



Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists

Fall Newsletter October 2020



Letter from the President - Lindsey Eastland M.S. CCC-SLP

I love Fall! Fall brings to some people many joys, changes, hectic schedules, and stress, including school starting back, football games, hayrides, cooler weather, leaves changing colors, fall clothing, and pumpkin spice flavors galore.

My work responsibilities would include in person trainings and open houses but that is not the current situation. This school year may look different or our jobs may look different but embrace the change. This time of year, things start to get busy. But I was once told....

BUSY is a CHOICE, STRESS is a CHOICE, and JOY is a CHOICE.

It all depends on how you handle situations and prioritize things in life. Yes, you must prioritize things in your life but if those things don't get accomplished, it is okay, because they still will be waiting on you tomorrow. As you go forward, embrace change and think JOY.

Please **BE**lieve **THE**re is **GOOD** in the world!

Happy Fall,
Lindsey Eastland, M.S., CCC-SLP
TAASLP President

TAASLP Takes Action! TAASLP Responds to Promote Equality for All

In response to social injustice and racial discrimination in our country, your TAASLP Board developed the AD HOC Diversity and Equality Committee in August 2020. The mission of this committee is to support the continuing education and advocacy of all TAASLP members and is specifically dedicated to the equitable treatment and elimination of discrimination based on race, national origin, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, and gender identities.

Like many of you, we have been following the latest details regarding the injustices within our country surrounding racism and continued unfair treatment of individuals of color in our society. The **Diversity and Equality Committee** is committed to uncovering and resolving racial injustice and unethical discrimination in the populations we serve through member input, diversity education and support of under-represented communities.

Although the Diversity and Equality Committee is in preliminary stages, the meetings have already brought forth notable brainstorming sessions including developing mentorship programs to recruit and retain ethnically diverse professionals in the field and planning a book drive for under-represented populations that specifically feature characters from diverse populations.

How can you help the Diversity and Equality Committee?

- Join the Diversity and Equality Committee (contact mal@taaslp.org)
- Donate a book to support the Book Drive (See **Books for H.O.P.E** article in this newsletter) book donation link [here](#)

Take action and reach out to Rachel Barger, TAASLP Member At Large (mal@taaslp.org) to join the Diversity and Ethics committee or to help support these great initiatives.



Perks of TAASLP Membership

- Updates about legislation and advocacy efforts for you to participate in at both the state and national levels
- Fund Lobbyists efforts to advocate for improved work conditions
- Discounts on annual convention/continuing education pricing
- Help identify and solve problems affecting your field of practice
- Opportunities for networking and leadership development
- Updates on local job postings, research notifications, and continuing education opportunities
- Access to the TAASLP newsletter, membership directory, links to other professional websites, and other materials

Did you know? A portion of your dues helps support our TAASLP Lobbyists who tirelessly advocate for us at the state level to improve work conditions and legislation for audiologists and speech language pathologists. This past alone, our Lobbyist helped remove the health care tax for SLPs and AUDs and fought to keep reimbursements for telepractice in place during the pandemic.



Courtney Atnip



Heather Meshell

TAASLP-TAA Lobbyists

Telehealth Extended Through 2022

Jamie Seek, M.A. CCC-SLP, VP Legislative Affairs

Our advocacy efforts on telehealth were successful! HB8002/SB8003 was passed on August 12, 2020. This bill expands the definition of healthcare provider in the Tennessee Telepractice Statute for those service providers, including audiologists and speech-language pathologists, licensed under Title 63 and allows us to use telehealth as a service modality until 4/1/2022. This bill also allows full insurance payment parity for telehealth services until 4/1/2022.

Many of you reached out to TAASLP about the issue surrounding telehealth for speech-language pathologists and audiologists, and we are so thankful for your interest in and your advocacy work around this topic! TAASLP found out in late July that our abilities to use telehealth as a service modality, if we were using our Tennessee Department of Health license, were in jeopardy due to a conflict between the wording in our practice act located in Title 63 and the Tennessee Telepractice Statute that was adopted in 2015. In essence, our practice act does not contain the word “diagnose.” The lack of this word nullified our abilities to use telehealth as a service modality without legislative action.

With your help as well as the tireless work of TAASLP’s lobbyists, Courtney Atnip and Heather Meshell, at Capitol & 5th Public Strategies and targeted work from Representative Robin Smith and Representative Bryan Terry, we were successful in moving HB8002/SB8003 forward, which protects our use of telehealth when using our Department of Health license.

