
Sound News

Parent Council for Deaf Education
Summer 2012



We Wish All our Members a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year

2	Reports	10-11	Dealing With Youth Depression
4-5	What's On?	12-13	A Parent's Guide To Unilateral Loss
6-7	Kaitlyn's Story	14	RIDBC Birthday Celebrations
8-9	Big School - The Next Step	15	Profile : Jim Hungerford, CEO The Shepherd Centre

President Report

Preparations are well underway for the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Parent Council for Deaf Education (PCDE), founded in 1961 as the Federation of Junior Deaf Education. This celebration will be on Sunday 11 March 2012 at the Shopfront contemporary arts and performance venue, Carlton (NSW), and will include the launching of our new name as “**Parents of Deaf Children**”. You are warmly invited and encouraged to attend this auspicious occasion! Further details will be sent to you in due course.

PCDE has re-established a ‘Professional Advisory Panel’ to formalise partnerships with professionals in the Deafness sector. This led to a very pleasant introductory gathering in September at the home of PCDE Committee member, Ann Porter, attended by all five current Panel members, the seven PCDE Management Committee members, plus other parents and guests.

In October, our Coordinator, Kate Kennedy, presented at Burwood Public School to families of deaf and hearing impaired children from the Inner West. She noted that this school was the ‘birthplace’ of PCDE.

Incidentally, my daughter, Anita, is just finishing her primary education at Burwood Public School, all in the hearing sup-

port class. In June I was delighted to be able to present an award to Mrs Peta Andersen, the retiring Teacher of the Deaf, at the Educators of Deaf Students’ Association annual Conference dinner. Mrs Andersen was Anita’s teacher for 5 of her 7 primary school years.

Of further historical interest is that the famous and accomplished Helen Keller, who was deafblind, wrote two letters to the school, then known as the Central Girls’ School, in response to welcome letters from a teacher (headmistress?) and class students on her visit to Sydney in 1948. To anyone interested, I can send copies of these letters .

PCDE was also busy in October supporting the annual National Week of Deaf People that included a Deaf Festival in Parramatta, and events at NSW Parliament House, a daytime tour for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and an evening launch and Panel Discussion with the theme “Life Stories – Experiences of deaf and hard of hearing young adults”.

At the PCDE Annual General Meeting in November, the seven Management Committee members were re-elected. I sincerely thank this Committee for

their ongoing valued contributions and support. I also deeply thank our dedicated staff, Kate Kennedy (Information and Advocacy Coordinator) and Gloria Simunovich (Administrative Assistant), including for their production of the quarterly ‘Sound News’ publications. Many thanks also to the parents who have participated in the POD group meetings (now in the Central Coast, Central Sydney, Macarthur, Mid North Coast, North West Sydney, and Northern Sydney) and PCDE events, including the POD Christmas Party and Parent Discussion in November.



President—Mark Burfield

PCDE Welcomes Federal Minister’s Announcement Regarding Auslan In Schools.

For the first time, Auslan will be included in the Australian Curriculum. The Federal Minister for School Education, Peter Garrett MP, has announced that all Australian students will be entitled to learn a language other than English in primary and secondary school, including Auslan.

It is a great step forward that the Australian Government has recognised the value of Auslan (Australian Sign Language) in the school curriculum. Auslan is the official language in the Deaf community in

Australia.

Many bilingual Deaf Australians have Auslan as their first language, with English as their second language. The inclusion of Auslan in the school curriculum will benefit

Deaf students, but also enable hearing students to experience Auslan and increase their understanding of Deaf culture and language.

It may also encourage students to study Auslan and perhaps be a pathway to working with Auslan when they enter the workforce.



Staff Annual Report

It was my pleasure to present the annual report to our membership and supporters at our Annual General Meeting on 13th November and in particular to highlight some of the achievements made over the past 12 months.

POD Groups

The POD network continues to grow with three new PODs opening at the instigation of local parents –in North West of Sydney, on the Central Coast of Sydney and on the mid north coast of NSW. This now makes up a network of 6 POD groups in NSW, adding to existing PODs in Northern Sydney, Central Sydney and Macarthur. I would like to thank the parents who have made these groups possible and those who regularly attend and generously share their experiences, insights and ideas. Along with regular POD “cuppa and chat” sessions, parents have also been able to participate in a range of activities, including movie nights, information sessions, parenting workshops and panel discussions.

Information Sharing:

This year PCDE presented to parents on a range of subjects relating to parenting and educating deaf children. Some of the places we visited were: RIDBC Matilda Rose El Centre, The Catherine Sullivan Centre, family pizza night at Burwood Public School, Australian Hearing Greville St, The Shepherd Centre School Readiness Program.

Teachers and audiologists play key roles in the lives of deaf children and their families. PCDE acknowledges the role that these professionals have in linking parents to our organization and we spent some time this year informing them about our organization and the need to refer families onto our services. We presented to 4 groups of itinerant teachers and to various AHS offices within the Sydney region over the course of the year.

