

HEAR IN NH

SUMMER EDITION 2008



Stories from China

In February, Southern New Hampshire University Circle K Club members Qian Ji and Ran Yang visited HEAR in New Hampshire. They shared stories of their native China with the students in Pre-kindergarten. The children really enjoyed their visit and liked listening to the wonderful stories.

The Circle K Club is a service organization for college students. Its focus is on helping children. Circle K is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Hooksett.



✧ Joseph's Journey ✧

The sky is the limit . . .

We are so excited to contribute our story of Joseph to the Summer Newsletter. But then, we are pretty excited about everything to do with Joseph, especially his experience at HEAR in New Hampshire.



Joseph is three years old. He was diagnosed with a bilateral, profound, sensori-neural hearing loss when he was fourteen months old. On the day of the diagnosis we were grief stricken and bewildered. But the very next day would mark the beginning of an incredible journey full of blessings and miracles. It began with the healing words of a friend, "Your dreams for

him are not dead. You will just get there in a different way."

We began an intense period of testing and research and ultimately worked with Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary where Joseph

(continued on page 2)



HEAR in New Hampshire Marches On

On Sunday, May 18th, HEAR in New Hampshire participated in the Bedford Pre-Memorial Day Parade. This was HEAR in New Hampshire's second parade this year and we have really honed our marching skills. Several of our students have become quite adept at working the crowd. Everyone who participated had a wonderful time!

(Joseph's Journey continued)

received a cochlear implant, activated in May 2006. He was 19 months old. He would receive a second implant one year later. We will never forget the day that Joseph's first implant was activated. As sounds reached him for the very first time, his eyes grew dark and we knew he had gotten something. I cried.

While awaiting surgery, we immersed ourselves in American Sign Language and Joseph quickly developed an extensive vocabulary. Once Joseph accessed sound with the implants, we worked to give him oral language. We talked non-stop! At the end of the day I didn't think I could utter another word.

Part of our journey was participating in the Families, Infants and Toddlers (FITS) play group at HEAR in New Hampshire. We began attending in September 2006. We enjoyed meeting parents of children with hearing loss and sharing experiences and information. We loved that Joseph met other children with hearing loss. It was in meeting the HEAR in New Hampshire staff that our journey with Joseph would take another exciting turn. Having access to professionals so dedicated to the development of these special children is invaluable to us. We spent time with Jane Ruddock (SLP) and Lynda French (TOD and Executive Director of HEAR in New Hampshire) every Wednesday and we took advantage of their expertise at every opportunity!

Joseph's journey at that point had already been incredible. He went from profound deafness, to one implant, to a second implant in just one year's time. From no language, to sign language, to the beginning of spoken language. The frustrations and adjustments for him were tremendous. It was so helpful to discuss the difficulties with Jane and Lynda and to separate what was typical two year old behavior from the challenges of what Joseph was navigating in listening and communication.

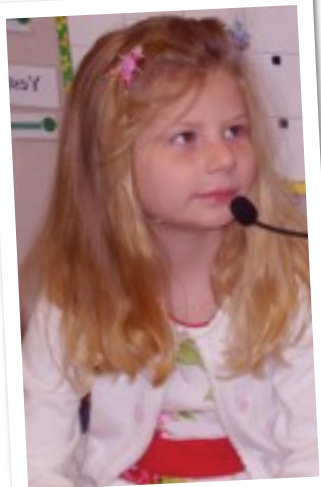
We are delighted that Joseph is a member of the HEAR in New Hampshire preschool class. To have highly skilled teachers who are able to make such intensive work fun is a blessing for which we are very grateful. We are seeing results that surprise and amaze us almost everyday. On our two hour daily commute, we sing and recite verses and talk about classmates and teachers. One word responses and labels are becoming three and four word sentences. We see Joseph's excitement about communicating orally and we see his pride when something he works for, like the letter 'P', is finally achieved. There isn't a word or letter that we take for granted.

While we can't say we are grateful that Joseph is deaf, we can say heartily that we are grateful for the journey it has given us. Our lives have taken on new dimension and purpose. Joseph's teachers have enabled us to work as a family to help Joseph develop his listening and communication skills. We have family game nights where we incorporate into our play what Joseph is learning at school. Joseph's older brother Michael, five and a half, works with him on all his nursery rhymes and songs. He is an excellent teacher to his little brother and they share a deep bond.

And just like his brother Michael, the sky is the limit for Joseph. We just get there in a different way.

Thank you to the entire HEAR in New Hampshire staff, especially Pat, Stacey and Jane.

Scott and Colleen



Reading is Fun!

This spring several graduates returned to HEAR in New Hampshire to read to the students and staff. Our guest readers were six and a half to twelve years of age. Why are these guest readers so important? Historically, students with hearing loss have found reading to be very challenging and not particularly enjoyable due to the complexity of the vocabulary and language structures found in most books. BUT . . . that's not the case for HEAR in New Hampshire graduates. They are often described as "voracious readers" who enjoy reading aloud as well as silently to themselves. Listening to these students read books motivates and inspires other students to do the same. That's why guest readers are so important. Special thanks to Corey, Kelsey and Bailey for sharing their favorite books and setting a great example for all the students and staff at HEAR in New Hampshire.

