

Michigan Speaks!

Michigan Chapter

Alexander Graham Bell

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

August

2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the President	1
Summer Camp Wrap-Up	2
I'm a Member	2
H.A. Tax Credit Honor	3
"Charmed" Story!	4
Back to School Tidbits	5
RTI	6
Matrix for D/HH	7

From the President: Summer Highlights & Looking Forward to Fall Conference

Michigan AG Bell participated in the Hearing Loss Assoc of America's Southeast Michigan "Walk 4 Hearing" at Kensington Metro Park in late May. Team MISD (Macomb County ISD), the AMAIZEing Blue Wolverines (U of M), MI AG Bell, the Michigan Ear Institute, and some individuals on other teams who designated funds to us made this a successful fundraiser!! We ended up receiving over \$800.00! Thank you SO much to all who participated!

Our Summer Splash picnic on July 9th was an enjoyable and relaxing event. We had 60 people attend including 20 children. Members of the Western Wayne County and the Downriver Chapters of the Hearing Loss Assoc. of Michigan came out to support us and enjoy a beautiful day of summer fun — visiting with old friends and making new ones — picnic lunch — and the opportunity

to network with others involved with hearing loss. The kids enjoyed the games: paper airplane races, water balloon toss, count the Skittles, egg race, and a scavenger hunt. Our fundraising efforts covered all expenses and, well . . . you just can't put a price on that kind of fun!

The 24th Annual Summer Camp was held from July 17 through 29th at YMCA Storer Camp near Jackson, MI. We had 18 campers attend and they had so much fun! See the article that follows for a better idea of what goes on at camp. Organizing this camp takes a tremendous amount of work and dedication every year. We offer our deepest appreciation to our Summer Camp Committee — Heather Van DeSteene, Mark Reeve, and Sid Kraizman and to our amazing 2011 Sum-

mer Camp staff, Meredith Rizor, Sonya Fritz, and Elisabeth McCourt! Thank you to all!

Our Fall Conference 2011 will feature the incredible Teresa Caraway, PhD. CCC-SLP, LSLS Cert. AVT. Please see the registration flyer enclosed for Fall Conference. Our conference committee, Chair Ashley Garber, Francina Silvey and Julie Steele are working hard to present an incredible conference. **Please plan to attend** and support our efforts to bring worthwhile activities to our members and others who are involved with hearing loss and how it impacts lives! See you November 11, 2011 at the Okemos Conference Center!

Shon Halacka



Summer Camp Wrap Up, 2011

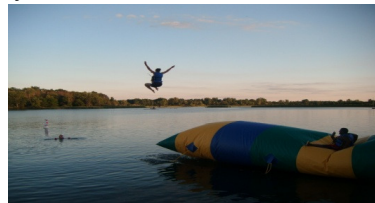
**By: Sonya Fritz,
Summer Camp Director**

A.G. Bell Summer Camp 2011 at the YMCA Storer Camp in Jackson, Michigan was a huge success! Eighteen fabulous young people received scholarships and were able to attend and successfully participate in a mainstream camp experience.



The A.G. Bell campers met each day as a group after lunch where they participated in language based activities. This year the campers put together a book of things that are important to them. Some of the things they mentioned and explained why they were important were hearing aids, friends, family, sleep, cabin leaders, and tracks (activities they individually participated in at camp). Other language activities the A.G. Bell campers engaged in included making mud pies, going on a scavenger hunt, and making scrap books and bracelets. Our campers learned about staying safe in the extreme heat this year.

They took advantage of water stations located around the campground, sunscreen, incentives to carry water bottles, running through sprinklers that were set up to cool off in, and how important it is to stay hydrated. Despite the extreme heat of 2011, our campers enjoyed several outdoor activities. These activities included sailing, paddling, swimming, drinking water, nature (which included local creatures and learning outdoor skills), archery, team sports, arts and crafts, wall climbing, horseback riding, trail rides, and blobbing. The blob is a large tube filled with air that sits in the water. One person jumps down on the blob and works his/her way down to the end of the tube.



