

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

CONNECTED:

A PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT TO SUPPORT
DEAF EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PROJECT

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
Mass Communication

By

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ABSTRACT

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A PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT TO SUPPORT DEAF EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PROJECT

By Stephanie M. Colman

Master of Arts in Mass Communication

This thesis project contains a full review of the steps taken to research, develop, promote, oversee, and analyze a public relations effort to support the Deaf Education And Families Project. The cornerstone of this project was a full-day event, titled, “Connected: Celebrating Families,” which was designed as learning opportunity for families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. A series of workshops served as an educational tool for parents, while children participated in a supervised kids’ program. The highlight of the retreat was the “For Dads Only!” workshop, which stressed the importance of fathers in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children. A comprehensive public relations effort was employed to raise awareness of the event. A total of 220 people attended Connected: Celebrating Families on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2013, at Marlton School in Los Angeles.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders estimates that three of every 1,000 babies born in the United States are deaf or hard of hearing. Of those, more than 90 percent are born to hearing parents. For many families, that baby is the first deaf or hard-of-hearing person they've ever met ("Statistics and Epidemiology," n.d.). As a result, parents can understandably be devastated by the news and may even find themselves trading thoughts of, "Will my daughter like sports as much as I do" for, "Will my son be able to drive? How will my daughter get an education? How will I communicate with my child?"

In the days and months following the results of a newborn hearing screening, and subsequent referral to an audiologist, parents face a whirlwind of medical information, often while still grappling with the news of their child's hearing status. Unfortunately, once the diagnostic process is complete, medical professionals often lose touch with families, leaving them to self-navigate a complicated maze of challenging parenting decisions (R. Friedman Narr, personal communication, April 10, 2013).

The Deaf Education And Families Project (DEAF Project) is a unique California State University, Northridge (CSUN) program designed to support, empower, and educate families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children by promoting healthy family relationships and effective parent-teacher partnerships. The university has strong ties to the deaf community. CSUN is home to the National Center on Deafness, established in 1964, and is one of only two universities in the nation with a comprehensive degree program in deaf studies. The university was one of the first to offer full-time professional

interpreters in the classroom, and currently offers select courses taught in American Sign Language, providing access to direct communication to more than 220 deaf and hard-of-hearing students (“Deaf Studies Department,” n.d.).

To date, DEAF Project has positively impacted more than 1,000 families throughout Southern California. DEAF Project aims to help parents realize the positive lifetime journey of bonding with and raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, rather than struggling with how to “fix” a “disabled” child (“About Us,” n.d.).

DEAF Project began in 2007 as a partnership with the Family Focus Resource Center (FFRC) at California State University, Northridge. The goal of the partnership was to expand the center’s services throughout the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, and Antelope valleys to include families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Working together, the partnership quickly led to American Sign Language classes for families, as well as organized playgroups for deaf and hard-of-hearing children (“About Us,” n.d.).

Based on its early success, the California Department of Education awarded DEAF Project a \$215,000 grant via its Parent Links organization to mentor families with children identified as deaf or hard of hearing through the California Newborn Hearing Screening program. The Newborn Hearing Screening program was established in 2006 by the California Department of Health Care Services, Children’s Medical Services. Through the program, families who deliver infants in facilities that are certified by the Department of Health Care Services to participate in the Newborn Hearing Screening can

have their babies' hearing screened before leaving the hospital ("Program Overview," n.d.). Infants who don't pass, or who pass with questionable results, are referred to a hearing coordination center for further testing.

Once in contact with a center, parents are asked if they would like to be contacted by another parent who is raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child. If so, the family's contact information is made available to DEAF Project through Parent Links.

DEAF Project currently employs four parent mentors, who themselves are raising deaf or hard-of-hearing children, to offer invaluable, first-hand experience and emotional support to fellow parents and families. In addition to providing parent-to-parent support, the mentors also assist with organizing monthly events throughout Southern California. These "Family Fun Days" are designed to help area families network with other families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. DEAF Project also offers three free, weekly American Sign Language classes where families can learn a visual language that builds on their children's obvious strength: their sight.

DEAF Project is voluntarily overseen by Rachel Friedman Narr, a professor of special education and deaf education at California State University, Northridge. The project retains one administrative assistant from Family Focus Center for 10 hours of weekly administrative support. At present, DEAF Project does not have the financial resources to employ a public relations person or fund-raiser. Friedman Narr writes and submits grant applications as time allows. To date, the organization's public relations efforts have consisted of presentations and a booth presence at several national conferences, as well as state and local events such as the Audiology Now National Conference, American Speech Language Hearing Association National Conference,

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention National Conference, California Educators of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, National Center of Deafness' annual Sign-N-Run at CSUN, Deafestival Los Angeles, and at a family camp in San Diego offered by California Hands and voices.

DEAF Project is guided by a system of core beliefs that centers on the idea that being deaf is cultural and linguistic identity rather than a disability. As such, families are encouraged to explore and utilize all available communication options. While other support systems exist for families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children, they often focus on support related to a specific language choice – that is, the decision to utilize assistive technology (hearing aids, cochlear implants) in following an oral (listening and speaking) language plan, or the decision to use American Sign Language. When a choice is made, families are often discouraged from exploring the alternatives. DEAF Project is somewhat unique in its belief that deaf and hard-of-hearing children can benefit from access to a variety of communication opportunities. While research supports this approach, it is often overshadowed by the medical community's preference for assistive technology and spoken language (R. Friedman Narr, personal communication, April 10, 2013).

Project Aim

The goal of this project was to help DEAF Project better communicate its message of support and empowerment for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Specifically, it focused on the importance of solid inter-family relationships and multilingualism as building blocks for healthy family bonding. Research supports the idea that shared-language facilitates bonding among family members and contributes

to the cognitive and emotional well-being of children who are deaf and hard of hearing (Luckner & Velaski, 2004).

DEAF Project reports that, among client families, mothers are more likely to learn and use signed language (R. Friedman Narr, personal communication, April 10, 2013). This potentially limits opportunities for father-child bonding, as fathers rely on the signing mothers' presence in order to function as an interpreter within the family. Fathers appear to frequently relinquish a relationship with their child to the rigors of work responsibilities and the time required to learn American Sign Language.

This project consisted of working with DEAF Project to research, develop, promote, and oversee a public relations program that emphasized the importance of active fathers and male role models in the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing children, while encouraging families to explore the use of both spoken and signed language.

The cornerstone of this project was a full-day educational retreat for families, entitled, "Connected: Celebrating Families." A series of workshops led by various professionals targeted both the family as a unit, as well as within their individual relationships with the deaf or hard-of-hearing child. The event was held at Marlton School in Los Angeles, on Oct. 12, 2013.

Research Questions

This project was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the components of a public relations event designed to help encourage language inclusion and active participation among fathers in families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children?

2. How can a public relations effort support an event, with the overall goal of positioning DEAF Project as a source of information, support, and empowerment for parents and families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing?

Significance

This topic is significant because more than 90 percent of children who are born deaf or hard of hearing have hearing parents. Padden and Humphries (1990) note that people who are culturally deaf rarely view their hearing status as a hearing “loss.” Instead, they consider themselves part of a language minority and celebrate a rich cultural identity. Within the deaf community, “deaf” with a lowercase “d” is used to describe the audiological condition of not hearing, versus the uppercase “Deaf,” which denotes the cultural identification of a group of people who share a set of values, traditions, and rituals, along with strong ties to American Sign Language as their natural language.

The distinction of people who are deaf as a language minority, versus a subset of the population, is often overlooked by mainstream media. Research shows that news coverage of people who are deaf and hard of hearing overwhelmingly focuses on a person’s inability to hear. Further, following FDA approval of the cochlear implant in children age two and older in 1989, many stories focus on its ability to essentially “fix” a deaf or hard-of-hearing child (Clogston, 1994; Fleischer, 2011; Haller, 2010; Longmore 1985; Nelson, 1994).

Parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children are bombarded with negative messaging related to their child’s hearing statuses. Media tend to frame being deaf as a hearing “loss,” or refer to “deafness,” which in itself embodies the notion of disease; negative terminology surrounds a child’s identification as deaf or hard of hearing (for

example, parents being told their baby “failed” a newborn hearing screening and has been “diagnosed” as deaf or hard of hearing); and many members of the hearing majority (including educators) frequently associate *language* with *speech*, discounting American Sign Language as a natural and valuable language, and discouraging its use (Benedict, 2011; Clogston, 1994; Lane, 1992).

Several factors combine to create the need for an organization such as DEAF Project. For example, the existence of audism, which is the idea that superiority is based on the ability to hear or to behave in ways that are similar to those who can hear, i.e. to listen and speak, even when identified as deaf (“What is Audism,” 2009). Negative terminology via words such as “deafness” align being deaf with having an illness or disease. Additionally, the medical community frequently loses contact with parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children following medical testing to determine a child’s hearing status, leaving families at a loss for how best to proceed (R. Friedman Narr, personal communication, April 10, 2013).

This specific public relations event helped the organization successfully reach out to an important target audience, while furthering its mission to support and empower families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The first section of this literature review provides an overview of research related to media's portrayal of people with disabilities. The next section examines research related to deaf culture, which is an umbrella term used to describe the self-identification of many people who are deaf or hard of hearing as members of a cultural and linguistic minority. In direct relation to this project, research examining the importance of support for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing, along with the role of father-child relationships in the emotional development and well being of children, is explored. Lastly, a review of research regarding the role of public relations in supporting the work of nonprofit organizations is presented.

Hearing loss is considered a low-incidence disability; people who are deaf and hard of hearing represent a small percentage of the population. Just how small is difficult to quantify because most census counts either include people who are deaf with people who are living with other disabilities, or they are represented as a group of people living with "hearing loss," which fails to distinguish between people who are pre-lingually deaf and people who experience hearing loss later in life. When considering post-lingual hearing loss, statistics generally fail to distinguish between a school-age child who has lost hearing due to illness or injury and an older adult experiencing age-related hearing loss (Harrington, 2010).

Most people have no direct contact with those who are deaf or hard of hearing. As a result, much of what people believe they know about being deaf comes from the media, which tend to frame stories in ways that focus on the perceived disability over the

individual. Further, in a hearing-dominated society, the overall assumption is that spoken language is the optimal form of communication. As a result, many parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children are socialized to believe that their children are at a life-long disadvantage. This confirms the need for support systems such as those offered by DEAF Project.

Theoretical Framework

To create an understanding of how the media consistently portray being deaf as a disability versus the deaf community's preferred identification as a language minority, the concepts of framing, hegemony, and audism, and the subtle, yet powerful ways they intersect, will be examined.

Framing

As defined by Entman (1993), framing is the act of selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality and (making) them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). McQuail (2000) notes that while the term “frame” is often used synonymously to mean “frame of reference,” “context,” “theme,” or “news angle,” a more precise usage is needed when studying how framing impacts the delivery of news.

In developing a better understanding of framing, Entman (1993) focuses on the selection and salience of information. How a story is told – from word selection and sources cited, to accompanying photos and selected contextual references – contributes to the story frame, the goal of which is to identify and pass judgment on a perceived problem, while suggesting a solution. Specific to coverage of the deaf community, the

inability to hear is typically framed as the problem; people who are deaf are often portrayed as socially isolated and dependent on others (negative judgment); and coverage is frequently limited to articles addressing assistive technology, suggesting that “fixing” one’s inability to hear solves the problem (Fleischer, 2011).

Frames are significant because they determine where, within a story, the audience will focus its attention. Further, framing seeks to guide the audience toward specific facets of information in ways that impact how the audience will remember, evaluate and respond to the “problem” as a result (Entman, 1993). Critical to framing is how the absence of information can be just as powerful as the selection of included information.

Hegemony

Carragee and Roefs (2004) suggest an integration of the concepts of framing and hegemony. As defined by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, hegemony refers to “a ubiquitous and internally consistent culture and ideology, which are openly or implicitly favorable to a dominant class or elite” (McQuail, 2000, p. 77). Rather than rely on the direct use of force, hegemony works through the dominant class’ ability to create a set of cultural assumptions that so entrench members of society, that they are taken for granted as “normal.”

“Messages supportive of status quo ideology emanate from schools, businesses, political organizations, trade unions, religious groups, the military, and the mass media. They all dovetail together. This interconnecting, mutually reinforcing process of ideological influence is the essence of hegemony” (Lull, 2000, p. 50). Hegemony depends on a “brains over brawn” approach where the dominant ideology is subtly imposed on society with such finesse that it goes virtually unquestioned.

Carragee and Roefs (2004) and Lull (2000) note media's role in creating and supporting the hegemonic influence of the dominant elite. "Media legitimize certain ideas, making it more likely that those ideas will be accepted by the population" (Lull, 2000, p. 53). Gans (2004) describes, in detail, the complicated array of established journalistic practices, from everyday news-gathering routines that depend heavily on access to official sources and the pressure imposed by media executives, to the prevalence of deep-seated enduring news values that guide and permeate mainstream media coverage, and by doing so, continue to support the dominant-class ideology. While his original study took place in the 1970s, he notes that, despite the evolving media landscape, the news values remain unchanged. By combining the concepts of hegemony with an understanding of framing, Carragee and Roefs (2004) posit that we can begin to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the news and the distribution of power within a society.

Audism

In examining the relationship between hegemony, framing, and the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, one must first acknowledge the concept of audism and its role in the oppression of people who are deaf and hard of hearing by the hearing majority.

The term "audism" is based on the Latin word "audire" meaning "to hear," and was first coined by deaf scholar Tom Humphries in 1975. Audism represents the idea that the ability to hear – or the ability to act as though one can hear – makes one superior (Bauman, 2004; Lane, 1992). Bauman (2004) also describes audism as "a system of advantage based on hearing ability" (p. 241). In general, the concept of audism attaches a negative stigma to those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and discounts the idea of deaf

people as a cultural and linguistic minority in favor of viewing them as a disabled segment of the population that must be looked after by the hearing majority.

Lane (1992) suggests this perspective is rooted in the fallout that comes from attempting to differentiate humans from animals on the basis of language. When *language* is mistakenly elevated to refer to the distinctly human trait of *speech*, people who are deaf become effectively inhuman, deafness is viewed as a problem, and audist attitudes gain traction. Audists exert their self-imposed ideas of superiority throughout the lives of people who are deaf and hard of hearing – from how they are described to society at-large, to where they can go to school, and how their education will be conducted – in an attempt to exert power and authority over the deaf community.

According to Lane (1992), audism is often practiced in order to further the interests of the dominant hearing majority. For example, many deaf and hard-of-hearing children who attend mainstream schools are taught using spoken language, sometimes augmented with written instruction or minimal signing. When such children struggle to understand what is being communicated – in a spoken language that plays not on their physiological strength of sight, but on their physiological weakness, an inability to hear, they are often seen as the problem and labeled educationally inferior.

Further, when signed language is used in traditional schools, it is often in the form of Signed English, which imposes a series of English-based grammatical rules that differ greatly from the grammatical and culturally accepted structure of American Sign Language (Lane, 1992).

In examining the idea that audism involves an advantage based on one's hearing ability, Bauman (2004) acknowledges this advantage as an expectation where, within

society, those who are deaf and hard of hearing represent a minority population. However, he notes personal observations of audism at multiple deaf schools, including Gallaudet University, considered by most to be the world's leading university for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Specifically, Bauman (2004) cites the inequitable nature of committee meetings at Gallaudet, noting the common use of simultaneous communication among hearing staff members, wherein people speak and sign at the same time. In doing so, hearing people have an advantage in that the spoken English is clearly communicated, but the accompanying signed language is often grammatically incorrect or, at times, even unintelligible, due to the difficulty in providing a direct English-to-ASL translation.

Lane (1992) posits that economic advantage plays a key role in the hearing majority's attachment to phonocentric values, noting the robust market for assistive listening devices and the myriad professions with a say in their use – from audiologists and doctors to school administrators – who often require the use of hearing aids (often touted as a “right” for deaf children by manufacturers) in the classroom. Although the outward goals of the medical and educational system are to said to protect the interests of people who are deaf and hard of hearing, the system operates to the monetary advantage of the hearing majority and, as noted by Bauman (2004), “maintains hegemony over the construction and representation of deafness” (p. 245).

Media's Portrayal of Disability

In this section, different literature on media's portrayal of people with disabilities will be examined, and to the extent possible based on available research, how media specifically portray people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Researchers agree that media have a long history of negatively portraying those who are “different.” From classic literary works depicting evil characters with a limping gait, to crime dramas frequently pairing mental illness with illegal activity, such portrayals have a potentially negative impact on audience perception of the disability community (Nelson, 1994).

How media cover people with disabilities is important because, in general, interaction between the “able-bodied” facet of society and those with disabilities is limited. As a result, for many, their only knowledge of people with a disability comes from the media (Haller, 2010). Further, news stories wield tremendous power because they help construct images of disability and frame disability (Haller, 2010).

The challenge of accurate media representation is compounded not only by the fact that journalists are themselves people who may lack direct experience with people with disabilities, but also because, as a society, stigmatizations often arise through one’s own deep-seated anxieties and the reality of one’s vulnerability. Similarly, Longmore (1985) notes the public’s general tendency to shun or stigmatize those who are disabled, likely in response to feelings of fear and anxiety that surround thoughts of personal disability or of the disability of those with whom we are close.

For Nelson (1994), this idea helps explain the primary models of disability-related media coverage and the associated stereotypes that have evolved – and persist. Clogston (1994) divides disability coverage into two main categories: traditional coverage, which defines an individual via the disability and views the disabled individual as “malfunctioning,” while suggesting that society is medically and financially responsible

for the person; and progressive coverage, where the major limiting factor of a person with a disability is a society that is ill-equipped to accept those who are different.

Within the traditional and progressive categories, Clogston (1994) identifies several models of coverage, many of which remain identifiable throughout the current media landscape.

Models of Traditional Media Coverage

The Medical Model – Clogston’s (1994) medical model explains how media routinely frame disability as an illness. Such stories often note a need for medical intervention. Media coverage of people who are deaf frequently fits within the medical model on a macro level, largely due to an overall view among hearing people that being deaf is the *absence* of hearing; that it represents a *loss*. This view grossly misrepresents the deaf community, which views itself not as a disabled population, but as a linguistic minority with a rich cultural heritage (Lane, 1992). Further, it ignores the concept of “deaf gain,” which Bauman & Murray (2009) note is a common reframing of “deaf” by the deaf community. With deaf gain, “deaf” is viewed not as an audiological deficit, but as a type of sensory and cognitive diversity that can positively contribute to society in myriad ways: from a shift in what senses are highlighted when learning new skills, or architectural design with an emphasis on human connection. Another example is the development of the infamous football huddle, a tradition first borne out of necessity during a football game at Gallaudet University when player Paul Hubbard grew tired of the opposing team watching as deaf players signed upcoming plays.

The Supercrip Model – Clogston’s supercrip model is widely known throughout disability media research. Similar to the medical model, individuals with disabilities

receive attention because of the disability and are “portrayed either as ‘superhuman’ because of physical feats (e.g. rock-climbing paraplegics) or ‘amazing’ because they function ‘normally’ in spite of their disabilities” (Clogston, 1994, p. 47).

The Social Pathology or Economic Model – In this model, the person with a disability is viewed as disadvantaged and as one who must rely on society for support, which is viewed as a gift, not a right. This model closely represents the audist’s view that people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing are “disabled” and want to “fix” their “hearing loss” with the use of assistive technology, or who view the use of American Sign Language as an oral failure.

