



## “Speech rules” helps preschooler overcome speech and behavioral problems



Left to Right—Kaitlyn Toth, Hanna Zimmerman, MS, CCC-SLP, Breanne Toth

Breanne Toth entered into the RHSC speech program in 2008 at the age of 3 with severe delay in her articulation skills. She had very strong language skills and willingly communicated with others; however, she was difficult to understand. She was understood about 70% of the time. When Breanne was not understood, she often became frustrated and acted out.

This story really began when Breanne was 2 years old. Her parents, Linda and Shawn Toth, became very worried when Breanne was dismissed from another speech therapy group because she was

labeled for having behavioral issues, and that “she just chose not to speak.” Out of sheer frustration and concern for her daughter’s speech and behavioral problems, Linda Toth advocated on her daughter’s behalf. The West Irondequoit School District recommended that Breanne be reevaluated and tested at the Rochester Hearing and Speech Center.

According to her speech pathologist, Hanna Zimmerman, “Our therapy consisted of producing age appropriate sounds and slowing down Breanne’s rate of speech to help her improve her speech intelligibility. Breanne was very easily frustrated and our initial sessions were challenging.” Ms. Zimmerman quickly incorporated a “speech rules” system to help Breanne understand what was expected of her during their sessions. Breanne would tell the speech rules (looking eyes, listening ears, inside voice) at the start of each session and if the rules were followed, she earned a sticker at the end of the session. This system quickly helped

—Continued on back page

## RHSC announces new cochlear implant programming service

RHSC is pleased to announce its new cochlear implant programming service which was introduced just last month and is now available to individuals in our community who wear a cochlear implant.

“Children and adults with severe to profound permanent hearing loss may not be receiving adequate benefit from hearing aids, depending on the age at which the hearing loss occurred, when it was diagnosed, and what caused the hearing loss,” according to Ramona Pompea, Director of Audiology Operations. She further stated, “Once these individuals have tried hearing aids with limited or no success, the option of a cochlear implant may be considered.” A cochlear implant is a device that turns sound into electrical energy. Sound is picked up by a microphone and is sent to a speech processor, usually worn on the ear. The sound is analyzed and converted into electrical signals, which are sent to a surgically implanted receiver behind the ear. This receiver sends the signal through a wire into the inner ear. From there the electrical impulses are sent to the brain. While a cochlear implant does not restore normal hearing, use of the device often results in improved communication ability and understanding of speech with less reliance on the use of visual cues.

For further information about the new cochlear implant programming service call Dr. Ramona Pompea at 271.0680, ext. 1868.



Ramona Pompea Ph.D.,  
Director of Audiology Operations



Communication  
for  
**Life**

# Audiology: A First Time Client's Visit

I had begun to realize that I was struggling to hear people around me. I had trouble when my sweet granddaughter spoke to me on the phone. I was having difficulty hearing the waitress at restaurants that I frequent. I wasn't able to follow along with television shows I had always enjoyed. I decided it was time to do something about my hearing.

I called Rochester Hearing and Speech Center to inquire about having a hearing evaluation. I was scheduled for an evaluation that very same week.

When I arrived for the appointment I was greeted by the receptionist, who welcomed me with a warm hello. She guided me through some paperwork that needed to be completed, a few permission forms and a history form that gave me a chance to tell why I wanted to be evaluated and what I hoped to learn from this appointment.

A few minutes later I was greeted by my audiologist. She took me into a suite of rooms that made me feel like I was in a living room, rather than in a cold sterile medical facility. It was a comfort considering I was nervous to have the "test." We reviewed my history form together and got to know each other a bit.

I was still a bit apprehensive about the tests that would be performed, but my audiologist explained what each one was for and what information she would be looking for. Initially my ears

were checked with a light to make sure there was no wax in my ear canals. I had hoped that I had a wax blockage that was causing all of my troubles. That wasn't the case.

The next series of tests involved a machine called a tympanometer. A small probe was placed in my ear to test my eardrums, the small bones of my middle ear and the overall mechanical system of my ears.

The audiologist then placed small foam plugs in my ears and went to the adjoining room. She presented tones in my ears and I indicated if I heard them. I then heard a speech sample and I repeated what I heard. Finally a headband style headphone was placed behind my ear and I heard the tones again. Once again I indicated when I heard them.

After all of this was completed my audiologist reviewed all of the results with me. She confirmed what I already suspected. I have a hearing loss in both ears. We discussed strategies that I could use to help me improve my communication ability with the help of others. We also discussed how hearing aids could help me hear better in difficult listening situations.

I have since made an appointment to discuss styles and types of hearing aids that are available to help overcome my hearing loss in situations that are important to me. I can't wait to hear what I have been missing!

