

# “From Caterpillars to Butterflies”

2011 Annual Professional and Family Conferences  
for professionals who work with, and families of  
children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## FEATURED PRESENTERS



### **Rachel Coleman, Signing Time!**

Emmy nominated Rachel Coleman is the co-creator of Signing Time!, which teaches ASL vocabulary to children of ALL abilities in a fun and engaging way. She has a unique perspective on parenting children with special needs. Rachel is the mother of Leah, who was born deaf, and Lucy, who has Spina Bifida and Cerebral Palsy. Rachel learned from her two daughters the power of using American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate and is committed to building a world where communication is available for everyone. This was the motivation behind Signing Time!. Rachel is also the president of the Signing Time! Foundation which is dedicated to making sign language fun and accessible to all children and creating a world in which all children can express themselves and be understood. For more information about Signing Time!, Please visit [www.signingtime.com](http://www.signingtime.com).



### **Cindy Farnham, M.A., Master Mentor, RID Certified**

Cindy is a freelance interpreter, mentor and trainer. Cindy has a variety of interpreting certifications and assessments including RID CI & CT, NAD, EIPA and ESSE. She completed the first cohort of the Master Mentor Program in 2002 and received her Master's Degree in Education in May 2010. Cindy works as a mentor for interpreters pursuing certification and also serves as a consultant to organizations developing mentoring programs. She is an adjunct professor in the Interpreter Preparation Program at American River College in Sacramento.

Cindy travels the country teaching workshops on interpreting and mentoring. She recently served eight years on the board of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers.

### **Michelle Koplitz, Miss Deaf USA**

Michelle was born deaf in Eau Claire, Wisconsin to Rodney and Dawn Koplitz. She has two younger siblings who are also deaf. Michelle was mainstreamed in the school district of Eau Claire, using a sign language interpreter and audiology services. Upon graduation from high school, Michelle attended Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) for her undergraduate studies. At RIT, Michelle led an active life within the Deaf community by joining the NTID Student Congress, travelling to England and Thailand, participating in the RIT/Gallaudet Sports weekends and meeting the friends she still has today. She graduated in 2008 with a B.S. in Biotechnology and a Minor in Psychology and decided to pursue a career in Public Health. Michelle attended Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health for a Master's Degree in Health Sciences: Health Education and Health Communications. She has an interest in working on national (and eventually, international) health initiatives for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. Michelle ran for the Miss Deaf USA Pageant last spring and won. Since then, she has earned her certification to teach Hatha Yoga. Michelle also started her first job with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in the Bureau of Health Professions, at the Health Resources and Services Administration division in Rockville, Maryland.



Photo by Matthew Vita

## Workshop Presenter Biographies

### Mary Chialastri

#### Delivery Redesign for Birth to 6 D/HH/DB in the Western Region

Mary Chialastri is the Program Coordinator and Early Childhood Special Educator for the Douglas County Birth to Three Program in Superior, WI. Mary is also a certified Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and has provided itinerant Deaf and Hard of Hearing services for children, ages birth through high school, in rural northern Wisconsin. She continues to serve in the capacity of Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing for children identified with hearing loss in the Douglas County Birth to 3 Program. Mary is currently participating on the Western Region Redesign Pilot team.

### Kristin Di Perri

#### Through Deaf Eyes

Dr. Kristin Di Perri is an independent educational and literacy specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and their families. For the past 25 years she has been a Teacher of the Deaf, an Instructor in the Master's Program in Deaf Education at Boston University and the English Literacy Coordinator at the Scranton State School for the Deaf in Pennsylvania. She is the author of five workbooks published by Butte Publications relating to the development of deaf/hard of hearing students' literacy through the use of a visually based approach. She has provided presentations and workshops throughout the U.S. and abroad. She is a consultant for several school districts and programs. Currently she is also working on the development of more materials for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, as well as their families.

### Alyson Eith

#### Language and Literacy in the Secondary Setting

Alyson Eith is a speech/language clinician at Sennett Middle School and LaFollette High School in Madison, Wisconsin. Her clinical specialties and areas of interests are in assistive technology and providing services for students diagnosed as Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

### Leslie Eldred

#### Transition: From High School to Post-Secondary Schools with Resources available for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Leslie Eldred is a guidance counselor at Wisconsin School for the Deaf (WSD). She works with transition staff in providing assessments, as well as implementing college and work goals for students. These include scholarships and support from various agencies. Leslie is also the mother of three daughters, two of whom are Deaf and attend WSD. Leslie graduated from Gallaudet University in 1997 and is currently a graduate student, majoring in School Counseling in the Counselor Education program at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

### Jovita Gandolfo

#### Language and Literacy in the Secondary Setting

Jovita Gandolfo has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Communicative Disorders and a Master's of Science degree in Speech and Language Pathology from the UW-Madison. After working as a Speech/Language clinician for several years in the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), with a focus on Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, she returned to school to pursue certification in Deaf Education and Cross Categorical Education. Jovita has worked with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, ages 3-21, in a variety of capacities and service delivery models within the MMSD. She is currently employed as a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at LaFollette High School. Her professional

interests include language development and use during adolescence, and inclusive practices. Her personal interests include a passion for endurance sports. She is currently training for Ironman Wisconsin 2011.