TAASLP continues to work with our lobbyists, legislators, and the Board of Communication Disorders and Sciences to ensure that telehealth is a modality that can be utilized even past 2022. We are further investigating our practice act and the Telepractice Statute as methods for advocacy work around this topic. TAASLP is also exploring the options to have Tennessee join ASHA’s Interstate Compact.

Many thanks to each of you for YOUR tireless advocacy efforts! - Jamie

TAASLP Hosts Community of Practice Calls

TAASLP is proud to announce a new way to connect with one another and to stay informed! On July 22 and 27 as well as on August 7, 2020, TAASLP partnered with Susan Usery and Joanna Bivens with the Tennessee Department of Education to kick off their virtual Community of Practice calls. Our first topic was school-based eligibility and assessments in the world of COVID-19.

Shortly after these first calls, TAASLP conducted additional Community of Practice calls on the topic of teletherapy in late August and early September. Heidi Joyce, M.S., CCC-A/SLP, Co-Founder and Co-Director of Team Autism Memphis, moderated these calls. These calls were well attended, and it was wonderful to connect with others across our State!

It is TAASLP’s intention to continue to hold Community of Practice calls on a variety of audiology and speech-language pathology topics. If you have a topic that you would like to see or if you would like to help moderate or host a call, please feel free to reach out to Jamie Seek at advocacy@taaslp.org.

Books for H.O.P.E (Helping Others Promote Equality)

Here at TAASLP, we are taking a stand against systemic racism and oppression in support of The Black Lives Matter Movement- thus, the *Ad Hoc committee: Diversity & Equality* emerged in August 2020 to root out racial inequalities that exist within our communities, our professions or our workplaces. We stand together with our colleagues and the individuals we serve who are hurting. We want to support their communities, protect their rights to communicate freely and openly, and advocate for more inclusive policies that would create ample racial equity opportunities.

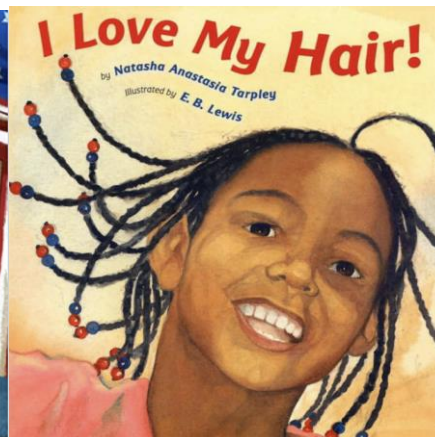
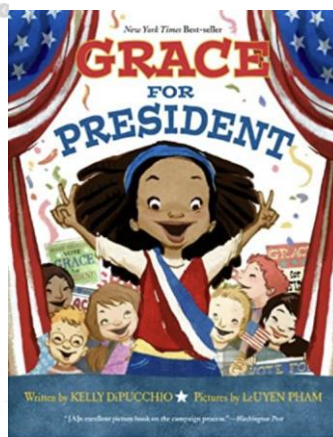
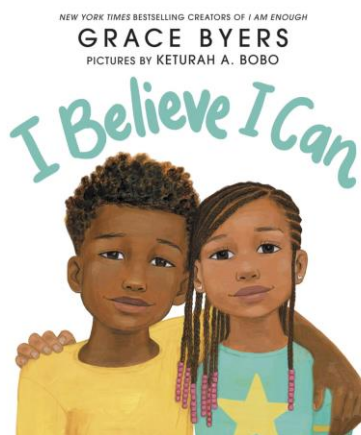
The AD HOC Diversity & Equality Committee pledges to support TAASLP's mission in meeting **all persons' needs** with communication, hearing, and swallowing disorders regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. Thus, the idea for a book drive, *Books for H.O.P.E. (Helping Others Promote Equality)*, originated to fulfill that mission and meet the academic, cognitive, and communicative needs of local children by collecting and disbursing stories that promote diversity through protagonists of color and diverse cultures. Not only are we aiming to advance the concept of diversity through the book drive, but we also aspire to encourage and nurture the thought-processes encompassing creativity, self-love, confidence, and acceptance into the young minds who will receive these gifts.

All books collected during this three month book drive will be donated to children within local school districts Head Start preschool programs and state foster care organizations. **We call for TAASLP members to donate new or gently used children's books** age ranges appropriate for preschool to young adults/teens featuring lead characters of diversity. Suggested books can also be purchased directly through TAASLP's Books for H.O.P.E. Amazon Wishlist by clicking [here](#) or mail books directly TAASLP Books for H.O.P.E P.O. BOX 131, LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, TN 37350.