Once the person on the end is ready another person jumps on the tube from a diving board, thus sending the person on the end flying through the air and landing in the water. Glee was another wonderful track the campers could choose to participate in. The Glee track was based on the popular television show of song and dance. In a week's time campers learned the lyrics and dance routine to a well known song.

Thank you to all of our campers and their caregivers, scholarship donors, our camping committee and staff, and the YMCA Storer Camp staff for making this summer a wonderful experience for all the kids. As we all continue to work together, we are making a difference today that changes lives for tomorrow.



I'm A Member:



By Huma M. Soofi

My daughter Ayla celebrated her eighth birthday last month. The past eight years have been quite a journey for us. Ayla was diagnosed with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss at birth. I remember those first few months of uncertainty, and just hoping that my little girl would be able

to hear something with her hearing aids. Over the years, we moved from Chicago to New York City to Ann Arbor, and each city helped Ayla progress to the point she is at today. Our audiologist in Chicago worked tirelessly to get a good picture of Ayla's hearing loss as an infant. We started auditory/verbal therapy in New York, and she also received her cochlear implants there. Ayla continues to receive AV therapy in Ann Arbor. She is a successful bilateral cochlear implant user, and has been fully mainstreamed since preschool. She is set to start third grade in the fall. When we first moved to Michi-

gan, I found AG Bell to be a great resource for meeting other parents and for getting information about services available in the area. I joined the board of MI AG Bell so that I could help find other parents who are looking for advice and support in dealing with their children's hearing loss. Our journey with Ayla's hearing loss is by no means over, and we still face new challenges as she gets older. But when I tell my daughter that she can be anything she wants to be, I now know that is possible.

Senator Stabenow Honored with Commemorative Plaque

On May 3, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) received a commemorative plaque in honor of her support of the Hearing Aid Tax Credit. This comes after an event last year in East Lansing, Mich., attended by 170 supporters. The event was organized by Shon Halacka, president of the AG Bell Michigan chapter and Ann Liming with Hearing Loss Association of Michigan. The Hearing Industries Association (HIA), International Hearing Society (IHS), Michigan Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MADHH), and American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) also supported the event.

The plaque was presented by (from left to right): Susan Boswell, AG Bell; Micah Spangler, HIA; Alissa Parady, IHS; Andy Bopp, HIA; Sen. Debbie Stabenow; Ingrida Lusis, ASHA; and Lise Hamlin, HLAA. The plaque features letters and photos of Michigan children who have benefitted from hearing aids.



Advertising Opportunity:

MI AG Bell is now offering the opportunity to advertise in our newsletter which is published in print form twice a year in the spring and fall. It is mailed to all Michigan members of the AG Bell Association, as well as to the Intermediate School Districts, and Oral Programs for the Deaf. The following options are available:

Business card ad - \$20 per print edition

One quarter page ad - \$35 per print edition

One half page ad - \$50 per print edition

We also send out **E- Newsletters** 3-4 times per year with the following advertising opportunity:

Para-graph length including a link - \$20 per e-news edition

If interested, please contact Shon Halacka at: ShonHalacka@miagbell.org.



From Challenged to Charmed!

My name is Hayleigh, and I am 12 years old. I am the designer and creator of

www.HayleighsCherishedCharms.com, a business created to make hearing aids fun & fancy and help the people who wear them feel special.

A Near Death Beginning... and Hidden Help

I was born with a hole in my diaphragm that allowed my stomach, intestines, and bowels to float into my chest, displacing my heart and not allowing room for my lungs to grow.

My little body endured surgeries, high frequency oxygen ventilation, 13 days on a heart-lung bypass machine, and many medications. The doctors believe one of these life saving treatments caused my hearing loss. At 18 months, I was diagnosed as severe to profoundly hearing impaired and have worn BTE hearing aids ever since.

