



# Newsletter

Fall 2005

Independently Merging  
Parent Associations  
of California

*Together for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children*

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### IMPACT Newsletter

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Editor

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## Back to Basics

At this traditional back to school time of year, let's go back to the basics. In raising and educating our Deaf and Hard of Hearing children our goals as parents are the same as raising and educating any child. It is our responsibility as parents to make sure that our children get a good education and grow to realize their potential. The basics include taking a look at the individual child, and student. Getting to know our children, and how best they learn, then following through with encouragement and support.

Here at IMPACT we work to maintain a network of parents and community members who believe in the goal of supporting our Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in having equal access, treatment, rights, privileges, and experiences as every other child. As you raise your child, one of the greatest gifts is a network of resources. IMPACT was that gift to me. I found help, support, information, acceptance, encouragement, diversity, perspective, passion, friendships, hope, wisdom, and guidance. I hope you find what is of value to you in this group as well.

Every child is unique in his/her own way, but our common thread at IMPACT is that we are raising a child with a hearing loss. Many families throughout the state are so isolated (what is referred to as low incidence) that when they look for help locally they can not find what they need. The pediatrician may be seeing their first deaf baby, the school district personnel may be trying to figure out how to handle a deaf student, and the parents themselves may have never met another deaf person in their life. This is why IMPACT is here.

What IMPACT tries to do is highlight the things that work and share that information so that parents can find help when they need it. By improving our website and publishing news, we will offer parents tools to find the support and information they need. We also offer parents educational opportunities through conference and regional training classes, and encourage parent support groups to meet regularly. Our hope is to continue to build the largest parent organization serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in the state. IMPACT is a gathering place. IMPACT is a community. Together we can accomplish many things.

*Lori Steed IMPACT President*

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### ***IMPACT*** ***Mission Statement***

We as parents, professionals and members of the deaf and hard of hearing community are rising up as a single voice. Regardless of communication modalities, we stand united in the task of getting the very best for our children. We will take no less than quality education for our children, support and early intervention for our families, information and education for our parents.

## IMPACT Nears 20 Year Celebration

In the next year we will be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inception of IMPACT as an organization. The basic core issues are the same. Parents saw injustices to deaf and hard of hearing children; those who chose to use sign language and those who used the oral method. These parents came together, discovered that their children were being excluded, not being treated the same as hearing children, and found that the school districts couldn't seem to fix the problem.

Through conversation, these parents found common ground even with their differing approaches to education and communication, bonded, joined forces, and fought for the rights and futures of their children as one single voice. Pushing for legislation at the state and federal level, and joining with other organizations such as ASDC (American Society for Deaf Children) and AG Bell, they helped shape policy for the IDEA, The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights, California state department of education Deaf and hard of hearing program guidelines, newborn hearing screening, and many more laws and policies that bring equality to the education of our deaf and hard of hearing children.

We will carry forward with this history and tradition. As basic as it is, we still have much of the same work to do today. There are new parents, new educators, and new lawmakers. We are extremely grateful for the parents who have paved the way. They not only helped pass laws, guidelines, and establish policies, but they have been role models for leadership of this organization. It's up to us to create the history of tomorrow. It's up to us to decide how much of a difference we will make today. We can have influence in the local community, state, country or even the world. We can make a difference in the life of our deaf children.

IMPACT believes language is the critical factor for success that must be developed for children to connect with the people in their world. IMPACT respects the family's choice of language, modes of communication, and education for their deaf children."

# Our Story

## A Twist of Fate

By Cora Shahid

Early in my life as a hearing child I found myself drawn to the Deaf community. Growing up in Wichita Kansas I was exposed to many deaf students in our public schools. I fell in love with sign language right away. I can remember being so excited one year when a new deaf student took the locker next to mine at school. I spent lunch and after school with the other deaf students, feeling completely at ease, even wishing at times that I could be deaf too. By the time I was in the ninth grade I was fluent in sign language and became the ASL teacher's aid. From there I dove into the Deaf community, attending local Deaf Clubs and driving an hour away to the School for the Deaf for various functions. I owned my own TTY and always kept the closed captions on our TV at home. I became so well known in the Deaf community that by the time I graduated school I was offered a position as an Interpreter at Wichita State University. I worked happily as an Interpreter for four years before moving to California. As life happens, I found new work, made new friends, married a wonderful man, and began to have children. At that time I thought the chapter of my life in the Deaf community was closed; that is until the day my son was born.