Parent to Parent Mentoring

The Parent to Parent Mentoring program continues to support families at the time of diagnosis or any time on their journey. I would like to acknowledge the support of the Deaf Society of NSW and in particular Theresa Thompson, who coordinates this program. PCDE and DSNSW work together to train and match parents for this program and our ongoing collaboration has

resulted in service that meets the needs of parents at a crucial time. We are looking to train more parent mentors in 2012.

Advocacy

PCDE continues to support families to advocate for their child and we continue to advocate on behalf of families for systemic issues that relate to parenting or educating deaf children.

This year we lobbied on behalf of families on a range of issues and policies and we met with parliamentary ministers and government departments, both state and federal to raise specific issues that impact on families with deaf children.

Sound News:

Distribution of Sound News, our quarterly magazine is one way that we engage with our parent community. We do however acknowledge the growth of social media in the lives of our membership and so have also added Facebook to the mix and are building this up as a way of communicating with parents.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Gloria Simunovich who stepped into Anna’s role as a maternity leave position. Gloria, despite having to learn on the job about deafness and parents needs, has done a fantastic job and has continued to keep crucial deadlines and has worked hard to ensure that the quality of content and format of SN continues to be of a high standard.

We acknowledge all those who have contributed to our magazine over the year, particularly those parents who have shared their personal stories with us – it is this input that makes the magazine a great resource for families, who love to hear from others about their experiences.

Key Relationships.

PCDE continues to build good working relationships with other organizations and professionals in the sector, as we strive to further our reach and impact. The formation of the PCDE Professional Advisory Panel will provide to PCDE with specific expertise and support from professionals in the sector. We acknowledge with gratitude our new advisory panel and look forward to an ongoing professional relationship.

With the signing of an MOU with the Deaf Society of NSW this year, we have also made a strategic decision to build a closer working relationship with this key provider of services for the deaf community in NSW in order share information and resources.

Deaf Children Australia continues to support PCDE with management support provided with ongoing financial support for program delivery. I would like to thank Damien Lacey, CEO, Margherita Riccioni, Manager, Children Youth and Family Services and more recently Caroline Doutre, the Manager of Government Relations with DCA, who have provided us with valuable support and guidance over the course of the year. We look forward to an even closer working relationship with DCA in 2012.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the active support given to PCDE staff by the Management Committee of PCDE and I would like to particularly single out Mark Burfield, our fantastic President and Ann Porter. Mark is always there for the staff of PCDE and is a tireless campaigner for our organization and the arrival of Ann’s organization at Dara House has meant ongoing support and guidance on the ground. I thank them both for their contribution.

I look forward to an exciting year ahead as we prepare for our 50th Birthday celebrations and a new name and brand for PCDE.



Kate Kennedy

What's On?

Save the date for 11th March 2012 .

PCDE's 50th Anniversary Party and Launch of our new name. More details to follow.

You will be all warmly invited to what is going to be an exciting event. Families welcome

Sunday 11th March 2012 at

The Shopfront Theatre ,

88 Carlton Parade Carlton NSW



Belvoir St Theatre productions :

Belvoir Theatre will provide three captioned performances in 2012, where live text captions are displayed on screens either side of the stage. These captions will detail actors' dialogue, adlibs, asides, song lyrics, musical descriptions and other sound effects. A number of seats nearest the captioning displays have been held for their guests who are interested in using this service.

As You Like It by William Shakespeare starts 19 Nov—24 Dec 2011

Captioned performance 8pm Wednesday 14 December.

Ticket prices \$39—\$59

Please call 02 9699 3444 for Bookings or Belvoir.com.au/asyoulikeit.

Powerhouse Museum:

Harry Potter Exhibition

In this amazing exhibition, guests will get an up close and personal look at the artistry and craftsmanship that went into creating the iconic props and costumes that appeared throughout the *Harry Potter* films. These authentic artifacts will be displayed in elaborate settings inspired by locations from *Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry* including the *Gryffindor* common room, Hagrid's hut and the Great Hall.

Nov 19, 2011 - March 18, 2012

Art Gallery of NSW:

Cubism school holiday workshops

Sessions for ages 3–13

10–12 & 17–19 January 2012 (Tue, Wed, Thu)

Tour through the exhibition [*Picasso: masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso, Paris*](#) with our Gallery educators and make your own painted and collaged cubist masterpiece.

5-8 years: \$25

9-13 years: \$30

Family session (3-5 years + adult): \$25

Bookings and enquiries: 02 9225 1740 or www.artgallerynsw.gov.au

From The Student Diary 2011...

Some of our members' children share their exciting experiences.