My parents were so thankful that hearing aids existed and worked so well. However, they wanted people to look at me and see me for who I truly am rather than focusing on my hearing loss. So, they made a decision that ultimately led to my business....They hid my hearing aids. They chose flesh colored hearing aid molds and styled my blond hair to cover my ears. But once I was old enough, I let them know that I had my own ideas!

I wanted my hearing aids to stand out and shine!

From the mouth of babes... A

Business is Born!

At age 5, I was sitting at the kitchen table in my grandparent's house drawing with my twin sister. When my mother asked what I was creating, I said I was drawing pictures of charms for my hearing aids. She listened to me explain that I wanted to make my hearing aids look fancy. As I grew, my designs became clearer and I was able to better explain my charms for hearing aids.

We contacted a patent attorney, and I made my first presentation. The patent attorney was impressed and told me that he thought "I was on to something!" He helped us apply for a provisional patent and then later a full patent for my hearing aid charms, tube twists and cochlear implant charms.

Get to Work

When I first shared my charms with my family and friends, they just loved them. Then strangers began to compliment me and ask how they could have some too. This positive feedback inspired me to open an online store where I not only sell my hearing aid charms but also make all of my charms into pierced earrings and clip-ons.

Everyone in my family now works to help run my business, www.HayleighsCherishedCharms.com (well, everyone except my baby brother). I design and make all the charms. My twin sister Vienna makes necklaces, and Sarah, my younger sister, makes bracelets to go with the charms. My mom and dad help maintain the website and give me advice (that's what parents do!).

Together, we paint displays for

audiology offices. I really appreciate when audiologists put out the displays because I know my product is being seen by the hard of hearing and deaf community.

Running My Business

Each day I check and answer my emails and fill any orders so my parents can go to the post office before it closes. I believe in getting my customers their orders just as fast as I can! My parents taught me customer service is VERY important. When I package each charm, I write a personal note to my customer. I want them to know I personally made their charm for them and that I appreciate their business. I email the customer the day the order is mailed and send almost all orders within 24 hours of the order date. I take good care of my customers and now get many repeat orders. In addition, many new customers tell me they heard about me and my website from one of my current customers or audiologists.

Keeping Fresh and Expanding

I update the website frequently. I am constantly having to check my supplies to be sure that I have everything that is listed on the website and the materials to make more and make new designs. To expand the business, I have attended hearing loss conventions, presented at audiology conferences, created a distribution network with audiologists throughout the USA (and even some overseas!), have been featured in two catalogs,

and am just now testing Google advertising.

Every week my business grows and it is SOOOOOO fun to come home from school and see orders from my website. It's like Christmas everyday! I am really working hard to make quality products for a very reasonable price. It is important to me that as many children and adults that want hearing aid charms are able to get them without cost being a factor.

I also think it is important to give back. 10% of every sale goes to hearing research and to schools for the deaf and hard of hearing.

The Best Part...

The best part of my business is hearing from the customers. I began a page of photos of customers wearing their charms

www.HayleighsCherishedCharms.com/customer_photos

It is so wonderful to see their happy faces and to hear their stories. It makes me happy to see other boys and girls, men and women decorating their hearing aids with pride, making them stand out and shine. It makes me feel good to know that a little bit of their joy came from my hard work.

I also like it when moms buy a matching set of earrings with their daughter's hearing aid charms. That's what my mom and aunt did with me and it created a special connection between us and that made me feel so good.

Lessons Learned and Future Goals:

There are so many business lessons I have learned through suc-

cess and many more from failure but more importantly I have learned something about myself and people. I have learned to focus on my strengths and to look at people and see all of them. Every person is unique and special. I have had a few opportunities to speak at conferences, and I really enjoyed it. I would really love to inspire children of all abilities to expand their dreams and reach for new heights. I would love to speak more and to open my own store.

