

HELPING HANDS

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www.deafinstitute.org or e-mail us at staff@deafinstitute.org

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Never Give Up **by Cynthia Jones**



When my daughter **Molly** was eight months old, I took a reading class required for my Special Education certification. During class discussion one day, some of my

classmates were making comments about children needing to hear adults read aloud in order to be able to learn to read. My professor, intending to offer “food for thought,” posed the question, **“Well, how do Deaf people learn to read? DO Deaf people learn to read?”** Even though he was only attempting to encourage my classmates to “think outside the box,” my curiosity was piqued and I used the opportunity to do some research.

Over the course of the next few weeks, **I found research indicating that prelingually deaf children who learned American Sign Language turned out to be better readers than those who did not learn ASL.** With that knowledge, I became inspired to make sure Molly learned ASL – but first I would have to learn ASL! **Not only did I want her to be a better reader, I also wanted her to be able to communicate** – and I wanted to be able to communicate with her! I made up my mind that, of all the things she might hold against me when she turned 15, one of them was NOT going to be that I didn’t learn to communicate with her. I found a sign language class and began attending. I also began attending events in the Deaf community, so I could interact with Deaf people at every opportunity. When I was offered the opportunity to have a Deaf adult come into my home

and teach me to read with my daughter through the **Shared Reading Project**, I eagerly accepted!

Although Molly understood ASL fairly quickly and picked up several signs, her overall communication skills did not develop as rapidly as I had anticipated or hoped. She would sign more with me than with others, but still not as much as I would have liked. **I continued to sign with her and to expose her to other Deaf people** at every turn. Over time, she began to sign more – but still not as much as I would have liked. She would sign with me at home, and she would make “selfie videos” demonstrating extensive signing skills, but she kept these skills to herself – like some well-kept secret that only a chosen few could be privy to. I spent YEARS envying other parents whose children were signing fluently despite their parents’ minimal efforts at signing with them. Some of these parents would even ask me to interpret for them when interacting with Deaf people. I kept thinking how unfair it was that their children were signing so well and my child wasn’t, despite my best efforts. **I didn’t give up**, though.

When Molly was still a toddler, I noticed some other things were not “quite right” with her. As a special education teacher, **I knew all-too-well the characteristics of Autism – and I was noticing them in my own daughter.** One night, as I was listening to her vocalize through the baby monitor, I found myself googling “girls with Autism.” All that came up was that “Autism is extremely rare in girls” and “Autism is more common in boys than in girls.” Well, that’s great – **but moms “know” things.** I’d

(continued on pg. 3)



Perseverance

by Pam Eubanks
(My word for 2020)

"Perseverance" - "persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success." As I look back to our family's beginnings in the "Deaf World," I remember people God placed around us BEFORE we knew we needed them! **Sarah Nickels, Richard Miller, Cecil Bennett, Julie and Werner Hallabrin**, and so many others.

We found out **Nathaniel** was deaf when he was 22 months old. **What a shock! So many questions!** So many unknowns! What a challenging, life-stretching, on-going learning experience for our whole family. **How do we do "family life" with added new dimensions?**

My job title -- "**Family Ministry Representative**" came about after the fact! As our family began "**life after Nathaniel's diagnosis of 'Deaf,'**" **God connected us** with such a variety of people who knew families with a child who is deaf. In the beginning of these connections, **we began gathering various things that helped our family deal with deafness in our dailiness -- so we could share with others!**

Thinking back to daily family things, the #1 item was a flashlight! Why? **Think of all the places a family finds themselves trying to communicate in the DARK!** In the car at night, bedtime after lights are out, when you don't want to wake up everyone, but your child who is deaf needs to tell you something, when a movie is shown at a gathering, so the lights are turned OFF. The list of helpful things eventually became more than a plastic bag could hold. **Becky Samborsky**, suggested we get a cloth bag. **Paulina Dolerhi**, took our ideas and came up with a logo. **Norene Engled**, mom of a CCU Deaf Ministry student, found cloth bags that our "**Gifts of Hope**" logo would fit on the front. She created iron-on pictures of our logo for the bags.

GE Jet Engine employees (where **Cecil Bennett**, Deaf Institute founder, worked before he started DI) began donating toys for our **GOH bags!** They still give us toys, books, etc to give to



families! **We have the joy of sharing these gifts and practical "tools" for everyday family life with families we would never know otherwise!**

God knows how to connect those who need what we can share in such a variety of ways! People have connected us personally with so many **families who need encouragement in their 24/7/365 daily living family life**. What a joy to be part of His connectors!

These **Gifts of HOPE** help us have on-going connections with families. They get information about our **All About Deaf Kids Fair, Deaf & Family & Friends Camp, Summer-Time Kids events, Shared Reading Program**, and other **family-friendly deaf/hearing events**.

Our sister organization **Deaf Missions**, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, produces wonderful materials for families who want to share Bible truths with people who are deaf.

Our Heavenly Father really knows how to equip and connect people!

Meet Our New Teen Director

My name is Ash Huston. I grew up in an area on the East Side of Cincinnati called Pleasant Plain. Growing up I always did and still do attend Withamsville Church of Christ. Currently I am a practicum student at Cincinnati State to become a Sign Language Interpreter. I am projected to graduate in the fall of this year. I started learning ASL as a second language in my junior year of high school. My teacher strongly encouraged us to attend silent dinners. So I started getting involved with the Deaf community that way.



Soon after starting at Cincinnati State, I was invited to the National Christian Convention of the Deaf in Michigan where I met many of the people I've had the pleasure of working with since. The following summer, I was invited to Deaf & Family & Friends Camp to work with the teens and I had an amazing time. Between camp and NCCD, I knew I wanted to get involved with deaf ministry and I was especially excited when I was given the opportunity to work with deaf teens with Deaf Institute. I am very excited to get to know more people and I look forward to God's plans for my work in the ministry.