I've been to the deaf camp in Tyalgum NSW from the 6th of September to 9th of September and I had lots of fun. On Tuesday we went on the waterfall walk. I didn't make it so I went back down. On Wednesday we had breakfast, it was delicious. Then we did camping skills, we made fire and cooked damper. When we did L-ropes I got a bit wobbly because I had some loss of balance, then we tried archery and I nearly got it on the target. Next I did flying fox, I got a bit scared because I'm scared of heights. On Thursday instead of rock hopping I did flying fox again and this time it was fun. When we did canoeing first we built a raft. 4 people get to hop on the 2 rafts then I went on the canoes and went around 2 times I got a bit dirty. Then we did group initiatives. On Friday we packed up for the trip home. I slept with Eva, Emily and Caitlyn while away. I also made some new friends.

By Meaghan Payton

Our Deaf Camp Trip:

By Naomi Clarry, with input from her sister Melanie.

Deaf camp was so awesome. I made friends with wonderful people, nice, funny, sweet, and awesome people. I got along with everyone. Not only did I make friends with people, I also got to know their stories like how they became deaf and how they deal with being deaf every day.

The activities at camp were so much fun, I enjoyed pretty much every activity I did there. There were high ropes, giant swings, rock climbing, BMX, archery, bushwalking, games and there is also a disco night too. Though I'm not much of a dancer I chatted with lots of people and had fun. We also watched State of Origin and my dad is a big Queensland fan and Queensland won yay.

I'm a speaker and a lip reader, I don't do sign language, but after being at deaf camp I learned some and wanted to know more.

I don't know how, but after having an awesome time at deaf camp I came back home with a huge smile and great confidence. Not only did I make new friends but I got to see some childhood friends, friends I haven't seen for ages and wow, I missed them. It was great to catch up with them.

Deaf camp is awesome, if anyone asked me if its fun, it's definitely from YES from me.

Parliament House Tour, National Week Of Deaf People 2011



I went to Parliament because my hearing support teacher suggested I go and I thought why not, so I went. My sister went with a whole group of hearing support students from her school, St Ives High, and there were about 70 students from all over Sydney. It is a lovely old-fashioned building, full of art. We met the Premier who spoke to us. It was really interesting to see how the Parliament worked, especially in the red and green talking room The Upper and Lower Houses. They showed us many parts of State Parliament house and told us about how laws are made. Many laws have been made to help people who are deaf have a better life. The Federal Government gives money so children can have hearing aids and cochlear implants. The education laws make sure children receive good education. Afterwards there was a lovely finger food lunch which was a bonus. Thank you PCDE for inviting us and showing us State Parliament.

By Naomi Clarry

Kaitlyn's Story

I want to tell you about a phenomenon I recently heard of—not suggesting that this is the norm, but it is interesting: there are children here in Australia who were fitted with cochlear implants at a young age and grew up in the hearing world, going to mainstream schools and going to speech therapy and working with itinerant teachers and wearing FMs and going (again and again) to Australian Hearing. And these children grew up and turned into teenagers and began that stage of rebellion. These teenagers discovered the Deaf Community and signing and they took off their cochlear implants and started to sign—only their signs were rough (at least in the beginning) because they never learned to sign—they were never exposed to Auslan. These teenagers were angry (as teenagers are prone to be), and who do were they angry at? They're parents, of course. They were angry with their parents for never letting them be Deaf.

Now this makes sense to me, one, because I was once a rebellious teenager and hated my parents (for very different reasons) and two, because I can see how these young people, searching for an identity and a place where they can belong, find this place with people who are like them—people who share a culture, a language, a history.

Again, I do not mean to suggest that all teenagers with cochlear implants will follow this same trajectory. The cochlear implant is indeed an amazing piece of technology; it has allowed Deaf parents to hear their children's voices; it has allowed Deaf people to work and function in the hearing world, but it is not the be all end all.

I feel for those hearing parents, who genuinely thought they were doing the right thing. I feel for those hearing parents because I know how much they love their children—it is a crazy kind of



love that we feel for our children, isn't it? I'm amazed at how much I love my daughter, and yet that doesn't mean that I always make the right decisions about how to raise her.

In February 2010 my daughter Kaitlyn was diagnosed with progressive hearing loss, and I cried. She was two years old, a bright beautiful girl and I didn't want her to wear hearing aids or a cochlear implant; I didn't want her to be excluded from play because of a disability; I didn't want her to talk differently or not at all. I didn't want her to be deaf.

After the diagnosis, we were overwhelmed with appointments—there was speech therapy, hearing tests, diagnostic tests in hospitals and appoint-

ments with the ENT. For the first six months there were an average of two appointments a week and I had to stop working just to fit it all in. The focus in all of these appointments was to try to fix my daughter. Everyone was trying to squeeze Kaitlyn into a box. Their goal was to make every Deaf kid, no matter the prognosis, turn out just like a hearing kid. They focussed on clear speech and would not allow us to use any gestures or signs, as they believed that this interfered with Kaitlyn's ability to learn English.

Kaitlyn was fitted with her first hearing aids and by the age of three, she was speaking on-level for her age. But she still couldn't hear at her noisy mainstream pre-school (which she hated);

Kaitlyn's Story

she still couldn't hear at the beach, in the restaurant, in the bath. As soon as she could talk, Kaitlyn asked why *she* wore hearing aids and no one else did and each time she asked, my heart broke a little more.

