

# FHSR

Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

*A sound investment in our children*



# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2023 offered the Foundation for Hearing & Speech Resources (FHSR) many opportunities to amplify our impact on the lives of Illinois children living with hearing loss. In fact, **we served 30% more children** than in 2022 by expanding our reach from Chicago out to Oswego and up to Grayslake, ensuring deaf and hard of hearing children in these communities have every opportunity to participate in our unique tuition-free programs. We also saw **an increase of 25% in the number of children enrolled in more than one of our programs** and/or attending a community event.

With your support, our three program pillars, Music to My Ears, Clinical and Community Outreach, and EARs - Education, Advocacy and Resources - each saw tremendous growth and achieved new milestones, which you can read about in the pages that follow.

I want to thank our Board of Directors, Advisory Board, Associate Board, corporate sponsors, funders, donors and YOU for your continued support. With your help, we are able to keep all of our programs tuition-free, allowing equal access for all children and families. **Thank you for making a sound investment in our children!**

With gratitude,

*Kristen Van Dyke*

**KRISTEN VAN DYKE**

Executive Director

The  
Foundation for  
Hearing &  
Speech  
Resources  
(FHSR)  
develops and  
funds  
innovative  
programs to  
support Deaf  
and Hard of  
Hearing  
Children and  
Young Adults

[Click here to watch](#)  
["A Closer Look" On our](#)  
[YouTube channel.](#)





# FHSR

Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources

## Year at a Glance

**223** children served by the Hart Family Education Coordinator at Lurie Children's Hospital



**30** hearing aids, ear molds and accessories purchased for the loaner hearing aid bank at Advocate Children's Hospital in Oak Lawn



**25%**

increase in children enrolled in more than one program or opportunity through FHSR



**30%** increase in number of children served from 2022 to 2023



From 2022 to 2023, we doubled the number of children enrolled in early childhood music classes and our instrumental scholarship program.



Celebrating two new partner music schools: in Grayslake, LaGrange, Hinsdale and Burr Ridge; bringing us to 9 partner schools across the greater Chicago metro area.



# BOARD DEVELOPMENT

**In 2023, FHSR welcomed Brett Fealy as a new Board Director and two new staff members.**



## **Brett Fealy - Board Director**

Brett is the Founder and President of ElectronicMedia Technicians which designs, installs and services home automation systems for the luxury

residential market throughout the US. Brett previously served on the board of LaunchU, which helps underserved youth achieve collegiate and career success.

Brett and Megan's first child, son Camden (Cam), was FHSR's 2023 Champion Child. Cam was diagnosed with hearing loss at 15 months at the Ann & Robert H Lurie Children's Hospital and was fitted with hearing aids, which he calls his "magic ears." Now, three years later, Cam loves his preschool and music classes, especially singing his favorite songs. He is also the proud big brother of newly arrived baby sister Colette! Brett and Megan are thankful for the role FHSR plays in providing advice and counsel regarding the best educational, musical, and enrichment programs for children like Cam.

*Brett says: "When we found out about Cam's hearing loss, we went looking for a community for young kids - something that would allow him to be around kids like him, and allow me and Megan to be able to be around other parents. ... I just remember that fear, that uncertainty, when we found out about Cam's hearing loss - how we didn't know anyone and wanted to meet people in similar situations as us. I wanted to become more involved with FHSR to provide back to other parents what we received.*

*When a charity is always looking to the future, that's really exciting for me. There are so many moving parts at FHSR, and so much movement in so many directions."*

## **Board of Directors**

Ellen Babbitt  
Heather Bennett  
Jim Borovsky  
Jennifer Evangelides  
Brett Fealy  
Carey Gelfand  
David Gelfand  
Steve Hallenbeck  
Robert Handler  
Erik Kessler  
Daniel Lockwood  
Paul Lurie  
Rudy Radasevich  
Steve Salzman

## **Associate Board**

Jamie Davidson  
Rick Denis  
Katie Farnsworth  
Kiersten Flynn  
Kelly Schicher  
Elise Sundberg  
Kim Tasharski

## **Advisory Board**

Laura Corcoran  
Kate Gfeller  
Jeff Graunke  
Benj Kanters  
Amanda Long  
Scott Murray  
Trish Patterson  
Richard Reed

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT

## Staff

Kristen Van Dyke

Jean Kaiser

Kate Spelman

Anna Tess



### **Anna Tess - Education Coordinator**

Anna has been a part of FHSR for many years - first as the founder of our Associate Board, and then as a Board Director.

Now, Anna has joined the FHSR staff as our first-ever Education Coordinator. Prior to joining FHSR, Anna was an administrator and teacher at a school for children with hearing loss. She received a Doctorate in Special Education at Illinois State University, Masters in Educational Leadership from American College of Education, and Masters in Deaf Education at Vanderbilt University. Born deaf herself, Anna was among the first generation of cochlear implant recipients, receiving her first implant at the age of 2 and her second at the age of 19.



