

APPENDIX

Introduction

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## THE TRIPOD STORY

### BACKGROUND:

TRIPOD is a nonprofit organization committed to helping families raise their deaf children in an informed and positive way. TRIPOD is the only educational organization of its kind in the United States and its programs are now models for national replication. TRIPOD receives no federal or United Way assistance, and we have been most fortunate in receiving the committed support of many notables in the entertainment, civic, corporate and foundation communities.

"The TRIPOD Story" is extraordinary. In 1981, Megan Williams and her husband, Michael Shamberg (producer of "The Big Chill") discovered that their son Jacob, then three years old, was profoundly deaf. As is most often the case with hearing parents, the Shambergs had no previous knowledge of deafness or how to help their child. They began searching for information and options, and were dismayed to find that there was a maddening controversy surrounding the issue of deaf education. There was no "Dr. Spock for the Deaf Child" to which they could refer. There was no central source of objective information about raising and educating deaf children. There were many more questions than answers.

In search of information and help, Megan documented more than 200 phone calls around the country until she was referred to Carl Kirchner, Associate Professor of Special Education at California State University, Northridge. Carl is the hearing son of deaf parents and had been involved in deaf education for 25 years.

While Carl helped the Shambergs wade through a sea of information, Megan was busy exploring all existing programs in Los Angeles. She learned that there were no programs -- public or private -- which offered the type and quality of education they wanted for Jacob.

In the meantime, a friend of the Shambergs, introduced them to an east coast venture capitalist who took an interest in the Shambergs' problem and offered to make a major financial contribution to help Jacob. This pledged support encouraged the Shambergs and Carl Kirchner to develop the idea of a new organization which would provide a national clearinghouse of objective information pertaining to all aspects of childhood deafness, as well as a family-oriented preschool program for hearing impaired children that would offer the most innovative methods and the most qualified professionals.

## THE TRIPOD STORY

TRIPOD was incorporated in December, 1982. With a major gift from a benefactor and proceeds from the Los Angeles, premiere of "The Big Chill", the TRIPOD Preschool opened its doors for the first time in February 1984. Six students were then enrolled, and by the following September, the school was operating at capacity with fourteen children.

In an extremely short amount of time, TRIPOD has gained national recognition and commendation from educators, parents, and the deaf community. Because of its immediate success, TRIPOD is now experiencing a tremendous growth period characterized by program expansion, growing numbers of children served, new projects, plans to move to a larger building in order to accommodate more children, and greater national visibility.

### TRIPOD PROGRAMS:

When a deaf child is born into a hearing family -- which is the case over 90% of the time -- communication and normal interaction do not come naturally. They must be learned. The learning process involves overcoming the emotional impact of discovering a child's deafness, understanding what the deafness means, deciding how to adapt to it, and developing new ways to communicate.

TRIPOD is the only total-family, educational organization for deaf children in the United States which combines the Total Communication philosophy with Montessori teaching methods. The Total Communication philosophy stresses deaf children's use of all vehicles in order to communicate (speech, lipreading, audition, sign language, mime, reading, and writing). Montessori methods are particularly well-suited for deaf children because instruction is primarily visual; self-expression is part of all activities; and children develop self-confidence and independence since activities are based upon the child's interests.

TRIPOD's roster of services continues to expand in order to help families. This year, TRIPOD began a Parent-Infant/Toddler Program for hearing impaired babies from birth to two years of age. This program was a direct result of the success of TRIPOD's Preschool Program. TRIPOD had been approached by families whose children were too young for the Preschool. They wanted the total-family, total-child, total-communication approach for which TRIPOD had become known. The Parent-Infant/Toddler Program offers home visits, weekly center-based group classes, and weekly sign language classes for parents.

The TRIPOD Preschool is flourishing. It serves children from two to six years of age and there is a waiting list. In addition to the hearing impaired children in the classroom, TRIPOD has enrolled two hearing children, whose parents are deaf. We have found that this kind of integration is mutually beneficial.

### THE TRIPOD STORY

Two years ago, TRIPOD began an elementary program in conjunction with P.S. #1, a private elementary school in Santa Monica. This program enables hearing-impaired children to be mainstreamed into a school setting with hearing children. Four hearing-impaired children are now enrolled in a classroom with fourteen hearing children and by September 1988, this program will have the capability of serving eight hearing-impaired children. Enclosed please find an article entitled, "Enjoying Each Other's Company", which describes the success of this program to date.

TRIPOD's programs are based upon the belief that family involvement is the cornerstone in helping deaf children overcome their handicap. We believe -- and research confirms -- that easy communication and relaxed interaction within the family enable children to experience the greatest success as they grow and learn. The Parent Support Program consists of weekly sign language classes for all family members; the only extended Day Care Program for hearing-impaired children in Los Angeles; a Parent Lending Library of books and videotapes about child rearing and deafness; a nationally circulated newsletter called Sense; Parent meetings which help families to learn more about deafness and to share ideas and feelings with other parents, professionals, and deaf adults.

The TRIPOD GRAPEVINE is the only national and local toll-free hotline in the country. The GRAPEVINE is for anyone who has questions about childhood deafness. Since its inception four years ago, the GRAPEVINE has provided information to more than 4,000 callers from fifty states and several foreign countries. TRIPOD's Public Service Announcement publicizing the GRAPEVINE was written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan (director of "The Big Chill" and "Silverado"). The spot stars Chevy Chase, Jo Beth Williams, Jeff Goldblum and deaf actor Herb Larson. It first aired on ABC directly following the 1985 Superbowl and it continues to be shown throughout the country.

TRIPOD's founding parent, Megan Williams, produced a documentary film for parents and teachers of deaf children entitled, "Language Says It All". The film sensitively focuses on the impact of deafness for young children and their parents. Parents candidly talk about their feelings and the frustrations of communicating with their deaf children. The film has won the highest awards bestowed by several international film festivals and was nominated for a 1987 Academy Award.

## Parents of Deaf Child Organize Help for Others

By MARY LOU LOPER,  
Times Staff Writer

Megan Williams was beginning to be terrified. She would clap her hands loudly, but her beautiful 8-month-old baby didn't respond. She consulted the pediatrician. He said wait. Three months later he agreed to testing. The diagnosis: deaf.

"Then we didn't know what to do." She and her husband, Michael Shamberg, Jacob's father, were referred to a clinic and told they would have to wait six months for an appointment. They bought books. They burned up the telephone lines. They floundered amid fragmented advice.

