



THE B.I.G. NEWS

BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

COMMUNICATING ► SHARING ► COUNSELING ► SUPPORTING

Volume 31

Issue 1

2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

B.I.G. Meeting	March 13
B.I.G. Picnic	Aug 9
Walk4Hearing	Sept 29

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MEETING NOTICE:

Wednesday, March 13

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center
50 East North Street, Buffalo 14203

Everyday Miracles

By Marielle Fitzpatrick

It took my breath away to hear my deaf son say “I love you, Mama” for the first time. It was a moment that I wasn’t sure I would ever experience. It was a moment that also redefined my idea of gratitude. It was that experience and so many other everyday miracles that have blessed our family because of the dedicated team at Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center.

When our son Chief was born, he was a perfectly healthy baby but for suspected hearing loss. His hearing loss was confirmed when he was six weeks old. The days and weeks that followed his diagnosis were filled with feelings of devastation, grief and fear. A ray of light and hope entered our lives as we found our way to BHSC.



During our first visit to BHSC, we met Michelle who would become Chief’s audiologist. Michelle helped us to understand and navigate the cochlear implant process. She helped us in so many ways and at every single step from planning the surgeries, choosing devices, to teaching us how to care for and troubleshoot Chief’s cochlear implants. Michelle still works with Chief and ensures his devices are working optimally.

We also met Ellen and Monica who would be Chief’s teacher of the deaf and speech language pathologist, respectively, at BHSC’s Oral Deaf School. Ellen and Monica began working with our family when Chief was only 3 months old. They taught us about hearing loss and the role our family would play in Chief’s development. When I visited their classroom, I was

filled with hope that Chief could have the future we’d dreamed of and that his hearing loss would not limit him. Every week, they helped us build new skills and worked tirelessly to help us and Chief in our shared goal to “close the gap.” In January 2018, he transitioned into Ellen’s classroom and the progress he has made in less than a year is nothing less than astonishing. The skill and caring of BHSC’s team has helped in motivating Chief to reach his goals!

Because of his hearing loss, Chief also had gross motor delays. When we were having a difficult time finding a physical therapist to fit his needs, Chris from BHSC stepped in to work with him as his physical therapist. There is no doubt that having access to Chris’ amazingly engaging and motivating PT has helped Chief to be a happy child, running, playing and keeping up with his big sister.

Two years ago, we didn’t know what Chief’s future held. To say we are grateful for his progress is an understatement. I now know that anything is possible for Chief because of his amazing team at Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center. Thanks to the skilled, caring and dedicated staff, Chief is a thriving two-year old boy living a life in full sound and never missing a beat!



President's Corner

By Sue Wantuck



Hello! Welcome New Year 2019 to all of you!! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and are keeping your New Year's resolution(s) going.

Shortly after Christmas my family and I ventured to the Adirondacks. We have a second home there now. On this trip we wanted to explore Lake Placid. One day we decided to go to the Olympic sites and history museum. We agreed in advance to try the Bobsled experience. It was certainly something I can now check off my bucket-list. I was so excited and could not wait. When the guy handed me the helmet, it wouldn't fit correctly on my head with my implants. It had to fit properly and not be loose. I was of course, very disappointed as I was so curious what it would all sound like. Oh well, unfortunately, I had no choice but to take them off. I placed them

in my gloves and jacket pockets separately so they would be safe. As soon as I walked to the bobsled outside with my husband and my son, the whole world went so silent. Seeing the guys talking, I needed to rely on my lipreading skills and my son's help to interpret what I was missing. If I had my CI on, I would have understood more, plus have had an opportunity to hear what the sound would be like going down at high speed, around the curves sideways, etc. Holy moly, it was something! I saw it while peeking. The rule was that your head must be facing down but I wanted to see and know because I was not able to hear it at all. Actually, it was not really a good idea to do that, but to me it was worthwhile. At least I made it through safely, and once I recovered I agreed it was fun. My son asked me, "Hey mom! How did you like it?" My reply was, "I survived!" My son originally told me that it was supposed to be about 40 mph downward. However, it went down quite fast, close to 90 mph. My son laughed, as well as others, at how shocked I

was to find out the truth afterwards. As I look back on my bobsledding experience, I was so glad I went, even if I didn't have my CI's. Would I do it again?... Hmm... I don't think so!

