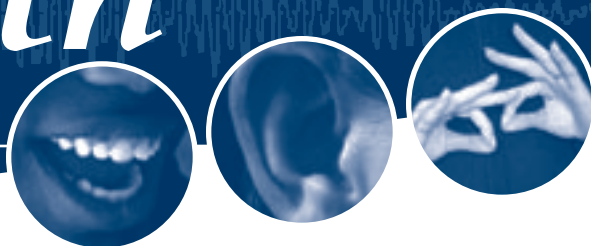


Wavelength

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH AND HEARING SCIENCES

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Life as a School SLT in New Zealand

Focus on Alumni

By Erin Beneteau



After graduating with my master's degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences from WSU ('98) and practicing in the public schools around Washington State for six years, I decided to take an overseas job in another English-speaking country—New Zealand. With its beautiful scenery, warmer temperatures, and home of *The Lord of the Rings*, Aotearoa, the land of the long white cloud, sounded great! With a couple of hundred dollars, my transcripts, and American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) credentials, I joined the New Zealand Speech Therapy Association and in July 2004 began working for the New Zealand Ministry of Education, Group Special Education.

I work as a speech-language therapist (SLT) in Henderson, which is a suburb of Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. I work in the School Focus team, which serves children age 5 and older. School Focus SLT services are only funded to serve the most severe 1% of this population. This does not quite mean the same thing as it does in the United States, since the most severe children are often sent to special schools, which do not contract SLT services from Group Special Education but hire their own therapists. So the students we serve are in mainstreamed schools, but have severe speech and language delays.

I have a total of 18 schools on my caseload, but only regularly serve about 10 of them. I typically go to each school once a fortnight (every two weeks). When I go to a school, I see the student briefly and then I write notes to the teacher aide, parents, and classroom teacher as to how they can adapt curriculum to meet the child's needs. I also provide therapy materials for parent and classroom staff. Therapists are allowed to determine their service delivery model and some choose to serve a larger percentage of their caseload in a direct therapy, clinical approach than I do. Most of the therapists in my area use the consultative model, however.

As you can imagine, there are both benefits and drawbacks to this system. Therapy does not seem as effective because trained SLTs are not providing it. This was a great lesson for me, reinforcing that we SLTs really have learned specialized skills. Recently, I was explaining to a parent how to progress from /g/ in consonant-vowel form to vowel-consonant-vowel and

then to words. The look on her face was completely blank. It really hit me that what comes naturally to us does not come naturally to others who are not trained. It has been difficult trying to explain to non-SLTs how to provide therapy. One of the benefits, though, is that I feel that my information and opinions are generally more valued and respected here than they were when I worked in U.S. public schools. Parents and staff alike are generally grateful and gracious about any information that can be shared with them regarding speech and language development and intervention.

In an attempt to help more than the most severe 1% of students in the schools, some of the resource teachers, principals, and I have worked on creating systems within the schools to increase speech and language skills. One project, a music program for classroom teachers, was started by another American SLT who had been in Henderson previously. The program targets vocabulary development and phonological awareness skills. Another project underway incorporates prepositional phrases, target vocabulary, and sequencing skills within a physical fitness program. Developing these projects is fun and exciting and presents new challenges.

Interestingly, some of the theories underlining therapy are different here. I attended an SLT workshop a while ago in which the speaker asked if anyone felt that dyspraxia was purely a motor planning disorder and no one raised a hand. Everyone present believed dyspraxia is a motor planning disorder with a linguistic component linked to the disorder. Another difference from my U.S. experience



Erin Beneteau

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WASHINGTON STATE
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True Stories from SLP Alumni

All Alone Out There

By Leslie Power

There is a shortage of speech-language pathologists in small rural school districts in eastern Washington. Some of our graduates in rural areas piece together part-time jobs in two or more districts and some take full time positions in one district. The opportunity to talk with two of our graduates who took their first job as the only speech-language pathologist in one of these districts came up recently. I was curious as to why they made that decision and what they perceived as the advantages and disadvantages.

Heidi (Reil) Schaefer, class of 1998, worked as a preschool teacher before returning to graduate school. After graduation, she took her first job as the only speech-language pathologist (SLP) in Highland School District outside of Yakima, and her second position was again as the only SLP in Kamiah, Idaho.



