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KSHA Communicator

2012 KSHA Convention Update

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Hitting A Home Run For Communication Disorders

The snow is fast approaching or already here for some of our fellow association members. Hopefully, you are planning to attend our Annual KSHA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky from February 15-18, 2012, **Hitting a Home Run for Communication Disorders**. The last time you heard from us, I'm sure you were sitting poolside and thinking about the fun of summer. It's now time to start thinking about February, which means we have a lot to share. Our planning committee has been very hard at work to bring to you many presenters on topics that will motivate you, give you great knowledge, and provide you with the continuing education that you will need to renew yourself in the field of speech pathology and audiology. We have a tremendous group of presenters coming to our annual Convention this year, and we continue to work on filling the schedule so that you will have the most optimum of choices. You too will be excited of what is to come!

Our keynote speaker, Mr. Jeff Alt, is a fellow colleague and has an intriguing story to share with us as he motivates and inspires us with the adventure of his hike along the Appalachian Trail. He will be there to jump-start our Convention and get us motivated to gain new knowledge and have fun. Our luncheon speaker, Ms. Debbie Dacey, will be here to share her stories of working in the field of speech pathology and discuss meeting the needs of the families of the individuals we work with.

Just a taste of what is to come at this year's Convention: Carol Afflerbaugh, Raquel Anderson, Lisa Gershkoff-Stowe, Jane Kitson, Laura Mize, Erin Redle, Cheri Fraker and Laura Walbert from our pediatric track will be speaking on such topics as apraxia, pediatric dysphagia, voice, early intervention, and language and literacy. The adult track is well on its way with such speakers as Rebecca Gould, Nandhu Radhakrishnan, Amanda Hereford, Leslie Peters and Robert Marshall who will be speaking on topics that include dysphagia, voice and aphasia. And, for our Audiology professionals, we have such speakers as Jeff Weihing, Katharine Fitzharris and Lynzee Alworth who will be speaking on auditory processing, hearing aid fitting, infant hearing ABR and cochlear implants. You will not want to miss these presentations and you will have a lot more to choose from as we have received many wonderful calls for papers that comprise a vast array of topics that will be sure to meet everyone's interests. And, that's not all! We are still working to schedule other speakers to guide you to become a more motivated and informed professional.

All and all, the planning for the 2012 KSHA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky continues to promise a great time and a great amount of information to motivate you and keep you well informed of the changes we encounter as professionals. We are looking forward to seeing you there! Mark your calendars and make your reservations because a dynamic line-up will be waiting for you as we step up to the plate and **Hit a Home Run for Communication Disorders** together in February, 2012!



Christie LaCharite and Tina Brock
Co-Directors of the 2012 KSHA Convention

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Message From the President



Check out the KSHA website for updates on our Annual Convention coming up February 15-18 2012, in Louisville. Our Convention Committee, being led by Tina Brock and Christie LaCharite, are spending many hours preparing an outstanding program for us. The time and effort that each committee puts into our Convention each year shows the dedication of our members. Countless hours are spent by each committee member to provide us with our speakers, exhibits, events and activities. So please plan to hit a home run and attend our Annual Convention *Hitting A Home Run For Communication Disorders* and see what KSHA and Louisville have to offer.

KSHA has a lot to offer its members not just professional development hours at Convention. Professional advocacy legislative efforts and leadership are also among those benefits. Consider donating your time and talents to KSHA. KSHA prevails by our members volunteering! Attend our annual business meeting and talk with our Executive Council members on how to become involved. Please consider taking an active role in the future of KSHA. You are welcome to contact me at foghorn78@fuse.net to learn more.

Ann Miller
President

STUDENTS ... WHY JOIN KSHA?

Benefits include:

- Access to KSHA's student scholarships and grants
- *KSHA Communicator* – quarterly newsletter
- Online bulletin board
- Online community
- Other benefits can be found at www.ksha.info
- But MOST IMPORTANTLY

A FREE T-SHIRT!

During the 2011 Convention, the Executive Council members voted to admit students for membership at NO COST. Free, yes that's right FREE. In honor of this momentous occasion KSHA will be distributing FREE celebratory t-shirts to the first 100 students who become KSHA student members.

Watch for enrollment time and then hurry to receive this commemorative t-shirt, a very fashionable KSHA blue with an inspiring quote.