Celebrate what makes you, you!

Hayleigh Scott

Oticon 2010 Focus on People Student Award Winner

www.HayleighsCherishedCharms.com

cherishedcharms@gmail.com

Back to School Tidbits for Parents & Professionals

By: Julie Steele

It feels like yesterday that we were all saying, "Hooray, summer is here!!" Now the start of a new school year is right around the corner. This is a very good time to prepare for a great year and get off on the right foot. Here are a few tips for parents and professionals:

Parents:

- *Attend an open house prior to school starting so that you can introduce yourself and your child to their new teacher. Let them know about their unique needs but don't expect them to be an expert in hearing loss on the first day of school. Remember that there is a learning curve.

- *Remind your child to advocate for themselves – sit

where they can see and hear the best, use working HA/CI, change batteries when necessary, use an fm system, show their new teacher how to use the fm system, tell new friends about their HA/CI

- *Throw an extra pack of batteries in their backpack on the first day of school – just in case!!

Professionals:

- *Focus on customer service this year!! We provide a service and we need to treat our students, families, school staff and administrators like our customers.

- *Use names whenever possible, introduce yourself and leave a card with everyone that you come into contact with, use email to contact

teachers if you can't visit them the first week and SMILE!!

- *Even though time and money are tight, make sure to check for professional development in the first three months of the school year. Many resources are provided through workshops and online training that can be used throughout the year.

Parents and professionals working together will help our kids have their best year ever!! Put these tips into practice and start out the school year on a positive note. Hope to see everyone at the AGBell Fall Conference on November 11th, where we can all come together to network and learn with each other.

Response to Intervention (RtI): Not a Pre-referral for HI Certification

By Teresa Sundberg

You don't need to be in the field of education to notice that your local school districts are reacting to the state and federal budget cuts to education. Many school districts have had to lay off existing teachers, support and related service staff caseloads are becoming larger, and class sizes are growing. Currently, approximately 10% of federal education funds are allocated to the States for use in Special Education and with less money for local educational agencies (LEA), filling in the gaps of meeting the needs of students with disabilities becomes less attainable. One school-wide initiative that schools are currently using to minimize students need for special education is Response to Intervention (RtI). In this article, I want to provide a brief description of RtI and give parents resources for learning more about your child's school model. At the same time, I would also like to encourage parents to make sure that their child with a hearing loss receives the appropriate accommodations and services crucial to their academic and social success.

In accordance with the reauthorization of IDEA 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), The National Association for the State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the Council of Administrators of Special Education in compliance with No Child Left Behind, put forth a set of policy considerations and implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) for schools across the nation. At the National Center on RtI, it states

that the four essential components of RtI are:

- A school-wide, multi-level instructional and behavioral system for preventing school failure
- Screening
- Progress Monitoring
- Data-based decision making for instruction, movement within the multi-level System, and disability identification (in accordance with state law)

RtI was designed to help identify struggling learners early on before the need for special education. Each Local Educational Agency (LEA) has developed their own model based on the core principals set forth by the NASDSE.

I remember first hearing about RtI through the various workshops being held at the Intermediate School District. As a Teacher Consultant for the Hearing Impaired, my initial reaction after examining the multi-tier level of support (pyramid) was to wonder how a child with a hearing loss would benefit from any instruction or level of support if he or she couldn't hear? For example, when teachers are addressing literacy skills in small groups within classrooms, the background noise alone may be impeding the HI child's ability to hear and understand instruction. In reference to this, Cheryl Deconde Johnson, The President of Hands and Voices, wrote an excellent article shortly after RTI was set in motion. In RTI- What it is and What is isn't, she said, "RTI strategies are tools that enable educa-

tors to target instructional interventions to children's areas of specific needs as soon as they become apparent. A hearing impaired child's first need is to hear what is being taught before targeting instruction." This emphasizes the fact that if your child has a medical diagnosis of a hearing loss, you have every right as a parent to request an initial evaluation for special education if you feel that he or she has an educationally significant hearing loss. Your child would more than likely need to have an IEP or 504 Plan in order to take advantage of a personal FM system that will be monitored by an educational audiologist or teacher consultant for the hearing impaired. It's important to remember that a school cannot deny or delay a referral on the basis that a child has not gone through the RtI process.