Our son Zain was born on May 30, 2004. We had already been blessed with a daughter and now my husband and I were ecstatic to welcome a son into the world. I can remember it like yesterday when the nurse came to tell us that our perfect baby boy had failed the Newborn Screening Test *twice*. Nurses, doctors, family, they all told us not to worry. Lots of babies failed the Newborn Screening Test because of fluid in the ears. However on our third test, three weeks later, the results were the same. We finally ended up at UCLA for an ABR. At four weeks old my son was diagnosed with a mild/moderate to severe bilateral hearing loss.

The car ride home that day from UCLA was emotional for my husband and I. We could not grasp the reality of having a child with a hearing loss. All of my years spent with in the Deaf community, even my work as an Interrupter could not prepare me for the shock and concern that I felt for my son.

Suddenly I was thrown into the community again, but this time as a hearing parent of a deaf child. I still wonder to this day, how such a thing could have happened. Did my childhood wish to be deaf come true in this bizarre twist of fate? Now as an adult I had to truly look at what it meant to be deaf, past the beauty of the silence and the dancing hands. Like any parent I began to worry what life would be like for my child and after much research my husband and I found ourselves drawn toward oral education.



Making the choice to raise our son oral came easy. With his hearing aids Zain can hear all speech sounds and his language is currently age appropriate. Our religion and culture are such a precious part of our life, we want to know that Zain can freely absorb this information. Teaching him to listen in religious settings, to be able to socialize with our families and friends that don't speak English, and to be able to learn his father's native language of Urdu; these are just a few of the reasons we have chosen oral communication. In choosing spoken language over sign language, I am not trying to turn Zain into a hearing child. I do not look down on Sign or Deaf Culture. It is my hope and dream that Zain can fit into both cultures and have the confidence to live in both worlds. Oralism is not the same as it was 30 years ago, with the help of technology and early identification, many children can learn to listen and talk through play. Oralism is not about being ashamed of being deaf. To me, oralism is all about empowerment, pure and simple. Empowerment to be able to make a difference in the mainstream society. Being able to get jobs easier, and communicate with hearing people effectively.

I find great support in both the Oral Community and the Deaf Community. My hearing daughter recently decided that she wanted to learn to sign, and we encouraged her to enroll in ASL class.

I have since been in touch with my old deaf friends back in Kansas. Everyone has been so supportive. One of my deaf friends was raised Oral and did not learn sign until the age of 15. He said to me one day...."I am pleased to hear that your son is learning how to speak. I truly love ASL, but I would not go back to the beginning of my life and change anything. I'm constantly grateful for all of my family, and friends support during my development."

We hope that our son will grow up to be just as appreciative of the choices we've made in raising him.

*Cora Shahid is a member of Impact and lives with her husband Naseer, their daughter Hana(14) and son Zain(17months) in San Diego.*

## **Tools for Success**

Take a moment to remember the unique needs that our deaf and hard of hearing children need to succeed.

### **Communication...**

No matter what mode of communication that you and your family choose, our children need:

- Stimulating environment outside the classroom where communication can be spontaneous and direct.
- Adult role models in various modes of communication.
- Deaf role models to help develop pride and good self esteem.
- An awareness that different situations may require different language modes.
- A program with full and direct communication access to other students, teachers and staff.

### **Academic and Learning Environment**

- Small sized classes with other deaf and hard of hearing children of similar ages and ability levels taught by certified teachers of the deaf.
- Classes structured for deaf children with heavy emphasis on language development as a basis for all learning.
- Incidental learning opportunities to enrich classroom discussion.
- A learning environment that affords total / spontaneous participation opportunities.
- A teacher skilled in motivating students to participate in class discussions.
- An environment free from communicative stress so critical thinking can be addressed.
- Daily and regular scheduled time for homework.

### **Social and Emotional Environment...**

- Exposure to extra curricular activities where leadership abilities are developed through free and direct communication.
- Building self confidence in social situations through successful and rewarding experiences with deaf peers and in the mode of communication most comfortable for the child.
- Development of self pride in deaf culture.
- Opportunities to see how deaf peers handle various situations and problems.

### **Work Maturity....**

- Exposure to deaf role models in work, maturity, habits and attitudes.
- Guidance from a staff trained and experienced in working with deaf students to assist them in developing appropriate work behaviors and habits.
- On campus work experience where the students can have ongoing supervision.



# CAL-ED / IMPACT Joint Conference

Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> - Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> 2006

## 2020 Education: Paving the Way

**WHO** is this conference for? Educators, Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Parents, Support Personnel, and Administrators!

**WHAT** does this conference offer? Keynote speakers and FANTASTIC workshops (Spanish and Hmong translation available if needed), teachers can earn 11 hours of professional development (CEU's available too), a comprehensive children's program (ages three to 17, all three days) to entertain the little ones while mom and dad participate in the workshops, an art gallery and contest for the kids, Special Interest Groups, Awards BBQ dinner and more!

