

# Colorado Families for Hands & Voices

Annual Report  
July 1, 2007– June 30, 2008

Colorado Families for Hands & Voices is a non profit 501(c)(3) organization

July 1, 2007—June 30, 2008



HANDS &  
VOICES

## Issues of Concern and Involvement Include:

- ◆ Communication access for children who are Deaf/hh
- ◆ Transitions from Part C to Part B
- ◆ Pro-Active support to regional programs and school districts
- ◆ Deaf Education Reform – Educational excellence
- ◆ “Medical Home” Initiative
- ◆ Legislative issues
- ◆ Parent Funding Toolkit
- ◆ UNHS/EHDI
- ◆ Genetics and deafness
- ◆ Educational interpreting services
- ◆ Parent/Professional collaboration
- ◆ Parent/Consumer partnerships
- ◆ Parent advocacy, education, and support
- ◆ Deaf Child Bill of Rights
- ◆ Natural Environments and children who are deaf/hh
- ◆ Parent’s right to make informed communication choices
- ◆ National expansion of organization

## Colorado Families for Hands & Voices...

”The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual. ~ Vince Lombardi

On behalf of Colorado Families for Hands & Voices, the children in the state of Colorado who are deaf and hard of hearing and their parents, we respectfully submit our annual report detailing the activities accomplished in the fiscal year July 2007 through June 2008

Colorado Families for Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology. We’re a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Our outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children to reach their highest potential.

**Our Board of Directors:** President, **Shelley Strickfaden**—Vice President, Stephanie Olson, Secretaries—Cindy Bacher, Dinah Beams; Board Members: Tracey McGurran,



Vickie Thomson, Sheryl Muir, Brenda Nowicki, Shannon Cannizzaro, Lonnie Burkholder, Jennie Germano, Denise Davis-Pedrie, Cathy Noble Hornsby

Our Staff: **Executive Director, Janet Des-Georges, Assistant Director, Sara Kennedy**– Addtl. Staff: **Jeannene Evenstad, Lisa Eberlein, Katherine Baldwin, Chris Sullivan, Jessica Fernandez, Caloy Fernandez, Jodi Dietrich, DeeAnn Westfall, Dawn Yocum, Cathie Ponce de Leon, Maria Rodriguez, Lyn Bopp.**

## Individual Advocacy and Support

Colorado Families for Hands & Voices advocacy experts attended/provided individual support at over 20 IFSP/IEP meetings at the request of families this year, as well as supporting over 201 families **one-to-one** through phone conversations, home visits, and hundreds of email correspondences.

Families who have newly identified children are given the opportunity to receive a phone call or home visit from members of Hands & Voices for

emotional support as well as resource sharing. The Guide By Your Side programs provide one-on-one support to families in their geographic locations. Fifty one of these visits were made this year. GBYS welcomed an additional Spanish Speaking Representative to our ranks this year. Along with our two Spanish speaking Parent Representatives, a Deaf Parent Rep. and Unilateral Parent Representative provide unique support to many families.

## Representation on Statewide Forums & Collaboration with Other Groups

Colorado Families for Hands & Voices had the opportunity to represent families in the state on issues of importance as members of various boards and committees, including , The NICHQ Learning Collaborative; CO Parent Engagement Task Force; MDHC Advisory Board, Veditz Center/Rocky Mtn. Association of the Deaf Board , The CO Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Deaf Education Reform Task Force; The CO Outreach Leadership Advisory Team; CO Newborn Hearing Advisory; CO Early Education Advisory Committee; National Unilateral Hearing Loss work group; CO Hearing Aid Legislation Coalition; H&V personnel gave presentations at the National Early Hearing and Detection Systems CDC/MCH Family Issues; Deaf Symposium Planning Committee, The RID Advisory

*Colorado Families for Hands & Voices takes pride in collaborating with other organizations and agencies*

Board; HCP Family Advisory Board for El Paso County; Pueblo Community Child Hearing Project; El Paso Newborn Hearing Screening Project Western States Regional Planning Committee; University of CO, MDHC “Teen Thing” Planning Group. CSDB Early Years, & the Larimer County ICC.

We continued our Collaboration with other groups such as: Family Voices, El Grupo Vida, the Colorado Association of Audiologists, The TEDP Project, AG Bell of Colorado, American Society for Deaf Children, Rocky Mountain Deaf School, The Listen Foundation, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, Marion Downs Center, CO Assn. of the Deaf, Part C, Colorado Home Intervention Program, Colorado Department of Education, and the Aspen Camp School.