### 'Emotionally Disorienting'

"It was tortuous," says Megan Williams, co-founder of TVTV, a documentary video production company that has produced numerous programs for PBS.

Shamberg, co-producer of PBS films with KCET as well as producer of "The Big Chill," in production at Columbia Pictures, amplifies: "It was emotionally disorienting. Normally, you might worry that your children would get in car accidents, get into drugs, get pregnant. But you take for granted that you can talk to them, read them bedtime stories, and . . . so you think, 'Oh my God,' and then once you get over that period—it took us four or five months to get in touch—then . . . the pain starts to dissipate. It's the ignorance that's so awful. It's what you don't know that causes fear."

### Associate Professor

In all, Megan Williams documented about 200 telephone calls to agencies and experts all over the United States, seeking guidance in wading through the sea of seemingly disparate and fragmented information. Because there is no "Dr. Spock" for deaf parenting, she sought out other parents with deaf children, deaf role models and adults who had grown up in environments with auditory deprivations.



GARY FRIEDMAN / Los Angeles Times

Helping parents raise deaf children through new group TRIPOD are Megan Williams and Michael Shamberg, holding their son Jacob Shamberg; in rear, Carl Kirchner, left, and Joe Shapiro.

One of those (referred to her from 3,000 miles away) was Carl Kirchner, an associate professor of special education at Cal State Northridge and the son of a deaf mother and father.

And one result has been the formation of TRIPOD Inc., a nonprofit organization committed to helping families raise deaf children in an informed and positive way. Aware that some parents, due to lack of means, knowledge, know-how or self-confidence, agonize over their dilemma as deaf

parents and, convinced that those precious first months and years of a child's life must be nurtured in a healthy home environment, TRIPOD will establish a clearinghouse.

If all goes well, within days TRIPOD will have headquarters in the Westside (possibly leased space in the Santa Monica Schools). Immediately, then, it will move to establish a toll-free 800 hot line designed to provide quality consultation and referral services for

Please see DEAF, Page 5

## DEAF CHILD: Parents Organize Help for Others

### Continued from First Page

parents of the deaf. Also, TRIPOD this summer will conduct three workshops designed for families with deaf members. The preschool workshop is set for the July 24 weekend, adolescents the July 31 weekend and elementary the Aug. 7 weekend. "A loving, stable family is the key to raising a child, particularly a deaf child during the formative years," Kirchner says, "and the workshops will be designed to teach parents how to raise a deaf child, focusing on family, friends and community."

In the fall TRIPOD plans to start a laboratory preschool. It hopes to publish a sleek parents' magazine, somewhat like Talk in England. And eventually it plans a television program for parents, videotaped parent information packages for home use, expansion of parent workshops.

Because this is a heartfelt venture, TRIPOD chose Valentine's Day for a party at Ma Maison. The fund-raiser netted \$7,000, but an anonymous donor has given \$120,000. Says Shamberg, "That will buy us our first year." But he's already thinking ahead: "We'll have the Los Angeles premiere of 'The Big Chill' Sept. 29. It's written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan, released through Columbia Pictures and Carson Productions. And I am the producer," he adds with authority.

Purposely, and unlike some groups, TRIPOD has opted for a mix on its board. For instance, it includes Herb Larson (who is deaf), administrator of support services to deaf students at Cal State Northridge and host of "Off Hand," a television series about deafness on Channel 9. Also there is Frederic A. Bourke Jr., a venture capitalist and on the board of the Rectory School, a private junior high school specializing in educating children with learning disabilities in conjunction with "normal" children. Another member is Joe Shapiro, partner in the law firm of Donovan Leisure Newton & Irvine, who has donated legal services, helped with incorporation and secured the donated accounting services of Coopers & Lybrand.

Kirchner is board president.

Says Shamberg, "With this interplay between academics and our 'nasty capitalists,' we really think that we do have a chance of getting the biggest bang for the buck. . . . Someone will bring in technical information and 'the bad guys' on the board will say, 'That is going to cost \$211, but if you do it this way you can do it for \$209 . . . or go somewhere and get it for nothing.'" And he notes that "we are not interested in duplicating other kinds of deaf services in the city. We have been very successful so far by limiting ourselves to goals we can achieve and by taking one step at a time."

Jacob is now 3½, a delightful child who can use sign language to tell you, playfully, "I want a horse." He is diagnosed as profoundly deaf and has a 90- decibel loss

which, his mother translates, means that he probably hears some rhythm of speech but can't discriminate sounds, "so that much will be valuable to him in learning to speak," she says. "He also signs when he speaks but is a very vocal child, and he has a very good chance of learning comprehensible speech."

And yet, she says, "That is only one of our goals, because he also needs to socialize with other children and have a sense of self, which is strong, to learn to read and write at a normal time."

Kirchner points out that the most valuable aid to a deaf child is to have his parents feel good about him or her, and then the reading and writing and the linguistic process will take place at the normal time, which is usually later. "But we find when there is early communication, it comes earlier. A lot depends on the parent/child interaction and how intense that interest is. And, if I said to Jacob a very complex sentence, the information might never get stored upstairs, and so communication must be meaningful. Therefore, an auditory process only does not help store the material upstairs. And so a total communication philosophy involves hearing residual speech, lip reading, sign language, mime, gesture—all this really enhances the child's cognitive process and establishes a basis for English skills as he grows."

Knowledge has helped Megan Williams face her child's hearing impairment. "At first, my sister reminds me now, I was hysterical. I wondered, 'Will Jake ever drive a car? Will he ever get married? How will I potty-train him?'" Says Michael Shamberg, "I thought, gee, he can never make movies, and yet when you look around, he's just like everyone else."

Now that they, as parents, are back on track, they're anxious to spare other parents the agony that they experienced, or at least to shorten it.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## TRIPOD'S FUNDRAISING HISTORY

TRIPOD's programs have been more successful than anyone expected. Recent research has validated the theories behind what we are doing, and we have received national recognition and commendation for our work. The fact that all our programs are operating at capacity confirms that the community is behind us and we are filling an important need.