Models of Progressive Coverage

Minority/Civil Rights Model – In this model, the person with a disability is portrayed as “a member of a minority group dealing with legitimate political grievances, usually involved in disability rights political activities, and actively demanding political change” (Clogston, 1994, p. 47). Stories related to Americans with Disabilities Act legislation often fall under this model, but, depending on lexical choices, can also represent traditional coverage when headlines or story language suggests that the activism is due to one being “stricken” by a disability (social pathology model), or is taking place despite the disability (supercrip model). Whereas, in traditional coverage, persons with disabilities are often referred to with adjectives substituting for nouns, progressive coverage, such as that within the minority/civil rights model, use the same adjectives to modify nouns.

Cultural Pluralism – In this model, no unique attention is paid to the disability, and it is only addressed if relevant to the story. For example, a story about unsafe

sidewalks might traditionally focus on the challenges people in wheelchairs encounter as a result of poorly maintained thoroughfares, but within the cultural pluralism model, the emphasis is placed on sidewalks themselves – and society’s responsibility for ensuring maintenance. This model is most closely aligned with the Associated Press guidelines of not describing someone as disabled or handicapped unless “it is clearly pertinent to the story” (Associated Press, 2012 p. 81). In alignment with the cultural pluralism model, the National Association of the Deaf issued a position statement on the portrayal of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in television, film and theater, calling for the community to be represented as a vibrant, diverse group, and specifically denouncing the use of the descriptive terms “deaf mute,” “deaf and dumb,” and “hearing impaired” in favor of the terms “deaf” and “hard of hearing.”

More recent research confirms that media still rely on Clogston’s models. Fleischer (2011) reviewed 84 newspaper articles related to “deafness” and found that lexical choices made by reporters consistently portrayed people who are deaf as socially isolated; dependent on others; emotionally negative; generally incapable; physically, cognitively, socially, and psychologically defective; unconventional; and experiencing a low quality of life. In contrast, when the articles referenced the ability to hear – through the use of assistive technology, specifically the cochlear implant – lexical choices were in direct contrast: socially integrated; independent; emotionally positive; generally capable; normal; conventional; and experiencing a higher quality of life.

Fleischer (2011) argues that, “the constructed image of deaf people as a ‘problem’ is reinforced through characterizations of hearing people, ‘us,’ as the norm that society should meet” (p. 200). Through lexical choices, and the associated implications,

Fleischer posits that the overall message is that all of society should aspire to be like hearing people and, therefore, people who are deaf and who wish to embrace deaf culture, are not accepted for who they are.

Additionally, Fleischer (2011) argues that the negative portrayal of people who are deaf enables people who are hearing to believe they must help them, and superimposes the “hearing world’ onto the deaf community in a variety of ways – from the prevalence of oral education programs to the types of employment typically accessible to persons who are deaf.

A wealth of existing research highlights the prevalence of the supercrip model. Haller (2010) notes that not only do supercrip stories present a limited view of people with disabilities, which impacts the public’s view of disability communities, they also potentially impact the self-concept of those living with disabilities. While such stories help illustrate the abilities of people living with disabilities, they are also damaging in that they potentially create unrealistic expectations for members of the disability community. When members don’t meet the expectations – either because they can’t or simply choose not to attempt similar goals – they are further marginalized by being ignored by media (Haller, 2010).

Krossel (1988) notes the challenges facing those with disabilities when it comes to media coverage, specifically media’s proclivity for the amazing feel-good story. This tendency completely overlooks the reality of people with disabilities as regular, everyday people facing regular everyday issues, and challenges the disability community to conform to the triumph over tragedy mindset if it wishes to attract media coverage.

Even coverage that outwardly appears to fit the progressive minority/civil rights model can covertly fall within the supercrip model. In 2001, Kosicki examined a week's worth of articles related to the Deaf President Now (DPN) protest at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. During the eight-day protest, students, faculty, and staff effectively shut down the federally funded university in protest of the Board of Director's decision to elect a hearing woman as university president. The appointment of Elizabeth Ann Zinser marked the seventh hearing person as president of the deaf university ("Deaf President Now," n.d.).

The DPN protest was the first instance of considerable coverage of the deaf community by mainstream media (Kensicki, 2001). An analysis of coverage within two mainstream newspapers, the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, and one deaf community magazine, "The Silent News," revealed seemingly positive ways of framing the protest: effective conduct, justifiable action, internal unification, and external support. However, despite the positive framing, Kensicki suggests that the protest being viewed as a disability movement is what gave it media traction. As such, the protest fit the stereotypical confines of disability coverage and, as a result, Kensicki posits that the positive media framing might have existed "not as an example of successful political upheaval, but as a story of struggle and subsequent accomplishment within the disability stereotype" (Kensicki, 2001, p. 164).

Deaf Culture and Signed Language

As noted by Lane (1992), American culture's ideal citizen is typically a young, married, white, college-educated, employed, Protestant male. Those who deviate from the norm are often stigmatized based on physical ability, character traits, and/or group

identity. Lane (1992) suggests all three categories of stigma are ascribed to people who are deaf or hard of hearing: they are physically different in that they are unable to hear or hear to a degree considered less than “normal” (physical ability); their method of communication is characteristically different from the hearing community in that it is a manual language, not a spoken one; and to many hearing people, the close-knit relationships shared among members of the deaf community – especially those who consider themselves culturally deaf – are clannish or tribal in nature.

Padden (1989) highlights the tendency of professionals within the fields of physical science and education to “describe deaf people in terms of their pathological condition: hearing loss” (p. 1).

Labeling based on a pathological description often begins within days of birth following results of a newborn hearing screening. It continues through the child’s education via tests in an attempt to measure intelligence, adjustment, continued hearing status and more. The results of such tests are typically focused not on what the child has in common with the deaf community, but rather, how the child is different from the hearing-dominated society (Lane, 1996).

The pathological approach is in direct conflict with the belief system of people who view themselves as culturally deaf. Whereas members of the hearing majority often view those who are deaf or hard of hearing as isolated or handicapped, members of the self-identified deaf community celebrate a shared language, heritage, and culture, as well as the shared experience of navigating their way through communication challenges and myriad instances of oppression (Rutherford, 1989).

The Deaf Community and Deaf Culture

While other cultural and linguistic minorities often reside in distinct geographic areas, no such mecca exists for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, largely because they are predominately born to hearing parents. As a result, not all deaf and hard-of-hearing people consider themselves culturally or attitudinally deaf. Within the deaf community, residential and day schools are often preferred over attempts to mainstream deaf and hard-of-hearing children into hearing schools, largely because deaf schools are considered to play a key role in the development of one's deaf identity (Lane, 1992).

The United States is home to more than 110 day and residential schools serving children who are deaf and hard of hearing ("Schools and Programs," n.d.). These specialized schools offer comprehensive programs that collectively address students' academic, health, social, and vocational needs, and generally serve students from pre-school through grade twelve. Students are frequently educated and socialized in American Sign Language, oftentimes by deaf adults, which offers access to deaf role models, and helps prevent the isolation that often results from deaf and hard-of-hearing students being singled-out as different while attending mainstream programs. Residential schools are also where students begin to learn the customs, values, humor, and heritage of the deaf community (Gilliam & Easterbrooks, 1997).

Beyond residential schools, social organizations and athletics have historically played key roles in creating a sense of place and continuing one's acculturation into the deaf community. Deaf clubs began to emerge throughout the United States in the 1940s. Los Angeles was home to the first clubhouse owned by members of the deaf community. The Los Angeles Club for the Deaf served as a popular meeting spot for area deaf and

hard-of-hearing people, many of whom lived in isolation at home and who welcomed the opportunity meet others who shared similar experiences, values, and traditions, and with whom they could freely communicate using American Sign Language. The clubs offered access to personal interaction, entertainment and sporting events (Kennedy & Elliott, 1985). Additionally, the sharing of “life lessons” by older club members served as opportunities to learn about deaf values and customs, and opportunities to participate in vital club activities such as planning meetings, elections, and service events helped teach valuable life skills (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996). As technology advanced, the popularity of brick-and-mortar meeting places for the deaf diminished.

Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TTD) phone technology, video relay services, and later, the popularity of texting, allowed deaf and hard-of-hearing people to communicate remotely, and captioned mainstream entertainment eliminated the need to gather at the club to view a subtitled film. By the 1980s, the number of deaf clubs had dwindled dramatically (Kennedy & Elliott, 1985).

The deaf community continues to value social interaction with fellow members, and information about regular social events at coffee houses, restaurants and other public meeting spaces is aggregated online via sites such as DeafEvents.org and DeafEvents.net. In addition, regional organizations such as the Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness serve the deaf community by offering social and educational opportunities while working as a coordinating agency that addresses the social service needs of people who are deaf and hard of hearing (“GLAD Mission,” n.d.). Additionally, national organizations such as the National Agency on Deafness work to “preserve, protect and promote the civil,

human, and linguistic rights of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the United States” (“NAD Mission,” n.d.).

American Sign Language

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the deaf community is its use of a manual, signed language. Signed language is not universal; different countries have distinctly different signed languages. American Sign Language is historically related to French Sign Language, as it was first brought to America in the early nineteenth century by French educator Laurent Clerc, who partnered with Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet to establish the first school for the deaf in the United States in 1817. There, the students’ individualized “home signs” blended with French Sign Language to become the foundation for American Sign Language. As graduates went on to develop similar schools in other states, the language grew and became standardized (Poor, 2003).

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln established Gallaudet College, now Gallaudet University. The institution was headed by Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet’s son, Edward Miner Gallaudet, who valued his father’s ideals of signed language and access to written English for all, but who also advocated for speech training. This fuelled a dispute between those who favored manual language versus those who supported oralism – and the ideological divide remains to this day.

Throughout the history of the ideological difference, two names are most prevalent: Alexander Graham Bell and the Milan Conference. Bell was born to a deaf mother. His father developed a system of symbols that, with sufficient training, taught deaf people to control and move their tongues and mouths in ways that resulted in the

output of sound. This primitive form of speech therapy was known as visible speech, and was used by the Bells as a for-profit endeavor.

In later years, Graham Bell developed his own methods of teaching speech and lip-reading to deaf children, and became steadfast in his belief that oral skills were paramount to deaf Americans' successful integration into society. His name became, and remains, synonymous with oralism – a pedagogical approach that seeks to suppress signed language in favor of spoken language (Greenwald, n.d.). Today, the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's mission remains heavily invested in promoting listening and speaking as the primary way for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to “thrive” in mainstream society (“Who We Are,” n.d.).

The early growth of signed language was also dramatically stunted by the Milan Conference in 1880. This event was the first international conference of deaf educators. All of its 164 delegates were hearing. During the conference, resolutions effectively barring the use of signed language were passed, stating:

The convention, considering the incontestable superiority of speech over signs, for restoring deaf-mutes to social life and for giving them greater facility of language, declare that the method of articulation should have preference over that of signs in the instruction of the deaf and dumb”; and “Considering that the simultaneous use of signs and speech has the disadvantage of injuring speech and lip-reading and precision of ideas, the convention declares that the pure oral method ought to be preferred (Lane, Hoffmesiter & Bahan, 1996, p. 61).

As a result of The Milan Conference, countless deaf teachers were fired and harsh measures were imposed upon students in an effort to obliterate the use of signed language

(Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996). It took 130 years for the damaging effects of the Milan Conference to be formally addressed. In 2010, the International Congress on the Education of the Deaf issued a statement rejecting the original conference resolutions and apologizing for the detrimental effects (“21st International Congress,” n.d.).

In the 1960s, linguist David Stoke proposed that American Sign Language was not merely a rudimentary version of pantomimed English, but rather, a fully formed language of its own (Armstrong, 2000). Prior to Stoke’s research, it was largely thought that those who used signed language were oral failures, and educators strove to oppress the use of manual language however possible. As a professor at Gallaudet University, Stoke studied American Sign Language through the lens of a linguist, and was the first to apply accepted linguistic principles to the language. His pioneering research in the 1950s is said to have legitimized both a language and a culture (Armstrong, Karchmer & Van Cleve, 2002).

In understanding American Sign Language as a complete and valid language, it’s important to view language as a system of communication, of which there are many – such as traffic signals, Morse Code, human and animal body language, flag telegraphy, etc. Valli and Lucas (2000) note that language is comprised of a set of symbols manipulated by the user to produce meaning, and rules exist to keep the system organized. For example:

- **The symbols themselves can be arbitrary or iconic.** In spoken English, the sound produced by the word *cat* fails to resemble the animal itself – compared to words known as onomatopoeias, where the spoken form of a word symbolizes the sound associated with the word itself: the word “choo choo” representing the

sound of a train, etc. Similarly, signs can be arbitrary or iconic. The sign for *cat* resembles whiskers and is made along the side of the signer's face (iconic), versus the sign for *wrong* (handshape "Y" at the signer's chin) that, by itself, has nothing to do with the state of being incorrect; it is arbitrary until the meaning is learned.

- **Language has ways of showing relationships between words.** A common example of denoting the relationship between words is the use of adverbs to modify verbs. In spoken language, one might say, "The man drove recklessly," where *recklessly* modifies the verb *drive*. This effect is not limited to spoken language. The same idea can be conveyed in American Sign Language using the non-manual signal "th," consisting of pouted lips with the tongue placed between the teeth, the translation for which is *carelessly*. By combining the sign for "drive" with the non-manual signal, one sign can be used to convey the idea of reckless driving.
- **Language changes over time.** Valli and Lucas (2000) found that just as new words are added to spoken language dictionaries to reflect social and cultural change, new signs are also created. For example, as STEM education programs gained traction throughout universities, many deaf and hard-of-hearing students struggled due to the lack of universally recognized signs for a variety of science terms. In 2009, researchers at the University of Washington created the ASL STEM Forum, an online collection of crowd-sourced suggestions for signs to represent specific pieces of scientific terminology. Users review submissions and vote on preferred signs to create standardized vocabulary to represent advanced

academic concepts in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (Davis, Huang, Barrow & Xaquín, 2012).

Like most languages, American Sign Language utilizes myriad organizational rules. For example, signs are composed using combinations of seven basic handshapes; can be one- or two-handed; symmetrical or unsymmetrical; and in the case of unsymmetrical signs, the signer's dominant hand moves while the non-dominant hand anchors the sign. The rules that apply certain non-manual markers (such as facial expressions) to *yes or no* questions conversely apply different non-manual markers to *who, what, when, where, and why* questions. Specific rules exist to layer locative or directional information onto verbs, and where spoken English relies heavily on the use of prepositions to describe the relationship between words, for example in the sentence, "The ball is *on* the chair," American Sign Language uses classifiers, specific handshapes that represent objects, to show the action of *placing the ball on the chair* (Mikos, Smith, & Lentz, 1988).

Valli and Lucas (2000) also note that while humans are born with an innate ability to acquire language skills, they must be exposed to the opportunity to interact with other language users. Language acquisition among deaf and hard-of-hearing children is a topic of hot debate, with many, especially within the medical community, claiming that deaf and hard-of-hearing children should not be taught to use signed language if the goal is for the child to listen and speak using speech therapy and assistive technology. However, signed language allows children to communicate effectively before they are physically capable of producing speech, and research shows that early language development positively impacts cognitive, social, and psychological development. Further, studies in

neuroscience prove that the brain has the ability to learn both visual and spoken language, and that early learning of a visual language can improve the acquisition of spoken language (Mallory, n.d.; Mithiner, Nussbaum & Scott, 2012).

Father Involvement and Family Support

For most hearing parents, their deaf baby marks the introduction to the deaf world and many respond with natural feelings of fear and uncertainty. Research shows that when being deaf is presented in a negative light, parents develop feelings of guilt and view their child as abnormal – the focus becomes not on the child as a visual being, but as a being with an auditory deficit. In promoting the overall well-being of children who are deaf and hard of hearing, being deaf should be viewed as a difference not a deficit, and the educational and medical communities must shift their audistic thinking so as to support the family's ability to focus on the development of a healthy, well-adjusted deaf child as opposed to striving to correct the deaf child's audition (Hauser, O'Hearn, McKee & Steider, 2010).

In examining the role of the family in creating well-adjusted deaf or hard-of-hearing children, Calderon and Low (1998) found that deaf and hard-of-hearing children in homes where the father is present demonstrated stronger language and pre-reading skills than those in homes where no father was present. Their research suggests that several factors contribute to the increased success. In two-parent homes, families may have greater access to medical care and social services. The presence of a father benefits children indirectly via acting as an additional support source for the mother, and simply interacting with two parents doubles the opportunity for exposure to language. Even in homes where fathers sign with less proficiency than mothers, the day-to-day interaction

allows fathers to develop a workable system of parent-child communication, during which essential communication rituals such as turn-taking, affective matching, and eye-contact are modeled.

In a more recent study examining levels of father involvement in preschool programs for hearing children versus deaf and hard-of-hearing children, Ingber and Most (2012) found that fathers in both categories reported similar levels of involvement. These findings contradicted the researchers' expectation that deaf and hard-of-hearing children would present greater demands, and as a result, that fathers would become more involved in the child-rearing process in response to the demand. As it relates to the theoretical framework of the current project, it's especially interesting to note that all of the deaf and hard-of-hearing children included in Ingber and Most's research used spoken language to communicate, and that those with bilateral hearing loss used either hearing aids (60%) or cochlear implants (32%). In other words, they were deaf and hard-of-hearing children who were functioning similar to hearing children. Given previous research (Bristol, Gallagher & Schopler, 1988) that showed that fathers were less likely to be involved in the lives of their children when speech was affected, to suggest that fathers maintain a high level of involvement regardless of their children's hearing status – when all of the children studied used spoken language to communicate – demonstrates the pervasiveness of audism. The need for further study of fathers of bilingual-bicultural children, as well as an analysis of the severity of hearing loss and the father's level of involvement was noted.

The Role of Public Relations

The use of public relations to support the work of non-profit organizations dates back to the early 20th century when colleges, churches, charities, and health and welfare organizations recognized the need to influence public opinion. From promoting the advancement of learning to raising funds to support a new building, public relations played a key role in meeting goals (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth, 2012).

As a professional practice, public relations gained significant traction in 1948 with the establishment of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). The organization was the first to develop a code of ethics for public relations practitioners. The code outlines the profession's goal of serving the public interest through strict attention to issues of honesty, objectivity, accountability, loyalty, fairness, and professional expertise ("Code of Ethics," n.d.). Versailles (2012) notes that within the field of public relations, which serves as a powerful tool for influencing the attitudes and opinion of the public, ethical guidelines protect the public interest by promoting an open exchange of information. Similarly, Ki, Choi, and Lee (2012) found that practitioners working in agencies with established ethical parameters that were clearly communicated to staff members, were more likely to engage in ethical business practices.

The definition of public relations must remain fluid to address the needs of a changing society. Today, PRSA defines the practice of public relations as "a strategic communications process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics" ("What is Public Relations," n.d.).