Heidi grew up in the small town of Kendrick, Idaho. Leanne (Lafferty) Lawson, class of 2002, worked for one year on an emergency certificate in Oroville, Washington, before returning to graduate school. Upon graduation with her master's degree she started her career in the Cashmere School District outside of Wenatchee. She grew up in another small town, Okanogan, Washington.

Why did they return to small towns? They both described it as being comfortable.

"I would rather share a town with a few people that I know than with a lot of people that I don't," stated Leanne. Heidi, on the other hand, looked forward to serving a district with only one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. It made it easier to schedule students, plan meetings, and minimize travel between schools.

Fresh out of graduate school Heidi wanted to be as independent as possible. She had wonderful practicum and internship experiences, which gave her many great ideas. She wanted to try them on her own without a senior SLP looking over her shoulder. She looked forward to developing her own therapy plans and materials and to try them out independently. Wanting to become deeply involved with a variety of children is what appealed to Leanne. She works with children, 3 to 21 years old, who have various communication disorders.

At the time they took their jobs they did not see many disadvantages, but challenges presented themselves as time passed. Caseload/workload issues are more difficult to manage with only one SLP. There are not as many opportunities to discuss treatment options with SLP colleagues. Also, it is harder to bargain about contractual issues when you are the sole provider of services.

Covering caseloads when they are sick or on maternity leave is always a challenging problem. When Heidi and Leanne each went on maternity leave, they had to complete upcoming Individual Education Plans and assessments before leaving. They then had to train paraprofessionals to cover their therapy, as there were no other certified SLPs in the area. This meant that, while on leave, they needed to be available for questions and assistance.

Finding someone to supervise the Clinical Fellowship Year (CFY) worked out easily for both alums. Leanne negotiated this

as a condition for accepting the position. Heidi accepted the position vacated by a recently retired SLP who agreed to assist her with her CFY, to problem solve, and to answer questions.

Leanne lives and works in the same community. She can walk to all three schools, and visit her son at daycare for lunch. When Heidi was in the Highland School District, she had to commute from Yakima. Now that she works in Kamiah, she still commutes, but now from Orofino.

Communication with other speech language pathologists is important. Leanne meets bimonthly with other SLPs from surrounding school district where they discuss ideas and present case studies. They also keep in contact with previous internship supervisors and former graduate students. Phone calls and e-mails prove critical to solving problems, brainstorming ideas, and planning, especially in the first few years.

They both feel supported by the special education directors and professional staff in their schools. The opportunity to work with one psychologist, one physical therapist, one occupational therapist, one speech-language pathologist, and one director offers them the opportunity to make steady progress with children. Other professionals are never far away in a small district and they feel that they collaborate easily and make necessary changes quickly. In addition, as the only SLP in a small district, each benefits directly from continuing education funds. Small towns and small schools have offered these two alumni great opportunities to grow.

Heidi and her husband Brian have a new baby, Max, born in January, and live in Orofino, Idaho. Leanne and her husband Jerimi have a 20-month-old son, named Cort, and live in Cashmere, Washington.

In The Spotlight

Speech and Hearing Sciences students were recognized for outstanding scholarship, leadership, and service. **Abby Sudbery** was named the College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Senior in Speech and Hearing Sciences. Junior **Megan Gumke** was awarded the Maynard Lee Daggy Scholarship. This year, through the outstanding fundraising efforts of our NSSHLA club, two students were awarded the Lynn Larrigan Clinical Excellence award. Senior **Maurita Birkland** was honored for her clinical excellence in Speech-Language Pathology and **Kevin Liebe** for his clinical excellence in Audiology.

Graduate students were also recognized. **Maya Hawkins** and **Jowan Lee** received the Outstanding Speech and Hearing Sciences Graduate Student Commencement Award. **Tracy Behler** received the Graduate School Edward R. Myer Scholarship and the WSU Spokane Branch Campus Leadership Award. **Noelle Phillips** was awarded a Graduate School Minority Assistantship. The Scottish Rite Scholarship in childhood language disorders was awarded to **Amy Williams**.

News of our friends



We hear that...

