



RECAP OF SOUND BEGINNINGS BREAKFAST



On Tuesday, November 17, HHI hosted its 4th annual "Sound Beginnings Breakfast" at the downtown campus. The rain didn't keep dedicated HHI supporters from coming out to this year's event featuring chairperson Teddy Abrams, Conductor of The Louisville Orchestra, emcee Shannon Cogan of Wave 3 News, and Christy Ames, mother of HHLA student Blake. Each speaker relayed their own personal stories of their support for Heuser Hearing and its mission to serve the deaf and hard of hearing in the community.

Not a dry eye was left in the audience upon hearing the inspiring words of Rilynn Heid's parents, Joan and Tim. They shared a personal video of their daughter's moving journey, followed by a display of her progress as Rilynn read out loud a poem and special tribute to the staff, teachers and supporters of HHLA. The morning concluded as HHLA students presented decorated butterflies as a souvenir for all guests to take home and even helped collect the donations.

Thanks to all our sponsors, donors, friends, and families who continue to support our efforts! Special thanks also to Brad Broecker, board members, Silver Spoon Catering, and HHI staff for putting this annual event together that raises a large percentage of our annual budget.



HEUSER TEAMS UP WITH THE GALT HOUSE CHRISTMAS

Once again this year, HHLA is the charity of choice for "Christmas at The Galt House." This year's event brings more activities for the children including a new Winter Wonder Lane, KaLightoscope Luminaries, Santa's Sleigh Green Screen Experience, the annual Gingerbread Contest, a snow play that lets visitors Create Your Own snowman, and country music star Pam Tillis who will make a special visit to HHLA on December 3rd for a special holiday performance by HHLA students. HHLA will also enter its gingerbread house in the contest, created by in-house artist and art instructor, Jill Hedges and put together by HHLA students. Parents, teachers and friends of HHLA are invited to go by and vote for our entry!

The event takes place November 19 – December 27, 2015. Hours for the event are Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Sundays 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. The event is closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

For tickets and more information, please visit www.christmasatthegalthouse.com.

ELLIE KATE'S STORY By Jane Cook

Our journey to having a child born with a hearing impairment looks a bit different than most. We adopted our sweet 4-year old Ellie Kate, who was born with a hearing loss, from Huazhou, China at the age of 20 months. While I have worked with special needs children most of my life, this was new territory for myself, my husband and our two boys. We had a specific conversation about adopting a child with special needs and we were both okay with it, although neither of us had any specific qualifications. We decided to leave it all in God's hands instead of limiting Him. Imagine our surprise when we received a call just a few months later from our social worker asking us to review the file of a 16-month old baby girl who was profoundly deaf! It was all I could do not to say "YES!" before we evened opened the email!

During the next four months we learned all we could about children with hearing impairments and the deaf community. Because of my connections with early intervention and working for The First Steps Early Intervention Program, I made several phone calls to my therapist friends and picked their brains about what to expect. To say I was overwhelmed before I even held my daughter for the first time, was an understatement. My conversations led us to Heuser Hearing and Language Academy and their staff and speech therapist, Cheryl Donaldson and developmental interventionist, Paula Garby, who walked hand-in-hand with us from Ellie Kate's first days at home. The talented staff and audiologist, Dr. Katie Austin, answered our questions and guided us through every step of the process to determine that a cochlear implant would be the best option for our child.

Ellie Kate became a permanent part of our family in July 2013 and had her first appointments at Heuser in August. After being tested and wearing loaner hearing aids for 4 months with little to no improvement, she received her first cochlear implant at 26 months old and her second one almost a year later just before her 3rd birthday. Cheryl and Paula faithfully accompanied Ellie Kate through First Steps, encouraging me as a parent and pushing our child to perform at her best. They supported us, cheered us on and celebrated the milestones as they came. We later transitioned to the school with Ellie Kate attending classes in a language rich environment. Living in Spencer County is a haul with traffic and headaches, but we make the sacrifice to get our daughter to HHLA several times a week. To be in a classroom with a fantastic teacher, specifically trained to work with children with hearing loss, where she is encouraged daily to use new words, is something I can't duplicate at home. Ellie is in her 2nd year in the 3 year-old room and LOVES coming to school! I wish I could match her excitement each morning when we pull into the parking lot!

While our journey has been different from most, The Lord led this tiny, perfect child from Southern China to our family at the perfect time. And now, with the help of Heuser Hearing Institute and their fantastic staff, Ellie Kate is flourishing, full of sassiness and learning new words every day.

And a few weeks ago, she finally called me "Mommy."



