

THE B.I.G. NEWS

BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

COMMUNICATING ▶ SHARING ▶ COUNSELING ▶ SUPPORTING



B.I.G. STAFF

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UPCOMING EVENTS

B.I.G. Meeting October 28

Vera Bradley Bingo November 14

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MEETING NOTICE:

Wednesday, October 28

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Buffalo Hearing
& Speech Center

50 East North St. - Buffalo

Mark Your Calendar-Vera Bradley Bingo

by Margie Fitchlee



Margie Fitchlee

On Saturday November 14 a very special fundraiser for the Buffalo Implant Group will take place at St. Mary's School for the Deaf (2253 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14214) in the Gallagher Gym. Doors will open at 11:30 am with a light lunch being served at 12:00 noon and bingo to follow. Who doesn't like Vera Bradley's iconic bags? Join us for a chance to win Vera Bradley bags retailing in value from \$55-\$90 dollars. At least 15 games of bingo will be played and over 25 Vera Bradley items such as wallets, cosmetic bags, luggage tags, belts, book covers, lunch bags, and tee shirts will be given as door prizes. You will also have a chance to buy raffle tickets for three special Vera Bradley items: a laptop computer bag, a small duffel bag, and a travel set. 50/50 split tickets will be on sale during the event as well. What a wonderful way for us to raise much needed funds for

the Buffalo Implant Group. 100% of the profits will go directly to our group to help us continue to help educate, mentor and support those in the Western New York community who are faced with the challenges of profound hearing loss and deafness.

Buffalo Implant Group cares, I care, and we are asking you to care too. Bring your bingo dabber, gather up some friends and family, and get ready to enjoy a wonderful afternoon. None of this would have been possible without the generous donation of all these Vera Bradley items by the family of my husband's late cousin Vickie Fitchlee. Vickie was what I call a giver. She lost her battle with cancer 3 years ago at the young age of 57. She was an engineer for General Motors Corporation, an expert baker, an enthusiastic quilter, and a lover of helping others. She also sold Vera Bradley products online. I contacted her brother and sister and told them of our organization and asked if they would be willing to send me some of her bags. Little did I know that they would send me enough to do the whole fundraiser. Vickie had quite an inventory of Vera Bradley bags left at her home when she passed away. Thank you Greg and Marybeth Fitchlee for your generosity.

Tickets for the bingo will be on sale for \$20 each. Tickets can be

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CORNER

Hello! Goodbye summer and welcome Fall! It is hard to believe that the leaves are already changing color and cooler, shorter days are ahead. However, I am excited and looking forward to putting out all of my Halloween decorations soon!

We had a wonderful turnout at this year's B.I.G. summer picnic. For those who came I hope everyone enjoyed themselves.



What an honor it was to celebrate with our founders Craig and Jackie Carpenter for

the Buffalo Implant Group's 30th Anniversary. It has been a while since we have seen them last. Both seemed much happier and healthier

since living in the "Sunshine State" known as Florida. Craig mentioned to me that he does miss Buffalo, primarily the people he knows, but not the weather. They were surprised by and grateful for the special gift we presented them. It was a beautiful green fleece blanket with white embroidery "Happy 30th Anniversary Craig and Jackie 1985 to 2015." It acknowledges their hard work and dedication to our group over the years.

This has been another amazing year for me on my hearing journey. Why? I am hearing much more than ever before! I have taken notice of distant thunder, sirens, dogs barking inside the house with the window closed, etc. While watching TV I tend to depend less on closed captioning and only use it as needed. Listening with my processors has become less work and stress, and more enjoyable. I have learned to just relax

and take in what I can. I have been really trying to appreciate situations where I am successful and not be so hard on myself in more stressful environments like loud restaurants and shopping centers. I try to embrace the challenges and just continue to practice. I try to keep a positive attitude and take small steps towards achieving new goals. This year I really want to continue practicing with music (especially Christmas songs) and use the telephone.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fall meeting, October 28 at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center (BHSC). The topic will be assistive listening devices, with a presentation and demonstration of the "loop system" as well as opportunities for hands on experience with your specific model/brand and accessories. Please join us, and happy hearing!