## Education and Outreach

RHSC Speech-Language pathologists are actively involved in the community to answer questions about child development, language and learning needs and to discuss general communication issues. In this picture, Laura Corey, MA, CCC-SLP participates on behalf of RHSC in the Genesee Valley Parent Magazine Summer Camp Fair 2010 at Eastview Mall. For copies of our new brochures about RHSC Programs for Children, Developmental Milestones or our hand-outs "Could It Be an Undiagnosed Language Problem" and a copy of the RBJ article, "New Help for Auditory Processing Disorders" go to the RHSC website at [www.rhsc.org](http://www.rhsc.org).



Laura Corey, MA, CC-SLP

## Recent Grants

Rochester Hearing and Speech Center is pleased to recognize recent grants from the following:

- **J.M. McDonald Foundation**—a grant to support two specialty clinics at RHSC dealing with Central Auditory Processing and Childhood Apraxia of Speech
- **E.J. and L.R. Dondlinger Fund**—a gift to the Peter K. Hixson Legacy Society
- **Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation**—a gift to support the purchase of a new telephone system at RHSC
- **Al Sigl Community of Agencies**—an allocation from monies raised as part of the 2009 partnership WalkAbout
- **CVS/Caremark**—a grant to support the Summer Community Outreach Program for speech-language therapy and early literacy for children
- **M&T Charitable Foundation**—a grant in support of two new specialty clinics dealing with Central Auditory Processing and Childhood Apraxia of Speech
- **Mark and Bobbie Hargrave**—a gift to allow for the purchase of assistive devices for Audiology clients
- **Rochester Press Radio Club**—a grant to purchase testing materials for children in the Speech Department
- **Davenport-Hatch Foundation**—a gift to support the purchase of a new telephone system

**“Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline.”** —Jim Collins [Good to Great]



**Tom Gibbons**  
President

Are we facing difficult challenges and hard times? Is the future uncertain? Are we being asked to do more with the same or fewer resources? These are questions confronting all of us whether they are framed in the context of our personal situation or our business.

Rochester Hearing and Speech Center is a service organization. Service is our lifeblood. Everything flows from it and is nourished by it. Customer service is not a department, it is an attitude. Our customers may not care how much we know about our professional disciplines and practices until they know how much we care about serving them.

We are a service organization, driven by a mission. That mission includes our commitment to making available to all of the residents of our community the speech and audiology services they need to enjoy communication for life. We are the fortunate beneficiaries of philanthropic support. Without that support we would not be able to deliver all of the services we offer. When

clients make a decision to come to the Center we strive to deliver to them the very best service possible. We distinguish ourselves from profit making organizations in part because our motivation is not driven by the margin gained from a financial transaction. Rather it is derived from the knowledge that we have provided the very best service, the very best solution to the needs of our clients.

While we are driven by this motivation we clearly understand that we are also a business. In order to stay in business we must apply sound business operating principles to our operations. We do this by operating under a philosophy that we have a dual bottom line: achieving our mission, and securing and generating sufficient resources to support our operations.

While we face difficult challenges in uncertain times and do more with the same or fewer resources we take pride in the unique position we retain delivering speech and audiology services in our community. When you, a member of your family, a friend or business associate are considering where to go for these services I hope you will consider RHSC. When you are deciding where you might offer a gift of support to a longstanding well established and successful not-for-profit I hope you will include Rochester Hearing and Speech Center.

## Speech Services at Head Start and Day Care Centers



This past summer saw over 200 children, ages 3-8, served through the RHSC Summer Community Outreach Program. Children received group therapy and participated in the RHSC Early Literacy Program at 10 city Day Cares over a 6 week period. The

purpose of the program is to ensure that at-risk children do not regress in their speech-language skills over the summer months and, in some cases, actually make significant progress—returning to school “ready to learn.” Special thanks to the following organizations that made the Summer Community Outreach Program possible through their generous donations: Ames-Amzalak Memorial Trust, Fred and Floy Willmott Foundation, Glover-Crask Charitable Trust, Joan and Harold Feinbloom Supporting Foundation, Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation, and Wegmans.

## 2009 WalkAbout A Huge Success for RHSC!!

Over 200 staff, clients, board members and friends walked strong for RHSC last October as part of the Al Sigi Community of Agencies Partnership WalkAbout! The WalkAbout was preceded by a special breakfast and short program highlighted by cheerleaders from the Penfield Varsity Cheerleading Team. New this year was a silent auction allowing walkers to bid on many exciting items during the reception and raising almost \$1,000. Twenty eight companies and firms offered their support this year—a new record! Total money raised was \$44,000—all to help RHSC clients to continue to receive the highest quality audiology and speech-language services they have come to expect!

