



# connect.

CONNECTING VANCOUVER ISLAND & THE GULF ISLANDS

**We hope you are all staying healthy and continuing to do your part in physical distancing yourself to continue to help BC flatten the curve.**

Our offices are re-opening and we are seeing clients by appointments. To help manage the flow and maximum capacity in each of our centres, all the staff are working part-time in the office and part-time remote from home. What ever day or work schedule they are always ready and happy to connect with you via phone, email, or face-to-face online (Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime). Please read our “Re-opening” document effective June 1st so you are aware of the guidelines for any in-person appointments.

**[www.idhhc.ca/reopening](http://www.idhhc.ca/reopening)**

If you have any questions or need support during this time, please reach out to us.

**[www.idhhc.ca/howtoreachus](http://www.idhhc.ca/howtoreachus)**

All of us at IDHHC will continue to support the members of our community. We encourage you to reach out to us if you need support, or reach out to one another if you can provide support to someone else.

We are still here and will continue to do whatever we can, in any way we can, to support Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and hard of hearing individuals and families during this difficult time.





# INSIDE IDHHC

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OUR CENTRES



During the month of June, Canada Helps, an online fundraising platform, will be awarding \$20,000 to one non-profit organization. Every single dollar that is donated to IDHHC through Canada Helps equals one ballot in the draw. **\$1 = 1 ballot.** The more ballots we have, the better our chances of winning. Our goal for this fundraising campaign is to raise \$10,000 during the month of June to continue supporting individuals and breaking down communication barriers. This funding

helps us provide ASL classes for families, Speechreading courses, hearing rehabilitation for low-income individuals and produce more material in ASL so that it is available to all members of the community. Please check our online campaign (link below). Your support is greatly appreciated.

[www.idhhc.ca/gcgc](http://www.idhhc.ca/gcgc)

## IDHHC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**This year, our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held Wednesday, July 29 2020 at 6:00pm.**

Due to COVID-19 the AGM will be delivered virtually via Zoom. Nominations to the Board of Directors is available to active Members and the nomination process is now open. The deadline for nominations is June 24th. Please check link below for the nomination form.

[www.idhhc.ca/agm](http://www.idhhc.ca/agm)

AGM material and information on how to access via Zoom will be sent to current Membership by July 7th 2020, so be sure your Membership is up to date. Any questions please feel free to contact us!

**Time to renew your annual membership! Not a member? Join us!**

**Email [idhhc@idhhc.ca](mailto:idhhc@idhhc.ca) to sign up or renew!**

## WHY BE AN IDHHC MEMBER?

**We cannot do this without you.** Our members are a combination of clients, donors, volunteers, and supporters – a diverse mix of individuals that we rely on to help fulfill our mandate and provide valuable feedback. **Membership benefits include:**

- + Free or discounted program or services/workshops/events
- + Attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting and vote in elections
- + Be elected to the Board of Directors
- + Submit program and service ideas
- + Volunteer on internal committees or special ad hoc committees

*(Memberships are annual, January to December.)*

## IDHHC EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

Due to COVID-19 this year's Summer Celebration has been put on hold. We will continue to follow the directions of the Provincial Health Authority for decisions regarding safety for events and gatherings. We hope to host a Celebration gathering sometime in the fall.

Royal Bank (RBC)'s Shelbourne & McKenzie Branch is excited to offer two FREE Zoom workshops for IDHHC clients on Financial Topics to help us all learn more about the financial world.

### Credit & Budgeting

**David Russ**, Financial Planner, from RBC will talk about the importance of setting up a personal budget and how it can help improve your financial well-being. He will also discuss how to manage credit cards, how they impact your credit score, and how you can improve your credit score.

**JUNE 25, 5:30 - 7PM**

### Investments & Retirement

**Kerri Koster**, Investment and Retirement Planner, from RBC will talk about various ways to invest your money to help you prepare for retirement. She will discuss how your financial situation changes after you retire and how you can be prepared.

**JULY 8, 5:30 - 7PM**



Email us today to register!

[idhhc@idhhc.ca](mailto:idhhc@idhhc.ca)

*Zoom info will be sent via email.*

### Assistive Devices to Improve Hearing

Join us for a live Zoom Q&A with Ted Clegg from Assistive Listening Devices Systems (ALDS). IDHHC will be asking Ted to share with us the latest in amplifying telephones, alerting systems, alarm clocks, sound maskers, and other amplified listening products.

