

Please stand by for realtime captions. >> Good morning. Welcome to those of you who joined us. We will get started in just a few minutes.

Harold? Are you on the call.

Hello. I am on the called.

How are you?

Shannon, are you here with us?

IM here. -- I am here?

Who else do we have on the call this morning?

This is Betty from Oregon.

This is [Name Indiscernible], Mississippi. >> Good morning, Sheila .

Good morning.

Good morning. Who just joined us?'s -- who just joined us?

This is Janet from Hans invoices. We will get started in just about five minutes or so. We usually have quite a few people come on right at the top of the hour. >>

Good morning. Thank you for joining us. We will get started in just a few moments.

Good morning. Thank you for joining us. We will get started in just a few minutes.

This is Janet DeGeorges from Hands & Voices. Who also has joined us on the call this morning ?

[Indiscernible - multiple speakers]

I am sorry , could you say that again?

This is Laura.

I am the new guide in Southern Indiana.

Fantastic.

This is Kim .

Hi, Kim.

This is Janet we will get started and just a few minutes. It's exciting to have people coming on the call from all over the country and Canada . Anybody else who has just joined us.

This is Lisa from Indiana.

Good to hear your voice.

Good to be here.

It is Sarah Kennedy. Colorado.

Hi, Sarah .

This is Janet DeGeorges we are getting close to the top of the hour. We usually wait until one or two minutes after to get started. We will be recording this session. We will get started in just a few minutes.

Good morning . Welcome to the Tran for call. Who just joined us?

Good morning.

Welcome to our call. We will get started in just a minute.

Good morning. I can hear people coming on. Welcome to the call. We will be getting started in just a minute. >> Is there anybody who just joined us who would like to check in ski -- check-in?

This is Lisa from Colorado.

Lisa .

Jenin from Colorado.

Is there anybody else.

This is Janet DeGeorges from Hands & Voices. I have two minutes past the hour. I think we will get started. We would like to thank everybody who joined us today. We are excited for this call. Before we get started with our special guest speaker, Harold, I will put you on the spot for a moment I was hoping you could do a brief overview of the our children project and any updates you want to give to the committee.

The project has evolved. The entire evolution Hands & Voices has remained the national leader. We began with increasing our awareness and understanding the problem. We were horrified when we learned how frequent the impact of maltreatment upon our kids. We began focusing on helping parents and professionals to better recognize when kids were suspected of being in trouble. That project let us to the realization that we have to focus on the prevention because there are too few services for our kids with experienced maltreatment. The maltreatment is to life-changing to simply wait until that happens to do something.

That is the evolution. The [Indiscernible] project is where we have representatives from most of the Hands & Voices chapters working to be on this call to inform their members and to be involved in a whole range of activities from literacy where parents are encouraged to read to the children. Books to help them understand their loved and supported to the project and presentation. One final thing, Janet DeGeorges and I will be in Boston next week for the Council for exceptional children conference. There are 34 presentations, an all-time

high, at that conference. Janet will be presenting with another colleague from kid power. They will be doing -- they will focus on prevention at level III of our work and having parents and community leader talk about this at a professional level. It's incredibly exciting. I will tell you for the last several years we have been pushing the CEC Board and leadership to incorporate the prevention of maltreatment into the CEC strategic plan. A lot of back and forth. That is on the agenda when we will be meeting next week and we hope to have good news -- we hope to have good news to report to you. That is a quick overview of what is happening. I will turn it back over to you.

Thank you. For all of you on the call this morning, this will -- there will be a brief pause while I start the recording. Please hold tight and we will get started in just a second.

[Pause] >> Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining the O.U.R. conference call. We made every month in the second Tuesday of the month at 12:00 Eastern time. We are so pleased today to continue our series of guest lectures for the O.U.R. committee call. This year we have had quite a variety of different perspectives and speakers from researchers to those who work directly with families. Today, I think we have a really special opportunity to hear a parent's perspective of a story of love and adoption. Today's presenter, I am so excited to introduce to you. She is a personal friend of mine. She wears the hat -- she wears several different hats. She is an audiologist as well as a mom of an adept daughter who is deaf. Shannon -- I have known her a long time. She is an audiologist to us work as a pediatric audiologist and is practicing at the University of Colorado Hospital. They adopted a child with severe to profound hearing loss in 2016 after being her foster parents. Their daughter is now seven years of age and doing exceptionally well. Shannon we are so happy to have you here with us today. I will turn it over to you and let you tell your story. We will have a chance for comment and questions. Shannon?

