

President's Address

Dear Members,

As you know, the devastation that has hit Louisiana and Mississippi has affected several schools for the deaf as well as many of our deaf and hard of hearing friends in that area. I encourage you to remember them in your prayers and in your donations. We, in California, are very lucky and I know we want to help in any way that we can. Please see the information included in this letter on how to help those at the Magnolia school for the Deaf.

It's fall again and we are moving into high gear in our continued planning of the conference on **February 25, 2006**. We have 2 exciting speakers lined up: Judith Simser and Lisa Shaanan both experts in their respective fields of auditory oral training and occupational therapy. We want parents and professionals alike to be able to hear each speaker on targeted topics and so they will each be presenting in the morning and afternoon. Put this date on your calendar so you'll have a front row seat!

Marcia Haines and Sandra Hocker had a very successful Fall Picnic in San Jose on September 24th. This is an annual picnic they have given for several years and families always enjoy themselves tremendously! The children get together and become friends before the afternoon is out! We are all grateful to Marcia and Sandra for the hard work and dedication they bring to their work every day as well as to this picnic.

Jane Croft, our Vice President, graciously volunteered to go to the Chapter Training Session in Washington D.C. on September 23 and 24. Her report on the perspective from our national organization is included in this letter.

Speaking of National AG Bell! The dual membership program goes into effect in January of 2006. At that time our dues will entitle us to be members of both National AG Bell and California AG Bell. The successful melding of the two will bring greater benefits to all and less confusion for many! The state chapters will still have their annual picnics, conferences and board members. The only aspect that will change is that for one low price members will receive Volta Voices, and national information as well as the chapter newsletter with info on what's happening in their own back yard. New families have the opportunity to sign up for a free membership that will be in effect until January of 2006.

Let me say that I hope the rest of the year brings better weather, good health and more happiness to all!

Sincerely,
Mary Ruth Leen

$E=mc^2$

(English equals milk and cookies too!)

In our last newsletter, Sylvia spelled out the theory of English equals milk and cookies too. In this edition, she writes about ways to incorporate this theory into everyday life which she presented at Auditory Verbal International in Toronto, Canada in July.

Let's play.

Play is a child's work. Children learn when they are actively engaged through participation. Children learn best when they are interested in what is happening. There is a wealth of natural language for the situation. Everything we do has language. As therapists interacting with parents, we look at everything as a learning experience with multiple aspects, not just audition and language related.

Daily Living Parents are really always teaching their child. Everything from changing diapers and running errands to grocery shopping and preparing meals and countless others are part and parcel of daily living. (see Baby Blues cartoon – can we discuss this?) Parents discover that if they “teach” through the course of everyday things, language learning situations become obvious. Activities of daily living (ADL) naturally incorporate the meaningful everyday language along with repetitions needed to facilitate the development of competent young communicators. Considering mealtime as the ADL (feeding the young child or the setting of the table for an older child) this activity can take place a minimum of three times per day. Over the course of a year, that activity is done over 1000 times. The possible repetition of the language within that activity may be five or ten times and multiplied by the 1000. One can be certain of ample exposure. The reality is, these things need to be done anyway. Over time and with developing confidence, parents learn to take advantage of these natural situations to help their child maximize their language learning potential. To assist the parents in thinking of language for use in the activities, one might consider a list of concept areas (figure ?). Parents accept that the activity will take longer than if it wasn't used as an audition and language-maximizing situation. Parents are guided to understand that there is always *more* language to learn within an activity. We learn to analyze a task for different levels of skills which may be inherent in the activity, Parents will foster other cognitive areas beyond the obvious elements of the task at hand. They learn that activities have many components including the introduction of the activity, the beginning and all the various steps and the finishing and achieving closure plus the potential for following up with related activities.

Parents maximize potential within activities of daily life so that audition, speech and language are an integral part of everything they do everyday. Video taping a baking session allows parents to see how the different components all come into play by watching a segment and then discussing “what was happening?”

While the actual activity is modeled in therapy sessions, the different aspects of language levels, stages of the activity and follow-up will be discussed to show the parent how to make the most of the activity. The time in therapy will typically limit the scope of the activity, but parents leave with the understanding that there are multiple components.

Let's Bake After all that focus on, chocolate chip cookies always seems like the obvious activity to begin with. There is no doubt that baking chocolate chip cookies is an activity which

incorporates key elements for success – food, fun and an abundance of language. The levels of language (Figure 5) are by no means an exhaustive examination of language for this activity. Getting the recipe in itself could be an entire activity including a trip to the library for a recipe book or a “surf on the web”. The ingredients all need to be found along with the equipment which are all carefully put away in different locations in the kitchen. Parents and children prepare themselves with hand washing and picking their favorite apron. A collection of aprons could lend an entirely new element to a baking session. After measuring, mixing, scooping of dough and baking, comes the cleaning up and washing of dishes or loading of the dishwasher. Finally, milk and cookies too!

