

# LET'S HEAR IT!

NEWSLETTER OF  
DORSET DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY  
AUTUMN 2024



## FAMILY FUN DAY AND HOG ROAST

On Sunday 30th June 2024 we held our annual Family Fun Day and Hog Roast and BBQ at The Orangery Suite, Merley, Wimborne with 251 members attending. This is one of our most popular events and it was a record attendance this year!

The Orangery is such a great venue for our Fun Day with games and activities such as Mini Golf, Badminton, Beach Volley Ball, Basketball, Petanque, Table Tennis, Giant Chess, Football Table, Climbing Net and a giant Connect Four. We also hired the very popular inflatables which this year included Sea World, Vertical Drop Slide and an Assault Course. For the smaller children we had an area of soft play and of course face painting from Sharon and Jo, who is mum to Lilliana.



Jamie Jigsaw entertained everyone during the day stilt walking, doing circus trick workshops and his show. We had some excellent food from Ben and his team from Hog Roast and BBQ and yummy ice creams and ice lollies from Big Chief Ices.



**A great family day with loads of fun!**  
Thank you to Becky, Louise and Scott at The Orangery Suite for making us so welcome!





# HAPPY RETIREMENT

**Specialist Teaching Assistant and Technician Linda Higgins has retired after 32 years' service with the Hearing Support Service.**



Happy retirement wishes to Linda Higgins who has retired after 32 years supporting deaf children and their families across Dorset and BCP. Linda's contribution as a Specialist Teaching Assistant and Technician, initially in the resource bases at Sylvan School and St Edward's and for the last twenty years working alongside the Advisory Teachers, has been exemplary.

Over the years, Linda has worked with deaf children of all ages including at the monthly HSS Parent Support Group for pre-school families where her flair for art and craft has shone. Linda's dedication saw her achieve BSL Level 1 alongside her Audiology skills which has been a great support to the team. Linda has produced some wonderful resources including 'hearing aids' made of felt for children to sew onto their teddies! Linda's contribution to organising the resources library and book bags has been inspirational and has benefitted countless children. Her dedication continues in her retirement as she has returned as a volunteer at the monthly HSS Parent Support Group!

## DDCS FACEBOOK GROUPS

DDCS has a public Facebook page which we would love all our families and their relatives, friends, work colleagues and in fact anyone who is interested to follow us as this helps raise awareness of our charity.

We also have a private members Facebook group, only for our members. The Parent Forum group is private so that parents can keep in touch with each other, ask for advice or get information. If you wish to join this group just send a request to [info@dorsetdcs.co.uk](mailto:info@dorsetdcs.co.uk)



**Some members follow the public page but are not in the Parent Forum group and vice versa. Please join both.**

If you would like to join the groups they are easy to find just type "Dorset Deaf Children's Society" and "Dorset Deaf Children's Society Parents Forum" into your search bar.



Support DDCS by buying a lottery ticket from BH Coastal Lottery, If you buy a £1 ticket, 50p goes directly to DDCS!

There is a one in fifty chance of winning each week (that's better odds than the National Lottery and People's Lottery) and the top prize is £25,000!

So if you want to get lucky and also support Dorset DCS then please log on to: [www.bhcoastalottery.co.uk](http://www.bhcoastalottery.co.uk)

Select buy tickets and then select Dorset Deaf Children's Society.

Thank you!



Krystian Daraszewicz has been a trustee of DDCS for the last 10 years. His daughter Lilliana was diagnosed with a hearing loss and the family joined as members. and then later Krystian became a trustee. Due to work and time available he has reluctantly decided to stand down at our AGM. We want to thank Krystian for all the time he has given to DDCS. We wish him well for the future and hopefully we will still see him at events!

### Learn Sign Language the easy way!



**Bright BSL**

Learning BSL is easy, fun, and effective This is a very simple App which children and adults can use to learn signs

[www.brightbsl.co.uk](http://www.brightbsl.co.uk)

### DO YOU HAVE AN EXPERIENCE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OTHER FAMILIES?

We are always looking for articles for our newsletters. It really helps to read what other families have experienced, or maybe you just have a story to share?

Please contact Shirley on 01202 571089  
We would love to hear from you!

## Welcome to Sarah Joyce and Louise Allen who have joined the HSS Team!

### Sarah Joyce Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) Advisory Teacher

In the summer term, Sarah Joyce joined the HSS team as a MSI Advisory Teacher in a specialist role working with both the Hearing and Vision Support Team. Sarah has a wealth of experience and is a qualified Teacher of the Deaf, Teacher of Vision Impairment and a Multi-Sensory Impaired specialist. Many families will know Sarah from her previous role with the University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service (USAIS) where she worked as a Teacher of the Deaf. Sarah's new role sees her working across Dorset and BCP with a focus on pupils who attend special schools. Sarah is a very welcome addition to the team and we wish her all the best in her new role.



