

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER

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UCSF and HSC Partner to Provide Piano Lessons for Cochlear Implants Users

There have been huge advances in cochlear implant technology, but they are not a miracle cure for people with hearing loss. After undergoing surgery, most people with cochlear implants go through rigorous therapy in order to get the most use out of their device.

This year, the UCSF Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery has partnered with the Hearing and Speech Center of Northern California to provide free piano training to CI users as a form of auditory therapy. Students receive eight weeks of hour-long, one-on-one lessons from instructors attending the San Francisco Conservatory of Music who are trained in music therapy. All but one of the students who have completed the eight weeks continue to study piano independently.

"We are thrilled to be able to offer this program to cochlear implant users. Hopefully, participants will find learning piano to be fun, but also to be an important component of auditory rehabilitation as they learn to process the complex sounds of music," said Dr. Charles Lamb, an otolaryngologist, Director of UCSF Cochlear Implant Center, and the project lead.

The program has proven to be extremely popular, with more than 20 students taking part so far. Many students have been recruited from the UCSF Cochlear Implant Center; others came from the Hearing and Speech Center community or learned about the program by word-of-mouth. Students are enthusiastic about their teachers, describing them as effective, dedicated, patient, and prepared. The lessons helped many students overcome music and sound-related anxieties.

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Piano teacher, Karam, evaluates a student's performance in a lesson offered through the HSC/UCSF CI music program.



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A Message From Our CEO



Dear Friends,

Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to see any of our past graduates or clients return as young adults and bring us up to speed with their lives. In this issue, Cian tells us a little about where he is today. I remember Cian as a young boy very well and I am so proud to see how remarkable his journey has been. His family has been involved with the Center for many years, and it reassures me of the importance of the communities we build and nurture. I am delighted to feature him in this edition.

Please save the date of May 12th, 2016! We will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Hearing and Speech Center. Fundraising events serve a dual purpose of raising vitally-needed charitable dollars for our work and also creating a point of connection for our donors, clients, and staff. Since we started our events a few years ago, it has become an important part of our philanthropic effort. We hope you will join us in making May 12th a very special evening as we look to both the past and future of this great agency.

Finally, I am honored to share with you that the Hearing and Speech Center was recently ranked the #1 hearing aid dispensing practice in San Francisco. When taken into consideration that we are operating on a non-profit budget and limited financial resources, such a validation is a boost to our morale and a recognition that the HSC continues to set standards of excellence in the Bay Area and beyond.



Darragh Kennedy | CEO

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Participants met with a member of the project team once prior to the eight weeks of lessons and once after, in order to participate in basic hearing tests, complete a questionnaire about music listening habits, and provide feedback about the program. Of the students who have completed the program, all but one have demonstrated significant improvements in basic speech perception; several improved speech in noise intelligibility; and over half improved on at least one aspect of pitch sensitivity.

UCSF and the Hearing and Speech Center hope to continue this incredibly successful program next year, and look forward to giving the joy of music to many more people with cochlear implants.

"Research shows people with cochlear implants hear music very differently; they prefer rhythmic instruments, fewer harmonics and shorter reverberation."

- "Music enjoyment: A study of Timbre, Reverb, Acoustic and Rhythmic Complexity, Harmonics" by the Columbia University Cochlear Implant Center

#1 Practice in San Francisco

The HSC was ranked the #1 practice (again!) in San Francisco by Bay Area Consumers' Checkbook with a 94% score. We ranked 6th in the entire greater Bay Area from a total of 60 or so practices evaluated. 100% of our consumers ranked our practice superior for promptness of service, reliability, and quality of products, and we also received high marks for advice on choice and use of products and overall quality. We're very proud of these rankings, and look forward to remaining the #1 practice for years to come!

Welcome to the Team!

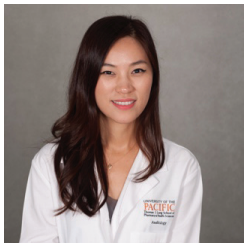
The Hearing and Speech Center is delighted to welcome six new additions to the Center staff.



