



On July 10th the 11th Annual “*Break the Sound Barrier*” Motorcycle Run benefiting hear ME now was held. Board president, Gregg Lagerquist attended on behalf of hear ME now to share our appreciation. We are grateful to the **Widows Sons Maine Grand Chapter** for the support they give to help children and adults with hearing loss in Maine.

# Hear ME! Hear ME!

THE GAZETTE OF HEAR ME NOW

Fall 2021



Pamela Dawson  
Executive Director

## DIRECTORS UPDATE:

Dear friends of hear ME now,

Schools are open and the school year is underway! Our staff has been speaking with excited parents, students and district teams who are ready for a year of in-person learning. hear ME now is ready to support our students and their families as we look towards an uncertain year ahead. See below for some wonderful back to school photos from the hear ME now community.

Thanks to your ongoing support, we have much to tell you about...

**hear ME now is sharing** what we know with other professionals to build capacity in listening and spoken language in all of northern New England. We are increasing opportunities for kids who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families by mentoring early interventionists and school district staff in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. We have solid data to indicate a positive experience of growth in the knowledge and skills of both the families and professionals we are supporting.

**hear ME now is teaming** with pediatric audiologists in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts! A recently completed needs assessment indicated families strongly support regular, ongoing communication between their child's speech pathologist and audiologist. They feel teaming could improve their child's speech and language outcomes. We are excited about expanded partnerships with Maine Medical Partners, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Mass Eye and Ear.

**hear ME now is expanding** our support to adults who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Maine Medical Center adult cochlear implant program is back in full swing after months of curtailed services during COVID. As an integral part of the team, we support our patients as they identify their communication goals for their new way of hearing, and help them reach those goals through rehabilitation therapy.

**hear ME now cares** about connecting our community. For the last 18 months, we have held monthly virtual meet ups for teens, young adults and elementary school students. These well attended, fun groups have been informal times for catching up, playing games and checking in. See page 2 for some photos of us "together apart".

We will soon be preparing for our annual Break the Sound Barrier Ski Race and Winterfest on March 6, 2022. After a more successful virtual event than we had expected last year, it is our sincere hope we will once again be together on the slopes of Mt. Abram. We will keep you updated!

**We can't do what we do without your help and support. Thank you and be well!!!**

## Celebrate the Start of a New School Year!



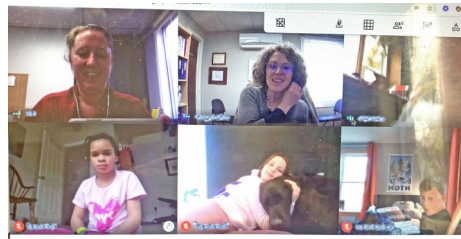
Many of our friends headed back to the classroom this fall. It's been amazing to see students, teachers and support staff come together to share strategies, problem solve and support each other over the past year-and-a-half. We wish you all the best this school year!

Check out some first day photos from our friends!



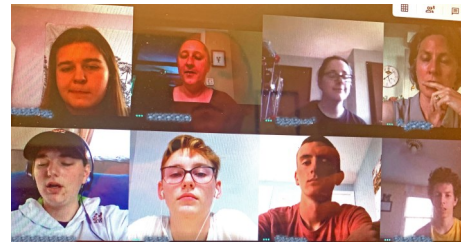


## Hear Me! Hear Me!



### Staying Connected With Our Students - Virtually

For the last 18 months, hear ME now has offered virtual meet-ups for teens, young adults and elementary students. These well attended, fun groups have been informal times for catching up, playing games and checking in.



We've been off the summer months, but plan to see what the new school brings for opportunities to connect as a community, and reestablish them as needed.



If you know someone that would be interested in participating in one of our groups, please contact Pam Dawson at [pdawson@hear-me-now.org](mailto:pdawson@hear-me-now.org).

### Virtual Ski Race Wrap-Up

This year's "Break the Sound Barrier" Ski Fundraising event was held virtually and it was better than ever! We had over 30 skiers, skiing on mountains from Maine to Colorado during the month of February all raising money for hear ME now!

While we were not able to gather together at the mountain this year, this fundraising event exceeded our expectations! We are grateful to our skiers and sponsors that continue to support our mission of helping those with hearing loss in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

We raised \$30,000. We hope to see you on the slopes in 2022!



### SAVE THE DATE



Join us on March 6, 2022  
at Mt. Abram  
20th Annual hear ME now  
Break the Sound Barrier Ski Race  
and Winterfest

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## Hear Me! Hear Me!

### How to Help Your Child Return to In-Person School During the Pandemic

Adjusting to the new normal may feel overwhelming. As a parent, how can you help your child ease back into the swing of things, both academically and socially?

#### Assessing Your Child's Feelings

If you're not sure how your child is feeling about returning to school, a good strategy is to have open discussions at your child's level about feelings, recommends Cathy Janelle, MS, CCC-SLP, LSLC Cert. AVT in Maine who has worked with all ages. Local libraries often have children's books that address feelings like ***Sometimes I Feel Scared***, by Nunavummi that can help address the issue, she adds.

"Empathy and structure are key!" Janelle says. "Different places have different restrictions regarding masks and social distancing. Parents can be clear about what is okay to do so that any questions the child may have are answered. Listening to and validating a child's feelings is always important!"

Parents can also talk about what will occur and listen to what their child thinks or fears about social and educational situations. Janelle suggests using pictures to show less verbal children what "normal" life looks like with groups of children together.

A child's temperament will likely determine how they handle new transitions. Some will be excited and rush right back to the old way of life, while others might be more tentative.

#### Helping Your Child Ease Back

If a child is distressed, start slow, Janelle cautions. Shorten the typical period of time in groups at first, and gradually increase. If possible, use the school's remote mic system at home to help your child become accustomed to what it sounds like. This is also a good opportunity to practice manipulating the hearing aid technology to attach receivers at the beginning of the day.

Many adults will also be struggling with returning to full-time in-person schedules. "There will be lots of opportunities to listen and empathize!" Janelle says.

#### Reminding Teachers of Hearing Loss Needs

Regardless of how long it's been since your child has attended in-person school, remind teachers of their needs – particularly since there will likely be new teachers involved with a new school year. Hopefully there is a provider – whether a speech-language pathologist or teacher of the deaf – who is able to hold an in-service at the start of school, Janelle says. "The content of an in-service generally covers the child's hearing loss, general care and maintenance of hearing assistive technology, accommodations, and general information about being a child with a hearing loss in an academic setting," she explains.

If this isn't available, Janelle says many parents have developed a one-page sheet that details their child's hearing loss, equipment, things that help, and things that negatively impact access to clear speech and language. This is also beneficial for substitute teacher plans as well.

#### Keep Things in Perspective

Know that social stresses are real. One thing Janelle teaches the families she works with is that we all have trouble hearing or do not understand everything that people say all the time. The need to ask for repetition happens for everyone, not just those with hearing loss. "Parents can normalize the need to ask for repetitions by asking for them naturally at home," she says. "I didn't hear what you said about XXX. Could you say that again?"

The most important thing to remember is that no one has all the answers and every child is different. "Working with your child and their team collectively sure makes this all much easier to manage," says a mom of a child with hearing loss. "Virtual school was really hard but going from virtual to in-person learning really is a blessing for various reasons – socially, emotionally, and academically. Trust in your judgment as a parent throughout the process as well, and remember that you know your child best."

Goldstein, Linda A. "How to Help Your Child Return to In-Person School During the Pandemic." [agbellvotavoices.com](https://agbellvotavoices.com). Accessed July, 2021.