There will be an upcoming B.I.G. General meeting at BHSC from 6 to 8 pm on Wednesday, March 13, 2019. Please come! The topic will be a "Parent Panel" with parents of children at the elementary age level whom are CI users. It will be a wonderful opportunity to hear others share their personal stories and experiences, ask/answer questions and to learn from one another. We will also be taking a vote to change the by-laws with regards to reducing the number of B.I.G. Newsletters produced annually from four to three issues. You can find more details about that in this issue. As always I look forward to seeing everyone and catching up. Stay warm and Happy Hearing!

From the Editor

By Gail Cronin



Greetings Friends! When last you heard from me in the fall, I expressed my apologies to you for getting the last issue out so late (due to the fact that I had

been recovering from surgery) and stated that I hoped to get a fourth issue out before 2018 was through. Well, that did not happen. It proved to be too large a task. So again, I apologize.

Fortunately, I am now fully recovered and ready to get back to work. However, you may find that in the future, three issues per year could become the norm. This is a proposal from our Board and must be voted on at the next meeting on March 13. Details about this potential change and the reasons behind it can be found in this newsletter.

Also in this newsletter you will find reports on our fall meeting in October and our incredibly successful Bunco Brunch fundraiser in November. Ending our year with such an enjoyable and profitable event was a joy. Yes, it was a lot of work, but the afternoon was so

much fun and the feedback from our guests was so positive that it motivated us all to look forward to next year's fundraiser, whatever it may be. We are already exploring our options.

Our Bunco was so profitable because of the generous donations we received from many area businesses. We have included a list of all those who donated items for the raffle and for the brunch. Please support these businesses that have been so kind and generous to the Buffalo Implant Group.

This issue also contains information about our second annual B.I.G. Scholarship, which will be awarded to a high school senior. If you know a high school senior who qualifies, please share the enclosed application with them.

I've written an article about a brand new real-time transcription app for Android phones called Live Transcribe. I can't even begin to tell you how excited I am about it! Since writing the article I can't stop using it and showing it to others. It is mind-blowing what this new technology can do. If you are an Android phone user and are inspired to download and use this app, I would love to hear from you and learn about your experience with it.

You may have heard that AG Bell (The

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) has a new chapter in Western New York. Krissy Rule, Kristin Bergholtz, Sarah Exley Ozimek, and Marielle Fitzgerald founded this chapter and recently hosted their first event, in Rochester. You can read more about the new Western New York chapter of AG Bell in this newsletter.

And a special thank you goes to Marielle Fitzgerald for allowing us to print the letter that she wrote to Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. In it she shares the triumphs of her son Chief, and we have used it as our cover story for this issue.

At this time I am looking for additional cochlear implant users to share their stories with our readers. Please consider sharing your experience and sending it to me at gdcronin@roadrunner.com

Finally, I would ask that you keep Gloria Matthews, our Social Media Manager, in your prayers. For the past few months she has been battling cancer and is currently recovering from surgery. She is awaiting test results to see if any further treatment is needed. Prayers and positive thoughts for Gloria's recovery are greatly appreciated.

Live Transcribe for Android Phones - Transcription in the Palm of Your Hand

By Gail Cronin

Live Transcribe is a newly released Google cell phone app for Android phones that provides real time transcription of the spoken word. It is currently in the beta testing phase, but is already available for download in the Google Play Store. Live Transcribe requires an internet connection to run, as it transcribes speech in real time. As the microphone on the cell phone picks up the sounds of speech, it transcribes it using large letters on the phone screen for the user to read, either vertically or horizontally. Testers have reported that Live Transcribe has an incredibly accurate ability to add capitalization and punctuation appropriately, as well as choose the right word in ambiguous situations. Examples of accurate transcription include, "I am buying a new jersey in New Jersey" and "When it is chilly I eat chilli." Live Transcribe is designed to understand 70 different languages.

