



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association BC Youth Peer Support Program

Fifth Annual Report June 2017 to May 2018

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 (DHH) youth in their navigation of academic and social lives in secondary and post-secondary institutions. We aim to create a platform where DHH youth can be empowered to foster active leadership, provide peer support, advocate and promote hearing awareness in their communities.

Family Weekend Camp – September 1st to 3rd 2017, Camp Elkgrove

The revival of this popular camp in partnership with CHHA-BC Parent's Branch was a huge success! Spaces filled up quickly once the announcement was made – 23 families applied with 4 being put on the waitlist. In the end we welcomed a total of 43 participants, which composed of 17 hard of hearing children, 6 siblings, 13 parents, 3 cooks and 4 leaders. For a detailed summary, please refer to the enclosed report submitted to CHHA Foundation, the main sponsor of this event.

BC Buddies

This past year we have hosted 3 get-togethers, each time under a specific theme (click each one for the reflection post):

- November 18th, 2017 – [Indoor Rock Climbing](#)
- February 17th, 2018 – [Fear Factor](#)
- April 28th, 2018 – [Laser Tag & Luncheon](#)

Each event attracted an average of 10-12 participants. Altogether we had 18 new individuals and 6 returning whom attended more than one BC Buddies. They came from various parts of Lower Mainland: Burnaby, Delta, Maple Ridge, New Westminster, North Vancouver, and Surrey.

Workshops

UBC Mix n' Mingle Nights

For the first time we were able to partner with UBC Access & Diversity in organizing a mingle night on November 2nd 2017 for current UBC students and alumni. It was an informal evening where attendees shared their experiences navigating the classrooms, seeking employment, and use of technology. 5 students and 4 alumni, along with 2 CHHA representatives and Dr. Ruth Warick attended. The response was overall positive.

A follow-up event took place on March 27th 2018 where speakers from WIDHH were invited to speak on employment. Again 9 participants attended and they found the content relevant to their interests.

[Hear Your Way to Success](#) – December 5th 2017

We hosted our 3rd session of this segment with new additions to our panel: Clovis Chung (financial advisor), Jesse Kazemir (engineer), and George Hartjoulakis (auto mechanic/business

owner). Nicole Leung, our workshop coordinator, facilitated the workshop and also shared her experiences as a nurse. There was a turnout of 11 people: 3 students, 4 parents, and 4 teachers, lower than expected.

In consideration of those who cannot attend the session in-person, we are currently in the process of creating a webinar on this topic so that the content can be accessed by anyone across B.C.

[Post-Secondary Transition Workshop](#)

In continuing partnership with PCAS, PDHHS, and WIDHH, we delivered a session on January 31st 2018 at Burnaby South Secondary/BC School for the Deaf. A new structure was used where participants navigated between stations to obtain different pieces of information, such as accommodation & services, financial resources, technology, community resources, etc. About 60+ participants: students, parents, and teachers attended.

Website & Social Media

In the 2017/2018 year, we have published the following on the website (www.chha-bc.org/youthpsp):

- *Advocacy Series*
 - [Finding Your Way](#)
 - [On or Off? Navigating an Amusement Park](#)
 - [The Little Advocacy That Could](#)
- *Young Adult Spotlight* – 4 new additions: Monique Les, Mark Sherwood, Yat Li, and Michael Currie. Their stories can be found [here](#). We are mindful to ensure there is a gender balance.

After almost a year-long search we have the honour of having Monique Les join the Peer Support Program as technical writer. Having started on May 1st 2018 she has published 2 blogs throughout the Better Hearing and Speech Month.

1. [Barrier Free Communication](#) #communicateawareness
2. [7 Habits of Highly Effective Hard of Hearing Teens](#)

Google Analytics indicated that the website has received 537 visits and 2,165 page views between March and May 2018, certainly a huge increase compared to previous years.

Our [Facebook page](#) is steadily growing with 89 followers. On average our posts reach ~300 to 400 people, with a record breaking one being 1,400 people for the post on “*The Little Advocacy That Could*”.

Referrals & Requests

This past year we have received a total of 16 direct requests via emails and Facebook for information, one-to one support or invitation to organize an activity in their local area:

- 5 prospective and current university students inquiring about the process to obtain accommodation & services, connecting with other young adults
- 4 TDHHS requesting a PSP event in their local area – Cowichan Valley, Campbell River/Comox, Prince George, Terrace

- 3 parents requesting resources to support their child at home
- 3 requests for brochure and information about upcoming activities
- 1 request for volunteers/young adult role models to support an event in Vancouver

Other News

Outreach activities

In response to the increasing demand from outside the Lower Mainland we have attempted to organize informal get-togethers in collaboration with the local TDHHs:

- Cowichan Valley Mix n' Mingle – February 8th 2018
 - 12 hard of hearing students ages 6 to 16 attended the event, and had the opportunity to ask Bowen about his experiences with hearing loss and use of technology
- Kelowna Mix n' Mingle – May 8th 2018 (cancelled due to insufficient numbers)
- Vancouver Island BC Buddies in Duncan – June 2nd 2018 (cancelled due to insufficient numbers)
- Terrace Year-End Gathering – June 22nd 2018
(Providing logistics support and sending a representative)
- Prince George Technology Info Session – TBD

Community partnerships

The Peer Support Program is represented at following community meetings:

- Council of Service Providers – November 17th 2017 & May 25th 2018
- Post-Secondary Communication Access Services (PCAS) Advisory Committee – January 29th 2018

We recently received invitations from BC Deaf Sports Federation and Deaf Youth Today to collaborate on including hard of hearing youth in their existing programs. We look forward to the conversations coming ahead.

Staffing & Volunteers

Currently we have 6 regular staff and 1 contractor:

- Directors: Bowen Tang & Joy Gong
- BC Buddies Coordinator: Allison Lui
- Workshop Coordinator: Nicole Leung
- Young Adult Social Coordinator: Janno Lim
- Technical Writer: Monique Les
- Webmaster: Andrew Tjia

We also have a volunteer who joined us for one of the BC Buddies event as well as 4 individuals expressing interest to be a part of the program! A job description of general volunteers targeted towards high school and post-secondary students was created and will be posted online shortly for the next academic year.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

Activity	# of DHH youth served (2017/18)	# of DHH youth served (2016/17)
Family Weekend Camp	17	-
BC Buddies	36	12
UBC Mix n' Mingle Nights	18	-
Workshops: Hear Your Way to Success & Post-Secondary Transition	33	50
Outreach Events	12	-
Referrals & Requests	16	4
TOTAL	132	66

Future Plans

Educational and Social Activities

- Continuation of 3 BC Buddies events offered in the Lower Mainland
- At least 3 outreach events outside of Lower Mainland in collaboration with local TDHHS
- Collaboration with post-secondary institutions to host information sessions for DHH students
- Parent coffee nights – childcare offered in the format of board games or movies
- Expansion of workshop topics in the areas of:
 - Financial planning
 - Managing hearing stress
 - Be a problem solver – advocate for inclusion
- “*Challenge Life!*” (tentative name) – a weekend retreat in Spring 2019, targeted towards senior high school and post-secondary students in building leadership and self-advocacy skills, a proposal has been submitted to Cochlear Canada
- 3-week summer camp in July 2019
- Family Weekend Camp 2019

Website & Social Media

- New blog topics: independent living, mental health resources, public accessibility, technology review
- Continuation of Young Adult Spotlights – plans to recruit current post-secondary students sharing their journeys of getting into program of study, program highlights, and plans after graduation
- Expand social media engagement, looking into feasibility of an interactive forum
- YouTube channel: vlogs

Administrative Plans

- Both directors and 1 young adult will receive training from the Online Mentorship Program offered by CHHA-BC & CHHA Vancouver
- Bowen Tang, co-Director, will be available on Fridays beginning in September 2018 to provide 1:1 support or plan outreach events upon requests
- Continue conversations with community partners on possible collaboration projects

- BC Deaf Sports Federation
- Children's Hearing & Speech Centre of BC
- Deaf Youth Today
- Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Post-Secondary Communication Access Services
- Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- University of British Columbia Access & Diversity
- Recruitment of high school and post-secondary volunteers starting in the Fall 2018

Acknowledgements

We would like to take a moment to thank the following people and agencies who contributed their time and space to support the program from 2017-2018:

- Dr. Marilyn Dahl – offering valuable advice to the program
- Dr. Ruth Warick (UBC Access & Diversity) – collaboration on Mix n' Mingle Nights
- Tori Jackson – volunteer at BC Buddies
- Clovis Chung, George Hartjoulakis, Jesse Kazemir – panelists at Hear Your Way to Success
- Fiona Young – TDHH in Cowichan Valley School District
- Mark Sherwood, Yat Li, Michael Currie – Young Adult Spotlights
- CHHA BC office (Courtney, Stephanie, and Viviana) – providing administrative support
- CHHA BC Parent's Branch – collaboration on Family Weekend Camp
- Accurate Realtime Inc. – providing accessibility at workshops
- Children's Hearing and Speech Centre of BC – providing a venue for BC Buddies
- Douglas College Student Interpreters – providing accessibility at BC Buddies

We would also like to acknowledge the donors whose contribution have made all the activities possible:

- Caldor Foundation
- CHHA Foundation
- CHHA North Shore Branch
- Phonak

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

Respectfully submitted,

Bowen Tang & Joy Gong
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