

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER

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Partnerships Make a Difference! Friends of the Center Offer Enriching Experiences

What makes a rich curriculum with excellent teachers even better? Fun, interactive extra-curricular experiences that give kids a chance to build knowledge and confidence! Thanks to community partners and friends of the Hearing and Speech Center, students at our Auditory Oral School have opportunities to apply their language and social skills that they have learned in class.



"Children with hearing loss learn new vocabulary and concepts best through interactive or real life experiences." Says Jan Christensen, the school's director. "We are so grateful for the involvement and generosity of all the community members who contribute both time and resources."

Call us if you are interested in learning more about the school or if you would like to sponsor

a field trip or partner with us.

In the past, the school has had professionals, like cardiologist Dr. Keith Cohn, come in and talk about what they do.

Our students also have exciting annual visits with fire fighters and police! Recently, the school was able to take children to the Bay Area Discovery Museum, thanks to a grant from Target (See inset story).

This year, we have also been delighted to have New Conservatory Theatre providing a drama class for our students. The theater class gives students a chance to practice expressing themselves while also building their confidence.

"Mom! Look! It's a coach bus!" My son grabbed my hand with excitement and boarded the deluxe motor coach during a field trip to the the Bay Area Discovery Museum funded by Target. This was one of the best field trip the students had taken; riding the scenic route from Divisadero Street over the breathtaking Golden Gate Bridge. Teacher Kristi had everyone take a photo with "Spot" on the bus and offered a variety of snacks for all to enjoy at lunchtime.



I want to thank my son's teacher, Kristi, for all her planning efforts. This was an awesome and rewarding field trip for my son and for me!

-Violette Karavul, parent

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IN THIS ISSUE

School Partners

Kids Learn from Special Experiences

A Message From Our CEO

Our Young Graduates

Product Feature

Phonak Offer - Free iCom

Finding the Right Fit

Classroom Checklist for Parents

Support Groups

Learn and Grow with our Hard of Hearing Group

Board Member Profile

Tom Lloyd-Butler

A Message from our CEO



Dear Friends,

We have come to the close of another school year and we must (reluctantly) say goodbye to our graduating students. One would think that since this is a reoccurring event each year that it would get easier! About 10 years from now, these children will be entering the workforce or beginning college. Will one go on to be president? Will we have doctors, teachers, and firefighters? As long as these children want it, of course they will.

However, I heard a remarkable statistic quite recently. It was that 50% of deaf and hard of hearing working Americans are under-employed. Of that 50%, 80% are also under-paid. As I look at the potential, intelligence, and character of our young students, I am determined to make sure that at the very least, those who find their way to our Center defy those odds and reverse this trend.

Our Partners in Communication Program, Summer Camps, Youth in Transition Program, Homework Groups, and our Auditory Oral School Program are some of the ways in which we empower our students. They are programs which involve not only our youth, but also their families, and help determine their future by addressing challenges head on. These programs go the extra mile to make sure their education is uncompromised in what are already difficult circumstances.

As a friend of our center, I ask that you consider supporting our efforts this year by making a financial commitment to one of these programs. I ask that you share the responsibility of challenging false limitations and confronting obstacles, and that you will share in the celebration of the small and large successes we will have along the journey.

Our students *will* go on to be doctors, teachers, and firefighters. Our students *will* go on to do anything they want to do. And who knows, one might just want to be President.

Darragh Kennedy | CEO

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Support Information for Families and Adults

Finding the Right Learning Environment

As fall approaches, and children prepare to head back to school, parents may wonder how to know if their child is attending a school that meets his/her needs. Here are some suggestions from Shannon Simonson, Family Communications Coordinator.

Five Things to Look for in a program for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students:

1. A credentialed Teacher of the Deaf fluent in your child's mode of communication.
2. An acoustically modified classroom where noise level does not exceed 35db.
3. A speech and language pathologist who is experienced and knowledgeable in working with students with hearing loss. Also, make sure they are fluent in your child's mode of communication.
4. Age-appropriate language mode peers.
5. Classroom size should not exceed six students.

Five Things to Look for in a mainstream setting for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing:

1. A school that is willing and open in accommodating your child's needs.
2. Professionals (i.e. teachers, speech and language pathologists, resource specialists) who have experience in working with students with hearing loss.
3. An acoustically modified classroom where noise level does not exceed 35db.
4. An Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf who is fluent in your child's mode of communication
5. An audiologist who provides trainings to school staff on hearing loss, F.M./Sound-Field systems, and any other devices that support students with hearing loss in the classroom.



Interested in finding other ways to support your child? Contact Shannon at 415-921-7658, or shannon@hearingspeech.org to learn more about our family programs.

Hard of Hearing Support Groups

We hope that you can come and participate in this wonderful community meeting where active adults with hearing loss can come together and support each other, share stories, learn coping strategies, and more!

The meetings are held the **third Saturday of the month from 1-3pm.**

Community Support Group for active adults with hearing loss facilitated by Marisa Musso & Karena Kirkpatrick, MFT trainees, and Barbara Bell LCSW.

\$10-15 donation, no one turned away for lack of funds.

Easy Ways to Support the Center!

Register with eScrip!
www.escrip.com

Donate your used items at Community Thrift Store 623 Valencia Street
- Charity Code 161

Be a friend of the Hearing and Speech Center at **Cole Hardware**

Learn more at
www.hearingspeech.org/support

Board Member Spotlight: Tom Lloyd-Butler



Tom has been a friend of the Center for over 10 years. He first came to the Center when his son, John, was diagnosed with a hearing loss, and immediately began looking for ways to contribute. He served on the board of directors while John attended the auditory-oral school, and now is serving on the board again and is chairing the development committee. "As head of the development committee I want to raise awareness of the Center within our community and build community within our organization, amongst our supporters, clients, patients."

Tom believes deeply in supporting the center. "The center is the only organization in SF which supports the deaf and hard of hearing with a complete set of services, from cradle to grave." Tom is also motivated by the fact that low income and underprivileged people are more likely to have hearing loss and face great challenges. Lastly, Tom knows that education and support for children and youth are extremely significant. "My son John, now, 17, has been in mainstream education since the first grade. **The auditory oral**

school prepared John by teaching him to listen rather than just hear, and to speak rather than just talk. John also learned to advocate for himself. Without that preparation, I do not believe John would be where he is today with solid academic skills, athletic abilities, and communications skills which enable him to move freely in the deaf community or in our world."

Recently Tom and his partner Dan hosted a fundraiser at their home. Tom encourages everyone to think about how they can contribute to the work of the center. "I believe any charitable effort is not just about money but also about connection. It is about building community, and using that community as a foundation for what an organization does and how it gets those things done."

Thank you to Tom for all his time and commitment ensuring that other children have the opportunities his son had, and for encouraging others to think creatively about how they can help!



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www.hearingspeech.org

Visit us online to learn more about how we can help you, or someone you know.