

# hear ME now!

## Lucas!!

Lucas is eating blueberries out of a plastic container. He drops them into the lid... plink...plunk...plink. It's *Blueberries for Sal* right in Hollis, Maine.

At 17 months, Lucas is the active second son of Tonya and Norman Ng. He has been wearing his cochlear implant for a little over 2 months. "It's so exciting to see him already beginning to catch up to his hearing cousin and babble the same variety of sound that she does", says his mom. "Our therapist from *hear ME now* is just as excited with his progress as I am – she's like part of the family. It's so easy to work with someone who genuinely cares about our family and appreciates all our work to encourage spoken language".

When she found out about Lucas's hearing loss, Tonya immediately began to research what auditory oral resources were available in Maine. She knew they wanted listening and spoken language to be part of their family life with Lucas. She says, "All families do things a little differently. For me, it helps to get all the information I can, and then I've learned to follow my gut. What works for our family is best for us."

"I've never felt any judgment from the people at *hear ME now* regarding our choices for our family. They have a unique expertise in Maine, and I don't know what we would have done without their support", says Tonya.



Photo courtesy Pierce McCleary

"In some ways, it's hard to imagine our life without hearing loss. It's not the journey we imagined, but in a way it's opened more of the world to us and our children. We have a network of caring, supportive families and professionals that have enriched our lives so much!"

Portland, ME 04104  
PO Box 896

hear ME now!  
Maine's only auditory oral education center...

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# HEAR ME! HEAR ME!

The gazette of *hear ME now!*

Fall 2011

## Well Received Pilot Program Leads to Expanded State Contract



Photo courtesy Pierce McCleary

Early childhood educators and parents are giving a big thumbs up to the Pilot Preschool Program – a partnership between the State Department

of Education and *hear ME now!* coaching classroom teachers in equipment use, teaching strategies to facilitate listening and spoken language development, and social supports for children with hearing loss. In pre and post rating scales, teachers improved their knowledge of hearing loss and use of hearing technology by at least 50%, and their observed use of auditory teaching strategies by over 40%.

The program is designed to establish cost effective, *community based* education for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and who communicate using spoken language. It provides ongoing training resources to early childhood center teachers to optimize the listening and language skills of children with hearing loss.

**"It was so helpful to observe the modeling of teaching strategies and then have the opportunity to discuss the reasoning behind them"** Arundel preschool teacher

Six different preschool classrooms participated in the program during the 2010-2011 school year. A *hear ME now* auditory oral teacher of the deaf spent extended periods of time as part of the classroom team

**"Our hMn coach was very open to going with the schedule of the class and suggesting strategies within the activities planned"** Lewiston preschool teacher

The successes of the Pilot Program have led to an expanded contract between the Department of Education and *hear ME now* for the 2011-2012 school year. Newly named SHIPS (Speech and Hearing in Preschool), the program will be expanded to include a distance learning component and provisions for professional development learning credits. By working closely with State case managers for children ages 3-5 with hearing loss, we will offer this exciting free program to many more early childhood educators – for the benefit of their current and future students with hearing loss!

## "Summer Camp" in July



Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual July "summer camp" for elementary students was once again well attended and well received. The *hear ME now* one day camps focus on the development of self-advocacy and hearing loss awareness. Through a fun combination of games and activities the *hear ME now* team facilitated the children's participation in reading stories about other children with hearing loss, writing their personal stories, and creating

videos to introduce themselves to their new classroom teacher in the fall. There was time for sharing thoughts and feelings about their own hearing loss, and practicing strategies to facilitate

communication within the mainstream setting. Of course, there were also many opportunities for playing with and learning from other children just like them.

This year's group was led by Julie Neumann, Listening and Spoken Language Specialist and Katelyn Driscoll, Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf both from *hear ME now!*

For more photos of the fun, visit our Facebook page at [hear-me-now!](http://hear-me-now!)

## DIRECTOR'S UPDATE



Sen. Susan Collins and Pam Dawson, Executive Director

Dear Friends of *hear ME now!*,

It is a pleasure to update you on the significant developments at *hear ME now* over the past months. In July, I joined 80 other OPTIONS school administrators in Washington DC for our annual meeting. As a member of a small delegation from several states, I was able to meet with members of Congress – including Senator Collins and Senator Snow's office. Our message to the 90 offices we visited was focused: "All families who have made an informed choice to communicate and learn through spoken language should have the option of using existing public funds for their child with hearing loss to attend programs with training and experience in listening and spoken language." Several legislators from all parts of the country have indicated an interest in supporting this effort. I will keep you informed of our work as it progresses.

As a further example of our ongoing commitment to partnership and capacity building, *hear ME now!* has been awarded a contract with the State Department of Education (DOE) to provide technical assistance to students and the professionals working with them on a STATEWIDE basis. This contract includes:

**Statewide Hearing Equipment program.** We will help the state

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# hear ME now!

## You're Invited!

Movie Day at *hear ME now!*

The Farmer's Cheese: A musical for Children with Hearing Loss  
(See the article on page 3 for a description of this delightful film)

**Saturday, November 12, 2011**  
**12:00 pm - 2:00 pm**

Please join us for a pizza reception in our newly expanded office space at 4 Fundy Road, Falmouth. The 20 minute film will begin at 1:00 pm. Popcorn provided! Everyone welcome!

RSVP to: Cindy at [crussell@hear-me-now.org](mailto:crussell@hear-me-now.org) or 207-781-7199

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## In Their Own Words...

### CI Implant Recipient: March 31st, 2011

I first began seriously thinking of a Cochlear Implant (CI) back in 2002 when I went completely deaf in my left ear...the nearest CI Center was in Boston...

I was excited when I heard that Mercy Hospital has approved this process [in 2008]. After a few months, the surgery was set for March 31st.

