



Hands & Voices New Mexico

December 2013

“What works for your child is what makes the choice right.”

Back to School Presentation Summary

Speaker: New Mexico Rhodes Scholar, Rachel Kolb
(Watch the presentation on line, <http://hvnm.org>)

By Judy Underhill, HVNM Board President

Our “Back to School” event at the Museum of Natural History and Science, was both invigorating and motivating as Rachel Kolb encouraged deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) youth to build their self-confidence and self-advocacy skills.

She credited her parents’ recognition of the importance of communication early in her life and strongly recommended that we pursue all the knowledge we can for the sake of our children. One of Rachel’s life lessons was acknowledging the need to understand herself and her needs to become her own, best self-advocate.

She shared five ways to achieve this:

- 1. Find strategies that work for you.** Try different strategies and learn which ones work best for you, whether it is sign language interpreters, real time captioning, note takers, an FM system, or limiting the number of people in your groups. Rachel says, ***“Whatever your strategies are, embrace them.”***
- 2. Find people who support you.** Find the people who will take the time to help you communicate and to understand

your needs. You will probably need to educate them about what it means to be deaf. People who support you could include conscious communicators, professionals, and last but not least, your family. Rachel emphasized ***“It’s so important to pursue those relationships and value them.”***

- 3. Invest in yourself.** Rachel invested time learning skills to communicate with her hearing peers. Speech therapy was challenging but an investment she needed in order to learn and improve her speaking skills. Parents’ and families’ investments in your future are important too. Rachel continued saying, ***“Investing in yourself means being deliberate about the skills you want to have and pursuing them, even if that’s not easy. And I’m sure that you’ll reap the rewards of your effort in the end.”***

- 4. Learn how to express what you need.** Expressing what you need will help you achieve your goals. When you get to college, contact the disability resource office for the support services you need, whether it’s interpreters, captioning, note taking, or something else. Rachel concluded, ***“Just like in your social life,***

you are the one who is ultimately responsible for letting them know what you need.”

- 5. Say something!** Rachel felt point four was important enough to reiterate. She summarized by saying ***“The only way I’m going to make change happen in this world is if I take that responsibility upon myself.”***

This last point sums up her presentation beautifully by reminding us that when we take responsibility for ourselves we essentially teach others how to communicate with us and our children. She concluded by saying, ***“Whatever you all in this room decide works for you, whatever you discover, whatever you decide to do, just use that knowledge, seize it, and run with it. Never stop, and never let anyone tell you that you can’t. You can.”***

To watch a close captioned, signed video of Rachel’s presentation, please visit our website: **<http://hvnm.org>**

With Sincere Appreciation To Our Generous Sponsors:

Rachel Kolb - creating this presentation and sharing it with us.

Museum of Natural History and Science - offering space, reduced fee museum entries, tours and installing a loop.

Rio Grande Connections - providing ASL interpreters.

NMSD - providing Spanish Interpreters.

Mike Langner - donating and installing a loop for this event, providing technical support.

Yadira Delgado - translating the newsletters announcing event

Jessica Ramirez - taking photography of the event.

You - coming out and joining and supporting HVNM

Thank you all!

Please complete and mail in survey and 2013 dues!

Stay in Touch!

We've changed our email address!

Our old email address was quite a mouthful, so while we were reviewing our media contacts, we streamlined our email address. Please check in with us in one of a number of ways:

NEW E-mail:

parentgroup@hvn.org

Website:

www.hvn.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/handsandvoicesnm

Twitter:

www.twitter.com/handvnm

Pinterest:

www.pinterest.com/hvn.org

2013 Membership

New "Institutional Membership" category for organizations who wish to support HVNM. Institutional Members receive 20 copies of our quarterly publications organization.

Please be sure to join Hands & Voices NM Chapter:

Parent/Family: \$25 per year

Professional: \$40 per year

Institutional: \$150 per year

Benefits to you:

- Receive *The Communicator*, a Headquarters H&V quarterly newspaper
- Receive quarterly H&V NM Chapter newsletter
- Information on workshops, resources, events
- Informational support for you and your family
- Opportunities for parents and professionals working together to help children who are D/HH

Scholarships are available if you wish to become a member but cannot afford the dues, please contact us.

Thank you!

Meet Our New Board Member, Jessica Sanchez!

My name is Jessica Sanchez and I'm a mother of three children. Max (five years old) was born deaf, Marcelo (two years old) and Mariela (nine months old) were born hearing. When we found out that Max was deaf our first thought was to learn ASL so we could start communicating with him right away. We were not upset or mad with the diagnosis, just had a fear of the unknown. When Max was 12 months old he received his first cochlear implant and by two years old he received his second one. He attends an oral school where he is doing incredible! We still practice ASL at home because you never know what the future might bring. I'm so happy to be part of this group to help other parents learn about all the options that are offered for deaf and hard of hearing children here in New Mexico. There are so many options to pick from and I want to help parents with that.

Shout out to Yadira Delgado for translating HVNM Newsletter!

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If you have a personal story, ideas for future articles, or if you know of an upcoming event that would benefit our readers, please let us know:

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