



FHSR

Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources

2024 Impact Report



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A Sound Investment In Our Children

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Year of Education: In Review

2024 was FHSR's Year of Education. We kicked off the year with the official launch of the Education Coordinator program, and by year's end Dr. Anna Tess had impacted 248 children and professionals (see page 4 for more of Anna's extraordinary work). We also expanded the Ages and Stages resource on our website, and, in partnership with CHS (Chicago Hearing Society), created a bold new initiative in early childhood literacy.

All of FHSR's growth is based on our response to the needs we hear from the parents of those we serve and the professionals with whom we work. The Education Coordinator position was created in direct response to the needs of parents and professionals for assistance in advocating for the accommodations and support their children need to thrive.

Another example of our strategic, responsive growth is FHSR's donation of loaner cochlear implant batteries and chargers to the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). FHSR has been deepening our partnership with CPS for years, and in 2024 realized our goal of serving all five of the district's deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) cluster schools with our pre-K-1st grade classroom-based Music to My Ears program. We became aware that children were coming to school with uncharged devices, limiting their participation in MTME and compromising their academic progress. We heard the need, and we responded - and we'll continue to respond, thanks to another landmark donation earmarked for the purchase of loaner hearing aid supplies.

Whether you attended or sponsored an event, made a donation, shared our newsletter with your friends and colleagues, or bought a ticket to Rock the Town for Hearing, your support allowed FHSR to offer our proven, effective programming free of charge to the children and families who need it the most. After a year of extraordinary growth in 2024, 2025 will be FHSR's Year of Access & Inclusion, and we are focused on continuing to grow our program strategically to meet the needs we hear from our partners.

Thank you for partnering with us in this critical work!

Kristin J. Van Dyke

FHSR Executive Director

374

families and professionals served by the FHSR Education Coordinator through literacy trainings, book scholarship, 1:1 counseling and professional presentations



BY THE NUMBERS 2024



7,821

unique users on the Ages and Stages and Parent Resources pages on the FHSR website



480

books sent out by our EARs Book Scholarship program

6

early literacy trainings for parents and Early Intervention professionals



5 out of 5



CPS DHH cluster schools served by the classroom-based MTME program



\$10,000

worth of loaner cochlear implant equipment provided to CPS schools

100%

of participants in Music Therapy saw progress towards their individualized goals



2

Music Therapy groups - including one for children with additional disabilities



\$7,000

to Rush's SCOPE clinic for loaner hearing aids



160

people registered for Cheers for Ears, our largest event to date



956

total children served



EMPOWERING THE DHH COMMUNITY THROUGH EDUCATION AND SUPPORT.



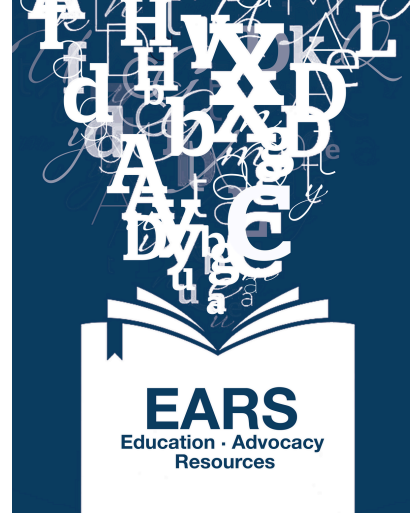
FHSR's vision is a world where children with hearing loss can reach their full potential and enjoy the same social, educational, and economic opportunities as their typically-hearing peers.



2024: Our Year of Education

FHSR HAS...

Set the standard of care for DHH children in and outside of the classroom, and become known as a resource and partner for education professionals. By providing 1:1 counseling, professional development and parent resources, we strive to become a trusted partner in every DHH child's educational journey.



FHSR EDUCATION COORDINATOR NUMBERS

848

Individual
Contacts

248

Parents &
Professionals
Supported

480

Books Sent Out by
Our EARs Book
Scholarship Program

LITERACY TRAINING

FHSR partnered with CHS (Chicago Hearing Society) to create training for Early Intervention professionals and parents to share the best practices for reading to deaf and hard of hearing children. Over six sessions, the program trained 25 Early Intervention professionals and 10 parents.

