

# SONIC

## MAGAZINE

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250-592-8144

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**NORM THOMPSON**



# From the Director of Operations

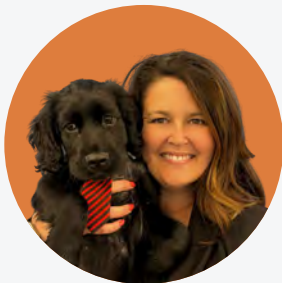
## WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN 2025 EDITION OF SONIC MAGAZINE

A warm welcome to everyone and thank you for taking the time to check out the latest Sonic Magazine. This edition is filled with updates, interesting features, industry insights, and a schedule of events and activities for this fall.

As the only non-profit doing this work, IDHHC has been supporting Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, as well as hearing individuals across Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and now throughout BC for the past 35 years. Our goal with this publication is to provide relevant information; invite you to take a class or attend a workshop; encourage you to access our services; support our initiatives and join us in building inclusive communities.

To stay up to date, please visit our website ([www.idhhc.ca](http://www.idhhc.ca)) to see all of the latest news and events as they unfold. Be sure to sign up for our monthly updates to stay connected and discover new ways to get involved.

Your feedback and engagement are not only welcome, but important to us. If you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas to share, please feel free to reach out [amanda@idhhc.ca](mailto:amanda@idhhc.ca) or 250.592.8144.



**Amanda Windle**  
Director of Operations

Island Deaf + Hard of Hearing Centre

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## IDHHC ACKNOWLEDGES:

Our offices are situated on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish, Nuuchahmuls, and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

We are grateful for their stewardship and preservation of the land where we live, work, and provide service to a diverse client base.

# Meet Our Newest Team Members

Our staff includes audiologists, interpreters, career development practitioners, speech-reading professionals and more. We work together to help bridge communication gaps, improve hearing health, and connect individuals with meaningful employment opportunities. As we grow our team to meet the needs for service we are excited to introduce these amazing talents to IDHHC:



**Neal Bafo**  
Audiologist

Dr. Neal Boafo joined our Hearing Health team in February 2025 as the Audiologist in our Nanaimo office. He was born in Ghana, did his Masters degree in Audiology at McGill University in Montreal and his Doctorate (Au.D) at Salus University in Pennsylvania.

Neal's past work includes Porcupine Health Unit in Timmins, West Park Rehabilitation Centre in Toronto and South Common Hearing Centre in Mississauga. Neal also spent time developing Audiology services in Ghana, playing a major role in developing an MSc Audiology program at the University of Ghana where he also taught for a few years.



**Alina Biehn**  
Booking Coordinator

Born Deaf and raised in Saskatchewan, Alina grew up using oral communication and Signed Exact English (SEE). Discovering ASL at age 14 was a turning point that deepened her passion and commitment to accessible communication.

With over 15 years' experience as a DeafBlind Support Worker, Alina brings a strong commitment to inclusion ensuring everyone feels connected. She connects with others through empathy, authenticity, and a dash of humor. Thriving in organized chaos, she brings energy, creativity, and heart to her work as a Booking Coordinator. Outside the office, Alina enjoys hot yoga, long walks with her dog, baking, and gardening.

## Be first to know!



Sign up for **monthly IDHHC updates** including new workshops, events and ASL classes. Visit: [idhhc.ca](https://idhhc.ca)



**Verica Bosnjak**  
Reception and Administration

Verica joined IDHHC in May 2025 as the welcoming reception and administration position in our Victoria office. She brings years of experience in customer service and administration to the position and is passionate about creating a friendly, and inclusive space for all who walk through the door.

As a multilingual speaker with a strong connection to her cultural roots, she enjoys helping clients feel comfortable and understood. Verica values community and communication and is proud to support the work at IDHHC. In her spare time, she enjoys nature walks, family time, and giving back in her community.



**Abigail Smiles**  
Audiologist

Dr. Abby Smiles earned their Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree from The Ohio State University in 2023. As part of their education, they completed a year-long externship at the Puget Sound VA in Seattle, WA and gained experience treating adults with complex communication and hearing needs.

Abby takes pride in offering a safe, neurodivergent-affirming environment in which each client's unique strengths and goals are included in their treatment plan. Outside of the clinic, Abby enjoys spending time with their husband and cat, playing the oboe and bassoon, and collecting cool rocks from around the island (ask them about Dallasite!).

# International Week of Sign Language

## NO HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT SIGN LANGUAGE RIGHTS

Each year, from September 22 to 28, the global Deaf community and allies observe the International Week of Sign Languages, also known as International Week of Deaf People. This year, 2025, carries the powerful theme: **“No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights.”** This unified focus underscores the vital role that sign languages play in securing the fundamental human rights of Deaf individuals worldwide.

### Daily Themes

#### 22 Sep: Deaf Communities Leading

Emphasizing leadership roles for Deaf-led groups in advancing sign language rights.

#### 23 Sep: No Human Rights Without Sign Language Rights

Highlighting the intrinsic connection between sign language access and fulfillment of universal human rights, per the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

#### 24 Sep: Multilingual Education for Deaf Learners

Advocating for inclusive, sign-language appropriate education under Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

#### 25 Sep: Deaf Rights in Crises

Stressing the necessity of accessible crisis communication and emergency planning in sign languages.

#### 26 Sep: Recognition of National Sign Languages

Calling for legal recognition of national sign languages in accordance with the UNCRPD Article 21.

#### 27 Sep: Sign Language Access Services

Emphasizing proper planning and budgeting for professional sign language interpreters at events to ensure effective and inclusive participation.