At the place where we received speech therapy, they brought in a Deaf teenager with cochlear implants and had her speak to us. *Listen, listen to her voice* the counsellor said, *Isn't it beautiful?* The girl did have a lovely clear voice, but she also spoke of how much she hated one of her cochlear implants, of how she wasn't going to wear it as soon as she turned 18. And she said she still had trouble hearing in many situations. It was then that I began to wonder if this was the only path for my daughter.

My husband and I started Sign Language I at Sydney Community College in October of last year. We walked into a crowded class unsure of what to expect. When the pretty young woman next to me asked why I was learning Sign Language and I explained that our daughter was Deaf, she said, *Oh!* In an excited voice. I had never had that reaction before. Sometimes people flinch when I tell them Kaitlyn's Deaf; sometimes they say they're sorry; occasionally they cry; they are never excited. It was refreshing to see the look on this girl's face. Then class began and we started signing, and we haven't stopped since.

We didn't just learn basic Auslan in our class—we also learned about the Deaf Community and Deaf Culture. We were introduced to a whole new world, where Deafness was not a disability, but an *identity*. Now I'm taking Certificate II Auslan at DEN. It's not easy. I'm 36; my brain is not set up to learn a new language quickly, but with the support of the Deaf Community I do believe I'll get there.

When I found out about the only bilingual pre-school for Deaf kids in Sydney, Roberta Reid, I went to visit with Kaitlyn; we both loved it. I have since taken her out of the mainstream pre-school, which she never enjoyed. Kaitlyn prefers Roberta Reid, where the kids wear hearing aids like her and they sign *and* speak English.

There is little support for hearing parents who want to teach their kids to sign in Sydney and I have to admit that there are moments when it all feels too daunting. There are times when I break down and think I will never become fluent in Auslan, but I receive much support from my teachers and classmates at DEN, from the teachers at Roberta Reid and from the Deaf Community. There are no playgroups for kids that sign, but I would like to start one. There is still no Auslan in schools in New South Wales, but I'm determined that the primary school where Kaitlyn goes will offer Auslan as a second language to the students in her class.

This is where the PCDE comes into play. The Parent Council for Deaf Education supports all kinds of education for Deaf kids. They are a place where we can go to make contacts, find out about resources for our children and receive support. Please contact the PCDE if

you're interested in learning Auslan, or joining a bilingual playgroup.

For a long time, Kaitlyn asked me why we sign. At first, I was reluctant to tell her that she was Deaf. It has such negative connotations in the hearing world. But then I started to spend time with other Deaf people—I started to learn their culture and their language and I saw the advantage of being bilingual and bicultural. When I meet a Deaf person and tell them that my daughter's Deaf, they smile, or they make the sign for 'beautiful'.

The other morning at breakfast, Kaitlyn asked over her oatmeal, 'Mama, why we sign?'

I took a deep breath and said, 'Because there's something very special about you, Kaitlyn. You're Deaf and that is a beautiful thing. You are part of the Deaf world, which means you have a whole community, a whole culture that is open to you, but you have to learn to sign in order to be a part of it.' She seemed satisfied with this answer. And we resumed our conversation in Auslan.

By Sarah Klenbort, Kaitlyn's mum



Big School - The Next Big Step

What Can You Do At Home To Prepare your child for Kindergarten?

There are many ways that you as a parent can help prepare your child for school.

Firstly, you can provide a variety of experiences and activities to stimulate your child's imagination and knowledge of the world. When talking to your child, try to expand the conversation, pointing out new objects and places and giving them names, giving them context. Remember that conversational language is a great language opportunity and lots of fun, as well as helping to build healthy family relationships.

Be a reading role model

Try to read to your child every day. Read with expression and show your joy of reading.

Make reading a special time - with the simple act of reading, turning pages of books and inventing stories using pictures, the child will begin to match spoken words with print.

Turn on the Captions when Watching TV.

Emerging readers benefit greatly from the reinforcement of the importance of reading, that captions provide. Set up this habit at home and your child will learn a skill for life.

For information on how to access captions at home, visit:

www.mediaaccess.org.au

Gather Information about the Schools in and out of your Area.

Information is the key to preparing yourself to make the decisions about the best school for your deaf child. Visit the aussiedeafkids website links below for relevant information on what questions you need to ask of the schools that you visit.

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/preparing-your-child-for-school.html>

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/starting-school-checklist.html>

What is an Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf (ITOD)?

An ITOD provides specialist assistance to schools and teachers relating to the inclusion of students who are deaf or have hearing impairment (HI)

An ITOD provides information to school staff about the impact of hearing loss on language acquisition and access to learning. They can provide school staff with support, advice and strategies to facilitate inclusion. They liaise regularly with school staff and can provide consistent support to students and advocate for their needs.