Families who took the training, or who are being served by trained Early Intervention professionals received four free books from FHSR. Parents choose titles from a vetted list of books featuring children with diverse hearing loss, assistive technology and communication styles. These books reinforce a healthy self-esteem in children who rarely see their identity reflected in print.



EDUCATION COORDINATOR SERVICES

Education Coordinator Dr. Anna Tess offers free 1:1 counseling to families seeking to establish, maintain or adjust an IEP or 504 plan. She also provides support to classroom teachers and administrators seeking to implement accommodations. Dr. Tess provided several professional development presentations and conference presentations, including "Strategies for Children with Sensory Disabilities," a virtual presentation for Early Intervention professionals throughout Illinois.

AGES AND STAGES

FHSR continues to maintain our Ages and Stages online resource for parents and professionals, continually updating it and adding new and helpful resources for DHH children at every step of their educational journey. The Ages and Stages hub expanded to include a page on post-secondary education and careers. New parent resources were added as downloadable PDF's, and the page hosting these quickly became the third-most visited page on our entire website.



WHAT'S NEXT?

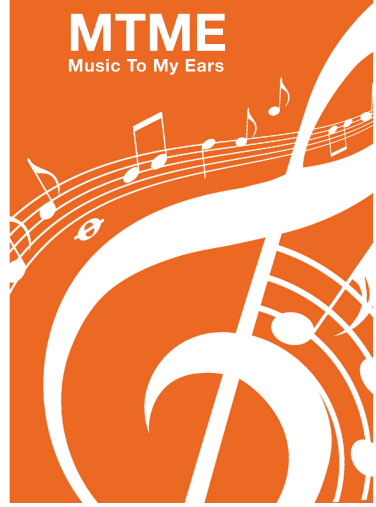
In 2025, FHSR will launch our Parent Ambassador Program to provide peer mentorship and outreach. 2025 is our year of access & inclusion and we will be expanding our programming and resources for students who are deaf and DWD. This will include expanded use of ASL and Spanish interpreters, translation of materials into Spanish, and creating spaces that are sensory-friendly.

HOW TO BE YOUR CHILD'S **Best Advocate**

- 1 Educate Yourself
- 2 Get Organized
- 3 Take the Time and Prepare
- 4 Read Correspondence & Put It In Writing
- 5 Communicate with the School
- 6 Find an Advocate
- 7 Attend Parent Trainings and Network

DEAF WITH DISABILITY

Did you know that an estimated 40-60% of children with hearing loss will also be diagnosed with at least one additional disability? FHSR's Education Coordinator works to provide resources and counseling to these students, known as "deaf with disability" (DWD), and their parents and educators. Dr. Anna Tess posted multiple blogs with helpful information for parents and educators, including lists of recommended toys for children with hearing loss and tips for 504s and IEPs.



This is Music to Our Ears:

FHSR HAS...

Expanded school-based Music to My Ears (MTME) programs to serve all 5 CPS DHH cluster schools, and our successful programs continue at Terrace Elementary (NSSEO) and Child's Voice. Our broadened curriculum now includes full ASL support, plus accommodations for DWD students and medically complex students.

MTME'S NUMBERS

- 7** Scholarship partner schools across Chicago & Suburbs
- 16** NEW Scholars and Early Childhood Scholarships
- 24** Instrument Scholarships w/ focus on piano, drums, percussion, violin, ukulele, and musical theatre

MUSIC THERAPY

Sixteen students, with siblings, enrolled in our twelve-week program for children age 4-9. This research-based, tuition-free program was expanded to meet the unique needs of children who are DWD or using ASL to communicate.



CLASSROOM-BASED MTME

In 2024, 86 students across 7 schools received music enrichment in their pre-K to 1st grade classrooms. The number of children assessed as good, very good or excellent on the "Call and Response" measure improved from an initial 66% to 85% by the end of the 2023/2024 school year.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2025, 2 new schools will be added for early childhood and instrument lessons: Edge Music Academy in Homewood (instruments) and Miss Angie's Music (early childhood) in Homer Glen (with additional locations in Frankfort, Oak Lawn, Worth, La Grange Park, and Orland Park). FHSR is expanding the MTME scholarship's geographic reach to serve more families in their communities.

Through Support & Outreach:

FHSR HAS...

