



Fourth Annual Report – 2016/2017

History & Mission

The Peer Support Program was found in 2012 by Bowen Tang & Joy Gong, who both have profound hearing losses. The Program's mission is to support deaf and hard of hearing (DHOH) youth in their navigation of academic and social lives in secondary and post-secondary institutions. We aim to create a platform where DHOH youth can be empowered to foster active leadership, provide peer support, advocate and promote hearing awareness in their communities.

BC Buddies

In the Fall, BC Buddies event took place on November 19th at Burnaby South Secondary. Ten participants attended in which five of them attended previous BC Buddies earlier in the year. Click [here](#) to read the reflection post on the website. There were no BC Buddies held for the Spring term due to lack of volunteers available to support us with the organization and operation of the event.

Family Weekend Camp is BACK!

The good news, on the other hand, is that after months of deliberation with CHHA-BC Parent's Branch, we are proud to bring back the popular Family Weekend Camp that was defunct since 2011. The camp will take place at Camp Elkgrove from September 1st to 3rd. Better yet, this will be free for all deaf and hard of hearing children, made possible by our successful fund application to CHHA Foundation. We anticipate a number of 20-25 hard of hearing children/youth, accompanied by siblings, parents and our volunteers, making up an estimated total of 48 participants.

Workshops

Post-Secondary Transition Workshops

We continue to partner, for the fifth year, with community agencies (PCAS, PDHHS, and WIDHH) in delivering this session in the Lower Mainland and Nanaimo. A total of 90 participants composed of students, parents, and teachers attended.

Hear Your Way to Success

We are excited to launch this new segment, a career panel session developed by two volunteers, Nicole Leung and Tasha Cox, both hard of hearing. They worked hard to prepare a presentation aimed for senior high school students and current post-secondary students. Other young adults are invited to be on the panel. Through this session, participants will hear from the panelists on their experiences working in various fields such as business, education, health, and performance arts. Participants will also learn information related to disclosing their hearing loss to employers and requesting workplace accommodations.

Website/Social Media Update

<http://www.chha-bc.org/youthpsp/resources/>

This past year, we have launched several blog series on different themes:

- *Summer Health Series* (topics include: how to protect your hearing aid in the water, air travel accommodations, and travelling tips)
- *Back to School Series* (tips to prepare for a new school year, book list feature deaf and hard of hearing characters)
- *Young Adult Spotlight* (showcases the success stories from a diverse group of hard of hearing individuals. We currently have 6 profiles)

We are currently working on a new series on independent living, which will be published over the summer.

Two new handouts were published:

1. [Disclosure of Hearing Loss in The Workplace](#)
2. [Hearing Aid Compatible Technology Pamphlet](#)

Google Analytics indicated that the website receives an average of 151 visits per month. Frequent pages visited were BC Buddies, Young Adult Spotlight, and Workshops.

A Facebook page was created (<https://www.facebook.com/chhabcypsp/>), increasing our visibility in the online community. We have had new inquiries about our services since then.

Mentorship Referrals

Requests to us continue to come from teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing though there was one independent inquiry. Four were processed this past year:

1. Burnaby – 4 young adults were invited to speak to a group of elementary students about their experiences using equipment and navigating peer relationships
2. Delta – connected a Grade 12 student with a young adult in the auto industry
3. Maple Ridge – shared info on program and community activities for 16-18 year old students
4. Vancouver – a 19 year old student seeking to participate in the program for social connections

Other News

Representation at AG Bell Conference



From July 1st to 3rd, Bowen attended the AG Bell Convention in which he co-presented a workshop on self-advocacy. A showcase on the Peer Support Program was included in the presentation as an example. It garnered interests from many people in the audience, whom wants to adopt the program in their communities. One parent even asked if she can drive up from Bellingham to participate.

Representation at Experience 150 & Me

Through his work with the Peer Support Program, Bowen had the honour of being invited to a panel discussion with the Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage, organized by Experiences Canada 150 & Me on September 25th. To commemorate Canada's 150th anniversary, 150 young inspired and inspiring Canadians were selected to attend a discussion focusing on opportunities and challenges facing Canada's future.



Following that was a reception hosted by the Prime Minister of Canada in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Luckily Bowen was the first group to speak with Prince William and of course brought up Canadian Hard of Hearing

Association and the work of BC Youth Peer Support Program to empower youth in reaching their potentials. Prince William wish us the very best of luck!

Future Plans

Educational and Social Activities

- Continuation of BC Buddies with a change in format and structure
- Continuation of workshops in the topics of employment and post-secondary transition
- Co-organize social activities with school districts, assisted by our volunteers
- “*Challenge Life!*” weekend (tentative name) – a youth retreat targeted towards high school (16+) and post-secondary students in building leadership and self-advocacy skills, currently in preliminary brainstorm phase

Website & Social Media

- New topics: independent living, technology review
- Blogs from post-secondary students sharing their journey of getting into program of study, program highlights, and plans after graduation
- Establishment of an interactive forum
- Expand program visibility on Facebook

Administrative Plans

- Connect with post-secondary institutions and audiology clinics to recruit young adults who may be potential blog contributors or volunteers
- Research feasibility in providing outreach support for rural regions (e.g., Kelowna, Prince George)

Acknowledgements

We would like to take a moment to thank the following people who contributed their time to support the program from 2016-2017:

- Tasha Cox
- Calvin Chow
- Taylor Hallenback
- Alisha Kalia
- Jesse Kazemir
- Nicole Leung
- Allison Lui
- Hart Plommer
- Elissa Robb
- Andrew Tjia

We would also like to thank Marilyn and the staff at CHHA-BC office for their continual support in taking care the administrative/financial paperwork. Lastly none of the aforementioned activities would have been possible without the funds from Caldor Foundation and CHHA Foundation.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Bowen Tang & Joy Gong
CHHA-BC Youth Peer Support Program
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