Much like for-profit companies, non-profit organizations face numerous challenges that can be mitigated with effective public relations. Specific to DEAF Project, these key challenges include:

- **Gaining recognition in the marketplace** – Consumers of information are faced with myriad options when conducting a simple Google search for “deaf children.” Families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children must first be able to find DEAF Project.
- **Competing for resources** – Non-profit organizations must compete for resources ranging from financial support to qualified employees and potential volunteers.
- **Managing multiple publics** – In fulfillment of its mission, DEAF Project’s primary public is families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. However, in supporting this mission, the organization must be sensitive to the unique perspective of the deaf community, as well as the fact that all families are unique in their choices related to how they raise their children. The organization must also be aware of the unique needs of the related professional community, including teachers, audiologists, and speech-language pathologists.
- **Building a brand and an identity** – Although DEAF Project currently has a partial built-in client base through referrals via the Newborn Hearing Screening program, in order to reach families with older children (born prior to the now-mandatory screening), or to ensure access to families in the absence of the direct referral source, it’s important that the organization work to establish name recognition, both to secure a client base, as well as to bolster fundraising efforts (Lattimore et al., 2012).

Turney (2009) notes that events can function as an important public relations tool for organizations. They create a unique opportunity for the organization to promote an idea, cause, or important project. Effective events serve a public relations purpose, and are designed with special attention to target audiences and key messages.

Publicity plays a key role in the success of an event, and several factors must be considered when creating a publicity plan. Prioritizing which events or facets of an event for which one seeks media coverage; appropriate knowledge of media outlets; an ability to use audience misconceptions to one's advantage; and knowing how to motivate an audience are all key considerations. Further, objectivity, newsworthy facts, and overall uniqueness contribute to the likely success of a publicity plan (Yale, 1991).

Lastly, Yale (1991) notes a variety of common tactics used to generate publicity for an event, include researching and creating media lists, writing press releases and public service announcements, pitching stories to reporters, and submitting post-event photographs for publication.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, the methods used to complete this thesis project are explained. The purpose of this thesis project was to determine what specific components of a public relations campaign could be used to help encourage language inclusion and active participation among fathers in families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and how a specific public relations initiative can help position DEAF Project as a source of information and support for families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Preparation

I embarked on my project with a solid understanding of the work of DEAF Project via conversational interviews with key staff and volunteers, a thorough review of the organization's informational materials, and a previous video project completed in partnership with DEAF Project as part of a social justice reporting class. Further, I studied American Sign Language through CSUN's Department of Deaf Studies, officially completing levels 1 and 2, and auditing level 3.

To further my knowledge of deaf culture and the deaf community, I also attended numerous lectures and events, including an American Sign Language immersion weekend sponsored by CSUN's Deaf Students Association in March 2013. The event, which was attended by a mix of deaf and hearing students from various universities, predominately deaf studies majors, was strictly "voices off." No spoken language was allowed throughout the event. As a new signer, the experience offered valuable insight in that it paralleled the experience of many deaf people in a hearing-dominated world. Much of the time, I had no idea what was being communicated around me. When people

addressed me directly, I was frustrated by my need to continually ask someone to re-sign information, often multiple times, and more than once, after several unsuccessful attempts to understand what was being communicated to me, I resorted to smiling, nodding, and looking for the quickest possible exit from the encounter. The experience highlighted the importance of DEAF Project's role in helping to create shared language among families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Project Design

This project consisted of researching, developing, promoting, and piloting an event that encourages fathers and father-figures to play an active role in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children, while encouraging families to explore language inclusion and multilingualism.

Needs Assessment

First, a five-question needs assessment was developed with Rachel Friedman Narr to help determine the current level of participation among fathers, as experienced by educators working with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The survey, hosted on SurveyMonkey.com, was distributed via email by Friedman Narr to approximately 40 professional contacts who work with infant and school-age children throughout Los Angeles, Covina, Burbank, San Diego, Orange County, Alhambra, Bakersfield, Palmdale, and Ventura. Two of the survey questions were designed to specifically provide a snapshot of the extent to which fathers appear to be involved in the lives of their children. For the purposes of this project, it was assumed that participation in key activities related to a "special needs" child's education would be a reasonable measurement of involvement.

The first question established in what capacity the respondent worked with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The key questions asked (for which answers were required) were, “In working with deaf and hard-of-hearing kids, how many families have you met with during this past school year? (For example, during IEP meetings, Open House events, Back-to-School nights, etc.),” where respondents were required to select a range; and the open-ended question of, “In those meetings with families, approximately how many had a father (or father figure) present?” Optional feedback regarding the importance of fathers in the lives of their children was also solicited, and respondents were encouraged to submit an email address if they wished to be informed of future developments with DEAF Project’s “father-friendly” initiative.

The survey was distributed via email on June 7, 2013, which coincided with the last week of instruction for teachers throughout most of the school districts. Twenty-seven respondents, all teachers, completed the survey within a one-week period. The majority of respondents indicated they had met with 20 or fewer families throughout the previous school year. Data compilation and analysis revealed that nearly all of the respondents reported seeing fathers less than 50% of the time. Most significant were the comments offered by teachers when given the opportunity to share input regarding the importance of fathers in the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Key comments included:

- *“Fathers are generally less involved, and are less involved the more deaf the child. When it’s a signing child, fathers almost never learn enough themselves to have any meaningful communication with their own child.”*

- *“Deaf students need to have guidance from both mom and dad. Usually if anyone signs in the home, it’s solely the mother.”*
- *“Not only do fathers need to be present, but they need to learn sign language, too.”*

Results of this brief needs assessment supported DEAF Project’s earlier observations that fathers are less likely to learn signed language and engage as active participants in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and confirmed the need for a campaign specifically designed to encourage increased participation among fathers.

Program Conceptualization

Campaign ideas were initially developed in partnership with DEAF Project. Additional support was achieved via the recruitment of Tomas Garcia, a trilingual (spoken English, spoken Spanish, and American Sign Language) deaf adult and DEAF Project supporter, who was raised by hearing parents and frequently lectures to parents and families, as well as blogs about the importance of bonding and creating meaningful relationships with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Multiple meetings were held to develop a conceptual framework for a daylong event that would emphasize the importance of fathers in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children, while highlighting the benefits of language inclusion and multilingualism as building blocks for healthy family bonding. Several important considerations were discussed, such as the benefit of expanding key workshops to include topics of interest to mothers, whose participation in the retreat would likely help encourage fathers to attend.

Initially, the retreat was viewed as an event in which solely fathers would participate with their children, but it was quickly determined that a major challenge to driving attendance would be securing enough father buy-in to justify the expense associated with a full-day event. It was strongly believed that if DEAF Project was willing to invest significant funding in an event, there was tremendous value added by including programming for mothers – both in terms of mothers being likely to encourage or insist that fathers attend, and because mothers are traditionally the information seekers and would be more likely to explore additional DEAF Project programming after attending an event sponsored by the organization.

Additional ideas included the need to keep ticket prices low to prevent cost as a barrier to attendance, the need for scholarship support for low-income families, and the importance of incorporating additional deaf adults to serve as role models for families while ensuring that the deaf perspective was accurately conveyed and respected.

Early planning information was also gathered via multiple conference calls with DEAF Project's team of parent mentors. Currently, DEAF Project employs four parent mentors who are mothers raising deaf or hard-of-hearing children: one in the San Fernando Valley, one in Los Angeles, and two in San Diego. Based on their personal preferences and experience as parents, combined with knowledge gathered from ongoing conversations with fellow parents in their roles as parent mentors, several key topic areas, in addition to the need for father involvement, were discovered. They included the value of moms meeting with and interacting with fellow moms, how to effectively advocate for a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, and the importance of understanding disability rights issues.

While DEAF Project's overall mission is rooted in the idea of celebrating the joys of bonding with and raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, and focusing on what the child *can* do, as opposed to focusing on ways to "fix" a "disabled" child, many of the supportive services afforded to families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children (and the protected rights of the individual child himself) are the result of both state- and federally-mandated programs that group hearing status with various other disabilities. Examples include California's Department of Developmental Services "Early Start" program, which provides early intervention services to children ages 0-3 with a documented developmental delay; the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (the nation's federal special education law); and the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is important that parents become familiar with, and learn to successfully navigate the many policies and programs that exist to support their children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Once key subject areas were determined, potential workshop presenters were identified in partnership with Friedman Narr. Presenters were selected based on their knowledge of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, previous support of DEAF Project, and their likely willingness to either donate their time or join the project in exchange for a small stipend. Friedman Narr and Garcia leveraged professional and/or personal relationships to secure the involvement of others on either a volunteer basis or in exchange for a small stipend. The following participants were successfully recruited:

Mark Splittstoesser – Adjunct professor of American Sign Language at California Baptist University and Mt. San Jacinto College. Deaf adult. Co-presented the "For Dads

Only!” workshop with Tomas Garcia in American Sign Language, with spoken English interpretation provided.

Lori Steed Sortino – Group facilitator and mother of two adult children, one deaf and one hearing. Authors a blog, “Deaf Son, Hearing Mother,” and conducts a variety of parent training sessions that address communication, awareness, and decision-making. For the Connected retreat, Sortino led a workshop for mothers on the importance of emotional support and self-care and the benefits of fostering solid relationships between deaf and hearing siblings.

Carmen Varela – Disability rights advocate with Disability Rights California. Varela specializes in the legal rights of children and those with disabilities, especially among immigrant and underserved populations. Hearing adult. Mother of two adult children with disabilities. Varela addressed preparing for a successful Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting under the umbrella of becoming an empowered advocate for your deaf or hard-of-hearing child. Presented in partnership with Edith Wysinger, Irma Sanchez, and Jamila Guerrero-Cantor. Varela and Wysinger presented in spoken English with American Sign Language interpretation, while Sanchez and Guerrero-Cantor presented in spoken Spanish.

Edith Wysinger – Volunteer parent mentor with DEAF Project. Hearing adult. Mother of a deaf son.

Irma Sanchez – Parent mentor with DEAF Project. Hearing adult. Mother of three deaf sons.

Jamila Guerrero-Cantor – Counselor for deaf and hard-of-hearing students at Los Angeles Trade Technical College and former counselor at Marlton School for the Deaf.

Represents deaf and hard-of-hearing children and Chicano/Latino communities in school settings as a member of the California Mental Health Services Act Multicultural Coalition, a statewide project that makes recommendations regarding the mental health needs of underserved communities.

Apryl Chauhan – Hearing mother of three children. Oldest daughter, Zahra, is deaf. The entire immediate family has learned American Sign Language. Her husband, Raj, is known as somewhat of a “Super Dad” for his proficiency in ASL. Former DEAF Project parent mentor. Served as co-emcee for the retreat, offering the perspective of a hearing parent who is successfully navigating the unknown territory that accompanies raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child.

Richard Hall – Deaf adult. Teacher at Marlton School. Co-emceed the retreat with Chauhan, offering the perspective of both a successful deaf adult and an educator who speaks to the importance of early language acquisition as a key component of academic success for deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Stephanie Johnson – Deaf adult. Teacher at Marlton School. Oversaw a structured children’s program throughout the day for kids (both hearing and deaf) ages three and older, while their parents attended workshops.

A flexible presentation framework was provided for each of the 10 presenters, leaving ample room for each person to personalize his/her workshops based on professional expertise and personal experience. Direct communication was a key consideration in developing workshops, and content was created to either be offered concurrently in both spoken English and Spoken Spanish, or delivered in Spoken English with simultaneous spoken Spanish interpretation available to monolingual Spanish-

speaking guests via wireless personal frequency modulation sets. American Sign Language interpreters interpreted retreat content in its entirety.

Venue

Securing an event location that would accommodate a large group of people, and that could be reserved at a reasonable fee, was a critical component of early planning. Marlton School in Los Angeles, LAUSD's public school for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, was identified as an ideal location based on its shared mission to support deaf and hard-of-hearing students and its potential for a built-in project audience. An initial meeting in early July with Principal Cara Fields confirmed her support of the event, and a willingness to recommend to the district's leasing office that DEAF Project be granted permission to lease the facility at the reduced rate. An LAUSD leasing application was secured and completed.

A follow-up site visit to determine what specific areas of campus would be utilized for individual workshops, and a comprehensive logistical plan was developed for use by Marlton's custodial staff in prepping the location prior to DEAF Project's early morning arrival on Oct. 12.

Budget and Funding

Although DEAF Project had earmarked existing grant funding to support full implementation of the proposed event, it was important to explore possible sponsorship funding to help replenish spent monies, both to support DEAF Project's ongoing programming, and to determine the likelihood of supporting future full-day workshops in times when grant funding might be minimal or non-existent. A comprehensive event budget was developed, that included expenses such as facility charge, speaker fees, ASL

interpreters, administrative support, meals, and workshop supplies, and allocated an additional \$500 for unknown/miscellaneous expenses. The total initial proposed budget, based on an early estimation of 75-100 registered attendees, was \$7,750.

A list of sponsorship opportunities was developed to present to allied companies and organizations seeking to advance the “father friendly” initiative and DEAF Project’s overall mission of supporting and empowering families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Specific dollar amounts were aligned with specific opportunities for recognition ranging from verbal acknowledgement during opening comments at the event for donations of less than \$500, to company/organization branding on printed and online event materials, booth space at the event and a guest pass for one company representative to attend, inclusion of sample product or company materials in attendee welcome kits and verbal recognition during welcome comments for a donation of \$5,000. The proposed budget and sponsorship options were outlined in a document made available to potential sponsors, and is included in the Appendix.

In partnership with Rachel Friedman Narr, a list of potential sponsors was developed. Companies were selected based on the relevance to the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities or a known support of education. It was determined that funding would not be requested from the three manufacturers of cochlear implants (Advanced Bionics, Cochlear Corporation or Med-El), due to the medical community’s overwhelming bias toward oralism, which is in direct conflict with DEAF Project’s support of multilingualism.

As shown below in Table 1, 15 companies/organizations were identified as potential event sponsors, based on a connection to the deaf community or a history of supporting education:

Identified Potential Event Sponsors
ABC Family, “Switched At Birth”
AT&T Relay Service
Costco Culver City
Costco Northridge
Hamilton Relay
Harris Communications
Lakeshore Learning
“No Ordinary Hero: The Super Deafy Movie”
Purple Communications
Sam Simon Foundation
Signing Time
Sprint Relay Service
Starky Hearing Aids
Staples Office Supply
That Deaf Guy: Cartoonist Matt Daigle
ZVRS Video Relay

Table 1: Potential Event Sponsors

Existing relationships were leveraged where possible. Tomas Garcia personally asked contacts at Purple Communications and AT&T Relay Service, and Friedman Narr requested support from contacts at Dawn Sign Press and Hamilton Relay. For the remaining companies/organizations, appropriate contacts were researched, sent targeted pitch letters, and followed-up with as necessary. A sample sponsorship request letter is included in the Appendix.

In addition to financial support, in-kind donations were also requested and received from various companies. In some cases, as shown below in Table 2, a company offered product in lieu of a monetary contribution, and product was specifically requested from other companies. The following companies supported the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat via cash or in-kind contributions:

Sponsorship Support		
Product	Donation	Other
ABC Family, “Switched at Birth” Dawn Sign Press Lenny & Larry’s National Center on Deafness “No Ordinary Hero: The Super Deafy Movie” Sprouts Market	Galpin Ford: \$500 donation Harris Communications: \$200 donation Purple Communications: \$250 donation	Big Mango Café (Waived catering service charge)

Table 2: Sponsorship Support

Promotional Efforts

Effective promotion would be critical to the success of the event, its broader goals of raising awareness of DEAF Project, and positioning the organization as a valuable source of support and empowerment for families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Adobe InDesign was used to create a full-page flier to help promote the retreat. The initial flier was released as part of a soft-launch effort announcing the event and encouraging people to “save the date.” The flier was updated twice throughout the promotional period: once after registration opened, with edits prompting people to “register today,” and later as part of a follow-up effort to Marlton School families, where the flier was re-designed to promote continued attention by parents, and included a personal message from Tomas Garcia. Fliers were also translated into Spanish, and are available in the Appendix.

A multi-tiered strategy was developed to help raise awareness of the retreat among key audiences, which included parents with deaf and hard-of-hearing children, educators, audiologists, cause-related organizations, and the media.

DEAF Project maintains a database of approximately 1,000 contacts, comprised of parents, teachers, and other professionals. While this database played a critical role in promoting the Connected retreat, it was not relied on exclusively. In the past, Facebook

posts and periodic email newsletters to contacts in the DEAF Project database have largely represented the extent to which DEAF Project events and activities were promoted. Given the costs associated with hosting the Connected retreat, as well as its overall importance and the opportunity it represented for families, it was crucial that promotional efforts cast the widest possible net.

Outreach to Professionals

In her role as a professor of special education and deaf education, Rachel Friedman Narr maintains an expansive list of personal and professional contacts, particularly among teachers of the deaf and administrators of deaf education programs. This list, combined with the existing DEAF Project database, served as the foundation for an outreach list.

An Internet search was conducted using key word strings such as “deaf children,” “raising deaf children,” “deaf children Los Angeles,” and “hearing parents, deaf children” to help compile lists of additional key professionals and organizations. This research surfaced four primary groups of professionals for which comprehensive online lists were found:

- California Newborn Hearing Screening Program (NHSP) Certified Communication Disorder Centers
- Family Resource Centers Network of California
- California Department of Social Services Deaf Access Program Service Providers
- California Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Administrators

Several individual organizations were also uncovered – all of which were familiar to Friedman Narr, but not all existed as previously established contacts.

Research results were cross-referenced with Friedman Narr's existing contacts to eliminate duplication. It was determined that Friedman Narr's contact list was comprised of access to teachers of the deaf throughout California, Family Resource Centers Network via an email list-serve, and Deaf Access Program Service Providers. She took responsibility for outreach to these contacts, initially via a personally drafted message, and later, via a pre-drafted follow-up/reminder message. Text for two separate email newsletter messages that were sent to the existing DEAF Project client database, the first when event registration opened in early August, and again prior to the registration deadline of Oct. 9, was also provided.

Two of the four researched lists of professionals (California Newborn Hearing Screen Program Certified Communication Disorder Centers and California Special Education Local Plan Area Administrators) included contacts throughout the state. It was determined that professionals from Bakersfield to San Diego would be targeted. Once the statewide lists were parsed by county, a concise, informative email, as seen in Figure 1 below, was sent to the Special Education Local Plan Area Administrators, asking them to please share the information with families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children, as well as teachers of school-age deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Fliers were included (in both English and Spanish), and contacts were encouraged to contact DEAF Project for more information:



**** Please Share with Early Start Professionals Working with Families Raising Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children, as well as Teachers of School-Age DHH Kids. ****

The Deaf Education And Families Project (DEAF Project) will host a **full-day retreat** for **families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing** children on **Saturday, Oct. 12** from 9am to 5p at **Marlton School for the Deaf** in Los Angeles. Workshops include a "For Dads/By Dads" session highlighting the importance of fathers in the lives of their DHH kids; becoming an empowered advocate for your child; fostering solid relationships between deaf and hearing family members; the importance of multilingualism; family team-building; and more! Supervised children's activities will keep kids occupied while parents attend workshops. Catered lunch included. **\$25 for a family of four.** Additional family members \$7. [Pre-registration required](#) (online or by mail). **Deadline is Oct. 9.** Workshops presented in spoken English, spoken Spanish and American Sign Language. For more information: (818) 677-4007 V or (818) 435-8163 VP or email DEAFProject@csun.edu. <http://www.csun.edu/deafproject>.

We appreciate your help in sharing this information with families! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (818) 677-4007.