After baking, parents will be encouraged to follow up on the activity in a variety of ways, including a reading If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Numeroff, go shopping to buy more ingredients or even make a sequence book of the process.

Grocery Shopping

Inevitably, the two other ADL 's that parents can use to maximize language learning potential are grocery shopping and doing the laundry. The levels of language (Figure 6 & 7) are simply a guide for these activities.

Grocery shopping typically starts with making a list and possibly checking around the house what needs to be purchased.

One very successful adaptation to this chore is to make cards with pictures of the grocery items to be purchased. I have found that index cards with colorful photographs from grocery store advertisements with a hole stamped in the corner can then be put on metal rings to be used a picture grocery list for the child to take to the store. Making of these cards by looking for pictures of the items to cut out, cutting and pasting them is another variation of this activity. Preparing the grocery list from the pile of cards takes on a new dimension, as the child is responsible for the items from “their list”. Different colored cards can be used for different categories or the older child can sort and categorize the items. The growing collection of cards can be laminated and stored in recipe boxes. Since grocery shopping happens outside of the house, the processes of leaving the house and getting to the store may include: getting dressed for outdoors, going by car, stroller, foot, etc..., stopping at the bank to get money for shopping, parking the car and remembering where it is parked. After shopping the parent and child must empty the bags and put away of the purchases. That should probably all be followed by a snack of milk and cookies, too!

Laundry is never done!

Components of this chore include gathering the laundry from around the home, sorting, washing, drying, resorting items and putting them away where they belong. All that hard work should probably be followed by a snack - of milk and cookies, too!

The intent of this article is not to examine all the ADL and play for a child but to develop a springboard for examining opportunities to help the child with a hearing impairment. The auditory-verbal therapist shouldn't miss opportunities to guide the parents to the realization that everyday life is an auditory-verbal process and that a wealth of language awaits their discovery. When parents following the auditory-verbal philosophy realizes that they are optimizing learning opportunities even while paying the bills by going to the corner post office and putting a stamp on the corner of the envelop, cleaning up the house or playing with the refrigerator magnets, the possibilities are endless.

Magnolia Speech School: Current Needs/Situation (post Katrina) As of 9-8-05

- *Building has minor roof and ceiling damage (which also damaged part of our security system).
 - *Tree down on playground but little structural damage.
 - *2 families lost homes – we’ve collected clothes, canned goods, donations for them...one went to a salvation army shelter; other got an apartment
 - *Families we were serving on Gulf Coast with Deaf Babies all accounted for but 3 – despite our best efforts we have not been able to locate these families.
 - *Plans to pen the “Coast Campus” of Magnolia will, or course, be delayed indefinitely – the church we were going to us for classrooms is damaged.
- Our greatest concern is the effect that this will have on the future of the school. We already know that the catastrophe will reduce donations from United Way, Mississippi Grantors, corporations and individuals. Our Development Office is projecting a loss of a minimum of a quarter million dollars that we had budgeted for this school year. Also, while the power, water and gas situation will improve in our area, Jackson charities are housing, feeding, clothing and sheltering thousands of evacuees. We have already had a number of these families call our school looking for programming for their children. Therefore, it seems that we’re going to be asked to serve more children with fewer resources. While we are aware that all Option Schools must actively solicit donations, we do ask that everyone help us locate sources of funding that might be available to us in light of this unforeseen situation.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR STAFF...IT’S A CHALLENGE TO STAY FOCUSED RIGHT NOW...WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO PROVIDE SOME “NORMALCY” FOR THE CHILDREN AND PARENTS WE SERVICE.

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Break a Leg! On to Broadway!

I have been teaching deaf children for 25 years at the Jackson Hearing Center in Palo Alto. For the last 20 years, we have been doing a school play at the end of the school year. It started off with the story of The Tortoise and the Hare, done in the classroom, for parents only. It progressed to Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, The Wizard of Oz, Peter Pan, Pinocchio, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. It started with paper bag costumes and moved to beautiful hand made costumes. It started in the classroom for parents only and moved to the multipurpose room at the school, performed in front of more than 100 people! The amount of work necessary to put on these productions was enormous. One might ask, "Was it worth all the effort?" You bet! Do you want to know what the children got out of working on these plays?

- They learned how to memorize a script. This task in itself develops so many skills useful in life.

- They learned how to design, build sets, and work as a team. Co-operative learning is a wonderful experience!

- They were so motivated to be well understood that they worked hard on their speech at the end of the school year, when they are normally sick of working so hard! They learned how to emote through changing inflection while speaking.