### 2010 WalkAbout Corporate Gifts



Alesco Investment Advisors	Lifespan
Audiometric Technology LLC	Mengel Metzger Barr & Co LLP
Bonadio Group LLP	Merkel Donohue/Deskset
The Brown Group at Merrill Lynch	MGM Associates Insurance
Buckingham Properties	Oticon
Canandaigua National Bank and Trust	Phillips Lytle LLP
Doyle Security Systems	Phonak
EBS-RMSCO, Inc.	Practis, Inc.
Entre Computer Services	Smart Holdings of New York LLC
Federated Clover Investment Advisors	Starkey
Helluva Good Cheese	Tipping Point Media
Interpretek	Toshiba Business Solutions
The Konar Foundation	Towers Airport Business Park
Lawley Andolina Verdi LLC	Wegmans

# Hear Better Now

Rochester Hearing and Speech Center's Audiology Program is offering a class for first time hearing aid users and their significant others. "Hear Better Now" provides information on maximizing hearing aid benefits through the understanding and use of communication strategies.

"Hear Better Now" helps clients understand their individual hearing loss and teaches them realistic expectations of benefits they may achieve through the use of their hearing aids. Following a brief overview of the audiogram and anatomy of the ear, we discuss the different types of hearing loss and how each affects a person's ability to hear. We explain that the hearing aid experience is somewhat different for each individual wearer.

We emphasize that communication is not based on one individual but on an interaction of three elements:

- the listener (hearing aid user)
- the speaker (who can be a single speaker, one on television or a group of speakers)
- the environment (background noise)

Clients who attend "Hear Better Now" learn how they can alter one or more of the three elements to enhance communication. We provide participants with several educational handouts containing suggestions and strategies to help them learn to manage their listening difficulties.

Our main message to the new hearing aid user and their families is that purchasing a hearing aid is the first of multiple steps leading to better hearing. Through "Hear Better Now", we provide additional important ways for the new hearing aid wearer to progress toward achieving maximum success with their hearing aids.

The next "Hear Better Now" class is scheduled for **Monday, May 17 at 3:30p.m.** at the RHSC Elmwood Avenue location. Come join us and learn more about hearing wellness and the proper use of hearing aids. For further information call **271.0680** ext. **1868**.



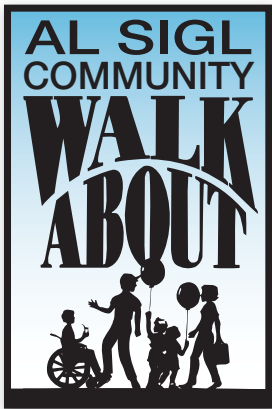
*Dawn D'Agostino,  
MA, CCC-A  
Senior Clinical Audiologist*



*Sharon Sadlon,  
MA, CCC-A  
Clinical Audiologist*

## Congratulations

*to Deborah Sanderson,  
Senior Clinical Audiologist, on receiving  
her Au.D. (clinical doctorate in Audiology)  
from Salus University in October 2009.  
Deb is involved in the auditory processing,  
mobile unit, diagnostic testing and dispensing  
programs, as well as maintaining the  
industrial hearing conservation database  
and reports. She has worked for  
RHSC for over 24 years.*



*Gibbons accepts check from Al Sigl Community of Agencies Director of Special Events, Amanda Birchenoff, as Mary Consler looks on.*



*The McLellan family, David, Meghan and David, have supported the Walk for many years with their time, talent and treasure!*



*Board members Bernadette Skobjak and Ray Saucke join the fun and contributed greatly to the Walk.*



*The Medwetsky family leads the way! Youngest family member, Ethan, raised almost \$1,000 on his own.*



*Greece audiologist, Traci-Lynn Farley and her daughter Megan enjoy the Walk.*



*The Penfield Varsity Cheerleaders cheer RHSC walkers onto victory and first place!*

# Annual Friends Appeal Nearing Its Goal!



Rochester Hearing  
and Speech Center



The Annual Friends Appeal has seen significant support from over 123 donors so far and is stretching to meet its \$30,000 goal for 2009-2010. To date over \$22,000 has been raised and RHSC is pleased with its progress. Said Honorary Chair Andre Godfrey, "We greatly appreciate the support from so many generous donors. Together we can make this year's appeal a success and help many RHSC clients receive the highest quality speech-language and audiology services they deserve."



Andre Godfrey

Your gifts can help to:

- Ensure that at risk children in the inner city receive the necessary group and individual therapy they need during the summer months to return them to school in the fall "ready to learn."
- Provide financial assistance to RHSC clients in need so they may receive audiology and speech-language services—regardless of their ability to pay.
- Help to provide seed money for two new clinics RHSC is establishing—Central Auditory Processing Clinic and Childhood Apraxia of Speech Clinic—to serve two pediatric populations which are currently under-served.