Kindly,

Stephanie Colman
DEAF Project

Figure 1: SELPA Communication

Similarly, a mailing list of California Newborn Hearing Screening Program Certified Communication Disorder Centers located from Bakersfield to San Diego was created, and contacts received a one-page letter explaining the importance of the Connected retreat for families and inviting contacts familiarize themselves with DEAF Project through its website. Information was sent via U.S. mail because contact email addresses were unlisted. Unlike the SELPA contacts who work exclusively in special education and with whom DEAF Project likely already had support regarding the importance of a retreat like Connected, the NSHP providers consist of audiologists who are certified to work with deaf and hard-of-hearing babies and school-age children, but who do not do so exclusively. They are professional audiologists for whom deaf and hard-of-hearing children likely represent a small portion of their clientele. As a result, the letter needed to first establish the need for an event like Connected: Celebrating Families, explain what the event would entail, and then ask professionals to share information with appropriate clients. A copy of the letter can be found in the Appendix.

Social Media

Social media proved a to be a useful tool for disseminating information about the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat. The retreat was soft-launched on the DEAF Project Facebook page in mid-July via a posted event flier (in English and Spanish, Figure 2, below) encouraging people to save the date and announcing the open-registration date of Aug. 5.



Figure 2: Initial Event Fliers

In addition to the DEAF Project Facebook page, the fliers were cross-posted to the Facebook pages of several related organizations.

Fliers were posted multiple times, each with slightly different messaging. Some messages offered a general overview of the topics to be addressed, while others focused on the ease of online registration and the registration deadline, or offered “teaser” statements related to workshop content, such as, “Do you know what the Dinner Table

Syndrome is? Join us for Connected: Celebrating Families to find out!” Posts encouraged others to share with their own personal networks to help promote the retreat, and page administrators, when known, were privately asked to “comment” and “share” posts within the page to help make “user” posts more prominent and keep the content active.

Twitter was also used to help raise awareness of DEAF Project and the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat. Tweets were primarily sent by the three main event organizers, via personal Twitter accounts, with each person re-tweeting the other’s posts. Other workshop presenters were asked and encouraged to tweet about the retreat, but were largely inactive on Twitter.

The strategic use of hashtag #deaf, for #DEAF Project, was used to help create brand awareness while promoting the event, and ensured that the Connected retreat would be available as part of the greater online discussion related to the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. It was anticipated that not everyone reading the event-related tweets would be interested in the workshop itself, but with a shared interest in the deaf community, might visit and bookmark the DEAF Project website. The hashtag #connected was also used. Similar to Facebook posts, tweets offered an overview of the retreat, its importance, and “teaser” posts related to workshop content.

Legacy Media and Bloggers

Legacy media and bloggers were also beneficial in raising awareness of the Connected: Celebrating Families Retreat and DEAF Project. First, a press release (available for review in the Appendix) was created to highlight the retreat as a one-time event, but also stressed the existence of new research disproving the medical

community’s longstanding claim that parents should specifically avoid teaching deaf and hard-of-hearing children to sign if they wish to explore listening and speaking via assistive technology, and the benefits of multilingualism. As event stories typically represent “soft news,” the DEAF Project story was presented as more than just an event piece in an effort to secure further interest among media while leveraging Friedman Narr as an expert in the field of deaf education.

Simultaneously, a targeted media list of local daily and weekly newspapers, parenting magazines, radio stations, broadcast affiliates, Spanish-language media, parenting bloggers, and community journalists was developed. Two audience-specific national outlets were also included: *Huffington Post Parents* and *Parenting Special Needs* magazine. A total of 42 individual outlets were included in the media list.

Media Outreach

General Print	TV	Radio	Parenting Bloggers
LA Times LA Daily News LA Independent Herald Publishing: (Multi-paper) Los Angeles Magazine Jewish Journal	KCBS KNBC KTLA KABC KCAL KTTV	KYSR KOST	LACityMom.com MomsInLA.com ParentsConnect.com DeafParenting.com SassyMamaInLA.com TwoLittleHands.com Macaroni Kid Publishing: (Multi-site publisher)
Parenting Magazines/Websites	Hyper-Local News	Spanish-Language Media	CSUN-Related
LA Parent Magazine LA Splash Magazine: (Babies & Parenting) Parenting Special Needs Magazine Huffington Post Parents	Patch.com: Culver City Marina del Rey Hollywood Westwood/Century City Beverly Hills Northridge/Chatsworth	Hoy Los Angeles La Opinion San Fernando Valley Sun La Prensa Univision	KCSN Office of Marketing & Communications Daily Sundial

Table 3: Media Outreach

Individual media outlets were selected based on geographic coverage area and coverage type. In the case of parenting bloggers, while a Google search uncovered numerous parenting-related bloggers throughout the greater Los Angeles area, a review of blog post content revealed that many focused heavily on product reviews and personal

accounts of bloggers' life-experience as parents versus news-style, informational posts. Such blogs were eliminated from the media list.

The press release was sent with a tailored pitch, via email, fax, or website contact pages to pre-identified feature editors or editors. Calendar editors were sent a pre-drafted calendar listing, along with the release, and local radio stations received a 30-second public service announcement script. Event listings were posted directly to media websites when possible.

Information was first sent two weeks prior to the Oct. 12 retreat, with a follow-up media alert sent to the daily newspapers and network affiliates on Oct. 9. To help track if and how the information was used, a Google Alert was created for the term, "DEAF Project" which, as the host organization, would show up in articles related to the "Connected: Celebrating Families" retreat.

Additional Promotion

Additional event promotion included working with Marlton School's principal to organize outreach to families via students. The original "save the date" flier was sent home with Marlton's 325 students in late-August, and a re-designed flier, which included a personal message from Tomas Garcia, was re-distributed with copies of the mail-in registration form in late-September. It was also arranged that Marlton would provide information to parents via the school's Direct Ed. system, where parents receive pre-recorded phone calls, email and text messages. Pre-scripted messaging was provided.

Attending DEAF Project's local weekly Family American Sign Language Class at Mayall Elementary School in Granada Hills provided an opportunity to open class with a short description of the event, encourage attendance, and distribute fliers.

Follow-up was conducted among key supporters, such as the family education coordinator at California School for the Deaf, Riverside, thanking her for her support in forwarding the event fliers to CSDR families (the result of earlier outreach by Friedman Narr), and encouraging the continued sharing of information among families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Lastly, two volunteer still photographers (Marsha Katz-Rothpan and Ellen Zuckerman) and one reporter (Jennifer Bjorklund Lloyd) were recruited and guided in an effort to document the event on behalf of DEAF Project. Pre-arranged interviews with Friedman Narr and a local family raising a deaf daughter took place the week before the Connected retreat, and an interview with Tomas Garcia and assorted B-roll was secured during Oct. 12 retreat. Select event photos were captioned and made available to interested media following the event, and all of the photos were uploaded to an online album, with the link made available to attending families and posted to the DEAF Project website.

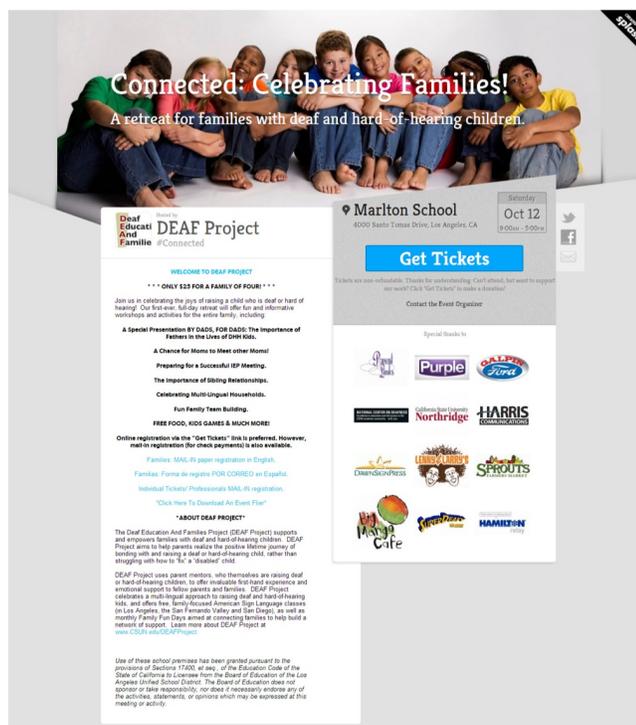
Media Training

To prepare for possible media attention, a set of key talking points (available in the Appendix) were developed to serve as cornerstone messaging about both the event and the organization. Prior to this project, while certain overarching themes were present in DEAF Project's work, materials and designated spokespersons lacked consistent message points, potentially diluting important information and detracting from organizational branding. As part of this effort, a short list of media tips was created, which was reviewed in person with Friedman Narr and presented via a detailed email to

DEAF Project's four parent mentors. Further, all workshop presenters were notified in advance about media known to attend the event.

Registration Process

Online event registration was selected due to its ease-of-use. Event management site Splashthat.com was used to create a comprehensive registration site for the Connected: Celebrating Families event. As shown in Figure 3, the site included an overview of the event, biographies and photos of workshop presenters, a sample event schedule, and logos of companies supporting the event in some way. The page also included links to downloadable paper registration forms, in English and Spanish, for families who preferred to pay by check or cash.



Speakers



Dr. Tomas Garcia
Dr. Tomas Garcia is a professor of American Sign Language at Los Angeles College, and a member of the California Deaf Community. He is also a member of the Deaf community and has been a hearing aid user for many years. He is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community. He is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Lori Reed Sortino
Lori Reed Sortino is a young business and mother of two who is a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community. She is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Stephanie Johnson
Stephanie Johnson is a graduate and kindergarten teacher at Northridge High School. She is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Carmen Varela
Carmen Varela has been a disability rights advocate for 20 years, and currently works as a legal advisor at Disability Rights California. She is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Emma Sanchez
Emma Sanchez is a parent activist with DHH Project and a hearing aid user. She is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Mark Spittstoesser
Mark Spittstoesser has been an adjunct professor of American Sign Language at California State University. He is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Apryl Chauhan
Apryl Chauhan is the hearing teacher of a deaf daughter and has been a hearing aid user. She is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Richard Hill
Richard Hill is a member of the Northridge High School American Sign Language and Hearing Impaired and is a hearing aid user. He is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Janila Carrero-Castro
Janila Carrero-Castro, MA, MEd is a researcher for deaf and hard of hearing students at Los Angeles Trade Technical College. She is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.



Edith Wyringer
Edith Wyringer is a parent activist at DHH Project and a hearing aid user. She is currently a hearing aid user and is a member of the Deaf community.

Retreat Schedule

9:00AM - 9:30AM	Check-In and Socialization
9:30AM - 10:00AM	Welcome and Opening Comments
10:15AM - 12:15PM	"For Dads Only!" with Tomas Garcia (Spanish) and Mark Spittstoesser (English/ASL) OR; "Moms Supporting Moms" with Lori Sortino and Apryl Chauhan AND; Kids' Activities with Stephanie Johnson and Friends.
12:30PM - 1:45PM	LUNCH (Included) Catering provided by Jonathan Weiss and Big Mango Cafe.
2:00PM - 3:45PM	"For Dads Only! Part Two" OR; "Becoming an Empowered Advocate for Your DHH Child" AND;
4:00PM - 5:00PM	Kids' Activities with Stephanie Johnson and Friends. Family Team Building and Closing Remarks.

Figure 3: Online Event Registration

Event pricing was pre-determined in prior planning meetings. Three different ticket types were created. The first was a \$25 Family Ticket, which provided access to a family of up to four, which could include adults other than the parents. In registering as a family via online or with a paper registration form, registrants were asked to provide basic contact information, the total number of people attending with the family, specifically who was attending (i.e., Mom, Dad, and two children, or Mom, Grandma, Aunt, and one child), the age of any children attending, what languages were used in the home, and if anyone required special accommodations (beyond language interpretation). Details obtained via registration provided important information throughout the event planning process, such as the number of Spanish-speaking vs. English-speaking families, the number of fathers, and the number and ages of children for which supervised activities would be provided.

Add-On Tickets were available for \$7 each and were only valid when purchased with a Family Ticket. Add-On tickets were used for families registering to attend with more than four people. Forty-five Family Tickets were sold, with eight families purchasing one or more Add-On tickets. A Professional/Individual ticket was offered for \$20, and was available to educators, administrators, or individual parents attending without their family. Eight Professional/Individual tickets were sold.

The Splashthat.com website was used to create customized purchase-confirmation emails and receipts for online ticket purchases, as well as customized tickets (Figure 4, below), which were emailed to attendees:

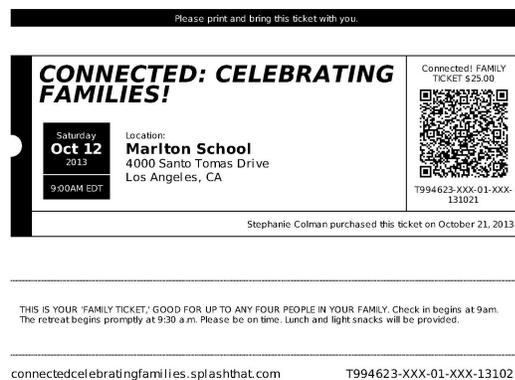


Figure 4: Event Ticket

When registration closed on Oct. 9, a final attendee list was exported and used to inform presenters of the estimated number of people to attend workshops, as well as to generate name tags and contact cards, which were distributed during event check-in. Registered guests received a reminder email, sent in both English and Spanish, three days prior to the event. The email included the venue address, parking and check-in information, and important details related to the supervised children's program.

Volunteer Recruitment and Management

Adequate event staff is key to creating an enjoyable experience for event attendees. In addition to the two event organizers, only one volunteer parent mentor and two of the four employed parent mentors were scheduled to attend the Connected retreat (the remaining two, from San Diego, had scheduling conflicts), and were either scheduled as workshop co-facilitators, or, as parent mentors, needed to be available to interact with families. Freidman Narr emailed a request for volunteers throughout CSUN's College of Education, and created a short online application for interested students. Thirty-two students responded. The first 20 were selected as volunteers, with the remaining 12 encouraged to join DEAF Project at future events.

A brief, mandatory volunteer orientation took place on Sept. 20, where students were given an overview of the event and the event organizers' expectations of them as volunteers, and asked to sign a volunteer agreement reiterating the expectations. Contact with volunteers was maintained in the weeks leading up to the event, recruiting help when it was time to assemble participant "goodie bags," fielding questions about volunteer responsibilities and schedule changes, and ensuring that everyone was prepped with important last-minute information.

Miscellaneous Activities

Attention to detail is a critical element of ensuring a successful event. To that end, attention was paid to the production and management of several additional activities designed to create an enjoyable and memorable experience for DEAF Project and families attending the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat, including:

- **Event Catering by a Deaf Role Model** – A search for local event caterers uncovered Big Mango Café, a restaurant and catering company owned by Jonathan Weiss, who is deaf. Weiss was contacted about the event, and agreed to provide services at a significantly reduced fee. Ongoing communication was necessary to create a menu, submit a guest-list, manage last-minute headcount changes, and organize delivery and set-up of food at the event.
- **Participant “Welcome Bag” Production** – In addition to promotional materials (catalogs, branded note pads, pens, etc.) that were included in exchange for financial sponsorship, additional materials such as snack items from Lenny & Larry’s, ASL alphabet cards from the ABC Family television show “Switched at Birth,” and various informational items of interest to families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children were solicited. A “welcome letter” and final event schedule (available in English and Spanish) were created and assembled in folders, along with additional fliers and collateral materials. Welcome bags were presented to guests in CSUN-branded drawstring bags. Every registered family and professional/individual received a bag upon check-in.
- **Event Signage** – Many families were visiting Marlton School for the first time. The Marlton campus is split over three different levels. As shown in Figure 5, a comprehensive collection of event signs was designed with copy in English, Spanish, and graphics depicting the ASL-version to further the theme of multilingualism. Signs were displayed throughout campus during pre-event set-up.

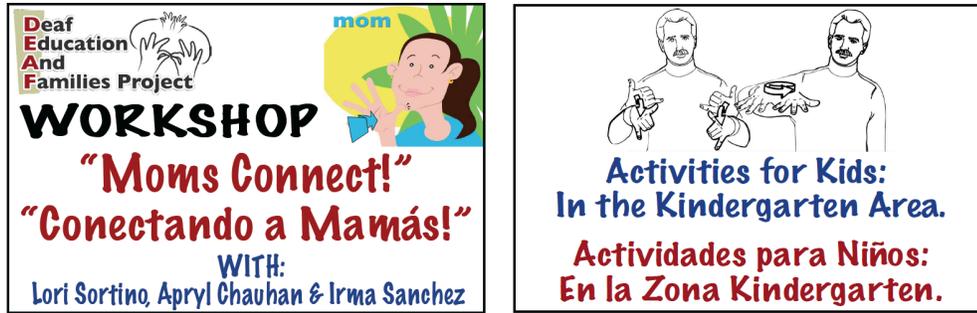


Figure 5: Event Signage

- **Workshop Evaluation** – A workshop evaluation (in English and Spanish) asked participants to rate the value of information, perceived knowledge-level of specific presenters, the likelihood that presented information would be incorporated into the attendee’s lives with their families, and how the workshops might be improved upon in the future. Participants were also asked whether or not they were familiar with DEAF Project prior to attending the Connected retreat, and if not, would they now be likely to attend future events. This information helped determine the success of the workshops as will help guide future DEAF Project programming. Ninety-four evaluations were completed, the results of which are discussed in chapter four.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter presents a summary of the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat, including attendance and budget, promotional efforts, retreat programming, and participant feedback.

Attendance and Budget

A total of two hundred and twenty people attended the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat. A breakdown of participants is provided in Table 4, below:

Type	Number
Registered Guests (44 Families, 9 Professionals)	181 (95 Adults, 86 Children)
Workshop Presenters	10
Event Volunteers	20
Professional Language Interpreters	7
Event Organizers	2

Table 4: Event Attendees

Of the 44 families who registered, 35 included a father. Most families came from throughout the greater Los Angeles area, however families also traveled from Bakersfield, Indio, Lancaster, Riverside, San Diego, and Ventura. Only three pre-registered families failed to attend on Oct. 12.

The total cost of the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat was \$7,771. The event generated a total income of \$2,390 through sponsorship donations and ticket sales, for an actual cost of \$5,381. To assist DEAF Project with future event budgeting, a comparison of the anticipated versus actual budget is provided in Table 5:

	Facility Charge	Workshop Facilitation	ASL Interp.	Meals	Admin. Support	Supplies	Misc.
Proposed:	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$750	\$500
Actual:	\$540	\$525	\$2,100	\$3,208	\$240	\$740	\$240

Table 5: Budget Overview

Promotional Efforts

Raising awareness of the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat played a key role in generating attendance. Key audiences targeted in the outreach effort included families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children, educators, professionals, allied organizations, and the media. A variety of outreach tactics were utilized, including:

Social Media

In the past, DEAF Project events, while significantly smaller in scope than the Connected retreat, were primarily promoted via the organization's Facebook page, and posts often lacked the attention necessary to keep the content near the top of the page where it was more likely to be seen by both occasional and regular users. As a result, posts would often become buried weeks prior to the event. In using Facebook as a platform for disseminating information about the retreat, it was imperative that information be consistently available without becoming overwhelming. Posts most often served as reminders for parents to register to attend the event, and consisted of various messages directing users to the DEAF Project website and/or the Connected online registration site. Links to outside media promoting the retreat were also shared.