From the Editor

by Gail Cronin

For the first time in quite a few years, I did not receive a member's personal story for use on our cover despite my best efforts and those of our Board members. But you won't find me complaining because this issue really is chock full of important and timely information about recent and upcoming events. That being said, I always do prefer to have a personal story on our cover and I am hoping that every reader who hasn't shared their story, or who feels that their story could be updated, will submit an article for an upcoming issue. We love hearing from you!

In the meantime, our cover story draws attention to an upcoming fundraising event, which is very important and has the potential to

raise a significant amount of money for us, which we really need. Vera Bradley Bingo will be held on November 14. All of the Board members have been working on this, in addition to all their other duties. Several other B.I.G. members and their extended family members have also been working behind the scenes to secure donations to make the lunch memorable. I have included many of them in our "Many Thanks" issue in this newsletter, but I know that I have missed some working behind the scenes. In our next issue we will report on the Vera Bradley Bingo and I will include all those who volunteered in our acknowledgments.

Speaking of volunteers, we are extremely grateful to the graduate students from UB who assisted at the summer picnic, and to their professor, JoAnn Hammer, who recently joined our Board as Student Liaison. It was a goal of ours this year to increase our communication with area

agencies and organizations and we have certainly been working hard to do so. I think that is also reflected in this issue.



In our Parents' Corner article you will see that Lisa Hill Nowicki has installed a loop system in her living room, which has tremendously improved the listening acoustics for her daughter. At our most recent Board meeting this resulted in a fascinating discussion and we all realized that this topic is relevant to all our members. As a result, Lisa has contacted the professionals who helped her to loop her living room and they are planning a demonstration at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center for our October 28 meeting. It should be very informative. And if that isn't

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JoAnn Hammer Joins Our Board

Happy Fall, Buffalo Implant Group members! My name is JoAnn Hammer and I am the new Student Liaison for the Buffalo Implant Group. As the newest member of the Board, my focus will be to encourage Audiology and Speech Language Pathology graduate students to become involved in supporting the Buffalo Implant Group.

I am a NYS Licensed Audiologist and I have been an audiologist for over 20 years, having graduated in 1990 with my Master's of Science in audiology from Hofstra University and my doctoral degree from Salus University in 2003. I began my career in social services in the New York City and Long Island area. I moved back to Buffalo in 1992 and have been associated with Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center ever since. During my

tenure at the Center I served in the capacity of Manager of the Audiology Clinical Program and Coordinator of the Cochlear Implant Program. I am proud to say I am one of the original team members of the Cochlear Implant program since its inception in 1998.

I joined the University of Buffalo Speech Language and Hearing Clinic as a Clinical Assistant Professor in September 2002. In May 2004, I received a recognition award from the Speech Language and Hearing Association of Western NY for outstanding service in the field of audiology.

I am currently part of the Cochlear Implant Team at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center that provides services to both pediatric and adult populations.

At the University of Buffalo, I am involved in clinical teaching of doctoral level audiology students and placing students in community agencies for further training, including Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center. I enjoy providing clinical services and training students in general audiology including auditory processing, tinnitus management, amplification, diagnostics, and cochlear implants.

It has been a pleasure being associated with B.I.G. over the years and having the opportunity to learn through this wonderful organization and community of people. I look forward to introducing the next generation of practitioners to all of you and look forward to the future of the Group!

Treasurer's Report

by Lisa Hill Nowicki



August is our biggest expense month against the B.I.G. budget due to the picnic – an event we agree we all love and enjoy. Thank you to all who continue to give us your 2015 dues. (Note the date to the right of your name on your newsletter mailing label to see if your dues are up to date). We are currently in the red around \$900, but will hopefully make this up with our 2015 fundraiser, and we are looking to make some changes in 2016 to help address the rising costs we face around our few, but significant expenses. Thank you again for your support.



Our Living Room is Looped

by Lisa Hill Nowicki

Our living room is finally “looped” and my hearing impaired daughter Sienna LOVES IT!

Earlier this year in Winter issue of The B.I.G. News, I wrote about the assistive listening device the hearing loop. To refresh your memory, a hearing loop transmits the audio, through magnetic energy, directly to the telecoil in a hearing aid or cochlear implant sound processor. The telecoil in the hearing aid or cochlear implant receives the sound without any background noise, reverberation or distortion.