## Guide by Your Side and Ambassador Program

CO Hands & Voices celebrated its seventh year as a national model for the GBYS program. Regional Parent Coordinators represent and meet the needs of families in geographical locations around the State. To date, coordinators are established in the Western Slope (1), Colorado Springs, (1) the Denver Metro Area (3), Boulder, and the Northeastern Region (1) of Colorado. Spanish Speaking Representatives (2) , a representative for Unilateral Hearing Loss and an ASL Deaf Parent.. Hands & Voices, in collaboration with CSDB, also has one representatives specifically for the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind campus in Colorado Springs. The consultants improved their skills by attending many trainings, including Title 1 Parent Involvement; Hands & Voices National Leadership Conference; Natl. EHDI Conference; NCHAM’s National Parent Support Conference...

The **H&V Ambassador Program** began its pilot projects around the state, creating new parent volunteers to ensure information dissemination to families. Several parents were trained through a gotomeeting. training to ensure unbiased support to families. We hope to see an increase in this project in the coming year.

## Hands & Voices Database, Survey Monkey, and GoToMeeting.com

Our database reflects an **increase of over 100 parents** over the current year, to create a current database of over 1750 on the mailing list. (list also deletes old names) This list is shared with CSDB and other agencies for mailings to parents for events such as the State Symposium. The database is maintained on a monthly basis to keep it updated. A grant was written to increase the technological capabilities of H&V, including the purchase of Survey Monkey, Go-

tomeeting.com and upgrading our Filemaker Pro program. The entire database of parents whose children attend CSDB is currently on the database. The database includes the 9 digit zip code in order to more effectively understand the geographic representation of our constituency. A field reflects the population of Spanish Speaking Families and date of birth has been added as a field to the database. .

## Teacher/Professional Pre-service and In-service Training

Hands & Voices participated in a series of in-service trainings for professionals this Spring sponsored by CDE/CSDB Outreach Team in: Aspen, Windsor, Denver Metro, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. The In-service training by H&V consisted of information on the new **Ambassador Program**. Pre-service trainings took place at the University of Colorado on

Parent/Professional collaboration for undergrad/graduate students in Audiology and Speech Pathology. Presentations were made to Audiologists, Deaf Educators, Early Interventionists, Physicians, and other professionals all over Colorado and the United States, including a UNC Presentation to Audiology students.

## Regional Workshops/Events for Parents; Family and Student Support; Product Development

### Product Development and Dissemination in this

#### Fiscal Year:

- ♦ **Colorado specific website:**  
**www.cohandsandvoices.org**
- ♦ Bridge to Transitions: Transitions Packet from Part C to Part B Disseminated
- ♦ Continued Training for Parent Advocates: New series of PowerPoints developed
- ♦ Revision of the CO Resource Guide in English 08/09 Version
- ♦ Revision of the CO Resource Guide in Spanish 08/09 Version
- ♦ Quarterly publication of the “Communicator”
- ♦ CO Event flyers sent out throughout the year.

#### Summer 2007- Summer 2008

- ♦ Three Parent Social Gatherings for parents in the Denver Metro/Colorado Springs/Fort Collins Area Attendance: 75
- ♦ H&V National Conference/Colorado Attendees: 10
- ♦ Dad’s Night Out at the Rockies Game
- ♦ Roundhouse Conference (April) Western Slope

#### August, 2007

- ♦ Booth at the CSDB Back to School Day
- ♦ Joint H&V/MDHC Spanish Family Picnic  
Attendance: 100
- ♦ H&V Family Picnic—Fort Collins Attendance: 25

#### September, 2007

- ♦ Family Picnic for newly identified children who are deaf/hh and their families. A forum for families to meet and get information in a non-threatening atmosphere. Attendance: 45 (including parents, kids, professionals, and role models)

#### October, 2007

- ♦ Event for Families with Unilateral Hearing Loss Attendance: 10
- ♦ 7th Annual Hands & Voices Benefit Attendance 200

#### November/December 2007

- ♦ Joint H&V/MDHC Holiday Gathering  
Attendance: 85
- ♦ Fall Family Gathering, Colorado Springs Attendance: 25
- ♦ CO Deaf Symposium: Average Attendance of families : 20—25; workshops: Deaf/HH Panel; Parent Vignettes

#### January/February , 2008

- ♦ State Capital: Many parents attended Legislation Testimony for SB 57
- ♦ CS Early Years Presentation Attendance: 15