#### 28 Sep: Set the basis for the future

Celebrating innovation in our diverse intersectional global communities which consists of Deaf people from different backgrounds and life experiences. Envisioning an inspiring and innovative world where Deaf people everywhere can sign anywhere.



## Why it Matters

International Week of Sign Languages amplifies awareness and advocacy around crucial issues such as:

### Human rights and language justice

Sign languages are not optional, they are essential tools for communication, education, democratic participation, community involvement, and engagement in society. Without legal protection and recognition, Deaf individuals face systemic exclusion.

### Cultural identity and empowerment

Sign language is deeply woven into Deaf culture, from storytelling and art to shared community identity. Recognizing it reinforces pride and belonging.

### Educational equity

Early sign language based multilingual education supports cognitive development and academic success. The UNCRPD mandates accessible learning environments that honor sign language.

### Safety in emergencies

Ensuring Deaf individuals receive life-saving information in their first language during crisis is both a legal and moral imperative.

### Pathways for innovation

Deaf-led contributions—such as in technology, education, arts, and community planning—illustrate how centering Deaf voices accelerates inclusive innovation.

# How to Participate

**International Week of Sign Languages is more than a celebration – it's a call to action.** With this year's theme linking sign language rights directly to human rights, the Deaf community and allies are united in the push for equality. Through legal recognition, inclusive education, accessible services, and community-driven solutions, sign language becomes both a right and a revolution.

Below are four practical ways that we can stand together, because no one should have to choose between their rights and their words.

- 1 Learn and use sign language.**  
Register for one of our ASL courses at IDHHC. [www.idhhc.ca](http://www.idhhc.ca)
- 2 Support legal policies.**  
Lobby for government recognition of national sign languages, inclusive education, and emergency access systems
- 3 Celebrate Deaf culture.**  
Attend virtual or in person events such as film screenings, poetry showcases, and lectures to honor Deaf achievements and rich cultural traditions.
- 4 Amplify awareness.**  
Share content on social media or support blue light events. "Shine a Blue Light on Sign Languages," events are an initiative associated with the International Day of Sign Languages (IDSL) on September 23rd. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) encourages public places to illuminate their buildings in blue light to show support for sign languages and the global deaf community. This initiative aims to promote the use of sign languages and advocate for the human rights of deaf people.

## For over 30 years

**Island Deaf + Hard of Hearing Centre has been Vancouver Island's trusted source for hearing health**

- + Experience a full-service hearing clinic with registered Audiologists.
- + Access in house support services and workshops.
- + Choose from a range of hearing aids, assistive tech, and devices.



## Research Roundup

### WHAT IS THE LATEST NEWS

The Hearing Health Team at IDHHC brings you a brief synopsis of recent research findings relating to the hearing sciences:

#### Breakthrough Gene Therapy for Hearing Loss<sup>\*1</sup>

A study conducted by researchers at the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden with colleagues in China has shown that gene therapy can significantly restore hearing in children and adults with congenital deafness caused by mutations in the OTOF (otoferlin) gene. The therapy, which involves delivering (through a single injection) a copy of the OTOF gene to the inner ear using a modified virus, leads to rapid hearing improvements, with some patients experiencing noticeable changes within a month. Researchers plan to expand their efforts to treat deafness caused by other, more common genetic mutations.

\*1 "AAV gene therapy for autosomal recessive deafness 9: a single-arm trial", by Jieyu Qi, et al, July 2025, Nature Medicine

\*2 "Echoes in the night: How sleep quality influences auditory health", by Peng Zhang et al., April 2025, Neuroscience

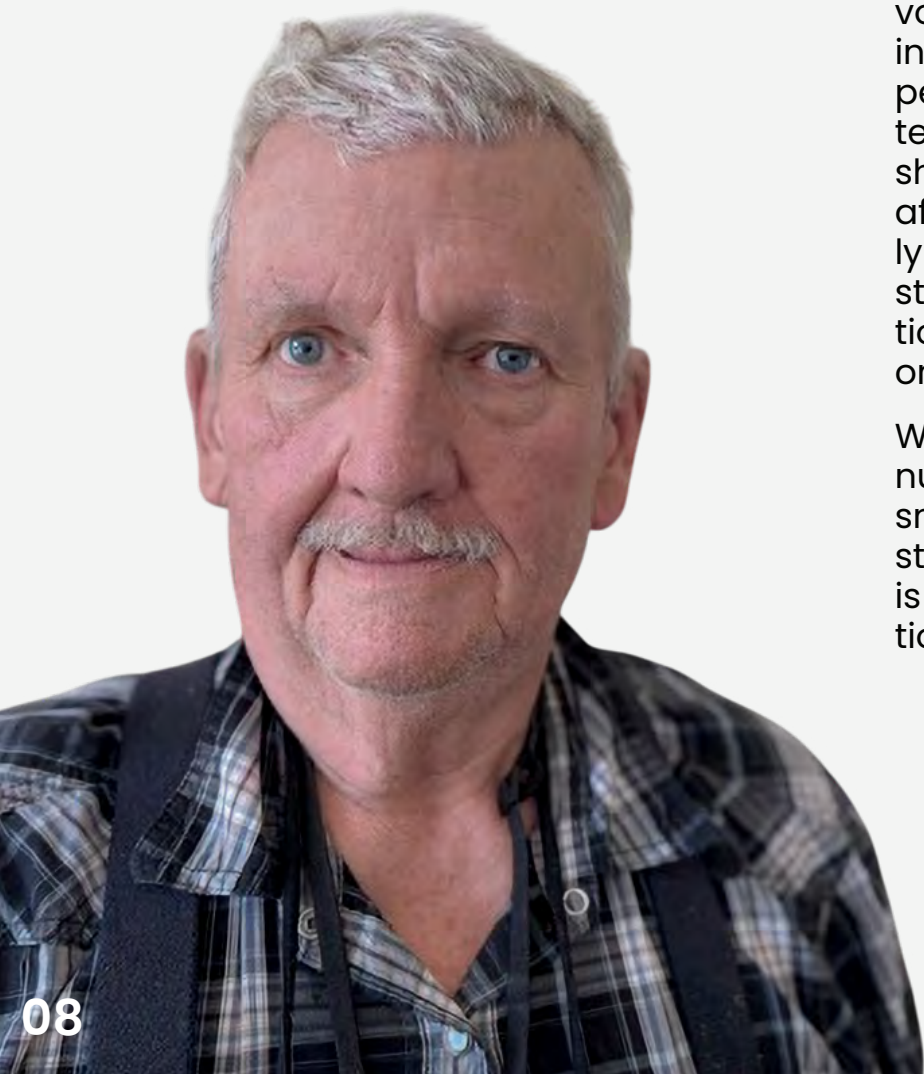
#### Connections between Sleep Disorders and Hearing Loss<sup>\*2</sup>

