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June 2011



Iowa Department of Human Rights



Office of Deaf Services

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Coordinator for Iowa Lions Hearing Aid Bank

“On June 1st, the Iowa Lions Hearing Aid Bank will have a new Coordinator: Chris Waring of Jesup, Iowa. Long-time Coordinator Rhoda Bender, Marshalltown, is retiring - a second time! She took this position following her retirement from teaching school. Our thanks go to Rhoda for her 21 years as Coordinator on behalf of those who can't easily afford hearing aids. Welcome, Chris!

The Iowa Lions Club Foundation established the Hearing Aid Bank in 1982 for the purpose of recycling used hearing aids for individuals with financial need. The program is a joint venture by the Iowa Lions Foundation and the Iowa Association of Hearing Health Professionals. Used hearing aids are donated to the Hearing Aid Bank by private citizens, who may claim a tax deduction in kind with appropriate documentation. The Hearing Aid Bank evaluates each aid. If it can be used again, it is made available to a hearing aid dispenser to fit it to a qualifying patient. If the aid is not in good enough condition for re-use, parts may be recycled for further use.

You may donate a used hearing aid to your local Lions/Lioness Club – check your phone book or online if you don't know of a local group. To apply for fitting with a used hearing aid, you may also contact a local Club, or contact one of these state offices to start the application process:

Lions Clubs of Iowa State Office

www.iowalions.org

2300 South Duff, Ames IA 50010

515-232-2215

Iowa Association of Hearing Health Professionals

<http://iowahearingassociation.org>

1001 Office park Rd, #105, West Des Moines, IA 50265

515-440-6057”

INFORMATION

NATIONAL LEVEL NEWS

Hearing Loss Association of America ([HLAA](#)):
[Reintroduction of Hearing Aid Tax Credit](#)

National Association of the Deaf ([NAD](#)):

- [Matlin Shatters Barriers on Celebrity Apprentice](#)
- [Hand-Waves for Matlin In Celebrity Apprentice Finale](#)

STATE LEVEL NEWS

Office of Deaf Service's Contractual Interpreting Program Funding for FY2011 is gone. Since the budget for FY2012 has yet to be approved for state government we do not know if we will have funds available for the period of July 1, 2011—June 30, 2012. As soon as we know, if the budget comes through for FY2012, we'll let you know hopefully in the July's E-News.

<http://www.deafservices.iowa.gov/interpreting/contractual-interpreting-program.html>

SUBMITTING ARTICLES, NEWS, RECENT EVENTS, OR INFORMATION

The deadline for submission for the July issue is June 30th. Send e-mail submissions to the editor at dhr.dsci@iowa.gov

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ESSAY BY JUSTIN WITTRICK

Is the cochlear implant a miracle in the making, or is it a threat to the deaf culture? Who has a final say if a child can have it or not? Is deafness a unique cultural identity or a medical condition that must be fixed? Those questions have plagued both the hearing world and the deaf world for more than 20 years. When the cochlear implant was first introduced, its controversy wreaked havoc and made other contentious disagreements on deaf topics look like a spring picnic on a sunny day. Perhaps, that may be overstating it, but we cannot underestimate the firestorm this seemingly innocuous little technological invention has ignited. Should the cochlear implant have ever been invented in the first place? That is the ultimate question this essay will attempt to answer. I will present the pros and the cons based on my experience and my knowledge. The pros will start with my history of deafness.

It is unknown if I was born deaf, but what became clear was that my condition had not been diagnosed or became present until I was 1 ½ years old. I have worn hearing aids since then and learned American Sign Language and Signed Exact English as well as oral English. Interestingly, despite my severe-profound deafness, I preferred to speak rather than sign since I was able to hear well as long as I was wearing the hearing aids. However, my hearing progressively worsened over time. By the time I was in high school, it had become very difficult to understand what was spoken; even my speech skills were declining. That was when I decided that if I was to function and be successful in a dominantly hearing world, I should have a cochlear implant. I received it during July of 2004 in Rochester, Minnesota; at the time I was a sophomore going into my junior year of high school. I remember when the specialist turned on the cochlear implant processor for the first time, all I heard was some high-pitched warbling noises, which I didn't like at all! Nonetheless, when I continued wearing the processor, I began to notice that I was picking up several sounds that I had never heard before. Such sounds included the clicking of the car's turning signal, the ticking of a clock's second hand, the chirpings of several songbirds – the list goes on. Even the audio testing indicated that my ability to pick up words and phrases had markedly improved provided that I wear both my hearing aid and cochlear implant processor. Having a cochlear implant is a godsend; it has granted me immense access to the hearing world and a huge opportunity for me to take advantage of what it has to offer. I felt as though a burden had been lifted off my shoulders. I can use the phone to some extent, and I can talk to people without some fear of miscommunication. However, it is still not perfect; my hearing level through the processor is still not on par with that of the hearing people. I can still misunderstand what was being said, and I don't rely on the telephone and radio very often because of that. This is a constant, but good, reminder that I am still deaf even with help from this wonderful technology.

