

THE VOICE



Learn, laugh, play & grow!

Housekeeping

1. March Break, no school: March 14th-18th
2. Break Day, no school: Monday, March 21st
3. Spirt Day: Wednesday, March 30th



A Message From Our Executive Director

Dear Family, Friends, and Staff,

Here we are in March, with warmer weather just around the corner and Spring Break just a couple of weeks away. It feels like this year is flying by too quickly.

So much of the world seems to be filled with violence and negativity, and so many are struggling. It can be hard to be positive and see the good things around us. We hope you are able to share love and goodwill with those close to you and that your friends and family are all safe.

With the recent easing of COVID-19 restrictions, we are optimistic that things may soon return to normal. However, we must remain vigilant and continue to follow Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education guidelines to ensure the safety of our staff, students, and community.

Unfortunately, last month we had a number of staff members absent due to illness, and it placed significant strain on our centre's resources. We want to ensure we are providing the best services and programming we can. We continue to ask for your cooperation in keeping our centre safe by following the [procedures](#) we have in place.

As restrictions ease we are hopeful that we will be able to have families back in the building. We are planning some fun events and activities, so stay tuned for more details. If you would like to lend a hand and join our Events Committee, we would very much appreciate your help. For more information please contact our Marketing & Development Officer at ecohen@childrenshearing.ca

We are truly grateful for your support and look forward to seeing you all in person in the months to come.

Yours Sincerely,



Dawn McKenna
Executive Director



From Our Itinerant Program

Last month the 2022 Global Disability Youth Summit (GDYS) took place in Oslo Norway. The Summit was co-hosted by the International Disability Alliance, UNICEF, and the Atlas Alliance represented by youth Mental Health Norway. Part of the larger Global Disability Summit (GDS), the GDYS brings together youth leaders and innovators from all over the globe to shed light on a range of topics and issues affecting youth with disabilities.



This year Élise, one of our very own students in our itinerant program, spoke at the conference as part of the Perspective of Youth with Disabilities in Education Panel, hosted by the Rick Hansen Foundation. The panel of six were posed questions and given the opportunity to answer them through their own lens.

Élise candidly spoke about some of the micro aggressions she has experienced in the classroom by teachers, students, and parent volunteers over the course of her education. Some teachers she has encountered have associated her intelligence with her hearing loss. For example, some teachers did not know why she needed certain accommodations in the classroom (i.e. closed captioning, or a teacher wearing a mic) because she was clearly smart and articulate.

Deafness and being smart, or just of average intelligence in school, they're seen as these mutually incompatible concepts. If I'm deaf I'm patronized and baby talked to, which has happened an uncomfortable number of times. Like baby facial expressions and everything. And if I'm smart I can't really be deaf and I don't need an accessible classroom according to them. And this has made it extremely frustrating to deal with the education system for the last however many years... (Élise)

During our discussion, she recounted an experience in her elementary days where a parent volunteer came to her class and organized a game of hide and seek. Élise told the parent that she may have difficulty hearing them call her name due to her hearing loss. While trying to find her during the game, they were yelling out her name, but naturally Élise couldn't hear them and when the volunteer finally found her, she was really irate and thought she was faking.

It is these types of micro aggressions that cumulatively can wear a person down. She has had educators question why in some instances (i.e. face to face) she can carry on a conversation and hear with minimal complications, but when the person is speaking from behind, she has a hard time hearing.

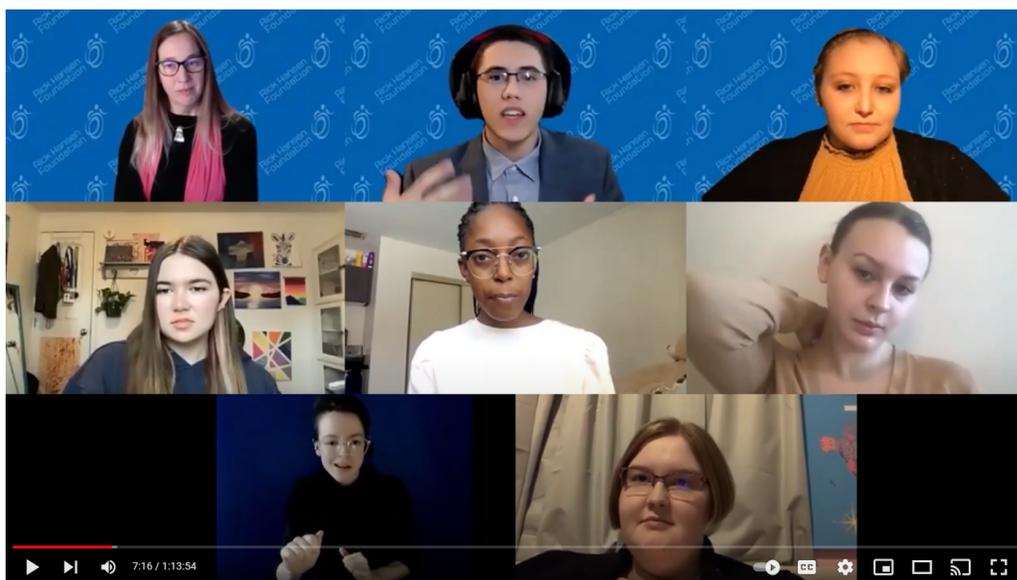


From Our Itinerant Program continued...

Despite some of her experiences, Élise is optimistic about the possibility for change within the classroom, but she does feel that it will take a concerted effort, particularly on the part of teachers as they are a student's primary point of contact within the education system. She suggests that teachers continuously educate themselves and points out that there is a lot of different sources of information out there, such as blogs, where teachers can learn about how to accommodate students with disabilities.

Another way to bring about system change, as exemplified through Élise's actions, is advocacy. In addition to her participation at the GDYS, Élise has recently become a Youth Ambassador for the Rick Hansen Foundation. Youth Ambassadors engage with schools and organizations across Canada. Schools can request a presentation (at no cost) by a Youth Ambassador and the representative will provide a presentation discussing their experience as a person with a disability. It is a great way to educate the public about the issues, needs, and perspectives of persons with disabilities. So far, Élise has had one speaking engagement and despite some technical difficulties it was a great success. She is looking forward to doing more of them in the future.

Now in her final year of high school, Élise is starting the daunting task of applying to colleges. She has her sights set on a two year Registered Massage Therapy program, followed by a Bachelor's of Health Science degree, and eventually she would like to study Veterinary Medicine so she can become a Veterinarian with her own practice. If you would like to view the Perspective of Youth with Disabilities in Education Panel you can watch the entire discussion on the [Rick Hansen Foundation's YouTube channel](#). We wish Élise all the best in her future endeavors!



From Our Wolf Class

Olympic Fun!

The Wolf class was busy learning about some winter events that took place at the Winter Olympics in Beijing from February 4th to the 20th. In gym they simulated skating, sledding, curling, skiing and hockey. On an individual basis and as a group they graphed the medal count for events. Canada won 4 gold, 8 silver and 14 bronze for a total of 26 medals. The class also enjoyed having the opportunity to try on some medals.



A Visit from Arts Umbrella

On Friday, Feb. 25th the primary class was fortunate to participate in a virtual field trip run by Arts Umbrella. Through storytelling, drawing and performance we explored Maurice Sendak's book "Where The Wild Things Are". The students learned how to create their very own unique "wild thing" and worked collaboratively to create a large-scale art piece for their classroom (the setting for their characters).