TRIPOD's start-up in 1983 was funded by a gift of Ford Stock. Since then, the TRIPOD Board of Directors has developed a fundraising program comprised of individual giving, foundation and corporate grants, and annual fundraising events. Volunteers, non-cash donations, and publicity are also important elements of TRIPOD's fundraising strategy.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

On Valentine's Day 1983, the TRIPOD Board of Directors hosted its first fundraiser at Ma Maison. Tickets were priced at \$50 (to become a Friend of TRIPOD) and \$100 (to become a Founding Member). Approximately 100 people attended. It is interesting to note that the majority of the people who attended this event are still active supporters of TRIPOD.

On September 20, 1983 "The Big Chill" (produced by Michael Shamberg) was premiered at the Academy Theater - and simultaneously at the Directors' Guild in a captioned version for the hearing impaired. This was the first time a major motion picture was premiered with subtitles, making it accessible to deaf people. The screenings were followed by a party at the Beverly Hilton, with Columbia Pictures covering the expenses. Proceeds went to TRIPOD. Attendance was 1,200 and the net was \$74,000.

In November 1984, TRIPOD screened "The River" in New York City for 100 East Coast friends of Board members. Tickets were priced at \$100, and the screening was followed by a reception at the home of TRIPOD Patrons Roger and Marcia Kapp. The event helped to broaden our East Coast donor base.

In March 1985, TRIPOD hosted "Reggae Night" at the Venice, California home of Roy and Carol Doumani. Tickets were \$250 each, and TRIPOD earned over \$35,000 after expenses. Entertainment was donated by Reggae star Jimmy Cliff. Benefit committee members arranged for hors d'oeuvres and desserts to be donated by ten of Los Angeles' finest restaurants. Press included Variety, People magazine, The Los Angeles Times, and The Herald Examiner.



In April 1985, TRIPOD received \$25,000 from an event called "Rags to Riches", which was sponsored by the California Apparel Manufacturers. Board member, Bob Salka, arranged for TRIPOD to benefit annually from this event. Last year, we received \$47,000 from this event.

In November 1986, Robin Williams performed at the Comedy Store as a benefit for TRIPOD. We charged \$100 per ticket and netted about \$31,000. One of the evening's highlights was the sign language interpreter, who amazed the audience by keeping up with Robin Williams' warp-speed monologue.

TRIPOD's big fundraiser in 1986 was the premiere of Warner Brothers' "Club Paradise", produced by Michael Shamberg. Like "The Big Chill", "Club Paradise" was presented simultaneously with captions for the hearing impaired. The screenings at the Academy Theater were preceded by a buffet reception in the lobby. Tickets were sold for \$125, and Warner Brothers contributed about \$40,000 toward expenses, making TRIPOD's net about \$86,000.

In October 1987, TRIPOD premiered "Baby Boom" at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. This premiere signified the third time TRIPOD has simultaneously premiered an open-captioned version of a major motion picture which was available in an adjoining theater. Tickets were sold for \$125 and the screening was followed by a dessert reception in the lobby. Net proceeds totaled \$84,000.

In July 1988, TRIPOD premiered the MGM comedy "A Fish Called Wanda", starring John Cleese, Jamie Lee Curtis, and Kevin Kline. The movie was simultaneously interpreted for the deaf members of the audience. Tickets were sold for \$200 and proceeds from the event totalled \$116,000. The screening was followed by a reception in the lobby.

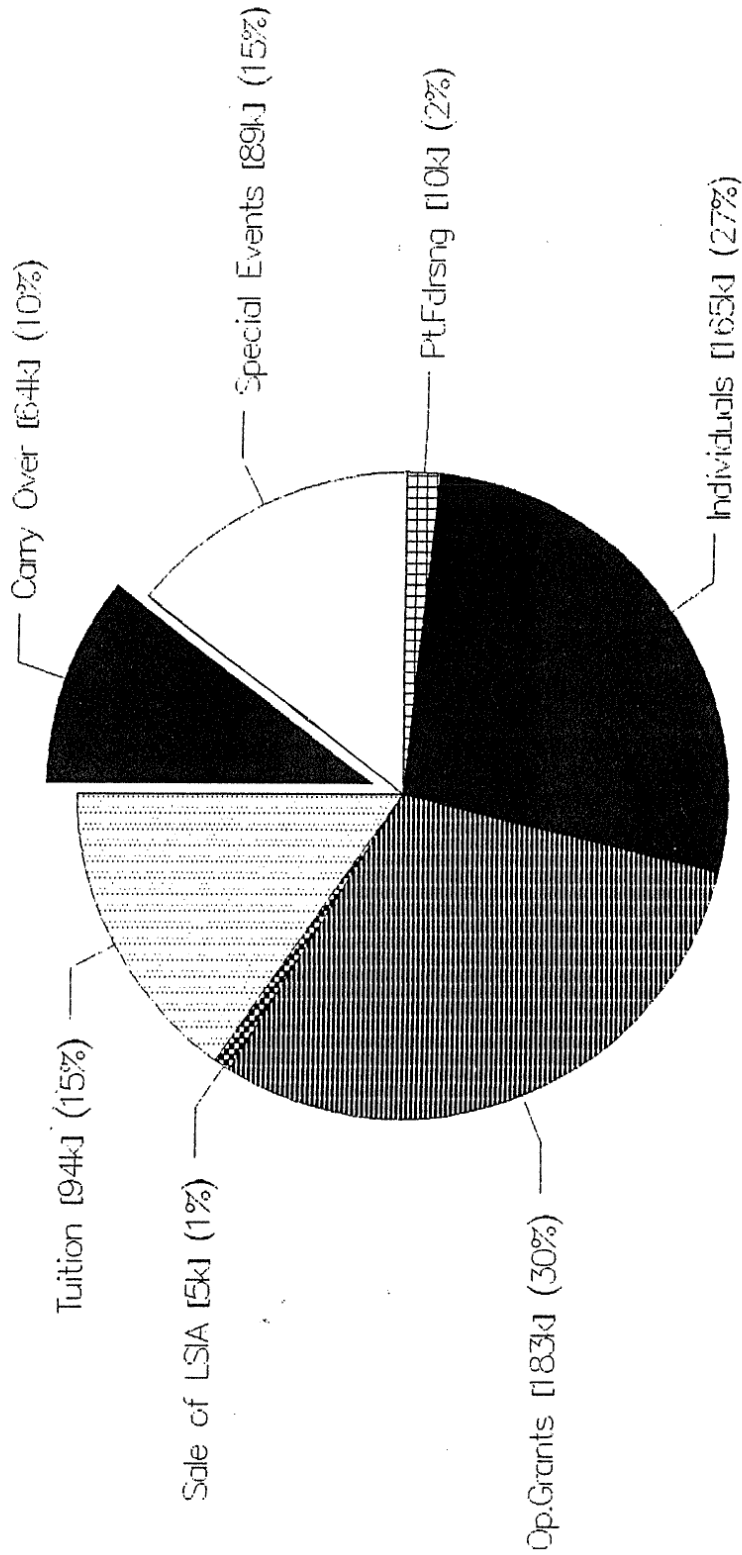
In January 1989, TRIPOD formed the Celebrity Support Group, chaired by Academy Award winning actress Louise Fletcher, daughter of deaf parents. Group members include Bea Arthur, Phoebe Cates, Chevy Chase, Jamie Lee Curtis, Geena Davis, Jeff Goldblum, Kevin Kline, Marlee Matlin and Jo Beth Williams. The group's first fundraiser was held on March 27th and netted almost \$20,000. The evening was so successful that an annual pre-Oscar party is being planned for 1990.