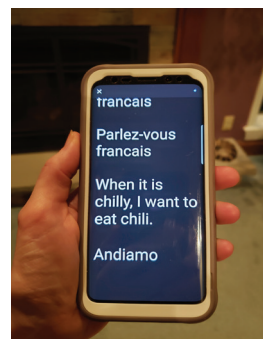
Live Transcribe was developed by Google research scientist Dimitri Kanevsky, who has been Deaf since the age of one. Kanevsky consulted with Gallaudet University for feedback throughout the development process. This app could be used for one on one conversations, medical and legal appointments, classroom lectures, and potentially even our Buffalo Implant Group meetings. The transcription can be cast (using a device such as Google Chromecast) to a larger screen for full audience access. This app could potentially replace costly transcription services in a variety of settings, saving Deaf and Hard of Hearing people time and money.

Live Transcribe has some clever features. If someone starts talking after a period of silence, the phone will vibrate in order to alert the Deaf or Hard of Hearing person that someone is talking. If there is excessive ambient noise in

the room, a pulsing blue dot on the screen will let the user know that the phone needs to be moved closer to the person speaking. And for those users who do not speak or who have difficulty having their speech understood by others, an on-screen button allows a keyboard to pop-up so that the user can type his or her replies. You can even opt to mask profanity. Settings also allow you to choose a white or dark background and adjust the type size.

Those who are concerned about privacy are being reassured by Google that neither the phone nor the servers can save any of the audio or transcription data. Data is not collected or stored to improve algorithms or for any other purpose. You can scroll back through the transcription while you are still have the app open, but once you close the app, the transcription is gone and cannot be viewed again.

I downloaded Live Transcribe from the Google Play Store and I am currently exploring it on my Samsung Galaxy S9 phone. It really impresses me. In contrast, I have a lot of difficulty with the voice-to-text feature on my phone. I have to tell it to punctuate, and it often misunderstands my instructions. It frequently substitutes incorrect homophones (to, two, too). But my biggest pet peeve is that it never understands my daughter's name. It is very frustrating to constantly have to type it in and make corrections. I found that Live Transcribe always heard her name accurately and even spelled it correctly! It also adds the correct punctuation on its own, and it distinguishes homophones. I wish that my voice-to-text was this accurate! That is not to say that Live Transcribe never makes mistakes, but they are far fewer than other apps that I have used.



Your Vote is Needed

By Gail Cronin

An important vote will be held at our next General Meeting on Wednesday, March 13. The Board of Buffalo Implant Group has unanimously decided that we need to make a change of our newsletter schedule and will be putting it to a vote of our membership in accordance with our by-laws.

Our current by-laws state that Buffalo Implant Group publishes and mails four issues of The B.I.G. News per year. The Board is proposing that the by-laws be changed to reflect that starting this year we will publish and mail three issues per year.

In the past there have been years when only three issues were produced by our volunteers. In every case it was an unexpected circumstance due to an editor's illness or a death in the family. Such was the case in 2018, when I was only able to get out three issues. Moving forward we would like to make three issues our official production schedule.

There are a number of reasons why the Board believes that it is time to reduce our newsletter production to three issues. The first is the

volume of work required to produce an issue. It takes a minimum of 40 volunteer hours to produce a single issue. The second reason is that we are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain articles, particularly the personal stories that we usually put on our cover.

The third reason is cost. The production of our newsletter is our single biggest expense. Each issue costs us a minimum of \$450, and that is with a printing discount and the generous cost of mailing covered by Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. If we had to pay full price and postage it would cost us far more. With a production schedule of four issues per year, it currently costs us at least \$1,800 annually to produce the newsletter. Subscriptions alone do not cover this cost. We rely on donations and fundraisers to close the gap. We also know that printing costs will increase for us this year. Reducing to three issues per year will allow us to offset the cost increase we anticipate.