Provided \$10,000 worth of loaner cochlear implant batteries and chargers from all three major manufacturers to all five DHH elementary clusters in the Chicago Public Schools so that no child will go without access to the world of sound during the school day. We have also hosted numerous FREE events for families of children with hearing loss.



FHSR continues our support of the **Hart Family Education Coordinator** at the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, as well as our support for a Music Therapy Pilot Program at Lurie's.

HART COCHLEAR IMPLANT EDUCATION COORDINATOR'S NUMBERS:	172 Students Assisted	39 Meetings Conducted	9 Presentations Given	2 Conferences/ Workshops Attended
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Music therapy at Lurie's expanded to 3 locations, with 80 co-treatment sessions and 3 training seminars for Auditory Verbal therapists focused on helping them apply music techniques in sessions where a music therapist is not present. Families report that the therapy boosts their child's mood and decreases anxiety.

SCOPE CLINIC AT RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

Through our Loaner Hearing Aid Bank initiative, FHSR made a \$7,000 donation to the SCOPE clinic at Rush University, which provides under- and uninsured patients of all ages with access to high-quality hearing services. The clinic is also training the next generation of audiologists by offering student internships.

HOSTED EVENTS

- For the first time, FHSR offered two **"Bowling With Friends"** events; one in Chicago and one in suburban Berwyn, with a total of 187 registrants.
- FHSR's annual **"Cheers for Ears"** event brought together over 160 people for a fun family concert at Ravinia featuring "the queen of children's music," Laurie Berkner. The show featured ASL interpretation and a shout-out to FHSR from Laurie herself!
- FHSR offered its first **"Family Day"** event at the **Museum Of Contemporary Art Chicago** in December of 2024.
- **"Mal's Pal's,"** led by Board Director Jen Evangelides and her family, was the #1 fundraising team for Move for the Kids! Come walk with us again on Jun 1, 2025.



WHAT'S NEXT?

With generous grant support, FHSR will expand the equipment packs offered to Chicago Public Schools to include loaner equipment for hearing aids, and provide loaner equipment kits to additional schools. We will also offer more frequent, casual gatherings with our new Family Day series while continuing to provide our well-loved and well-attended signature family events.

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENCY.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW:

INCOME

Total Individual Contribution	181,315
Release of Investment Reserves	152,000
Release of Program Reserve for A&G	30,000
Grant Income	165,500
Special Event	13,040

TOTAL INCOME **\$541,855**

PROGRAM EXPENSES

Clinical & Community Outreach	80,415
EARs Education Program	142,821
MTME Music Program	202,380

TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES **\$425,616**

OPERATING EXPENSES

Fundraising	26,876
General Operations	25,324
Professional Services	233,906

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES **\$286,106**

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$711,722**

NET OPERATING INCOME **(\$169,867)**

NET OPERATING INCOME W/ RELEASE OF RESERVES **\$936**

VALUE OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO **\$2,450,000**

Thank you to our 2024
Rock the Town for
Hearing Sponsors!

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MED-EL

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Sorenson

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Syntec Group

Yoga Among Friends

Cornell-Brewer Foundation

The UPS Store
Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, IL

IL Academy of Audiology



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John DiChiara*	Rudy Radasevich
Liz Galster*	Steven Salzman
Kate Gilliat*	Megan Worthington*

LIFETIME DIRECTORS:

Jim Borovsky
Pat Livingston

*denotes new member

"From learner to leader, I'm grateful to pay forward the support that transformed my son's life and our family's journey. Empowering deaf and hard of hearing children is a symphony of hope, and I'm proud to play a part."

-Kat Allen, Board Director since 2024

FHSR'S STAFF:

Kristen J. Van Dyke, Executive Director
Anna Tess, Education Coordinator
Kate Spelman, Director of Development
Jean Kaiser, Director of Events & Communications

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

SUPPORTERS • EDUCATORS • ADVOCATES

For many years, I have seen the impact that FHSR has had on the growth and development of children with hearing loss. Now being on the board, I can see how FHSR fueled by the shared passion of each individual that works with and supports this organization. I'm excited about the future and the impact we will continue to make."

-Eva Lopez, Board Director since 2024



Thank You

Thank you for your continued support of The Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources and for making a sound investment in our children!

2025 is FHSR's **year of Access & Inclusion**. Join us at FHSR.org to learn more about how we are investing in our programs to make sure every child has the chance to thrive.