In February 1989, TRIPOD started a Women's Support Group, spearheaded by Meg Kasdan. The group was formed to provide hands-on support to TRIPOD's kids and parents and to help raise funds.

Also in February 1989, TRIPOD formed The Director's Circle in order to expand its leadership and broaden its base of financial support. This group was organized by Harry Eversole and Ron Lee.

# TRIPOD - 1988/89 PROJECTED REVENUES

TOTAL: \$612,414



BOARD ROSTERS

### THE TRIPOD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Megan Williams, President:** Ms. Williams is a former television journalist who currently works full-time on a volunteer basis. Ms. Williams just completed a 23-minute film for parents and educators entitled, "Language Says It All". The film describes the impact of deafness upon young children and their families and was nominated for an Academy Award in the "Documentary Short Subject" category. Ms. Williams was named 1984 "Woman of the Year" by the Greater Los Angeles Council on Deafness, and received the "Lee Katz Award", the highest honor bestowed by the American Society for Deaf Children. She and husband Michael Shamberg are co-founders of TRIPOD and parents of Jacob, a deaf student in P.S. #1/TRIPOD's Mainstreaming Program.

**Carl J. Kirchner, Executive Director, Ex-Officio Board Member:** Mr. Kirchner is on leave of absence from his position as Associate Professor in charge of the Teacher Preparation Program, area of the deaf, for the Special Education Department at California State University, Northridge. Mr. Kirchner is the hearing son of deaf parents and has been an educator for over twenty-five years.

**Mary Lloyd Estrin, Vice-President:** Ms. Estrin is a freelance photographer. She also serves on the Board of the General Service Foundation, which funded TRIPOD's award-winning documentary "Language Says It All", and has actively participated in TRIPOD's fundraising and publicity activities.

**Michael Shamberg, Secretary - Treasurer:** Mr. Shamberg is an independent motion picture producer whose credits include "A Fish Called Wanda", "The Big Chill", and "Club Paradise". Along with wife, Megan Williams, Mr. Shamberg has been actively involved in TRIPOD's fundraising and financial affairs.

**Joe Shapiro, Assistant Secretary:** Mr. Shapiro is Senior Vice President, General Counsel, for Walt Disney Productions. He was responsible for introducing TRIPOD's founders to the benefactor who provided start-up funds.

**Linda Bove:** A deaf actress, Ms. Bove is best known for her work on "Sesame Street", and in the motion picture, "Children of a Lesser God". She has received several awards for her work, and is a member of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals.

SUPPORT MATERIALS

GRAPEVINE  
LETTERS OF SUPPORT

**YOUTH ADVOCATES, INC.**  
2317 EAST JOHN ST., SEATTLE, WA 98112  
(206) 322-7838 TTY/VOICE  
GERSON KLEINBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



March 10, 1988

Barbara Lincoln  
Tripod Grapevine  
755 N. Alfred St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90069

Dear Barbara:

Thank you for sending me the materials from your organization. I found the article on "Deaf Adults in the Lives of Deaf Children" to be particularly informative and useful.

I shared the article with two hearing parents of a deaf child and they stated to me that it was eye-opening and brought their attention to issues in their relationship that they had never thought of previously. In the future, I plan on providing this article to all my hearing parents with hearing impaired kids and including your telephone number as a resource for information.

In the future if you become aware of a resource my agency should be utilizing or an article I might benefit from, please feel free to call me and let me know. Also, I have enclosed a pamphlet from my agency. If you should get inquiries about the availability of resources in Seattle for deaf foster kids, please refer them to Youth Advocates. We are trying to recruit more deaf foster parents to help meet the needs of the deaf children in our community. Any support in the way of referrals and information would be most appreciated.

Thank you again for your time and effort. Please call me if you have any questions about Youth Advocates, 1-206-322-7838.

Sincerely,

Tracey S. Church  
Caseworker/Advocate  
Youth Advocates

*Alternative Counseling and Residential Programs for Our Youth*



A United Way Agency



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA 92717

October 25, 1988

Barbara Lincoln  
Tripod Inc.  
955 N. Alfred St.  
Los Angeles, CA. 90069

Dear Barbara:

Thank you so much for your time and the great tour last week. I was very impressed with the philosophy of the program, the activities and the staff that I observed. Every deaf child and his or her family should have a resource like Tripod available. The videotape "Language Says it All" will be a valuable teaching instrument in my classes here at U.C. Irvine. I showed it to my Deaf Culture class today. It had a powerful impact. It is one thing when I tell students the same kind of things in class, but when they see Megan and the other parents tell their story it is really moving.

If I can ever be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me either at home or through the Department of Cognitive Studies. Enclosed you will find a check for the videotape.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Dennis Galvan Ph.D.  
Lecturer  
Dept. of Cognitive  
Sciences

DG/bp

Enclosure 1



FROM: Department of \_\_\_\_\_ 14 March, 1988  
Audiology and Speech Pathology  
(303) 861-6800

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for the information about both Tripod and the Grapevine.

Enclosed is Children's Hospital's "Parent Packet" which we hand out to parents of newly identified hearing-impaired children. On our next revision, it will include your program, Tripod, and the Grapevine.

It was a pleasure talking with you.

