walking nowhere. When Avina was born in

the hospital in Iran, we were asked for a second hearing checkup. A month later, after having done the ABR test, we were facing the reality of Avina's moderate to severe sensorineural hearing loss in both ears. This was the biggest shock for me and the whole family. All of a sudden, the bright future that any parent has in mind for his/her child was replaced with an ambiguous and challenging future for us.

Unfortunately, I was suffering from postpartum depression and this shocking news added to my sadness. Thank God that mine and my husbands' parents were so supportive in helping me work through this difficult time. Looking back, my advice to parents is to not be alone in your suffering; do not hesitate to seek professional help if it's needed. I sometimes wonder if those first few months would have been easier if I had reached out to a psychologist or psychiatrist sooner.

Continued on Page 2

Upcoming Events
Mingle & Play / 40th Anniversary
August 6 & 7

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

Starting a New Life *continued*

Over the coming months, more ABR tests gave us more accurate results. Avina then started wearing hearing aids and soon after began receiving early intervention services, at nine months old. When Avina was 1½ years old, our immigration to Canada was approved. We arrived in Vancouver in March 2020 at the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak and large lockdowns! We faced many challenges at that time when we had to stay at home: my husband was working and studying at the same time; we were learning a new language; there were delays in administrative work and health services. We were far from our families' supports but we were also unable to connect with our new community.

During this time, getting Avina to keep her hearing aids on was the biggest challenge. She usually took the hearing aids off after 10 minutes and threw them away! I tried not to have any reaction, and after 10 to 15 minutes I would try to put them back on. This could go on for the whole day. When Avina was two years old she became really sensitive to her ears being touched. She would scream if you tried to put the hearing aids in, and audiology appointments were really upsetting for her. Getting new earmolds seemed impossible, but the audiologist suggested us getting earmold impressions at the hospital under anesthetic, but unfortunately the effect of the drug went away during the procedure.

Looking back now, we feel that this strategy of repeatedly trying for new impressions wasn't the best for Avina and may have caused further trauma and sensitivities. In the end, rather than getting new earmold impressions, what worked for Avina was her

audiologist adapting her old earmolds as a temporary solution until Avina was able to tolerate and cooperate with earmold impressions. We're happy to say that she's now at that stage again.

We worried about psychological damage and anxiety around the hearing aids, but we also knew how important these early years were for auditory, speech, and language development. Over the next nine months, we could only persuade her to wear hearing aids with small prizes and exciting games, but it was still a struggle. After a lot of close consultation with her audiologist, Sonia, we got a new earmold with softer material and a shorter canal length. This made it more comfortable for Avina but she was resistant to putting them on.



Her everyday cries caused us a lot of suffering and at the height of our disappointment we were asking ourselves whether this shadow of sadness would leave our home or not. And YES, "The end of black night is brightness."

Finally, her monkey toy one day turned into a doctor monkey who was responsible for putting on her hearing aids on and she really liked this game!

Free medical services and the unwavering supports from BC Family Hearing Resource Centre (BCFHRC) were super effective in paving the way for us. We were so lucky to have Sonia (her first audiologist) and Valerie Marshall (Avina's speech-language pathologist) beside us. Their patience and kindness in calming us and helping Avina really helped us in this challenging journey. Thank you very, very much Valerie and Sonia!

Avina loves books and she understands her mother language (Farsi) very well and can speak it fluently. She started going to

FAMILY FEATURE

Starting a New Life *continued*

BCFHRC Day Care last September for two days a week, so now she is learning English and American Sign language (ASL). She absolutely loves the daycare and her teachers. We are also participating in ASL monthly Zoom classes, lead by Karen Jackson. ASL has provided a new way for us to communicate together. After Covid restrictions were reduced, BCFHRC started hosting a variety of exciting events again and we have participated as much as we can. It has been great for Avina to finally get to play with more children and meet others who also wear hearing aids.

Now, Avina is happily using her hearing aids everyday for (almost) the whole day.



Our journey to this point over the last four years has been challenging. However, awareness, getting closer with our family, and patience are some of the invaluable gifts this journey has also given us. Avina's smiles and sweet language is like heaven for me and my husband. We are so thankful to experience these sweet moments, and we are hoping to be able to give her self-confidence, love, and happiness.

I always remind myself that patience and awareness can transfer the darkness of any challenge to brightness. This brightness is the light that we feel in our heart, not necessarily what we expect to happen in the world. We need to just do what we can do with love and patience, and let the universe show us the results.

***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

Greater Vancouver Zoo



Play in the Park: Vancouver



Play in the Park: Fraser Valley



YOU AND YOUR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILD



full-day and half-day options available!

Communication Stars offers a specialized, bilingual-bicultural curriculum (American Sign Language and English) for children. We also utilize a parent communication app to ensure that you stay connected with everything your child is learning during their time with us!

Our **NEW** half-day program is available 2 or 3 days a week (T/Th or T/W/Th) from 9:30am-12:00pm.

Our program is open to Deaf and hard-of-hearing children, Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs), and hearing children. Spaces available for children aged 30 months to 5 years.