Our newsletter is an important part of our mission. Not only is it beneficial to our subscribers, but it is also an outreach tool that

we use to educate the public and inform new implant users and implant candidates of our existence. We have no plans to eliminate the newsletter. However, in this digital age we know that most people look to the internet for their information. Our plan is to increase our use of our website in the future and provide more frequent articles and links on the site in order to compensate for fewer printed issues.

We will be voting on changing our bylaws at the March 13 meeting. Every one of our members should feel that they have a voice. We want to hear yours. All concerns and opinions are welcome and valid. We won't know how you feel about this change unless we hear from you. Please join us on March 13 to vote. If you are unable to attend, please email me at gdcronin@roadrunner.com prior to the meeting with your yes or no vote on changing the bylaws to reflect a production schedule of three issues per year. Your email will be kept confidential.

Please let us hear from you.

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!

The B.I.G. Scholarship Committee is encouraging graduating seniors that use a hearing implant (cochlear implant, BAHA) and that will be continuing their studies in either a college or vocational setting to apply for our second annual B.I.G. Scholarship award of \$500.00. Additional criteria and the scholarship application are available in this newsletter and on our website www.buffaloimplantgroup.com. Applications and supplemental materials must be submitted by March 31, 2019.

One winner will be notified by mail on or about April 15, 2019.

Treasurer's Report

By Lisa Hill Nowicki



Thank you everyone. 2018 was our highest membership/donation year in over 8 years. As we continue to face increased newsletter printer fees and other general expenses, your generosity, the Walk for Hearing and Vera Bradley Bunco have put us on solid ground for 2019. If you have had a moment, please still consider adding Buffalo Implant Group as your Amazon Smile and United Way designator. Believe it or not these two

alone brought in \$650. That goes a long way for our little organization.

I look forward to seeing you at our next General Meeting. If you have not already paid your 2019 dues of \$20, I will be at a table to receive them. See you then!



Reflections On: "My Journey to Better Hearing"

By Margie Fitchlee



I have often written about what I call my "Journey to Better Hearing." It is a journey that all of us who have undergone cochlear implant surgery are on. It is a journey that I invite all those contemplating having the surgery this New Year to embrace. The road for all of us varies, but the destination is the same. It has taken us to a place where we can rejoice. It has taken us to a place where we can once again be comfortable. It has brought us home, back home to once again converse with our loved ones, take part in the everyday happenings of life, and to feel the joy this modern miracle has provided us with.

"Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending." Those words by Carl Bard really hit home to me. What a wonderful way to start the New Year. Work on making a brand new ending.

With hope and a positive outlook you too can take what might seem a hopeless situation to you and turn it into the journey of a lifetime. There is an old Chinese Proverb that tells us "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." That is exactly what I did. I took the step that lead me to the office of Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz. It gave me the courage to put my fears behind me, to proceed with the surgery and to begin to get back much of the old life I had before

losing my hearing.

I have found much encouragement, friendship and comfort in this wonderful organization called the Buffalo Implant Group. I am sure you will too. The door to becoming a member is always open. We are continually working to help bring you all the tools necessary to make an educated and informed choice when it comes to cochlear implants. The Buffalo Implant Group cares. We care about you!

Almost ten years ago I started on the path to get help and guidance, when I almost thought there was none. I felt the fear, I felt the loneliness, I felt your pain. I invite you "to do something today that your future self will thank you for tomorrow." Join the Buffalo Implant Group and feel the love. S. L. Young tells us "Don't fear the journey. Don't be hampered by a fear of the journey. The challenge isn't necessarily the journey, but choosing the right path."

It has been such a pleasure for me to work towards bringing the many speakers and programs that we have provided to the hearing loss community in WNY. There have been so many I would like to thank for their tireless and unselfish work. They consist of professionals, parents, implant users, families of implant users and many more. We will continue to work for you, to bring you helpful programs and an informative newsletter. We need your help and encourage you to pay our dues and remain informed by the services we provide you.