Books for H.O.P.E. will commence on October 1st until December 31st with a goal to collect 100 books (requesting 3 copies of each book title) to donate across the state. We eagerly look forward to your participation as you stand with us in our continued fight for justice and help support children of diverse backgrounds. **We also encourage you to explore these selected titles and use them in your practice in waiting rooms and your therapy services.**

Thank you for your support!

Stephanie N. Austin, M.S., CCC-SLP, Committee Member
Rachel Barger M.S. CCC-SLP, Member at Large



*Help promote equality through Books of H. O. P. E
(Helping Others Promote Equality)
Amazon Wishlist Link to Donate to Books of H.O.P.E: [DONATE
HERE](#)*

2020 Awards and Nomination Time

Do you know someone you would like to recognize for their outstanding work in our organization? Do you know someone who has made tremendous efforts to support our professions in 2020?

TAASLP would like to honor those in our organization who are going above and beyond! We are accepting nominations for three annual awards.

Honors of the Association: Awarded to a member for outstanding service to the Association, outstanding contributions towards the purposes of the Association, or outstanding service to persons with speech language or hearing disorders.

Distinguished Service Award: Awarded to a member or non-member individual(s) or group(s) residing in the state of Tennessee for significant contributions to speech, language, and hearing on a statewide or national basis.

Public School Incentive Award: Awarded to individual TAASLP members in a public school system for providing innovation or exceptional communication services to school-aged children.

Click for a [TAASLP AWARDS & HONORS NOMINATION FORM](#) and submit form to mal@taaslp.org

A Note from Our Public Schools Committee- Paulette Gentry



Welcome to Public Education!

These are the words I have always used when supervising my graduate students. This school year they carry a completely new meaning.

Across Tennessee, schools are reopening amid the pandemic COVID-19. As administrators attempt to keep students and staff safe, provide a safe learning environment, and follow guidelines and regulations issued by public health agencies and government officials there are multiple scenarios and supports rolling out. Some school districts are remaining totally virtual, some are using a hybrid approach (virtual and in person) while other districts are fully in person.

It is important to remember that the relaxed telepractice regulations are for now temporary. Medicare requirements remain constant. Most importantly, it is our responsibility to maintain security and privacy when providing virtual group services.

There have are many great resources for virtual and or hybrid reopening at

<https://www.asha.org/SLP/schools/School-Based-SLP-Resources-for-Physical-and-Virtual-Reopening/>

Many of our colleagues around the state are using Boomcards, Teacher Pay Teacher and Super Duper for virtual materials. Some are creating their own power points or google folders with their therapy materials. The SDOE has put together a teleservices toolkit: <http://www.tn.gov/contnet/dam/tn/education/>

For our students using AAC there are several resources available, PrAACTicalAAC, SpeechTechie, www.asstivieware.com

While we continue to navigate through these uncertain uncharted times ASHA has provided a workload calculator specially to use during COVID, <https://www.asha.org/slp/schools/workload-calculator/>. This workload calculator captures time spent in all required areas, number of hours required to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of school SLPs. It is especially important to realize a caseload approach, the number of students with an IEP, does not authentically represent all the direct services, compliance activities, indirect services and indirect activities we are being required to perform as we provide services virtually and/or in a hybrid model.

ASHA has also provided resources for our educational audiologists as they address such issues as the wearing of masks, social distancing and unworn hearing aids.

<https://www.asha.org/Practice/Audiologists-Resuming-Services-During-COVID-19/>

We also have to remember to advocate for ourselves. As professionals, we need to take care of ourselves. ASHA has a great resource:

<https://www.asha.org/Practice/Connecting-Audiologists-and-Speech-Language-Pathologists-With-Mental-Health-Resources/>

Your Public Schools Committee is here for you. We would also like to invite you to consider joining this committee. If you are interested in joining us please contact me directly paulette.gentry@mnps.org

Paulette W. Gentry

TAASLP/Public Schools Committee

Convention Update - Kelley Cocoran AuD, CCC-A - VP Convention

As many of you are aware, for the safety of participants and presenters TAASLP/TAA cancelled this year's in-person convention that was to take place in November 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic concerns.

Mark your calendars for 2021! We are looking forward to catching up with everyone at the next TAASLP/TAA convention that will be held on October 21-22, 2021 at the Cool Springs Marriott in Franklin, TN.

For those interested in presenting at convention, be on the lookout in April 2021 for our call for papers announcement. If you have any ideas or suggestions for topics and/or speakers that you want to see in 2021, please complete our current member survey [here](#) or reach out directly to Kelley Corcoran at convention@taaslp.org. See you all in 2021! - Kelley

Just in2020 Member Survey Results [here](#)



Tennessee Association of Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologists Learn more at TAASLP.org