In addition to assorted messages posted to the DEAF Project Facebook page, as seen in Figure 6, information was also cross-posted to, and maintained on, the pages of numerous allied organizations, including: California Hands and Voices (both the Facebook page and group site); California School for the Deaf, Riverside; Deaf Latinos (a Los Angeles-based organization); Friends of Marlton School, Hearing Parents of Deaf Children; No Limits for Deaf Children; and "No Ordinary Hero: The Super Deafy Movie."



Stephanie Colman

Wondering why YOU should attend the #Connected retreat? Tomas Garcia explains...

REGISTER TODAY!

Deaf Education And Families Project

CONNECTED: CELEBRATING FAMILIES!

WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND THIS EVENT? A NOTE FROM DR. TOMAS GARCIA:

*Dear Families:
As parents, we don't always have all the answers... and when blessed with raising a beautiful deaf child, we sometimes don't even understand all the questions! But as parents, I believe we are chosen because we have the courage, compassion and love needed to be the special parent of a special child.
In our busy lives, it's easy to overlook the importance of bonding as a family. I hope you'll join us for a day of rejuvenating family bonds and celebrating a true family CONNECTION.
I look forward to meeting you!*
- Tomas Garcia

SATURDAY, OCT. 12
9am to 5pm
Marlton School
ONLY \$25 for a family of four, including lunch!
(Limited Scholarships Available.)
REGISTER ONLINE OR BY MAIL
www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject

DEADLINE IS OCT. 9!

WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:
The importance of fathers in the lives of DHH children, a special presentation "Far Buds Only!"
With Tomas Garcia and Anne Spittler-Casas.
A Chance for Moms to Meet Other Moms.
Advocating for your DHH Child.
The Importance of Sibling Relationships.
Celebrating Multi Lingual Households.
Children's Activities.
With Stephanie Johnson and Franck de

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

QUESTIONS?
(818) 677-4007 V / (818) 435-8163 VP
or email DEAFProject@CSUN.edu
WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES WILL BE PRESENTED IN SPOKEN ENGLISH, SPOKEN SPANISH AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · September 24 at 8:54pm

Irma Sanchez, Rachel Friedman Narr and 3 others like this.



Stephanie Colman

DEAF Project's Connected Retreat featured in LA Parent magazine's monthly newsletter and on the website!



LAParent.com - Your Child With Special Needs Monthly
engage.advancedpublishing.com

For kids with special needs, the spooky holiday is a chance to develop social skills, imagination and other talents. Check out these tips and seize the day!

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · October 8 at 11:31am near Los Angeles

Rachel Friedman Narr, Irma Sanchez and 5 others like this.



Write a comment...





Stephanie Colman

Registration is quick and easy! Do it today!
<http://www.csun.edu/deafproject>



Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · October 5 at 12:41pm

Rachel Friedman Narr, Irma Sanchez and Apryl Chauhan like this.



Lauren Abbott Maucere Great reminder!
October 5 at 3:59pm · Unlike · 🔄 1



Edith Inda Wysinger It was!!!! I registered online!!!
October 6 at 7:28pm via mobile · Unlike · 🔄 2



Write a comment...

Figure 6: Sample Facebook Posts

In addition to Facebook, Twitter was used to promote the event via social media. The most effective strategy for Twitter, in terms of widely disseminating information, proved to be the direct outreach to individual cast members of ABC Family’s popular television show, “Switched at Birth,” which features several deaf characters in a storyline about two hearing families each raising teenaged daughters, one who is hearing and one who is deaf. Of the seven main actors who were contacted via Twitter and asked to re-tweet retreat information in an act of support for families like the show’s Kennish Family, three complied. Re-tweets were sent by actress Constance Marie (@GoConstance, with 47,804 followers), actor D.W. Moffett (@DWMoffett, with 16,796 followers) and actor Ryan Lane (@RyanLane123, with 12,909 followers). Lane’s re-tweet of the information was also further re-tweeted by several of his followers. A similar tactic was employed with tweets to actor John Maucere and producer Hilari Scarl

of the 2013 film, “No Ordinary Hero: The Super Deafy Movie.” In the film, Maucere, a deaf actor, plays alongside a deaf boy named “Jacob,” whose parents are in conflict over whether he should use American Sign Language or follow an oral education plan.

Maucere and Scarl (@JohnMaucere, with 1,721 followers and @HilariScarl, with 637 followers) were asked to re-tweet provided information “for families like Jacob’s.”

Legacy Media and Bloggers

The Connected: Celebrating Families retreat marked the first time that DEAF Project utilized a media relations campaign to help raise awareness of the event and the organization. As appropriate, media received the press release, pre-drafted calendar listing or PSA script. Feature editors were pitched the idea of an event-specific story with the option to cover as an evergreen story related to issues surrounding hearing parents raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Among mainstream media, *L.A. Parent* magazine took the greatest interest in the retreat, including an event listing on the website, expanded information in an email newsletter sent to approximately 680 subscribers, and assigned a reporter to cover the event as part of a January 2014 feature story related to children with disabilities. While DEAF Project seeks to avoid framing being deaf as a disability, inclusion in this story presented an opportunity to educate the publication and its readers on the concept of deaf as a culture, not a disability. The reporter conducted a pre-interview with Rachel Friedman Narr the day before the retreat, spent the full day at the event, interviewed several families and deaf adults, and scheduled a follow-up interview with Tomas Garcia.

Additionally, the event calendar was manually uploaded to media websites whenever possible. Several publications elected to run the calendar listing and/or the press release in its entirety, as shown in Table 6, below:

Calendar Listing	Event Press Release
L.A. Parent Magazine Jewish Journal LA Independent La Prensa LA Splash Magazine Macaroni Kid Beverly Hills/West LA Macaroni Kid Conejo Valley Macaroni Kid Glendora Macaroni Kid North San Fernando Valley Macaroni Kid Pasadena Macaroni Kid Rancho Cucamonga MomsLA.com Parenting Special Needs Magazine Patch.com Beverly Hills Patch.com Culver City Patch.com Hollywood Patch.com Westwood/Century City	LA Parent Magazine LA Splash Magazine Macaroni Kid Glendora Macaroni Kid Pasadena

Table 6: Legacy Media and Blogger Coverage

Not surprisingly, California State University, Northridge showed the greatest level of support with coverage of the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat. The director of media relations distributed the press release to a university-maintained media list of more than 100 media representatives in the Los Angeles area, including all television stations, both English and Spanish, as well as print publications serving Los Angeles’ English- and Spanish-speaking communities, and several Asian- and Armenian-language media outlets. Additionally, the managing editor for faculty, staff, and community news posted the press release as a news article in the online faculty/staff publication, “CSUN Today.” The article was also featured on the front page of the CSUN website from Oct. 1 to Oct. 12, as seen in Figure 7, below:

California State University
California State University, Northridge - Home

Skip to Content | Skip to Portal | Accessibility | Directory | Calendar | A to Z | Webmail

Search

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CSUN Board Approves New Home for Tseng College [Read more](#)

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University Events Calendar

Drawing Attention by John Van Hamersveld
Monday, Aug. 26 – Saturday, Oct. 12 Art Gallery (AG)

Interpreneur or Entrepreneur?
Tuesday, Oct. 15 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. University Student Union, Grand Salon

[See more events](#)
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[Visiting CSUN](#)

CSUN News

DEAF Project to Host Retreat for Parents of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing Children
More than 90 percent of the nearly 12,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing babies born annually in the United States have hearing parents. Often, that baby is the first deaf person the parents have ever met, and questions abound as they enter a world they are unfamiliar with. [Continue reading about the retreat.](#)

CSUN Social Work Student Honored by CSU for 'Outstanding' Achievement
When Brooke Celia Hall was 17, she lost her father. Seven years later, her older brother died. While others might have given up and retreated from the world, Hall persevered through both. [Continue reading about Brooke Hall.](#)

Former U.S. Asst. Sec. of Ed to Explore 'Education on the Edge' at CSUN Lecture
Best-selling author and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch will discuss the pressures facing public education in the United States on Wednesday, Oct. 2 as part of the Education on the Edge lecture series presented by California State University, Northridge's Center for Teaching and Learning. [Continue reading about lecture.](#)

CSUN Athletics Partners With Penn's Center For The Study of Race & Equity in Education to Examine Student-Athlete Experiences and Success
Cal State Northridge and the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education have joined forces to participate in an important education project to determine student success for women and students of color who participate in athletics at CSUN. [Continue reading about study.](#)

More at CSUN Today

Campus Budget News
Campus Budget News - Updated: July 2, 2013
The [Campus Budget FAQs](#) include the most up-to-date information on the University budget.
[Student FAQs for Fall 2013](#) are now available.

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Faculty and Staff News

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Figure 7: Website News Feature

The campus radio station, KCSN, also showed its support of DEAF Project via voicing and airing a 15-second public service announcement (Figure 8, below) a total of 25 times, during various day-parts, between Sept. 18 and Oct. 12.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**DEAF EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PROJECT
CONNECTED: CELEBRATING FAMILIES RETREAT**

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (:15)

More than 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents. If you're raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, you're not alone. Join the Deaf Education And Families Project for "Connected: Celebrating Families," a full-day retreat on Saturday, Oct. 12 at Marilton School for the Deaf in Los Angeles. \$25 for a family of four. Tickets available at C-S-U-N dot E-D-U slash DEAF PROJECT (www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject) or call (818) 677-4007.

###

Figure 8: Radio PSA

The university's student-run newspaper, the *Daily Sundial*, sent a reporter to cover the Connected retreat. The article (available in the Appendix) appeared in the Monday, Oct. 14 edition and contained numerous factual errors that misrepresented the retreat as an event targeting the families of deaf and hard-of-hearing CSUN students. The student editor was immediately notified via email, and when no response was received within five days, the letter to the editor was forwarded to the faculty publisher who responded the same day. A correction was issued on Tuesday, Oct. 22.

Immediately following the retreat, a series of photos (available in the Appendix) by volunteer event photographers Zuckerman and Katz-Rothpan were captioned and sent to the Office of Marketing and Communication, along with key event details. In response, the office published a follow-up story and two event photos in "CSUN Today" on Monday, Oct. 21. Additionally, at the time of this project's completion, DEAF Project remained in contact with the office's senior director and executive editor

regarding interest in a *Northridge Magazine* article about CSUN's many connections to the deaf community, including the role of DEAF Project.

Support of the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat via campus media is important because it helps raise awareness of the organization among key faculty, staff, and administrators who might choose to personally support the work of the organization, or who are in a position to recommend that the organization be considered for various grants and other fundraising opportunities. While DEAF Project's affiliation with CSUN makes it more likely that campus media would promote its events and activities, it's important to note that faculty and staff publications such as "CSUN Today" are overseen by a managing editor who makes editorial choices regarding content. Every story idea presented for consideration is not selected for publication.

It's impossible to know to what extent pre-event media coverage of the Connected retreat contributed to the turnout, or if the turnout is directly related to the persistence with which the event was marketed to parents, teachers, and allied organizations. However, much like the benefit of linking DEAF Project and the Connected retreat with the greater conversation surrounding "deaf" as a topic via a Twitter hashtag, the hope was that successfully getting the DEAF Project name out there, particularly among readers of parenting-related publications, would potentially help guide families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children to the organization for support, either directly or via word-of-mouth.

Event Video

A post-event video was produced in partnership with volunteer videographer/editor Jennifer Bjorklund Lloyd, to serve as a promotional tool for DEAF Project. The 5-minute video features interviews with a DEAF Project client family,

Rachel Friedman Narr, and Tomas Garcia, and includes b-roll and still photographs from throughout the Connected retreat. The goal of the video was to encourage families to participate in future DEAF Project events, while highlighting DEAF Project key messages. Specifically, the importance of fathers communicating with and showing affection to their deaf children in ways that are meaningful to them, and the benefits of teaching deaf children American Sign Language, even if parents intend to use assistive technology such as hearing aids and cochlear implants.

The video was closed-captioned in both English and Spanish, uploaded to DEAF Project's YouTube page, DEAFProject CSUN, and linked from the DEAF Project website and Facebook page. Rachel Friedman Narr distributed the video link via email to an expansive list of personal and professional contacts within the field of deaf education throughout California. The video was well received by both families and professionals, with one professional commenting on its usefulness as a teaching tool for future teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The YouTube link received more than 200 views in its first three days. The video link can be found at www.csun.edu/deaf project, viewed directly on YouTube at http://youtu.be/D_Ea13OpHhQ, or by searching YouTube for the title, "Connected: Celebrating Families."

Retreat Programming

The following section provides an overview of opening events, as well as a summary of the three distinct program areas offered during the "Connected: Celebrating Families" retreat: workshops for dads, workshops for moms, and programming/childcare for children.

Arrival, Welcome, and Opening Comments

Upon arrival, guests were instructed to check-in at the registration desk, followed by escorting their children to the kindergarten area for the supervised children's program. Once their children were signed-in with the appropriate volunteers, parents returned to the auditorium for a welcome session and brief opening comments.

Rachel Friedman Narr opened the event with a few brief words as DEAF Project's coordinator before introducing Richard Hall and Apryl Chauhan, who delivered an opening address. Hall was asked to participate to help share the deaf perspective throughout the day, and to serve as a deaf-adult role model for families. Access to deaf-adult role models is important for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, a point Hall illustrated in his telling of how he, as a child, had a deaf friend (with hearing parents) who thought all deaf people died after a certain age, because he'd never met any deaf adults. Hall is third-generation deaf, and a teacher at Marlton School. As a teacher, he was also able to speak to the importance of early language acquisition as a key component of academic success among deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Hall co-emceed the opening session with Apryl Chauhan, who is hearing, and has three school-age children. Her oldest child, Zahra, is deaf. Chauhan worked with DEAF Project as a parent mentor before her family relocated from Southern California to Northern California so that Zahra can attend California School for the Deaf Fremont.

Following a 30-minute welcome and opening comments, parents dispersed to attend their respective workshops and other retreat activities, as detailed in the event schedule, Figure 9, below:



Schedule of Events

9:00-9:30am	Check-in and Socialize – Auditorium		
9:30-10:00am	Welcome & Opening Comments - Auditorium		
10:15am-12:15pm	“For Dads Only!” “Sólo Para Papás” En Español Tomas Garcia La Biblioteca In English Mark Splittstoesser Room 201	“Moms Connect” “Conectando a Mamás” With Lori Sortino Apryl Chauhan Irma Sanchez Presented in English with Español and ASL interpretation.	Activities for Kids! Actividades Para Niños! With Stephanie Johnson and Friends! Kindergarten Area Please Sign In
12:30-1:45pm	LUNCH / ALMUERZO		
2:00-3:45pm	“For Dads Only!” “Para Papás Sólo” PART TWO En Español Tomas Garcia La Biblioteca In English Mark Splittstoesser Room 201	“IEP and Advocacy” “Reuniones del IEP y Abogacia” En Español Irma Sanchez and Jamila Guerrero Kitchen In English Carmen Varela and Edith Wysinger Auditorium	Activities for Kids! Actividades Para Niños! With Stephanie Johnson and Friends! Kindergarten Area Please Sign In
4:00-5:00pm	Family Activity and Closing Remarks - Auditorium		

DEAF Project is sponsored, in part, by Parent Links, California Department of Education.

Special thanks to Marilton School administrators, faculty and staff for their outstanding support of Connected: Celebrating Families!

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Figure 9: Event Schdule

Workshops for Dads

Tomas Garcia and Mark Splittstoesser, both deaf adults and fathers, created a four-hour presentation designed to address the importance of father-involvement in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children in a meaningful, yet non-threatening way.

Garcia and Splittstoesser's "For Dads Only!" workshop challenged participants to examine and reflect upon their role as the fathers of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The workshop was comprised of lecture, group discussion, games and activities, and personal reflection through journaling. To offer insight into the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children, fathers were asked to wear ear-plugs throughout the day, and various activities illustrated the difficulty of lip-reading. During the presentation, Splittstoesser explained that people who are deaf or hard of hearing tend to miss an estimated 60-70% of information when relying on lip reading.

Given that the Latino community represents the largest ethnic group in Southern California, it was important that cultural differences be acknowledged and respected throughout the development and delivery of a father-specific workshop. Further, to promote direct communication, Garcia and Splittstoesser co-developed a workshop that was presented concurrently in spoken Spanish, by Garcia, and American Sign Language with spoken English interpretation, by Splittstotesser.

To encourage the open sharing of information by and among the fathers, wives, or other female attendees were not allowed to participate, and Garcia and Splittstoesser implemented a "closed-door" policy wherein event staff understood that the group was requesting privacy when the door was closed. In an attempt to further create a comfortable environment in which fathers could share personal information, only male interpreters and volunteers were present during the workshops. Judging by the overall positive response to the "For Dads Only!" workshop, it can be assumed that attention to details such as the gender of interpreters and volunteers helped create a "safe space" in which fathers felt comfortable discussing sensitive and personal information.

Workshops for Moms

Carmen Varela, a disability rights advocate with Disability Rights California and the mother of two adult children with disabilities, was recruited to present a workshop on the importance of advocating for deaf and hard-of-hearing-children. Although she does not have extensive experience working with the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, she specializes in the legal rights of children and those with disabilities, especially within immigrant and underserved populations. She was paired with Edith Wysinger, a DEAF Project parent mentor who is raising a 9-year-old son who is deaf, and who has spent 20 years working in the developmental disability field, currently as the family services manager for Channel Islands Social Services. They were asked to create a two-hour workshop that would be delivered in spoken English, around the concept of effective advocacy on behalf of deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

Similar to the “For Dads Only!” workshop, respecting cultural differences that might affect what information should be stressed throughout the presentation was important, so parent mentor Irma Sanchez, who is raising three sons who are deaf, and Jamila Guerrero-Cantor, a counselor for deaf and hard-of-hearing students at Los Angeles Trade Technical College, were asked to partner with Varela and Wysinger in developing a parallel presentation that would be presented in spoken Spanish.

The teams worked together to customize one of Varela’s existing presentations, which focused on the Individual Education Plan (IEP), to include information specific to provisions for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, such as audiology services, speech therapy, personal FM systems, real-time captioning, in-class note-takers, written instructions, and additional time allotted for tests. The bulk of the presentation was

centered around the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and offered an overview of the plan, its purpose, preparing for the annual IEP meeting, the meeting itself, members of the IEP team, what goes into the plan, how children are evaluated for services, and what to do if parents disagree with the evaluation and proposed actions.

PowerPoint presentations were created in both English and Spanish with copies of presentation slides provided to all workshop attendees.

Based on early in-person planning meetings with Tomas Garcia and conference calls with all of the DEAF Project mentors, it was determined that one of the two, two-hour workshops for mothers (and other female attendees) would embody a relaxed approach that encouraged significant interaction among the group, verses a traditional lecture with primarily one-way communication. DEAF Project promotes itself as a source of support and empowerment for families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. In keeping with the theme of “support,” it was important to organizers that one of the workshop for mothers offer an opportunity for them to network with and support each other through the exchange of personal stories related to raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children, while empowering each other with shared knowledge and ideas.

Lori Sortino, who is hearing, the mother of two adult children, one who is hearing and one who is deaf, and is a professional group facilitator was asked to help develop a workshop. She authors a blog, “Deaf Son, Hearing Mother,” where she writes about a variety of issues related to hearing parents raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and conducts various parent training sessions that address communication, personal awareness, and decision-making. She was partnered with Apryl Chauhan and Irma Sanchez.

