



FAMILY NETWORK FOR DEAF CHILDREN

I have watched many parents over the past several years make huge sacrifices for their deaf children. Let's face it – all parents make sacrifices for their children, but it is easier with a hearing child, isn't it? It's often "drop off and pick up", with the luxury of standing on the sidelines with the other parents sipping a Tim Horton's coffee and chatting (that's the life you signed up for, isn't it?). When you have a deaf child – so much time, energy and finances are spent supporting them in and through their passions. Most of the support requires either mom or dad being directly involved.

In the early years, when the kids were younger, it was easier to be involved, but as they become teens, it becomes much more obvious to have your mom or dad serving as your interpreter. Like it or not we do it, so that are our children have great experiences in life.

Because Deaf Youth Today focuses on sports/recreation, here are some examples of what parents all over B.C. are doing:

- a mom in bare feet – interprets at Swim practices and Swim meets.
- a mom (and dad) interpret basketball, badminton & volleyball camps, clinics, practices and games - including weekend "away" tournaments.
- a dad – runs the sidelines interpreting for his deaf son during Special Olympics training.
- two moms –serve on a Curling Executive and spend time organizing in order to have their deaf daughters be included and play together on the same team.
- a sister interprets her deaf brother's practices, games and post-game chats.
- a Deaf dad and hearing dad co-coach a team of deaf basketball players.
- Three parents fly to Montreal to watch their deaf children compete in the Deaf Pan Am Games.
- a mom interprets for her deaf daughter at horseback riding clinics and lessons.
- two parents drive their deaf daughter and her two friends all the way to Oregon to attend a Christian Deaf camp.
- a dad drives to Vancouver (from the Okanagan) so his deaf son could be included at a Deaf Youth Today Basketball and Golf camp for one week.
- a mom arranges/pays for a one-to-one worker so her deaf plus son can be included in a summer program.
- a Mom arranges interpreting so her deaf daughter and two deaf friends could attend a one week camp at Circle Square Ranch in the Okanagan.

Why do I bring this up? ... because all over B.C. parents are spending time, energy and finances putting these "deposits" into their deaf children. The individual moments may sometimes seem meaningless, but over the years, they begin to add up. Every single "deposit" that is made is added to a deaf child's life experiences. These deposits all pay off in the end. Parents – you are all doing an excellent job!

As FNDC administers the Deaf Youth Today program, we would like to figure out ways of supporting parents through some of these challenges rather than have you slogging it out alone. **What can we do to support you is our question????**

In the Deaf Youth Today Program, one of the interesting scenarios that has come to the forefront over the years is what I have dubbed the “Eclectic Group Syndrome”. Let me explain. We have so few deaf children in any one location in B.C. that it’s virtually impossible to run an effective learning or recreational group. For example, a “hypothetical” group may include the following: an 8 year old deaf girl with no language, a 9 year old deaf boy with Cerebral Palsy, a 10 year old deaf boy with behaviour issues, a 10 year old deaf girl with developmental disabilities, an 11 year old competitive deaf girl, an 13 year old deaf girl with autism, a 10 year old hard of hearing boy that signs but prefers spoken language – and they are all signed up for ... a Tennis Camp.

Deep friendships aren’t developed, frustrations arise, language levels are vast, and tennis skill levels are diverse. No two deaf children are alike in any of those areas. The kids begin to complain, the program staff become frustrated and the parents aren’t happy.

In an effort to be all things to all people – we end up not being able to serve any one deaf child effectively. This is what I call the Eclectic Group Syndrome. (Ask any teacher of the deaf, and I’m sure they understand what I’m talking about).

We are beginning to see the effects of this in a couple of the programs that we have offered. Deaf Youth Today is now in the process of making some changes. Over the next several months, Deaf Youth Today will be conducting phone surveys with parents and will be consulting with Deaf adults and other groups to determine how to best serve deaf children and youth.

One suggestion that we are exploring is moving to a “closer to home” model where deaf youth and/or parents choose and pay for programs in their home community (for their deaf child and one or two additional deaf friends), and Deaf Youth Today may provide a Deaf Buddy and/or interpreting support. This is a great opportunity for us to branch out throughout B.C. and not just the Lower Mainland. We also need to figure out creative ways to meet the needs of Deaf Plus children that need more support than we have been able to give in the past. Of course, we will continue to run large group programs like our Hornby Island Kids Camp and Summer Adventure Tours etc. because we value the large group experience.

We are hoping that you will work with us as we develop some new goals during this next year. We are on a journey together and hope you will join us. *Cecelia*

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FAMILY NETWORK FOR DEAF CHILDREN

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of Members of **The FAMILY NETWORK FOR DEAF CHILDREN** (the "Society") will be held on **Friday, September 10th, 2004, 9:00 pm**, (immediately following the FNDC workshop) at the YMCA, 14988 57 Avenue, Surrey (152nd Street & No. 10 Highway)

The purpose of the meeting will be to transact the following business:

1. To receive and consider the Report of the Directors and the financial statements of the Company for the fiscal year end March 31, 2004 together with the report of the Auditors thereon;
2. To determine the number of Directors at nine;
3. To elect Directors of the Company to hold office until the close of the next annual general meeting.
4. To appoint Auditors.