### Louise Allen Specialist Teaching Assistant

This term, the HSS Team has welcomed Louise Allen as a Specialist Teaching Assistant who will be supporting children across Dorset and BCP alongside the Advisory Teachers. Louise has previously worked as a TA with Deaf children in school and college, so joins the team with lots of experience and ideas. Louise is a sign language specialist, with a BSL Level 6 qualification, and will be working with young children to support their language and communication development. Welcome to the team, Louise!



## HELP AND CONTACTS

**CHAIRMAN** – Kevin Forbes, Hamilton Court House, 1-3 Alum Chine Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth, BH4 8DT 01202 769890

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON, TREASURER & MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY** – Shirley Sorbie, Touchwood, 9 Oakland Walk, West Parley, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 8PF 01202 571089

**SECRETARY** – Julie Hansford, 34 Fernside Avenue, Poole, Dorset. BH14 0PN 07973 737687

Website – [www.dorsetdcs.co.uk](http://www.dorsetdcs.co.uk)

E-mail – [info@dorsetdcs.co.uk](mailto:info@dorsetdcs.co.uk)



For more information, news, pictures and future events please visit our website.  
[www.dorsetdcs.co.uk](http://www.dorsetdcs.co.uk)



# THE JENNY BARRETT DEAF CHILD ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2024

Every year, at our AGM, we present the Jenny Barrett Deaf Child Achievement Awards. The awards set out to reward achievements of children with a hearing loss and they are split into two categories, the junior category which is for eleven years and under and the senior category which is for twelve years and above. In 2024 there were a total of nineteen children nominated.

The winners were announced at our AGM held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at Bournemouth Deaf Club. The awards were presented by Robin Barrett and the two overall age group winners received shields, certificates and cheques for £100 each. **YAZZ HANSFORD** was the winner in the senior category and the winner in the junior category was **FELIX BOWYER**. All other nominees received £20 vouchers and certificates.



**Felix Bowyer**  
Junior Winner



**Yazz Hansford**  
Senior Winner

## SENIOR NOMINEES

Please note that the nominations below are a very short summary and only a part of the nomination as the nominations can include confidential and personal information.

**BRADLEY FARMER** was nominated by Dawn Wrench, HSS Advisory Teacher, for his development, improved self-confidence and attainment over the last three years. His transition to secondary school is commended and this is shown in his hard work and positive interaction with teachers. He is also commended for his improved self-worth and focus and application to his learning. He is an excellent role model welcoming and supporting a new student with a hearing loss who joined the school.

**YAZZ HANSFORD** was nominated by her mother, Julie Hansford. She struggled at school in the 2 years leading up to GCSE's but she managed to pass her exams to secure a place in sixth form. She was selected to be a Senior Prefect. She is an active member of the BCP Youth Forum and helped manage the Youth Fund Project. She is also a Young Consultant for Participation People who inform and challenge adult audiences from all over the world to engage in youth participation. This involved facilitating workshops and keynotes in London, Southampton and Dublin advising how companies can include youth voice as an essential part of their business. Another post she holds is that of Youth Ambassador for The Center of Youth Voice project at George Williams College in London which involves gaining data to identify the strengths and gaps in youth voice and participation enabling support for young people. She is also a volunteer for DDCS and is a proven advocate for the society and school for both deaf children and those with additional needs. She attained a bronze Duke of Edinburgh award, learnt to ski, paddle board and secured a part time job.

**FRANCIS HAYWARD-NEVITT** was nominated by Dawn Wrench, HSS Advisory Teacher. She is an outstanding role model explaining to peers and school staff why her hearing aids and radio aid is fundamental for her to access conversations. She and another student delivered a bespoke INSET to school staff and was articulate explaining about her equipment. She has enthusiasm and warmth and offers friendship to younger HSS students. She is an inspiring example of all that can be achieved with enthusiasm for life and a hard working ethic. She is thoughtful and caring and thinks of others.

**HARRY LAKE** was nominated by his mother, Judy Morris, his Aunt Tina Morris and Sarah Joiner, HSS Advisory Teacher, for his amazing progress in his GCSE's over the last two years. He found many subjects difficult and tried his hardest to achieve his full potential. He has exceeded many teachers' expectations and has achieved fantastic GCSE results. He has struggled with many challenges which he has managed to overcome which is not easy as he lacks confidence with communication, socialising and concentration. He was recognised for his hard work and for being a role model by his head teacher. He had a summer job which boosted his confidence. He helps his aunt with caring for his Nan by sitting with her whilst she does the shopping. He has a calming nature and is always keen to help others.