Chicken Soup for the Soul author Hanoch McCarty, and Jane Fernandes, the Provost of Gallaudet University

**WHEN** is the conference? Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> - Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> 2006

**WHERE** will the conference be held? Fresno, California - The Radisson Hotel and Conference Center

**WHY** should I come? This non-traditional conference is a wonderful opportunity to meet other families with D/HH children, get the most up to date information in the field of Deaf Education, collaborate with peers, catch up with old friends, and make new ones!

For updated info. and pictures of the 2005 conference go to...

Register by February 1<sup>st</sup> and SAVE!!!

For Registration Information Contact:  
Antonina Cardinalli  
(559) 255-9662 v/tty/fax ~  
[apc15@csufresno.edu](mailto:apc15@csufresno.edu)

Check out the IMPACT website at:  
[www.deafkids.org](http://www.deafkids.org)

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## Legislative Update

### The California High School Exit Exam and Students with Disabilities

Beginning this school year (2006), all students must pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in order to earn a diploma of high school graduation.

Earlier this year, a settlement was reached between the California Department of Education and a group of students with disabilities. The agreement would have allowed (for 2006 graduates only) students with disabilities to have the High School Exit Exam waived by the State Board of Education, provided that:

- o the student had an IEP or a Section 504 plan
- o the student was on a high school diploma track with an expected graduation date of 2006
- o the student had met all other state and local requirements for graduation
- o the student had availed himself of the opportunity to take remedial instruction aimed at passing the CAHSEE or the district had failed to offer remedial instruction.

Senate Bill 586 (Romero) was introduced to codify (make law) this settlement agreement. However, by the time the bill passed through the Senate and the Assembly, several changes had been made, including:

- o students expected to graduate in 2006 or 2007 could apply for waivers
- o students would not be required to participate in remedial instruction
- o local school boards would be allowed to waive the CAHSEE requirement, instead of the State Board of Education.

Because Senate Bill 586 altered the terms of the settlement agreement, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed it. In his veto message, the Governor said, "Enacting this bill sends the wrong message to the over 650,000 special education students in our state, the majority of which have the ability to pass the CAHSEE."

In addition all district superintendents have been sent a special alert regarding the graduation requirement to pass CAHSEE be included in each pupils IEP. It also has a reminder that the current state budget has one time funds specifically to assist students with disabilities who have failed one or more portions of the CAHSEE.

More details on IMPACT web site [www.deafkids.org](http://www.deafkids.org)

## Magical Vacation

*Written by Brenda Call*

It was in the year of 2000 when my husband and I decided to book a Disney Cruise going to the lovely island of Bahamas. It was the most memorable family vacation we have ever had. We are Deaf parents of two Deaf children and we were rather concerned about the lack of communication access. We book our vacation in January and that allowed the company six months to make all the necessary arrangements to provide certified sign language interpreters. The company indeed kept their word.

The first day on the Disney cruise ship we were required to attend a safety meeting with all passengers. My husband and I were immediately worried that we would miss the information regarding life jackets and emergency evacuation. Our fears were put to rest when an interpreter appeared just as the crew started to speak. We had the same communication access as the hearing passengers did when it came to receiving instructions.

The cruise had nightly Disney entertainment and there were always two interpreters. Our daughter at that time was 3 ½ years old and adored the Disney princesses. The interpreters rehearsed with the Disney cast members during the day time and performed with them during the evenings. They signed with facial expressions and true emotions of each Disney character. Even with the children's program, they taught the children songs and had them perform for all of the parents. I was brought to tears when they began to *sign* a song.

We were honored to learn that we were the first Deaf family to experience this type of cruise with provided interpreters. Our access to communication didn't stop at the Cruise ship, through out the Disney World parks in Florida there were sign language interpreters. One even helped our six year old son pull Merlin's sword from the stone. It was truly a magical experience for our family in every sense of the word.

**When planning a trip to an amusement park, cruise or resort be sure to give guest relations plenty of notice so that sign language interpreters can be provided.**

## IMPACT Membership Application

Full Name: Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (Specify voice or TTY)

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation  Parent  Professional  Student  Social Agency  Business  Legislator

Enclosed is my contribution:  Advocate (\$500)  Supporter (\$300)  Booster (\$100)  Family (\$50)

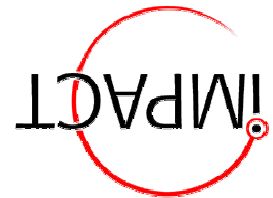
Individual (30)  Student (20)

I am a:  New Member  Renewing

Please complete this form, clip it out, and mail it along with your check to:

IMPACT Treasurer 34130 Gannon Terrace Fremont, CA 94555

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