### **Amber Havers**

#### **“Down the Rabbit Hole”: Discovering Writing thru Digital Storytelling!**

Amber Havers has been a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Wisconsin School for the Deaf for ten years. She also has one year of previous teaching experience in a self-contained Deaf and Hard of Hearing classroom at the kindergarten through second grade level in the public school setting. Amber completed her Master’s degree in Special Education: Deaf and Hard of Hearing from Lewis & Clark College and her Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Gallaudet University.

### **Julie Holma**

#### **Real-Life Skills for Real-Life Success**

Julie graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1997 with her Bachelor's degree in Special Education, with a focus in Interpreting for the Deaf. She worked in a wide variety of educational settings as an Educational Interpreter, including birth through post-secondary settings. In 2003, she returned to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and obtained her post-baccalaureate in Teaching for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Learning Disabilities. Since 2005, she has been working at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf in Delavan, WI. She currently works as a high school teacher building students' transition skills and is the coach for the Sign Song Dancers. The Sign Song Dancers are a Deaf and Hard of Hearing performance group that travels throughout the state, performing dance and signs to popular music, while teaching hearing and deaf audiences about Deaf culture, hearing loss, and the Wisconsin School for the Deaf.

### **Stefanie Kessen**

#### **Using Evaluation to Inform: The Development of the IEP**

Stefanie Kessen holds a degree from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, in Deaf Education, Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Before becoming part of the WESP-DHH Outreach team as the Educational/Diagnostic Consultant, she taught for more than ten years in the classroom, working with children ages three through college. She has worked in bi-lingual/bi-cultural, total communication and oral settings. Stefanie’s experience includes working at the Indiana School for the Deaf, as well as teaching Deaf and Hard of Hearing students overseas. She has also been a classroom teacher in Michigan and Wisconsin. As a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Stefanie has provided in-services and consultation to teachers and parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

### **Karen Knopf**

#### **Auditory Learning**

Karen Knopf is a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for the School District of Waukesha. She graduated from Truman State University with a major in Communication Disorders. She moved out West to obtain a Master’s degree in Deaf Education from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She has taught preschool through middle school, using auditory/oral methods and total communication, depending upon the needs of the current classroom. In the summer of 2004, she was able to attend an intensive training program for Educational Consultants at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She currently serves as the Educational Consultant for the Koss Cochlear Implant team. Karen's true love and passion is literature - of all kinds. She loves to teach preschool literature all the way up to critical

thinking and schema development with the older child. Her love of books flows over into her family of three children, ages one, four and twelve, who all have passion for reading as well.

### **Katina Koch**

#### **Real-Life Skills for Real-Life Success**

Katina has been a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the School District of Waukesha for more than seven years, and as a teacher of the DHH in other settings for four years prior to that. She has a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, a post-baccalaureate degree in Deaf Education from UW-Milwaukee, and a Master's degree in Education from Alverno College. In addition, she holds a license to teach students with learning disabilities. Katina has taught Deaf and Hard of Hearing students from ages 3 to 19, with and without additional disabilities such as learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities, and vision loss. Katina has had experiences in classrooms with students using ASL, total communication, and auditory-oral communication in self-contained, mainstream, and itinerate settings. Katina is also a parent of a three-year-old daughter and a six-year-old son who both love to travel almost as much as she and her husband do.

### **Katie Kroll**

#### **Delivery Redesign for Birth to 6 D/HH/DB in the Western Region**

Katie Kroll is the Coordinator for the Western Region Redesign Pilot. Katie supports 22 dedicated and talented individuals who have come together as an early response team with the encouragement of their managers to help create a network of service providers who understand the unique needs of our youngest children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Deafblind. The team includes: Birth to 3 providers; Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; an Audiologist; a Deaf Mentor; Parent Guides; a Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired; and a Speech-language Pathologist. All of these dedicated individuals are committed to working collaboratively and beyond their agency boundaries, when necessary, to provide quality services where and when they are needed. Katie has worked as a Regular Education and Special Education Teacher and as the manager of publications and training for Cray Research. She is also the proud parent of three differently-abled adult children.

### **Mary H. Schultz**

#### **Writing - Maximum Input / Maximum Output**

Mary Schultz has worked in residential schools, self contained classrooms, and in itinerant programs in North Dakota, Maine, Connecticut, and Minnesota. She has served Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in parent / infant, elementary, and secondary programs. Her students have been from many different cultures and backgrounds, with a wide variety of cognitive and physical challenges including transition and college preparation programs. In addition to working with students in public schools, she serves as an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Minnesota working with graduate students who are studying reading and writing practices with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Her primary focus and passion is reading and writing as a life long focus for pleasure, general information, and academic purposes.

