

Year in Review: 2012

Georgia Hands & Voices

January-December 2012

Georgia Hands & Voices...

"The willingness to share does not make one charitable; it makes one free." - Robert Brault

On behalf of Georgia Hands & Voices, we respectfully submit our annual report detailing the activities accomplished in the year, January through December, 2012.

Georgia Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology. We're a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children.

Our outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling deaf and hard of hearing children to reach their highest potential.

2012 Board of Directors:

Chair: Carianne Muse;
Secretaries/Treasurers: Cindy Dunn-Kearly, RaDora Dinnan; Ginny Bowling; Jennifer Jezyk; Deshonda Washington; Laura Sarsfield; Clare Sullivan; Dr. Frank Nesbit.

Executive Director: Terri Patterson

Individual Advocacy and Support

Georgia Hands & Voices has attended/provided individual support at over 25 IFSP/IEP meetings at the request of families this year, and supported over 50 families one-on-one through phone conversations and hundreds of email correspondences.

Georgia Hands & Voices hosted its first of six ½ day Hands & Voices Advocacy Support & Training (ASTra™) Workshops in Athens, GA in October. 3 ASTra™-trained parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing provided the presentations.



Issues of Passion and Participation Include:

- Effective newborn hearing screening, identification, and early intervention practices
- Parent advocacy, education, and support
- Parent/Professional collaboration
- Parent/Consumer partnerships
- Communication access for children who are d/hh
- Teen Support
- Literacy- Georgia Pathway to Language and Literacy
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Transitions from Part C to B
- Proactive support to regional programs and school districts
- Deaf Education Reform – Educational excellence
- Legislative issues- "Let Georgia Hear"
- Educational interpreting services
- Child Abuse and Neglect prevention and resources
- Deaf Child Bill of Rights
- Parent's right to make informed communication choices
- Mental Health Issues

The Hands & Voices ASTRa Program



Last year, GA H&V trained 20 parents from all over Georgia to support families in their quest for educational excellence through a new program at Hands & Voices. The two day training was funded through the GA Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention agency, in Macon, prepared participants to understand the law, support the rights of students, and improve the education system for our kids. We further secured funding for 6 additional ½ workshops to be held around the state in 2012-2013. Watch for us in Augusta in April 2013!

Revenue/Expenses

GA H&V received income from a diverse set of sources: GA State UNHSI program, H&V fundraisers and individual donors. During our fiscal year we received approximately \$6500 in direct funds. Expenses fell under the following six categories (figures are approximate):

- **Programs:** \$600.00 (advocacy/workshops, family events, sponsorships, etc.)
- **Administrative Costs:** \$300 (mailings, eNewsletter fees, etc.)
- **Executive Director:** \$850
- **Sponsorship/exhibitor fees:** \$350
- **Advocacy Training:** \$4,000.00
- **Interpreting/Captioning Services:** \$700

Staying Connected

In an effort to increase our effectiveness in getting information out to families, efforts continue to ensure that email distribution lists have been developed to reach over 400 parents and professionals at this time. Our database reflects an increase of over 50 entries over this past year. We add names to our database as requested through personal contact, our website and email requests. If you would like to be added to receive our emails, eNewsletters and notices, please contact us at info@gahandsandvoices.org. We use Survey Monkey as an online evaluation tool, increasing our ability to receive feedback from families. Self-referrals from families continue to increase. We also continue to build our connections on our Facebook group, where we share resources, ask and respond to questions and share stories.

Representation on Statewide Forums & Collaborations with Other Groups

Georgia Hands & Voices had the opportunity to represent families in the state on issues of importance as members of various boards and committees, and/or providing support to—
The Georgia Interagency Coordinating Council; The NICHQ Learning Collaborative; Georgia State Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention Stakeholder's group; Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons; Georgia Pathway to Language
Georgia Hands & Voices

and Literacy; Let Georgia Hear; AASD Parent Involvement Program; Atlanta Speech School Parent Teacher Club; Georgia PINES, "Loop Georgia!"; American Association for Home Based Early Interventionists, CDC EHDI Parent to Parent Subcommittee.

We continued our Collaboration with other groups such as: Georgia Peach Cochlear Implant Association, GA Bell, GACHI, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf,
www.gahandsandvoices.org

Georgia School for the Deaf, Atlanta Speech School, Auditory-Verbal Center, Babies Can't Wait, Georgia Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf, G.R.E.A.T D.A.Y., PEPNet South, CDC EHDI program, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention agency, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Parent to Parent of Georgia.

P.O. Box 37, Evans, GA 30809

2012 Events and Presentations

WINTER:

- Participated in the GA PINES Annual Family Workshop (January: Macon, March: AASD)
- Attended State Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention (UNHSI) Stakeholders' Group in Athens.
- Representation at Georgia Disability Day at the State Capital.
- Representation at the National Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Conference in St. Louis.
- Presented at Cobb/Douglas UNHSI Open House.
- Presented at the Macon UNHSI task force meeting.

SPRING:

- Participated in the AASD Parent Involvement Program 1st Annual Walk
- Table at Atlanta Speech School PTC Author event.
- Attended Hands & Voices Annual Leadership Conference in Oregon.
- Representation on the American Academy of Pediatrics Meeting

SUMMER:

- 5th Annual GA Hands & Voices Back to School Bash in Lawrenceville. 55 in attendance.
- Presentation at Cobb Regional UNHSI Meeting
- Presented to new GA PINES Parent Advisors at their annual training.

FALL:

- Representation at State UNHSI Stakeholders' Group Meeting
- 1st ½ day AStratim Parent Workshop in Athens. 15 in attendance.
- Presented at LICC (Local Interagency Coordinating Council) meeting in Woodstock.



We wish to thank the many individuals and organizations who, through their financial support, make it possible for GA Hands & Voices to succeed!