Support from a Northern Maine Family

The following is a recent letter written by one of our families to the Commissioner of the Department of Education.

Dear Commissioner,

I would like to personally thank you for your support of the hear ME now organization, and for the contract that allows them to continue the work that they are doing to help families like mine all across Maine.

We are a family in Fort Kent, new to the world of hearing loss. Our son, Dax, was recently diagnosed with severe bilateral sensorineural loss, and we were told he would have to wear hearing aids for the rest of his life. We were quite devastated initially by the news. We were worried more than ever about his language delay and wanted desperately to get him any and all the help we could. Another major concern was that we lived in such a rural area, and it would be difficult to find services that may be readily available in other parts of the state.

Shortly after we received his hearing aids, we were educated through the Maine Center on Deafness about the hear ME now program and were very interested in the auditory oral education approach. When we further educated ourselves with the actual approach to listening and speaking that is very unique to hMn, we were very excited and convinced to get connected.

The first time I spoke to Carrie Cho-jnowski, a speech and language pathologist with hMn who has specialized training in Auditory-Verbal Training, I felt a new sense of hope for my child and an excitement for his future. When she explained the approach and how it differs from some other traditional therapies, it really resonated with my belief in what my child needed. Her passion for what she does matched the passion I have for doing my best as a parent to help my child through this challenge.

The most amazing part of all of this is that Carrie is 6 hours away, yet we get to meet with her in her office in Portland from our living room up here in Fort Kent. She can see Dax and work with him while she educates us on strategies to use in between sessions.

I cannot express my appreciation enough for this program and the specialists that work at hear ME now. Their outreach program has made it possible for Dax to have access to a very special educational opportunity. We no longer feel we are missing out because we live so far away.

Sincerely,

Vicki M.

The gazette of hear ME now

This year’s winners are:

- Blue Moosers: Fastest Team Gross ($80.87) Gregg Novick, Tina Novick, Sarah Novick, Ella Novick
- Albin, Randall & Bennett: Fastest Team Net (69.38) Bart Haag, Eric Levasseur, Chrissy Wilcox, Lynn Gallagher
- Fastest Male Skier: Gregg Novick – Blue Moosers (25.67)
- Fastest Female Skier: Sarah Novick – Blue Moosers (26.62)
- Fastest Under 14: Liam Martin – The Long Trailers (25.18)
- Top Fundraising Team: Albin, Randall & Bennett – ($2825 in pledges!)
- Most Leisurely Pace: Albin, Randall & Bennett
- Best Wipeout: Maddie Mooradian – Team Med-El
- Best Costume: Dave Rossignol – The Cable Guys
- Best Cheerer: Seth Slivinsky – Team Med-El
- Raffle Winner: Nancy Brooks

Spring 2012

The support of donors, private foundations and the State has allowed us to design and deliver effective service delivery models in Listening and Spoken Language and move closer to our goal of a statewide educational system for children with hearing loss whose parents choose listening and spoken language.

We have visited all nine Child Development Services (CDS) sites and followed up with comprehensive information to case managers on hearing loss and communication options through mailings and a series of eight one-hour webinars that were broadcast to 13 sites around the state. As a result, our referrals have increased significantly.

We are able to report back on the first year of our pilot preschool program – newly named SHIPs (Speech and Hearing in Preschool). The initial 5 preschool classrooms from the 2010-2011 school year included a public pre-k, a CDS preschool, a Headstart program and 2 private preschools.

The Adult Cochlear Implant Group met on March 31 at the hear ME now offices in Falmouth. We enjoyed an informal social gathering and delicious breakfast foods. Some attendees shared information about assistive technology devices that make their lives a little easier, and everyone enjoyed being with others who face similar challenges.

To date, hear ME now has provided services to 13 adults with cochlear implants through the new cochlear implant program at Mercy Hospital.

10th Anniversary Ski Race a Great Success!

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Adult Cochlear Implant Group Gets Together

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Hear Me! Hear Me!

hear ME now funded for another year!
State and Private Foundation Support for hear ME now!

We are pleased to announce that both the State of Maine and our primary funding foundation will continue to support the work of hear ME now for our next fiscal year of 7/1/2012 – 6/30/2013.

The Department of Education will be renewing our current contract to provide technical assistance, equipment support and professional development to Child Development Services and state contracted providers working with young children with hearing loss. A private family foundation has agreed to match the state contract. This public/private partnership insures that our mission continues – that all families have the CHOICE of working with qualified professionals in listening and spoken language.

A warm thank you to both our partners! We will be accountable to you, and all our stakeholders, in our ongoing efforts.

Pam

11th Annual Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Conference
By April Morin

March 4-6, 2012
St. Louis, Missouri

The largest group of Maine stakeholders ever attended the EDHI conference last month! It was a fun and informative opportunity to learn what is happening in childhood hearing loss across the country – both at the state and federal levels.

Pam Dawson and April Morin, a parent of two children receiving services from hear ME now share feedback on several sessions they attended below.

Family Advisory Boards:
“Never underestimate the insight that parents can bring to the table – they have the most experience with their child and the most desire and drive to evoke change in the educational system.”

Tele-Intervention: “We are both excited by the rapid growth of this service delivery model – and hear ME now is in the forefront of a national effort to develop an evidence-based model of tele-intervention. It will be a viable option to reach many children and their families in Maine that are underserved at this time”

Parents’ Legal Rights: “…I still have a lot to learn here, however, this is definitely a very important part of EDHI. Many parents still may not even know their rights as parents of a child with a disability – the session enforced for me the need for Advocacy!”

On-Line Together: “…Very excited about “therapist as coach” to parents. It educates the parent more and enables them to implement strategies during non therapy times.

“Where children with hearing loss learn to listen and speak.”

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www.hear-me-now.org

AG Bell’s acclaimed Parent Advocacy Training

After completing the P.AT. Program, parents gain a basic understanding of education law and how to negotiate appropriate applications to help develop an effective Individualized Education Program (IEP) for their child.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child.

Topics covered in this training include:

Know the Law
Know Your Rights Under the Law
Know How to Use the Law to Advocate for Your Child’s Educational Needs
Know How to Secure Ongoing Support and Services for Your Child

FMI about this training in May, contact Pam at pdawson@hear-me-now.org.

Parent and hear ME now board member Deb Feagans with daughter Emily.

“Where children with hearing loss learn to listen and speak.”

Parent Advocacy Training

In January and February 2012, hear ME now used its new video tele-conferencing equipment to provide a free, three-day course in auditory language development to 31 Child Development Services (CDS) speech pathologists in 5 sites simultaneously – Falmouth, Waterville, Rockland, Bangor and Houlton. We were able to provide continuing education credits to attendees through a collaboration with Northeast Hearing and Speech.

The participating speech therapists currently work with 53 students with hearing loss in all regions of the state! Interested participants will continue to receive professional development through an ongoing Community of Practice (CoP) facilitated by hear ME now. The CoP will provide a collaborative learning environment where professionals will have access to resources and skill building tools in auditory oral education.

We received some wonderful and constructive feedback from the speech therapists, and more sessions are in development.

FMI or to sign up for a session, contact Cindy at crussell@hear-me-now.org.

Page 2   Spring 2012

Page 3
10th Anniversary Break the Sound Barrier Ski Race
Photos courtesy Cunningham Photography