The other thing to consider is that professional support staff that understands the unique needs of hearing loss such as Teacher Consultants for Hearing Impaired and Educational Audiologists should be asked to consult with the classroom teacher as well as parents to ensure that the HI child's needs are being met. I have spoken with many general educators about the supports and accommodations suggested to them as part of the RtI process in their school districts, and most are consistent with the same recommendations I would suggest to classroom teachers in addressing students with hearing loss in their classrooms. Maybe you've heard the expression, "Best practices for hearing impaired children are often best practices for all children." Unfortunately, many teachers have not been in-serviced on the signs of hearing loss

Continued on next page. . .

unless they have had an HI child in their classroom. Here are some of the considerations that teachers are asked to consider when implementing best practices in their classrooms.

- Staff awareness of signs of hearing loss
- Classroom acoustical considerations
- Classroom communication and accommodations including; consideration of classroom distribution system
- Hearing conservation
- Frequent checks for comprehension

sion

- Good lighting
- Reduction of visual/auditory distractions
- Predictive routine with structure and paired with language
- Use of graphic organizers/outlines and written procedures
- Pre-tutoring vocabulary
- Differentiated instruction
- Link to prior knowledge

I recommend to parents that they first make sure their child has the appropriate accommodations and

amplification including hearing aids and/or classroom and personal FM systems. Take time to explore their child's school district policy on RtI and ask their child's teacher how they are using strategies in their classrooms to address your child's needs. Please refer to the following websites for more specific questions related to the RtI process. www.nasdse.org and www.rtiprogress4success.org (The National Center for the Response to Intervention)

Matrix for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

By: Nancy Mosher

WHY MIGHT WE USE A DHH MATRIX?

Effective communication, academic success, social competence, and independence are the goals for each of our students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH). Since each student is unique and has different needs, the IEP team uses DATA to define the necessary programs, supplementary aids, supplementary services, accommodations or modifications which will support independence and school success. The Matrix for Students who are Deaf/ Hard of Hearing is a TOOL for use with students who spend most of their time in the general education setting, are between the ages of 5 and 21 years, and do not have significant additional disabilities. The Matrix allows the team to look at individualized DATA.

HOW DID THE DHH MATRIX DEVELOP? Fifteen years ago, teacher consultants from Oakland Schools in Michigan began developing and using this tool. Several other schools in Michigan also used versions of the tool. In 2010 and 2011, a small committee was established, supported by Michigan Department of Education-Low Incidence Outreach. The committee revised the documents, piloted the forms, analyzed the data and produced the updated DHH Matrix. It is

intended to be an optional resource.

Thanks to Oakland Schools, Midland ESA, and the Revision Committee (Marianne Titler, Tammy Hansford, Suzanne Raschke, Shannon Williams, and Nancy Mosher) for the DHH Matrix.

WHAT IS THE DHH MATRIX?

The DHH Matrix is a TOOL which may be used (not required or endorsed by MDE) as a way of collecting and quantifying DATA about a specific child's needs and the EDUCATIONAL IMPACT of those needs. The Matrix is a grid which looks at the following "Factors for Consideration": Audiological Factors, Language/ Vocabulary, Functional Listening Skills, Use of Amplification, Educational Performance, and Personal Adjustment/Transition. Within each of these "Factors for Consideration" areas, statements are chosen which match the data about the child and a numerical score is obtained for each Consideration (row). The total score is then transferred to the cover page. Optional "Contributing Factors" (Age of Student, Program Demands, Student Cooperation, Interpreter/ Captionist, Change in Program, Attendance, Challenging Condition, Other) can add or subtract points from the impact score. The student's "Educational Impact" score can then

be compared with the range of services which are currently being provided to students throughout Michigan who have similar scores. These ranges are only guidelines. THE IEP TEAM, including the PARENT, makes the decisions. Higher scores could indicate a greater need and level of service, while very low scores could indicate little or no service is necessary for the student's continued success.