Even with all the potential positive results that go with the cochlear implant, sadly it may not work for everyone that is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Only those with a relatively severe hearing loss may qualify for it. Having a cochlear implant requires surgery, so obviously there are risks that go with it, such as tinnitus, dizziness, and changes in your senses of taste and smell. You can also become more vulnerable to meningitis, which can be a fatal disease; therefore, you are required to have a vaccination. The cochlear implant can be very, very expensive, and there are no guarantees that the health insurance may provide coverage for those seeking to have the cochlear implant. Even if you have successfully overcome these hurdles, there is still one more obstacle to conquer: you have to retrain your brain to interpret and distinguish the sounds your processor receives into words and noises, and that may vary among individuals in terms of the amount of time it takes to effectively retrain their brain. It can range from a few months to even several years. Fortunately, my retraining lasted only a month or so, but I am not everyone else and everyone else is not me. There are some that may not like the experience at all and choose to abandon the cochlear implant processor despite going through the impediments to get it. There is one thing that we all stand to lose in the

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pursuit of obtaining the processor: any residual hearing that we may have will disappear altogether once we go through the surgery, and we will not be able to return to using our hearing aids, if we ever used it. In other words, we will become totally deaf, quite literally, if the procedure fails. If you have completed your mental retraining, you may run across some unpleasant noises like metallic screeching of a rusty cart and, yes, someone giving out a pointless, droning monologue, which by then you would have wished that the gift of sound had been taken away from you. However, I consider them nothing more than some minor inconveniences. Interestingly enough, the biggest stink about the cochlear implant has little to do with the cons already stated above and more to do with the deaf identity. Some have felt that if you, as a deaf individual, accepted the cochlear implant, you have effectively abandoned your culture and chose to become a hearing person. It would be quite frightening to find yourself being treated as a traitor and an outcast to the deaf world, especially if you have been raised all your life in that world.

I would like to address this last con regarding deaf identity. I am not sure if this is the view that the majority of deaf people share, but I feel that it is just flat wrong. Firstly, I believe in the right of individuality, the people's right to live however they want to live their life, provided that it is within the law. It is not up to us to decide if a person should have a cochlear implant or not; it is this person's business and not ours. I can't help but recall that we live in the United States where our constitution demands that we uphold a democracy for all. If we cannot grant others the right to decide or choose for themselves, then what are we? Tyrants? Dictators? Secondly, some of us deaf people are curious about what the hearing people are actually experiencing. What do sounds sound like? Maybe the biggest curiosity might actually be this: what does music sounds like? Are the notes sweet like honey on bread, or are they harsh like wasabi on sushi? Pardon my figure of speech, but you may sometimes have to use some kind of a comparison to describe the experience of sounds to those that may never hear or have never heard before. Even for those who take the gift of sound for granted, it would be incredibly difficult to explain what sound sounds like; it would probably be easier to let the deaf people experience it for themselves. Thirdly, I take offense to those that say that those who wear the cochlear implant processor are not deaf. Some may not realize it, but if you take the processor off, what do you hear now? Nothing! So, how are we not deaf if we cannot hear a thing without the aid of a processor? It is like declaring that a yellow apple is not an apple because it is not red. Moreover, the processor does not fix our hearing; it only aids our ability to "hear" to some extent. Additionally, some may choose not to speak and continue to use sign language as a means to communicate. Some don't even necessarily "abandon" their deaf identity and culture; they just opt to experience what the hearing world has to offer at the same time. For example, why would I be viewed as abandoning my deaf identity if I have attend a deaf camp twice, first as a camper and second as a counselor? Some of my statements may seem to be common sense and quite logical, but you can be quite shocked at how some do not share that sentiment.