**MOLLY (Remy) MCSHARRY** was nominated by Dawn Wrench HSS Advisory Teacher, for their excellent GCSE results enabling them to go on to study A levels and for their willingness to be a mentor to new students at school. Molly is applauded for their focus, hard work, kindness to others and enthusiasm throughout their GCSE years. Molly is a role model to younger HSS students.

**FRANCESCA MURPHY** was nominated by Samadhi-Rose Christopher, HSS Advisory Teacher, for being positive with a fabulous attitude to life and learning. As well as her hearing loss she is severely sight impaired and has a diagnosis of Osteopetrosis, a rare bone disease, and other medical illnesses and has experienced prolonged periods of illness and time in hospital. She perseveres and always tries her best and never gives up. She gives her all and rises to every challenge asked of her. She sat on an interview panel for the Hearing Support Service and has been nominated for Deputy Head girl. She never complains.

**JENNIFER-MARIE ROE** was nominated by Jemma O'Rourke, HSS Advisory Teacher, for being a superb role model and a wonderful young person. She has worked hard and is now in sixth form doing an EPQ on young children with first language BSL and the impact it has on their lives. She has a part time job and has a two year plan to raise money for her to travel to Borneo with a charity organisation to work with orangutans and help build a community building. She has already raised 2K and is running a marathon to raise funds.

**SIENNA WATSON** was nominated by Dawn Wrench, HSS Advisory Teacher, for her resilience, maturity and her personal growth and self-confidence over the last 4 years. Earlier this year she underwent explant, re-implant CI surgery. Significant preparation went into pre and post operation and Sienna displayed an inner confidence, pragmatism and composure. She maintained her school work and wanted to return to full school timetable as soon as possible, reflecting her commitment to her studies and school life. She is an excellent role model, achieved excellent results in her studies and is polite and focused.

## JUNIOR NOMINEES

Please note that the nominations below are a very short summary and only a part of the nomination as the nominations can include confidential and personal information.

**EBONY BARNES** was nominated by Jemma O'Rourke, HSS Advisory Teacher, for her amazing social skills making a new deaf friend and expressing herself through art. She met with another deaf child visiting her school and she was welcoming and excited and took her hand to guide her round the school.

**FELIX BOWYER** was nominated by Melissa May, HSS Advisory Teacher. When he moved to Dorset at the age of 3 he was waiting to be implanted and he had no meaningful language to communicate. He was amazing at BSL and was quickly using signs at home and school. He can now sign full conversations. He has also used his processors to develop his oral communication. How well he has developed both continues to astound his teacher. He is the only deaf signing child in his school and although this is isolating it has not deterred him and when he was without his Communication Support Worker for 4 months it did not stop him being fully involved with school.

**JACOB CALVERELY** was nominated by his father, Mike Calverley. He auditioned for the lead role in his school play. It involved learning over 100 lines and committing to a busy rehearsal schedule for many months. He impressed his teachers with his loud clear voice and was given the role over very confident hearing peers. He was a superstar.

**DARCEY GOOCH** was nominated by her mother, Leanne Gooch for the way she has taken to wearing her hearing aid so well. She has shown resilience and responsibility and coped with school and the challenges it has brought socially. She was brave with her MRI and CT scan. She is a star.

**ALEX GRAY** was nominated by Dawn Wrench, HSS Advisory Teacher, for how he has blossomed into a mature, confident, articulate young man. He is applauded for his enthusiasm in all aspects of school life. When he was absent from school due to ear operations he was positive and articulate describing the procedures to teachers. He was brilliant explaining to teachers at an INSET about his equipment. He is a positive role model and was kind and supported a new hearing aid wearer in his year group last year.

**BUDDY HOLIAN** was nominated by Sarah Joiner, HSS Advisory Teacher, for his amazing first year at school despite many challenges. He started school when he had only had his implants for a very short time. He was reluctant to wear them at first but soon built the confidence to wear them during the whole day at school. He has learnt some basic BSL and is now able to use them to communicate. He has achieved so much in a short time.

**CHARLOTTE HUDSON** was nominated by Jemma O'Rourke, HSS Advisory Teacher, for enjoying interaction with a new deaf peer via sign and shared experiences. She does not find painting easy and during a visit with a deaf peer at her SEN school she painted a self-portrait showing her band with BAHAs devices and made an ear model with playdough

**TODD JEWER** was nominated by Jemma O'Rourke, HSS Advisory Teacher. His Advisory Teacher visited his new senior school to deliver training to the staff. Although he was extremely anxious he stood in front of 30 teachers and explained about his radio aid and where to seat him in classes. His family were super proud of the courage he showed.