Given that neither of the event organizers were parents, it was important to give Sortino, Chauhan, and Sanchez significant leeway in developing a presentation that would guide parents through a shared exchange of information of greatest importance to them. Organizer input regarding content development was limited to a request that the workshop address topics that were being “teased” as part of the promotional effort – specifically, the importance of fostering solid relationships between deaf and hearing siblings and other family members, and the benefits of multilingualism, and that the theme of empowerment be incorporated in ways that would allow parents to leave the workshop feeling as though they had acquired new knowledge and skills that would be immediately beneficial. The request was made that when facilitating their presentation, deference to the “deaf perspective” be given whenever possible. It was known that deaf adults and young adults (guests attending as professionals and select event volunteers) would be present. Unlike the facilitators, who, although they are parents raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children, they themselves are hearing, and as such, are unable to fully understand the myriad ways their actions and decisions affect their deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

The three mothers developed a two-hour workshop called, “Moms Connect,” which focused heavily on the importance of communication skills such as active and reflective listening, eye contact and body language, empathy, and curiosity. They opened the workshop by introducing themselves and sharing information about their families, followed by a group discussion to establish guidelines for group engagement and interaction.

Sortino and Chauhan then introduced the format for the remainder of the session. Participants were given the opportunity to create a vision board, which was first explained as a way for mothers to put their “hopes, dreams and goals (for their children) into one place using a collage of pictures and words”; to join one of six pre-determined topic areas for small-group discussion; or to establish a group discussion built around a topic of greatest interest or relevance to them. The pre-determined topics were created as leading questions to help generate initial conversation, and included, “What has your deaf or hard-of-hearing child accomplished that you never thought s/he would?”, “How do you share your culture with your deaf or hard-of-hearing child?”, “How do you create a bond between your hearing family and your deaf or hard-of-hearing child?”, “If you could ask a deaf adult one question, what would it be?”, “What has been the hardest decision you’ve had to make for your deaf or hard-of-hearing child?”, and “What do you enjoy most about having a deaf or hard-of-hearing child?”

Children’s Program

Providing childcare, in the form of a supervised program for children ages 3 and older, was likely a key component in securing attendance, as it meant families did not have to struggle with finding care for their children. It also kept older children from loitering throughout the Marlton campus as their parents attended workshops, which was a liability concern. Marlton kindergarten teacher Stephanie Johnson, who also teaches the San Fernando Valley-based Family American Sign Language class for DEAF Project, organized and lead a comprehensive children’s program for children ages 3 and older. DEAF Project provided five volunteers, and Johnson recruited select friends and

colleagues, as well as several additional student volunteers from the UCLA American Sign Language Club.

The children's program took place throughout Marlton's kindergarten area, which is comprised of several connecting classrooms and an outdoor play yard. The program successfully integrated approximately 80 children, both hearing and deaf, ages 3-16, who participated in arts and crafts, sports, board games, movies, pumpkin carving, and play equipment. Children had open-access to activities such as board games, movies, crafts, and outdoor play equipment, and were encouraged to participate in scheduled activities such as relay races and pumpkin carving. Designated activity breaks included donated snacks, and helped prevent over stimulation among younger children.

In some cases, parents of teenaged children expressed concern that their kids were "bored" with activities designed primarily for younger children. During initial retreat planning, an attempt was made to partner with Deaf West Theater, wherein they would develop and lead a story-telling workshop that would help provide an activity likely of interest to older children. Unfortunately, the organization was unavailable for an Oct. 12 event.

Children were reunited with their parents during the catered lunch, and again at the end of the day, for a closing family team-building activity. Under the direction of Tomas Garcia, families were challenged to construct a bridge using one daily newspaper and one roll of masking tape. The bridge represented the importance of connections within a family, as well as the act of connecting the deaf and hearing experience and cultures. Families were instructed to complete the challenge without using formal

language of any kind (spoken or signed), to introduce the idea of teamwork, communication and creative problem solving as foundations for a connected family.

Participant Feedback

To assess the degree to which attendees found the workshops beneficial, a seven-question workshop evaluation was distributed in the final 10 minutes of every workshop. Questions were presented in both English and Spanish, and those related to individual workshops asked attendees to rate their experience using a Likert-type scale from “Not Great/*No Bueno*” (1) to “Best/*Mayor*” (5). Attendees were also asked two open-ended questions, “How can we improve this workshop in the future?” and “How did you hear about this event?” as well as two closed-ended, yes or no questions, “Prior to attending this retreat, did you know about DEAF Project?” and “If no, now that you know about DEAF Project, are you likely to attend another event or speak with a parent mentor?” Finally, participants were asked if they would be willing to be contacted for additional feedback about the workshops or their experience at the retreat, and if “yes,” were asked to include their name, telephone number and email address.

When starting the evaluation, attendees were asked to indicate which workshop they were evaluating. Because the forms were distributed in every workshop, results include some overlap in answers to the questions, “How did you hear about this event?” “Prior to attending this retreat, did you know about DEAF Project,” and “If no, now that you know about DEAF Project, are you likely to attend another event or speak with a parent mentor?” This is because females attended two separate workshops and completed evaluation forms in both, while males also attended a workshop, and the same evaluation form was used in each of the three workshops. Additionally, some

respondents failed to identify which workshop they were evaluating. In some cases, the workshop could be identified based on written comments. For example, if someone referenced making a vision board, it was easily determined that they were evaluating the “Moms Connect” workshop. Unmarked evaluations were matched with associated workshops whenever possible. Ninety-four evaluations were completed.

Overall, feedback regarding workshop content was favorable, with the majority of respondents rating workshops and presenters as 5s and 4s. Marks of 3 and 2 were infrequent, and marks of 1 were non-existent. This suggests that DEAF Project has a solid understanding of the needs of families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children, as would be expected based on the professional expertise of Friedman Narr as a professor of special education and deaf education, and the “real world” expertise of the parent mentors. A copy of the bilingual evaluation and complete evaluation findings are available in the Appendix.

While overall, the workshops received high marks, several attendees from the “Moms Connect” and “IEPs and Advocacy” workshops offered additional input when asked the question, “How can we improve this workshop in the future?” Responses were analyzed, which revealed the following general suggestions:

- Provide more time for group discussion and audience questions.
- Create a streamlined approach to workshops, where speaker introductions are brief and the workshop content is more quickly accessible.
- Ensure that information is specific to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Offer a wider variety of workshops that allows for the sharing of more specific information.

- Provide opportunities for attendees to hear directly from young adults and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who were raised by hearing parents.

The workshops received mostly the highest possible ranking, yet 44 of the 94 evaluations noted opportunities for improvement, suggesting that families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children are eager for information, and recognize that DEAF project is in a position to meet this need. It also suggests that families would be interested in attending the retreat again in the future.

Given that the role of fathers in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children was a key motivating factor in the development and implementation of the retreat, special attention was paid to evaluations completed by participating fathers. A total of 18 evaluations were completed by fathers. Only five of the 18 evaluations received marks lower than 5 for each of the three Likert-type questions. Similar to the other workshops, of the evaluations that did not reflect “perfect scores,” the scores remained in the 3 and 4 categories, with no marks of 2 or 1.

Interestingly, whereas evaluations from the “Moms Connect” and “IEPs and Advocacy” workshops answered the question of, “How can we improve this workshop in the future,” with actual suggestions for improvements, participants from the “For Dads Only!” workshop frequently utilized the space to compliment the presenters and request that such opportunities for fathers be offered on a more frequent basis. Positive feedback included:

- *“I think this is a good class. It helps a lot.”*
- *“This workshop is good and the best.”*
- *“Instructor gave good insight and a humorous class!”*

- *“The timing in my life was perfect for this. Mark hit home. Appreciate everything.”*

In terms of promoting multilingualism, perhaps the most significant shared comment came from a father expressing an interest in American Sign Language, who said, “Please email me links to learning ASL, or mobile apps that are useful so I can strengthen my ASL skills.”

That fathers went out of their way to compliment presenters, coupled with the high marks reflected in the evaluations, suggests that the information was extremely well-received by fathers, and represents an opportunity for DEAF Project to explore additional “father-friendly” programming to build on the positive momentum gained with the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat.

From a public relations standpoint, it’s also useful to examine feedback from questions designed to help gauge attendee familiarity with the organization, as well as likelihood of continued involvement, particularly among workshop participants for whom the retreat was their first interaction with DEAF Project. Attendees were specifically asked, “Prior to the retreat, did you know about DEAF Project?” and “If no, now that you know about DEAF Project, are you likely to attend another event or speak with a parent mentor?” Of the 94 evaluations that were completed, 39 reflected no prior knowledge of DEAF Project. Of those, 29 respondents indicated they would be likely to attend future DEAF Project programming, and nine responded that they would “maybe” attend future programming. No respondents indicated that they would not attend future DEAF Project events.

Ultimately, it's difficult to rely on workshop evaluations to determine how many attendees were participating in a DEAF Project-sponsored event for the first time, due to the fact that female attendees participated in two workshops and potentially completed evaluations for both, and results were also mixed with evaluations completed by fathers following the "For Dads Only!" workshop. However, even if the results related to organizational familiarity are triplicated as a result of repeated evaluations within the same family, the findings still suggest that, at a minimum, 10 of the 44 registered families, 23%, experienced the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat as their first point-of-contact with DEAF Project. This supports the idea that a large-scale event can be an effective way for an organization to raise awareness of itself.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Non-profit organizations face many of the same public relations challenges as their for-profit counterparts. In order to effectively meet the needs of its target audience, the organization must be recognized within the marketplace, successfully compete for myriad available resources, and establish an identity. Public relations events can be beneficial in that they create opportunities for organizations to promote causes, ideas, or projects among key target audiences.

Project Evaluation

In determining the overall effectiveness of the Connected: Celebrating Families event, several factors must be considered. They are:

Attendance

Given that the number of families who attended the Connected retreat was considered a significant success among professionals who work with families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children – Rachel Friedman Narr, Tomas Garcia, and several attending professionals within the field of deaf education – one can assume that workshops of this type are a useful and welcomed way of disseminating valuable information to parents, while meeting the broader goal of supporting networking among families and providing access to deaf adult role models. This idea is further supported by the overwhelming positive evaluations paired with participants' willingness to offer feedback on how to improve the event in the future. Most significant is the number of fathers who participated.

However, when examining the bigger picture – that more than 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents, and the breadth with which the retreat was promoted, that only 44 families attended is still somewhat disappointing. Marlton School has approximately 180 deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and the event was held on their home campus. It was expected that this would help provide a significant attendance base on which to build through extensive promotion throughout Southern California.

In planning the Connected retreat, every attempt was made to eliminate barriers to attendance. The ticket price was intentionally set at an extraordinarily low amount to help make the event accessible to low-income families, and in extreme cases, scholarships (funded by Purple Communications) reduced the cost by 50%. (Three families requested and received a scholarship.)

Even among low-income families, it was important to event organizers that parents take some financial responsibility for attending the retreat in order to lessen the chance that a family would sign up, then fail to attend, in which case DEAF Project would be forced to absorb food costs at \$50 per family of four. For perspective, it cost a family of four less to attend the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat than it would for the same family of four to eat at a typical fast-food restaurant.

The logistical and financial challenges of finding adequate childcare were eliminated through encouraging parents to attend with their children as a family. While most of the workshops were designed for parents, families were reunited during lunch and for an end-of-day team-building exercise designed to give parents an opportunity to explore some of the themes presented throughout the day. Approximately 80 children attended the Connected retreat. Had the retreat not been presented as a family event with

access to a supervised children's program, and as a result, parents needed to secure appropriate childcare on their own, it can be predicted that overall attendance would have been even lower.

Language barriers were also eliminated through the conscious decision to provide direct access to information via separate, simultaneous presentations in spoken English and spoken Spanish and access to spoken Spanish translation via language interpreters. Both pre-event promotional material and day-of materials were provided in English and Spanish.

With such attention paid to potential barriers to attendance – cost, access to childcare and access to information in one's native language – coupled with an aggressive promotional strategy, a seemingly prime event location, and the overwhelming frequency with which deaf babies are born to hearing parents – the question remains, *“Where were the families?”*

One possible reason why hosting the retreat at Marlton School failed to provide a larger built-in audience might be the geographic enormity of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Marlton School is the only deaf school in the district. The school district is the second largest public school system in the country, serving 29 distinctly different geographical areas that span a total of 720 square miles (“District Information,” n.d.). It is likely that students are bused in from greater distances than their families are willing or able to travel on their own.

Emotionally, it's possible that many parents struggle to fully accept, understand, and empathize with their child's audiological difference to the extent that they fail to realize the importance of accessing information like that which was available via the

Connected retreat. That children are generally adaptable and often appear to be “getting along fine,” can often mask underlying challenges commonly recalled by deaf adults. For example, the exhaustion that comes from struggling to lip-read during interactions with hearing family members; the challenges of being taught in a hearing environment; or, as Richard Hall, Connected’s co-emcee shared of a childhood schoolmate, the uncertainty about one’s own ability to survive into the future, as the result of not meeting deaf-adult role models.

The medical community’s influence may also be affecting parents’ willingness to participate in workshops that promote the identity of a child as deaf or hard-of-hearing. Research shows that much of media’s coverage of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, as well as the cochlear implant, frames the inability to hear as a distinct deficit or disability – something that can often be “fixed,” allowing one to live a “normal” life through the use of assistive technology. The National Institutes of Health estimates that more than 26,000 children now have cochlear implants. Media headlines such as “Cochlear Implants Open Deaf Kids’ Ears to the World,” (Roan, 2009) “Hope for Hearing: Cochlear Implants,” (Young, 2012) and “Early Cochlear Implant Best for Deaf Kids,” (Ullman, 2012) likely drive well-meaning parents toward assistive technology and a medical community that, with the cost of cochlear implantation exceeding \$40,000 per ear, benefits greatly from indoctrinating families to its approach, often at the cost of access to other ideologies. As implant usage is on the rise, it might be difficult for parents to understand the need to accept their child as a deaf individual, and to educate themselves about the unique challenges and opportunities that being deaf represents, regardless of language decisions within the family.

At the same time, while 44 families might seem like a small number overall, it's important to consider the distance many families travelled to attend – from not just throughout the greater Los Angeles area, but also Bakersfield, Indio, Lancaster, Riverside, San Diego, and Ventura. Additionally, when compared to a typical Deaf Project Family Fun Day event with eight families, or even a large turnout of 12 families for an evening of Family Sign Language class, 44 families attending the Connected retreat gains significance.

Promotional Efforts

It's also possible that increased efforts during pre-event promotion might have led to more thorough distribution of the event information among various professionals working with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. DEAF Project attempted to reach families not yet in its database through outreach to fellow professionals working with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. In doing so, it required that professionals not only successfully receive retreat information, but also actively forward it to their own client families and encourage their participation. It would be helpful to have a better sense of how persistently fellow professionals promoted the event within their own communities.

In an attempt to gather some of this information, a list of 15 random professional contacts, to whom retreat information had been sent, was developed. It was intended that each person would be contacted in an effort to determine if retreat information had been successfully received and if so, if and how it had been further distributed. Unfortunately, given the heavy event-planning workload in the final weeks leading up to the Connected retreat, the personal follow-up was not completed. The lack of time necessary to

complete this task highlights the challenge in functioning both as the primary event planner and public relations person for a substantial event.

Specific to media coverage, it's possible that additional follow-up efforts might have led to a minimal increase in event coverage, in that personal follow-up can help a potentially overlooked press release get noticed, or present an opportunity to interact directly with a reporter and capture his interest via real-time dialogue. However, cold calls by public relations people are often cited as a major source of annoyance among reporters. More than likely, the lack of event coverage among media is the result of shrinking newsrooms, the low-incidence nature of the deaf population, and, most significantly, the general scarcity with which the population is covered beyond the context of using assistive technology such as hearing aids and cochlear implants.

Opportunities for Further Programming

Given the challenges inherent to parents developing a thorough understanding of the deaf or hard-of-hearing child's experience, there is value in creating opportunities for parents to hear directly from deaf young adults and adults. While the Connected retreat did put a strong emphasis on respect and deference for the deaf perspective, i.e. asking workshop presenters to solicit feedback from present deaf adults during presentations, a scheduled opportunity to hear personal accounts from deaf adults did not exist. This could easily be done as a panel discussion, and was discussed as an opportunity during initial planning, but ultimately not pursued in favor of other topic areas.

The success of the "For Dads Only!" workshop suggests that fathers are receptive to information when it's presented in a non-threatening way. DEAF Project should consider the opportunity to further the momentum gained among outreach to fathers

during the Connected retreat. The organization has already started to consider several possibilities, including a series of short, online video public service message-type videos targeting fathers raising deaf and hard-of-hearing; asking deaf and hard-of-hearing adults to share the deaf perspective via blog and vlog posts; or a Family Fun Day specifically targeting fathers and their children.

Challenges

A considerable amount of time is required to organize an event like the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat. DEAF Project is overseen by Rachel Friedman Narr, who maintains a full-time position as a professor of special education and deaf education. The organization's four parent mentors work an average of 15 hours per week, during which time they are engaged in direct outreach to families. None of the parent mentors have professional experience in public relations, marketing, or event planning. For some, working with DEAF Project is the first time they have worked outside of the home. While the Connected: Celebrating Families event was created in such a way as to serve as a model for future full-day retreats, it would be challenging for the organization to successfully re-create the event without a designated, experienced staff person.

Another challenge is funding. The timing for the first Connected: Celebrating Families retreat was ideal in that it coincided with the receipt of "carryover" funding through the Parent Links grant, which was required to be used for parent support. This grant money allowed DEAF Project to comfortably fund the event in its entirety without first needing to secure sponsorship support.

In the future, continued grant funding will be critical in supporting the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat. Despite aggressive outreach to allied organizations and companies that serve the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, financial support via corporate sponsorships was limited. This is likely due to recently imposed regulations by the Federal Communications Commission that severely restrict how the marketing departments of video relay service providers can spend money.

While the medical community is known for having deep pockets and a tendency to align itself with cause-related organizations, as a matter of ethics, DEAF Project does not wish to explore funding partnerships with cochlear implant manufacturers at this time. The organization is, however, willing to explore partnerships with hearing aid manufacturers. While outreach to one such manufacturer was initiated, it was unsuccessful due to lack of existing relationships and difficulty establishing contact with appropriate representatives. Creating a partnership is likely a lengthy process, and relationships would need to be established long before the core planning of a second Connected retreat. In addition, numerous charitable organizations award grant money in various amounts. Friedman Narr has successfully secured grant funding from assorted organizations in the past, and the ability to speak to the success of the inaugural Connected: Celebrating Families retreat, supported by the event video, will be beneficial in completing future grant applications, either to support subsequent offerings of the Connected retreat or additional DEAF Project programming.

Recommendations

Based on the success of the “For Dads Only!” workshop, it is recommended that DEAF Project continue to advance its plan to move forward with additional father-specific programming.

The success of the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat was due, in large part, to persistent event promotion among a wide audience. Whereas, historically, DEAF Project events were marketed primarily to internal audiences via the organization’s Facebook page, occasional email newsletters to the client database, and fliers distributed during DEAF Project-sponsored American Sign Languages classes, outreach in support of Connected was far more expansive and included repeated follow-up.