*Questions can be submitted by email or using the chat feature during the Zoom presentation.*

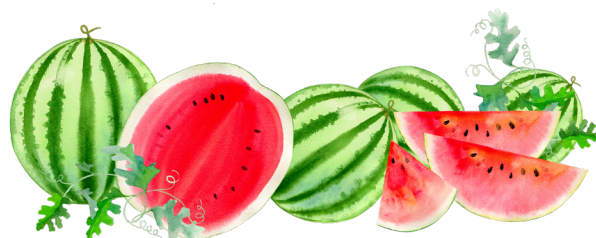
**JUNE 24, 2:30 - 3:30PM**



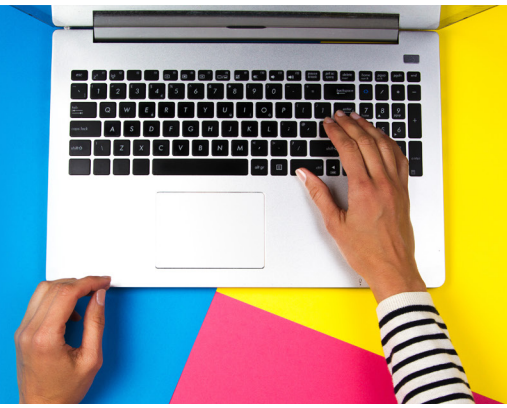
Email us today to register!

[idhhc@idhhc.ca](mailto:idhhc@idhhc.ca)

*Zoom info will be sent via email.*



# IDHHC's Family & Community Services is thrilled to offer online sessions for families with school-aged children and youth!



## Family ASL

Your family can request up to six ASL classes that address your family's unique communication needs.

## ASL for Parents

### Introduction to ASL Grammar, Part 1

Part 1 is 6 one-hour sessions that introduces parents to ASL grammar fundamentals. Classes will run on Tuesday and Thursdays at 11AM: starting July 14 and ending July 30.

**Group class; spaces are limited.**

## Parenting Workshops

*Presented by the Deaf Well Being Program (WBP)*

### Children's Growth & Development

Learn how to navigate with your child through opportunities and learning, presented by Kathryn Jones.

**JUNE 30, 3:30 - 5PM**

### Self Advocacy

Learn how self-advocacy can increase confidence in both parents and children, presented by Kristen Pranzl.

**JULY 28, 3:30 - 5PM**

WBP workshops are targeted for hearing, hard of hearing, and Deaf parents with children 12 years old and younger.

**Spaces are limited, so register soon!**

# ZOOM FUN!



### Magnet Memory Game

Learn new signs for different animals and objects. See if you can tell what was taken away from the sheet!

*RECOMMENDED AGES: 5 - 7*

**JUNE 24, 10AM**

### Create an Animal

Learn about animal groups, types of diet, etcetera. Learn what makes an animal and make up your own!

*RECOMMENDED AGES: 8 - 11*

**JUNE 25, 10AM**

### Guess the Emoji

You will see a series of emojis put together to convey a message and it's up to you all to figure them out!

*RECOMMENDED AGES: 12 - 13*

**JUNE 26, 11:30AM**

Spaces are limited. Parents must register for their children and be available at home for support if needed.

**Watch for end-of-July activities in our next newsletter!**

To register and for further information, please contact Alex Walker by  
EMAIL: [alex@idhhc.ca](mailto:alex@idhhc.ca) VOICE: 250-753-0999 TEXT: 250-668-4235





## WELCOMING NEW STAFF

Let's welcome our new team members!!! We are excited to tell you about three new staff that have joined our team since early in the New Year.



Joining us as Operations and Client Services Coordinator is **Grace Cantle**. Hailing from the chilly hills of Edmonton she moved to Victoria in search of sunshine, work and great biking adventures. Her experience in non-profit is extensive, with positions in program management for regional and provincial organizations. Public speaking, program evaluation and development, community engagement and administration process analysis and development are just some of her strengths she brings to this operation position with us. She is a self-proclaimed “geek” loving data and spreadsheets – and the rest of the staff are elated to have her skills and sunny disposition.