They may provide some in class support for students, assisting them to access the curriculum; and also using the curriculum as a vehicle to improve their language skills. They may work directly with students on language and audition skills. They can troubleshoot equipment difficulties / liaise with Australian Hearing. They can encourage independence in students including their management of hearing aids, CIs and FMs and their approach to their work.

Be involved in your Child's School.

The transition to school is often more challenging for the parent than the child. The parent's role changes as their child moves into this next exciting stage of their life. Parents often feel concerned that they have less control over how their child is progressing.

Parents can still play a part in the life of their child at school. Your involvement in the school directly is a great way of keeping an eye on how your child is integrating and learning at school. One suggestion is to volunteer to help in the classroom once a week, with reading for example. Building good relationships with the teachers and school will be beneficial when you are advocating for your child.

Liaise with your child's ITOD on how best to navigate your school. Each school has its own culture. One suggestion is to become involved in the school community such as P&F or P&C committees and extend your own social network as a parent. This can be beneficial to your child and their integration.



Big School - The Next Big Step

Here are a few of our members' children starting school next year. We wish them all the best!



Jacob

Going to school at St Thomas Aquinas Springwood in 2012.
Jacob says:

"I'm going to my big school with all my friends after Christmas time.....Mum is it Christmas tomorrow?"



Kiera

Favourite saying is "Mum can you put music on please". At the start of our journey I never thought this would be possible but now I get asked this and many more questions daily. Kiera will be attending Camden Public School .



Lucas

Is going to school at Middle Harbour Public School. He is very excited about starting big school and meeting lots of new friends to play with.

Australian Hearing changes to hearing eligibility from January 2012

From 1 January 2012, young Australians will be eligible for Australian Hearing's children and young adult program up until their 26th birthday. Previously the cut-off age for this program was 21. These changes are a result of a recent Australian Government policy change.

This means, from 1 January 2012 those aged between 21 and under 26 will once again be able to access our services including:

- Regular monitoring of hearing and hearing needs
- Hearing aid and FM fitting and maintenance
- Assistance with maintenance of cochlear implant speech processors
- Cochlear implant speech processor upgrades
- Replacement of lost or damaged cochlear implant speech processors.

Those who wear hearing aids or have a cochlear implant will also be able to renew their Hearing Services Card (for a small annual fee) to receive full maintenance and batteries.

We recommend young Australians between 21 and under 26 should contact their local Australian Hearing centre on 131 797 or visit www.hearing.com.au/youngadults if they have any questions about what services may now be available to them.

I Just Want You To Be Happy– Tackling Youth Depression

By Professor David Bennett



It is her fourth cold in three months. She is chronically tired and has stomach pains, which are preventing her from going to school. Lucy is a shy, sensitive fifteen-year-old. Her parents have taken her to naturopaths, chiropractors, then the family GP, who referred her to a psychologist. The consultation with the psychologist went like this: ‘I sense that something else is wrong.’ ‘No.’ ‘Are you worried about anything?’ ‘No.’ ‘How is school?’ ‘Good.’ ‘Who do you hang around with at school?’ ‘Nobody.’ Then, with tears welling in her eyes, Lucy said: ‘My friends have dumped me. They swear at me. Older kids stole my bag. No one cares and everything is my fault. I’m bored and I’ve got nothing to do.’

Is Lucy being bullied or is she depressed or both? The kinds of questions to ask Lucy are: ‘How long have you been feeling sad? When can you last remember feeling happy? How has your school work been going? What are your usual interests and have you been interested in them lately? How are your friendships? How is your appetite? Have you lost or gained weight recently? How are you sleeping? If the bullying stopped, would you feel completely better? Would that fix everything?’

If Lucy says she’s felt sad or uninterested in her usual activities for over two weeks in a row, it is likely that she is depressed and requires treatment. On the other hand, if her problems resolve when her teachers intervene and stop the bullying, we would generally conclude that she is not depressed, just responding appropriately to a stressful situation. In this case, reassurance and validation may be all that she needs.

Recognising the difference between sadness and depression is important, because not all teenagers who are sad, morose or miserable are depressed. Such reactions can be appropriate responses to life’s ups and downs. Depression should be suspected, however, if a young person who’s sad, downhearted, withdrawn, uncharacteristically irritable or vaguely unwell, remains in that state for more than two weeks. Then, getting the right help is important!

“At a time when parents just want their children to be happy, depression among young Australians is increasing. It is a serious problem for young people, their families and society.”

These are the opening words of the introduction to our new book, *I just want you to be happy: Preventing and tackling youth depression*. But the story that unfolds is not all doom and gloom. As doctors who have a great deal of experience in working with young people (and their families) who are stressed, unwell or otherwise in trouble, we make no apology for the essentially optimistic and hopeful stance that we take on the issue because, contrary to popular myth, depression in young people can be prevented, or picked up early and treated effectively.

In fact, pretty much any predicament that a young person and their family may encounter can be sorted out; lives can be healed. Whether you’re a parent, carer, teacher or friend, it’s important not to feel cornered or defeated. It helps to know something about normal adolescent development and behaviour, to be able to recognise signs of distress (some of which are mentioned above in relation to Lucy), and to know where to turn for appropriate help and guidance.