In promoting future ongoing events and activities such as Family Fun Days, DEAF Project should consider a similar outreach effort among both professionals with access to deaf and hard-of-hearing children and allied organizations. To accomplish this, it would be beneficial to develop a master promotional email list that extends beyond those professionals currently listed in the DEAF Project database. A master list would provide any DEAF Project staff member with access to appropriate contacts, making it easy for them to disseminate information.

In promoting regular events via Facebook, posts should be monitored to avoid information sinking to the bottom of the page where it is likely overlooked. Periodic comments following a post can help generate conversation while keeping the post high on the page. Information should also be re-posted as needed. Similarly, fliers and event announcements should be cross-posted to the Facebook pages of allied organizations, with periodic monitoring to check visibility and watch for user questions. The Facebook

pages targeted in the promotion of the Connected retreat can serve as the start of a master list to which DEAF Project staff members can add pages and groups as needed.

While Twitter was used to help promote the retreat, tweets were sent from event organizers' personal Twitter accounts. Although the hashtag #DEAF, for #DEAF Project, aimed to create name recognition for the organization, the establishment and use of a designated DEAF Project Twitter account would further its branding and potentially extend the reach of information to individuals and organizations who elect to follow @DEAFProject due to an overall interest in the deaf community. Login credentials could be provided to key event organizers who would share the responsibility of creating appropriate @DEAFProject tweets, while continuing to re-tweet information via personal accounts.

Overall, an increased attention to branding in all facets of DEAF Project programming will help create name recognition among professionals working with and families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. For example, event fliers and other materials should consistently include the DEAF Project logo, and a discussion with parent mentors can resolve inconsistencies among email signatures, some of which currently reference Parent Links, but not DEAF Project. Similarly, a discussion with parent mentor Irma Sanchez, who recently founded Deaf Latinos (an organization dedicated to integrating cultural history into the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing children) will help eliminate the current confusion that occasionally surrounds event sponsorship, while likely creating opportunities to promote both organizations.

Lastly, while DEAF Project specifically does not seek to promote regular free events via mainstream media for fear of attracting a general-public audience of people

interested in learning American Sign Language for free versus, specifically, families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children, the organization should consider regularly sending information to the university's Office of Marketing and Communications, which would likely consider the story due to the organization's CSUN-affiliation.

Final Thoughts

The Connected: Celebrating Families retreat highlights the effectiveness of public relations as a strategic communications practice designed to help organizations build mutually beneficial relationships. The development of a full-day event successfully helped DEAF Project address issues of importance to families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children, while a comprehensive promotional effort both drove attendance and served to raise awareness of DEAF Project among various key audiences. Collectively, these efforts served to help DEAF Project gain recognition within the marketplace, which is an important factor in furthering the organization's mission of supporting and empowering families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

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Appendix A

Sponsorship Opportunities



CONNECTED: Celebrating Families

OVERVIEW:

A one-day educational retreat for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. This retreat will emphasize the importance of solid inter-family relationships with the goal of supporting the deaf or hard-of-hearing child. A series of workshops (led by various professionals) targeting both the family as a unit, as well as within their individual relationship to the child (as a father, mother and sibling) will empower families to celebrate and explore language inclusion as a building block for healthy family bonding. Crafts and games will keep children entertained, as well as create opportunities for families to enjoy time together. Admission will be free to families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Unique to the retreat is a related educational campaign addressing the importance of fathers in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children. This message will be presented by Dr. Tomás García, a professor of American Sign Language at East Los Angeles College, and author of “Conocimiento,” a popular bilingual blog designed to unite the deaf, hard of hearing and hearing Latin American and mainstream communities. His experience growing up deaf and raising a child who is deaf, coupled with being trilingual (American Sign Language, spoken Spanish and spoken English), makes him an excellent role model and resource for fathers and families. We will aggressively promote the event among target families throughout Southern California, as well as launch a focused media relations campaign.

The retreat will also serve as the groundwork for various follow-up activities such as Father-Child events, continued video PSA messaging, and with additional funding, interactive, online American Sign Language classes targeting fathers.

DATE AND LOCATION:

The retreat will be held on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2013 at Marlton School in Los Angeles.

BUDGET AND SPONSORSHIP:

DEAF Project is seeking \$8,000 to support this initiative, with an estimated budget as follows:

Facility Charge:	\$500
Workshop Facilitation: (Assorted speaker fees)	\$1,000
ASL Interpreters:	\$2,400
Meals: (Morning/Afternoon snacks and catered lunch for ~75-100 people)	\$2,500
Administrative Support:	\$1,000
Supplies: (Workshops, Children’s Program, etc.)	\$750
Misc. Event Expenses:	\$500

TOTAL: **\$7,750**

Post Event PSAs/Follow-Up Activities: **\$3,000+**

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Various sponsorship opportunities exist for allied companies and organizations seeking to advance the initiative and DEAF Project’s overall mission of support and empowerment for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

EXCLUSIVE SPONSORSHIP:

An exclusive sponsor (\$8,000+) will receive company/organizational branding on all printed and online materials (fliers, mailers, event signage, video PSAs, attendee name tags, etc.), table space and passes for two representatives to attend, a scheduled, 10-minute product-demo prior to closing events, verbal recognition during welcome comments, and the option to include sample product or collateral materials in attendee welcome kits.

Other levels of sponsorship include:

\$5,000 – Company/organizational branding on event printed and online materials, table space and a pass for one representative, verbal recognition during welcome comments, and the option to include sample product or collateral materials in attendee welcome kits.

\$2,500 – Company/organizational branding on event printed and online materials, verbal recognition during welcome comments, and the option to include sample product or collateral materials in attendee welcome kits.

\$1,000 – Company/organizational branding on day-of printed materials (workshop handouts), sponsorship recognition on the DEAF Project website and verbal recognition during welcome comments, and the option to include sample product or collateral materials in attendee welcome kits.

\$500 – Verbal recognition during welcome comments and the option to include sample product or collateral materials in attendee welcome kits.

Sponsors of less than \$500 will receive verbal recognition during welcome comments.

ABOUT DEAF PROJECT:

The Deaf Education And Families Project (DEAF Project) supports and empowers families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. To date, the organization has positively impacted more than 1,000 families throughout Southern California. DEAF Project aims to help parents realize the

positive lifetime journey of bonding with and raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, rather than struggling with how to “fix” a “disabled” child.

DEAF Project uses parent mentors, who themselves are raising deaf or hard-of-hearing children, to offer invaluable first-hand experience and emotional support to fellow parents and families. DEAF Project also offers free, family-focused American Sign Language classes (in Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley and San Diego) and monthly Family Fun Days aimed at connecting families with others like themselves.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Rachel Friedman Narr, Ph.D.
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(818) 677-6854 V
(818) 435-8163 VP

Stephanie Colman
Public Relations, DEAF Project
StephanieColman@sbcglobal.net
(818) 989-7996 V

Appendix B

Sponsor Request Letter



18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge CA 91330-8265
www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject



(818) 677-6854

August 6, 2013

Harris Communications
Donation Request – Additional Information
Via Fax: (952) 906-1099

To Whom It May Concern:

On Saturday, Oct. 12, the Deaf Education And Families Project (DEAF Project) will host a full-day educational retreat for families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. This event, entitled, “Connected: Celebrating Families,” will be held at Marlton School for the Deaf in Los Angeles, California. The retreat will feature fun and informative workshops and activities for the entire family, with the overall goal of helping parents realize the joys of raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child. Given that, for most hearing parents, their deaf baby is the first deaf person they’ve ever met, providing support for such families is critical.

Workshops will focus on the importance of fathers in the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing children; how to become an empowered advocate for your deaf or hard-of-hearing child; fostering solid sibling relationships; the benefits of multilingualism and much more. In order to make this information available to a wide range of families, DEAF Project is heavily subsidizing the event, charging the nominal fee of \$25 for a family of four, including lunch. To ensure direct communication for families, the workshops will be presented in American Sign Language, spoken Spanish and Spoken English.

We are requesting a sponsorship in the amount of \$1,000 to help cover the cost of providing interpreters throughout the day. As a sponsor, Harris Communications will be acknowledged on event materials and the registration website, as well as during the “welcome” and “closing” comments. Additionally, we are happy to include company-provided promotional materials in participant bags.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (818) 989-7996. I’ve attached an event flier for your review, along with a copy of our non-profit status, which is extended to DEAF Project via its affiliation with California State University, Northridge. For more information about DEAF Project, please visit www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject.

Thank you in advance for your generous support of our upcoming Connected: Celebrating Families retreat!

Kindly,

Stephanie Colman
DEAF Project

Appendix C

Event Fliers

Deaf Education And Families Project  **CONNECTED: CELEBRATING FAMILIES!**

AN EDUCATIONAL RETREAT FOR FAMILIES WITH DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILDREN.

***** SAVE THE DATE! *****

Saturday, Oct. 12, 2013
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Marlton School, Los Angeles, CA

ONLY \$25 PER FAMILY!
(LIMITED SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE.)

Join us in celebrating the joys of raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. Our first-ever, full-day retreat will offer fun and informative workshops and activities for the entire family!



WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES WILL BE PRESENTED IN SPOKEN ENGLISH, SPOKEN SPANISH AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

 **Educators and other professionals welcome.**
Sponsorship opportunities available.

WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- The importance of fathers in the lives of DHH children, a special presentation "For Dads Only!"
With Tomas Garcia and Mark Splittstoesser.
- A Chance for Moms to Meet other Moms!
- Advocating for your DHH Child.
- The Importance of Sibling Relationships.
- Celebrating Multi-Lingual Households.
- Children's Activities
With Stephanie Johnson and Friends.

FREE FOOD, FAMILY TEAM-BUILDING & MORE!

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.
Visit www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject.

QUESTIONS?
(818) 677-4007 V / (818) 435-8163 VP
or email DEAFProject@CSUN.edu.

DEAF Project is sponsored, in part, by Parent Links, California Department of Education.

**Deaf
Education
And
Families Project**



**CONECTADO:
CELEBRANDO
A LA FAMILIA!**

**UN TALLER EDUCATIVO PARA LAS FAMILIAS
CON NIÑOS SORDOS.**

***** RECORDAR LA FECHA *****

Sábado, Oct. 12, 2013

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Marlton School, Los Angeles, CA

**SOLAMENTE \$25 PER FAMILIA!
(BECAS LIMITADO DISPONIBLES.)**

Únase a nosotros en la celebración de la alegría de criar a los niños sordos. Nuestro primer retiro, todo el día se ofrecerán divertidos e informativos talleres y actividades para toda la familia!



**TALLERES Y ACTIVIDADES SE PRESENTAN
EN HABLADO INGLÉS, ESPAÑOL HABLADO,
Y AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.**



Los educadores y otros profesionales son bienvenidos. Tenemos oportunidades de patrocinio.

TALLERES Y ACTIVIDADES INCLUYEN:

La Importancia de los Padres en las Vidas de los Niños sordos, una Presentación Especial de "Sólo Para los Papás!"

Con Tomas Garcia y Mark Splittstoesser.

Una Oportunidad para Conocer a Otras Madres las Madres!

Cómo Prepararse para una Entrevista IEP Exitoso.

La Importancia de las Relaciones Entre Hermanos.

Celebrando los Hogares Multilingües.

Actividades Para Niños
Con Stephanie Johnson.

**COMIDA GRATIS,
FAMILIAS TRABAJO EN EQUIPO Y MÁS!**

SE REQUIERE REGISTRARSE.

Visite a www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject

PREGUNTAS?

(818) 677-4007 V / (818) 435-8163 VP

E-mail: DEAFProject@CSUN.edu

DEAF Project es patrocinado, en parte, por Parent Links, Departamento de Educación de California.

REGISTER TODAY!

Deaf Education And Families Project



CONNECTED: CELEBRATING FAMILIES!

WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND THIS EVENT?
A NOTE FROM DR. TOMAS GARCIA:

SATURDAY, OCT. 12

9am to 5pm

Marlton School

ONLY \$25 for a

family of four,

including lunch!

(Limited Scholarships Available.)

**REGISTER ONLINE
OR BY MAIL**

www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject

**DEADLINE
IS OCT. 9!**

Dear Families:

As parents, we don't always have all the answers... and when blessed with raising a beautiful deaf child, we sometimes don't even understand all the questions! But as parents, I believe we are chosen because we have the **courage, compassion and love** needed to be the special parent of a special child.

In our busy lives, it's easy to overlook the importance of bonding as a family. I hope you'll join us for a day of rejuvenating family bonds and celebrating a true family CONNECTION!

I look forward to meeting you!

-Tomas Garcia

WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

The importance of fathers in the lives of DHH children, a special presentation "For Dads Only!"

With Tomas Garcia and Mark Splittstoesser.

A Chance for Moms to Meet Other Moms.

Advocating for your DHH Child.

The Importance of Sibling Relationships.

Celebrating Multi-Lingual Households.

Children's Activities.

With Stephanie Johnson and Friends.

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

QUESTIONS?

(818) 677-4007 V / (818) 435-8163 VP
or email DEAFProject@CSUN.edu.

**WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES WILL BE
PRESENTED IN SPOKEN ENGLISH, SPOKEN
SPANISH AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.**

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* REGÍSTRESE HOY *

**Deaf
Education
And
Families Project**



CONECTADO: CELEBRANDO A LA FAMILIA!

¿POR QUÉ ASISTIR A ESTE EVENTO?
UNA NOTA DE DR. TOMAS GARCIA:

Queridas Familias,

Como padres, no siempre tenemos todas las respuestas ... y cuando tenemos la bendición de criar a un hijo hermoso y sordo, a veces no entendemos todas las respuestas! Pero como padres, yo creo que hemos sido escogidos porque tenemos **el valor, la compasión, y el amor** necesario para ser el padre especial de un hijo especial.

En nuestras vidas cotidianas es fácil pasar por alto la importancia de la unión como una familia. Espero que se una a nosotros para rejuvenecer los lazos familiares y celebrar a una verdadera familia. **CONEXIÓN!**
Tengo ganas de conocerlos.

- Tomas Garcia

SÁBADO, OCT. 12
9am to 5pm

La Escuela Marlton
Solamente \$25 para familia de 4, con almuerzo!
Personas adicionales \$7 cada uno.
(Becas Limitado Disponibles)

Registrarse en el Internet o por correo.

www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject

FECHA LÍMITE ES OCT. 9!

TALLERES Y ACTIVIDADES INCLUYEN:

La Importancia de los Padres en las Vidas de los Niños sordos, una Presentación Especial de "Sólo Para los Papás!"

Con Tomas Garcia y Mark Splittstoesser.

Cómo Prepararse para una Entrevista IEP Exitoso.

Una Oportunidad para Conocer a Otras Madres!

La Importancia de las Relaciones Entre Hermanos.

Celebrando los Hogares Multilingües.

Actividades Para Niños!

SE REQUIERE REGISTRARSE.

Visite a www.CSUN.edu/DEAFProject

PREGUNTAS?

(818) 677-4007 V / (818) 435-8163 VP

E-mail: DEAFProject@CSUN.edu

TALLERES Y ACTIVIDADES SE PRESENTAN
EN INGLÉS Y ESPAÑOL HABLADO,
Y AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE.

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Appendix D

Audiologist Letter



18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge CA 91330-8265
www.csun.edu/deafproject

(818) 677-6854

Dear Professional:

As you know, more than 90 percent of the nearly 12,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing babies born annually in the United States have hearing parents. Usually, that baby is the first deaf person the parents have ever met, and questions switch from, "Will he enjoy sports like I do?" to "Will he drive a car? Will he find a job?" and "How will we communicate?"

On Saturday, Oct. 12, the Deaf Education And Families Project at California State University, Northridge will answer some of these questions with "Connected: Celebrating Families," a day-long retreat at Marlton School for the Deaf in Los Angeles. The event will offer workshops and family team-building activities for parents of all experience levels.

A highlight of the retreat will be a special workshop, "For Dads Only," that will focus on the importance of fathers in the lives of their DHH children. Additional workshops will address becoming an empowered advocate for your deaf and hard-of-hearing child; how to prepare for a successful IEP meeting; the importance of relationships between deaf and hearing siblings; and the benefits of exploring a multilingual approach to communication. A supervised children's program will entertain kids (both hearing and deaf) while parents attend workshops, and families will reunite for a catered lunch and family team-building activity to end the day.

As a California Newborn Hearing Screening Program Certified Communication Disorder Center professional, we hope you will share this information with client families who are raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. We have enclosed a flier for your review. Additional information is also available online at www.csun.edu/deafproject. Pre-registration is required; the deadline is Oct. 9.

We also invite you to get to know DEAF Project. Our goal is to support and empower families. Our parent mentors, who themselves are raising deaf and hard-of-hearing kids, offer invaluable first-hand experience and support to fellow families. We also offer three free, family-friendly American Sign Language classes (in Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley and San Diego), and monthly Family Fun Days aimed at connecting families with others like theirs.

Thanks in advance for helping us spread the word about this exciting opportunity for families.

Kindly,

Stephanie Colman
DEAF Project

Appendix E

Event Press Release



California State University, Northridge
Michael D. Eisner College of Education

18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge CA 91330-8265

www.csun.edu/deafproject

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: Stephanie Colman

(818) 989-7996 / (818) 414-8559 Cell

StephanieColman@sbcglobal.net

CSUN NON-PROFIT TO HOST FULL-DAY RETREAT ON OCT. 12 FOR PARENTS OF DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING CHILDREN

Deaf Education And Families Project Helps Families Get #Connected

(NORTHRIDGE, Calif., Sept. 23, 2013) – More than 90 percent of the nearly 12,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing babies born annually in the United States have hearing parents. Usually, that baby is the first deaf person the parents have ever met, and questions switch from, “Will he enjoy sports like I do?” to, “Will he drive a car? Will he find a job?” and “How will we communicate?” as parents navigate a sea of unknown information.

On Saturday, Oct. 12, the Deaf Education And Families Project at California State University Northridge will answer some of those questions with “Connected: Celebrating Families,” a day-long retreat at Marlton School for the Deaf in Los Angeles. The event will offer workshops and family team-building activities for parents of all experience levels.

“We’re here to help parents embrace the life-long joys of bonding with and raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, as opposed to struggling with how to ‘fix’ a ‘disabled’ child,” said Rachel Friedman Narr, project coordinator for DEAF Project and a professor of special education and deaf education at California State University, Northridge. “This retreat is about ‘connecting’ by creating healthy family bonds, something that’s not always easy for the hearing family members of deaf children, as well as helping families network and ‘connect’ with other families like themselves. We’re also providing a space for families to meet deaf adults, to see the successful futures that are possible for their deaf and hard-of-hearing children.”

One goal of the retreat is to encourage families to explore language inclusion and multilingualism as building blocks for solid family relationships, as well as a key component of their child’s overall success.

“We want parents to understand that they don’t have to *choose* one method of communication,” said Friedman Narr. “There’s a lot of misinformation out there suggesting that if you want your child to listen and speak using hearing aids or a cochlear implant, you shouldn’t teach him to sign. Modern research proves that isn’t true – in fact, early acquisition of American Sign Language actually helps improve a deaf or hard-of-hearing child’s ability to acquire spoken language skills.

A highlight of the Connected retreat is a special workshop, “For Dads Only” that will address the importance of fathers in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The workshop is led by Tomas Garcia, a professor of American Sign Language at East Los Angeles College, who grew up deaf in a hearing household, and who is raising two children of his own, one who is hearing and one who is deaf.