- They learned to listen to each other, so they would know when to speak. This often involved maintaining visual contact with each other, as well as only auditory contact

- They learned that hard practice, even though it felt tedious at times, pays off in the end!

- They learned that they, too, could be the stars and receive the admiration and respect of the other children at the school.

- They felt REALLY good about themselves!

Years later my old students would come to visit me, when they were in college. When we reminisced, the first thing they always said was: "Do you know what I remember most about elementary school? It was the plays!"

I don't take this as an insult to my teaching. NO WAY ! I take this as another validation of the benefits of theater in the lives of our children.

So, if you can, give your children an opportunity to join community children's theater. It is an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives!



Ricka Berns

It's All About Connections

On the last Saturday of September for the last 22 years, we have been at John Morgan Park in Campbell, California with the families and friends of hearing impaired children. This year was no exception and on a bright and sunny September 24th 80-90 people gathered for this fun filled annual picnic. Our diverse group brought dishes from India, China, Vietnam, Japan and Russia to complement the good old American standard of BBQ steak and hot dogs.

The past and present students ranged from 3 years old to the couple who will soon be married, some accompanied by their parents and other family members along with former students' parents who attended without their college-age children. From this diverse assembly, we interviewed a group of young ladies in the midst of a volley ball game to ask about why they came to the picnic every year. Twelve-year-old Jennifer Phan of JLS Middle School in Palo Alto was the first to say, "What I like best about the picnic is that we get to see everyone." Justine Rouleau of Rolling Hills Middle School in Campbell added, "I used to go to their school and now I go to another one. This picnic is where I get to see everybody, and my good friend, Danielle." Danielle Maggie of Sinnott School in Milpitas agreed, "I like this picnic because I like to get to see you (Marsha and Sandra), my friend and my friend's cousin who I don't get to see very often. I'm not at their school any more." Jennifer's eleven year old cousin, Linda commented, "I get to see my cousin Jennifer's friends every year!" Melinie Go, thirteen years old and a student from JLS in Palo Alto and the last of the game players told us, "I have come here for 9 years for the picnic. I come to visit my friends!"

As we walked away, we thought that the parents would agree wholeheartedly with their children if they were asked this same question. It is a time to make connections at every level and to keep those connections going year after year. That is why we have continued to arrive before dawn to "secure our spot" on the last Saturday in September these past 22 years. Katy Wells, a nine year old from Silver Oak School in San Jose summed it up succinctly when asked why she came, "There is a lot of great food and I enjoyed doing the 2 piñatas every year. (Thanks Ivette!). It's lots of fun and there's a great playground and water park."

We hope that you will all come and join us next year at our 23rd annual picnic!

Marsha Haines and Sandra Hocker
Listen and Learn



Jane Goes to Washington DC!!

Thirty-five chapter leaders, representing twenty-seven states participated in the annual AGBell Chapter Leadership Training in Washington DC September 23-25 – including our California Chapter President-Elect, Jane C Croft.

Currently, AGBell is going through major changes to better serve our members and the deaf community as a whole. One of the goals is to establish fully integrated Chapters creating relationships among each Chapters and the International Headquarter by January 1, 2006. To achieve this historical goal, AGBell trained each Chapter Leader on many topics including:

- *7 Habits of the Highly Effective New AGBell President
- *Available Services for Chapters from the AGBell International Headquarter
- *Leadership That Lasts
- *Conducting Board Meetings
- *AGBell Strategic Plan 2005-2009
- *Chapter Restructuring
- *Membership Restructuring
- *How to Sell the AGBell brand
- *Hot Topics, Great Events: Making Your Programming an Experience
- *How to Become An Effective Disability Policy Change Agent
- *Ethical Financial Reporting
- *Grant Proposal Writing
- *Convention Sponsor Benefits
- *Volta Voices Articles
- *Writing Successful Newsletter
- *Writing Marketing Plans
- *AGBell Logo and Marketing Tools

Jane commented “I enjoyed this training tremendously. Each Chapter Leader was passionate about the Mission and Cause of AGBell which is advocating independence through listening and talking. We had lively discussions, many ideas were formed, and great friendships were made among all of us. I left feeling very inspired and joked to some leaders that I wish this was a full-time job! I am truly blessed and honored to serve my chapter and the state of California even more so than ever before!”

As always, YOUR California Chapter Board Members are hard at work advocating independence through listening and talking for ALL OF YOU!!

SAVE THE DATE!

CA AG BELL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

8:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
San Jose/Silicon valley
In
Milpitas, CA 95035**

The 15th Annual Seminar on Cochlear Implants in Children

Fri. Nov. 4 and Sat. Nov. 5

Sponsored by CEI, Let Them Hear & Oakland Children's Hospital

San Jose Hyatt

Register by Oct. 21 online at: cme.letthemhear.org