



PEOPLE ARE TALKING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER

1234 DIVISADERO STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94115 TEL 415 921 7658 FAX 415 921 2243 TTY 415 921 8990

Guiding Children on Their Hearing Journey

UCSF and HSCNC partnership focuses on children with cochlear implants and their families

Cochlear Implant Interconnect (CII) is a one-of-a-kind collaborative program between the Hearing and Speech Center of Northern California and UCSF Cochlear Implant Center. Cochlear implants are an implanted electronic hearing device, designed to produce useful hearing sensations to a person with severe to profound nerve deafness by electrically stimulating nerves inside the inner ear. Cochlear implants help severely to profoundly deaf adults and children who get little or no benefit from hearing aids.

Children with cochlear implants have unique needs that many CI clinics cannot provide, such as speech therapy, educational support, and much more. CII combines clinical services and community services to provide the best possible experience for possible CI candidates and children with cochlear implants.

CII began in 2013, and since then has continued to grow and change to meet the needs of our patients. The CII team—consisting of audiologists from both clinics, otolaryngologists, a speech therapist, a social worker, and others—meets once a month to review the status of various cases and make sure that families are moving forward through the process including a hearing aid trial, psychological assessment, parent education, surgery preparation and recovery, educational follow through, and community support.

The team works closely with each family to determine their needs, including if the child is an appropriate candidate for a cochlear implant, and to advocate for each child. Depending on the family, CII provides or refers them to speech therapy, parent-infant communication classes, informational counseling, emotional counseling, home visits, Deaf/Hard of Hearing mentors, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) planning and advocacy, parent and family support groups/networking, and more.

Continued on page 2...

Getting a cochlear implant is just the first step. Families may still need additional support to find the best educational options for their child.



SUMMER 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

[Guiding Children on Their Hearing Journey](#)

[A Message From Our CEO](#)

[Parenting as a DHOH Person](#)

[Donor Corner: Matching Funds](#)

[Community Spotlight: Wayne and Lorraine Lesser](#)

A Message From Our CEO



Dear friends,

Just a few weeks ago, the Bay Area Consumer Checkbook evaluated 50 hearing aid centers throughout the nine counties of the Bay Area. The publication bases ratings upon reviews from real clients, using seven criteria that are applicable to all agencies. The Hearing and Speech Center was ranked as the #1 hearing aid center in the ENTIRE Bay Area.

Their secret shoppers also found massive discrepancies in how much clients were being charged. In the most glaring instance, a shopper was quoted \$7,694 for a pair of hearing aids that another provider was offering at \$2,650. This is a \$5,044 difference for the exact same product. For each and

every one of the 12 sample products reviewed the HSC was providing products lower than the average cost.

These types of behaviors are extremely worrying to those of us who are already concerned about the affordability of hearing aids. It is up to us and our community to stand up for what is fair in our field. We must make our voices heard and it is very much part of our vision to promote integrity in the field of hearing health. We have dedicated ourselves to an equitable and comprehensive model of care – regardless of any individual's ability to pay. To be distinguished in such a way by Bay Area Consumer Checkbook is a huge validation that our advocacy efforts for fair play and transparency within the field of hearing aids are being recognized by our community at large.

Finally, thank you to all who showed their support at our 100 year anniversary gala. It was a memorable night and it was such a pleasure to celebrate former directors John Darby and Rayford Reddell and see so many people from decades past still so closely connected to us. The event was a huge success and raised over \$140,000 for our programs – almost a quarter of our annual charitable dollars needed in just one night! It is precisely this type of support that allows us to advocate around the issues mentioned above and serve our community with integrity. We greatly appreciate your acknowledgement and involvement. Have a wonderful summer!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D-Kennedy'.

Darragh Kennedy | CEO

Guiding Children on Their Hearing Journey (continued)

Families come to the UCSF Cochlear Implant Center from all over the state for implantation. Many of these families are from rural areas, where they don't have access to essential follow up services. Speech language pathologist (SLP), Sara Coffey, provides speech therapy services to these families via Skype.