Also rounding out our Victoria office team is **Amanda Windle**, the Outreach and Client Services Coordinator who just started with us in late February. Amanda spent the last six years as the Patient Coordinator with an Audiology clinic and previously worked as a community support worker and early childhood educator. Amanda's role supports to the audiology clinic and the Sound of Change program, as well as oversee the growth of our tech aid program and (when we can get back out into the community again!!) she will be providing communication education and outreach activities. When not out hiking with her boxer Winston she is looking for a patio with some sunshine!



We are truly excited to announce that **Stephanie Renaas** has joined our Nanaimo team as Audiologist. Stephanie knows IDHHC well as she was a client in the Nanaimo employment program before heading off to UBC to earn her Masters Degree in Audiology. For the last 5 years she has been practicing audiology at a private clinic in Courtenay but in joining IDHHC she says “I feel like this is where I was always meant to be and I love working with this team and the work we do”. Her time away from the office is spent on a large piece of property with her husband and dogs (and soon to be horses too!)

We are thrilled to have these talented and dedicated professionals bring their amazing skill and expertise to our agency and we hope you get a chance to meet them (virtually or in person) soon.



# RESOURCES

TIPS & TOOLS TO USE DURING COVID-19

## ZOOM TIPS

**Accessibility Tips for a Better Zoom/Virtual Meeting Experience:** [www.deafhhtech.org/lerc/accessible-virtual-meeting-tips/](http://www.deafhhtech.org/lerc/accessible-virtual-meeting-tips/)

**ZOOM Resources:** [www.deafwellbeing.vch.ca/zoom/](http://www.deafwellbeing.vch.ca/zoom/)

## POCKETALKER

With all the recent changes due to COVID-19 and people wearing masks, communication can be that much more difficult without the ability to read someone’s lips and see their full facial expressions for cues that assist us in ‘hearing’ better. We have just the device for you.

The Pocketalker Ultra amplifies sounds closest to the listener while reducing background noise.

It features a lightweight, ergonomic design for portability and ease of use. Fingertip adjustable volume control allows you to quickly adjust to your listening environment - whether your hearing loss is low frequency or high frequency sounds. The listening accessories jack accommodates for a variety of earphone and headphone options.



The Pocketalker Ultra can be used with optional neck loop (NKL001) to amplify a telecoil-equipped hearing aid. It also comes complete with the EAR013 single ear bud and a HED021 headset for your listening pleasure.

Order the Pocketalker Ultra today through IDHHC and have it delivered right to your door!

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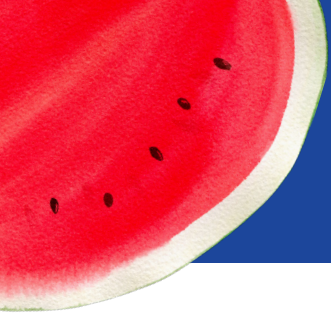
## VIDEO CHATTING FOR HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS

BY EDWARD STORZER, AUDIOLOGIST



Many of us will be feeling isolated as we stay home and practice physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. People who have hearing loss often deal with feelings of isolation already, and will be particularly vulnerable to experiencing anxiety, loneliness and depression if they feel disconnected from their family and friends. Talking on the phone can be very difficult for people with hearing loss, and it has been shown that using video-calling technologies can improve speech understanding by 23% for people with severe to profound hearing loss (Jepersen & Kirkwood, Hearing Review, 2015). So if you have hearing loss and have a computer or other device that allows video-calling through FaceTime or Skype or any other video-chat application, give it a whirl! Quality of sound can also be improved if you use headphones at the same time (for phones or tablets, you might need headphones that have a built-in microphone). For the more technically-minded of us out there, try to think of people in your family or community with hearing loss that you could help by talking them through the set up to use video-chat technology.

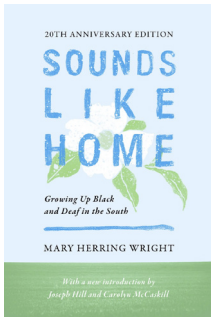
Let's work together to stay connected!



## #BLACKLIVESMATTER

### Resources for Action and Change

[www.convorelay.com/blm-resources](http://www.convorelay.com/blm-resources)



**Sounds Like Home** written by **Mary Herring Wright**: This book presents the perspective of an African American deaf woman who attended a segregated deaf school. Mary Herring Wright documents her life from the mid-1920s to the early 1940s, offering a rich

account of her home life in rural North Carolina and her education at the North Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind, which had a separate campus for African American students.