DATED this 30th day of July 2004.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FAMILY NETWORK FOR DEAF CHILDREN

Per:

"COLLEEN PETERSON"
President and Director

NOTE:

- Members in good standing are all members who have paid their annual membership for 2004/2005. *Voting members are parents or legal guardians that have been a parent or foster parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child, youth or adult.*
- All members of the Family Network for Deaf Children are encouraged to attend this important meeting.
- Interpreters will be provided.

Do you need a Volunteer Interpreter??????

Douglas College Student Volunteer Interpreters

If you would like a volunteer student interpreter please contact us at intr@douglas.bc.ca
or at 604-527-5133 tty

Please place your request at least 2 weeks in advance and include all the information below so we can promptly process your request.

- Date and time
- Place
- Length of appointment
- General location - municipality
- Type of event you are planning to attend - family reunion, birthday party, etc.
- Contact information – please provide an e-mail address or name and phone number

All requests are checked by department faculty to ensure the request is suitable for a student interpreter to provide service.

We look forward to helping with your interpreting needs.



Services for Family and Community Development

Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

To contact us or to register for programs:

Address: 4334 Victory Street, Burnaby BC V5J 1R2

Email: psdhh@gems1.gov.bc.ca

Telephone: (604) 660-5507

TTY: (604) 660-5509

Fax: (604) 660-1859

Free call Outside Lower Mainland use ENQUIRY BC (8:30 – 4:30 p.m. weekdays):

1-800-663-7867 (V) 1-800-661-8773 (TTY)

WHAT'S NEW AT SFCD?

Our big announcement to the families and professionals who know Hester Hussey, our Sign Language Specialist, is that she will be retiring from SFCD at the end of September. Hester has worked hard to establish SFCD's *Sign Language Development* classes and programs. We are fortunate that even though we are saying good-bye she has agreed to offer the Community Based Reading program twice this Fall. This program teaches parents how to read to their Deaf child in ASL. Promoting and supporting literacy in Deaf children has been Hester's passion. A new Sign Language Specialist will start in October – T.B.A.

Sign language classes, in the Lower Mainland, are being set-up upon request. We encourage parents and caregivers to contact our office for more information on all our services.

We look forward to hearing from you.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS (September to December 2004)

SIGN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

1. **Community Based Reading** (families with children ages 5 – 8yrs)
Date: Oct. 27, 2004
Time: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Where: 4334 Victory Street, Burnaby, BC
Please Register by – October 15, 2004

2. **Community Based Reading** (families with children ages 5 – 8yrs)
Date: November 24, 2004
Time: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Where: T.B.A
Please Register by – November 12, 2004

Hester Hussey and David Still will provide an evening of story storytelling for families.

A selected story is read in ASL, then Hester and David teach the ASL/English aspects of the story to parents while the children participate in a craft or activity related to the book's theme.

3. **Sign Language Classes – Kelowna, BC**
Date: On Tuesday, September 28 – November 16/04
Time: Two classes - times to be confirmed
Instructor: Deborah Perry
Where: Central Okanagan Child Development Centre

4. **Sign Language Classes – Vernon, BC**
Date: On Wednesday, September 29 – November 17/04
Time: Two classes - times to be confirmed
Instructor: Dellalee Piper
Where: T.B.A.

FAMILY DAYS

1. FAMILY DAY 2004

Date: Saturday, September 11

Time: 11:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Where: 4334 Victory Street, Burnaby

Hosted in partnership with Deaf Youth Today, this event is an opportunity for families to connect with old friends and make new ones. Also families will receive information about upcoming programs and workshops offered by SFCD and DYT. Let's come together and have some fun as we start off the new school year! **See attached flyer for specific information.**

2. SCIENCE WORLD FAMILY DAY

T.B.A – this popular event is presently in the planning stages. We are hoping to offer this in November.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Educational Workshops in parenting offered by Barb Desmarais – see descriptions below.

About Barb Desmarais

Barb and her husband have raised two deaf sons using sign language as the mode of communication in their home. Barb is a trained parenting and life skills coach. Since 1988, Barb has been leading parenting workshops for various family agencies and organizations.

1. Your Child's Self-Esteem

Date: Saturday, October 2, 2004

Time: 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Where: 4334 Victory Street, Burnaby, BC

Please register by – September 17, 2004 (let us know if childcare is needed)

Children with positive self-esteem have healthy relationships with their peers as well as with adults. They are not afraid to take risks, they don't feel defeated by adversity and are more likely to be leaders rather than followers. This workshop will provide parents the opportunity to learn how to develop their deaf or hard of hearing child's self-esteem and also how to take stock of their own. We can't give what we don't have.

2. Discipline Vs. Punishment

Date: Saturday, November 27, 2004

Time: 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Where: 4334 Victory Street, Burnaby, BC

Please register by – November 12, 2004 (let us know if childcare is needed)

Many of us confuse discipline with punishment. This workshop will provide parents and caregivers the opportunity to acquire knowledge and improve their strategies regarding natural and logical consequences with a focus on the long-term goals parents hold for their children.