Report from the Executive Director and Board Chair

Summer at HEAR in New Hampshire is a bittersweet time. While we are always delighted to see our students and families return for the three week program in July, we know that when the summer session ends we will be saying good-bye to some of our school family. This year two of our students are moving on to classes in their local communities. Parents, students, and staff have worked hard to reach this milestone and we celebrate the fact that our children are ready to leave HEAR in New Hampshire and return to their neighborhood schools. On the other hand, we will miss seeing them in the hallways and listening to them singing, laughing and talking with friends. Since the school began in July of 1999 there have been many bittersweet summers and there will certainly be more in the years to come. It is truly a privilege and a joy to have the opportunity to be a part of the work that takes place at HEAR in New Hampshire, a place where dreams come true - even though at times it may be bittersweet.

Lynda French and Carolyn Drury



Manchester Attorney Jaye L. Rancourt Joins HEAR in New Hampshire Board of Trustees

HEAR in New Hampshire is very pleased to announce the addition of Attorney Jaye L. Rancourt to its Board of Trustees. Attorney Rancourt was born in Waterville, Maine, and grew up in Central Maine and Western Massachusetts. She graduated Cum Laude with a B.A. from Elmira College and received her degree in law from the University of Maine School of Law. From 1999 to 2003, Jaye worked as a staff attorney in the New Hampshire Public Defender Program. Presently, she is an attorney with the firm of Brennan, Caron, Lenehan & Iacopino based in Manchester.

Ms. Rancourt commented, "I decided to accept a Board appointment to HEAR in NH because I was impressed and inspired by the excellent work of the school. Hopefully, I will be able to make a worthy contribution and assist the school in furthering its goals and programs."

Jaye currently lives in Dunbarton with her husband, Larry Tokar, who is an airline captain with JetBlue Airways. She belongs to the American, New Hampshire and Manchester Bar Associations; the National and New Hampshire Associations of Criminal Defense Lawyers; and the Education, New Lawyers and Professionalism Committees of the New Hampshire Bar Association.



Special Thanks to Telecom Pioneers

HEAR in New Hampshire recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation. The grant application was for a new program, "Listen for Literacy." Chapters, councils, and Life Member Clubs across the TelecomPioneer Region competed for this grant, but thanks to the hard work of Pascale Coates, who is a member of the N.H. Council, in Verizon's Manchester office (now FairPoint Communications), our grant application scored highest in the competition.

With the grant money, HEAR in New Hampshire will purchase sound field FM systems and personal FM systems for the school. With the help of this technology our students will have greater access to spoken language and activities that promote literacy such as read aloud books, experience charts, books on tape, and songs. Along with the FM equipment, HEAR in New Hampshire will purchase a book binding machine and a laminator. This equipment will allow us to create our own books based on student activities and experiences, which will foster the connection between real world events and text. We believe this early intervention will encourage a love of reading and language that is not available to many children with hearing loss and will promote a far higher literacy rate among our students as they enter adolescence and adulthood.

FairPoint TelecomPioneer's will help install the FM systems. The members of the N.H. Council, which is part of the Jasper N. Keller Chapter #33, have made monthly commitments to spend time at the school reading to our students, creating books, and seeing the impact of their generosity and support on the lives of our children.

Bid HEAR! 2008

A Wonderful Success with the Help of Many

HEAR in New Hampshire's first online auction ended Friday, June 20th. Almost 200 individuals, businesses and organizations donated items to the auction and 213 people from twenty states and Canada signed up to bid. Everybody had fun bidding on their favorite items. The result was a wonderful new fund raising event for HEAR in New Hampshire with all the money raised matched by the Oberkotter Foundation. We received fantastic support and made lots of new friends.

On the next page, you will see a list of the folks who generously donated items to the auction. If you patronize any of them, please take a moment to thank them for supporting HEAR in New Hampshire. We cannot list everyone who bid, but we appreciate you all and hope you will join us again next year.

Plans for next year's event have already begun. Auction items have started to arrive at the school. Denise Petrin, from HEAR in New Hampshire's Board of Trustees, has volunteered to be one of our committee chairs. She will be joined by Debbie Plourde and Colleen Gutwein, parents of two of our students, and Pat DuPaul, a member of our staff. We are looking for more members to get items, spread the word, improve the auction site and help us come up with new ideas to make Bid HEAR! 2009 even more fun filled and exciting. If you are interested in being part of this committee, contact Skot at (603) 624-4464 or spare@hearinnh.org.



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Wachovia Foundation Matching Gifts Program



KELSEY ...

is seven years old and attends first grade at Kimball School. Her favorite subject is reading. When asked why she likes reading Kelsey had this to say, “because I can make pictures in my head that go along with the words.” In fact, Kelsey likes reading so much that it is one of her favorite after school activities along with Girl Scouts and playing with her friends. Kelsey also enjoys gymnastics and art projects. Her parents shared the following, “Kelsey is doing very well both academically and socially. It's been an exciting year for her (and us) as this is her first year attending a mainstream program full time. She's become a voracious reader and staying involved with Kelsey's school and maintaining a strong relationship with the administrators and teachers has helped us to foster an effective, supportive network for Kelsey.”



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