Thank that, Janet. I am excited to be here and tell my story. I haven't told the story in this much detail to anyone it will be fun to share it with you. Just want to make sure, can everybody hear me okay?

Sound good.

I guess I will start with a little about myself and history of where I come from. I grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The relative part of my history is at age 10 by John and a group called hands and harmony. In Cheyenne, there is a prevalent deaf community there. It spread -- it's rather large and there is a following up people who participate in the community. At age 10, I joined a group called hands and harmony. It's a performance group of kids of all ages who can join. If you are interested in learning sign language and during performances, and stuff like that.

We performed across the United States using sign language to music. It was kind of cheesy, but I loved it. I learned a lot and developed lifelong friends. I believe my life would have followed a different path if I had not been a part of this group. I think hands and harmony

for that and I think the people who taught me great things about hearing loss and deafness and sign language and being able to incorporate that into my life. Throughout college I was a teacher's assistant for the sign language classes in college. I was a sign language interpreter. I decided I wanted to do something with my career that involved working with children with hearing loss and also allowed me to continue to use sign language. It happened that I went into audiology. After graduating in 2000, I worked primarily in children's hospitals in Arizona, California, and every turned back to Colorado -- and I returned back to Colorado. I worked with kids of all ages. All types and degrees of hearing loss and many different developmental challenges for the past 17 years. My passion is working with pediatric cochlear -- we work with kids with hearing loss and possible challenges in addition to hearing loss. I love what I do. I love working with families. That's a little about me and how I got to where I am now. Janet give me a few questions to keep it going and stay on topic. One of the questions was tell us about your training as an audiologist regarding child abuse and neglect. That when I first met

Felicity and aware of her needs, or did I learn as I went? I would say that training I received through college was quite minimal. It was mostly on-the-job training and learning from mentors and colleagues. As a healthcare professional, I am aware of that [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] neglect and I knew I would encounter difficult situations as a pediatric audiologist and I knew I would have to be attentive to what was going on not only with the patient's in the clinic, but thinking about what might be happening at home that would be preventing them from getting what's they needed.

With that said, I guess I will jump into the story of how I became a mom. I first met my daughter, Felicity, when she was about 18 months old she was living in sterling, Colorado. She came to the university of Colorado hospital for a cochlear implant I went out to the waiting room to greet her. She was accompanied by a large group of adults. The group consisted of her biological mother, father, her maternal grandmother, her foster mother and father, social worker, one or two social workers, her chip [Indiscernible] which is the coordinator for the early intervention program. And CH I P -- per chip facilitator is the person who would come to her home weekly. A large group of people. It was overwhelming to say the least. I realized that hearing loss was not going to be the weakest challenge in her life. She was the cutest little one's hair, blue-eyed toddler. She was kind of uncapped and it was obvious she was delayed even at 18 months in many areas. Taking a history and talking to the adults that were with her at the appointment, there were -- they reported there was a history of neglect -- abuse and neglect. We were there to talk about how to here -- to have her here better.

Her hearing loss at the time was moderately severe to severe. She had chronic middle ear infections and training years and chronic sinus infections they had diagnosed her with asthma. A lot was related to the environment she had been in as we learned over the years. It wasn't something that [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] but it did. At that point, she needed to be healthy. She needed to clear her infections. She had to use her hearing aids. That proof to be a challenge with the

environment she was in she needed a stable environment before we could recommend a cochlear implant. We were trying to figure out how to get her in a stable position so she could hear and she could learn to talk and learn language. That's where we left it after that appointment.