Donna Goodlett-Collins
Executive Council

KSHA Professional Development Grants

We have a name change! KSHA Regional Grants is now titled KSHA Professional Development Grants. The purpose of the grant system is to provide funding and an equal opportunity to all speech-language pathologists and audiologists across the state to obtain continuing education units to maintain Kentucky licensure while establishing and prompting professional growth and education. Criteria for application include:

1. Grant recipients must be KSHA members. Informal groups or organizations may apply. Please attach a copy of your KSHA membership card.
2. Topics must address therapeutic methods, procedures, or theory.
3. Workshop must be announced in the *KSHA Communicator* prior to being held.

Applications will be considered on a first come, first served basis following meeting criteria for inclusion.

Visit www.ksha.info for additional information and to access the grant application.

Tammy Cranfill, PhD, CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
Lincoln County School System

ASHA SEAL Report

On September 26, 2011, I participated in another telephone conference call with representatives from ASHA, the ASHA SEAL coordinator, Eileen Crowe, Director, State Association Relations and other state SEALs from approximately 12 other states. ASHA has adopted a new policy statement for the roles of speech-language pathologists in schools. The policy statement is available for review on ASHA's website for anyone interested in reading the document. Essentially, the document outlines the role and responsibilities of SLPs in the schools.

An action plan has been formed to disseminate this document to all 50 states, primarily through the ASHA SEALs. The reasoning behind the new "SLP's Roles and Responsibilities Policy Document" is to offer states' education agencies a formal guideline to develop an assessment instrument specifically for SLPs working in the public school setting. Some state legislatures have already enacted laws to tie SLP (and those of teachers) evaluations, contracts and salary increases to performance, and student success. ASHA wanted to put out a uniform outline for an SLP job description based on this document so that if a state adopts this type of evaluation system, SLP coordinators and education department administrators will have a resource to construct an evaluation tool specifically for SLPs, different from teachers, that accurately and fairly represents what SLPs actually do in the schools.

Much of the conference call dealt with how this document should be distributed and presented, so that all states' education departments and individual school districts within each state are aware that this document has been adopted by ASHA and is available as a resource. Some state SEALs have already presented it to their state's education departments; are planning to present at their annual convention, send out broadcast emails to all ASHA members in the state, and some have other plans for dissemination. I hope to discuss this during the next KSHA meeting to see how to proceed.

Sherry Hoza
Kentucky SEAL



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Special room rates ranging from \$145-\$175 per night will be available until January 17, 2012 or until the room block is sold out, whichever occurs first.

The hotel is connected via a skywalk to the Kentucky International Convention Center.

Brescia University NSSLHA Update

Brescia University's NSSLHA group volunteered on Saturday September 11, 2011, at the Annual Dream Riders of Owensboro's Fall Jamboree. Dream Riders is an organization that provides a variety of equine services for those individuals with disabilities. The day was filled with manning the inflatable obstacle course, overseeing the corn hole tournament and Hillbilly golf, running the candy walk and painting unique designs on children's faces. Monies raised go to support the Bittel Equestrian Center in Owensboro, Kentucky, the home of Dream Riders. NSSLHA officers are Tarin Edge, President; Makenzie McEnroe, Vice President; Amanda Payne, Secretary; and Jourdan Kratzer, Treasurer. Professor Donna Goodlett-Collins serves as advisor.



Public Knowledge of Autism: A Pilot Survey in Kentucky

The need to ensure appropriate and effective care and treatment of individuals with autism has prompted clinicians, investigators and advocates to initiate programs to raise awareness, increase research funds, and provide enhanced services. Still, there seems to be a skew in the public perception of autism evidenced by nightly news specials on CNN and similar stations touting titles such as “‘Horse Boy’ Finds Respite,” and “Dogs work ‘magic’ on kids with autism” (Autism: Unraveling the Mystery, 2009). Though this type of media may improve the likelihood of individuals becoming aware of autism and its related behaviors, it may also exacerbate a negative public perception of individuals with autism and their families based on sensationalized or over-generalized information. As yet, there are no known studies of public knowledge of autism to tell us what beliefs the public maintains regarding autism or what sources of information the public uses to establish those beliefs.

Current literature is limited to information about perceptions of autism held by service providers, family members and individuals with autism (Schwartz & Drager, 2008; Strunk, 2009; Gray, 1993; Huws & Jones, 2008). These limited investigations all report a continued need for information regarding the disorder. The study reported here was intended to investigate what the public knows about autism, its causes and where that information is typically acquired.