So what did it entail? Not much to be honest. We had to run a wire around the perimeter of our living room (we did this in the basement with a staple gun) and connect it to our Sarabec Loop System LA215 (approximately \$200) and to the TV. Sienna then needed to hit the t-coil setting on her hearing aid, and like magic the sound of the TV automatically transmitted to her hearing aid.

So why would you get this? Why not!!!! This system now allows Sienna's TV experience to be like that of a “normal” kid. No longer

will she sit with headphones on, not being able to hear conversations around her, or sit close to the TV to try and understand it, or blast us with the volume. Now she can sit on the couch, hear a clearer TV sound, and have a conversation with those of us in the room.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at lhill@rich.com.





The Buffalo Implant Group (B.I.G) Presents:



Saturday November 14th 2015

St. Mary's School for the Deaf, Gallagher Gym
2253 Main Street Buffalo, NY 14214



Doors Open: 11:30am

Light lunch included- served @ 12:00pm

Bingo to follow

Tickets: \$20.00

All attendees require a ticket (10 & up)

♥ All items donated in loving memory of Vickie Fitchlee.
100% of proceeds go to the Buffalo Implant Group (B.I.G.)

- ❖ Bring your dabber
- ❖ 15+ games, winners choose from bags retail value \$55-\$90.
- ❖ 25+ door prizes-wallets, book covers, belts, cosmetic, lunch bags, luggage tags etc.
- ❖ Duffle, laptop bag , travel set raffle & 50/50 raffle

For more information contact Lisa Hill Nowicki at lhill@rich.com or (716) 878-8202

Checks payable to: The Buffalo Implant Group
Include: Your name, address, email/phone number
Mail to: Lisa Hill Nowicki
1 Robert Rich Way
Buffalo, NY 14213

Shop for a Cause Update

by Lisa Hill Nowicki

Thank you everyone who participated in the Macy's Shop for a Cause fundraiser, where 100% of the proceeds of the tickets we sold at \$5, for a one day shopping pass with 25-30% off all day, went to B.I.G. Though shy of last year's number, we raised \$90 this year. I hope those that participated found lots of bargains. Look for B.I.G. to participate in the event again next summer with tickets being available for purchase in June. So stay tuned.



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The Five Minute Rule

by Gail Cronin



If you are a hearing aid user, you may be interested in learning about what is now being called "The Five Minute Rule" to significantly extend the life of your hearing aid batteries, which can reduce your cost to operate them.

The Five Minute Rule came out of a discovery made by a Rochester, Minnesota middle school student by the name of Ethan Manuell. Ethan is an eighth-grader with a hearing loss who uses a hearing aid in his left ear. After a discussion about zinc-oxide batteries with his audiologist, Dr. Mary Meier, he became curious about how air exposure effects battery life. As any hearing aid user will tell you, to activate a new battery,

users must remove a sticker from the battery, which allows oxygen to mix with the zinc-oxide in the battery. Ethan began experimenting with different wait times after removing the sticker. What Ethan discovered is that the optimal time for the battery to be exposed to the air prior to use is five minutes. If zinc-oxide batteries are installed in a hearing aid too soon after the sticker or strip of tape is removed from their oxygen ports, their life span falls from 5 – 7 days to just 2- 3 days. A five minute wait will maximize the battery's lifespan.

Ethan Manuell devised a formal study of his preliminary finding, which he titled "The Effect of Wait

Time on the Lifespan of Hearing Aid Batteries." Dr. Meier confirmed his findings in a clinical setting with her other patients. This study has earned Ethan several honors, including a U.S. Naval Science Award and his study was featured at the Minnesota State Science Fair.

Ethan's discovery could benefit the millions of hearing aid users by extending battery life by up to 4 days, often doubling it, thereby cutting battery costs in half. So the next time you peel the sticker strip off a hearing aid battery, follow The Five Minute Rule and wait five minutes before putting it in your hearing aid.

REFLECTIONS ON:

School Days

by Margie Fitchlee

Here we are again at that magical time of year, my favorite season “FALL.” The calendar tells us that summer has once again come and gone. It also reminds us that those lazy, hazy, carefree days for school age children have come to an abrupt end too!