#### March/April, 2008

- ♦ Family afternoon for Newly Identified Children who are Deaf/hh and their families: A forum for families to meet and get information in a non-threatening atmosphere. Attendance: 45
- ♦ Colorado Springs “Mr. Biggs” Event supported by H&V Attendance: 115
- ♦ Mom’s Night Inn: The Wisdom Among Us, Peaceful Valley Ranch Attendance: 24
- ♦ State Capital: Parents attending Legislation Testimony for SB 57

#### May/June, 2008

- ♦ **SIGNING OF SB 57 into law** - Requiring insurance companies to cover hearing aids for children
- ♦ H&V Booth at the DPS Family Picnic 2008
- ♦ Family Learning Retreat at CSDB –Hands & Voices provided scholarships for families to attend.

Hands & Voices wishes to thank the financial support of the many organizations and individuals who make it possible for CO Families for Hands & Voices to succeed!!

## CO FAMILIES FOR HANDS & VOICES

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[www.cohandsandvoices.org](http://www.cohandsandvoices.org)

*What works for your child is what makes  
the choice right!*

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.cohandsandvoices.org](http://www.cohandsandvoices.org)

### Evaluation

Hands & Voices takes very seriously the expectation that there will be measurable outcomes for the projects it undertakes. An evaluation form is given to all participants at events, and is then collated. The information is used to plan future events and to modify our topics according to the needs of individuals. Constituents provide information through the website and a feedback form disseminated through "The Communicator". Evaluation tools for Hands & Voices staff and board members

### Revenue/Expenses

Hands & Voices receives income from a diverse set of sources. CO Dept. of Health, - Special Health Care Needs (HCP) The Kennedy Grant, Sprint/Relay, Phonak, Anschutz Family Foundation; CSDB, CDE, , Sertoma, University of Colorado's MCH Grant; Civic organizations, H&V fundraiser, businesses, and individual donors. During this fiscal year, Hands & Voices received approximately \$95,000.00 in direct funds.

Expenses fell under five major categories (figures are approximate)

- Programs (including staff time for implementation) : \$73,000.00 (advocacy/workshops GBYS, Deaf Symposium Parent Strand, systems representation etc)
- Administrative Costs: \$8,000.00
- Resources and Publications: \$9,000

is also implemented annually. Participation in the development of a parent survey with CDE was accomplished. Pre and Post Tests are sometimes given on knowledge and skills for participants in workshops. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures are consistently used in the carrying out of Grants. CO H&V staff report to the Board of Directors on day to day activities and the accomplishment of set goals. Survey Monkey has been purchased in order to obtain more information from members on services needed, and will be implemented in the coming year.

### Resources for Families and Professionals

Website - [www.handsandvoices.org](http://www.handsandvoices.org)

Hands & Voices has established a comprehensive, growing website for Families in Colorado, and beyond. Both the English and the Spanish versions of The Colorado Resource Guide have been added to the website, as well as articles and information for families. Upcoming events section is kept active and up to date. Articles in Spanish are emerging, as well as a donor appreciation section of the web. **The new CO H&V website is online and ready to go....** The national website has been reformatted, and CO has its own specific pages to ease consumer usage.

#### Resource Guide

The Colorado Resource Guide has been updated to the 2008/2009 version, with extensive revisions and additions. Phone lists, and addresses included in the guide have been updated. Transition to Part B and a diagram of the ear were added. The resource guide was translated into Spanish, and is currently being disseminated to Spanish speaking families in the state.

#### Newspaper

The Hands & Voices publication, "The Communicator"

is disseminated quarterly. Circulation has reached 5,000 copies per issue nationally, with over 1800 recipients in CO alone.

Highlighted topic included:

- ♦ **Fall Issue – Following Your Child's Lead: The Dance of Language**
- ♦ **Winter Issue – Eligibility Survival Kit**
- ♦ **Spring Issue – Mainstreaming**
- ♦ **Summer Issue—How Many are Enough?: Defining Critical Mass**

Contribution to the Outreach Network News by the parent team member on the Outreach Board was also disseminated. Additional flyers were mailed throughout the year apprising members of upcoming events.

#### Clearinghouse

CO H&V continues to maintain and update the clearinghouse per parent request. Books were purchased for families at their request. Our parent guides received "Wrights law: Special Education" A new dissemination Policy will be created in the coming year to ensure that the materials are accessible to families.