

# Louisiana Hands & Voices

## Connections Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

May 2014

### Summer Camps -- Making Connections for Kids with Hearing Loss

Summer is here, and there are many opportunities around the state for kids with hearing loss.



**GUIDE BY YOUR SIDE™** Kids Kamp 2014 is scheduled for June 6-8 at Camp Istrouma in Greenwell Springs, LA. Kids Kamp is for children ages 4-14 (15 Junior Volunteers) to 17 year olds can be who are deaf, hard of hearing, hearing with deaf family members, or interested in learning sign language. This camp includes two nights in cabins with air conditioning, meals and activities such as swimming, rock climbing wall, fishing, water blob jump, zipline into water, and much more! Cost is \$100 per person. More information can be found at [www.deaffocus.com](http://www.deaffocus.com).

Lions Club camp. The Lions Club is sponsoring their annual camp in 2014. More information can be obtained at [www.lionscamp.org](http://www.lionscamp.org).

Louisiana School for the Deaf will offer two summer camps in June 2014. Drama Camp, June 9-12, 2014, for students 5-12 years old. Sports Camp,

June 16-19, for students 13-17 years old. For more information or to reserve a spot, contact Kattie Sheppard by e-mailing her at [ksheppard@lsdvi.org](mailto:ksheppard@lsdvi.org) or by phone (225-757-3268). For more information and registration forms, call 888-769-8111.

The Bright School in New Orleans is offering a six week summer program this summer. If you have or know of a child that is deaf, hard of hearing or a child that would benefit from their camp, please contact Linda Frantz for more information at 504-256-9200.

Assembly of God Camp. The 38th Louisiana Assembly of God Deaf Camp is scheduled for The camp for children ages 10 to 18 will be held July 31 to Aug. 5 at the Assemblies of God Campground in Woodworth. Tuition is free and transportation is provided. This camp is open to all students regardless of the degree of hearing loss. For information contact [ladeaf@cox.net](mailto:ladeaf@cox.net) or Rev. Ron DeWitt (225) 241-0773 Voice or text.♦



## HANDS & VOICES™

*"What works for your child is what makes the choice right"™*

Non-biased support for families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing

For more information about Hands & Voices, please contact:

Mariah Ranko  
504.919.8147  
Jill Guidry  
337.515.5774

Check out our **Facebook** page to help you follow all that is happening locally around our State, as well as throughout the nation.

Join us on **Facebook!**

[louisianahandsandvoices](https://www.facebook.com/louisianahandsandvoices) ♦

*Congratulations*



Our heartfelt congratulations to Kaye Wallace. Kaye is the recipient of a \$500 scholarship from Hamilton Relay. Kaye is a 2014 graduate of Barbe High School.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

### First Annual Family Conference

**November 7, 2014  
Lafayette**

FREE, one day workshop for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Email: [handsandvoicesofla@yahoo.com](mailto:handsandvoicesofla@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.lahandsandvoices.org](http://www.lahandsandvoices.org)



#### What's happening:

- 05/16/14 Picnic, Shreveport
- 05/21/14 Board Conference Call
- 05/28/14 Playday/Coffee, New Orleans
- 05/29/14 LA EHDI Advisory Council
- 05/31/14 Coffee Chat, Lake Charles
- 06/07/14 Coffee Chat, Lafayette
- 08/24/14 2nd Annual LA H&V Fundraiser, Rock'n'Bowl, New Orleans

## The Good Things

by Janet DeGeorges

©reprinted with permission

What drives you? Fear of the unknown, dismal deaf education statistics, conflict arising from advocating for educational services, the unemployment and under-employment of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, hearing parents trying to cope with the lack of information about having a child who is born to them with a hearing loss.

As parents, professionals, and advocates who are united in our efforts to improve the lives of children who are deaf and hard of hearing, there are many challenges that we must face. It is important for us to stand together to battle the discrimination our children face in society and the inappropriate services sometimes offered to our children in educational and health systems.