For these reasons, our book covers a wide range of issues, not only the basics of adolescent depression (how it presents, medication and other treatments, strategies when a teenager threatens suicide...) but also related issues such as: nutrition and exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle, dealing with substance abuse and bullying (including cyber-bullying). We pay particular attention to the warm, respectful parenting style that helps protect young people from depression, and discuss the best ways to resolve common conflicts between parents and teenagers.

I Just Want You To Be Happy– Tackling Youth Depression

One of the most important things we can do for young people is to teach them to think optimistically and manage stress. Recognising that teachers and schools are also in the front line for preventing depression in young people, beyondblue: the national depression initiative has developed a curriculum program (www.beyondblue.org.au/schools) for junior secondary school students based on cognitive-behavioural principles. This approach recognises that our thoughts and interpretations of the things that happen to us are important and that young people with negative thinking patterns about themselves, the world and their future are more vulnerable to mental health problems.

The beyondblue schools classroom program was developed around six key senses:

- Sense of self-worth – the knowledge of and belief in one's strengths, skills and abilities – an acceptance of one's inherent value;
- Sense of belonging- the feeling of being valued, needed and accepted – being connected meaningfully to a social network;
- Sense of control – the belief that one has the skills and ability to cope with life's challenges and to manage one's own emotions;
- Sense of purpose – the capacity to make sense of the world and to perceive some meaning in one's life;
- Sense of future - the hopefulness about the future, enabling us to act purposefully and positively;
- Sense of humour – being able to see the lighter and

funnier side of life – including one's own foibles.

Our materialistic society encourages us to seek endless euphoria through buying new things and having new experiences, but it leaves many of us in a permanent state of dissatisfaction. George Bernard Shaw once remarked that 'a lifetime of happiness would be hell on earth.' Fortunately, we know from many decades of research that, in addition to the attributes listed above, feeling good requires a commitment to helping others. We are impressed by schools that encourage and support meaningful community service by students. Whether this is called service-learning or goes by other names, the message it sends is clear and powerful.

Clinical Professor David Bennett AO MBBS FRACP FSAHM University of Sydney and The Children's Hospital at Westmead Professor David Bennett is an adolescent health physician working to improve the health and wellbeing of young people through responsive health care, collaborative research, professional and community education, networking and advocacy.

David has recently co-authored "I just want you to be happy-preventing and tackling teenage depression" with Professor Leanne Rowe and Bruce Tonge
www.caah.chw.edu.au



New Research Project: Infants with Cochlear Implants

A new research project is investigating language and cognitive development in infants with cochlear implants. It covers Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland and is led by Professor Edith Bavin, based at La Trobe University. This project will be recruiting families with an infant with severe to profound hearing loss who is to receive a cochlear implant.

The study is funded for 4 years by the Australian Research Council, Cochlear Ltd, and Deaf Children Australia. They are working in collaboration with the cochlear implant clinics, the University of Melbourne, the University of Queensland and the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

For more information please contact:

Madeline Armstrong: Ph: (03) 9479 3412, email: Madeline.Armstrong@latrobe.edu.au

Alternatively, you can contact one of the associates at the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre:

Colleen Psarros: Ph: (02) 9844 6813, email: Colleen.Psarros@scic.nsw.gov.au

Or Kylie Chisholm: Ph: (02) 9844 6818, email: Kylie.Chisholm@scic.nsw.gov.au

My Child Has A Unilateral Loss - A Guide

A growing number of PCDE members are parents of children with unilateral hearing loss. A unilateral hearing loss (UHL) affects one ear only. The child can hear normally in one ear and has some difficulty hearing with the other ear. The hearing loss can range from a mild loss to a profound loss where the child hears very little with that ear.

Approximately one in 1000 children is born with UHL and this can be detected through a newborn hearing screening program. UHL, however, can occur throughout life and it is possible for a child to acquire a unilateral hearing loss anytime after birth. Although UHL babies are identified via the SWISH program in NSW and despite this diagnosis having the potential to impact on the child's outcomes with learning, communication etc, there is currently no government funding available to those families.

These families are ineligible for Better Start funding, some early intervention services and for itinerant support services in schools. Families are often left in confusion about the right path to take to support their child.

Here we seek to share some information for those parents and carers who are struggling with decisions on behalf of their child with UHL. This information is taken from Aussie Deaf Kids book on unilateral loss, called "Sound Waves". It is available to be downloaded on <http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/sound-waves.html>. We recommend parents with children with UHL join a parent group or link into information via PCDE or Aussie Deaf Kids to ensure that they have current information available to them on a range of issues relating to their child's hearing loss.

The Good News

The good news for parents of a child with UHL is that your baby can hear, your baby will learn to speak, read and enjoy music.

There is technology available that can improve your baby's ability to hear and listen. Your baby may have difficulty understanding speech in noisy environments, identifying where a sound comes from and hearing



someone speaking on the affected side.