I stumbled upon a poem written through the eyes of a young student named Winifred Marshall. It sums up perfectly the feelings of many youngsters out there who are now back in the throes of reading, writing, and arithmetic:

“SCHOOL”

School bells are ringing
loud and clear,
Vacation’s over, school is here.
We hunt our pencils and our books,
And say goodbye to fields
and brooks,
To carefree days of sunny hours,
To birds and butterflies and flowers.
But we are glad school has begun.
For work is always mixed with fun.
When autumn comes and the
weather is cool,
Nothing can take the
place of school.

Yes, excitement is in the air. School-age children everywhere have loaded up their backpacks, filled their lunch boxes, and decorated their lockers. They have donned their new outfits and headed back to the classroom. It is a time to leave behind the freedom that summer allotted them. It is a time to reenter the very structured life of being a student, and for some it is a time to encounter the challenges that being a hearing impaired student presents to them.

Classrooms are very noisy places. On a website called Hearing Sparks I found an article that addressed this very issue, classroom acoustics. It

stated that, “In many classrooms some kids are facing a yearly challenge - trying to hear the teacher and the classroom discussion. Classrooms just aren’t built for those with any degree of hearing loss to hear well. They have laminate or wood floors, hard walls, and many sharp edges for sound to bounce off of. Air conditioning or heating systems create sounds competing with others. Desks in a classroom are typically arranged in a row facing the teacher, which will be fine for a child trying to see the teacher but not useful for trying to follow student discussion. Sounds from outside or the hallway can easily filter in and disrupt hearing. Not only that, but the challenge of getting used to a teacher’s voice, to pick out sound reliably, can be difficult.”

This environment can be devastating to the child with profound hearing loss. For some, withdrawal sets in. For some, trying to follow discussion means constantly twisting and turning in their seat to try to see other students faces. Several people all talking at once can blur into a meaningless ocean of sound, and if someone whispers something to them, forget it. They just cannot hear it. Participating in discussions can seem almost impossible to them.

An article from the American Academy of Audiology touches on some of the problems with a traditional classroom environment for children. According to the article, “75% of the school day is spent listening. Even for children without a hearing loss, their auditory system is not fully developed until the age 12, so they face similar challenges. They recommend that children sit close enough to the teacher to eliminate echoing and reverberation of sounds. While it is definitely a good idea for deaf children to be in front in a traditional auditory classroom situation, it does

create the problem of not being able to hear their peers. This can lead to feelings of being shy, or not really involved. Kids can be pretty tough on differences they perceive.”

Author and educator George Evans reminds all of us that, “Every student can learn just not on the same day or in the same way.” Our wonderful teachers out there have quite a challenge trying to meet the needs of all students. Adapting their classrooms as mentioned above to meet the needs of hearing impaired students will surely help. To this special group of students I have a wish for you, a wish to have a wonderful school year ahead filled with the hopes and dreams of all students, to look to the future with excitement and hope and to do as Karen Ravin suggests when she says, “Only as high as I reach can I grow, only as far as I seek can I go, only as deep as I look can I see, only as much as I dream can I be.” Sweet dreams to all of you and God Bless!

Did You Know?

The Center for Hearing and Deafness, University at Buffalo, sponsors the WNY Tinnitus Support Group. If you or someone you love suffers from the distracting and often debilitating condition known as tinnitus, contact Carol Altman to enroll on the group’s mailing list and learn about future meetings. Carol can be reached at (716)829-5291 or caltman@buffalo.edu





Picnic Report

by Gail Cronin



Our annual Sunset Dinner Picnic was once again held at Westwood Park in Lancaster and was catered by Desiderio's. We met on August 14, on a rain-free but windy evening. Over 50 of our members attended and had the pleasure of visiting with our founders, Craig and Jackie Carpenter, who were visiting from Florida to celebrate our organization's 30 year anniversary. The event was marked with a special sheet cake for dessert. Craig and Jackie were presented with an embroidered blanket to remember the occasion.