MEMBER TO MEMBER

MY LIFE AT LAKE TRAIL SCHOOL

Submitted by Granger Campbell

[Granger, age 14, is Deaf, lives on Hornby Island, and attends Lake Trail Middle School in Courtenay. This story was printed in a Lake Trail School Poetry and Short Story publication].

I can't imagine the world with sound but maybe you can't imagine the world without sound: my perspective is unique. I'm the only deaf boy at Lake Trail Middle School and my experience is different, largely because of the communication challenge.

My life here at Lake Trail is almost the same as all the other kids. But one thing is different, communication. I can't hear people talk. Instead, I sign everything. American Sign Language (ASL) is the best language for me. I can understand everything and say everything I want to in my language; it's great, but other people don't know it. I only started learning English a few years ago, and it is very different than ASL. When my friends start laughing, sometimes I miss the jokes so it's hard for me. Communication can be a problem, but I have found ways to make friends.

Friends are really important and it's easy for me to make new ones. I make friends like everybody else. It happens naturally. I encourage kids if they want to learn sign or fingerspell, which helps. I want to be independent and I am. I have an interpreter in class for all the information, but in the rest of my life, I have to write notes or gesture, or sign. The Internet helps too; I like to chat on MSN like most kids. Here at Lake Trail there are friends who I've known for years, so talking and signing are commonplace to them. Encouraging sign is easy for me because communication with friends is important.

I have better vision than most kids because I'm deaf. My eyes are keen because I use them all day for everything. I use my eyes for talking, playing games, learning, reading, watching television, reading captions on television and chatting. I can see people coming even if I am writing. When people are moving, for example, while the class has changed, I can feel the movement. I can also feel the new bells at our school.

Joining sport teams is fun for me and good for the school too. In sports like basketball, soccer and volleyball, I can add to the team because of my excellent eyes. Sometimes I notice things that other kids miss. I feel good because I help the team. Skiing is my favorite sport. I've been skiing since I was 18 months old and I love it. I'm a good skier and it's good to participate with the school team. The school team is lots of fun, and the competitions are great- we get to miss school. Joining teams is important to me because it helps the school. It means we are participating in healthy, fun activities and meeting people on other teams from different schools. Then we can show school pride, whether we win or lose (I like to win though). It's great to represent our school. I really enjoy participating on school teams and activities with my friends at Lake Trail.

A community is where people feel like they belong. Lake Trail is one of my communities. I have another in Vancouver and it is important to me because it is the Deaf community, where we talk as equals. Lake Trail is a good school for me because I can participate a lot and have fun. When I leave here in a year, I'll have to begin all over again at Vanier High School, but I know my experiences at Lake Trail will prepare me for life at Vanier.

A BELIEF

Submitted by Kim Sanderson

[Kim, her husband Paul, and two children live in South South Surrey. Ashley (hearing), just recently graduated from high school, and Cole (Deaf) is entering Grade 11 this year].

There is a belief that if just one person really believes in you, takes an interest in you, it can make all the difference in the world in terms of you believing in yourself and succeeding in life.

Our Deaf son, Cole, is fortunate in that he has many people that believe in him – the majority of them are hearing. But he also has one special Deaf person that believes and is a constant cheerleader in his life – especially in regards to athletics. In my heart, I think this one special person sees a bit of himself in our son and by being with Cole it reminds him of his youth. But the reason isn't important, what is important is that his belief is there and its strong and it speaks volumes. His commitment will influence many areas of our son's life far beyond athletics.

That person is Doug Lambert.

On their first meeting Doug was helping a 2-year old Cole navigate a rope bridge across a creek at LVE and ever since he's been a constant guide and cheerleader. Doug was there while Cole competed in baseball on the Deaf White Sox team. He was there for basketball and the YMCA Deaf Slammers. Doug has been a fan at many of Cole's games -volleyball, basketball or badminton - at his new school Semiahmoo Secondary. All the local parents just assumed Doug was a blood relative (we tease ... "grandfather", which he hates and figures couldn't be possible – but hey do the math! Funnily enough Cole and Doug both share a March 4th birthday)



This summer Cole has competed in beach volleyball tournaments EVERY single weekend from the beginning of May to end of August. At almost every tournament, in addition to us his parents, Doug has been there to cheer him on. In Parksville at Beachfest, at the Summer Games in Abbotsford, in Seaside, Oregon at the King of the Beach Tournament, in Kits, Spanish Banks and at Locarno – Doug, seated in his Canada chair have been a permanent fixture on the sand.

One of the few games that Doug missed was the 16 & under Provincials. Cole was puzzled at his absence and demanded to know why Doug wasn't there (Doug was attending the wedding of another young Deaf person, Barb Hussey, who he know doubt influenced as well while she grew up).

Doug's belief in Cole's athletic abilities, his joining in our family's celebration of sport and his constant guidance and feedback in terms of developing character have been instrumental in Cole's athletic competitions, but more so in his life. Having another Deaf person present to witness these events and share in a young Deaf person's journey through childhood and adolescence is priceless.