You will need to keep in mind that unilateral hearing loss has the potential to have an impact on your baby's learning, communication and socio-emotional development. Some children may need assistance with developing age-appropriate speech and language and a small percentage of children will lose the hearing in their hearing ear.

With your love, support and commitment your child though, your child will attend mainstream school, make friends and go on to achieve all those hopes and dreams you had for him and her.

Building a Good Team

As the parent of a child with UHL, having a good team of health professionals around you who can guide and support you is invaluable. You and your family are the most important people on your baby's team. Professionals will come and go but you are there for the long haul. If you have a good rapport with your team members, you will feel more comfortable expressing your concerns and communicating your needs to them.

General Practitioner

Finding a good General Practitioner (GP) can be a useful asset for the whole family. Build a relationship with your GP. Educate your GP about UHL. Your GP can be a great coordinator when you are seeing a number of different services and specialists. Your GP will be able to make appropriate referrals to a paediatrician and Ear Nose and Throat surgeon (ENT) who will monitor your baby's development and hearing. It is often useful to ask for recommendations from family and friends with young children about good GPs in your area.

My Child Has A Unilateral Loss - A Guide

Audiologist

After the diagnosis of a hearing loss, children are referred to [Australian Hearing](#). Australian Hearing is a Commonwealth Government Authority that provides a full range of hearing services to children and young people up to 21 years of age. If your child is not fitted with a hearing aid, your Australian Hearing audiologist will work out a management plan with you. This is likely to include a combination of routine hearing monitoring, usually by the audiologist who initially referred you and reviews at key stages of your child's development at the Australian Hearing centre. If your child's hearing will be monitored by an audiologist outside Australian Hearing, you want to find an audiologist with experience working with young children. You may need to do a bit of research to find a suitable audiologist. The [Audiological Society of Australia](#) has a directory of audiologists on their website.

Family support worker

Newborn hearing screening programs usually provide access to either a social worker or a family support worker. Their role is to guide and support you until you are engaged with the appropriate services. The social worker or family support worker can help you with information about hearing loss and early intervention services for babies with UHL. They can advise you about any financial or other assistance that may be available to you.

Early intervention service

Early intervention provides services to families to assist their child to get the best start in life. The goal of early intervention is to help the baby with a hearing loss to learn to communicate, to use any available hearing and to interact socially. The professionals at the early intervention services have special training in hearing loss, its management and language development. Early intervention for children with UHL is a new area and may not be available to all families, particularly those in regional and rural areas. Your audiologist or family support worker should be able to tell you about early intervention services for children with UHL in your State. You may need to pay a fee for early intervention but this should not deter you. If cost is a problem, visit the early intervention services and talk the issue through with them.

What Can I do as a Parent?

- When you want your child to listen to you, try a quiet place and keep away from noises so he/she can hear you better.
- Position your baby with the hearing ear directed toward the sound you want him/her to hear.
- When feeding your baby try to keep the hearing ear exposed to sound.
- Stay close when talking to your baby or toddler, but don't yell. Being closer will make your speech louder for them. You may need to be even closer in a noisy room.
- Make sure your child can see you when you are talking to them, so they can see your lips and gestures. You may need to turn the lights on.
- Repeat and emphasise any key words when talking to your baby.
- Discuss with Australian Hearing whether there is special equipment that might help your child hear sounds (eg CROS hearing aids or sound field systems).
- Attend a regular hearing check with your Audiologist so that you find out quickly if there is any change in the hearing ear.
- It is important to get treatment quickly for ear infections that will make your baby's hearing worse.
- The hearing in your child's "good ear" is very precious. If an operation is advised for that ear, make sure that you understand why it is really needed and ask for expert paediatric E.N.T. specialist care.
- As your baby grows up be aware of safety, as your child may not hear warning sounds as easily.

Parent to Parent Support

You are not alone. You can benefit from linking into the parent community to gain insights and information from other parents who are further along on the journey. Best places to start are:

- Aussie Deaf Kids www.aussiedeafkids.org.au provides an online parent group from parents with children with UHL.
- Parent Council for Deaf Education www.pcde.org. PCDE coordinates a network of parent groups in NSW that meet regularly called POD.
- Deaf Society of NSW www.DSNSW.org.au DSNSW and PCDE run a parent to parent support program that can match parents to a parent mentor with a child with a similar diagnosis.

TPS Celebrates First Birthday For Reading Program

The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children's (RIDBC) Thomas Pattison School has celebrated the first birthday of its volunteer reading program.

The program was established to provide additional English literacy opportunities to the students at the school who are profoundly deaf and bi-lingual - communicating in Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and English.

RIDBC Thomas Pattison School Principal, Julie Kirkness, says that the program presents an opportunity for the school to actively promote additional learning and language opportunities.

"For children who are deaf and use Auslan we work hard to ensure fluency in both languages. Giving the students one-on-one time with our dedicated group of experienced volunteers provides another opportunity to achieve this," said Ms Kirkness.