During the picnic, Past-president Joe Kolis and current President Sue Wantuck presented

an award of appreciation to Fr. Bob McArtney for his years of service to our organization. Fr. Bob designed and maintained our original website for many years, and served as our Board photographer. Although Fr. Bob has passed those duties on to Will Licata, Fr. Bob continues to actively contribute to our organization as a member of our Board. He has been, and continues to be a wonderful asset to our organization. We are eternally grateful to his friend Sr. Dorothy Feltz for recruiting him.

Our organization is also extremely grateful to Sr. Dorothy for once again organizing our Basket Raffle, which always makes

our annual picnic more enjoyable. Sr. Dorothy was assisted this year by several UB graduate students in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. We are also indebted to our generous donors who contributed to our raffle. You can find the names of our volunteers, donors, and donor businesses in our "Many Thanks" list in this issue.

We also appreciate all the members who purchased raffle tickets and who brought appetizers and desserts to share. The event went well-past our ending time because people were enjoying themselves so much.



Jackie, Craig and Sue



Mary Ann checks her numbers



Sienna is a winner



Diane is a winner

Our Readers Say...

To All the Members of the B.I.G. group, We can't thank you enough for the warm welcome and for your wonderful gift.

Hugs to All!

Craig & Jackie Carpenter

The Picnic and the Basket Extravaganza

by Sister Dorothy Feltz

Both the B.I.G. picnic and the Basket Raffle were a “wow” experience! It was so wonderful to see and visit with so many of our members. Everyone appeared to be delighted to see and socialize with each other.

And, the Basket Raffle! What can I say? Baskets for the raffle just kept coming and coming. We had a total of 37 baskets and gift certificates which we raffled. Sincere gratitude goes out to all the donors. We are holding on to some of the gift certificates and prizes to use for future door prizes. Be assured that all the remaining donations

will have a beneficial purpose.

I wish to thank the wonderful donors for making the raffle such a success. Thank you to all of you. To all of the helping hands, my heartfelt gratitude. A lot of work and effort was involved. Tables were brought by members and volunteers who set them all up and had them ready when Fr. Bob and I arrived. Our cars were loaded with baskets, tables, numbered cans, tickets, aprons for the sellers, and so much more. With so many willing and generous helping hands, the basket array was set up in no time at all.

“Many hands make light work.”

JoAnn Hammer’s graduate student volunteers from UB were remarkable. I don’t think we would have sold so many tickets without them. They donned aprons and were most efficient at ticket selling. And, at raffle time they aided Sue Wantuck with number drawings and the delivering of baskets to the winners. We would not have been so successful without them.

Again, heartfelt gratitude goes out to all of the donors and workers. You all deserve a plaque stating “You made it happen. Work well done!”



Fr. Bob McArtney

Our Readers Say...

To the B.I.G. Board Members,
I was totally surprised Friday when my name was called to receive that plaque! I am certain that many others have done more for B.I.G. than I have. I don’t feel I did any more than what was expected of a volunteer. Still, thank you very much. While I didn’t need reassurance, it’s nice to know that one’s actions are appreciated. I will remember all of you in prayer for your generosity. I do look forward to B.I.G. activities because everyone is so nice and the “work” seems to fill a need in the area. I hope everyone feels that what they do for B.I.G. is helpful to others and brings each person much satisfaction.

Gratefully,
Fr. Bob McArtney



Jimmie and Sue



Raffle baskets

Mark Your Calendar... *cont. from page 1*

purchased with cash or check at our upcoming B.I.G. general meeting on October 28. Tickets can also be purchased with a check, by mail. Checks can be made out to "Buffalo Implant Group." Include your name, address, email or phone number. Mail checks to: Lisa Hill Nowicki, 1 Robert Rich Way, Buffalo, New

York 14213. For more information contact Lisa Hill Nowicki at lhill@rich.com or call 716 878-8202.

I have tried very hard to come up with ways to help keep this wonderful organization and its newsletter afloat. Don't miss out on a chance to help too. Get your tickets, come out and

enjoy a great day of helping The Buffalo Implant Group! We need you!



