



HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER
a non-profit clinic, school & community



PEOPLE ARE TALKING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER

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General James Frank Scholarship Fund



The Hearing and Speech Center is proud to have the James Frank Scholarship in memory of one of the founders of the Hearing and Speech Center. The world lost General Frank in the Summer of 2008. His vision and generosity helped to lay the foundation for our school and we are pleased to celebrate his initiative with this fund.

All funds donated to the Frank Scholarship Fund will be

dedicated to helping children attend our Auditory Oral School of San Francisco. Here children with hearing loss learn to use amplification (hearing aids, cochlear implants, etc.), and speak. Classes focus on age-appropriate subjects, but are taught by certified Teachers of the Deaf who help them develop their language. In addition, each child receives one-on-one speech therapy. The goal of the school is to prepare our students to participate in a "mainstream" classroom.

It is an honor and a thrill to be able to provide an excellent educational experience to children with hearing loss. We hear from many of our former students who are now youth or young adults, who are doing very well in their lives, attending college, leading successful careers, starting families. We were only able to teach them, because people before them gave generously to establish the school and to support their education.

It is very exciting to be able to provide services to fresh young minds.

The Hearing and Speech Center would like to thank the Frank family for supporting this initiative.

For more information, or to make a contribution, contact Leslie Castellanos, Development Director at 415-921-7658 or leslie@hearingspeech.org.



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A Message from our CEO

Dear Friends,

We have just entered a new fiscal year here at the center. Thanks all who were generous to support our services in 2009-10. We are all looking forward to what this New Year will bring, and all we hope to achieve. The times are indeed worrisome, but despite taking significant pay decreases in 2009, we are very proud to say that our programs remain fully intact with no reduction of services, thanks in whole to our dedicated staff members that are committed to mission and who have the strength of vision to see beyond present circumstances.

Like many of our colleagues in the non-profit sector, have a constant struggle to meet the demands of our services based on our capacity. Of course we seek financial support from our community members to subsidize our efforts, but there are other ways for our supporters to help too. Volunteer help might be asked to stuff envelopes or to make calls, or help with specific projects such as assistance with website design, strategic planning or marketing advice. The easiest way to help is to tell a friend about the Center! If you would like to volunteer, please visit our website for more information or call me at (415) 921 7658 x55 – I would be delighted to hear from you!

Finally, I am pleased to announce our new mission statement. We spent several months last year giving great consideration to our work, our clients and our goals, and are happy to present our new mission: "Our mission is to provide life-long professional services to support all people with hearing or communication challenges in achieving their goals". We believe it fully encompasses the spirit of our work and we look forward to serving you with the continuous, reliable and quality services.

Sincerely,

Darragh Kennedy | CEO



Collaborating for the Best Results: Auditory Neuropathy

by Rupa Balachandran, Director of Audiology and Jan Christensen, Director of Educational Programs

Some cases require work as a team to reach the best results. Our school and audiology departments have been working in partnership with UCSF to support children with a condition known as Auditory Neuropathy.

Auditory neuropathy (AN) is a disorder in which sound enters the inner ear but the transmission of signals from the inner ear to the brain is impaired. It can affect people of all ages. People with AN may have normal hearing, or hearing loss ranging from mild to severe; they always have poor speech-perception abilities, meaning they have trouble understanding speech clearly.

Some babies who have been diagnosed with AN improve and start to hear and speak within a year or two. Other infants stay the same, while some get worse and show signs that the outer hair cells no longer function (otoacoustic emissions). In adults with auditory neuropathy, hearing can remain stable, fluctuate, or progressively worsen, depending on the underlying cause.

Parents should consider their child's needs as well as family priorities when discussing the most appropriate amplification and communication options with your diagnostic team, and for everyone to keep an open mind during the process.

While most children with AN will enjoy great benefit from hearing aids or cochlear implants, some children will not demonstrate expected gain from amplification. Some children will learn to become oral communicators, while others will learn a manual language, such as American Sign Language (ASL). It is important to make decisions based on functional, longitudinal assessments, as opposed to performance on any one specific day. Every child is different, and each family brings a different dynamic to the table.