Hopefully Doug will be accompanying us to the Deaflympics as it just won't be the same without him, his camera and his Canadian Flag chair.

LIFE WITH A DEAF DOG:

Submitted by Shannon Haider

[Shannon and her husband, Gene, both Deaf live in the Okanagan with their three hearing children and their deaf dog, Aspen].

Where to begin? I can begin with the story about how I got my beautiful Border Collie x Blue Heeler.

My dream since I was a child was to have a dog of my own. My parents did not allow me to have one. One day, I will get my own dog when I live on my own. My dream changed towards the direction getting a Hearing dog for the Deaf. I never actively looked for a dog at all.

One day, the opportunity just came across my lap. I heard about this dog who was at the shelter thru the grapevine. She was deaf. Out of curiosity, I went to the animal shelter to check her out. I left the shelter empty-handed and confused. Was it good idea to get a dog that is deaf rather than a Hearing dog for the deaf? My plan seemed to change somewhat. I ended up with this beautiful scared deaf dog. With the intention to find her a good home in the deaf community. One week later, my heart was won! I just could not give her up to a deaf couple who had shown interest. I ended up keeping her.

My feeling at the time was really stunned that I actually got a dog that is also deaf herself. That wasn't the plan! So she has a home, I decided that she needed a name. I mulled through names for her, giving this dog a good long look, the name Aspen seems to suit her well. So Aspen is her name then. She is named Aspen Chance, but called Aspen for short. Her name sign is a flat palm over the left or right side of the temple, bending it like the shape of a floppy upright ears, up and down.

Now for the training, sitting there looking at Aspen. Thinking ... she is only 1 and ½ years old. I felt that it was too late to train her for anything. I stocked up on dog books. Read through books how to train her. I used ASL to have her follow commands. That worked well. Aspen took an entire month to learn the sign for "sit". Since she was in a new home and new environment, she had so much fear in her. She later picked up on other commands other than "sit" quickly after she settled in.

Aspen is very attached to me. She follows me everywhere and needs to be with me constantly. I have learnt from her that she can't hear me. So she follows me to "see" where I am going. She will put her head on my feet as I work at the computer so she can sleep and notice if I get up. She will lean against the chair for the same effect when I push the chair back to get up from the desk.

I recall one day when I decided to go out for ½ hr to train Aspen to cope being alone in the house. I left her and signed/wave "bye". When I got back, to my horror, I saw that she had chewed the metal/plastic blinds and had tangled herself in one of the blinds. When she saw me, she tried to run but couldn't because she was tangled up. My first thought was, "bad dog!". Over time with a lot of pondering, I have come to realize something. She wasn't being bad at all. She, from her point of view sees me "disappearing" through the door. So she proceeded to chew the blinds next to the door to see where I went. When that didn't work, she chewed other blinds at the other window to see me. She just simply couldn't hear my car leaving the driveway and wanted to see.

Her eyes are very valuable for Aspen. She uses her eyes for communication. She can "talk" with me with her eyes. I learnt with Aspen how to communicate with her. She did that very well. If she wanted a ball, she would look at me and look at the ball as to say can we play?

I find that I am very protective of Aspen. I feel that since a lot of people do not understand her deafness. Aspen is never left alone outside in an unfenced yard. She is very good about not wandering off or taking off. That was not the problem. I find it's harder to trust people with Aspen than to trust Aspen with people. Aspen can't hear the cars behind her. She can't hear people yelling at her to move. So she is always with me or with a responsible adult who looks out for her.

There have been no regrets about getting Aspen. Of course, life wasn't easy moving from house to house. Aspen has adjusted to my unpredictable life very well. She has received a lot of love from myself and my friends; and now my husband. Having Aspen has taught me so much in life. She has been there through the ups and downs in life itself. She sees everything so differently. I've learnt to look through her eyes. I'm starting to even think like her every time I see something round, I think of a ball.

Aspen has a great fondness over balls. She just loves playing with balls so much that she was enrolled in flyball. She has been doing very well in flyball. Communication isn't a problem for her and myself. I just showed her how to do it by leading her by the leash. By the 3rd flyball practice, she was running to the box and back on her own. She has her own tetherball in the back-yard as well. She chases balloons with glee. When they finally popped. She looks at me saying, "more?" She enjoys playing soccer.

Having Aspen in my life is a true blessing. She has enriched my life in so many ways. There are no regrets. Aspen and I have a good life ahead of us and good memories behind us. I look forward to the years with Aspen in tow. She's a special girl and will always hold a place in my heart and my husband's heart too.

She's now 10 years old. I'm just so amazed how fast the time went by. She knows over 90 signs and our boys just love her to pieces. She has since then retired from fly-ball due to a fly-ball related injury she got when she was 8 years old. She may be old; but she's still a puppy at heart and loves playing ball constantly.

Resources:

To order Living with a Deaf Dog call Direct Book Service at (800) 776-2665 or 4M Enterprise at (800) 487-9867. Cost is \$15.95 (US) plus shipping.