*"My goal is to work with the families of children living with hearing loss so the children have every opportunity to achieve educationally. I want to pay it forward and help kids like myself succeed and become confident in themselves."*

### **[Read more about Anna and the Education Coordinator Position on our Blog](#)**



### **Kate Spelman - Development Manager**

Kate joined FHSR in late 2023 as our Development Manager. She brings a deep background in nonprofit management and stewardship to her work at FHSR, having previously worked in higher ed, faith-based institutions and the social service sector.

*"I'm inspired by FHSR's mission to help children and young adults with hearing loss access and participate fully in all aspects of life. I'm excited to work with our staff, boards, families and donors to create a more just and inclusive world for all"*

***In 2024, FHSR will formally launch the Education Coordinator program, to support parents, teachers and administrators with technology, individualized education plans, 504 plans, accommodations, modifications, transitions and to provide classroom support to help their students achieve their fullest potential. Anna will also work to expand and improve FHSR's Ages and Stages program and oversee the public launch of our early literacy training program.***



# FHSR PROGRAMS

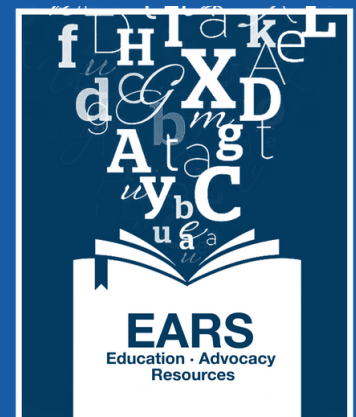
FHSR creates and supports innovating programming in three pillars: Music, Education, and Clinical & Community Outreach to deliver unique programs to deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children at no cost to their families.

**Music To My Ears (MTME)** programming provides a continuum of tuition-free music classes for DHH children through our nine partner schools, from early childhood music enrichment classes to individual instrument lessons and school-based music programs. FHSR also provides tuition-free music therapy based on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Kate Gfeller.

**Education. Advocacy. Resources. (EARs):** FHSR strives to be a neutral research- and medical-based resource for parents of children with hearing loss, with an emphasis on the importance of literacy. In 2023 we undertook the development of a new early literacy training program for early intervention service professionals with Chicago Hearing Society and expanded our online Ages and Stages parent resource.

**Clinical Community Outreach (C&CO):** FHSR provides key funding for pediatric loaner hearing aids to audiology centers, assuring no child goes without access to hearing amplification while their hearing aids are being repaired or replaced. The Hart Family Cochlear Implant Education Coordinator serves patients of the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

Free family events have been the cornerstone to the Foundation's community outreach and advocacy. By bringing the community together at fun and educational events throughout the year, FHSR supports parent connections and fosters self-esteem in DHH children.





[Click here for descriptions of all of our music programming.](#)

## **School-based Music Programs**

Based on our past success with the school-based program, in 2023 FHSR added two new Chicago Public Schools - Kinzie and Bell Elementary Schools - to the roster of Pre-K/1st grade deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) classrooms. Our partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) allows FHSR to increase reach into minority and underserved communities in Chicago. In working with CPS, we have adjusted our curriculum to better meet the needs of children who are defined as “Deaf Plus,” with other disabilities in addition to their hearing loss.

## **Early Childhood and Instrument Scholarships**

In 2023, FHSR nearly doubled the number of DHH students in our scholarship program for early childhood and instrument lessons. This year saw the largest gains in our instrument scholarships, with students taking lessons on instruments ranging from piano to drums, guitar and ukulele. In 2023, we celebrated new partnerships with Tiny Toes Music (located in La Grange, Hinsdale and Burr Ridge) for early childhood enrichment and with The School of Rock (Oak Park and Northbrook locations) for instrument lessons.

## **Music Therapy**

In its second year, our small group music therapy session for children ages 4-8 was held in 2 locations, Chicago and Western Springs, and extended to 12 weeks to increase the benefits that participants receive from this DHH-specific curriculum. Enrollment nearly doubled from our first year, with several re-enrollments from our first year.



*In early 2024, FHSR will launch a new partnership with Jamieson Elementary School, a third CPS DHH cluster school.*



[Click here for full descriptions of all EARs programming.](#)

## **Ages & Stages**

In 2023, the website's [Ages and Stages](#) section continued to grow. Because the landscape is always changing, we are continually monitoring to make sure we have the most accurate and up-to-date information included in this crucial parent resource. New developmental checklists and language information were added to the [Birth to Three](#) page to help parents assess their child's needs. New pages for key academic transition points were built out, including [1st Grade through High School](#) and [Educational Options: IEP vs 504](#).



## **The EARs Early Literacy Program**

In early 2023, FHSR partnered with Chicago Hearing Society to create an early childhood literacy program specifically for DHH children. The program is a “train the trainer” model, with CHS and FHSR offering training to early intervention service providers on incorporating effective reading strategies into their therapy sessions. Every family who is served by these trained therapists will have the option to enroll in the EARs Scholarship Book program, which will provide a free book of the parent's choosing from a list of vetted books featuring children with hearing loss each quarter.