Sincerely,

Donna Selter

Enclosure

The Children's Hospital



1056 East 19th Avenue

Denver, Colorado 80218



PHILIP W. JOHNSTON  
SECRETARY  
BARBARA JEAN WOOD  
COMMISSIONER

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Human Services  
Massachusetts Commission  
for the Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing

July 28, 1988

Ms. Barbara Lincoln  
TRIPOD  
955 N. Alfred St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90069

Dear Ms. Lincoln,

Thank you for your time on the phone and for sending information for parents. The materials that you sent are helpful and some will be included in our parent information packets. It is always hard to choose which materials to include when there is so much to pick from. We will be sending out different packets organized by age group and topic areas. We are also developing a list of materials that parents can request from our department.

We greatly appreciate your help, and wish you well.

Sincerely,

Michelle Brodsky

*Dear Barbara —  
Thank  
you for the help. Hope you are  
well. Love,  
Bobbie*

Bobbie

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL  
FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

CEDAR SPRING STATION  
SPARTANBURG, S.C. 29302  
TELEPHONE: (803) 585-7711



Joseph P. Finnegan,  
President

May 23, 1988

Barb Lincoln, Coordinator  
TRIPOD  
955 N. Alfred Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90069

Dear Mr. Lincoln,

During the course of our conversation last week, you requested to be put on our mailing list of periodicals so that they may be placed in your library alone with information/materials from other deaf schools.

Enclosed is a few copies of our most recent pamphlets. You should be receiving more from time to time as I have passed this request to all department here at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Sincerely,  
*JS*

~~Jack~~ Siemenda  
Assistant Principal

JS;ej  
cc: Pat Dowling, Principal  
File

Enclosure

*write  
THX*

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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MR DARYL G HAWKINS  
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Sixth Congressional District  
MR. DONALD CAPPS  
Member at Large, Blind  
MR HARRY CULPEPPER  
Member at Large Deaf

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DR CHARLIE WILLIAMS  
State Superintendent of Education  
MR MICHAEL O JARRETT  
Commissioner, DHEC  
DR FLORIDE MARTIN  
Representative from the  
Governor's Office



October 12, 1988

Ms. Barbara Lincoln  
Coordinator  
Tripod Grapevine  
955 North Alfred Street  
Los Angeles, California 90069

Dear Barbara:

Many thanks indeed for sending me the extremely interesting materials from Tripod, which I received today. I have taken the liberty of passing these materials on to our Director of Education, Vas Prabhu, and I'm sure that she'll be as interested as I am to know more about not only the needs of the tremendously important community of individuals that you serve, but the extraordinary way in which you are serving them.

Once again, many thanks for your assistance. Please don't hesitate to call me if you'd ever like to visit MOCA; in addition, if you are ever interested in bringing a group of students here, please feel free to call our Education Assistant, Caroline Blackburn, at 213/621-2766, and she'll be happy to help you schedule this.

With ~~all~~ best wishes,

Erica Clark  
Acting Director of Development

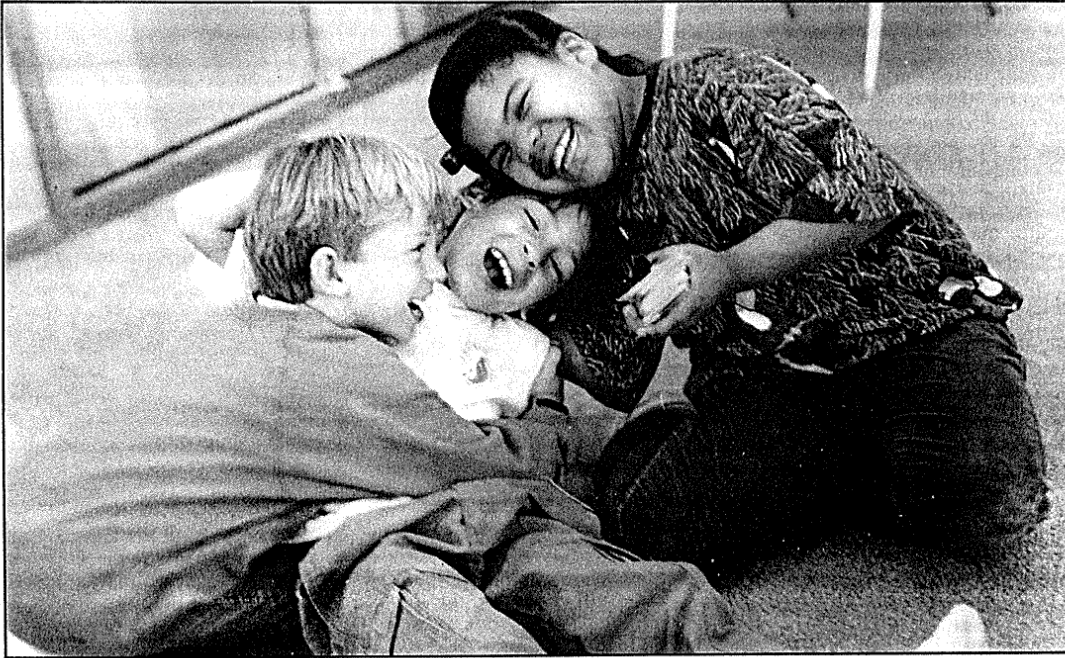
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cc: Vas Prabhu

The Museum of Contemporary Art  
The Temporary Contemporary  
250 South Grand Avenue at California Plaza  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 621-2766 Telex: MOCA 194476

PUBLIC RELATIONS INFORMATION

# ENJOYING



## ***Each Other's Company*** **OUR MODEL MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM**

*Wilson Sotaw Roman* ○ *Paula E. Tucker* ○ *Pam Salka Wirht*

**I**s it possible for deaf students to take full advantage of the educational benefits of a regular classroom? To participate in all aspects of school life? To be accepted as equals by their hearing peers? The staff, parents, and students at our small, independent elementary school would heartily answer, "Yes!" The secret to the success of our program and its greatest reward is the children's social interaction, which we have encouraged in several ways.\*

Our model class consists of 16 hearing and 3 deaf

\*The project is being conducted through TRIPOD, an organization serving deaf children, at PS#1 Elementary School, Santa Monica, California. Seed money for the project was provided by the Mattel Foundation.

children, ages six to nine. They are taught by an elementary school teacher and a teacher trained in teaching deaf students who plan the curriculum together and use a team approach in the classroom.

Here are some of the exciting things that are happening:

- The deaf and hearing students interact freely and confidently, and have found ways to overcome communication barriers. During independent work time, the students often choose to work with each other.
- Although there has been no formal sign language instruction for the hearing children since the initial preparation, all of the students know some signs,

## FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

You may wish to read some of the following books dealing with deafness to your hearing students.