Sarah Sullivan (B.A. '02), after completing her first year of graduate school, took a leave of absence to work at Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska. She helped Dr. Andrew Lotto (former SHS instructor) set up both a speech perception lab and a speech production lab in their new hearing research/clinic facilities. She is now in Austin, Texas, working in the Auditory Cognition and Speech Perception Lab. Sarah is working on a doctorate in experiment psychology at the University of Texas.

Last we heard...while working full time as an SLP **Carey Bailey** (B.A. '01) was expecting child number three. Congratulations to Carey and her family! Her oldest, Ashley, is now five and Nelson is two.

Brenda (Thomas) Arend (B.A. '87, M.A. '89) is living in Olympia, and her husband teaches choir at Tumwater High School. Their children are Amanda (9), Emily (7), and Thomas (2). She is working one day a week at Providence St. Peter Hospital covering acute care and a skilled nursing facility. She also works in-patient rehabilitation when needed. Brenda is a community board member of the Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB). It is the largest independent IRB in the world, and is located in Olympia. "My job is to work on the consent forms that subjects sign before they can be part of the research. I simplify language, eliminate redundancies, replace jargon with lay language, and try to make sure the form complies with regulations."

Trish (Lagacé) Salois (M.A. '92) has married and is living in north Idaho. While home schooling her three children, she also works one day a week seeing other home schooled children who need speech-language services.

Last year **Kelly Sebold** (B.A. '91, M.A. '94) left Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, where she was in acute care pediatrics, to accept a new position. Kelly, her husband Rod, and their three year old daughter Abby moved to the small town of La Center, Washington, where Kelly began her new role as lead SLP at a 0-3 center called Progress Center. The center is affiliated with the Longview School District and is currently completing negotiations with St. Johns Medical Center to have Kelly perform pediatric rehabilitation swallow studies. Currently the hospital refers clients to Portland and Seattle, over two hours away. "I still think of the experiences I had in Pullman and Spokane and appreciate how those programs prepared me for the work I do—I love the profession!"

Congratulations to Sam and **Ronee Buchert** (B.A. '02, M.A. '04) on the birth of their son Trace Jeffery Buchert. Trace was born April 18, 2005, at Deaconess Hospital in Spokane, Washington.

Congratulations also to **Jessica Haugen** (BA '04) on the birth of her son, Nicholas. Nicholas was born on November 26, 2004. Stop by to see pictures of Trace and Nicholas in the SHS main office.

Terra Bleicher (B.A. '03) and her dog Emmie have moved to Korea. Terra is the Youth Recreational Specialist on the U.S. Naval base in the town of Chinhae (population 130,000). She will be implementing the Boys & Girls Club program, running the toddler program and other youth activities.

Gayle "Gamache" McLernon (M.A. '82) and **Lee Klinski** (M.A. '77) are working together on the augmentative communications portion of an assistive technology team for the Portland (Oregon) Public Schools.

Cindy Weber (M.A. '01) accepted a position as an audiologist for Southeast Alaska Resource Health Consortium in Sitka, Alaska.

Michelle (Moriarty) Frederickson (B.A. '01) has completed her CFY and is working with Susan (Ericson) Forbes (B.A. '00) in our Pullman Speech & Hearing Clinic doing audiology evaluation, hearing aid fittings, and aural rehabilitation.

Deanna Boyd (M.A. '03) and **Lois Vanderbilt** (M.A. '02) work together in Anchorage, Alaska, at Programs for Infants and Children. They provide services in private homes and daycares. Deanna says, "It's given me a whole new perspective on carry-over of skills." Congratulations are also in order for Deanna, who is getting married in August.

Dr. Stephen Fausti (B.A. '65) received the Magnuson Award, Veterans Affairs' highest award for rehabilitation investigators, in March 2004 at the national meeting of the American Academy of Audiology in Salt Lake City. He has gained international recognition for his research and clinical expertise in assessing high-frequency auditory sensitivity and using high-frequency testing for early identification of hearing loss caused by ototoxicity. The Magnuson Award comes with a \$5,000 cash award and an additional \$50,000 award per year for three years, to support a currently funded, nationally peer-reviewed research project. Dr. Fausti is the director for the VA's National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research at the Portland VA Medical Center and is a professor in the Department of Otolaryngology at Oregon Health and Science University.

Send your news to torkelson@wsu.edu.