Our last fundraiser was a wonderful event. I want to thank all who worked on it from the bottom of my heart. You are wonderful! You make the Buffalo Implant Group wonderful. I also pledge to work my hardest to continue along with the others to fundraise and keep this invaluable group going. I also want to thank all who came and supported the event and to thank all the donors who made the event possible.

Author Sue Fitzmaurice tells us, "Being told you're appreciated is one of the simplest and most uplifting things you can hear." I am so humbled that I was able to do just that at our picnic this past summer. I received the most wonderful gift that anyone has ever given me - recognition for my work with this great group of people. The plaque they presented me with has traveled with me all the way to South Florida and proudly hangs in my home here. Every time I read it, I am filled with joy. The words on that plaque mean more to me than I can even express. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of all that transpires here. The plaque represents all of you, for all your dedication and love, helping us be the best we can be.

I leave you with a wonderful thought, written by an unknown author. It is a thought to think about as you travel on down this road that I call "A Journey to Better Hearing." "On the road to success the rule is to always look ahead. May you reach your journey to be wonderful." That wonderful life awaits you!

Meeting Report

By Karen Ward

Our fall general meeting was held on Wednesday, October 24 at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center's North Street location. We were very fortunate to host John Macko from the National Technical Institute For the Deaf. NTID is the world's first and largest technological college for students who are D/deaf or hard of hearing and is located within the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY. Students enrolled at NTID can earn associate degrees in 20 accredited programs and also have the opportunity to continue their education at RIT to earn bachelor's or master's degrees in more than 200 programs offered at RIT. John Macko serves as the Director of NTID's Center on Employment. His presentation was titled "Past, Present, and Future: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Employment."



During the Agricultural Age of the 1800s, Deaf men and women were most commonly employed as farm labor and servants. As America moved into the 1900s, the Industrial Age, Schools for the Deaf were among the first to offer vocational training to their students. The most common occupations for Deaf men were printing and shoemaking while Deaf women were likely to become dressmakers. As training programs continued throughout the 1900s, Deaf workers were able to find employment in shipyards and manufacturing plants. With the dawn of the Information Age, Deaf workers were able to be successful at careers similar to their hearing counterparts: accounting jobs, computer programmers, media specialists and engineers.

John's office assists RIT's D/deaf and hard of hearing students and graduates with their internship and permanent job searches, and partners with employers to foster successful employment. They seek to "bridge the gap" between students, alumni and employers including consulting about accommodations in the workplace. He offered tips for parents to help their children be prepared for career success. It should be noted that these are fantastic suggestions for all students, regardless of their hearing abilities:

- Ask your son or daughter about their career interests and vision
- Inspire them to volunteer in their community
- Have your son or daughter ask questions of people in a career field they are interested in
- Encourage participation in sports and clubs
- Require your son or daughter to read every day for at least 20 minutes.

He also provided information for summer camps and competitions that NTID/RIT have available to Deaf and hard of hearing middle school and high school students. These events provide a wonderful opportunity for students to meet other children and become familiar with what the campus has to offer.

John encouraged students, alumni, parents and employers to visit NTID's Center on Employment website at www.rit.edu/ntid/nce. It serves as an informative resource on constructing a resumé, preparing for an interview, and searching for a job. The site highlights the successes of current students and recent graduates.

The Buffalo Implant Group would like to thank John Macko for his wonderful presentation as well as for answering questions from our membership and guests. We would also like to thank everyone who provided the snacks and desserts enjoyed at the meeting and Valerie Mueller for providing sign language interpretation.

Another Successful Bunco Event

By Gail Cronin

On November 17, 2018, Buffalo Implant Group held it's second Vera Bradley Bunco fundraiser. Unlike the 2016 event, which was a dessert party, this event was a "Bunco Brunch." Held at St. Mary's School for the Deaf, the event included a lively game of Bunco and an enormous basket raffle.

Many Western New York businesses donated food and drink for our brunch. Additional baked goods were provided by our members. There were breakfast items such as donuts, crumb cake, and pastry. There were lunch items such as salads, sandwiches, and chili. There were desserts such as cookies, brownies, and cheesecake. And there were beverages such as coffee, tea, cider, milk and water. No one left hungry.

All of the auction items and Bunco prizes were donated. Nine participants won Vera Bradley bags by playing Bunco. For those who aren't familiar with the game, it is a game of chance in which participants sit at small tables that seat four people and take turns rolling a set of three dice. The people opposite one another combine their scores as a team. Extra points are given when someone scores a "Bunco," or the same dice roll on all three dice as the number of the round of play. When the round is over, one pair moves to the next table and one member of each pair moves their seat so that they are not paired again. It is a great way to move around the room and have a chance to work with many people. Prizes were awarded for high scores, high number of Bunco rolls, and even for lowest score. Once again, we were grateful for the donation of Vera Bradley bags from the Fitchlee family in memory of Vickie Fitchlee.

The basket raffle featured over 50 items this year. Tickets could be purchased for the many tables of prizes and for an additional table of premium prizes. There was much excitement as the numbers were called and the happy winners received their prizes. In addition, there were many door prizes awarded that did not require the purchase of raffle tickets. These included many of the decorations that filled our space, including fresh mums, scarecrows, etc. No one left the event empty handed, as Western New York Immediate Care donated pocket size tissue packs, lip balms, and ice scrapers to everyone who participated in the event.

A total of over \$3,500 was raised for our organization, which is almost three times what we raised at our first Bunco event. Our fundraising committee solicited businesses for donations under the guidance and direction of Vice





President Margie Fitchlee. Margie secured the most donations herself and put in countless hours to make this event a success. She kept our committee on task with regular meetings and multiple emails. Once again she did an outstanding job directing our fundraising.

All the members of the Buffalo Implant Group Board and our fundraising committee assisted with the event, along with graduate student volunteers from the UB Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences. Photos in this issue are courtesy of Will Licata.

The overall response to the event was wonderful. Most participants asked us to hold another Buncos event in the future. A few said that they prefer Bingo, so we are considering another Bingo event in the future as well. If you would like to volunteer to help our committee with our next fundraiser, or would like to give us feedback, just let any officer know at our next meeting or email us. We would love your input.



Thank You to Our Generous Buncos Brunch Donors

Ace Hardware
 Alaina Allen – Japura Jewelry
 Atelier
 Aurora Cutting Edge
 Becker Farms
 BJ's
 Buffalo Bisons
 Buffalo Sabres
 Cala's Kitchen
 Canisius College Athletics
 Christmas Tree Shops
 Clyde's Feed Store
 Donna Stewart Photography
 Dunkin Donuts
 Sr. Dorothy Feltz
 Allison Fitchlee
 Margie Fitchlee
 Fitchlee family in memory of Vicki Fitchlee
 Gail's Hair Design
 Gullo's Garden Center
 Holliday Valley
 Theresa Holly
 Holst family
 In-Room Plus
 Allison James
 Johnson's Nursery and Garden Center
 Carol Lazzari
 Lockhouse Distillery
 Lori Wilson Jewelry
 Lowe's
 Meadowbrook Restaurant
 Millersport Market
 Diane Mogavero
 Mr. Pot Pie
 Old Orchard Inn
 Old Souls Outfitters
 Panera Bread
 Pano's Restaurant
 Park Avenue Coat Company
 Pasquale's Restaurant
 Premiere Wine & Spirits
 Russell's Steaks, Chops & More
 Salon Lilli
 Salvatore's Grand Hotel
 Sam's Club
 Stooges Burger Bar
 Tattered Tulip Farmhouse Décor
 The Roycroft Inn
 Tim Horton's
 Tops Markets
 Towne Lincoln
 Trader Joe's
 UB Athletics
 Vidler's 5 & 10
 Carol Wesley
 West Herr Automotive
 WNY Immediate Care
 Wild Birds Unlimited

AG Bell Launches Western New York Chapter

By Sarah Ozimek

We are very excited to announce the launch of AG Bell Western New York, the 38th chapter of AG Bell International! We formed in 2018 to build a community of support, information and empowerment for individuals and families with hearing loss from Buffalo to Syracuse. Through informational sessions, connection to others, and social events, we are here to support you on your hearing loss journey.

The Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was founded in 1890. Through publications, advocacy, training, scholarships and financial aid, AG Bell promotes the use of spoken language as well as hearing technology for children with hearing loss. It is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with chapters located throughout the United States and a network of international affiliates. The Association also sponsors the AG Bell College Scholarship Awards Program for a number of deaf and hard of hearing full-time students pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees. AG Bell's mission is for all families to be informed and supported, professionals to be appropriately qualified to teach and help children with hearing loss, public policy leaders to effectively address the needs of people with hearing loss, and communities to be empowered to help their neighbors with hearing loss succeed.

Our chapter kickoff events included the Buffalo Walk for Hearing in September 2018, and our next event in February 2019 is a film screening of *The Listening Project*, directed by Academy Award-nominated, Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Irene Taylor Brodsky and Jane Madell, Clinical Audiologist and Professor. It explores the profound impact

of technology on the lives and identities of young deaf adults.

Following the film

will be a panel of parents and teenagers speaking about their personal journeys with hearing loss.

Sarah Ozimek, Communications Director of AG Bell WNY shares: "I was born in Philadelphia with severe to profound hearing loss and diagnosed/fitted with hearing aids at age 2. An AG Bell member since childhood, I am appreciative of the lifelong connections I have made at AG Bell conventions all over the country and particularly at LOFT (Leadership Opportunities for Teens). There, I met deaf & hard-of-hearing friends, and our confidence in our skills, abilities and futures blossomed as a group. I can remember, as a teenager, soaking up round tables and panels full of valuable information and advice that I still carry with me today about going through life with a hearing loss. Now as a parent of children with hearing loss living in Rochester, I am so excited to have come full circle and to help create similar experiences for children, teens, and families in WNY - making even more supportive connections with each other as we grow our new chapter!"

We are looking forward to planning more events this year! To get in touch, email us at agbellwny@gmail.com.



Sound Amplifier Released for Some Android Phones

By Gail Cronin

In recent years, Apple had been a leader in accessibility for Hard of Hearing people with their iPhone products. Now Android is looking to close that gap and provide better accessibility for their cell phone users. Google has developed a new app for some Android phones. Sound Amplifier will provide new accessibility settings that allow the user to adjust sound settings for a customizable listening experience. Sliding controls can reduce background noise, adjust sound quality, and correct right/left balance. The user must wear wired headphones (not Bluetooth) to hear the adjusted sound signal. Currently, the phone must be running Android 9 Pie in order to download this app, available in the Google Play Store. It will be pre-installed on Pixel 3 phones.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America) will be holding their third annual Buffalo Walk4Hearing on Sunday, September 29, 2019. The Walk will be held at the same location as last year at South Park Ring Road, part of the Buffalo Olmstead Parks Conservancy, near the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens.

For the past two years, Buffalo Implant Group has been an Alliance Group organization with HLAA and sponsored a Walk Team. We hope to do so again. Funds raised are split between HLAA, a national organization that advocates and lobbies for people with hearing loss, and the Alliance Groups. More information about our participation will be included in the next issue of *The B.I.G. News*.

If you would like to learn more about HLAA, check out their website at www.hearingloss.org. To learn more about the Walk4Hearing, go to www.walk4hearing.org.



The Buffalo Implant Group Scholarship

The Buffalo Implant Group Scholarship is an annual award offered to any high school senior who uses hearing implants. This award has been created to assist recipients with expenses related to post-high school studies (college or vocational). The scholarship value is \$500. It will be available in the spring of 2019 to graduating high school seniors.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must use hearing implants (Cochlear Implant or Bone-anchored Hearing Aid)
- Must have a GPA of 80% or higher
- A copy of applicant's official high school transcript
- Must submit an essay on how the Cochlear Implant has impacted his/her life (Please attach to scholarship application.)
- Letter of recommendation from a non-family member

Application deadline is March 31, 2019

All materials should be sent to: B.I.G., PO Box 350, Clarence Center, NY 14032-0350

The scholarship recipient will be notified by mail on **April 15, 2019.**



BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

P.O. BOX 350 • CLARENCE CENTER, NEW YORK 14032-0350

Scholarship Application

Applicant Information

Full Name: _____ Date: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

Address: _____
City State ZIP Code

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Cumulative GPA: _____ Type of Implant: _____

Extracurricular
Activities:
(Use space provided or
attach a separate sheet.)