You can reach the Deaf Dog Education Action Fund by writing P.O Box 369, Boonville, CA 95415; or visiting the Web site at www.cybervision.com/ddeaf/



INTERVIEW WITH HESTER HUSSEY

Submitted by Rebecca Storey

[Hester has served on the FNDC Board for several years, and has been a huge supporter of families with deaf and hard of hearing children. This article will give you insight into Hester's experiences over the years. We wish Hester all the best in her early retirement].

Hester Hussey will be leaving her job at the end of September. Hester has touched the lives of hundreds of families with Deaf children throughout BC. I am inspired to think of how many people reading this article have shared their children, family and community with her. She holds memories and pieces of history with so many of us.

Hester began her interest in early childhood education (ECE) following the births of her daughters, Leslie (1973) and Barbara (1975). She worked part-time with the newly-formed Deaf Children's Society (DCS) visiting families with Deaf children in their homes in the evening to teach sign language and mentor new parents.

Leslie attended a local parent participation pre-school – as Leslie was the only Deaf child, the *participation* required of Hester was to facilitate communication and act as an 'interpreter' for her daughter during circle time and story telling. When Barbara was ready for pre-school she was one of the first students at the Deaf Children's Society pre-school. Hester was hired as a pre-school assistant at DCS.

During these early years, Hester took care of her girls, worked at the pre-school, made home visits with families in the evenings, and began to take ECE courses through Douglas College. Hester was the first Deaf student at Douglas College, which was quite a different institution than it is today – some of Hester's courses were in New Westminster, some in Surrey, some in North Vancouver. An interpreter was provided through Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Hester's first college interpreter was Eleanor McLaughlin (in the days before she was married to Joe). After four years of study, Hester received her ECE certification.

For twelve years Hester attended Learning Vacation Experience (LVE), the summer immersion experience for families with Deaf children offered by Deaf Children's Society (DCS). She has fond memories of the summer weeks spent near Squamish at the rustic Outdoor Education Centre. She worked in a variety of roles from sign language instructor, to host for families, to group leader for children's activities. Aside from LVE, Hester remained with DCS and worked as a pre-school teacher, pre-school supervisor, and home visit instructor. She can vividly remember the children and families that grew through the program.

Hester began to teach ASL in the evenings with Vancouver Community College (VCC) and in 1990 she transferred to VCC full-time working as a lab assistant during the day and an instructor in the evenings.

In 1993, she moved to the Jericho Hill School (JHS) dorm to work with the senior girl residents for three years. After three years at the dorm, Hester decided that she wanted to stop working so that she could stay home (for the first time since her girls were babies). However, in 1996 a new opportunity was offered, an opportunity Hester just couldn't say no to. In 1996, Hester accepted a new job with the Jericho Individual Compensation program (JIC). She travelled the province as a claimant recruiter and then worked as a consultant for claimants with special needs.

In 2000, Hester worked in the mornings at the new dorm site in Burnaby - Victory Hill Residential Program. She was then hired as the *Sign Language Specialist* for Services for Family and

Community Development (SFCD) through MCFD Provincial Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. For the last few years she has been coordinating sign language instruction for families throughout British Columbia.

In the spring of 2004 Hester completed her first triathlon (swimming, biking, running race) and decided that she wanted to stop working so that she could spend more time at home and pursue her interests. She has announced her semi-retirement (for real this time) for September 30, 2004. However, she said that she is not ready to stop working completely, and would love to continue by volunteering and doing short-term contract work or special projects.

She thanks the families, community members, professionals and friends who have allowed her to be a part of their lives. She says she has learned a lot about respect and she has grown through each relationship. She is especially proud of SFCD because it has grown over the years, and she anticipates that it will continue to serve more & more families all over B.C.

In the future she will be taking time to focus on herself – hobbies, exercise, travelling with her husband Dave and visiting her daughters in the States (Leslie is married and lives in Texas, Barbara who will be married next week, lives in Minnesota). In the future, she plans to volunteer her time supporting Deaf seniors with daily living tasks.

Hester has great expectations of enjoying her freedom, yet she knows how hard it will be to say 'good bye'. She asks us not to forget about her and to keep in touch.

My hope for Hester is that she holds a sense of the many children she cared for even as she was raising her own; the many families she strengthened even as she was building her own; and the many friends and colleagues she inspired with her grace, energy and generosity of spirit.

***Remember to constantly check out our website, as we are updating continually so that you have lots of information!**

www.fndc.ca

FROM MY EXPERIENCE ...

Submitted by Kim Sanderson

[Kim, her husband Paul, and two children live in South South Surrey. Ashley (hearing), just recently graduated from high school, and Cole (Deaf) is entering Grade 11 this year].

We parents need to find strength and courage in places deep inside ourselves, in order that our children will have a sense of entitlement that they need to succeed, and to feel worthy and equal in their lives.

If they have seen it in us, they will find it more easily in themselves.

The problem, **from my experience**, is sometimes we find it hard to find strength and courage, and so we must “fake it” or “create it” where it doesn’t exist or is in low supply. We must dig down, deep inside ourselves and **believe**.

