



Naomi Horton, Executive Director | PO Box 347 | Zionsville, Indiana | 46077 | Phone 317.828.0211 | info@hearindiana.org

Hear Indiana's 26th Annual Educational Conference – Participation Doubles in Just Two Years

For Immediate Release

November 12 2008

Contact: Christopher Mann, 260.469.3090, chris@floydandpartners.com

Indianapolis-Hear Indiana, a statewide nonprofit agency dedicated to improving listening and spoken language outcomes for deaf or hard of hearing children, today announced a dramatic increase in the number of attendees at their annual educational conference. The attendance at the annual conference has doubled from 75 attendees in 2006 to over 150 attendees this year.

The conference, scheduled for November 14 at the Garrison at Fort Harrison in Indianapolis, hosts keynote speaker, Maura Berndsen, MA, CED, LSLS Cert. AVT®, who will discuss the importance of building partnerships to foster listening and spoken language development for children with hearing loss from birth to adulthood.

The conference also highlights: 1) resources for those who wear hearing aids or cochlear implants, 2) transitioning to college, 3) advances in telephone communications, and 4) connecting cochlear implants to Bluetooth devices and MP3 players. Hands-on experience with state of the art technology will be provided. Twenty exhibit booths will showcase Indiana's advocacy and support agencies, cochlear implant companies, and the latest in oral deaf education.

Naomi Horton also stated, "Hear Indiana supports informed choice and serves as a resource for those parents who specifically choose a spoken language education. As evidenced by the record attendance of this year's conference, parents and professionals are searching for more information about oral deaf education, hearing aids, and cochlear implants."

Early identification and intervention (before six months of age), combined with appropriate amplification, can enable children with hearing loss to develop language skills comparable to those of their hearing peers. Over the past 10 years, universal hearing screening (at birth) and advances in hearing aids and cochlear implants have dramatically increased the opportunity for children with hearing loss to learn and use spoken language.

Naomi Horton, Executive Director of Hear Indiana, added, "Seventy percent of new parents are unaware of spoken language options for deaf children.* Ninety-five percent of babies with hearing loss are born to hearing parents, and most hearing parents want their child to grow up using their language, be that spoken English or spoken Spanish. For those who choose spoken language, we're here to help."

*Data from the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Parent Survey 2006
<http://www.agbell.org/uploads/Campaign/Survey%20Results%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

Media availability

The following individuals are available to the media for interviews:

- Naomi Horton, Executive Director for Hear Indiana 317-828-0211 or info@hearindiana.org.
- Chris Mann, father of two deaf children, at chris@christophermann.com or 317-557-6343.
- Justin Ogden, hard of hearing adult, at president@hearindiana.org or 317-650-3048.

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 30 years the organization has helped children with hearing loss achieve their fullest potential as independent members of society.