To give you more history, she was removed from her mother's care at 10 months of age along with her two older siblings. She went back and forth between foster care and living with her maternal grandmother until age 5. Adage four, her hearing loss had regressed for dirt and we reevaluated her for cochlear and that. She was still in her grandmother's care and social services was in contact and involved and pretty heavily involved at that time. We felt it might be a good time to reevaluate this. Her hearing had progressed. There were supports in place that would help us catch her to learn how to use a cochlear implant. We had several meetings with our team as well as her grandmother and social workers. Per here Dasher ear infection to become less of an issue. -- Her ear infections became less of an issue. We decided to proceed with the right here for that cochlear impact. I was her audiologist, but I was trying to figure out if it was the right thing. We did -- we know that cochlear implant was not a miracle. Having a stable environment and a loving family and someone who can help her at home practice and learn and have the ability to dedicate time is critical. >> We didn't know if that would happen with what was going on and where she was placed. Her grandmother was granted guardianship at that time. She had her hands full. Several months after her surgery, the three children were removed from the grandmother's care due to allegations of abuse. She and her two older siblings were placed in different foster homes. Felicity was in another foster home. It was heartbreaking. We had gotten a call from the social workers and no idea if she was even using her cochlear implant. How she was communicating? How she was going to develop language. The team had so -- saw some much of potential. We know the window to learn was so rapidly closing. We had another meeting with her social worker to discuss options for bringing Felicity down from college -- sterling, Colorado, down to Denver so she could have access to better services to learn how to use cochlear implant and speech and language development.

At this meeting, the social worker -- this might've been a second meeting -- one of the social workers called another one on the phone. At the moment we were sitting at a round table and is the one social worker, her grandmother, foster mom, me, and Felicity. The social worker called her colleague and a colleague was on the phone. Handed me the phone and handed me the cell phone and said I would like to talk to you privately. I stepped out of the room. I said Desha talked about preschool and how do we get her to Denver into a preschool that could help her development? The social worker said we would like to place Felicity with you. I think I said something like, what? I had over the years told the social workers [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] multiple different [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] I wanted to take her. I wanted to give her what she needed because she was delayed and behind. It didn't have to be that way. Multiple times I had said that. Never did I think they would take me up on it. [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] come live with my husband in May for the summer in order to attend this preschool that she needed. I didn't know, we didn't know

what if it would be temporary or possibly a permanent foster/adoptive situation given she was removed from her grandmother's custody. We didn't know we were going to do this forever for this was just to get her some help. I don't think anybody know. At the time, my answer was that may call my husband. We had been married for two months and I expected to call him and he would say that I was crazy and he would talk me out of it. It was the opposite. He was 100% on board almost without hesitation. I set down so I wouldn't faint and I gathered myself together. I called the social worker back and there's all still sitting in the room. I said let's do it. She needs us and let's do it. My husband is on board. Before we had any formal training, two weeks later, Felicity arrived an hour front doorstep with her to social workers and a small bag of her things. It was two weeks after her fifth birthday. She arrived and missing half of her cochlear implant material. She was scared. Thankfully she knew me. She had never met my husband. She didn't understand why she was coming to live with her audiologist. That was weird and scary for her. >> My husband and I had never discussed fostering or adopting we wanted a child but we never made a plan. We had no training to prepare us for what was coming. After Felicity was placed with us we had 60 days to complete the mandatory foster training. We did so. I guess I will say that Felicity had a hard time learning how to trust us and understandably so. She had been through so much turmoil and uncertainty that she behaved as if she had never had appropriate boundaries. And this is at age 5 she was often angry and explosive . We didn't know why. We knew why. We know she had a significant past. It was never something that was easy to know what triggered it at the beginning. Her behavior was unpredictable. She had epic meltdowns. We spent long nights where she was screaming at us and refusing to go to sleep she would take her hearing aid and cochlear implant so she could shut us out. She couldn't regulate her emotions and she couldn't figure out -- she was terrified. Of course she was. We spent hours trying to calm her down trying to keep herself and ourselves safe. She was trying to figure out her world. >> One morning about six months after she was placed with us, after an all nighter of her screaming and throwing things and destroying her room, I called the social worker and I told her that we didn't think we could do this anymore. I told her to start looking for another family who might be strong enough to hand out this behavior. We hadn't had a lot of sleep and the high -- the stress level was high. We I was thinking we made it big mistake. The guilt of thinking that and wanting to call the social worker and sang don't think we can do this and put her in another home was horrible. I couldn't imagine it, but I didn't know at that point that we could do it and we didn't know how to help her.