WHEN COULD THE MATRIX BE USED?

The Matrix Development Committee suggests that the DHH Matrix might be useful in preparation for: Annual IEP, 3 Year Re-evaluation, Changes of Placement (Educational Setting, Community Transition Placement, Relocation to new school or building), or Transition.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE DHH MATRIX?

The Educational Impact Matrix Introduction and Instructions, the DHH Educational Impact Matrix Student Profile and Factors for Consideration are available on the MDE-LIO website <http://mde-l.io.cenmi.org>. If you have questions, contact the DHH Consultant at MDE-LIO

Michigan Speaks!

Michigan Chapter
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P.O. Box 250137
Franklin, MI 48025

National Office:
AG Bell
3417 Volta Place NW
Washington DC 20007
www.agbell.org

We're on the Web!

Check us out at:

www.miagbell.org

In Appreciation

We would like to thank the following for their donations:

- Sid Kraizman
- Joyce Sheehy
- Lavern and Yaju Loomis
- Teresa Sundberg
- Sound Support
- Becky Selenko
- Med-El Corporation
- Oticon
- Shon Halacka
- Dana Bowen
- Michigan Ear Institute
- AMAIZEing Blue Wolverines
- (U of M)
- YMCA Storer Camps
- Grace Parshall
- Advocates of the Hearing Impaired - Ida, MI
- Dan Seraphinoff
- Julie Steele
- Hayleigh Scott - CherishedCharms
- Cochlear Americas
- Advanced Bionics
- Ashley Garber
- Hearing Loss Assoc. of America – Michigan
- Sandy Angelos
- Macomb Intermediate School District
- Michigan Elks
- Audrey Pleasant

Donations

Your donation will help support all of the programs and activities available through the Michigan Chapter of AG Bell. If you would like to make a donation, please send a check or money order payable to Michigan Chapter of AG Bell to the address below. Be sure to include your contact information, so that we can acknowledge your gift.

Michigan Chapter of the
Alexander Graham Bell Association
for the Deaf
P.O. Box 250137
Franklin, MI 48025
Change Service Requested

Fall Conference Information:

Michigan Chapter of AGBell presents

Meet the Parents!

Guiding and Coaching Families of Children with Hearing Loss

Teresa Caraway, Ph.D. CCC-SLP, LSLS Cert. AVT

Friday, November 11, 2011

8:15am to 4:00 pm

Okemos Conference Center, Okemos MI

Recognizing that today's professionals are expected to provide parent guidance, coaching and education to support families in reaching their desired outcome for their child, but that often training programs for professionals have placed little emphasis on adult learning, Dr. Caraway has developed a program focused on the particular needs and requirements of adult learners. Her highly interactive session will utilize videotape excerpts and role-playing to equip participants with an understanding of adult learning styles to engage and empower parents in the intervention process.

Pre-Registration Required by 10/28:

\$90 "Early Bird Professional" by 10/1

\$110 Professional, \$60 Parent, \$25 Students

Includes continental breakfast and boxed lunch

New! AGBell Academy LSLS CEUs offered for this event!

Please return this portion of the form with your payment by **October 28 (10/1 Early Bird)** to:

Ashley Garber 3639 River Pines Dr. Ann Arbor MI 48103

Name: _____ Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

I am a: Teacher SLP Aud Parent Administrator SLP/Aud/Ed Student

So that we may plan accordingly, please notify us of any accessibility needs by October 15

Questions? asgarber@lconnections.com