Message from the Chair

By Jeanne M. Johnson

Hello all. Dr. Chermak was on sabbatical this past semester, so I have the opportunity to provide this year's update for Speech & Hearing Sciences (SHS). One of the pleasures I am privileged to enjoy as acting chair is reading the wonderful letters and e-mails from our alumni who are so supportive of our efforts to educate budding professionals in audiology and speech-language pathology. Your words and contributions are deeply appreciated.

Your contributions have been particularly important this past year because of recent budget cuts. Despite this, and because of your contributions to SHS, we were able to support students, the clinics in Pullman and Spokane, and academic teaching in a manner that maintained the exceptional quality of the program. Again, thank you for making this possible.

Now, on to the news: I am delighted to announce the successful hire of **Dr. Nancy Potter**. She will take over the teaching duties of Dr. Teresa Paslawski, who left for Saskatchewan last year. Dr. Potter comes to us from Wisconsin, having received her Ph.D. in December 2004 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She most recently has been working as a postdoc with Larry Shriberg studying developmental apraxia of speech in children with galactosemia. There is a very high incidence of apraxia in children diagnosed with this condition. A quick search on the Internet will show you the wealth of information on galactosemia, yet very little in relation to speech. Prior to pursuing her Ph.D., Nancy had a private practice. Her 20 years of experience have been in the area of neurogenetics with adult and child populations. She will be teaching dysphagia and motor speech disorders in the graduate program this year. We are very excited to have her on board.

I also have the privilege of announcing to you that our own **Dr. Charles Madison** won the prestigious Editor's Award from *Contemporary Issues in Speech-Language Pathology*. Dr. Madison received his award at the ASHA convention this past November in Philadelphia.

Dr. Jon Hasbrouck was hired as our graduate internship coordinator following the retirement of Linda Vogel. Dr. Hasbrouck previously held the St. Luke's Rehabilitation Center Preceptor position, working half time for WSU and half time for St. Luke's. Together with Leslie Power, our graduate offsite practicum coordinator, he ensures that students continue to be placed with some of the best clinicians in the Northwest. He is putting in a few more miles, but enjoys seeing the final outcome of our educational investment in students.

This year saw the opening of the HOPE preschool located in the UPCD clinic in Spokane. Funded by the Oberkotter foundation, this language-enriched preschool provides an oral-aural experience for children with cochlear implants. The teacher, **JoBeth Deibel**, and her aide, UPCD alum **Jenny Wheaton**, have years of experience in oral and sign-based instructional methods. Our graduate students have a unique opportunity to work with these children and their families, both in the preschool and during individual sessions. **Rachael Schwartz's** recent master's project documented impressive pre-post gains in language develop-

ment, particularly in the area of comprehension for at least one preschooler with cochlear implants. We expect to see similar results for other children as well.

Another successful experiment in the UPCD clinic was the phonological preschool for children from Spokane School District #81, conducted by **Leslie Power** and involving our graduate students. Children were referred by Speech-Language Pathologists across District #81 and attended once a week for a preschool-based intensive therapy experience. UPCD graduate students worked with children individually and in a group setting. Data showed impressive gains in phonological development for the children involved, particularly in comparison to using regular individualized therapy as an intervention model. The school district is planning to take over this program in the fall now that it has been successfully piloted in our clinic.

I had an interesting year working as an advisory board member of the Teaching Academy, a newly-established group of faculty at WSU who are known for excellence in teaching. The purpose of the Academy is to promote evidence-based teaching practices and to provide support for professors and instructors wishing to improve their teaching. There is one representative from each college and each campus on the Academy. I represent the College of Liberal Arts. The main accomplishment this past year was to develop "the Big 6" learning outcomes for students at WSU. These learning outcomes span all aspects of the bachelor's experience, defining for students, prospective students, families, and the public the goals of an undergraduate education at WSU. You will find them posted soon on the WSU Web site.

The department continues to emphasize the importance of direct interactions between students and faculty. We use teaching assistants to teach only one course, SHS 118—Accent Reduction. Few other departments in our college can boast this record. Students and peer faculty consistently rate our teaching very highly.

At this writing, we do not know the future of the Audiology Doctorate (AuD) at WSU. Diminished resources have put our plans on hold. A final decision has not yet been made. Similarly, we have not heard much more about the proposal to move the undergraduate program to Spokane. Your support for the current configuration (undergraduates in Pullman, graduates in Spokane) was overwhelming.