1. Adams, B. *Like It Is: Facts and Feelings About Handicaps from Kids Who Know*. Walker & Company, New York, NY. 1979. (ages eight to eleven)
2. Arthur, C. *My Sister's Silent World*. Children's Press, Chicago, IL. 1979. (ages seven to nine)
3. Bridges, C. *The Hero*. Joyce Media, Action, CA. 1980. (ages seven to nine)
4. Goldfeder, C.A. *The Girl Who Wouldn't Talk*. National Association of the Deaf, Silver Spring, MD. 1973. (ages seven to eight)
5. Hirsch, K. *Becky*. Carolrhoda Books, Minneapolis, MN. 1981. (ages seven to eight)
6. Hlibok, B. *Silent Dancer*. Simon & Schuster, New York, NY. 1981. (ages seven to nine)
7. Jackson, T. *Friends Are for Signing*. National Association of the Deaf, Silver Spring, MD. 1982. (ages six to nine)
8. Kamien, V. *What If You Couldn't...?* Charles Scribner's, New York, NY. 1979. (ages nine to eleven)
9. Levine, Edna. *Lisa and Her Soundless World*. Human Sciences Press, New York, NY. 1974. (ages eight to nine)
10. Pahz, J. *Robin Sees a Song*. National Association of the Deaf, Silver Spring, MD. 1977. (ages seven to nine)
11. Peterson, J. W. *I Have a Sister—My Sister Is Deaf*. Harper & Row, New York, NY. 1977. (ages six to eight)
12. Rislind, M. *Apple Is My Sign*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA. 1981. (ages nine to eleven)
13. Robinson, Veronica. *David in Silence*. Lippincott, New York, NY. 1966. (ages nine to eleven)
14. Sullivan, M. B. *Feeling Free*. Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA. 1978. (ages nine to eleven)
15. Talbott, M. *My Treasure Is My Friend*. Joyce Media, Action, CA. 1982. (ages nine to eleven)
16. Talbott, M. *Somethin'*. Joyce Media, Action, CA. 1982. (ages seven to nine)

The following materials are useful for teaching sign language to children.

1. Bornstein, Harry, Karen L. Saulnier, and Lillian B. Hamilton. *The Comprehensive Signed English Dictionary*. Gallaudet University Press, Washington, DC. 1975.
2. Charlip, Remy. *Handtalk: An ABC of Fingerspelling and Sign Language*. Parents Magazine, New York, NY. 1974.
3. Kirchner, Suzie Linton. *Play It* by Sign. Joyce Media, Action, CA. 1974.
4. Kirchner, Suzie Linton. *Signs for All Seasons*. Joyce Media, Action, CA. 1977.
5. *Sesame Street Sign Language Fun*. Random House, New York, NY. 1980.
6. *Signed English Children's Books, Levels I-III*. Gallaudet University Press, Washington, DC. 1973-1976.

observer would notice little difference between this class and any other. The students receive equal amounts of attention from the teachers. The students mix well socially. And the deaf students are not taught separately. Instead, the teachers incorporate the speech and language instruction necessary for deaf children into the regular classroom work.

Research on mainstreaming indicates that if a teacher pays more attention to the handicapped chil-

dren in a class, the acceptance of these children by non-handicapped peers is diminished.\* Initially the teachers in our class were more attentive to the deaf children in order to alert them to transitions and to give instructions. The solu-

\*White, Barbara Notkin. "Mainstreaming in Grade School and Pre-School: How the Child with Special Needs Interacts with Peers." In *High-Risk Infants and Children. Adult and Peer Interactions*, Tiffany Field, Ed. Academic Press, NY. 1980.

tion to this imbalance of attention turned out to be surprisingly simple and effective. One teacher decided to ask a hearing child to be responsible for getting each deaf child's attention. An unexpected result of this has been that the hearing children have generalized this behavior to play activities and now naturally alert their deaf classmates to any information they need.

It was less easy to figure out ways to incorporate the special speech and language training that deaf children need into the daily lessons without having the students appear different. The teachers found that many of the classroom materials could be adapted to create lessons that suited the needs of both the deaf and hearing students. For example, during oral reading, the hearing children work on sounding out new words while the deaf children focus on specific speech targets. In addition, syntax work that is primarily designed for the deaf children is taught through word games and riddles that hearing children also enjoy.

The planning and effort that have gone into implementing this program have helped the children learn to appreciate each other's differences, while at the same time learning that they are all really very much the same. One hearing student approached the teacher and asked how to spell the word *friend*. The student later presented a painting to his deaf classmate. It read, "You are a good friend."

Interactions such as this indicate that both deaf and hearing students are benefiting from the program. The students are thriving both academically and socially. These and other positive results have been making mainstreaming an enriching experience for our deaf and hearing students alike.

Allison Sedey Roman is a Speech Language Pathologist at the House Ear Institute, Los Angeles, California. Paula E. Tucker is the Assistant Executive Director and Pam Salka Wirht is a Teacher for TRIPOD, Los Angeles, California. Photographs by Mary Lloyd Estrin.

# Tripod School: A New Success in Deaf Education

by Cindy Murphy and Charles Katz

*Editorial note: At the recent CATIII Conference, keynote speaker Susan Kovalek spoke strongly about the merits of Montessori methods. That afternoon, a hundred teachers heard a presentation by TRIPOD staff about the school's progress. These pioneering efforts will be of special interest, and perhaps of growing importance in coming years as school districts all over the U.S. proceed to implement the preschool and infant programs mandated by P.L.99-457.*

Why is TRIPOD so enthusiastic about Montessori for deaf children? Our school was founded in Los Angeles five years ago as an experiment in deaf preschool education. We chose to use the Montessori method, originally for practical reasons, because it has an orderly curriculum with carefully designed materials in a specifically prepared environment, and for its emphasis on the child's exploration and self-expression. After five years' experience, we realize that Montessori is a more radical departure from traditional deaf education than we anticipated. The approach is uniquely suited for deaf preschoolers, and the benefits for children and teachers are much more than we expected.

Montessori methods are based on the assumption that children have strong innate tendencies: a tendency to explore, a tendency to try more and more complex movements, a tendency to become more organized, a tendency to express themselves in art and language, a tendency to become independent, and a tendency to perfect the skills they already have.