Dr. Julia Coats joined the staff as an audiologist in June. Her clinical interests include pediatric and adult diagnostics and amplification, aural rehabilitation, and community outreach and education. She is excited to work with the diverse San Francisco community!



Erin Cruz is the newest Clinical Services Coordinator at the front desk and a Test Assistant for audiologists. Before becoming a staff member in June, she volunteered and shadowed speech therapy and audiology sessions. Her favorite part about the Center is that it feels so much like a community.



Rudi Kim is a new intern in audiology. She is currently studying at University of the Pacific in San Francisco as a 2nd year Au.D student. Rudi believes hearing is such an integral part of life and is excited to help people hear again and improve their quality of life. She really enjoys the patient interaction at the Center!



Kylie McLaughlin is a doctoral student from Northwestern University, spending a year at the Center as an audiology extern. Kylie says she is so grateful for the opportunity to become a part of the family here at the Center and is thrilled to work with such a kind, caring, and highly qualified staff!



Christiana Oatman joined the Center as the Development & Administrative Assistant in August. At the Center, she is responsible for a variety of communications, development, and front desk work. She has already come to love being a part of a work family and the Center's passion for fulfilling its mission.



Robyn Reliford joined the Center as the Director of Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer in July. She oversees financial policies for Accounting, Finance, HR, and Administration processes, and so far, is really enjoying applying her skillsets to the range of different program areas!



Donor Corner: Survey Results

Back in July, as we began our new fiscal year, we issued our annual donor survey. We feel it is critically important to collect feedback from our supporters, and this year's responses to our donor survey offered many insights.

In response, we have a few new initiatives in the works:

Email communication – Many indicated that they would prefer to receive communications via email. Over the coming months, we will be setting up a system for sending electronic versions of donation receipts, so donors can have easier access to these records.

The impact of donations – Several donors indicated that they would like to learn more about the specific ways that donations support our programs. You may not know that we raise approximately \$750,000 each year from individuals, foundations, and other charitable partners so that we can provide services to those in need. You can learn more about this in our new "donations at work" quarterly update, featuring a specific program area or activity that has been impacted by donations in recent months.

Getting involved – Many wrote that they would like to visit the Center for a tour or to learn about becoming a volunteer. Both are great ways of getting to know the Center and our programs! In order to maximize the number of community members who can participate, we are hoping to set up a few tours in the coming year, open to all, as well as host volunteer days.

Many thanks to all those who responded! Stay tuned for more on these activities!



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

1234 Divisadero Street
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www.hearingspeech.org

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

Community Spotlight: Cian Modena-Hayden



Cian Modena-Hayden has been a part of the Hearing and Speech Center family for many years as an active participant in our youth and family programs. He graduated from St. Mary's College High School as valedictorian, and just started his freshman year at UC Berkeley. We can't wait to see where life takes him next!

Has having a hearing loss presented any challenges for you? If so, how have you overcome those challenges?

"Lecture-style classes can be difficult, but fortunately my school had a form of office hours after school where I could wait to ask teachers questions when I was having difficulty understanding something. I was also very fortunate to be able to attend a smaller school with smaller classes where there was less background noise."

Is there anything that you wish everyone knew about students with hearing loss?

"I want people to understand how much work being deaf or hard-of-hearing is. Students in high school are bound to come home exhausted some days, but a deaf or hard-of-hearing person will probably experience that more often than the average person since it is necessary to work harder to keep up as a disabled person. I've been able to live a lot like a "normal" person in a mainstreamed school, but I wish more people understood how much energy goes into a day."

Now that you've graduated high school, do you have any advice for younger students?

"If I would have done something different, it would probably have been to do a large extracurricular activity sooner. In my senior year I did stagecraft club. Even though it was harder to study and I had to put in a lot of work, it let me spend time with my friends in the club, and also gave me a chance to talk with my friends in more manageable groups than normal. It became one of my favorite parts of high school."