**ISLA LLOYD** was nominated by Sarah Poole, HSS Advisory Teacher, for showing confidence and resilience. Isla stood in front of her class and delivered a lesson on the ear and how we hear. She then took questions about her own hearing loss, gave out a worksheet and helped pupils with anything they needed help with.

**AVA-RAE ROSE** was nominated by her mother, Hannah Rose, for how she has coped starting a new much bigger school which has been overwhelming for her. As she has got older she has become more self-conscious and anxious. She copes with her challenges and does not let her hearing get in the way. She is a trooper and a star.

**BETTY WALKE-MYLES** has been nominated by Sarah Turpin a professional MSY Practitioner for how she has grown in confidence and working hard to communicate her needs and wishes. She is an incredible young lady who is determined to enjoy life despite being deafblind. She is curious and willing to explore new experiences even though she is nervous. She is developing her communication skills and is beginning to learn BSL signs.





# Hello from Gemma Hardman

## Speech and Language Therapy

I returned to the beautiful Dorset coast a few years ago, after spending 15 years living and working in London. I have recently started a new role as the Clinical Lead for Deaf Children and Young People's Speech and Language Therapy in Dorset and BCP. Since moving, I've been busy getting to know as many Deaf children and their families as I can! The main aspect of my role involves supporting parents, nurseries and schools to develop Deaf children's speech, language and communication skills through training, coaching and direct therapy. Of course, that's not all my job entails; I've also been developing some in-house training for the wider Speech and Language Therapy team, attending lots of meetings to consider how we can best develop the service and looking at our website and the resources we have available to families and professionals. If you have any ideas about what you would like to see available, please do let me know!

My career working with Deaf children is largely thanks to a friend from college, who convinced me it would be fun to learn BSL level one together. We started attending our local Deaf club, where we *attempted* to use our new skills and met some hilarious and interesting friends. After graduating from University I moved to North West London, where I started my career working in mainstreams schools and pre-schools. I already knew at this point that I wanted to work primarily with Deaf children and convinced my manager to let me 'have a go' in the local primary and secondary Deaf Resource Bases. Fast forward a few years and I was given a role as the Clinical Lead for Deafness for the trust, which was a steep learning curve in leadership at a relatively young age!

I moved to work for the Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) Cochlear Implant Programme and shortly after was awarded a grant from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to complete a Masters in Clinical Research, which involved running a few research projects at GOSH. By the end of the degree, I had completed three separate projects and supervised some SALT student projects, which I then published in journals. I was also given the opportunity to work as a supporting author for the Deafness guidelines written by Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy (you can find these on their website). This was a fantastic opportunity to meet so many of the leading clinicians from across the country and learn about how things were run in other places.

You might have realised by now that I quite like a challenge... so I then thought, what better thing to do than take up a third job! In the final term of my University degree, whilst also working at GOSH, I took up a role as a lecturer and module co-ordinator on the Speech and Language Therapy masters course at University College London (UCL). I loved working at UCL and teaching the next generation of SALT's about working with Deaf children amongst other things. This is partly why I am now so passionate about not only developing the skills of experienced therapists we have on the Dorset team but also encouraging students and others to join the profession.

Of course, not everything is about work, and our move to Dorset was largely driven by family life. At home I have a husband, two little boys, a dog and a cat... the whole bundle! There's lots to juggle (as I'm sure you all know) but I wouldn't have things any other way.

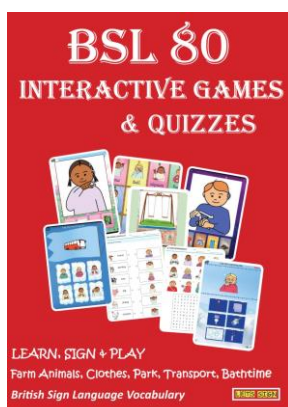
**Gemma is currently on maternity leave but will be returning in June 2025. If you are worried about your child's speech, language and communication development, please speak to your child's Hearing Support Service Advisory Teacher or setting SENCo.**



## BSL 80 INTERACTIVE GAMES & QUIZZES

### LEARN SIGN & PLAY

Farm Animals, Clothes, Park, Transport, Bath time



An innovative inclusive resource that all children and adults can access to learn British Sign Language (BSL) basics in a fun and interactive way - with a range of formats to develop skills - sign vocabulary, word recognition and spelling. Signs, descriptions, words and pictures with the unique added value of QR links to 80 wonderful interactive activities that you will want to play again and again

Available from Let's Sign or Amazon

## Dorset Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)



SEN and Disability Information, Advice and support service

Dorset Sendiass

Free, confidential, accurate and impartial advice and support to families living in Dorset for: Children and young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. Including school exclusions, EHC needs assessments, supporting conversations with a school or local authority and representation at SEND tribunals.

<https://www.dorsetsendiass.co.uk/>

<https://sendiass4bcp.org/>