Surgery was scheduled and I was very nervous. The staff at Mercy Hospital were terrific, I couldn't have asked for better treatment.

It was three weeks till the CI could be turned on; I had no problems from the surgery, and almost no pain. Dr. Hearst didn't cut off much hair. The staples were removed in 8 days; it took two minutes and was painless. I realized I had almost no scar and it was difficult for anyone to see that I had even had the surgery done. I was back to work in 10 days. There was a little soreness but nothing major, I felt great.

Being one of the first CI's for MKM ENT Associates, was a learning process for everyone involved. I was completely overwhelmed when it was first turned on. Everything sounded so weird, voices sounded like "Alvin and the Chipmunks;" I was asked to listen for "beeps and tones" and had no idea what they were supposed to sound like. It seemed to take forever...and I was nervous and sweating buckets. I was very

concerned about what I was hearing, I couldn't understand voices, couldn't hear Dr. Hearst jingle his keys. After all the testing was done, my CI was programmed and I was sent out into the noisy world...I was a bit disheartened.

What was crucial as I look back was the sessions with Cathy Janelle from *hear ME now!* This would be my turning point; Cathy's knowledge and training were just what I needed. She was able to explain to me what I was hearing and how the exercises were training my brain to work with my ears again. What I can say, it has been a huge improvement from that upsetting day when it was first activated. I would strongly recommend *hear ME now!* to everyone who receives an implant and after each new programming. It just gets better and better each day.

My social life has been completely turned around. I'm talking to people everywhere I go. I'm slowly building my confidence in the implant. I am so thrilled with the CI and the clarity of the voices I am hearing. I have begun to talk to people who I used to avoid because I just couldn't understand them and now I can. There are no words to express how that makes me feel, every day is a new day and a new adventure. It's thrilling!

Sincerely,  
Davy Smith



Cathy Janelle working with Lucas

Photo courtesy Pierce McCleary

**hear ME now!**

**PO Box 896**  
**Portland, ME 04104**  
**207-781-7199**

[www.hear-me-now.org](http://www.hear-me-now.org)

*"Where children with hearing loss learn to listen and speak."*

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## The Farmer's Cheese



Photo courtesy Pierce McCleary

Based on a book by Geoff Plant of The Hearing Rehabilitation Foundation, "The Farmer's Cheese" is a piece of children's musical theater composed by Oliver Searle and performed by the Scottish ensemble "Symposia." Commissioned by MED-EL, the performance was created for children with cochlear implants from the ages of 4-8, but has appealed to a much larger audience. The piece is performed by two actors who play the hapless farmer and the mischievous mouse and is supported by musicians playing the flute, violin, cello, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone and trombone. It includes a wide range of musical styles, slapstick comedy, dance, and mime.

*hear ME now!* organized a wonderful group of friends and family to attend the lively performance held at the St. Raphael Parish Center in Medford, MA on July 18<sup>th</sup>. In attendance were Pam Dawson; Mitchell & Taylor Daigle; Valerie, Nathan, Maya and Lana Dukhey; Vivian Mikhail & Nadia Rosenburg; and photographer, Pierce McLeary. If you are interested in seeing this performance, please contact Cindy at *hear ME now!* to borrow a copy of the book and performance on DVD.

## hear ME now! is sharing its expertise

This fall and winter, the Listening and Spoken Language Specialists at *hear ME now!* will be providing a series of "Lunch and Learn" webinars to the Department of Education. Service Coordinators for children with hearing loss ages birth through 5 will have the opportunity to learn about the effect of hearing loss on child development, listening and spoken language options/outcomes and hearing assistive technology.

We are excited to be a part of this professional development initiative that will give Department of Education staff the tools they need to support families and access to expertise in the field of auditory oral education.

## Director's Update ... Cont from page 1

centralize and optimize its hearing assistive technology inventory for students with hearing loss. This includes training (either on site or by distance technology) for early childhood educators for all children receiving new equipment. **Professional Development** in facilitating listening and spoken language for DOE staff and contracted providers statewide.

**Tele intervention** for infants with hearing loss and their parents in their own home – *no matter where they live.* *hear ME now!* staff is receiving training from practitioners experienced on both the international and national level in this unique and truly exciting service delivery model. We look forward to trials in the late fall.

We have tripled our adult clients this spring and summer as the new cochlear implant program at Mercy Hospital has gained momentum. It is a privilege to be a part of the important work of their hearing rehabilitation and to welcome them to the *hear ME now!* community.

We so appreciate your ongoing support and interest in our work to ensure opportunities for children with hearing loss to learn to listen and speak! I hope to see many of you at our "Movie Day" on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

Pam

## SKI RACE UPDATE!

Thanks to our generous sponsors and skiers, the 9th Annual "Break the Sound Barrier" Ski Race at Shawnee Peak was yet another great success! In spite of the rain, we raised over \$23,000 to help children who are deaf or hard of hearing in the state of Maine.

### Winning Teams:

**Fastest Team Gross:** Time Warner Cable

**Fastest Team Net:** Time Warner Cable

**Fastest Male Skier:** Jake Dawson

**Fastest Female Skier:** Tina Novick

**Fastest Under 14:** Sarah Novick

### Top Fundraising Team:

Team Albin, Randall and Bennett

**Best Wipeout:** Zachary Glidden

**Best Costume:** David Rossignol

**Most Leisurely Pace:** Brittany Landry

**Best Cheerers:** Will and Emily Feagans

Thanks to all who turned out for this great event! See you next year on the slopes March 4, 2012!

**Raffle Winners:** The Massey Family who donated their raffle winnings back to *hMn!*



Team: Time Warner Cable

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*July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011*

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made to include all our  
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accidentally omitted  
anyone's name.**

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