**Signing Black in America** is the first documentary about Black ASL: the unique dialect of American Sign Language (ASL) that developed within historically segregated African American Deaf

communities. Black ASL today conveys an identity and sense of belonging that mirrors spoken language varieties of the African American hearing community. Different uses of space, hand use, directional movement, and facial expression are ways that Black ASL distinguishes itself as a vibrant dialect of American Sign Language. DVD available summer 2020 and will be broadcasted on PBS fall 2020.

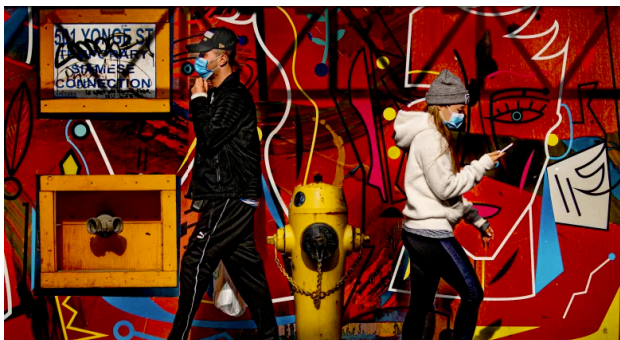
**National Black Deaf Advocates (NDBA)** is the leading advocacy organization for thousands of Black Deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States.

<https://www.facebook.com/NBDAdvocates>

**The Rosa Lee Show** weaves storytelling, comedy skits and music into a single web of American Sign Language celebration.

[www.facebook.com/rosaleeshow](http://www.facebook.com/rosaleeshow)

## 'INVISIBLE DISABILITY': MASKS MAKING IT HARDER TO COMMUNICATE, DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SAY



**BY FARRAH MERALI, CBC NEWS**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/masks-and-barriers-communicating-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-1.5579166>

Going to get groceries these days is the source

of anxiety for many people during the pandemic — the lineups, the narrow aisles, the touching of produce. But when you're hard of hearing or deaf, the task can be exponentially more difficult.

"The masks that everyone is wearing right now are quite the barrier," said Leah Riddell, community outreach director for the Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf.

Riddell, speaking through a sign language interpreter, said masks prevent people from being able to read lips or facial expressions.

"For those wearing masks, I'm not sure if they're talking to me or if they're talking to somebody



else. So there's a lot of assumptions. And if you ask somebody to repeat they can be very dismissive," said Riddell.

"We have to go out, we have to survive. We have to work. So there are a lot of members within the community that are quite anxious and quite concerned when they need to go out."



*Leah Riddell is the community outreach director for the Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf. The society works to advance the education and awareness of deaf culture.*

With more and more businesses opening their doors, and Canada's top health official now officially recommending the use of face coverings in public, the task of communicating has become increasingly difficult for some who are deaf or hard of hearing.

While options such as clear masks have emerged in some places, they are not widely available or worn, so people who are deaf or hard of hearing and are struggling to communicate now are asking for patience and understanding from the public.

### **Different levels of hearing**

The widespread use of masks has affected a range of people with different levels of hearing ability.

Craig Lund, a Toronto-based marketing head hunter, has been hard of hearing since he was three. He is deaf in his right ear, has about 30 per cent hearing in his left ear and wears a hearing aid.

"What the pandemic has shown is that I rely on reading lips a lot more than I realized," said Lund.

"Masks came along and all of a sudden I started to struggle a whole lot with understanding what was going on."

Lund described a few instances at the grocery store where he's been unable to understand what someone is saying.

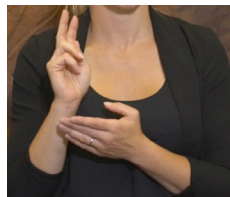
"There's a lot of anxiousness when people are having conversations — they want you to move along quickly. And people start to get irritated really quickly too," said Lund.



*Craig Lund, who uses a hearing aid, says since the pandemic started he's realized how much he relies on lipreading to understand people.*

For those who are deaf, masks present an additional challenge: about 70 per cent of American Sign Language (ASL), involves facial expressions and body movements, and only 30 per cent comes from hand signs, said Riddell.

"Facial expressions are quite critical in the language, and with the masks it's a barrier that prevents communication from happening because half the face is covered," she said.