I stepped down from the position of acting chair as of July 1. **Dr. Chermak** resumed her duties at that time. Look for a description of her sabbatical activities in next year's Wavelength. Yes, she was incredibly busy, focusing on her new book, coauthored with Frank Musiak, on auditory processing disorders. And yes, she was able to "refresh and renew" her energies as well, taking a modicum of time for a much needed break from the duties of being chair. We look forward to having her back.

Again, thank you all for your support. Please call 509-335-4525, e-mail speechhearing@wsu.edu, or write to us at the address on this newsletter. We'd love to include your update in our next newsletter.

In the Forefront

Speech & Hearing Sciences (SHS) faculty have shown remarkable productivity during 2004, despite the heavier teaching and service loads following the departure of Drs. Paslawski (to the University of Saskatchewan) and Ray (to Southeast Missouri State University) in May of 2004. The remaining tenure-track faculty published three refereed articles, one of which won a prestigious editor's award, one invited article, and 15 refereed abstracts, as well as gave 20 refereed presentations and nine invited presentations. Clinical faculty, who are not required to produce scholarly work, gave four refereed presentations and six invited presentations.

Chuck Madison received the prestigious Editor's Award for his 2004 article in *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders*, coauthored by **Barabara Guy** and **Melissa Koch**, titled "Pursuit of the Speech-Language Pathology Doctorate: Who, Why, Why Not." Dr. Madison combined two student research projects for this article on why students do or do not pursue doctorates, compared to why faculty believe students do or do not pursue doctorates. Thus, he combined student research with one of the most currently discussed topics in the profession—the shortage of those with doctorates—to produce a successful piece of scholarly work.

Mimi Salamat published two articles in 2004. One, coauthored by David McPherson, was published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology* and titled "Interactions among Variables in the P300 Response to a Continuous Performance Task with ADHD adults." This article received praise from James Jerger, the journal's editor-in-chief. Dr. Salamat published a second article with Dr. McPherson in the *Iranian Audiology Journal* (KAVOSH in Audiology) titled, "Variable ISI, RT, and Auditory P300 with ACPT paradigm." Dr. Salamat also served as an editorial consultant for the *Iranian Audiology Journal* and published 15 abstracts presented at an international conference in Tehran.

Ella Inglebret won a New Faculty Academic-Research Career Award from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), examining 1) the recruitment and retention of American Indian students in our fields, and 2) assessment practices used with Native Americans. She was also selected to participate in the invitation-only National Institute for Native Leadership in Higher Education and has been an active planning committee member of the newly established Plateau Center for American Indian Studies at WSU, which held its first conference in September 2004. Adding to her list of honors, Dr. Inglebret was recognized at the Annual Conference of the Washington State Indian Education Association for "Significant Contributions to American Indian Education." She had three presentations at the November ASHA convention in Philadelphia, coauthored by alumni **Sarah Deckman**, **Angie Gates**, and **Carrie Murphy** and colleague Jane Pimentel (EWU). You may also have noticed that Dr. Inglebret and alum **Britney Petersen**

wrote an article for *Advance for Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists*.

Jeanne Johnson presented two sessions at ASHA with alumni **Andrea Brown** and **Stacy Deffner** in the area of augmentative communication. She also served as an editorial consultant for *Mental Retardation* and the *Journal for the Association of Severely Handicapped* and reviewed two books for two publishers. Her work as part of the WSU Teaching Academy puts SHS at the forefront for teaching excellence at WSU.

SHS clinical faculty developed four major clinical innovations during 2004. **Jeff Nye** and **Jon Hasbrouck** collaborated to offer for the first time an Auditory Processing Disorders Clinic at the Hearing & Speech Clinic (Spokane Riverpoint Campus). **Sandy Bassett** collaborated with Spokane Ear, Nose, and Throat Clinic to establish the HOPE Preschool for infants and toddlers with cochlear implants. The preschool is housed in the Health Sciences Building and focuses on building oral language skills. **Jon Hasbrouck** made innovative changes to the Stuttering Treatment Program, offered through the Hearing & Speech Clinic, so that clients can access this service year-round rather than once per year. Finally, **Leslie Power** collaborated with the department to offer a Phonological Preschool to children in Spokane School District #81 through the Hearing & Speech Clinic.

