



The Crystal Ball Effect



How Hearing Parents Benefit from Adults who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Their Lives



Thanks to the Outreach Services at the Ohio School for the Deaf

...and to my gang at home that never complains when I'm gone

- **Janet DesGeorges**

- Executive Director, CO Families for Hands & Voices
- Outreach Director, Hands & Voices, Inc. (national org.)





Why do we need Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults in our lives as hearing parents?

“My parents made the best decisions for me based on the information they had at the time.”

Where Families Find Support

- Formal Parent Support Groups
 - △ Deaf Specific
 - △ General Disability
- Informal Parent Support

Parent-to-Parent

- Mentor
- Role Model

Adults Who Are Deaf/ Hard of Hearing

family

Information

- Internet Websites
- Brochures
- Books
- CDs/DVDs/Videos
- Resource Guides
- Curricula

Professionals

- Service Coordinator
- Parent Educator
- Early Interventionist
- Audiologist
- Medical Home/ Physician
- Speech/Language Pathologists
- Teacher
- Hospital Staff
- Communication Instructor/Specialist

Existing Communities

- Family
- Friends
- Neighborhood
- Places of Worship/Spiritual



When we first received our son's diagnosis,
I looked at the doctor,
he was hearing...
I looked at the audiologist,
she was hearing...
And as we walked out,
I looked back at the receptionist
and she was hearing.
I had no idea what this
(raising a deaf child)
would look like
until you, (Deaf adult) walked in the door.

-- *Shelley Strickfaden -parent*





Types of Influence

- Friends along the way
- Watching from afar
- Movements and culture



D/HH Adults in the lives of families... still relevant?

- It's a different world than it was 30 years ago
- Can families only benefit from d/hh adults who are 'like' their child?
- Historical and current use of d/hh mentors and role models in the lives of families
- The 'bias' factor



- Parents appreciate the *personal experience* reflections that only an adult who is d/hh can bring
- There are some perspectives I have *only* been able to get from adults who are d/hh
- Paying it *forward* to my daughter

Shaping **my** life....



- **3rd grade**
 - *Looking at loneliness*
- **Two angry people in a park**
 - *That looks like a language to me*
- **Going through the airport**
 - *do you need help with that?*
- **Camping in the dark**
 - *Laughing along the way*
- **The choking incident**
 - *I am not a hearing person*
- **The true friends**
 - *It takes more time*
- **Survivor**
 - *It's getting dark now*
- **The angry listener**
 - *How rude*
- **The challenger**
 - *When are you ever going to get good at that?*



REFLECTIONS FROM OTHERS....

From a Deaf parent...



"The doctor came in with a concerned expression on her face and told us our son was deaf. She said that like it was bad news. We were thrilled! Everyone in our family is Deaf and for us, learning that our baby was hearing would have been a blow. We said, 'wonderful, that's great!!' and I don't think she understood our happiness at all. Thank goodness we don't have to deal with doctors...they're depressing! I mean, in our family deafness isn't something medically wrong, it's just who we are."



A Judy Garland Quote helped me tremendously. I spent years worrying about where I fit... maybe I didn't sign right or understand enough and would be rejected... You know the drill.... This quote helped me realize that to be ME was not a bad thing. Self confidence makes all the difference in the world. She said: **"Be a first rate version of yourself, not a second rate version of someone else."**

-- Susan Elliott, M.A., Deaf Adult



I wish I had known that children with hearing losses could become whatever they set their minds to.

What I wish I knew then, that I know now is...that my life has been blessed with potential and options that we could not imagine during the time that I was growing up!

I wish I had known that a C.I. was going to be a reality.

I wish I had the confidence to trust that a CI would just change what I hear and not who I am.

I wish I had known and realized that you would become the beautiful person you are today.

Thank you mom, and I wish I knew then that being angry at you for worrying about me all those years wasn't fair to either one of us.

What we believe about ourselves is always more important than what we think others believe about us.



Irene Bender,
Mother, and her
Daughter,
**Stephanie
Olson,**
DHH Mentor



My new teacher...

- Letting go of *my* decisions and frameworks
 - The spiritual, educational, communicative, social context to Sara's life
- ...*That's* not how it happened
- No offense, *mom*
- Pass it *on*...the story of Anna





...thanks to my friends who have helped me along the way...



HANDS &
VOICES



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**GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™**

...for more information
about how to ensure all
families have access to
Adults who are
deaf/hard of hearing