From the Editor... *cont. from page 2*

a big enough draw for you to come, please know that we will be having an important vote. No, it's not for elections. Apparently no one has come forward who is interested in running, and our officers are all willing to continue to serve. Everyone is running unopposed. However, we still need to have a vote to make a change to our bylaws. We are

proposing a dues increase for the first time in decades. Details can be found in this issue of the newsletter.

So please come out on October 28 and cast your vote, and learn from some experts in assistive technology, and enjoy some companionship with our cheery group. And consider purchasing a ticket to our last event of 2015, Vera Bradley Bingo on November

14. Even if you are not someone who needs or wants a Vera Bradley bag (gentlemen, I am talking to you), Vera Bradley bags make great holiday gifts! These are your last two opportunities to see all your B.I.G. friends before the snow flies and the winter is upon us.



Deaf Awareness Week Kickoff Event

by Gloria M. Matthews

The Deaf Awareness Week Kickoff Event was held at the Walden Galleria Mall on September 19. This year the event was moved from its usual location near the Apple Store to its new location in front of Lord & Taylor. Due to the location change, it looked and felt smaller and different. The following organizations were in attendance: Deaf Access Services, St. Mary's School for the Deaf, Niagara University ASL Club, Canisius College's Graduate Deaf Education Program (new this year), Empire State Association of the Deaf, Independent Living of Niagara County, Erie County Office for the Disabled and of course, Buffalo Implant Group. We shared a table with Deaf Access Services and we thank them for that.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Frank Cammarata, the Executive Director of the Erie County Office for the Disabled, as well as Cathie Kersten, the Director of Professional Experiences at the Canisius College Graduate Deaf Education Department, about Deaf and Hard of Hearing awareness and

issues I believe I see in Erie County. It was an enlightening experience and conversation. B.I.G. President Sue Wantuck also spoke with both as well.

The one thing that stood out to me was when Stefan I. Mychajliw, our County Comptroller, spoke briefly to the crowd. He stated that he attended the 25th Anniversary of the ADA event, which was held downtown at Canalside this summer, and saw an interpreter signing for a group of people in the front row of the stage. He didn't realize that there was a population that existed in Erie County that was Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing. He said that more needs to be done to bring awareness to this community, and to educate the community at large as well. What he had just said was the purpose of Deaf Awareness Week, and it is also the same for Better Hearing and Speech Month, which is held in the month of May of every year.

The Executive Director of Deaf Access Services, Sharon Hanson, also stressed the importance of

creating awareness, bridging the gap between the D/deaf, Hard of Hearing and the Hearing communities, and urged that we work together to improve the lives of those who are D/deaf and/or Hard of Hearing.

If you ever want to get involved with creating awareness, please feel free to reach out to us and/or Deaf Access Services. We would love to see our own members become more involved in spreading awareness in our local communities. The only way to root out misinformation is to get involved in educating the community at large about the hearing loss communities. If and when the opportunity arises, step up and let our communities know we do exist and we continue to make our voice be heard and seen. It won't just benefit us individually but everyone who struggles with discrimination and misinformed individuals. Think about it and let us know what role you would like to play in raising awareness. We'll be glad to hear your thoughts!

“The Sign That Brings People Together”

By Sharon L Hanson

Deaf Access Services, also known as “DAS,” is the result of an effort created more than 20 years ago to bridge the gap between the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Hearing people of Western New York.

For more than 20 years DAS was known as Deaf Adult Services and was recognized as the oldest and most dependable organization of its kind in Buffalo. With time, Deaf Adult Services grew and began providing interpreting services to hospitals, courts, schools, churches and various other businesses and organizations throughout the eight counties of Western New York. The organization also began to provide American Sign Language (ASL) classes, career training and community education, all open to the qualified public.

In early 2013, the Board of Directors acknowledged the need to diversify its unique services to the community and decided to change the name of the organization to Deaf Access Services. The Board believed the name change to Deaf Access Services, Inc. (DAS) would facilitate the organizations’ growth and extend the scope of services to include babies, youth, young adults, adults, senior citizens, and a recently recognized group of Latent Deaf individuals. Such individuals among the Latent Deaf include our Veterans returning home from the war, senior citizens slowly losing their sense of hearing due to age related health issues and other incidents that led hearing individuals to experience permanent hearing loss.