Carla Jones has been busy supervising in the Pullman clinic and teaching Accent Reduction to employees of Pacific Northwest Nuclear Laboratories through the Distance Degree Program. Part-time Pullman supervisors **Sally Johnston** and **Susan Forbes** continue to provide expertise to our undergraduates who take two semesters of clinic. **Michelle (Moriarty) Frederickson** worked on her CFY in our clinic under Susan's guidance.

The Disabilities Studies minor continues to grow through the efforts of **Marshall Mitchell** and **Dianne Millhollin**. Marshall teaches on campus and through the Distance Degree Program to a large number of students. Marshall has just moved his office into Daggy Hall to join us in our Pullman facility.

In 2004, there was an increase of approximately 10% in the proportion of SHS undergraduate majors who achieved academic distinction compared to 2003. Achieving distinction included being named to the President's Honor Roll and being nominated for membership in Mortar Board, Golden Key, and Phi Eta Sigma honor societies. In addition, one SHS undergraduate student, **Megan Rubie**, participated as an officer in ASWSU. These numbers speak to the high quality of undergraduate students we have recruited and retained. This will positively impact the proportion of undergraduates who are eligible for graduate school.

In 2004, 9 out of 10 students, or 90%, passed the PRAXIS exam, compared to a national pass rate of 82%. Of the nine who passed, eight scored higher than the national average.

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Notes from NSSLHA

By Carly Knoll

The Washington State University National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association (WSU-NSSLHA) officers **Carly Knoll** (president), **Maurita Birkland** (vice president), **Carey Olson** (secretary), **Abby Sudbery** (treasurer), **Marta Plazola** (public relations), and **Jessica Lorimer** (junior liaison), had big plans for NSSLHA during the 2004–2005 school year. The goal was to create a more involved local NSSLHA chapter focusing on five main areas: education, publicity, community service, recruitment, and social activities. Because the response from students was so positive, the goals have been accomplished. We hope that this precedent will carry on and continue to improve with years to come. The following is a summary of the year's events:

Publicity/Recruitment

WSU-NSSLHA became a registered student organization with the university for the first time this year! Now the group is recognized as an official student group and can receive numerous benefits from Campus Involvement. Several members represented the Speech and Hearing Sciences department at Future Cougar Day, the Campus Involvement Fair, and Junior Preview Day. They spoke with future and current students about the department while at the same time raising awareness of speech, language, and hearing disorders and the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology. The NSSLHA members have no problem telling students about the greatness of the SHS department!

Community Service

Along with the recruitment events, several WSU-NSSLHA members participated in community service projects. In the fall, members raised nearly \$500 for Relay for Life and participated in the 24 hour relay to support the American Cancer Society. Members Carey Olsen, Abby Sudbery, **Joanna Yoder**, and **Lindsey Binford** represented the NSSLHA by volunteering as classroom aides at the Washington State University Children's Center. NSSLHA

also put together three food baskets to donate to families during the holiday season. If that wasn't enough, over 20 members participated in the NSSLHA "Pullman Clinic Clean Up" service project as a part of Cougar Pride Days.

Education

One of the most exciting things that happened this year was being awarded a Regional Project Grant from the national office of NSSLHA. The \$500 grant, cowritten by the officers, was used to fund the Spring NSSLHA Conference. This year's conference was a day long event held at the Washington State University/Eastern Washington University Riverpoint Campus in Spokane. The conference featured five expert speakers from the area.

Abby Sudbery, Maurita Birkland, and Carey Olson attended the American Speech-Language Hearing (ASHA) convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. **Keith Condict** and **Kevin Liebe** attend the American Academy of Audiology convention in Washington, D.C.

WSU-NSSLHA also featured three guest speakers this year. **Dr. Johnson** spoke in the fall about tips for applying to graduate school. **Mindy Espinosa** from the Moscow School District spoke to the group about her job as a school speech-language pathologist. Lastly, Maurita, Abby, and Carey shared their experiences with the group about their trip to the ASHA convention.

Because of the numerous fund-raising events that members participated in this year, we were able to give two Lynn B. Larrigan Scholarships for clinical excellence. The SHS faculty recognized Kevin Liebe in audiology and Maurita Birkland in speech-language pathology. They both received a certificate of achievement and their names are displayed on a plaque in the main office in Pullman. Excellent job!