MARIA KONDAUROVA A Profile of a UofL Researcher



I have always been fascinated by understanding cognitive mechanisms that underlie spoken language acquisition in both native and non-native language learners. My long-term research goal is to use quantitative experimental methods to uncover these mechanisms and describe them within the framework of linguistic and psychological theory. My research program can be considered in terms of two parallel project areas -- How the nature of the spoken language input to normal-hearing and hearing-impaired infants/children affects language acquisition and learnability and how the linguistic experience determines non-native listeners' ability to extract phonetic information from acoustic input and form phonological categories based on this information. Therefore, I'm interested in understanding how language acquisition is affected by both "bottom up" (i.e., hearing impairment in L1 learners) and "top down" sources (i.e., influence of the native language in L2 learners).

I graduated from Purdue University in 2008 with Ph.D. in Linguistics and completed a postdoctoral research position in The Department of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery at the Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis. I developed a program of research that examined acoustic characteristics of infant-directed speech in mother-infant dyads with mismatched hearing status in order to make predictions about which properties of spoken input are maximally beneficial for the development of speech and language skills in normal-hearing and hearing-impaired infants and children who received cochlear implants and hearing aids.

I am excited to join The University of Louisville's Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences and Heuser Hearing Institute to continue a program of research that focuses on identifying variables that can affect communication and language learnability in both normal-hearing and hearing-impaired learners. This research program will serve as a basis for creating new intervention strategies to maximize the likelihood of successful verbal communication in children with hearing impairment.

When not focused on research and teaching, I enjoy attending art exhibitions, spending time in nature and cooking. Being trained as a competitive swimmer since I was four, I also enjoy a number of sports including swimming, martial arts and skiing. Please feel free to stop by my lab and talk to me on anything related to your research interests and goals!

HEUSER NEWS

- Heuser Hearing & Language Academy is excited to announce a generous grant from Delta Dental of Kentucky's Making Smiles Happen!



This grant will allow us to expand our reach in the community and continue to provide amazing services to the youth who utilize our school.

- Heuser Hearing Institute's printed newsletter is going green! We will be printing a limited number of the Winter newsletter this season in an effort to save on resources and the environment.



To request a hard copy of the newsletter, please contact Wende Elkins by email at welkins@thehearinginstitute.org or by phone at 502-515-3320.

HEUSER EVENTS

December 14, 2015
Butterflies in Motion Luncheon and gift wrapping
10:00 a.m. Downtown campus

February 14, 2016
HHLA Valentine's Party
hosted by The Women's Club of Louisville
2:30 p.m. - Downtown campus

March 25, 2016
Easter Egg Hunt
hosted by Young Women's Club of Louisville
(TBA)

RSVP now...

WORDS FROM CEO Brett Bachmann



Since moving to Louisville a few years ago, I have gotten to experience the real change of seasons. Coming from California, as I do, we only experienced two seasons – slightly cool and hot. I now understand the beauty of nature and the good (and the bad) of true winter weather. Now I embrace the changes and look forward to the turning of the leaves and the snow that comes with the end of the year.

As we move into the colder weather, I invite all of you to visit Heuser Hearing to see just how busy we are! These coming months usher in the holiday season – our HHLA students run through the hallways trick-or-treating dressed in their costumes; we celebrate the Thanksgiving season and we end the year with the spirit of the holidays and all the joy and celebration of it all. We just wrapped up our annual fundraiser, "Sound Beginnings Breakfast," on Tuesday, November 17 which was very successful. I'd like to thank all of our donors, families, friends, and partners including Kosair Charities, The Greens Foundation, and our special speaker, Teddy Abrams, for helping to make this annual event so special.

Thanks once again this year to the generosity of The Galt House, our students and teachers will perform in "Christmas at The Galt House," with a joyous kick-off celebration featuring The Louisville Ballet and The Louisville Orchestra with their special guest, country music star and CMA Female Vocalist of the Year, Pam Tillis. Please visit this spectacular The Galt House celebration and the HHI booth throughout the event which takes place November 19 – December 27.

Stay tuned as we continue to grow here at Heuser and stay in tuned with the new hearing health technology that is so imperative to the daily lives of all we touch. I am astounded by all the good we do and just how vital strong hearing health leads to stronger, more productive lives throughout our community. Our audiologists and hearing health specialists are dedicated to that cause and I am both honored and proud to lead the charge that changes the lives of so many. I look forward to a new year and all the challenges that behold us. I wish all of you a happy holiday season and healthy hearing now and in the New Year!

Enjoy the Season!

Brett

This month's newsletter is brought to you by **PASSPORT HEALTH PLAN**

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