(Ash was added to our staff part-time to work with deaf teens and to help reduce Bryan's work load.)

(Continued from page 1)

mention to friends or fellow Special Ed teachers my suspicions and I'd get remarks like, "Pfft! She doesn't have Autism!" or "You're just overreacting because you know too much about disabilities!" But moms know things. *I mentioned my concerns to my pediatrician, who has always been very attentive to my concerns regarding Molly, but he said he did not see the need for worry. But moms know things.* Finally, around the age of four and a half, when she still wasn't potty-trained, was having more difficulty than her peers in school, had rejected her cochlear implant, and was not producing expressive language on pace with her peers, her teachers and other school personnel began to hint at Autism. I was able to get an appointment with a developmental pediatrician, who *diagnosed her as mildly Autistic*. The pediatrician did say that if Molly hadn't been Deaf, we might never have noticed the Autism – but the Autism diagnosis sure did confirm and explain why all my efforts at signing with her were not paying the dividends I had been expecting! *Now, I knew I definitely could not give up! Now, I knew I had to work that much harder!* This child needed my perseverance now more than ever! Her Autism made her strong-willed? Well, my motherhood made me even more strong-willed! *I would not give up on her need to be able to communicate!*

The past two years, since Molly has been in high school, she has become increasingly more expressive with her signing. Her teacher shares multiple anecdotes per week about how Molly is initiating conversation and interacting more with her. *I finally feel like my investment is paying off.* Recently, we had a little early season snow, enough to cause the school to cancel afternoon activities – including a party Molly was supposed to attend. She spent much of that evening looking out the window at the snow and asking, "School tomorrow?" I told her I thought there would be school tomorrow and asked her what she thought. She kept saying, "School tomorrow?" Then, she began signing three signs that I couldn't decipher at first. Although I was at a loss, I wasn't giving up – and neither was she! I recognized one of the signs as, "grow," but I couldn't quite put the others together in the context of what she was trying to say. She kept signing and I kept searching my memory bank for what she might be trying to tell me. She picked up her iPad and typed in the word "hot." Ok, now, we were getting somewhere! One of the words she was signing was "hot!" Hmm... "hot," "grow," with the sign in between "TEMPERATURE!" "HOT TEMPERATURE SPRING!" She was telling me she prefers hot

temperatures in the spring! *I was BEAMING with excitement and had tears of joy in my eyes! I signed, "OH! You prefer hot temperatures in the spring! Then, I told her how PROUD I was of her for continuing to sign and not giving up on me when I didn't understand her!* She told me again how she preferred the hot temperatures in the spring. I told her I did too, but that we need winter so the flowers and trees can be pretty in the spring. I even told her that, in a few months, it would start to get warm again, but right now it was winter and that we need winter to make the flowers and trees pretty in the spring. I thanked her again for not giving up on me when I didn't understand her and told her again how very proud I was of her.

What a communication journey this has been!

From the curious mom of an eight month old baby hoping to give her child the opportunity to become a better reader to



the beaming mom of a seventeen year old young lady thrilled at her daughter's progress, *I have grown as a parent. I have not given up on her right to communicate – and she has not given up on making sure I understand her!*

(Pam Eubanks has helped Cynthia and Molly through our Gifts of Hope, Shared Reading Program and Summertime Kids Activities)

Memorial Gifts

In Memory of Cecil & Rena Bennett

Bryan & Pam Eubanks

In Memory of George & Lucille Burns

Enon Valley Church of Christ

In Memory of Janice Eckerle

Bryan & Pam Eubanks

In Memory of Elmo & Christine Flynn

Don & Donna Flynn

In Memory of Bonnie Irwin

Bryan & Pam Eubanks



Prayer Requests and Praises

Never stop praying. Give thanks to God at all times.

That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 English Version for the Deaf

Pray for wisdom for our Board as we **search for an Assistant Director & Family Ministries Rep.** and consider other options for the Deaf Institute.

Praise for **Ash Huston** being added to our staff part-time to work with Deaf Teens and other needs.

Pray for more **Deaf Leaders, youth workers and Christian Interpreters** to reach deaf kids, teens and adults with good news.

Pray for Opportunities for families with deafness through our **Gifts of Hope and Shared Reading Programs.**

Pray for our **All About Deaf Kids Fair**, March 7 at the **Cincinnati State Conference Center.** (*This is location change*)

Pray for our Board Meeting May 16

Pray for **VBS** at First Church of Christ in Bluffton, IN, May 31- June 5.

Pray for **VBS for Deaf & Hearing kids** at Western Hills Church of Christ, June 7-12

Pray for **Deaf and Family and Friends Camp** at Lake James in Angola, IN, July 16-19, 2020.

Pray for **Lake James School of Missions**, July 26-31.

Thanks!

Your prayers and support help make a difference in the lives of families with deafness.

Deaf & Family & Friends Camp

“There is a Time for Everything”
Ecclesiastes 3:1

JULY 16-19, 2020
45 Years anniversary

Lots of crafts to do
Team building, youth and teens
Games for everyone
Great food
Swimming
Campfire with s'mores

Lake James
1880 W 275 N
Angola, IN 46703
www.ljca.org
host by Deaf Institute
www.deafinstitute.org
staff@deafinstitute.org
Tom Wink 585.206.2427 VP
tomjwink@gmail.com

Open to everyone. Great encouraging time for families that has a Deaf member.
We provide interpreters for the hearing.
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