My strength, courage, and feeling of entitlement, has been in low supply in situations that are filled with hearing children and their parents – you know those parents that can easily sit back, chat amongst themselves and watch their children fit right in. Our kids often require so much more of us, than others do of their moms and dads. As parents of deaf kids, we are often needed to participate in foreign situations, in order so that our kids understand what is happening and are on somewhat of an equal footing. That makes us “stick out”. That can breed in us a sense of alienation.

There have been countless times as a mother, I have felt that I just couldn’t muster up the gusto to, go yet again, into a situation and appear *confident, in control* and *find a sense of belonging* when I felt so out of place. But I have, and I do, and I will again in the future.

And now with overwhelming pride, I see my kids doing it naturally. They go forward in places that I marvel at their courage, their self-esteem and their sense of belonging. I know that if Paul & I didn’t model it first, it might not be so obvious and natural in them. I believe it is paramount in determining their success in life. Both Ashley and Cole are able to do things I could never have done as a teen or young adult. They have a sense of entitlement that is amazingly powerful.

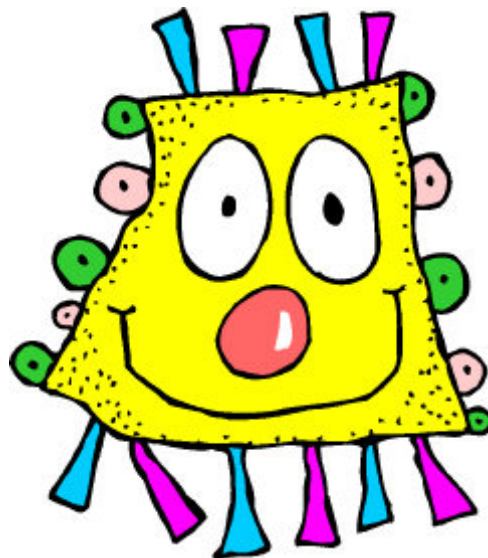
One example of what I speak of is ... a few years ago Cole had wanted to join a Grade 9 Club Volleyball team. Club Volleyball is usually for “elite” players that want to extend the school season. Cole hadn’t really had a school season, Burnaby South wasn’t able to find a coach for their junior volleyball team, so Cole hadn’t learned much about the game as he was coached by other older students. All others trying out for Club had just finished their fall Grade 9 volleyball season, while in contrast to our experience, skilled volleyball veterans had coached them. Cole is athletic though, and fiercely competitive. As we drove up to the gym where try-outs were held, he “changed his mind”. He wanted to go home – he refused to go into the gym. His confidence was weak. He was nervous. He decided he no longer wanted to try-out. Inside I was rejoicing, “yes, let’s get out of here!” I thought happily to myself “great – I don’t have to stand in front of a group of parents on the sidelines and teenage boys, trying to interpret “lingo” that I had no idea what I was talking about. Everyone in that gym surely knows each other from school, I know no-one and nothing about volleyball, and I will stick out and look goofy”. I felt frumpy and out of place being there and was pleased at the idea that I could now escape. But somewhere deep inside, a conflicting message was screaming out “Cole, you wanted this really badly, you were excited, you are a great athlete, you are scared and nervous and that is natural – you are equally as talented as any of these kids and you are worthy of giving it your best. You need to do this. You can’t skulk away. If you don’t make the team, no big deal, at least you tried. You gave it your best.” I gave myself a quick pep talk “Kim, you can interpret this, you can do a good job of it. You’ll both do just fine”.

I signed to Cole, “we are here, we are going in there – you don’t ever have to come back, but you are doing it today and you are giving it your best shot.”

After some further encouragement, he went in that gym, he tried his hardest, he worked extremely hard and although he didn’t have the skills of the boys, the coaches all noted his athletic ability and he was easily going to make the team. No-one could have guessed that Cole almost didn’t enter the gym because he felt like he didn’t belong or wouldn’t make the cut. The entire try-out I stood confidently beside the coach and interpreted to the best of my ability, while projecting a confident image as these young boys’ eyes were fixed either on my moving hands or this young new boy that wasn’t able to verbalize but had a pleasant happy face.

Almost every day, since that day more than a year ago, Cole has played volleyball. He plays school, club and beach and is no doubt the best beach volleyball player his age in the province and possibly in Canada. He now attends his neighbourhood school, a choice that was influenced by volleyball. He is determined to get a scholarship at a University and I have no doubt he will. I sometimes think, “what if I cowered, what if I hadn’t had the courage for both of us to go in there? What message would that have reinforced in him? I can think of many times in my life as his parent that I haven’t eagerly wanted to do something that involved standing and interpreting in front of a group of people I remember a high school rally at his new school, in front of 1,000 students and his interpreter was sick and I couldn’t find a replacement (oh god, what do you wear to that??), but that is another story... I am sure most of you can think of many times when you would have preferred to have walked away rather than go forward into a situation that requires you to have courage when you just can’t find it, but you have dug deep and came through. You **believed** it was the right thing to do for your child and no doubt it was.

From my experience you just never know where it will take you..... or take your child. Next time, if your supply is a bit weak, please draw strength ***from my experience***.



F.Y.I.

DO YOU HAVE "RUSTY" ASL SKILLS??