The social worker encouraged us to stick with it. This behavior was part of the process and would get easier. Keep doing what you are doing and will get easier, she said. We did. We worked through it. Every day was work. It was not easy. And sometimes it still is. We stayed consistent and we showed her the letter unconditionally no matter what. No matter how many sleepless nights we had, we showed her realtor. It seemed her behavior turned a corner almost exactly at about a year in. She continued having monthly visits with her older siblings. She has five siblings. Three that she lived with -- to that she lived with and

three younger ones who are still living with her biological mother that she would have visits with. Although wild during these two years where we were her foster parents, she would have monthly visits with her biological family. Every time she had a monthly visit, it would stir up so many emotions. It was like PTSD and re-triggered every month. We did not look forward to those visits. That they were mandated by the court. Finally, after ping her foster parents about 21 months, I think, the parental rights for her biological mother were terminated and we were able to adopt her. The long story that got us to a point where we have a child now who is a completely different child. She is a very healthy almost 8-year-old. She is doing amazing. We have gone back and forth about what we do about keeping part in contact with her biological family knowing there is importance to having that there for her and she wants it. She wants to see her grandmother. She doesn't have attachment to her biological mother as she was removed from the home and the mothers care about 10 months of age. Between her grandmother and foster parents who was raising her up to five. She had no attachment to her mother but she did to her maternal grandmother. She still doesn't she still wants to see her. We go back and forth whether we have visits every six months or yearly. We are figuring that out. The farther she has been removed from that situation and the less contact she has had, the more she has been able to thrive and blossom into her own and become more stable. That's an ongoing process we are trying to figure out.

Another question Janet asked me to answer was what impacts were evident from Felicity's life from her CI use, language, social/emotional development, schooling?

Because she had such inconsistent hearing aid use and cochlear implant used for the first five years, her language and communication was quite delayed. She was behind in many areas. Her speech was difficult to understand. For balance and coordination and foul language. She was terrified by everything. She was hesitant to do much of anything. She wouldn't interact with peers where we put that on her IAP is a goal to help her interaction with peers and preschool and kindergarten. She would cling to adults and parents and teachers and therapists. She would avoid interaction with other children. I think that goes back to her history. She was with her two older siblings. They were five, six, and seven and they were raising each other without a whole lot of adult, parental supervision and guidance. I think her interaction with peers was a concern and a problem at the beginning.

She would become over stimulated quite easily. She still does to a degree, but it has improved significantly. She doesn't do well unless she knows what is going to happen. She likes predictability and routine. She has never exhibited any negative have her at school other than the tired and sad after nights of no sleep. At school, she has done well. We think about these kids who have hearing loss and we think about the gap when they don't have access to language and hearing. She had quite a gap. We think about the kids that are trying to keep that gap going not necessarily having high expectation of closing it. But to keep it from getting bigger and bigger. That isn't okay with me. I wasn't okay with her having that gap. I thought she had the potential to do so. We

have worked so hard to close that gap to the point where she is now in second-grade and performing at second-grade level. She continues to struggle with overall -- with high-level language because she didn't have a lot of exposure to language for the first five years. We work with her constantly. She gets speech therapy with the therapist. We are down to every other week. We were doing weekly for quite some time. At school, she likes to have a plan at school. She asks her teacher at the beginning of the day if it will be anything unusual or different about the day. If there's going to be a substitute for tomorrow? She likes to know in advance what's going to happen. I know a lot comes from her history. >> With regard to academics, she has made great progress. At each six she was in our care, but she was almost adopted. We went ahead and proceed with the cochlear implant on her second year that same month. Implant and a new family. It was a big month and we celebrate it every year. She loves to hear. She is an excellent cochlear implant user. She is an oral communicator. She knows sign language and that goes back to what my background was and knowing sign language. I want her to know sign language. We pray is sign language one cochlear and plans -- cochlear implants are off we use sign language. [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] I sent to her and she speaks back to me. She has become an excellent advocate for herself and we work on that every day. The teachers at her school and therapist are amazed by that because they work with so many other kids -- efficacy [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] and it has been a strength of hers.

Another question that Janet proposed was what lessons have you learned that you could share in terms of supporting other mice with adopted children or fostering and supporting families who are going through this type of experience?