For more information or to register your child, please contact 604-584-2827, or email daycare@bcfamilyhearing.com

OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In Appreciation of our Supporters

Since February 2022 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 Society either monetarily or through goods and services.



Silver Star Donors (\$10,000 - \$24,999) ReConnect Foundation



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

- Abundant Life Seventh Day Adventist Church –Rosanna & Ethan Gamugamu
- Canada Helps Donors
- Chilliwack Elks
- Kamloops Royal Purple
- Langley Elks
- Prince George Royal Purple
- Pitt Meadows Plumbing in honour of Steve Robinson
- Province of BC Multiculturalism Grant
- Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
- Salmon Arm Royal Purple

In memory of Kate Bishop:

- Alexandra Bishop
- Helene Morneau
- Patrick Van Holderbeke



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

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| | | | •Stacie Wood |



Bright Star Donors (\$1 - \$499)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
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| •Sarah Francescutti | | •George Railton | |
| | | •Melanie Rainer | |

In memory of Kate Bishop:

- Lyssa Asselin
- Heather Dale
- Christian Nadeau
- Martin Nadeau
- Holly Orr
- Keely Speechley

OVER 35 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Bright Futures Walkathons 2022

We were thrilled to have in-person Walkathons again! This year two Walkathons were held on the same weekend. For the first time, a walk took place in Victoria at Beaver Lake Park on Saturday, May 28th. Then, on Sunday, May 29th, a walk happened in Surrey at Redwood Park. Both events were well attended. Afterwards, food and refreshments were provided and some lucky winners received prizes donated by the BC Lions, Vancouver Canucks, The Sandman Suites Hotel Guildford and The Chateau Victoria Hotel. A sincere thank you to all who participated by attending the walk, donating, volunteering, and supplying prizes.



Carolyn Hawrish, 2nd from right, at the Elks Provincial Conference held in June in Langley, BC.

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

REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY

Travel Takes Off!

Now that covid restrictions have eased, our staff have been making up for lost time with a flurry of fights and ferries! Here are some places we've been recently.



In Campbell River, Dyan Spear, Teacher of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, & Carolyn Hawrish, Listening & Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS), for Aboriginal Focus Group weekend



In Vernon, Courtney Lawrence, Speech Language Pathologist (R), with Jessica Niemela, Audiologist, at the Science Centre Exhibit: The Way We Hear It



In Whitehorse, Carolyn Hawrish (LSLS) (right, middle row) with a group of families and community services providers.

STAFF UPDATES

New Faces!

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



Catherine Alepante joined us for two months on a practicum placement from her Human Resources Payroll Coordinator Program at CDI College and we are happy to announce she has joined our staff permanently as a Finance and Accounting Assistant. Catherine is originally from the Philippines. She is grateful for the assistance her family received to settle in Canada which motivated her to work for a non-profit agency. She and her family love to travel and explore Canada.



Shaina Ardell recently joined our Vancouver office as a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), offering services to families in the lower mainland. She graduated from the University of British Columbia in 2021, gaining experience with clients in early intervention, schools, and hospitals. Shaina is originally from Saskatchewan; she grew up with an interest in American Sign Language (ASL) and became socially involved with the Deaf community while attending university in Minot, ND. Shaina is excited to be a part of the BCFHRS team and looks forward to serving her community!



Julia Szefer has joined our Surrey office and Communication Stars Specialized Childcare as Early Childhood Educator and Sign Language Consultant. Julia is deaf and bilingual, using ASL as her primary language. As a child, she attended Deaf Children's Society of BC and BC Family Hearing Resource Society (when it used to be called "The Elks"). After that, she attended BC School for the Deaf, followed by Gallaudet University graduating with a Bachelors Degree in Early Childhood Education. She is the only deaf person in her family and is now a wife to her deaf husband and a mother to her CODA toddler.



Vanessa Khu has joined our Victoria office as a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), offering services to the greater Victoria area. She completed her Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Alberta in 2016. After graduating, she worked as a school-based SLP in Calgary. In 2020, Vanessa moved to Victoria and began working in private practice. She has taken courses in American Sign Language (ASL) and Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD). While working in private practice, Vanessa learned about neurodiversity affirmative support. She believes in considering the lived experiences of those with disabilities when supporting families in developing meaningful goals for their child.

BITS & PIECES

Work Experience Student

We happily welcomed Marley at our Surrey Centre for a three-week work experience.

From Marley:

Hello! My name is **Marley Bridger** and I am a sixteen-year-old student at Earl Marriott Secondary. I enjoy figure skating, reading and writing. Both my younger brother Cohen and my sister Roxanne are hard of hearing and our family has benefited so much from BCFHRS. Cohen has a mild hearing loss and Roxanne has a moderately severe hearing loss. We have been a part of the BCFHRS community for just under ten years. During my work experience, I will be volunteering and exploring the different careers at BC Family Hearing.



UBC Speech-Language Pathology Grad Student Placement

We happily welcome Junette Gonzales, a UBC Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) Grad Student, from June 6th to July 22nd for her 2nd placement. She will be co-mentored by SLPs Valerie Marshall and Stefanie Macaro.