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO'D LIKE TO IMPROVE FLUENCY IN ASL, WITHOUT STARTING AT THE BASICS??

VCC is offering ADVANCED ASL as an evening course beginning this Fall:

What? -- ASL ADV 031 -- a course for people who know ASL but want to review and add to your skills
-- taught by experienced, Deaf instructors
-- HANDS-ON, FUN, INTERACTIVE

When? -- Wednesdays, 7:00 to 9:30 pm -- September 2004 to March 2005

Where? -- Vancouver Community College, King Ed Campus, 1155 East Broadway, Vancouver

Cost? -- \$308.

Register at the 4th floor registrar's office, or call for info: 604.871.7031

ASL, CUED SPEECH AND SIGNED ENGLISH EXACT

Good for parents to see the difference between stories told in ASL, using cued speech and SEE. If sign language instructors had access to this site, it would be a great tool for teaching as you can stop the video and explain what is going on.

<http://pbskids.org/lions/cornerstones/joseph/story/>

www.deafkidslink.ca

A new website for Deaf and hearing parents! We provide information, resources and networking for Deaf and hearing parents who use or are interested in American Sign Language (ASL).

If you know any parents of Deaf children, please encourage them to visit our website.

www.deafkidslink.ca is created by the Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf (OCSD), in collaboration with the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. We are funded by a grant from the Ontario Early Years Challenge Fund.



A PARENT GUIDEBOOK: ASL AND EARLY LITERACY

I have some good news to share with you. I am proud to say that I am one of the four contributing authors of the new book called “A Parent Guidebook: ASL and Early Literacy”. It’s a wonderful book for both deaf and hearing families from birth to preschool. It has full of ideas for fun activities that parents can play with their child. The book shows language facilitation, language games, ASL rhythms, rhymes, ASL storytelling, sharing books using ASL and art.

They are designed to nurture the parents’ relationship with their child and to help their child develop the language and literacy that will expand their world knowledge.

“A ‘must’ and a great resource in raising a healthy child”

This book and videotape are now on the market and if you are interested in buying them, you can order it through me at Deaf Diversity, 452 W. Nees Ave, Suite 178, Fresno, CA 93711. Ph: 559-438-7879 or Fax; 449-261-4516 or www.dovtech.com under Educational Products.

- 1. A Parent Guidebook: ASL and Early Literacy = 14.99**
- 2. Videotape – VHS or DVD = 12.99**

OR both items for \$25.00 dollars plus tax (no tax if out of California) and shipping cost.

There are more products under Educational and they are wonderful for young children.

DISABILITY TAX CREDIT COMMUNITY ADVISORY

The BC Coalition of People with Disability (BCCPD) and BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre (BC PIAC) are writing to advise our community partners about important changes to the Disability Tax Credit (DTC).

The DTC Certificate (Form T2201), which is the application form for the DTC, has been amended, and people with mental health and physical disabilities may now find it easier to qualify for the Tax Credit.

As a result of the amendments, disability is defined somewhat less restrictively than previously, and people who have been turned down for the DTC may want to reapply.

If you are reapplying you should tell your doctor or other qualified health professional that the DTC form has been amended. If you lost the DTC because of the October 2001 DTC review and you are reapplying, you should include with your DTC Certificate a letter entitled Request for an Adjustment asking for a reassessment of taxation years 2001 and 2002.

We are encouraged by the federal government's decision to introduce these changes and would like to congratulate the groups and individuals who have worked so hard to bring about this positive change for the disability community.

To Obtain the New DTC Certificate

You can access the DTC Certificate (Form T2201) from the Canada Revenue Agency's Website at: <http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca>
<http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca> Once you are on the website, click on search at the top of the homepage and then key in T2201 in the box provided.

Or, pick up the form at your local tax office.

MORNING CARE NEEDED IN THE SOUTH SURREY AREA

Morning care needed for 12 year old Deaf plus boy. South Surrey. 6:30-8 a.m. Monday-Friday. Starting Sept. 11.(There are two other children in the home as well.) Phone Nici 604.538.7564

CHHA - BC Parents' Branch "FAMILY WEEKEND"

Parent sessions, Teen Konnection, Kidz Konnection, Kiddie Care
- ALL at the beautiful new Surrey Family YMCA

Registrations accepted now for October 22, 23 2004

Contact Janet Les for information or a brochure: 604-794-3772 Email:

janetles@canada.com

Presenters include: Maureen Clarke, Susan Lane, Dan Paccioretti, Dr. Christina Perigoe, Dr. Ruth Warick...
Registration fee is \$35 per adult, \$20 per child - includes lunch and snacks

www.chhaparents.bc.ca

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FNDC

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Bella Poato Executive Assistant

DYT

Susi Bolender, DYT Co-ordinator

Articles

We love receiving articles from members and friends! If you are reading someone's article and saying, "I can't write anything" — think again. The feedback we get on these personal stories is phenomenal. So, tell us about your experiences. It doesn't matter who you are - a parent of a deaf child, Deaf adult, educator of deaf children, grandparent, aunt, uncle — we want to hear from you! We welcome your opinions, ideas, concerns or other information. Please remember **WHAT** you have to say is much more important than the spelling or grammatical errors.