Method

The Sample

A brief survey about autism was administered by undergraduate Communication Disorders students from the University of Kentucky, resulting in a convenience sample of 698 surveys. Demographic variable data were collected from the sample including age, gender, occupation and location.

Of the 698 survey respondents, 254 were male and 439 were female. Respondents’ ages ranged from 10 to 91 years and represented 26 occupational categories. Respondents were primarily interviewed in Kentucky and surrounding states.

The Survey

Respondents’ were first asked if they had heard of autism. If they responded yes, they were given an opportunity to explain autism and then answer eleven yes/no questions regarding their knowledge of the characteristics and causes of autism. On the yes/no questions, respondents were given a choice of ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘not sure’ responses. Finally each respondent was asked to indicate where they had heard about autism. A copy of the survey is available from the first author.

Results

Survey Results

Of the 698 respondents, 92.0% reported that they had heard of autism and completed the remainder of the survey. The following tables represent the data obtained through the five questions addressing the characteristics of autism (Table 1), the six questions addressing the possible causes of autism (Table 2) and sources of information about autism (Table 3).

Table 1: Results—Characteristics of Autism

Total Number of Respondents	Question: Would you say children with autism ...	Percent Yes	Percent No	Percent Uncertain
663	Have problems with verbal communication?	89.3%	3.5%	7.2%
662	Have problems with social interactions?	90.9%	3.2%	5.9%
660	Have problems with nonverbal communication?	65.6%	13.2%	21.1%
661	Display repetitive behaviors?	77.0%	2.6%	20.4%
661	Have problems regulating their emotions?	80.2%	4.1%	15.7%

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Table 2: Results—Causes of Autism

Total Number of Respondents	Question: Is autism caused by/a result of ...	Percent Yes	Percent No	Percent Uncertain
662	brain damage	25.5%	30.5%	44.0%
659	emotional problems	10.6%	58.7%	30.7%
660	environmental factors	19.2%	38.6%	42.1%
655	inheritance	39.2%	19.4%	41.2%
659	impaired intelligence	13.8%	53.9%	32.3%
661	mental problems	31.5%	35.7%	32.7%

Table 3: Results—Sources of information

Total Number of Respondents	Source(s) of Information	Number of Respondents	Percent
649	A relative or friend's child has autism	238	36.7%
651	TV/Radio	296	45.5%
645	Newspaper/Magazine	143	22.2%
641	Through Work	130	20.3%
620	Other	109	17.6%

Discussion

Overall, the respondents' answers to the survey suggest some clear trends. In general respondents reported 1) recognition of several characteristics associated with autism, 2) understanding that autism specifically affects both verbal communication and social interactions, 3) uncertainty regarding the cause of autism, and 4) dependence on television and radio outlets or personal experiences with relatives or friends for information about autism.

It was encouraging that 92.0% of the sample reported knowledge of autism. It is clear that some areas of information are relatively well-established while other areas are still limited. Respondents were least familiar with two characteristic symptoms of autism—problems with nonverbal communication (65.6% indicated 'yes') and tendency to display repetitive behaviors (77% indicated 'yes'). It appears the general public is less likely to recognize these two behaviors as characteristics of autism.

Although respondents generally indicated uncertainty regarding the cause of autism, there were two possible causes agreed upon by about a third of the respondents--inheritance (39.2%) and mental problems (31.5%). Correspondingly, there were two possible causes that were denied by over half of the respondents— emotional problems (58.7%) and impaired intelligence (53.9%). This information supports assertions by Gray (1993) and Farrugia (2009) that there is confusion regarding autism information in the general public and that ambiguity of information may allow for multiple interpretations.

Finally, this sample indicated the media to be an important source of information. Television and radio were the primary sources of information for 45.5% of our respondents. Professionals who wish to share information with the public may choose to utilize these media sources along with the internet to more effectively disseminate accurate information about autism, its causes and symptoms.

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the block is sold out whichever
occurs first

Spring KSHA Communicator
Deadline: February 1, 2012

2012 Convention
February 15-18, 2012
Kentucky International
Convention Center
Louisville, Kentucky

Submissions

Submissions of articles, manuscripts, reports and letters to the editor are encouraged. The *KSHA Communicator* also welcomes suggestions of editorial coverage. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity.

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