In a systematic review of research investigating the relationship between sleep disorders and hearing loss, Peng Zhang and colleagues highlight how sleep disturbances can exacerbate auditory issues, while auditory dysfunction can also negatively impact sleep. Key findings include: 1) a strong association between subjective tinnitus and disturbed sleep, 2) evidence suggesting sleep may alleviate tinnitus symptoms, 3) non-optimal sleep durations (both short and long) are identified as potential risk factors for poorer hearing levels, and 4) sleep deprivation may directly impair central auditory processing by reducing neural activity. Ultimately, the study underscores the need to understand these complex interconnections to develop effective interventions for enhancing sleep quality and safeguarding auditory health.

# Client Spotlight

## MEET THE ONE AND ONLY Norm Thompson

### BOTH A CLIENT AND VOLUNTEER.



At 68 years old, Norm Thompson is nothing short of extraordinary.

After seeing one of our CHEK TV commercials, Norm first connected with IDHHC in 2021. At the time, he was recovering from a life-altering workplace accident: he had been electrocuted and had fallen three stories. The aftermath was severe. Norm lost both legs below the knees, suffered extensive internal injuries and lost his hearing. He underwent five major surgeries; spent months in hospital; has two prosthetic legs; and wears custom braces on his hands due to extreme nerve sensitivity. He lost 190 pounds; endured the isolation of the pandemic; and a breakdown in his marriage.

Many might have given up. Not Norm. Instead, Norm has made it his mission to give. He's a dedicated volunteer with several organizations, including IDHHC. As a peer support person, Norm visits recent amputees in hospital, offering hope and showing them that life doesn't end after limb loss. Medical staff regularly call on Norm to meet with patients struggling to find purpose or motivation. He also supports new amputees on a Facebook group.

When winter hits, Norm drives nurses to and from hospital during snowstorms while most of us are staying warm at home. His 4x4 truck is fully equipped for winter conditions, so Norm ensures that hospital staff make it safely to their shifts and back home again.

He is also rappelling down the CIBC building in Victoria this September to raise funds for Easter Seals BC/

Yukon... AGAIN! Even more astonishing; Norm plans to walk as a double amputee from Mile Zero in Victoria to Holberg at the northern tip of Vancouver Island to raise money for an organization close to his heart: Vancouver Island Counseling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees.

Norm is a client in our Sound of Change Initiative, through which he received free refurbished hearing aids, batteries, and support. He also participated in our Speechreading course—something he says was life-changing. Severely dyslexic, Norm can't rely on reading or writing to communicate, so learning to speech read has become essential for communication given his hearing loss.

Norm is a true "YES" person always asking how can I help and showing up where he's needed most.

We are honored to support Norm on his journey and deeply grateful for the energy, kindness, and volunteer hours he gives back to IDHHC and other organizations.

If you or someone you know is a low-income adult or senior in need of hearing aids, our Sound of Change Initiative may be able to help. Contact us today to learn more.



# Sound of Change

## CELEBRATING 2,500 HEARING AIDS

On Tuesday April 29th 2025 something fantastic happened at IDHHC Victoria. That morning, Christine Martins was fit with a pair of refurbished hearing aids, free of charge. For individual clients as well as the Audiology teams in Nanaimo and Victoria, every time a pair of free hearing aids are fit, there is cause for celebration – better communication and improved quality of life are on the horizon. But this day *Christine Martins was fit with the 2,500th hearing aid provided free* through the Sound of Change Initiative.

Launched in April 2016, with only 25 clients, the Sound of Change Initiative has been providing free refurbished hearing aids, assistive technology and communication support to low income and vulnerable individuals across Van-

couver Island and the Gulf Islands. 2500 free hearing aids have a retail value of +\$7million for the now 1100 individuals from 47 communities. We are genuinely proud of this success and are incredibly grateful to everyone who donates funding and technology for this Initiative.

To support this program you can make a cash donation, drop off hearing aids and technology for refurbishing, or refer someone to access the program – just give us a call.



“I just want to thank everyone at IDHHC for the wonderful gift of hearing aids. Since I’ve gotten my hearing aids I can now have conversations with my grandchildren on face time, and I can actually hear what they’re saying instead of saying “What? What? What?!” I can go out with my friends again for coffee as I had stopped doing that quite a while ago because I didn’t hear the conversations. I love hiking the trails with my dog, and I can actually hear people coming up behind

me now. I can hear the leaves, I can hear the birds, I can hear the mulch underneath my feet – it’s just amazing all the stuff I was missing but didn’t know I was missing. My kids are just amazed, my daughter couldn’t believe how many years I went without hearing all this stuff and not realizing I wasn’t hearing it. It’s opened up a whole new world to me, I cannot thank you guys enough. It just means the world to me – it’s a miracle!”

~Christine Martins follow up appointment May 2025

The Sound of Change Initiative broke all past years’ numbers in 2024–2025 and provided:

**167**

NEW IDHHC CLIENTS

**316**

HEARING AID FITTINGS

**144**

RETURNING CLIENTS

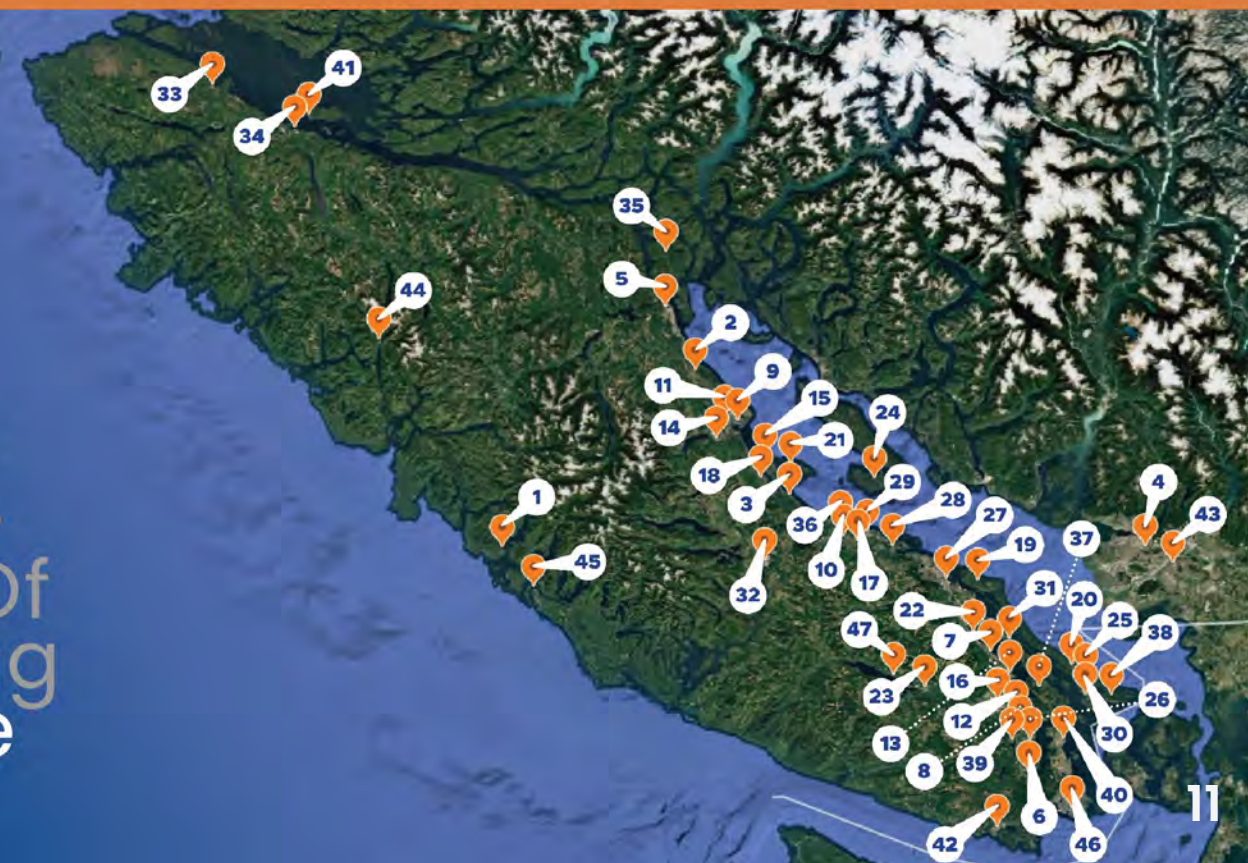
**157**

REPLACED HEARING AIDS

Bringing the grand total of free hearing aids dispensed to 2500!

- |                   |                     |                       |                      |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Ahousaht       | 13. Crofton         | 25. Mayne Island      | 37. Salt Spring Isle |
| 2. Black Creek    | 14. Cumberland      | 26. Mill Bay          | 38. Saturna Island   |
| 3. Bowser         | 15. Denman Island   | 27. Nanaimo           | 39. Shawnigan Lake   |
| 4. Burnaby        | 16. Duncan          | 28. Nanoose Bay       | 40. Sidney           |
| 5. Campbell River | 17. Errington       | 29. Parksville        | 41. Sointula         |
| 6. Cedar Springs  | 18. Fanny Bay       | 30. North Pender Isle | 42. Sooke            |
| 7. Chemainus      | 19. Gabriola Island | 31. Penelakut Island  | 43. Surrey           |
| 8. Cobble Hill    | 20. Galiano Island  | 32. Port Alberni      | 44. Tahsis           |
| 9. Comox          | 21. Hornby Island   | 33. Port Hardy        | 45. Tofino           |
| 10. Coombs        | 22. Ladysmith       | 34. Port McNeill      | 46. Victoria         |
| 11. Courtenay     | 23. Lake Cowichan   | 35. Quadra Island     | 47. Youbou           |
| 12. Cowichan Bay  | 24. Lasqueti Island | 36. Qualicum Beach    |                      |

Island Deaf + Hard of Hearing Centre





# The Nature of Sound

## HOW HEARING AIDS CAN BRING NATURE'S BRILLIANCE BACK TO LIFE

Imagine that you are taking a leisurely stroll through a lush forest or sitting next to the ocean as the waves gently lap against the rocky shore. What do you see? What do you hear? For many adults with age-related hearing loss, the sounds of nature can be muted or even non-existent. What's more, hearing loss often occurs so slowly over time that we may not even be aware of what we are missing. Thankfully, treating age-related hearing loss with hearing aids can help bring more of the restorative sounds of nature back into our range of hearing!

Spending time in nature may be associated with many health benefits, including improved mood, lowered blood pressure, and a greater sense of well-being<sup>1</sup>. For people that experience bothersome tinnitus, listening to nature sounds can potentially offer relief through reducing stress levels and helping the brain learn to focus on sounds other than the tinnitus<sup>2</sup>.

When wearing hearing aids for the first time, it is common to notice many new sounds, some of which are pleasant (birdsong, the leaves rustling in the trees), and some of which may be not-so-pleasant (traffic noise). Wearing hearing aids as much as possible during waking hours can help our brains re-learn to recognize different sounds in our environments and learn to tune out sounds that are not so pleasant. An excellent way to get used to wearing hearing aids is to spend time in nature. Keep reading for some suggestions for activities to try:

1. Zhu, R., Yuan, L., Pan, Y., Wang, Y., Xiu, D., and Liu, W. (2024). Effects of natural sound exposure on health recovery: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Science of the Total Environment* (volume 921)



### An Auditory Safari

Take a walk in a park or another favourite outdoor space. Try to identify as many sounds as you can. What sounds do you enjoy? What sounds are unpleasant? Can you figure out what direction each sound is coming from?



### Go Bird Watching

Spend some time in your backyard, a park, or a wooded area. How many birds can you hear? You can use an app, such as Merlin Bird ID, to help identify different bird calls, which can help re-train your brain to recognize different types of birds based on their songs!



### Try Ocean Meditation

Find a calm spot near the water. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. Take deep breaths as you focus on the sounds of the waves lapping the shore or rapids rushing through the rocks. Can you hear any other sounds around you?

If you have hearing aids and are still experiencing difficulties enjoying the sounds of nature, contact your audiologist to see if adjustments can be made to help maximize your hearing outdoors.

2. Lim, K. H., Nam, K. J., and Choi, J. (2019). The effect of natural ocean sound exposure and ocean-side relaxation on chronic tinnitus patients: A pilot study in Korea. *Ear, Nose, and Throat Journal*, Vol 100, issue 5.

# Building Your Skill

## EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS AND BREAKTHROUGHS

### Funding And Employment Support At IDHHC

At Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre (IDHHC), we are dedicated to empowering Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to succeed in the workplace. We connect clients with resources, including support to access funding for hearing aids and other assistive technology. This ensures that cost does not prevent anyone from fully participating in the workforce.

Our services are tailored to meet each person's needs - whether they are seeking a new job or wanting to thrive in their current role. We offer coaching to gain the strategies and confidence needed to manage their communication needs, and advocate for accommodations in the workplace.

IDHHC also works directly with employers to create more inclusive, communication-friendly workplaces. Through education and training, we support simple accommodation and improved communication practices that foster better understanding and collaboration among colleagues.

At IDHHC, we believe that everyone deserves equal access to gainful employment. By addressing both communication and financial barriers, we help individuals reach their full potential—and contribute to stronger, more inclusive communities across Vancouver Island.

What can I do as a job seeker or employee to move into a new position?



*Build your skills to stay competitive!*

How do I build my skills on a tight budget?



*Upskill by accessing online courses and certificates for FREE!*

### Upskilling Through Free Online Courses

**CLASS CENTRAL** (<https://www.classcentral.com/help/intro-to-online-learning>)

Class Central provides a centralized site for courses offered by hundreds of education providers, many offering free courses and certificates. Included are courses from universities around the world (including UBC, UofT and UofA in Canada) as well as other online education provider sites such as Coursera, Udemy, LinkedIn, Google, Microsoft, etc.

**Through this site you can:**

- + Set up a free account.
- + Filter for free courses and certificates.
- + Find explanations about how other online education provider sites, like Coursera, work.
- + Access links to completely free courses and certificates by subject.
- + Take courses to improve your soft skills such as: "Improving Communication Skills" and "Making successful Decisions", as well as courses focusing on hard skills like "Intro to Financial Accounting" and "Fundamentals of AI" or "Learn to Program"



## Stress Relief Techniques For Deaf + Hard Of Hearing Workers

Navigating the workplace as a Deaf or hard of hearing worker can present unique stressors, from communication barriers to feelings of isolation. This past May, several of our members got together for a workshop on working with difficult people or situations. So many insights and good reminders were generated that we had to share some of them! We noted there are many techniques and tools we can use to manage stress. Practicing these techniques when we're calm is key to being able to use them during times of conflict or upheaval. Here are some insights discussed:

### 1 The Mind-body connection:

In our modern world of constant screen-time and exciting content, the build-up of cortisol (your body's main stress hormone) is becoming pervasive. Luckily, our bodies can help our minds relax and manage. Exercise and deep breathing can help us get rid of excess cortisol, the stress hormone that builds during "fight or flight" moments. Elevated cortisol levels have been linked to high blood pressure, weakened immunity, and inflammation. Don't have time to exercise each day? You can still re-set your body's fight or flight response. Try standing tall with arms and legs wide, looking upwards, to increase optimism and confidence. Or to gain a sense of calm, take three slow, deep breaths through your nose throughout your workday.

Spending a few minutes daily feeling grateful, connecting with your body, and practicing self-compassion can help us build capacity, just like a muscle builds strength. Soon you will be well practiced and ready to call upon these tools during the inevitable stressors of the workday.

Sources:  
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/22187-cortisol>  
<https://highconflictinstitute.com/high-conflict-strategies/who-are-high-conflict-people/>

### 2 The Power of Gratitude:

Try this exercise: think of three things you are grateful for. Note the feeling you get from those thoughts of gratitude. Hold that feeling; bask in it for a few moments. Revisit that feeling often. You'll find soon enough you'll be able to call up that feeling of warmth and calm even during stressful situations.

### 3 Practice self-compassion and boundaries:

Communication challenges can be tiring; acknowledge your need for self-care. If there is someone in your work life (or home life) who presents frequent conflicts, it is ok to provide firm but friendly boundaries and then move on to a more positive topic of conversation.



## Listening Differently

We are always so grateful to receive kind words from happy clients and customers who have experienced that special something that IDHHC has to offer the Deaf and hard of hearing communities.

Hi Edward,

I have been to numerous hearing clinics over the past decade since losing the ability to hear effectively in my left ear.

I just wanted to let you know that IDHHC stands out for providing the best care I have ever received and has improved my quality of life because of this. You took the time to investigate the hearing issues that I suffer from, which are unique and harder to treat due to my chronic tinnitus.

I learned more about my condition from consultation with you than I have from my ENT specialist. You also took the time and effort to try different strategies to find the optimal solution to assist me with my limited hearing.

Private clinics have also proven to be costly as you have to buy new hearing aids and accessories, but you were able to provide me with a refurbished hearing aid. This allowed me to try a new approach to improve my hearing which would not have been possible if I had to pay for it.

IDHHC is a unique and most valuable resource for anyone with hearing issues, and I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the outstanding care you provided to me.

Yours sincerely,  
Tricia Winsby

# What Access Means to Me

At IDHHC, we believe that access and inclusion are not just services — they are fundamental human rights. Our Interpreting and Captioning Department works to break down barriers across workplaces, conferences, schools, colleges, universities, community events, and more. But why do these services matter? What difference do they make — or fail to make — in their absence?

We asked members of the Deaf and hard of hearing community to share how Registered Sign Language Interpreters and captioning services impact their daily lives. Their reflections are powerful reminders of the critical role access plays — and why this work is so vital.

## C. Dobbie, Victoria, BC

*“To have an ASL interpreter is to break down the barriers of communication in a natural way for both me as a Deaf person and the hearing person I’m talking to. The interpreter is for both of us. Having an interpreter at my work meetings makes me feel comfortable and confident to contribute my ideas and share my thoughts.”*

Interpreting is not simply translating from one language to another. It’s a nuanced, culturally responsive process that allows for the full intent, emotion, and meaning of a conversation to be conveyed. This level of communication creates connection, clarity, and trust whether it’s at a conference, in a classroom, or during a parent-teacher meeting.

## Lina, Victoria, BC

*“Captioning has made a real difference in both my work and daily life. As someone who is hard of hearing, I often found it challenging to fully follow conversations. Having access to captioning services helps me stay focused, understand the full discussion, and contribute with confidence; it is how I stay connected and informed. Before I had this support, I was constantly trying to guess what was said, which was frustrating and tiring. Now, I feel included and equipped to fully engage, both professionally and personally.”*

Without access, Deaf individuals are often left to navigate systems through guesswork, incomplete information, or by depending on family members to interpret. For

many, this has long been the reality — but it shouldn’t be. True access means more than simply being present; it ensures meaningful participation and understanding.

## Maria and Salah, Victoria, BC

*“During the hiring process for our new coffee shop, Marina Bay Café, we truly appreciated the value of having professional interpreters. As Deaf owners, it was essential that we could fully engage with applicants to ask questions, understand their responses, and ultimately hire the right people for our team. We were also featured on CHEK TV’s OrderUp! program, and thanks to interpreter access, we were able to share our story clearly and confidently, without frustration or communication barriers. Having access to interpreters gives us the freedom to communicate openly and fully.”*

For those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, workplace inclusion depends on communication access. Real-time captioning makes it possible to follow fast-paced dialogue, understand complex topics, benefit from training opportunities, and participate fully. Access is not a luxury; it’s a critical component of job retention and career advancement.

## N. Barker, Fort St John

*“Access through interpreters means being seen, heard, and understood without barriers. With interpreters, I’m able to fully engage— follow discussions in real time, contribute meaningfully, ask questions, network, share my expertise, and connect with colleagues as an equal. Having interpreters changes the entire experience; it’s not just about participation, it’s about true inclusion. It’s not just about communication access; it’s about being functionally equivalent — and having the ability to bring my full self to the space.”*

*Access provided through ASL interpreters allows me to focus on my work and contributions rather than navigating communication gaps. Being able to fully access the world around me empowers and validates me and makes me feel like I truly belong.”*

For far too long, many Deaf adults have had no choice but to rely on hearing family members — sometimes even their own children — to interpret in deeply personal, medical, legal, or everyday situations. This burden is unfair and strips away independence and privacy. Access to professional interpreting services restores voice, autonomy, and the dignity every person deserves.

These stories remind us that every interpreter booking or captioning request is more than just an appointment; it’s a lifeline to full participation, equity, and independence.

As we continue to expand our services, we are deeply grateful to the Deaf and hard of hearing individuals who share their experiences with us. Their reflections shape our work and remind us that accessibility is not just about communication, it’s about connection, empowerment, belonging, and community.



# TECH TALK

## ALARMS + ALERTING SYSTEMS

Home is where you relax, sleep, and care for yourself and your loved ones. When you miss certain environmental cues in the home, such as fire alarms or someone knocking at your door, you may not be able to enjoy this space or feel as safe as you should. Home alerting systems provide essential information and cues about the surrounding environment, keeping the user safe, connected, informed, and independent.

### Customization

The beauty of home alerting systems is how customizable they are! These systems can also be used at work, or places such as medical or care facilities. The first step is to find a system that works for you, then you can combine various add-ons to create an alerting system that not only fits into your environment but helps you to navigate it better.

### Alert Types

Choose the very best alert for your lifestyle! Visual alerts include strobe lights, scrolling messages, or illuminated images. If you prefer something tactile, you can receive alerts via vibration with a bed shaker or body-worn receiver. Alternately, you can choose an amplified ringer alarm – or a combination of all three!

### Add-on Features

The highly customizable nature of these systems means that you can purchase any number of add-ons to meet many needs, including safety and social.

Safety features include smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and door/window access alerts. Especially while sleeping, important information could be missed, potentially putting yourself at risk with an alerting system, you will be woken by your chosen combination of amplified ringer, strobe light, or vibration to ensure your safety. You can also place receivers in different locations throughout the home to keep you informed throughout the day.

Keep yourself connected to your community by ensuring that you are notified when people reach out. Doorbell transmitters alert you when someone rings your doorbell, and phone transmitters connect to your phone line to alert you to any incoming calls.

Many of these accessories can be used in ways that you might not expect, and some can be used for a variety of features. Baby cry signalers and sound monitors can be used to alert you to the sound of a baby crying, or to the sound of your alarm clock, phone, or doorbell. Mat transmitters can be placed under a doormat to notify you that someone (or even your dog) is at the door, or next to a bed, to let you know that someone has left their bed. Body-worn receivers can be carried in a pocket or worn on a belt and will notify you of any notifications with a series of distinct vibrations.

# TECH AID APPT AND TED TALK

October 9th from 12:00-1pm  
with Ted Clegg from (ALDS)  
Assistive Listening Device

Please join us for an overview of alerting systems and how they can fit into your life.

Perhaps you are not sure what you need or not sure if what you need exists. Come ask us!

We know which questions to ask to determine what your needs are, and we can help you take the next steps towards an environment that suits them.

This tech presentation will be delivered online with viewing space at both our Victoria and Nanaimo offices. Captioning will be provided.



# Autumn 2025 Events

## Register Today By Phone or Email

For all workshops classes or events you can register by contacting us at either office

### Victoria:

250-592-8144

idhhc@idhhc.ca

### Nanaimo:

250-753-0999

nanaimo@idhhc.ca

## EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

### AI Resumes and Cover Letters

Wednesday, September 24, 11am-12:30pm

In Person @IDHHC Victoria Office

**\$10 [FREE for WorkBC Clients]**

Use Chat GPT and other apps to start/enhance your resume and cover letter. Discussion will include safety measures and ethics of AI. Please try to bring a digital copy of your resume with you or send it to kim@idhhc.ca ahead of time. Please bring a laptop or tablet if you have one.

### Job Search for Mature Workers

Thursday, October 2, 1:30-2:30pm

Delivered online with viewing space @ IDHHC Victoria

**\$10 [FREE for WorkBC Clients]**

Tackle ageism head-on with tips for conveying your relevance in today's job market.

### Career Change Through Transferrable Skills

Wednesday, October 8, 1:30pm-2:30pm

Delivered online with viewing space @ IDHHC Victoria

**\$10 [FREE for WorkBC Clients]**

Learn how your transferable skills could be used in other careers towards a new beginning.

### Dealing With Difficult People In The Workplace

Wednesday, October 22, 2pm-3:30pm

In Person @IDHHC Victoria Office

**\$10 [FREE for WorkBC Clients]**

Practical techniques for managing emotions and reactions when faced with difficult customers or colleagues.

### Managing Hearing Loss in the Workplace

Wednesday, November 19, Noon-1pm

Delivered online with viewing space @ IDHHC Victoria

**\$10 [FREE for WorkBC Clients]**

Through discussion and situational role-playing, have fun learning tips on how to create effective communication strategies within the workplace.

### Holiday Stress Management

Friday, December 5th, 6:30pm-8:00pm

In person @IDHHC Victoria office

**\$10 [FREE for WorkBC Clients]**

It's back! Learn, share and practice enjoyable breathing, stretching, and calming exercises for the holidays. Adult colouring and light refreshments are also offered. Please bring a yoga mat or towel if you wish; some beginner yoga will be practiced on the floor, or in a chair if you would prefer.

## CONVERSATIONAL ASL CLASSES

IDHHC offers individuals the opportunity to learn or develop some basis conversational American Sign Language (ASL). This is a "recreational" program, the purpose to provide students with basic functional signing skills and does not provide certification of any kind. Each course offers 12 hours of in-person instruction. Fees are non-refundable after the course starts. Payment must be provided to secure your spot.

**Level 1:** is for anyone that wants to learn the basics of ASL – content includes concepts such as ABC's, numbers, asking questions and so much more.

**Level 2:** for anyone that has completed level 1 and is ready to learn more.

**Level 3:** our newest level will allow you more opportunities to practice your ASL and add some new vocabulary and concepts to your knowledge base.

**ASL Refresher Classes:** Has it been months since you have taken your last ASL class? We are now offering refresher classes for those that would like a quick 2-class review of what was taught in their last ASL level.

### Level 1 Refresher (2 sessions) \$40

IDHHC Victoria

Wednesday, September 24 & October 1  
6:30-8:00pm

IDHHC Nanaimo

Wednesday, September 24 & October 1  
7:15-8:45pm

### Level 2 Refresher (2 sessions) \$40

IDHHC Victoria

Thursday, September 25 & October 2  
6:00-7:30pm

### Level 1 ASL (8 sessions) \$145

IDHHC Victoria

Monday, September 22 – November 17  
5:30-7:00pm (no class Oct 13)

Monday, September 22 – November 17  
7:15-8:45pm (no class Oct 13)

Tuesday, October 7 – December 2  
5:30-7:00pm (no class Nov 11)

### Level 1 ASL (8 sessions) \$145

IDHHC Nanaimo

Wednesday, September 24 – November 12  
5:30-7:00pm

### Level 2 ASL (8 sessions) \$145

IDHHC Victoria

Tuesday, October 7 – December 2  
7:15-8:45pm (no class Nov 11)

Wednesday, October 8 – November 26  
6:30-8:00pm

IDHHC Nanaimo

Wednesday, October 8 – November 26  
7:15-8:45pm

### Level 3 ASL (8 sessions) \$145

IDHHC Victoria

Thursday, October 9 – November 27  
6:00-7:30pm

IDHHC Nanaimo Coming in January 2026

# HEARING HEALTH

## Hearing Better Together – Hearing Loss Support Group

One Thursday per Month, 10:30–11:30am  
Sept 18, Oct 16, Nov 13, and Dec 11

In person @ IDHHC Victoria

**FREE** (But registration is recommended)

A group for hard of hearing persons gathering to connect and share information and experiences about challenges and opportunities in a supportive and open environment. Meet once a month in-person. On occasion guest speakers may attend. Captioning will be provided.

## Let's Talk, Speechreading

**\$160** [\$125 for IDHHC members]

**10 Sessions** | Struggling to understand people even while wearing your hearing aids? 'Let's Talk' is a small-group speechreading (previously referred to as lip reading) and communications strategies course that helps people with hearing loss, and their families, communicate better. "Let's Talk Some More" is for anyone that would like to continue building their speechreading skills after completing Let's Talk.

## IDHHC Victoria | In Person

Let's Talk (Level 1)

Tuesday, October 7 – December 16  
9:30–11:30am (no class Nov 11)

## IDHHC Nanaimo | In Person

Let's Talk (Level 1)

Tuesday, October 7 – December 16  
5:30–7:30 pm (no class Nov 11)

## Impacts Of Hearing Loss

Thursday, November 20, Noon–1pm

Online with Viewing Space @ IDHHC

**\$10** [FREE for Members]

IDHHC audiologists Abigail Smiles and Edward Storzer will explore topics related to impacts of hearing loss, including social isolation, mental health and cognition. They will also outline important communication strategies and resources available for people who have hearing loss. This presentation would be appropriate for family members or caretakers who would like to learn more about communicating with and assisting individuals who have hearing loss. Abby and Edward will answer any questions after the presentation.

## Cochlear Implant Support Group

Please call us for CI Support Group

Fall schedule information 250.592.8144

Delivered Online via Zoom

**FREE** (Ongoing registration)

This is a virtual support group for those who have cochlear implants and are seeking support and expertise from others regarding their cochlear implant journey and the strategies they use in their daily lives. Captioning will be provided.

## Deaf Community Games Day

Every Tuesday from 2:00–4:00pm

In person @IDHHC Victoria

**\$2 Drop-In**

Join the Deaf community for coffee, snacks and games! Bingo is a favorite activity for this group. ASL only!

## Register Today By Phone or Email

For all workshops classes or events you can register by contacting us at either office

## Victoria:

250-592-8144  
idhhc@idhhc.ca

## Nanaimo:

250-753-0999  
nanaimo@idhhc.ca

# TECH SUPPORT

## Ted Talk: Alarms + Alert Systems

Thursday, October 9, Noon–1pm

Delivered online with viewing space  
@IDHHC Victoria or Nanaimo

**\$10** [FREE for Members]

Join us for a presentation with Ted Clegg from Assistive Listening Device Systems (ALDS) where Ted will share the latest and greatest in assistive technology as well as how you can benefit from the many available devices. Ted will be focusing on alarm clocks and alerting systems. He will also be available to answer any of your questions.

## Tech Tips with Kelsey

Every Monday from 1:00–4:00pm

In person @ IDHHC Victoria (by aptmt)

**\$15** [\$10 for Members]

Do you need help or have questions about any of the following? Hearing Aid Apps – Cellphone – iPad or tablet use – Laptop Computer – CI tech support – Bluetooth Devices – Voice to Text Apps –any other technological device. As a tech savvy CI user, Kelsey can assist with any of the above by explaining the complicated tech world in simple language and processes that are easy to follow and understand. Be sure to let us know what your tech needs are when you register so Kelsey can be prepared for your appointment

Check out our [idhhc.ca](http://idhhc.ca) website, sign up for our newsletters and updates, and watch for more Spring and Summer activities!



# When Community Builds Community.

## Thank You to these Community Leaders for their Support



**VICTORIA  
FOUNDATION**  
CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE



**Provincial Employees  
Community Services Fund**



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

We acknowledge the financial support of  
the Province of British Columbia.

**To find out how you or your organization can support the important work of IDHHC, call 250.592.8144 or email us at [idhhc@idhhc.ca](mailto:idhhc@idhhc.ca) or you can Donate online at [idhhc.ca](http://idhhc.ca)**

### **IDHHC Contact information:**

#### **Victoria**

301-3960 Quadra St.

#### **HOURS:**

Monday-Friday  
8:30AM - 4:30PM

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

**P:** 250.592.8144

#### **Nanaimo**

102-6588 Applecross Rd.

#### **HOURS:**

Monday-Friday  
8:30AM - 4:30PM

**E:** [nanaimo@idhhc.ca](mailto:nanaimo@idhhc.ca)

**P:** 250.753.0999



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