Social

The NSSLHA sponsored a pumpkin carving social, bowling night, and a departmental holiday taco feast.

From Focus on Alumni, page 1

is that phonological awareness skills are often a focus of SLT therapy for school age students.

Standardized scores are not an essential part of our criteria for eligibility for services. We are able to use our professional judgement with greater latitude than what I had experienced in U.S. public schools. There is a lot of room to use informal measures because few standardized tests are normed on New Zealand children.

Cultural awareness is highly emphasized. Our office has three Maori cultural liaisons who help implement speech-language programs for Maori children. All of our meetings begin with an opening prayer and song in Maori and end with a closing prayer and song. The Min-

istry is also moving to increase cultural awareness and appropriate cultural practices toward Pacific Islander children. We recently had a two-day training on Pacific cultures.

Working and living in New Zealand has presented many challenges, from learning how to drive on the left to slowing my speech so people could understand my accent. It has definitely provided me with a greater perspective on my profession and the delivery of speech and language services. I am really glad that I made the choice to come here to work and would encourage others to consider working in another country for a period of time. It is definitely a learning experience!

Q&A Doctor's Corner



Jeff Nye

Send Us Your Questions!

If you have other questions or topics you would like to discuss, send them to the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at spehrsci@wsu.edu, or mail them to the department at PO Box 642420, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington 99164-2420.

Question: I have a family member who has hearing loss and is interested in pursuing hearing aids. What do I need to know about hearing aids and the various options available, including costs?

Answer: First off I will congratulate you on having a family member who is interested in doing something about their hearing loss, including being open to the option of amplification. According to most recent estimates over 28 million Americans have significant hearing loss and very few ever decide to pursue hearing aids, which in most cases can be beneficial.

The first step is to be evaluated by an audiologist. The evaluation will help determine the type and degree of the hearing loss, which will dictate the available options for rehabilitation of the hearing impaired individual. Testing should include evaluation of hearing sensitivity (listening for tones), middle ear evaluation, and speech understanding ability at various loudness levels. The majority of hearing losses that we see in our clinic are sensorineural hearing losses, also referred to as "nerve hearing loss." This type of hearing loss may be caused by several different factors, which may include exposure to loud noises for extended periods of time, family disposition, exposure to certain medications and chemotherapy agents, or the result of the aging process.

After the audiological evaluation is completed, the audiologist will be able to determine

the type of hearing loss and be able to direct your family member to the next step in the hearing rehabilitation process. In some cases the hearing loss may be the result of a medical problem—excess cerumen (earwax) or a disorder of the middle ear (fluid in the middle ear space or fusing of the bones in the middle ear). If the problem is the result of this type of disorder, the audiologist will refer the individual to an otolaryngologist (ENT) who may be able to medically or surgically eliminate or reduce the hearing loss. If the loss is a sensorineural loss, hearing aids may be recommended as the best remedy.

Hearing aids are medical devices that amplify sound. Unfortunately, hearing aids are not like eyeglasses—they do not return hearing to normal, but instead assist the hearing impaired individual in the communication situations where they experience difficulties. Hearing aids have vastly improved since they were first developed. Today the majority of the hearing aids are completely digital, which allow adjustments to be made more readily and satisfactorily for both the audiologist and the hearing impaired individual. There are several styles of hearing aids available for the hearing impaired. They fit behind the ear (BTE), in the ear (ITE), in the canal (canal), or completely in the canal (CIC). The degree and configuration of the hearing loss, as determined during the audiological evaluation, dictate the style of the hearing aid that is most appropriate.

There also are different levels of technology and options available with today's advanced hearing instruments. Two that we have found to be essential in the fitting of hearing aids are directional microphones, which help reduce (not eliminate) the presence of background noise in noisier situations, and a telecoil, which allows the hearing aid to function more effectively while using a telephone.

The cost of the hearing aid is variable and is directly related to the style of the hearing aid and the level of technology that your family member chooses in conjunction with the audiologist's recommendation.

For additional information or resources regarding hearing loss and hearing aids I suggest checking out some of the following Web sites:

www.audiology.org/consumer
www.asha.org/public/hearing
www.hearingloss.org



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