*Seventy per cent of American Sign Language relies on the face and the body and only 30 per cent comes from hand shapes and signs, according to Leah Riddell.*

Until recently, the struggles have been at grocery stores.

"Now that things are starting to slowly reopen we're noticing it even more. There are more concerns, more anxiousness, about, 'Are they going to understand, are we going to be able to do this?'" said Riddell.

### **Masks plus physical distancing**

Another challenge is just how much masks muffle the sound of a voice.

"There have already been some studies to show that general surgical medical masks ... may reduce the way someone perceives sound by three to four decibels (DB)," said Rex Banks, an audiologist and director of hearing health care at Canadian Hearing Services, adding that can make someone's voice 25 to 30 per cent softer. Physical distancing makes the problem even worse.

“So you have the level of speech that’s decreased and then also when you put the distance in there — so trying to stand maybe six feet away from each other — who knows at this point how much of the sound is actually reaching the person,” he said.

Banks said there are a number of speech-to-text apps and other tools that he’s advising people to use during this time. Canadian Hearing Services has also been conducting a series of webinars that offer resources for people who are having challenges right now.

### Clear masks

In recent weeks, there’s been a popularization of clear masks intended to help those who are hard of hearing communicate.



Meredith Brookings, owner of Couture Alterations in Whitby, Ont, pivoted to manufacturing PPE after the pandemic was declared. She typically tailors wedding gowns or dresses for special occasions.

One of her products that’s seen a spike in demand: clear masks. It started with a request from the Canadian Helen Keller Centre.

“We put our heads together to come up with a design to help,” said Bookings, who has now been inundated with requests for clear masks.

“From New Brunswick to Windsor to up north and Peterborough. I even had a couple of requests from Kansas City and Texas down in the States.”

While clear masks offer some benefits, the problem is that it’s other people — not just those in the deaf community — that need to be wearing them for them to help those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Because of that, Riddell said right now many still prefer face shields because they’re more accessible. Some are even getting creative and making shields at home.

### Medical grade masks

Health Canada recently authorized the use of one type of mask with a clear mouth for medical use against COVID-19, manufactured by Clearmask LLC, a Baltimore company



It’s the first clear mask that’s been given the green light by the federal body during this pandemic, but it’s unclear how many health-care workers are wearing them in Canada.

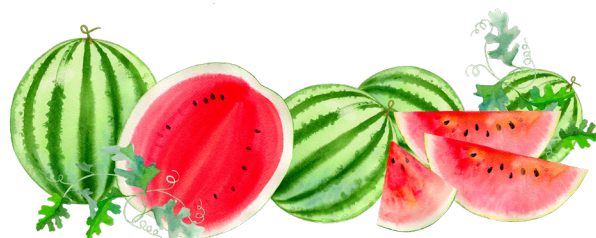
In the meantime, the deaf and hard of hearing community is asking for understanding from the public.

“A lot of times it’s an invisible disability,” said Lund.

“People don’t realize that there are other things going in other people’s lives. Everyone has various levels of stresses or abilities whether it’s mental health or hearing.”

Sometimes that means putting yourself in another person’s position before reacting, said Riddell.

“It’s just very important for mainstream society to understand you just need to have some patience with us to communicate.”





# THE FUNNIES

HAVE A LAUGH

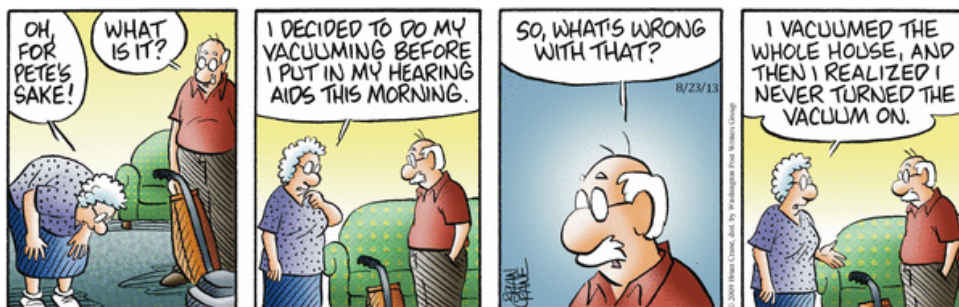
## THAT DEAF GUY

BY MATT & KAY DAIGLE



## PICKLES

BY BRIAN CRANE



when a video on social media asks you to turn the sound on and the captions have disappeared:

