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Hoosier Children with Hearing Loss are Doing Deaf Differently

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Indianapolis— When deaf kids don't consider themselves deaf... the magic begins. Last week, 48 hard of hearing and deaf students from across Indiana attended Hear Indiana's weeklong camp — a camp designed specifically for students who use spoken language rather than sign language to communicate.



Tony Gigli, an oral deaf adult and camp director said, "Camp reminds us all that deafness is no longer a limitation. Our campers amaze me with the gentle way they encourage each other to complete our challenge tasks. Our camp is fostering future leaders, not just within the hard of hearing and deaf community, but within the hearing world at large."

When these 48 campers remove their hearing aids and cochlear implants they are still deaf, but today, thanks to modern technology, they are singing camp "ditties" and telling ghost stories around the campfire. Tomorrow, these campers will become customer service agents, general education teachers, ministers, and even TV news anchors. With the ability to listen and speak, their options are endless.

Tyler McAchren, a Junior at Huntington University, was a chaperone this summer after attending as a camper for three years. McAchren who wears a cochlear implant was asked, “Do you consider yourself deaf?”

“I usually say I’m hearing, but I’m not opposed to using the word deaf either. After all without my implant I am profoundly deaf.”

Hear Indiana’s executive director, Naomi Horton, queried the children about what makes this camp special. A sample of the answers were: “swimming in the lake,” “horseback riding,” and “the friends we make.” None of campers surveyed even mentioned being deaf.

“Success!” says Naomi Horton. “Our goal is to host a typical camp for these special children. Often these campers don’t know anyone with the unique life experience of being neither hearing nor deaf. Being deaf is what brings these campers together, but being regular kids is what makes our camp magical.”



For more information, please contact executive director, Naomi Horton, at 317-828-0211 or Naomi.Horton@HearIndiana.org.

About Hear Indiana

Hear Indiana is the non-profit Indiana chapter of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (www.agbell.org). For over forty years Hear Indiana has helped children with hearing loss achieve their fullest potential as independent members of society.

Hear Indiana empowers and supports individuals and families with hearing loss who communicate through listening and spoken language. We believe in early detection, intensive amplification, and ongoing intervention. Hear Indiana offers informational resources, educational programming, support for families and professionals, and advocacy in areas related to listening and speaking.

For more information visit <http://www.hearindiana.org>.

Deaf Adults Available for Interview

Tyler McAchren, a Junior at Huntington University is majoring in Ministry and Sports Medicine. He plans to become a Camp Director after graduation. He can be reached at 574-581-1992 or mcachrent@huntington.edu (preferred).

Tony Gigli, a graduate of Wabash College, is a customer service representative for Lawrence Utilities. He can be reached at 317-965-1976 or tony.gigli@hearindiana.org.