Post Education
Goals:
(Use space provided or
attach a separate sheet.)

Education

High School: _____ Address: _____

From: _____ To: _____

2nd High School: _____ Address: _____
(If necessary)

From: _____ To: _____

Many Thanks

Carol Baum
Raymond and Lisa Brewster
Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center
Christine Burozy
Melissa Burroughs
Craig and Jackie Carpenter
Elsbeth Chidiac
Joe Cronin
Kathy Danahy
Deaf Access Services
Michelle Dubé
Jon Erwin
Sr. Dorothy Feltz
Margie Fitchlee
Marielle Fitzgerald
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JoAnn Hammer
Mary Healy

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Lisa Hill Nowicki
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Kathy Maroney
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Joanne Mayers
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Dianne Mogavero
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Sarah Ozimek

Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Popadick
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Jean Ras
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St. Aloysius Gonzaga R. C. Church
St. Mary's School for the Deaf
Tracy Schaeffer
Mary Ann Slon
Joe Sonnenberg
Sandra Swaciak
Jan Telban
Sue Wantuck
Karen Ward
UB Audiology and Speech students
Valerie Ward
Zenger Group



SAVE THE DATE!

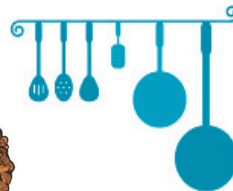
Our 2019 Summer Sunset Dinner and Picnic will be held at **Westwood Park in Lancaster on Friday, August 9**. Once again you will find us in Shelter #5 at 5:00 pm for dinner and our basket raffle. Please mark your calendars!

Russian Coffee Cake Recipe *circa 1928 submitted by Margie Fitchlee*

1 cup sugar	1 pint sour cream
½ pound butter	3 unbeaten eggs
2 ½ cups flour	3 t. baking powder
1 t. baking soda	

filling/topping

¾ cup sugar	4Tbsp. cinnamon
1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans	



Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees F. Cream together sugar and butter and mix in sour cream. Add unbeaten eggs one at a time. In separate bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, and baking soda. Combine the flour mixture gradually into the butter mixture. The dough will become stiff.

Spoon half of the dough into a well greased 10 in floured tube pan and mix together the topping ingredients.

Sprinkle a third of the topping over the first half of the dough.
Add remaining dough and sprinkle the rest of the topping.
Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees F. Cool 1 hour before removing from pan.





Quarterly Newsletter

Subscription/Membership Form

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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 Meeting:

Parents' Panel

The Buffalo Implant Group is pleased to welcome
a panel of parents of young children who will share their experiences

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

6:00 -8:00 PM

Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center

50 East North St. Buffalo 14203

The meeting will be held in the lower level conference room. Limited free parking is available in the lot behind the building.
Sign language interpretation will be provided.

A brief business meeting will be held at the beginning of the evening, followed by a vote on a change to our by-laws.

The proposed change would reduce the number of newsletters per calendar year from four to three.

The treasurer will be collecting dues payments for 2019. Our t-shirts will be available for purchase. Please support this fundraiser.
Pizza, pop, and water will be provided. Please consider bringing a dessert to share, if you are able to do so. Social time will follow.

Friends and family are always welcome.

If you are interested in child care during the meeting, call Tracy Schaeffer at 88-8871 x2203 or email her at tschaeffer@askbhsc.org



BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

P.O. BOX 350

CLARENCE CENTER, NEW YORK 14032-0350

www.buffaloimplantgroup.com

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