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Sounds Around

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CHILDREN
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Welcome!

The sunshine's arrived, Christmas is fast approaching and we've got plenty of news to catch you up on!

- Funding for families to learn NZ Sign Language
- Update on unilateral hearing group progress
- CMV parent workshops
- Our new community manager



Merry Christmas everyone! This photo is from a previous festive get-together with the big man in red in Hawkes Bay



NZSL Learning Subsidy Fund

Do you want to learn New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) but struggle to find out how to start? Or how to improve what you already know?

DCNZ has some funding, generously provided by the NZSL Board, to help with the cost of learning NZSL, for you and/or your family.

We have split this fund into two strands for individual families to apply for:

Strand A: For families who live in regions of NZ where there is no Regional Parent Group or it is difficult to find a NZSL Teacher

DCNZ will provide \$1,200 per family (incl GST), for Term 1 and 2, 2020, so \$600 per term.

Who can apply?

Families who live in Northland, Waikato, Gisborne & East Coast, Manawatu-Whanganui, Nelson-Tasman, Marlborough, West Coast, South Canterbury and Southland regions.

How to apply

Go to our website to [complete a NZSL Learning Subsidy Fund Application Form](#).

Important Dates

Applications for Strand A are open from now until Monday, 20 January 2020.

Strand B: any family who wants to learn or improve NZSL

DCNZ will provide up to \$800 per family (incl GST), for Term 1 and 2, 2020, so \$400 per term.

Who can apply?

Any individual family who has a child or children who are a member of DCNZ. It's free to join DCNZ, please go to the [Join DCNZ page](#) on our website.

Applications for Strand B will open Monday, 21 January 2020 and close on Friday, 28 February 2020 (until midnight).

[Join DCNZ](#)



CMV - the most common non-genetic cause of hearing loss

The Hearing House has been running a Specialty Clinic for families as a pilot. Its clinical director of audiology and habilitation Holly Teagle says children born with CMV make up one in 10 of the Auckland Hearing House's current caseload.

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is one of the most common viruses in the world - with symptoms similar to a cold - but many expectant mothers are unaware of the substantial risks it poses if they are exposed to it during pregnancy.

These include any degree of hearing loss, sometimes coupled with other physical and developmental problems.

Holly says the workshops, funded by Freemasons, used a team approach to share knowledge about resources, and provide a platform for addressing clinical research questions.

It brought together families where CMV had caused hearing loss and assessed children's physical, cognitive and educational development, looking at motor skills, language learning, working memory and emotional control.

"We are only just beginning to understand the nature of language development for children with a diagnosis of CMV," said Holly.

"There are many questions to ask around speech, language and interpersonal development that we could collect information on. Hopefully with support, we can move into a more formal research project. We are learning a lot but there is so much more to know."

Parents of children with unilateral hearing loss

As a parent of a child with single-sided deafness, I know families are struggling for resources and face different challenges to children who are bilaterally deaf. The good news is, many professionals are beginning to realise how serious this type of hearing loss can be, among them educators and audiologists.

The other good news is we have formed a group to advocate for better services for all our children. Where before we were a large but geographically distant group of parents wanting to see more done, we can join together, support each other and learn what services are available to children with unilateral hearing loss elsewhere in

the country.

You can email me gill@deafchildren.org.nz to join up.

We will have more news on this in the New Year.

DCNZ Community Manager, Meg Melvin

DCNZ is governed by seven very committed, voluntary Executive Committee (EC) members, all parents of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing child.

The EC has always known that if we wanted to grow our membership and achieve some of our goals, we would need to employ someone, part-time, to make this happen.



So we created the Community Manager role, a part-time contract for six months (October 2019 to April 2020), although we hope to secure more funding to be able to continue this role for longer.

Meg's role includes:

- Membership & database management;
- Management of the NZSL Learning Subsidy Fund;
- Website & social media and
- Sustainable Funding for DCNZ Family Camps

Meg's connections with DCNZ, Deaf education and community started in 2007 when she began learning New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) at Wellington High School, with Maureen Tompson.

"Learning NZSL was in response to finding out that my nephew, Liam, was profoundly Deaf, as a consequence of being born prematurely at 26 weeks."

Meg then completed her Level 2 & 3 NZSL at Tawa College with NZSL Tutor, Darryl Alexander. She was involved, for several years, with Odd Socks Productions, which was a deaf/hearing theatre and film company, that worked bimodally and bilingually with NZSL and English language creatives.

Meg started working with DCNZ in 2015, when she was contracted to develop a new website, with funding provided by the Ministry of Education. Meg had previously worked with the Ministry's Learning Support Professional Practice team as a web and online learning developer. Meg now works as a visual storyteller, helping organisations and companies explain complex information in a visual way.

We welcome Meg as our Community Manager, and please feel free to contact her at community@deafchildren.org.nz or on 021 0892 7668.



Would you like to appear in our next Newsletter? Have a great photo to share of your child or Parent Group? Email gill@deafchildren.org.nz

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