This is a hard question to answer. I had to learn to practice patience when I was beyond frustrated and exhausted and sad and stressed and worried about her. It takes a compassionate person to take on a foster child. Someone who has the ability to dedicate everything they have to help give the child what they need when they didn't get it from others in their life that should have given it to them. I would recommend parents use whatever respite care you can and find others you can content to help you through it. Especially those initial six months to a year. We had a friend who happens to be a teacher of the deaf. She was a tremendous support. She and her husband would take Felicity after her half-day preschool until my husband and I could get off work to pick her up. They put taker for sleepovers to give us a break so we could refuel and get ready to tackle all that she needed again. That's a huge part of it. We didn't look into enough of that or take other people up on their offer. The difficult part when you're a foster parent is the people caring for her have to be approved and certified. You can't just have first aid with anybody. You have to have someone that in the agency, social services approves. And is willing to help. That was a challenging thing. I think it can be done.

There are support groups are offered through foster and adoption agencies. We didn't join any support groups. I don't know if that was good or bad. We read lots of books and we listened to podcasts and relied on our friends and family for support and getting through the

first year. Looking back, because of the work I do, I know so many children need good homes. I would say I learned it's possible to make a difference and to push through these difficult times to get to the good ones. Matt and I can't imagine our lives without her. We are so glad we didn't give up on her we are glad she didn't give up on us. We are not mom and dad and we are a family. It's a crazy story but it's amazing. She is now a completely different child from when we -- from when she first came to live with this. She is one of the most loved students in her class. Prepares adore her, her teachers adore her. Her interaction with her peers as normal. Just play dates and sleepovers. The school talks about how hard she works and how polite she is. She's not the same kid she was three years ago. She walks with her head held high. She has confidence. And most important is she is kind. She is a compassionate little seven-year-old. She has become a leader. She is a leader at school. She tells me that she is not bossy, she is a leader. She still has her moments. She still has things that trigger memories that bring her back -- that take her back to a place she doesn't want to be. She is handling it. We did play therapy for some time. Most of the past couple years we did play therapy. She is not in play therapy now. We know she will probably needed in the future. She has learned so much [Indiscernible - audio cutting out] . That's all I had, Janet.

This is Janet. For those of you who are listening, if you are not speaking, if you could put your phone on mute, that would be helpful. Shannon, I could listen to you all day. Thank you so much for sharing. I am sure the experience you and Matt have been through, there are so many bubbles to this that I appreciate you sharing with us today. It's a fantastic story. Thinking of the level of fostering and your professional experience and first encountering Felicity and transitioning to becoming her mom. We want to welcome you to Hands & Voices as a mom and also thank you for sharing your expertise with us. I want to open the floor to other comments and questions from those who are listening in today.

This is Harold Johnson. Thank you for your presentation. I enjoyed listening and learning. When stress does happen and there's a flashback, what are some of the strategies that you and she use to get re-centered in this reality as opposed to a past reality?

We came up with a lot of strategies. At this point, what she is doing is if something bothers her -- for example, she doesn't do well when she is overstimulated. At a school assembly is something that she doesn't do well with. We have strategies where she doesn't sit in the middle of the gym. She goes back where it's not so chaotic. She has stress balls in her backpack and in her desk and at home . If she starts to feel that she is going to lose control and something is bothering her, she will use her stress ball . She has gotten to the point where she will stay -- say I feel like I am getting crappy. We will take deep breaths or she will say I need a minute which is incredible for seven-year-old to do. She has matured a lot and that ability to do so. We talk a lot. We talk about our feelings and emotions. We have tried to help her with words and language to communicate as opposed to hitting and kicking. Does that answer your question?

It does. Follow up. The point of having the [Indiscernible] to express your feelings and to talk through things, that is something we have an hour checklist that we try to get professionals to agree to have those worked into a student's IAP. You getting pushback from professionals including your daughter having the language she needs to express her feelings as well as the mix up owing the strategies? Where is it best for her to sit as opposed to where they might want her to sit? >> We are so pleased with her educational attainment support we are getting from the school. Which is mentor to weigh different school for second grade and they have on accommodating and extremely helpful in whatever it we need. Her teacher has been phenomenal.

Thank you.