The overwhelming task of creating systems in this country that will appropriately meet the needs of our children can sometimes lead to despair in the effort. At the Hands & Voices offices, every day parents call and email from all over the country (even the world!) seeking support for sometimes the most basic rights to communication for their deaf/hard of hearing children. Advocates become jaded from having 'heard it all', yet still horrified at the slow progress we seem to be making. One parent, when discussing endurance needed in advocacy, said this: "But I am afraid to look at my feelings now; afraid that I will discover that the emotions that have propelled me in the past will be gone and something worse will have taken their place: weariness. Can I last as long as it will take?" (Changed by a Child, pg. 248, Doubleday, 1970)

So where does one find the strength, energy, passion and commitment to 'endure'? It is celebrating **'the good things'**: the one administrator in a state who pushes the system to reform; the teacher of the deaf who stands in the face of political pressure to advocate for a student; the legacy of "Deaf President Now" that to this day has impacted the rights of deaf/hh individuals; it is the parent who works for years, unpaid, giving up time in her own business in order to give her time to others; it is the health professional that throws screening equipment in his trunk and drives all over the state so that babies may be screened; it is the scientist working in a lab to create better technology; it is the attorney that explores the legal concepts in our constitution to further the cause.. I will stop and take the time today, to recognize and honor those who will step up to the plate and say, "ENOUGH, we CAN do better". It creates hope and a belief that things will improve for our children.

Yet another aspect of **"The Good Things"** is often shared between parents, truly lived and understood by deaf and hard of hearing individuals, and often missed by the professionals that serve us. For many hearing parents, it is the unexpected joy in the journey that arises from having the title, "Parent of a child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing." Our lives are improved by having the privilege of seeing outside the box of the 'typical' life. Our children change us, create character in us that we need, help us to see people as human beings first and foremost, help us to understand the diversity of humanity. Many of us have learned another language, or at the very least, how to communicate in different ways.

Recently, Robert Baldwin, a deaf individual, shared his perspective on the journey with a group of health professionals. Below is an excerpt from his presentation (Vail, Feb. 2005 Marion Downs Center Presentation)

Some of the benefits: (i) Increased my capacity for change and forced me to evaluate, adjust, and change to varying situations. Because different listening environments require that I do different things to hear, I learned to be a flexible person. (ii) Makes monitoring sound and stress level very important in my life. Less stress makes me a happier, more contented person. I'm still working on this area. (iii) Makes me a very good listener. I am a visual person. I am more creative visually. I have a strong visual style and voice capable of reaching millions of people with a positive message. I observe people accurately through their body language. (iv) My intuition and instincts are strong. I sense things sometimes before they occur. My instincts are usually right, even though they may not make sense logically.

Some benefits to having a child with Hearing loss:

S/he doesn't hear the high-pitched bell on the ice cream cart that comes around every day of summer just before dinner time.

Opportunity to look really silly chasing your child down the beach with flapping arms, because hearing aids don't like sand and turf.

S/he sleeps through incredible thunderstorms while camping. Children in all other campers/tents are whining, crying and screaming.

Working parents don't need to worry about doing housework at night while s/he sleeps. Go ahead and vacuum under the bed.

No need to worry about decorating your house for years, as the walls are covered with vocabulary lists, pictures of words you are working on and object labels for those important pre-reading skills.

Our New Communities

Finally, **"The Good Things"** include the enlargement of our lives because of the people and communities that are brought together due to this experience. From the very collective experience of "Deaf culture and community" to the rooms across the nation where parents gather to increase knowledge and awareness, we are always aware of the fact that this experience has opened our world to meeting lots of wonderful people.

So, can we last as long as it will take to better the lives of our children? If you haven't already, step up to the plate and do your part in changing the systems that serve our children. We need you! Celebrate **"The Good Things"** today. Believe in the future for the next generation of deaf and hard of hearing kids. Change is coming, and it will be good.♦