“In our community, there are many stories of families where the father is physically present but emotionally distant,” said Garcia. “It can be hard for fathers – especially in some cultures – to accept that their child is ‘different’ and to embrace those differences. We want our ‘For Dads Only’ workshop to empower fathers to learn a few simple signs and not be afraid to ‘connect’ with their deaf children.”

Additional workshops will address becoming an empowered advocate for your deaf and hard-of-hearing child; how to prepare for a successful Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting; the importance of relationships between deaf and hearing siblings; and the benefits of embracing a multilingual approach to communication. A supervised children’s program will entertain kids ages 3 and older while parents attend workshops. Families will reunite for a catered lunch and a team-building activity to end the day.

The workshops will be presented in spoken English, spoken Spanish and American Sign Language. To make the information available to as many families as possible, DEAF Project is heavily subsidizing the event through sponsorships and grant funding.

Tickets are \$25 for a family of four, including lunch. Additional members of the same family can attend for \$7 each. Professional tickets are \$20. Pre-registration is required, and is available online at www.csun.edu/deafproject. Registration deadline is Oct. 9. For more information about the event, call (818) 677-4007 V or (818) 435-8163 VP, or email DEAFProject@csun.edu.

###

ABOUT DEAF PROJECT:

The Deaf Education And Families Project (DEAF Project) supports and empowers families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children. To date, the organization has positively impacted more than 1,000 families throughout Southern California. DEAF Project aims to help parents realize the positive lifetime journey of bonding with and raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child, rather than struggling with how to “fix” a “disabled” child. DEAF Project uses parent mentors, who themselves are raising deaf or hard-of-hearing children, to offer invaluable first-hand experience and emotional support to fellow parents and families. The organization also offers free, family-focused American Sign Language classes (in Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley and San Diego) and monthly Family Fun Days aimed at connecting families with others like themselves.

Appendix F



Key Message Points

Key messages are the most important points related to your organization in general and the issue at-hand (for topical stories). Remember that much of what you say in an interview will fail to make the final story due to word limits (print) and time limits (TV/radio). Be mindful of your key messages when delivering answers to reporters' questions. Your answers can often "bridge" back to a key message (or part of a key message), even if the key message isn't part of the answer to the reporter's question – with phrases such as, "That's why it's important that [key message]..."

Key messages should be delivered using language you are comfortable with, but try to be consistent. Write them down. Say them out loud. The phrases should become second-nature.

Suggested DEAF Project Key Messages:

1. More than 90 percent of the nearly 12,000 DHH babies born annually in the United States have hearing parents. Most of the time, that baby is the first deaf person the parents have ever met.

Establishes the need for DEAF Project.

2. The goal of the Deaf Education And Families Project is to support and empower families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. We want to empower families to realize the **positive lifetime journey** of bonding with and raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child rather than struggling with how to "fix" a "disabled" child. **Example:** Saying child is "identified" as DHH not "diagnosed." Word choice matters.

The phrase "support and empower" doesn't say as much. "Positive journey" vs "fixing disabled" offers an explanation of HOW DP supports and empowers families.

3. At DEAF Project, believe that children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing can accomplish anything, and that families are the key to any child's success. That's why we offer a variety of programs for supporting families.

- We have a team of dedicated parent mentors, who themselves are raising deaf or hard-of-hearing children, and who can offer invaluable, first-hand experience and emotional support to fellow parents.
- We also offer American Sign Language classes for parents with DHH kids, and regular Family Fun Days to help connect families with others like their own.

- At all of our events, we try to include deaf adults who can serve as role models for both the children (add why that’s important) as well as for the parents who need to see the successful adults their deaf children can grow up to become.

Look for ways to expand the answer to a simple question such that it includes more of the information YOU would like to see included in the interview. “That’s why…”

4. Within the Deaf Community, being deaf isn’t viewed as a **disability** – vibrant culture, own complete language (not English on hands, etc.).

5. DEAF Project is unique in that we believe in celebrating diversity of language and culture. **It’s not about choosing** one method of communication. There’s a lot of misinformation out there suggesting that if you want your deaf child to listen and speak using hearing aids or a cochlear implant, you shouldn’t teach him to sign. Modern research proves that isn’t true – in fact, early acquisition of American Sign Language actually helps improve a DHH child’s ability to acquire spoken language skills.

Noting the misinformation and modern research can be a great “hook” for reporters, and opens the door to explaining the importance/benefits of multilingualism, etc.

Specific to Connected Retreat:

The goal of Connected: Celebrating Families is to help families celebrate and strengthen family relationships, connect families with others like themselves, and create a space for families to meet deaf adults and see the successful futures that are possible for their DHH children.

- Can expand answer to include workshops, passionate presenters, etc.

Why Target Dads? (*Expect a question tailored to the Dads workshop.*)

Our research shows that, statistically, mothers are more likely than fathers to learn and use American Sign Language. We can attribute some of this to fathers being more likely to work outside the home – so it’s a demand of time – but we also know that it can be hard for fathers, especially in some cultures, to accept that their child is “different.” Our presenters for this workshop are both deaf, and grew up in hearing households – they know what it’s like – and they are the perfect people to help empower hearing fathers to learn a few simple signs and “connect” with their DHH kids.

Further, be prepared to answer a question related to the cochlear implant “controversy.”

General Notes:

- Remember you’re doing an interview – anything you say might make the story. Be mindful of this for when you’re “just chatting” with the reporter before or after what feels like the real interview.
- It’s OK to have a page of notes with you, if that’s helpful. Don’t read from it, but glance at it between questions, etc.

- In any interview, don't feel rushed to answer a question. It's fine to take a few beats to compose your thought. Or ask for clarification if you aren't sure of the question, etc.
- Unless it's a live broadcast, if you feel you've "fumbled" an answer, IT'S FINE to start over. Don't make a big production of it. Stop – acknowledge the do-over > wait a beat > start over.
- Find a nice balance of using the name of the organization vs. "we," without overdoing it. Most people naturally say, "we," so just try to remember to sub-in DEAF Project's name periodically. Long-term goal is for name recognition by audience.
- If a key message didn't come up in the interview, add it at the end. Some reporters will ask, "*Is there anything else?*" at the end. If not, offer it up. "*I'd like to add...*"
- For radio and video, try to incorporate the question into your answer.
Q. Why is DEAF Project unique? **A.** "*DEAF Project is unique in that we...*"
- Avoid excessive jewelry. Sound can be picked up on a microphone, and it distracts the viewer/listener.
- For video (or photos), avoid wearing white or busy patterns. Logo-emblazoned attire is a plus.
- Always encourage reporter to contact you with any questions. Ask to be kept posted re: when story will air/run.

Appendix H



Workshop Evaluation Results

Ninety-four attendees completed evaluations. Some did not identify which workshop was being evaluated. Evaluations were matched to the correct category (based on specific comments) when possible. The “unknown” category most likely represents the “Moms Connect” and “IEP/Advocacy” workshops.

Results regarding familiarity with DEAF Project and likelihood to return reflect some overlap, in that women attended two workshops, and those who answered that question, answered it twice.

Overall, workshops received consistently high marks. While comments predominantly reflect noted areas for improvement versus compliments, due to space restrictions, attendees were only asked, “How can we improve this workshop in the future?” and not the commonly paired question, “What did you enjoy most about this workshop?” In some cases, attendees opted to use the provided space to share a compliment.

“FOR DADS ONLY!”

“On a scale of 1-5, how valuable is the information presented today?”

ENGLISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	4	5
SPANISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	1	10

“On a scale of 1-5, how knowledgeable was/were your presenter(s)?”

ENGLISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	1	7
SPANISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	1	10

“How likely are you to incorporate this information into life with your family?”

ENGLISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	4	5
SPANISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	0	11

“Prior to attending this event, did you know about DEAF Project?”

ENGLISH/SPANISH	
Yes	No
12	8

“If no, now that you know about DEAF Project, are you likely to attend another event or speak with a parent mentor?”

ENGLISH/SPANISH		
Yes	No	Maybe
8	0	0

Notable Feedback/Comments:

- Would like opportunity for fathers to introduce themselves and share a little about their DHH child. (From English session; repeated sentiment.)
- Would like to have opportunities like this more often. (Repeated sentiment.)
- “I think this is a good class... it helps a lot.”
- “Super job! Super job! Super job!”
- “The timing in my life was perfect for this. Mark hit home. Appreciate everything.”
- “Please email me links to learning ASL or mobile apps that are useful so I can strengthen my ASL skills.”

“IEPs AND ADVOCACY”

“On a scale of 1-5, how valuable is the information presented today?”

ENGLISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	3	6
SPANISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	2	6

“On a scale of 1-5, how knowledgeable was/were your presenters?”

ENGLISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	1	1	2	6
SPANISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	2	5

“How likely are you to incorporate this information into life with your family?”

ENGLISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	4	4
SPANISH				
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	1	7

“Prior to attending this event, did you know about DEAF Project?”

ENGLISH/SPANISH	
Yes	No
9	8

“If no, now that you know about DEAF Project, are you likely to attend another event or speak with a parent mentor?”

ENGLISH/SPANISH		
Yes	No	Maybe
5	9	3

Notable Feedback/Comments:

- “I would’ve preferred a presenter with more DHH knowledge.”
- “Show what an IEP looks like, with goals and objectives.”
- “You have done great! Thanks for putting this together!”
- More info re legal rights to ASL in education for deaf children.
- Opportunity for the family to learn the information together.
- “More from Mrs. Silvia...” [From IEP/Spanish ... Silvia Garcia?]
- [From IEP/Spanish] “Show the movie in the general setting, not IEP workshop to give more time to workshop. " AND Time for personal meetings.

“MOMS CONNECT”

“On a scale of 1-5, how valuable is the information presented today?”

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	3	10	17

“On a scale of 1-5, how knowledgeable was/were your presenters?”

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	3	10	15

“How likely are you to incorporate this information into life with your family?”

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	2	10	18

“Prior to attending this event, did you know about DEAF Project?”

Yes	No
19	11

“If no, now that you know about DEAF Project, are you likely to attend another event or speak with a parent mentor?”

Yes	No	Maybe
8	0	2

Notable Feedback/Comments:

- More time for questions.
- “More time to go around more topics of interest.”
- Streamline guidelines.
- “A lot of info shared at once – condense instruction so there is more discussion time.”

“UNKNOWN SURVEY”

(Most likely either “Moms Connect” or “IEPs and Advocacy.”)

“On a scale of 1-5, how valuable is the information presented today?”

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	5	2	19

“On a scale of 1-5, how knowledgeable was/were your presenters?”

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	3	4	18

“How likely are you to incorporate this information into life with your family?”

1	2	3	4	5
0	1	2	4	18

“Prior to attending this event, did you know about DEAF Project?”

Yes	No
13	12

“If no, now that you know about DEAF Project, are you likely to attend another event or speak with a parent mentor?”

Yes	No	Maybe
8	0	4

Recurring themes regarding areas of improvement:

- *More time for discussion*
- *Less time spent on speaker/workshop introductions*
- *More time for audience questions*
- *Activities for older kids*
- *More specific info related to DHH kids.*
- *Programming related to siblings of DHH kids AND programming FOR older siblings of DHH kids.*
- *Greater variety of workshops/More specific workshops*
- *Opportunity for Deaf adults to share stories – particularly Deaf adults raised by hearing parents.*
- *Greater variety of presenters (other than mostly parents)*

How Parents Heard About the Retreat. (In order of frequency of response):

- Deaf Project/CSUN/Parent Links/Family Focus
- Via child’s teacher/school
- Via family or friend
- Facebook

Appendix I

Event Photos



Connected: Celebrating Families



On Saturday, Oct. 12, the Deaf Education And Families Project hosted a full-day educational retreat for families raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Connected: Celebrating Families offered an assortment of workshops for parents, a supervised children's program, lunch and a family team-building event. Forty-four families attended the retreat. Photo by Ellen Zuckerman.



A highlight of Connected: Celebrating Families was the "For Dads Only!" workshop, offered in both spoken English and spoken Spanish. The workshop stressed the importance of fathers in the lives of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children, and was co-developed by Tomas Garcia and Mark Splittstoesser. Photo by Marsha Katz-Rothpan.



The Connected retreat offered two separate workshops for mothers. "Moms Connecting" gave mothers a chance to network with other mothers while discussing various topics, and "IEPs and Advocacy" offered tips on becoming an empowered advocate for your deaf or hard-of-hearing child. Photo by Ellen Zuckerman.



Eduardo Guzman of Bakersfield reflects on his goals as a father during the afternoon portion of the "For Dads Only!" workshop led by Tomas Garcia and Mark Splittstoesser. To enhance the experience, fathers were asked to wear ear-plugs throughout the day to simulate the reality of someone who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Photo by Marsha Katz-Rothpan.



Nancy Jimenez of Baldwin Park listens intently during the "IEPs and Advocacy" presentation designed to help parents become empowered advocates for their deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Photo by Marsha Katz-Rothpan.



A comprehensive children's program, led by Stephanie Johnson, entertained kids ages three and older, and allowed many parents to attend who would otherwise be limited by the need for childcare. Photo by Ellen Zuckerman.



One goal of Connected: Celebrating Families was to help connect deaf and hard-of-hearing children with others like themselves, which can be challenging for deaf and hard-of-hearing kids who attend mainstream programs. Photo by Ellen Zuckerman.



Nancy Grosz-Sager, the deaf and hard of hearing program consultant for the California Department of Education, was one of many professionals who attended Connected: Celebrating Families on Oct. 12 at Marlton School in Los Angeles. Photo by Marsha Katz-Rothpan.



Deaf studies and deaf education students, both hearing and deaf, from California State University Northridge, served as volunteers during the Connected: Celebrating Families retreat. Exposing parents and children to Deaf role models is among the many goals of the Deaf Education And Families Project. Photo by Marsha Katz-Rothpan.

DEAF retreat improves communication

MERCEDES ORTIZ
DAILY SUNDIAL

WITH MORE than 220 deaf and hard-of-hearing students attending CSUN, the university provides programs such as the Deaf Education And Families (DEAF) Project to encourage communication and celebration between hearing and non-hearing family members.

The DEAF Project retreat connected families with deaf and hard-of-hearing children at the Mathon School in Los Angeles Saturday afternoon.

The goal of the retreat was to build hearing, hard-of-hearing and deaf family communication skills by providing workshops and family team building activities.

Apryl Chauhan has been involved with the DEAF project since they started, first as a mother receiving help and now contributing to the program as a presenter because she said the events the DEAF Project team hosts can make a difference in the lives of blended families.

"The social events are what have impacted my life the most," Chauhan said. "[By] giving us all an opportunity to come together and

enjoy each other as a family,"

The retreat was conducted in English, Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL) to make sure that every possible person in attendance was accommodated and made to feel comfortable.

"About 30 percent of the families that we work with are Spanish speaking and we are targeting everybody," said DEAF project coordinator Rachel Freeman Narr. "We want to make sure that they are feeling welcomed and invited because locating resources is really challenging for families that are already feeling isolated."

Some of the resources provided by the DEAF Project team include ASL courses and mental health resources for deaf and hard-of-hearing family members.

The DEAF Project has been at CSUN since 2007 under the Family Focus Resource Center in the College of Education with the purpose of providing support and empowerment for parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

"What that looks like are activities, education, networking, getting these families together so they can meet one another [so their kids can meet one another] so that they can feel less alone out there in the world," Freeman Narr said.

The DEAF project serves 12

counties from southern California including Kern County, San Luis Obispo, all the way down to Mexico and over to Arizona.

"We are very pleased that a lot of families have traveled pretty far, we have a family from Indio, from Eskersfield, San Bernardino, San Diego, Ventura, Lancaster, so we are really happy with the turnout," said Freeman Narr after seeing more than 230 people (about 50 families) at the retreat.

Parents were divided into two different groups with only moms and dads. These groups were then divided again into English and Spanish speaking.

Once in their groups, hearing parents were asked to wear earplugs in order to better understand for a few moments how it feels to be deaf or hard-of-hearing. Presenters talked about the importance of interacting with children, programs available for them, and other ways to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing kids to show emotions.

Marcus Rayon, 30, has a hard-of-hearing son and said this retreat was very unique and beneficial for him.

"It was very fulfilling because everybody got to share what kind of father you want to be and what kind of legacy you want to leave and that is so important in being a father," Rayon said.



MERCEDES ORTIZ / DAILY SUNDIAL

CSUN students volunteer at the DEAF Project retreat to promote communication between families by organizing team building activities on Saturday.

He also said that something he learned and impacted him as a busy father was a message he heard at the retreat. "You (have to) not be so busy making a living and start being busy making a life," Rayon said.

Doctor Tomas Garcia, who is deaf and specializes in American Sign Language education also believes events of this type are important for the deaf community.

"There is a lot of social pressures to be categorized and to fit

into a box. What happens a lot of times is that those deaf children go through the same experience that I did in not knowing and not distinguishing their identity," Garcia said.

He said that by going out into the community, by talking, interacting and living the experience together children feel part of a community.

Freeman Narr said these events are also about helping parents raising deaf and hard-of-hearing children, for parents to

meet deaf adults, to "meet their children in the future."

Doctor Garcia said he wants parents to see him as the future of their children.

"I am in representation of your child, this is your child having grown up ... so I'm directly sharing challenges and successes with you so we can be stronger and united," Garcia said.

"This is the first retreat of this type hosted by the DEAF project but they have other similar events every month.

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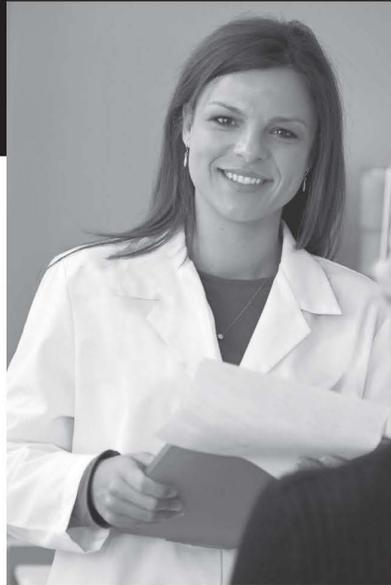
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1 <http://www.bls.gov/osh/healthcare/physical-therapists.html#tab-6>
2 <http://www.lahornermarketplace.edu.au/~/media/DepartmentPages/ABO/DocPH.aspx?nocontrol=291123>
3 WASC Senior College and University Commission, 950 Atlantic Avenue, #110, Alhambra, CA 94401, 610-745-5001, www.wasc.edu
4 Graduation from a physical therapist education program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; phone: 703-709-3245; accreditation@capte.org is necessary for eligibility to sit for the licensure examination, which is required in all states.
West Coast University is seeking accreditation for a new physical therapist education program from CAPTE. The program has submitted an Application for Candidacy, which is the formal application required in the pre-accreditation stage. Submission of this document does not assure that the program will be granted Candidacy for Accreditation status. Achievement of Candidacy for Accreditation status is required prior to implementation of the professional phase of the program; however, no students may be enrolled in professional courses until Candidacy for Accreditation status has been achieved. Further, though achievement of Candidacy for Accreditation status signifies satisfactory progress toward accreditation, it does not assure that the program will be granted accreditation.
For graduation rates, median date of graduates completing these programs and other important information, visit westcoastuniversity.edu/disclosure