I know that's not the norm everywhere. But we have been very fortunate.

This is Janet. Inc. Mac. Any other questions -- thank you
any other questions or comments? We will pause here for a moment.

This is Lisa from Indiana. I wanted to thank you for sharing your story. It's very inspirational. You have made such a difference and sharing this nationally and internationally. I am very inspired. I just wanted to say thank you.

I appreciate it. >> This is Janet. If anybody else has questions or comments? I have a question for you Shannon. @Tran01, we do a workshop sometimes called is this adapt thing. As parents, sometimes we struggle with issues or behaviors or communication with our children trying to differentiate between typical development of what kids might be going through versus the impact of the hearing loss. I think we also have this conversation with families with kids of additional special needs to parse through whether those have an impact. You, being an expert as an audiologist and understanding the impact, I'm sure it was different for you in terms of the parenting experience, but have you run into that challenge of trying to differentiate between adjusting are creating supports in school around the deafness part versus Felicity's history of it abuse. Or do you deal with whatever it is?

It has been challenging, parsing that out with her a bit. For example, comprehension and being able to retell stories and that higher-level language has been hard for her. She can do it one-on-one and in a quiet setting and has support. It's figuring out the difference between is this because she is distracted and thinking of other things? Or is it because she is having a hard time dealing with a kid talking asked to her. Is she having a hard time talking -- the kids talking next to her because of her past or is it a combination? A lot of the challenges that come up with Felicity is a combination of the 2. It's the hearing loss and the past together. It has been challenging to figure which is which.

It gets to the point where it doesn't matter. In her case, it goes hand-in-hand. We take it as it comes, I guess.

That is really good. Thank you -- thank you. Anyone else?

This is the other Lisa from Indiana. There are 2 leases in Indiana. Our guide by your side program where we match parents who have children identified with hearing conditions, many times they get matched with a parent who may be serving in the foster parent or considering adoption. Were there any particular resources, links, that you found especially helpful that you might want to share with us and then I could share with our guide by your side team when that here and guides in those positions?

As far as resources for fostering and adopt in?

Yes. First of all, in the fostering -- during the fostering time, there are so many resources, were there any that were helpful to you in managing that time and space? And were there anyone's in particular where it helped you and your husband go through the process of determining whether adoption was something you wanted to consider?

I wish I could answer this differently. I didn't want to be negative. I don't feel there were any resources for us. Maybe because we didn't look hard enough. The ones that we were given and offered, a lot of what we had -- granted, that agency we worked through was two hours away. The community they had training send resources, it was far away. We didn't partake in any of those. There weren't any that we felt were super helpful. We read books and listened to podcasts and talk to other parents. That was the most helpful thing to us. As far as specific resources, that's a problem with this system. Having those resources and having good resources available when someone jumps into something like this, I didn't feel that support. I didn't feel the resources were in front of me that I could have utilized. I don't have resources that were provided to me. We went in and seeking out our own. They were different books and articles. I don't have a list of those. I could try to gather them up. I felt that was a challenge and problem with the system we were thrown into.

May I interject. This is an date also from Indiana. I am an adoptive parent. I have a huge list of resources that I could share if anyone is interested. I found a lot of information from the MPower to connect conference. There is tons of information about connective parenting. I would be happy to share that with anyone who is interesting. I also do coaching for adoptive families.

This is Lisa Sandy, if you could send that to me.

I would be happy to. It is unfortunate that parents often don't have access to that. Some of the agencies just don't have the right information. I would be happy to share it with anyone who wants that.

This is Lisa. Janet, am I accurate that we just this year started collecting data in adoptive parents is something we will have information on?

This is Janet. I think that is one area that we are going to try to create further opportunities. At Hands & Voices an idea we have is we

aren't United regardless of our individual experiences. It's one of the things that has kept us together. We have found certain populations within the organization, we want to provide platforms for sharing and receiving resources. This is a great conversation. What helps Sandy and Shannon, I think that's the other thing we think about it Hands & Voices. Different resources and supports speak to her work for different families. Having a collection of different resources and different people who have gone through this process I think is really important. Thank you so much. We will MoveOn to a slightly -- we will move on to a slightly different process. But does anyone have any comment or question?