We have found that because we work with children's innate strengths and drives, our jobs are easier and we are more effective. We believe, on the other hand, that if our teaching or parenting methods work against the powerful forces of development in the child, the results can be counterproductive and frustrating.

In a typical deaf education classroom, the teacher sits at a U-shaped table surrounded by five or six deaf children. The teacher has her materials in a box behind her, and takes them out one at a time. She decides the topic of conversation, who will speak and when, and what the children can touch. Researchers have concluded this type of educational experience results in children becoming passive, losing self-confidence,

initiative, and motivation. The resulting state is referred to as "learned helplessness".

Montessori classrooms provide a dramatic contrast: All materials are available on open shelves so that children can choose what they want to work with, removing the materials from the shelves and replacing them easily by themselves. Throughout the day, teachers are always present, and may guide children to various materials. But once they have shown the proper use of the materials, they step back and allow children to explore the materials and work by themselves. The child decides when to begin the activity, how long to work on it, and how often to repeat it. The child's time-frame and his need for repetition are respected. The teacher's lesson plan is well-prepared but entirely flexible.

Maria Montessori encapsulated her suggestions for adults in the concept of the "prepared environment". Montessori teachers are trained to observe, listen, and support. During the day, a careful balance is maintained between teacher direction and the child's free choice. All parents and teachers can do this. Those who, instead, try to impose their will on the child are, in effect, saying: "I don't trust you. You can't choose the good. I must choose for you. Without me, you are bad (or ignorant)."

How can we parents and teachers achieve the desired, positive results and minimize the frustrating ones?

We can begin by recognizing the innate capabilities in children, by observing them, educating ourselves about child development, and training ourselves to have respect for the child. A child's time-table is not our time table. The child's way of learning is not our way of learning. Piaget described the development of children from birth to six years as sensory-motor. Everything is learned through the senses and through the child's movement. Learning is spontaneous, and that which has meaning to the child is learned easily. These principles are especially important in working with young deaf children.

When the child brings up a topic, someone needs to listen with interest, and respond without judgement or any unnecessary correction. When

there is a misunderstanding, adults may change their language mode to make their meaning more accessible. If the child destroys something, there may become a chance to make amends with loving support from adults.

In the home as well as in the school we can work to surround our children with the means to grow and to become good and intelligent people. Every opportunity can be given to help with household tasks: pitchers need to be light enough for pouring, personal belongings are stored in low position and are small enough for the child to take care of by himself.

Rather than working on the child themselves, teachers and parents can work on themselves. They can look for gyms and swimming classes, find friends and create opportunities to visit park museums, libraries, and theaters. They can delight in their child's progress, and not focus on what the child lacks. The child sees smiling, proud and confident adults, and takes this esteem into himself.

An important final point about TRIPOD School: The classroom is indistinguishable from a "normal" Montessori classroom. Children walk around freely, talking with each other and with the teachers; they are assertive in asking questions, are comfortable with visitors whom they do not know, and are interested in the world around them. We find that deaf children do indeed have the same strong positive tendencies we expect in hearing children. Given the opportunity they grow quickly and well in all aspects — emotional, intellectual, linguistic, and social. Our use of the Montessori method lets the adults go with the flow, as determined by the child. Our efforts are light and easy and so are the child's.

*Biographical notes: Charles Katz has a M.A. in deaf education, and is the first deaf person to qualify for an Associate Montessori Internationale teaching certificate. He teaches at TRIPOD, and is active in Los Angeles drama as an actor and a producer. Cindy Murphy LeBuffe is Educational Director for TRIPOD. She is credentialed by AMI, and as a teacher of the hearing impaired. She is working on a dissertation at Johns Hopkins U., on teachers' communication styles with hearing impaired students.*





Recognizing the need for a guidance center for deaf children's families, Megan Williams founded the non-profit organization TRIPOD, located in a cozy house in a quiet part of West Hollywood.

## Williams' film speaks for itself

By Susan King  
Herald Examiner staff writer

The ability to communicate. It's a basic skill. A daily necessity. And something we often take for granted.

As did documentary filmmaker Megan Williams and her husband, Michael Shamburg, producer of "The Big Chill." Until they learned seven years ago their 8-month-old son, Jacob, was deaf.

"After my baby was diagnosed," recalls Williams, "I was at someone's house and all these kids were running around. One of the kids was singing the theme from 'Cinderella.' Then he looked at his mom and said, 'Can we go to McDonald's today?'"

"I thought, 'How am I going to get all of this into Jake? How is he going to know about fairy tales — basic cultural information?'"

The couple searched in vain for someone or someplace to go for help and guidance. Then Williams took matters into her own hands, founding TRIPOD, a non-profit organization for hearing-impaired children and their parents, located in a cozy house in a quiet West Hollywood neighborhood.

Five years later, TRIPOD consists of a Parent-Infant/Toddler program, a laboratory preschool program, a demonstration Elementary Mainstream Program — where Jacob, now 8, attends second grade — parent support services and the Grapevine, a national toll-free hotline, which has answered more than 3,500 questions.

## Academy Awards Unsung Nominees

### BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT

- ▶ "Frances Steloff: Memoirs of a Bookseller," Deborah Dickson, producer
- ▶ "In the Wee Wee Hours . . ." USC School of Cinema/TV
- ▶ "Language Says It All," Megan Williams, producer
- ▶ "Silver Into Gold," Lynn Mueller, producer
- ▶ "Young at Heart," Sue Marx and Pamela Conn, producers

*These profiles in this series are being selected at random. They are not necessarily our prediction or selection for the winner in the category. Next Monday The 60th Annual Academy Awards.*

Last year, Williams focused her filmmaker's eye on an examination of the impact of deafness

upon children and their parents. The result, a 23-minute film titled "Language Says It All," has been nominated for an Academy Award in the Documentary Short Subject category.

The nomination took Williams by surprise. "It's a real treat!" she exclaims, sitting in TRIPOD's small kitchen. It's a double thrill, because Williams didn't make "Language" for the general public.

"We did it to show basically to parent groups," she explains. "There are a lot of parents' groups across the country. We also made it for schools and teachers because deaf education is controversial."

But perhaps the prime impetus for making the film was Williams' inability to find videos that, she says, "approached the true consequences of having a child not hearing. There were a lot of films that dealt with the emotional impact of finding out your child is deaf, but we didn't want to deal with the feelings, because it had been covered."