Our Auditory Oral School program has served several children with a diagnosis of AN over the past ten years. This is an area of great interest to our staff as these are children that are being diagnosed now at birth and amplification is providing spoken language success for many children. We have had specialized training in AN to better understand the educational issues involved. In our experience those children whose AN occurs in the cochlea have made good progress in developing successful listening skills and spoken language with the intensive teaching and parent education programs we offer. It has been dramatic watching a child who really did not understand language or respond to sounds start to recognize words and responding appropriately. Progress varies, but all are listening and talking!

Support Groups

Hearing Dog Program

by Barbara Bell, Licensed Clinical Social Worker



After 30 years of training and placing 800 Hearing Dogs from rescue and shelter dogs, the Hearing Dog Program became an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization in June of 2008, after San Francisco SPCA closed down their program. Glenn Martyn, Executive director, Martha Hoffman, Training Director and Tom Oliver, Assistant Director from the SFSPCA program got it going with the help of many devoted dog lovers and deaf and hard of hearing individuals, young and old.

I know how valuable the program has been for me and for the deaf and hard of hearing. I not only bring Bernard, a Pomeranian, in to work, but I depend on him during the nights when I take off my cochlear implant processor. When someone is knocking on her door, Bernard lets me know by jumping on me and then running back to the door. When the microwave timer goes off in the kitchen, he jumps on me and lets me know that the food is done. At work, when someone needs my attention in her office, the person rings a doorbell and Bernard jumps on me to let me know. Not only does Bernard and many hearing dogs like him help make life safer and more manageable, but they are wonderful companions to people of all ages who have difficulty hearing.

The Hearing and Speech Center is delighted to partner with the Hearing Dog Program which is so helpful to so many people. If you are interested in learning more, please look into www.hearingdogprogram.org or call 415 321 1762.

Parents and Teachers Provide Excitement and Side-Splitting Fun in Support of the Center

Congratulations to the parents and teachers of our school programs who worked very hard this spring to put together three great fundraisers!

Everyone contributed their time, creativity and talents to put on a rummage sale, our Silent Auction Gala and Laugh for a Cause comedy night. **Altogether the events raised over \$10,000 for our school!**



A great, big thank you to all the parents, teachers, performers and merchants who donated and to everyone who attended!



www.hearingspeech.org

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

Learn to Lipread!

- Do you have difficulty hearing?
- Do you know how to read lips?
- Do you want to learn how to use your hearing aid more effectively?

Come to this class to learn how to maximize communication through lipreading, stress reduction, creative problem solving and assertiveness. Instruction is taught in a supportive group environment.

6-WEEK BEGINNER SESSIONS - starting in August, 2010
THURSDAYS 1:15 - 2:45pm.

Session 1: August 19, 26, September 2, 9, 16 & 23

Session 2: September 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28 & November 4.




Class is offered to ALL individuals - call (415) 561-1018

Sponsored by City College of San Francisco/Disabled Students Programs & Services

Taught by Judi Kaplan, M.S., Speech-Language Pathologist

Staff Spotlight: Dr. Melissa Wilson

Clinical Audiologist



The Hearing and Speech Center is fortunate to count among our talented audiologists, Dr. Melissa Wilson. Melissa is our head pediatric audiologist and is our primary audiologists for clients who use American Sign Language. As a student, she thought that pediatric audiology would be intimidating, but she actually took to it. "It's a challenge, but it's creative, interactive work. You need to respond to each child and work collaboratively with staff and parents for a good result." Some parts of the job are especially challenging, like informing parents that their child has a hearing loss. "Breaking bad news is always difficult," says Melissa, "but it's good to work here at the center where you can offer resources immediately and remain connected to your patients."

A deep care for the well-being of her clients motivates Melissa. With a background in American Sign Language she enjoys being able to work with clients of all communication modalities. "The important thing is to make sure that each client has access to language and opportunities to develop socially."

Along with fellow audiologist, Dr. Tracy Peck, Melissa also leads efforts to increase awareness among adults of hearing protection. With innovative strategies, like handing out earplugs and information at loud nightclubs, Melissa and Tracy have worked hard to drive their message. To follow more of audiology's news, including topics of interest and topics for fun, check our website for our blog to begin this spring.