### **Carol Schweitzer**

#### **Effective Itinerant Teaching and the Wisconsin Model**

#### **Where are we going with this? Processing and Conveying Intent in K-12 Settings; Skillbuilding Session**

Carol Schweitzer began her career in Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in 1977 as an Itinerant Teacher in Kenosha schools. Most of her teaching experience was with high school and junior

high school age students. While teaching at Wisconsin School for the Deaf, she taught students from fourth grade through high school, who were deaf or hard of hearing and had additional disabilities. Carol received her CSC (Comprehensive Skills Certification) from RID in 1979. She worked in the Milwaukee area for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in a variety of roles including: Community interpreter; Instructor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Milwaukee Area Technical College in the ASL and Interpreting programs; and supporting transition needs for housing, work, and community supports at an Independent Living Center. Carol now works at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as the Consultant for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs.

### **Hayleigh Scott**

#### **From Challenges to Charms: Kids Proud of Their Hearing Aids**

As the 2010 Oticon Focus on People Award winner, eleven year old Hayleigh Scott is determined to inspire others and eliminate negative stereotypes about hearing loss. Her parents attempted to hide her hearing aids but at age five, she boldly stated "I want them to stand out and shine!" From her ideas, she created patented hearing aid charms and her feel good website:

<http://www.hayleighscherishedcharms.com/>.

### **Jill Severson**

#### **Delivery Redesign for Birth to 6 D/HH/DB in the Western Region**

Jill Severson is an itinerant Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at CESA 4. She provides both direct instructional services and consultation services to students from early childhood through high school. She holds a Master's of Science degree in Exceptional Education from UW-Milwaukee and completed her undergraduate degree at UW-Stout. She is currently a participant in the Professional Preparation in Cochlear Implants training program through the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Jill has worked as an Educational Interpreter at CESA 4, a Case Manager and a pre-vocational trainer in human service agencies, and as Assistant Director of the McBurney Disability Resource Center at UW-Madison. She has also served as a district Parent Liaison for special education services in her resident school district in CESA 10. Jill currently serves as a member of the B-6 Western Region D/HH/DB Redesign Pilot team. She and her husband are the parents of six children, one of whom receives special education services.

### **Millie Smith**

#### **Effective Strategies for Working with Children with Multiple Disabilities – with or without Deafblindness**

Millie Smith is a retired Teacher for the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. She subsequently worked as a Consultant for the Texas Deafblind Project as a Deafblind Specialist. She has numerous published articles. She authored Teaching Students with Visual and Multiple Impairments A Resource Guide (Second Edition) and the Sensory Learning Kit. Millie has extensive background providing direct services to children with multiple disabilities including deafblindness. Her primary focus has been with children, developmentally aged birth through six. Even in retirement, she continues to present this topic for service providers and families across the country.

### **Pam Stemper**

#### **Real-Life Skills for Real-Life Success**

Pam Stemper is primarily a wife and mother living with her family in Waukesha, Wisconsin. She is also a college student, completing a degree in Professional Communication. Her children are Colin (23),

Jordan (20) and Rachel (14.) Jordan and Rachel were born deaf and have unilateral cochlear implants. Sharing her parenting experiences through writing and public speaking is something Pam has done throughout the years and has recently begun to do more formally. Her latest article, "We Finish Only to Begin" will be published in an upcoming issue of *Hearing Loss Magazine*. She is currently writing a book about the challenges and rewards of raising both hearing and deaf children.

### **Kathy Sterwerf-Jackson**

#### **"Down the Rabbit Hole": Discovering Writing thru Digital Storytelling!**

Kathy Sterwerf-Jackson is the current Literacy Specialist at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf. She has been serving the field of Deaf Education for fifteen years as a classroom teacher and as a Literacy Leader. Kathy completed her Master's degree in Language and Literacy Leadership from Cardinal Stritch University in 2007 (magna cum laude) and her Bachelor's of Science degree from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. In 2006, Kathy's service to Deaf Education was recognized by Who's Who in America's Teachers, the Who's Who for Women in Business and Education Leadership, and the Cambridge Masters Teachers Corporation.

### **Ruth Stuhr**

#### **Love, Language, and Lullabies**

Ruth has been with Center for Communication; Hearing and Deafness (CCHD) since 2003, and received her Master's Degree in Exceptional Education, specializing in Deaf Education, from UW-Milwaukee. At CCHD, she provides service coordination and parent education in home settings. As a certified Kindermusik Educator, Ruth coordinates musical activities for the toddler communication groups at CCHD and has taught music classes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. She also provides support to the CCHD "Children of the Sun" Drum Program. Additionally, Ruth coordinates the Community Rehabilitation Program at CCHD, teaching independent living skills, literacy and communication skills in group classes, community placement or work environment settings to adults who are deaf or hard of hearing. She is also a certified Educational Interpreter. Prior to coming to CCHD, Ruth was a Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Kaukauna Area School District and Coordinator of the Independent Living Skills Program at Agape in Appleton.