"Children in rural areas often do not have access to service providers with experience in assisting children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. After receiving a cochlear implant, I work with the family through teletherapy to provide both speech therapy and consultation in order to educate the family on how to develop listening skills with the implants," Sara explained. "The families then take these skills and work with their children throughout the week to promote development."

There are unique challenges that come with teletherapy. "You can't play directly with the children," Sara said, "With the younger children, teletherapy involves coaching parents to interact while targeting various skills. The benefit of this is the parents increase their confidence while meeting their child's needs. The parents are the best therapist anyway!"

Sara's services are extremely beneficial for many families. "Therapy after a CI is absolutely necessary. You can't turn on a cochlear implant and have a child magically understand everything. Typically, humans start at birth learning to understand sounds and language. The children with cochlear implants are learning these skills at a different time line and require a trained professional to help move through the listening hierarchy. When they go home, the CI users need continued stimulation to help associate meaning to sounds and words. Therapists help guide parents in assisting this process with their children."

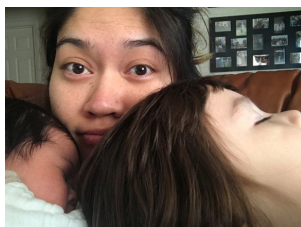
Currently, Sara is providing teletherapy services to two families. Since she and fellow SLP, Rose Phung, are some of the only SLPs in the area that are trained specifically in working with children with cochlear implants, we expect to see more families requesting this very important service. We look forward to seeing everything the children in our program will accomplish!

Parenting as a DHOH Person: Three Staff Members Share Their Stories

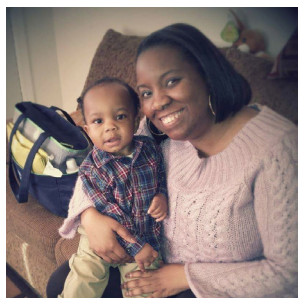


Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHOH) parents face challenges and joys that many hearing parents don't. Three of our staff members are all DHOH (Deaf or Hard of Hearing) and mothers of small children.

Audiologist, Kate Favor, has two children, Bruce (2 years) and Malayah (5 months). "My biggest concern is not being able to hear my kids," Kate said. "As a mom, I feel like I'm on constant alert. I don't want to compromise safety or overlook their needs." Baby Malayah co-sleeps with Kate and her husband, Rob, but as an extra precaution, Kate sleeps with one of her hearing aids on.



Director of Education and Social Services, Shannon Simonson, has similar issues hearing her daughter, Faith (21 months) at night. She uses a baby monitor, but sometimes doesn't hear it. Happily, her husband and co-parent is able to hear the baby when Shannon cannot.



"Do not let your disability scare you away from having a family. We can and are raising beautiful children every day!"

Kate, Shannon, and Employment Specialist, Dorothea Tolliver, also use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with their children.

"Bruce and I have found signing to be helpful for communicating. I modified some signs for his limited fine motor skills. When he can't express something verbally, he signs it," Kate explained. She

is also teaching Bruce Tagalog. "I like to think I'm raising trilingual children. Hopefully, it will stay that way."

"It has been wonderful to see her use sign language because I know it decreases frustration if she cannot yet speak it," Shannon agreed.

Dorothea's primary language is ASL. Her partner is Deaf, so it is necessary for her two-year-old, Norris, to sign to communicate with his parents. He is enrolled at the Center for Early Intervention on Deafness (CEID) in a program specifically for KODAs (Kids of Deaf Adults).

"Being a Hard of Hearing parent and having a hearing child is a blessing because we know he will be exposed to both Deaf and hearing culture," Dorothea said. "When he grows up, he can be whatever he wants to be, and his bilingualism will be a plus when looking for jobs."