The program hosts five trained volunteer readers who use Auslan - each volunteer reader works with three students per week. The volunteers work through a guided reading process to ensure that each student is able to gain meaning from the chosen text.

"This guided reading process helps to ensure the child understands what they are reading whilst also providing an opportunity for further discussion," said RIDBC's Teacher, Sue Anne Randazzo who co-ordinates this program

"The volunteer reading program has been fantastic for the students as it has greatly improved their reading skills and literacy," said Sue Anne. "The volunteers, many of whom are our student's parents, have been an important resource for the children in being able to achieve this."

RIDBC Thomas Pattison School was established in 1993 and is located at North Rocks. It takes pride in providing a quality bilingual educational program for deaf students who use Auslan and English in its spoken and written form.



The school offers classes from kindergarten – Year 10. Students follow the regular NSW Board of Studies Curriculum and study the same Key Learning Areas as students in Mainstream classes i.e. English, Maths, Science, HSIE, Design and Technology, Music, Art and PE. There is a strong focus on language development, both Auslan and English across all subjects with students receiving additional literacy and speech lessons. Real-time captioning is also used in some classes to help students develop English literacy. Auslan lessons and deafness related programs are also provided for parents throughout the school year.

All students participate in inclusion programs with mainstream schools. For part of the school week Primary School students attend North Rocks Public School while High School students attend The Hills Grammar School, Kenthurst for Sport and various additional curriculum subjects.

Students also participate in their partner school's annual Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country events.

The school combines modern facilities, advanced instruction techniques and a nurturing environment. It aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to pursue their ambitions, including tertiary study. The school accepts deaf students who are Auslan users from anywhere in Australia. A Host Family program is available for students from outside the Sydney metropolitan area. Video-conferencing facilities are also available for remote students who would like to access elements of the RIDBC TPS educational program.

For further information please contact:
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Profile: Jim Hungerford, CEO Shepherd Centre



Here Jim shares some insights about his life experiences.

Childhood memory...

was spent exploring the bush around Middle Harbour with my dog, stumbling across echidnas and the occasional carpet snake, and finding remnants from the previous Aboriginal use of the land.

Inspiration....

was (1) provided by nature, leading to a love of science, an initial career as a veterinarian, biotechnology and now The Shepherd Centre; and (2) my uncle & aunt who travelled the world whilst I was young, giving me a wanderlust that resulted in me working across the world.

Marriage....

To Julie followed at 25, eventually leading to a beautiful daughter who is now 15, and we still manage to laugh 25 years later.

My Parents always told me....

To believe in myself – and that is something I hope The Shepherd Centre inspires in the families we work with.

I wish I had....

found The Shepherd Centre earlier in my life! The children, the families, and the team here at The Shepherd Centre are wonderful.

I wish I hadn't....

developed my coffee addiction!

I am passionate about...

fairness and opportunity – everyone should be given a real opportunity to develop and grow into the best person they can.

Career highlight....

watching a lovely baby receive her first cochlear implant, and then seeing her family's reaction when it was switched on a fortnight later.

Life Lesson....

always be ready to try something new, be willing to fail, but always learn from mistakes. The most rewarding outcomes arise from the most unexpected directions.

Technology...

is a friend (what can I say, I'm a gadget guy!). At work I'm in a constant struggle with our IT manager who mistakenly doesn't believe in the inherent superiority of Apple products.

Mentor.....

where you can, and take mentoring when you can get it. One phrase that I've fallen in love with when considering other people's points of view I don't agree with is "what am I missing here?". Almost always when you appreciate where they are coming from you gain new & valuable insights.

I am reading.....

emails; but in the New Year I'll be in Port Douglas and enjoying some Science Fiction books I've been looking forward to (on the iPad of course).

I am listening to.....

Lots of podcasts, as I ride to work on my motorbike .

The Shepherd Centre teaches children aged 0-6 years who are deaf and hearing impaired to learn how to listen and speak so that they can reach their full potential in the hearing world.

The Shepherd Centre was founded in 1970 by Dr Bruce Shepherd AM and his late wife Annette, and commenced with just five families.

Today The Shepherd Centre helps over 250 children and families in five centres in NSW and ACT, as well as families in rural and remote areas of Australia and overseas via our residential workshop and ongoing Skype contact.

Our Early Intervention program focuses on training parents to seize every opportunity in day to day situations to teach their children to listen and speak. The vast majority of our graduates go on to enter mainstream schools, with the language skills on par with their hearing peers.



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Our mission:

‘To empower parents in NSW to support their children who are deaf or hearing impaired in reaching their full potential through information, support networks and representation.’

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Disclaimer: Views expressed in Sound News are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Parent Council for Deaf Education.

Sound News is produced by Parent Council for Deaf Education to inform and educate families with a child who is deaf or hearing impaired.

Enquiries, comments and suggestions are welcome.

Note: We use the term ‘deaf’ to mean all types of deafness. Copyright.

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