This is Nancy. I want to say that my sisters are both child development experts assured may because I have a challenging child that children will say the most challenging behaviors to exhibit to the people they trust the most. I think your story exhibited that. Felicity didn't show those behaviors that home -- at school but not at home. I want to thank you for hanging in their birth all those tough times. That shows a lot of strength and love on your part.

Thank you I appreciate that.

This is Janet. Shannon, this

topic for us as a community, we have been doing it for a lot of years. We approach it from a lot of different ways. The motivator for having [Indiscernible] the lives of kids who experience child abuse and neglect, there is hope for them not only in preventing this from happening in the first place, but hearing stories of kids who have experienced and going on to thrive

and have loving homes. Thank you for sharing your story today. It has just been a highlight for me in this series of speaking about this from our different presenters. Thank you very much for joining us. We will be closing up here in just a few minutes. I have one other thing I want to talk to the committee about. Is Harold mentioned, we are presenting next week at the CEC conference. I will be presenting on the safety attachment plan for IEP's and 504's. It's a plan that helps parents talk about the issues of safety in the school setting. For those of you who have been around for a while, we have experienced success and challenges in utilizing this attachment plan at IEP meetings. Harold intimated when he tried to get support in the school system. I would like to provide a couple quick case studies in the presentation. I had two written down. What I was hoping for today is you as a parent or a professional had an experience of the actual safety attachment plan during an IEP meeting. Would you please email me. I would like to have a summary of more than two to get a better sense of how this is playing out in reality is I present the safety attachment plan. If you have experienced using it or know somebody who has or have any comments for me for the presentation, that would be wonderful. Shannon, I don't know if you've seen our safety attachment plan. It's like a communication plan. It walks you through some things you might want to talk to your team about. We would love for you to look at it to see if we have captured everything you have experienced and whether that would be helpful since you had a good IEP experience in this way. That would be

great. Harold, is there anything else you would like to mention or any of our core team committee members for our call today?'s

Very quickly. This is Harold. To encourage all of you guys to take the first step which is breaking the taboo of talking about this topic. Our kids are particularly vulnerable role we can help them to be successful by breaking the taboo and talking about the topic of what you learned today. If everyone on this call shares something from this call today with someone else and break the taboo it makes our kids safer. Think about that.

This is [Indiscernible]. I wanted to thank Shannon also for sharing her personal story. That's not easy. Especially when you don't have feedback from a group like this. I may be reaching out to you to write an article if you would be interested. Would like to explore how Felicity became more attached to you and maybe what the turning point was. I know we are running out of time.

We can talk about that.

Thank you. All of you who joined today, thank you so much. As Harold said, I think for even us on the committee when we first started our first task was to have conversations with people about the areas of child abuse and neglect to keep learning, all of us who have been a part of this. Our motivations come in different ways and at different times. Knowledge is power. Asked Lisa said from Indiana, this is so inspirational to date. I know I learned a lot. I particularly was thinking about what you said, Shannon, about differentiating between the issues of hearing loss or deafness with behavior issues in Felicity's past experience. You said something that stuck out which at some point it doesn't really matter so much anymore as it does in addressing the issues. I think for us in developing kids without adverse experiences, we can relate to through this -- we can relate to moving through this experience with children who are hard of hearing and trying to find the reasons behind why the kids are struggling in certain areas. Have high expectations and to keep working through it. Patience and perseverance.

Again, thank you everyone very much. Big Mac Shannon. Thank you Harold for your leadership. We will be gathering again next month, same time and same place. Harold, do you want to talk about our presentation for next month?

For everyone, notes we have a remarkable conference table packet. If any of the Hands & Voices chapters are having local, regional, state or otherwise conference, communicate with Janet and we can send you a whole package from pictures to handouts to books. How to have this conversation. Next month, [Name Indiscernible] who is the executive director from [Indiscernible] will talk about a topic she has spoken about. It's about how to plan for safe, fun, and a successful summer for your kids. School is ending and things are planning. Summer camps and friends watching the kids.

This is Janet. Thank you , Harold, and thank you all for attending. We hope you have a wonderful day. Thank you, Shannon. We will be signing off now. Thanks everyone.

Thank you, Janet.

Good-bye. >> [Event concluded]