I hope this essay has cleared up some debates about the cochlear implant. As you may have noticed, this essay appears to be largely a spiritual argument rather than a scientific argument; that would be because the controversies are more about the deaf identity, thus the spirituality of one's identity, instead of the pros and cons of having a cochlear implant. Nevertheless, I believe that the pros and cons must still be addressed. Even when I'm wearing a cochlear implant processor, I still can't hear 100% and still rely on closed captioning when watching TV or movies. If I turn off the processor, I certainly cannot hear a thing and would have to resort to ASL or SEE to know what was being said. That is why I consider myself deaf, but not only am I deaf; I am proud to be deaf.

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That's what I'm talking about



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May 21, 2011

web site: www.hamiltonrelay.com
e-mail: info@hamiltonrelay.com

Suzy Mannella selected for Hamilton Relay 2011 Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award for the State of Iowa.

Suzy Mannella has been selected as the recipient of this year's Hamilton Relay Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award for her efforts in advocacy and dedication to individuals with hearing loss. She is an extraordinary individual who plays a big part in bridging the gap between the deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing communities in Iowa.

Currently, Suzy serves as the Executive Officer for the Deaf Services Commission of Iowa (DSCI). She has gained tremendous experience in speaking and responding to the needs of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and makes it her priority to increase awareness of hearing loss and available assistive technologies. Suzy is responsible for working with Legislators within the state and navigating the procedures necessary to help pass important bills that pertain to individuals with hearing loss. She has been a consultant of DSCI for over 10 years where her leadership and commitment to projects and trainings is well recognized. Suzy is also heavily involved in coordinating the annual DSCI Junior Commission Program Leadership Camp for young students in Iowa who are hearing, deaf, or hard of hearing.

Suzy serves on several boards and advisory councils and makes herself available for giving presentations to various individuals and groups, including the Hearing Loss Association of Central Iowa and 911 Dispatch centers. Recently, she attended the Hearing Assistance Technology (HAT) program sponsored by the Hearing Loss Association of America and was able to bring back her experience to share with the local HLA chapter.

Suzy is a graduate of Gallaudet University in Washington, DC and has a major in Recreation and Leisure Studies: Leadership and Programming. Her previous work experience includes well rounded knowledge and an understanding of working with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The ability to acquire new skills and share her expertise to benefit others is commendable and we are pleased to recognize Suzy Mannella for her positive contributions in the State of Iowa.

This leadership recognition has been brought to you by Hamilton Relay.

About Hamilton Relay

Hamilton Relay offers a variety of services including Traditional Relay Services, Captioned Telephone and Internet Relay services. Hamilton provides Traditional Relay and/or Captioned Telephone services to 18 states, the District of Columbia, the Island of Saipan and the Virgin Islands. More information is available at www.hamiltonrelay.com.



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INTERESTING INFORMATION

Want to improve
reading fingerspelling?
Try a Fingerspelling Quiz

Practice reading



fingerspelled words;
allows users to adjust speed.

<http://asl.ms/>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



7/01: 6:00 pm: American Sign Language Social hosted by Deaf Awareness and DMACC located at [ALL-Play](#), Des Moines.

7/09: 10:00 am: 80th Anniversary Celebration Picnic hosted by **Mascia Club** located at North Iowa Fairground, Eisenhower Ave. 4-H Bldg., 3700—4th St. SW., Mason City, IA. Lunch will be serviced between noon—1 p.m. Click here to see [flyer with more information](#).

7/09: 10:30 am: 22nd Annual Fairfield Deaf Picnic hosted by **Douglas Millhouse** located at Jefferson County Park, Fairfield, IA Click here to see [flyer with more information](#).

7/09: 7:00 pm: Families & Friends Community Night—Cedar Rapids Kernels Baseball at Veterans Memorial Stadium. Purchase tickets at CSD/DIAA Office, 4403—1st Ave, SE, Suite 302, Cedar Rapids.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



6/03: 6:00 pm: American Sign Language Social hosted by Deaf Awareness and DMACC located at [ALL-Play](#), Des Moines.

6/25: 10:00 am: Iowa Association of the Deaf (IAD) 53rd Annual Picnic located at Riverview Park, "Reunion Hall", 402 Woodland Ave., Marshalltown. Eat at Noon: bring your favorite side dish, chips or baked goods. IAD will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks. Admission: \$6 per person, \$10 per couple, and \$15 per family. More information: dmiksell@q.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

October 6—9: Deaf Women in the Heartland Conference located at Wesley Woods, Indianola, IA. Click here to get [registration form](#) or go to Iowa Association of the Deaf's website: <http://iowadeaf.com/>

For more details on these events, see our events webpage: <http://www.deafservices.iowa.gov/events/index.html>

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