Please return the envelope included in this newsletter today.  
Or call **271.0680**, ext. **1286!**

## Peter K. Hixson Memorial Staff Development Fund

Mary Lewis Consler



Many individuals cared enough to make generous contributions in memory of long time President Peter K. Hixson after his death in December of 2007. Significant funds were received in his memory and invested, creating the Peter K. Hixson Memorial Staff Development fund. The creation of this fund reflects Peter's wish for life long learning and education for all individuals. Awards from the fund are made available in scholarships/grants to Rochester Hearing and Speech Center employees in each department of RHSC

including Audiology, Speech and Non Clinical, and serve to benefit the professional growth of the employee.

Several recent grants have been made to qualified employees through the fund. They include:

- Deborah Sanderson—Audiology courses in Ethics and in Evaluations of the Child Patient
- Laura Corey—Speech course in DIR/Floortime Development- Relational Treatment of Autism & Sensory Processing Disorder
- Melissa Reichman—Speech course in Theory and Practice in Early Childhood Education
- Christine Wallace—Speech webinar in Practical Treatment Strategies for Pre-School Children Who Stutter

RHSC looks forward to providing many educational opportunities in the future as a result of donations from thoughtful donors truly reflecting Dr. Hixson's belief in life long learning and education.

For more information on how to make a gift to the Peter K. Hixson Memorial Staff Development Fund or to make a gift to support other RHSC programs or projects, please call **271-0680**, ext. **1286**.

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## SoundBites

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Comments or suggestions  
may be submitted to:  
Mary Lewis Consler and  
Margaret Whitney, Editors



## Former Board Member Spotlight



**Michael C. Walker**

**Lives:**

Spencerport, NY

**Occupation:**

CEO of Seniorsfirst, retired in 2002, and continued consulting locally and nationally for the senior market through 2006.

Continues to serve on community boards after retirement. Presently serves on boards and committees for Nazareth College (Audit Committee); Seniorsfirst; Kilian J. & Caroline F. Schmitt Foundation; and a community association board in Sarasota, Florida.

**Family:** Married to wife Patricia and has four grown children and four grandchildren

**Interests:** Writing books, golf, reading, travel and grandchildren

**RHSC Involvement:** Former Board Chair

**WE ARE REQUESTING YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!** In an effort to become an environmentally friendly agency and embrace the idea of “going green” we are requesting your email address. It is also our attempt to reduce the amount of paper used by our agency and decrease the postage costs. RHSC will not share your email address with another agency/company. Our use will be for alerting you about new hearing devices and technologies, community events, lecture series, and any time sensitive information about RHSC.

You can simply email your email address to [info@rhsc.org](mailto:info@rhsc.org). Please include your name and address in the body of the email, so we can correctly match your name with your email address.



1000 Elmwood Ave., Suite 400  
Rochester, NY 14620



—“Speech rules” continued from front

Breanne to become an active and interested participant in therapy sessions and speech therapy became fun for her. Through articulation practice she quickly learned age appropriate speech sounds and her overall intelligibility began to increase. As Breanne’s speech intelligibility increased, she became much more willing to express frustration as opposed to acting out. Improvement was seen both at home and at school. During many of Breanne’s speech sessions, her siblings would join in the games so that they could become a part of Breanne’s learning. Linda and Shawn Toth were great advocates for their daughter and willingly used speech techniques and even the “speech rules” at home.

As Breanne’s intelligibility continued to increase, therapy sessions started to target Breanne’s distractibility and some behavior issues. Her speech pathologist worked on focusing on tasks and tuning out distractions. Breanne was very receptive to social stories that helped her learn what to do when she became frustrated. She had the language to tell others what was bothering her, but she needed help remembering to use her words to express herself successfully. Her speech pathologist introduced the “turtle technique” which is a learning tool to help children cope with frustration. Breanne’s “turtle technique” social story reminded her to stop and think when she got frustrated and to ask for help. This technique and story became a familiar poster in the Toth household and helped Breanne to use her words to communicate frustration. Breanne ended her speech therapy in June 2009 and was judged to be about 90-95% intelligible. According to Shawn Toth, “We have definitely seen huge progress in her skills; it has been a great experience working with Rochester Hearing and Speech Center.”

The Toth family contacted RHSC about providing speech services for Breanne’s younger sister Kaitlyn, and speech pathologist Hanna Zimmerman is happy to be able to be a part of this family again. Ms. Zimmerman is currently working with Kaitlyn on increasing her overall intelligibility and articulation skills. According to Ms. Zimmerman, “she and her sister Breanne (and the entire family) have both been a joy to work with!”

## Calendar of Events

**April 27**

Presentation and Screening—  
Cloverwood Senior Living

**May 11**

Better Hearing & Speech Day

**May 17**

Hear Better Now Class

**May 19**

Annual Meeting and President's Reception  
Country Club of Rochester

**September 24**

Day of Hearing— Lifespan/RHSC

Check  
[www.rhsc.org](http://www.rhsc.org)  
for updates