***Coming soon: The Early Literacy Program will launch in the first quarter of 2024 with 3 in-person training seminars and 1 virtual training session.***







Clinical &  
Community  
Outreach

[Click here for full descriptions of C&Co programming.](#)

### **1-3-6 Awareness Campaign**

Based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health's Early Hearing Detection Intervention plan, FHSR stepped up to create our "1-3-6" campaign, helping inform parents of their next steps when a baby does not pass their newborn hearing screening and supporting new parents and caregivers at each step of the process. At FHSR, we think asking #howisthebabyshearing should be as commonplace as asking how much the baby weighed at birth.

### **Lurie Children's Programs:**

In 2023, we provided our 15th year of funding for the Hart Family Cochlear Implant Education Coordinator position, and provided a second year of funding for music therapy through a co-treatment model with Auditory Verbal Therapists. Hart Family Cochlear Implant Education Coordinator Jen Haney (pictured, right) supported 223 children with cochlear implants, and hosted Lurie Day, a training seminar for professionals in the pediatric hearing loss industry. Music Therapist Jackie Vilca worked directly with selected cochlear implanted children to boost attention, cognition and therapeutic outcomes.



*In 2024, FHSR will double the number of free family events offered, introducing a second **Bowling with Friends** event in the spring and a new "family day" outing in the fall, along with our annual **Cheers for Ears** concert.*

### **Loaner Hearing Aids**

Advocate Children's Hospital of Oak Lawn received \$10,000 to support their pediatric patients' hearing aid needs, assuring no child has to go without hearing while their device is being repaired or replaced.

### **Free Family Events**

FHSR families enjoyed an afternoon of bowling and pizza at the sold-out return of Bowling with Friends, and danced to the tunes of Laurie Berkner at our sold-out Ravinia outing.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

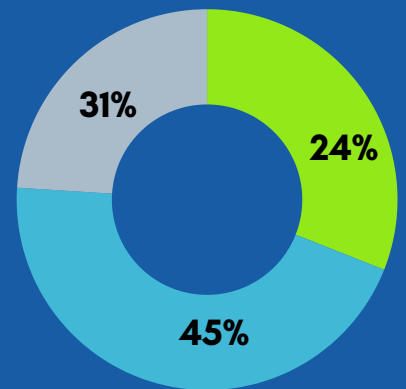
INCOME	
Individual Donations	\$126,151
Special Events	\$16,463
Foundation Grants	\$139,400
Corporate Sponsorship	\$10,750
Investment Support	\$66,000
Program A&G	\$14,381
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$373,145</b>

PROGRAM EXPENSES	
Music To My Ears (MTME) Program	\$110,473
Education (EARs) Program	\$59,056
Clinical & Community Outreach (C&CO) Program	\$74,772
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$244,301</b>

OPERATING EXPENSES	
Fundraising	\$86,176
Operations	\$20,587
Professional Services	\$145,209
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$251,972</b>
Net Operating Income	-\$123,128
Release of Program Reserves	\$198,950
<b>Operating Income w/ Program Release</b>	<b>\$75,822</b>

INVESTMENT INCOME	
Portfolio Value Ending 2024	\$2,456,273.00

## 2023 Program Percentage



- Music To My Ears (MTME)
- Education (EARs)
- Clinical & Community Outreach (C&CO)

# FHSR

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## ROCK THE TOWN FOR HEARING!

FHSR rocked out and surpassed our fundraising goal through the support of our generous sponsors and guests. We ate, drank, and enjoyed a great set from local cover band The Commoners, all in support of programming for deaf and hard of hearing children in Illinois.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!



Hear now. And always



#ROCKTHETOWNFORHEARING



SAVE THE DATE!

September 28, 2024

We're returning to Fitzgerald's for another evening of fun, food and friends, with another great live performance from The Commoners. Tickets will be available in late summer - watch your email and our website for details!

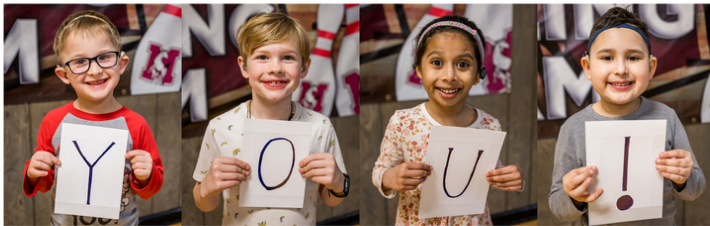
Corporate sponsorship opportunities are now available.

Rock the Town  
for Hearing  
2024



# FHSR

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## Thank you to all of our families, children and supporters!

FHSR creates and funds programs that help children and young adults with hearing loss participate fully in all aspects of life. Your generosity makes it possible for us to offer all our programming free of charge to children and their families, as well the hearing and educational professionals who work with them.

**Thank you for your support of the Foundation, and for making a sound investment in our children!**

**Follow Us on Social Media!**