At DAS, we realize that things are changing every day and the demand for services is greater than it has ever been. It is with that thought in mind that DAS is seeking to expand its partnership with St. Mary’s School for the Deaf, Crisis Services, Journey’s End, Aspire and

other organizations who provide the means for an improved quality of life for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Latent Deaf individuals and refugee families now residing in WNY.

As the primary provider of outreach and supportive services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Hearing communities, DAS is recognized as “The Sign That Brings People Together.” We are committed to providing equal communication access opportunities for all. We offer sign language training, interpreting services and video remote interpreting (VRI) competencies for individuals needing immediate alternative methods of communication. Our organization provides advocacy, community education, technology assistance and community employment services.

The DAS job placement department assists Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in attaining secure, steady, long term and life affirming employment. The job placement coordinator will assist with resume building, job search and professional decorum, by assisting individuals to become more proactive when seeking employment. The job placement coordinator will essentially report to the job site to work side by side with the Deaf individual to assure understanding of the duties and provide a sense of confidence to both the individual and the employer. On request, DAS will provide ASL training at the workplace of any employer in WNY who is interested in providing communication support to their employees who may need interface assistance. In addition to job development assistance, DAS offers sensitivity and Deaf culture training.

The DAS advocacy service line provides assistance for a variety of needs including hearing aids and

other deaf assistive technology equipment. Such adaptive technology includes, but is not limited to, flashing doorbell systems, baby monitors, fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, video phones, smartphone evaluation, tablet and iPad training. We also provide social, medical, legal and financial options assistance. DAS provides services to ensure that the rights of individuals seeking advocacy support are met and resources identified. We also assist businesses and organizations as they navigate their obligations under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The DAS community education department provides American Sign Language classes. There are Basic level courses in which individuals will learn the basic skills required to communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. The Intermediate level courses are designed to enhance the basic skills acquired at the basic level. Students will learn more advanced vocabulary, grammar as well as increased skills in facial expressions, fingerspelling and numbers. Students will also expand their Deaf culture knowledge. The Advanced level courses are where students will work extensively in the ASL language to continue to develop their understanding of the ASL conversation. The advanced language courses will include a more complex use of the acquired skills in receptive and expressive signing necessary for a career in interpreting.

DAS also provides community awareness and education about rights. In order to improve communication between the deaf and hearing communities, DAS provides informative consultations, presentations, workplace sensitivity and Deaf cultural training to assist all persons in feeling more at ease

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The sign that brings... *cont. from page 9*

when working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

In addition to DAS' efforts to reach out to the refugees newly residing in WNY, we also provide culturally sensitive training programs to Latent Deaf individuals and their families. We also offer baby sign language classes (coming soon), ASL assessment, interpreter training and internships. DAS provides a lending library with assistive devices, client services and a monthly e-newsletter.

Sign language is universal. Sports teams use it, teachers use it, and parents use it to communicate with their children! At DAS we advocate that sign language is a great way to communicate for the hearing and non-hearing as well.

Our vision is to be the leading agency in connecting Western New York's Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Hearing communities. The valued testimonies we receive at DAS affirm that we are well on our way

to achieving our vision. DAS has demonstrated its ability to support and actively sponsor individuals once forgotten about in our society. Today, throughout WNY, many Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Latent Deaf individuals are gainfully employed and enjoying life to their fullest potential. This acknowledgment of a fulfilled life is a greater testimony than could have ever been imagined back in the 1980's when the advisory council was first created, Deaf Adult Services. DAS is truly "The Sign That Brings People Together."



Sue & Gloria at DAW

The Necessity of a Dues Increase

By Gail Cronin

In almost two decades of operation, there has been no increase in Buffalo Implant Group dues. While our Board had been tirelessly working to raise additional funds, we have come to a unanimous conclusion that B.I.G. is behind the times in offering so much for such a small annual dues fee. As a result, we are asking our membership to consider an increase in their financial support of our organization with an increase in dues beginning in 2016. Up until now, our dues have remained steady at \$15 per year. The Board is proposing an increase to \$20 per year. This would require a change in our bylaws, which must be printed in the newsletter and voted on at the next general meeting, with a 2/3 majority needed to pass.