Donor Corner: Matching Funds

The Hearing and Speech Center is proud to announce that we were recently the recipient of a matching grant from the Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation, in support of our services to low income seniors! The foundation will match the donations of our supporters, up to \$20,000, and this fund helps us provide hearing tests, consultations, counseling, community classes, and more. You can contribute to this cause by indicating "matching grant" on your donation.

Gifts in Honor & Memory February 2017-June 2017

In Honor of Donna Casey:
Walter & Ellen Newman
Deborah Mann

In Honor of Sara Coffey:
Anne Coffey
Brittany Gatchell
Dolores Ziegler

In Honor of Bob Davies:
Joan and Jim Kirsner

In Honor of John Darby:
Nancy Brixey
Carol Cody

In Honor of William Mackey:
Jerry and Diana Robinson

In Honor of Gregory Moeller:
Allison Hastings

In Honor of Austin Zhu:
Trent Zhu & Judy Wu

In Memory of Dr. Shirley Baron:
Dr. Barry Baron

In Memory of Roger Boas:
Vera Cole Carpeneti
James C. Hormel & Michael Nguyen

Myron Sugarman & Cynthia Woods

In Memory of Peggy Gazzera:
Steve Gazzera

In Memory of Edith Imeri:
Ricardo Imeri

In Memory of James Nelson:
George Daugherty

In Memory of Rayford Reddell:

Lorraine Decker
Cindy Hausch Booth
Kathleen McNaulty

In Memory of Graciela Robles:
Antonio Robles

All three mothers encourage other Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to not be afraid of raising children. "Everyone has different challenges and needs. You know your family better than anyone else and what is best for them," Kate said.

"Having a child in general is amazing. I think having a hearing loss definitely makes you more aware of environmental sounds and I am always eager to teach my daughter new sounds. She can now say, 'listen!' when a bird sings, the refrigeration alarm goes off, when daddy opens the front door... Another benefit is being able to teach her about the Deaf culture and hopefully she will be sensitive to those with disabilities," Shannon said. "Do not let your disability scare you away from having a family. We can and are raising beautiful children every day!"



HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER

a non-profit clinic, school & community

1234 Divisadero Street
San Francisco
CA 94115

www.hearingspeech.org

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

Community Spotlight: Wayne & Lorraine Lesser



Wayne Lesser is a well-known figure in the Bay Area hard of hearing community. Wayne was born with hearing loss. He went on to become a successful attorney in San Francisco, but the experience of living with hearing loss always influenced his work and approach. Later in life, Wayne became more focused on advocacy around hearing loss and hearing protection. He began to dissect the models of care he experienced, and question why they revolved simply around “amplification” and often failed to acknowledge more holistic approaches of treatment. He was frustrated and motivated to influence a hearing world to acknowledge and adapt to the world he experienced as what he calls “HIP” (Hearing Impaired Person). Today, Wayne continues to innovate and has launched a series of products (and philosophies!) under the LesserSound brand, including an app that measures and shares decibel levels in public places. He remains dedicated to those with hearing loss and educating others on hearing loss prevention.

Wayne’s wife, Lorraine, has been by his side for almost 45 years. Later this summer, Lorraine is being honored by the Hearing Loss Association of America. She will receive the annual Alice Marie Stone Family Involvement Award for her tireless support, inspiration, and advocacy on behalf of and alongside her husband. Throughout their marriage, Lorraine has acted as an advocate and educator, instructing doctors, friends, and others about the basics of hearing loss and Wayne’s communication needs. Lorraine recently said “...in living with and caring for someone who is hearing impaired. . . . I didn’t dwell on the fact that my husband was hard of hearing. He was the man I fell in love with.

Throughout all our years, I was looking at the miracles that happened as opposed to the difficulties. It shifted my thoughts to the positive side of things.”

The HSC celebrates both of these community members, and heartily congratulates Lorraine on her well-deserved award.