FEEDBACK

As always, we take great pride in our newsletter. We enjoy producing it (and we especially love all the positive feedback). You may not realize how difficult it is to produce a newsletter for such a large, diverse group of people. Our newsletter goes out to parents, health professional, teachers of the deaf, teacher's assistants, preschool programs for deaf children, Deaf community organizations, and the list goes on.

What is FNDC about?

- FNDC believes that families are vital in ensuring that deaf children reach their full potential through a supportive home environment.
- FNDC believes that families have the right to make informed choices based on the needs of the deaf child and the family.
- FNDC believes that deaf children have the right to a quality education in a language that is 100% visually accessible.
- FNDC believes that each child is unique and has individual abilities and needs that must be recognized.
- FNDC believes that the rich and varied experiences and language of the Deaf community are an important and valuable resource for deaf children and their families.

With the support of our members, we hope to grow into an organization that provides workshops, networking via the internet and educating the hearing community and the Provincial Government on issues that are common and important to us all.

Who is FNDC?

FNDC is a non-profit society that was founded in March, 1995 to bring together families of deaf children in British Columbia who share common concerns.

Through our newsletter we are able to share information with our members and provide an opportunity for families to network with each other.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to those who support the goals of our organization. All FNDC members receive:

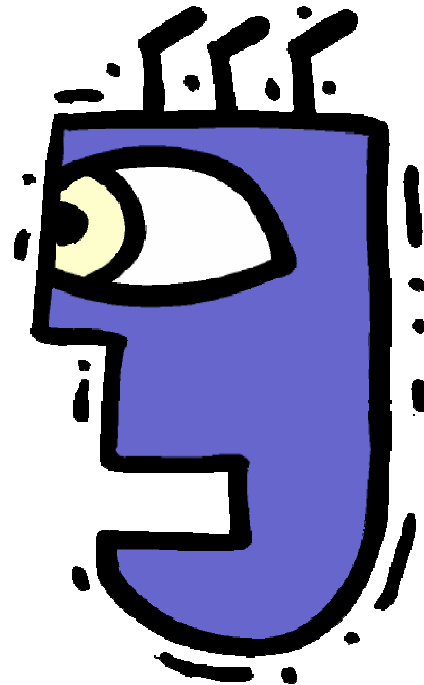
- a one year subscription to our newsletter (which is published three times a year)
- Family Network for Deaf Children's province-wide parent network.
- Update bulletins and information notices regarding upcoming workshops and courses and videos presented by FNDC.

Attached flyers:

Interpreting: Here it comes.. [Sept.10, 2004]

Family Day 2004 [Sept 11, 2004]

Deaf Funny Videos Contest [deadline August 31, 2004]



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2004/05

I would like to become a member of the Family Network for Deaf Children, a non-profit society, providing support and information. Members receive newsletters, bulletins and reduced workshop fees.

Memberships are valid April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2005. Please select the membership category, which applies to you:

- Family membership for families of d/Deaf or hard of hearing children. Any parent or legal guardian of a d/Deaf or hard of hearing child is entitled to vote. One vote per family \$15.00
- Individual membership. ** \$15.00
- Organizations/School Districts/Service Providers ** \$25.00
- I am a parent of a deaf child, and am unable to pay my membership fees at this time, but would like to continue receiving the newsletter. ** non-voting

Please check: NEW MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Method of Payment: Visa  MasterCard  Cheque *

(Charge card #) EXPIRY DATE [MM/DD/YY]

Signature

* Please make your cheque payable to **FNDC Family Network for Deaf Children** and return to the address below.

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ PROVINCE: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

HOME TELEPHONE: _____ voice TTY both

WORK TELEPHONE: _____ voice TTY both

CHILD'S NAME: _____ /AGE: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____ /AGE: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____ /AGE: _____ Please indicate which child is d/Deaf or hard of hearing with a *.

Receipts for Membership dues

If you would like a receipt of your payment mailed to you, please indicate here
IN ADDITION TO MY MEMBERSHIP I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION -- SEE NEXT PAGE.

Thank you for your support!
FNDC FAMILY NETWORK FOR DEAF CHILDREN
PO BOX 50075, South Slope RPO Burnaby, BC V5J 5G3

DONOR COUPON

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT B.C.'S DEAF CHILDREN

NAME: _____

COMPANY NAME (if corporate donation): _____

ADDRESS: _____

Postal Code: _____ Tel. #: _____

Please accept my donation of: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other: \$ _____

I wish to make my donation by:

Cheque *

Visa



MasterCard



(Charge card #)

EXPIRY DATE [MM/DD/YY]

Signature

* Please make your cheque payable to **FNDC Family Network for Deaf Children.**

Tax receipt name (if different from above):



- Please mail your donation to:
Family Network for Deaf Children.
PO Box 50075, South Slope RPO
Burnaby, BC V5J 5G3
- Official Charitable Registration No. 88622 5655 RR0001.
- B.C. Non-Profit Society #S-33351
- Please allow three weeks for a tax receipt.
- Tax receipts are issued for donations of \$10 or more.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!