The current wording of Article V, Section 2 of our bylaws reads: "Home delivery of The B.I.G. News

will be provided to all members at a fee of \$15 per year. Individuals who cannot pay due to financial hardship may request a fee waiver from the editors of The B.I.G. News."

The proposal for a change to Article V, Section 2 of our bylaws would read, "Home delivery of The B.I.G. News will be provided to all members at a fee of \$20 per year. Individuals who cannot pay due to financial hardship may request a fee waiver from the editors of The B.I.G. News."

If the dues increase passes, we will still need to continue with fund raising efforts and will continue to gratefully accept additional donations. A dues increase will assist in providing much needed operating funds.

Please come out and vote on October 28 and express your view on this matter with your vote.

Many Thanks

Tracy Balon
Jeanette Berry
Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center
Melissa Burroughs
Christine Cannon (thirty-one bags)
Craig & Jackie Carpenter
Dan Cartwright
Matt Coleman
Joe Cronin
Sean Cronin
Kathy Danahy
Darien Lake Theme Park
Jackie Drexler
Sr. Dorothy Feltz
Greg Fitchlee
Hana Fitchlee
Margie Fitchlee
Marybeth Fitchlee
French Pub
Marie Giovineti
JoAnn Hammer
Lisa Hill Nowicki
Jessica Holst
Anna Hourihan
Katelynn Imagna
Joe Kolis
Will Licata
Julia Linder
Kathleen Maroney
Gloria Matthews
Fr. Bob McArtney
Janet McKenna
Diane Mogavero
Shirley & Mark Morehouse
Lawrence & Joan Osswald
Ray Laks Honda
St. Aloysius Gonzaga R.C. Church
St. Mary's School for the Deaf
Gopika Shah
Shell Fab Countertops & Casework
Sisters of St. Joseph
Mary Ann Slon
Joe Sonnenberg
Jimmie Sorrento
Steven's Driving School
Matt & Dayna Taylor
Jan Telban
Debra Tilkins
Tops Friendly Markets (Transit at North French)
Sue Wantuck
Karen Ward
Zenger Group



Quarterly Newsletter

Subscription/Membership Form

\$15.00
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Device Name _____ Age Implanted _____

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**Please make your check payable to Buffalo Implant Group and send the Subscription/Membership Form and/or donation to:
Buffalo Implant Group, P.O. Box 350, Clarence Center, NY 14032-0350**

Without your support, there can be no B.I.G. News. It is our belief that the B.I.G. News is of great value to our readers and to those who would like to learn more about us. We strive to provide you with current, useful information, inspiring stories and valuable resources for cochlear implant users and the people who care for them. Please show us your support by joining B.I.G. now!

Our Next B.I.G. Meeting and Social

What are the Different Assistive Listening Systems available in WNY and who has them?

With guest speakers Al Colucci from Ronco and Karl Peabody from Listen Technologies

PLEASE JOIN US

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center
50 East North St. Buffalo 14203

Do you want to improve your listening experience when you are out and about in WNY? Since the passage

of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, many public locations have taken various approaches to provide assistance to those with hearing impairments. Come explore some of the technology available in WNY public spaces (FM systems, Infrared (IR) systems and Looped systems) , the pros and cons to each, and what locations have what, so the next time you are out you can ask for this to improve your listening experience.

It may be possible for you to demo the use of these technologies, if you use telecoil or have telecoil enabled for your speech processor or hearing aid. If you do not use telecoil, this meeting will provide you the opportunity to learn about these technologies

and then you can have your telecoil activated in your speech processor at your next mapping appointment. Your Audiologist will be able to guide you in the use of these technologies in your individual appointments.

There will also be a brief business meeting to vote on a change to our bylaws. The treasurer will be available to accept your 2016 dues. The meeting will be held in the lower level conference room. Limited free parking is available in the lot behind the building. Pizza, pop and water will be served. Please consider bringing a dessert to share if possible. But most importantly, we need you! Friends and family are welcome.



BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

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Awards our Newsletter has Received:

Best National Chapter Newsletter by CIAI

Service to the Hearing Impaired by Kenmore Lions Club

Judy Weiner Award for Service to the Hearing Impaired by Western New York Academy of Audiology