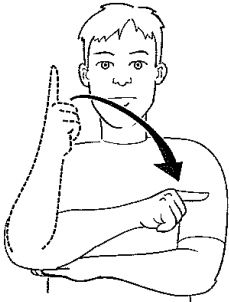
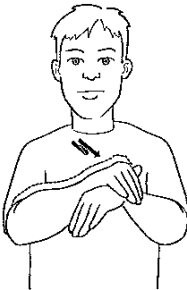

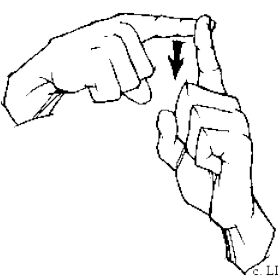
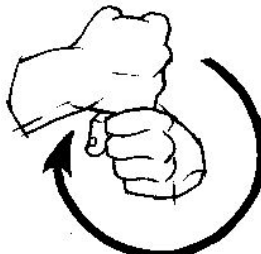
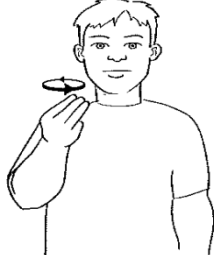
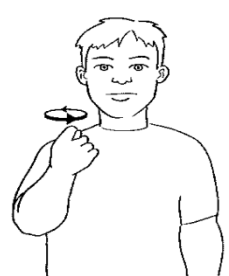

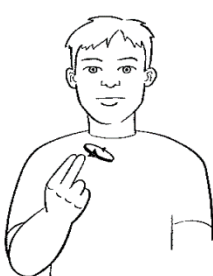



From Junette:

I grew up in Vancouver, Washington and currently reside in Surrey. I am studying for my master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of British Columbia. My mother has unilateral conductive hearing loss and growing up I witnessed how this affected her ability to communicate with others. I am passionate about helping children reach their communication potential and excited and grateful about my practicum with BCFHRS.



SIGN LANGUAGE

Signs of the 'Time'

 <p>day</p>	 <p>night</p>	 <p>week</p>
 <p>month</p>	 <p>year</p>	 <p>Monday</p>
 <p>Tuesday</p>	 <p>Wednesday</p>	 <p>Thursday</p>
 <p>Friday</p>	 <p>Saturday</p>	 <p>Sunday</p>

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

40TH Anniversary



BC Family Hearing
Resource Society

**SUNDAY
AUGUST 7**

*Come celebrate
40 years of BC
Family Hearing
Resource Society*

This outdoor event is rain or shine.

WHO'S INVITED?

Everyone! Families, alumni, grandparents, friends & neighbours, supporters... you're all welcome to celebrate with us!



Enjoy a special show from **Candice Roberts**, filled with dance, shadow puppets & physical comedy.

WHEN & WHERE?

10:00am - 1:00pm at
our Surrey Centre,
15220 92nd Avenue.

RSVP HERE:

<https://bit.ly/BCFamily40>

MORE INFO AT:

WWW.BCFAMILYHEARING.COM

2022 Calendar

May

4 Farm Field Trip
 9 Kamloops Meet-up
 23 Victoria Day – Centres closed
 26 Monthly ASL Session
 28 & 29 Aboriginal Focus Group
 28 Bright Futures Walkathon - Victoria
 29 Bright Futures Walkathon- Surrey

June

15 Play in the Park - Vancouver
 15 Kelowna Meet-up
 17 Play in the Park - Victoria
 25 Play in the Park - Abbotsford
 29 Annual General Meeting
 30 Monthly ASL Session

July

1 Canada Day- Centres closed
 4-5 Summer ASL Classes begin
 6 Comox Valley Beach Meet-up
 13 Microtia & Atresia Meet-up
 28 Monthly ASL Session

August

1 BC Day – Centres closed
 6-7 Mingle & Play/40th Anniversary
 8 Surrey Centre closed
 25 Monthly ASL Session

September

5 Labour Day- Centres closed
 23 Foundations for Professionals Workshop
 30 National Day of Truth & Reconciliation – Centres closed

October

5 PEER Session #1
 10 Thanksgiving – Centres closed
 15 Fortieth Anniversary Celebration – **Stay tuned for more details!**
 19 Education Fair
 25 PEER in Action Evening
 28/29 Foundations for Families Workshop

Staff Visits to Communities in BC & Yukon

- **Dyan Spear** – Campbell River, Courtenay, Comox, Duncan, Nanaimo, Parksville, Powell River, Salt Spring Island, Sechelt, Victoria
- **Carolyn Hawrish** – Fort St. John, Kamloops, Merritt, Vernon, Whitehorse
- **Valerie Marshall** – Rossland, Grand Forks, Nelson, Greenwood
- **Teresa Kazemir** – Port Hardy, Hope
- **Stefanie Macaro** – Cranbrook, Kimberley
- **Courtney Lawrence** – 100 Mile House, Williams Lake

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 with the email address you would like the newsletter sent to. Newsletters are also available on our [website](#).



Reaching Out

Newsletter published quarterly by
 BC Family Hearing
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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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