Yet, there was no way to avoid the feelings. In one particularly powerful sequence, a frustrated father admits — through his tears — he thinks his young hearing-impaired daughter would be better off living with a deaf family who could more readily communicate with her.

"That's where I was within a year of Jacob's diagnosis," says Williams. "That was one of my first thoughts, that this baby would be so much better off with a deaf family. The notion of learning sign language seemed so awesome and difficult a task, but, in fact, it's not."

Though "Language" has been embraced by parents and teachers, Williams is amazed at the public's warm reception. "We assumed that we may be able to get it on TV, but we weren't sure if it was of interest to the general public."

That was until she screened the finished product for her board of directors. "They were really taken by it," she says. "They thought we should show it publicly."

Williams heeded their advice. At a TRIPOD benefit screening of "Baby Boom" last fall, Williams showed a 13-minute excerpt of "Language."

"For some reason," says Williams, "people were touched by it. Friends of mine supported TRIPOD, the school, mainly because they're close friends, but one person came up to me and said, 'I never knew why you did what you did. Now I understand. I never understood what it's like to have a child who is deaf. Now I do.'"

Williams intends to produce more videos to help parents and their children. "We want to focus on specific situations and focus on developing communication," she says, "and breaking down those barriers of communication. We want to take bits and pieces from 'Language' and expand on them and let the parent feel comfortable with what they're doing."

# Click



Scott Downie/Celebrity Photo

"Fish" fan Dudley Moore with his wife, Brogan, left, and his co-star in "Arthur 2 on the Rocks," Cynthia Sikes

## Rich, famous, stylishly dead

By Bill Higgins  
Herald Examiner staff writer

"WE WERE GOING to have two queens," said one of the organizers of the premiere party for MGM's "A Fish Called Wanda," "but one queen refused to come when she heard the other queen would be here."

Just as well. Who needs a couple of bickering queens clawing at each other's tiaras?

The majestics in question were part of a troupe of royal family look-alikes brought in to highlight the Anglo-American nature of "Wanda," which stars Monty Python-ites John Cleese and Michael Palin and U.S. All-Stars Jamie Lee Curtis and Kevin Kline.

Cleese, Palin and Curtis were at the Motion Picture Academy's theater (Kline's in New York doing Shakespeare) and they all do a remarkably good job of resembling themselves.

This is more than could be said for the royal look-alikes.

"I didn't know Jackie Mason was a member of the royal family," said one guest as she examined an ersatz prince who we thought looked a little like Fernando Lamas.

Besides bringing full

employment to everyone (except for one very prissy queen) who even vaguely resembled a member of the House of Windsor, the premiere also benefited Tripod, an organization for hearing-impaired children.

"It was such a struggle to get adequate information on how to raise and educate a deaf child," said co-founder Megan Williams (wife of "Wanda" producer Michael Shamberg) whose son Jacob is hearing-impaired. "Tripod's whole focus is to give deaf children normal lives and not to focus on their deafness."

As she said this a look-alike for either Prince Philip, Annette Funicello or Buster Crabbe walked by. As we followed His or Her Sort-of Highness we could see Dudley Moore was in the crowd with former partner Peter Cook.

Also circulating were a slew of directors including "Roger Rabbit's" Robert Zemeckis with his wife, Mary Ellen; Moore's co-star in "Arthur 2," Cynthia Sikes, and their director, Bud Yorkin; and Brian DePalma, who's just finished "Casualties of War."

"Saturday Night Live's" Jon Lovitz reminded both Palin and Cleese that they were always welcome to make an appearance. JoBeth Williams praised Cleese's "Fawcety Towers" and Janet Leigh played proud parent as Curtis; made sure Ambrosia Caterers sent any leftovers to a shelter for the homeless.

Proving there's more to being a star than just looking like one.



Scott Downie/Celebrity Photo

**Something fishy?:** Michael Palin, John Cleese, Jamie Lee Curtis and producer Michael Shamberg at "A Fish Called Wanda's" premiere



Scott Downie/Celebrity Photo

**Checking the assets:** Janet Leigh gives an appreciative pat to the posterior of her daughter Jamie Lee Curtis.



Lee Salem

**"Saturday Night"** then and now: SNL stars Laraine Newman and Jon Lovitz at the Motion Picture Academy theater



Lee Salem

**"Roger Rabbit's"** Robert Zemeckis, left, was at "Fish" with sister-in-law Carolyn Trainor, Brian DePalma and wife Mary Ellen.

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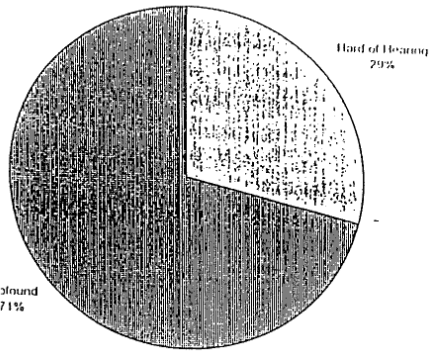
EXAMINER

## Another 'Big Chill' reunion

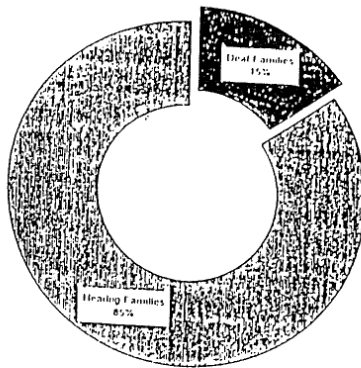


**The cast of "The Big Chill"** was reunited at a benefit for Tripod, an organization that helps families raise their deaf children. From left, Jeff Goldblum, William Hurt, Glenn Close, JoBeth Williams and Kevin Kline were guests of Roy and Carol Doumani for a "Reggae Night" featuring Jimmy Cliff. Some very chichi restaurants, including 72 Market Street, West Beach Cafe, Prego, Michael's, Rex II Ristorante and Chinols, donated food for a buffet dinner.

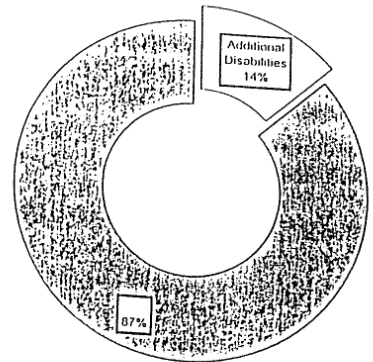
Hearing Loss Distribution



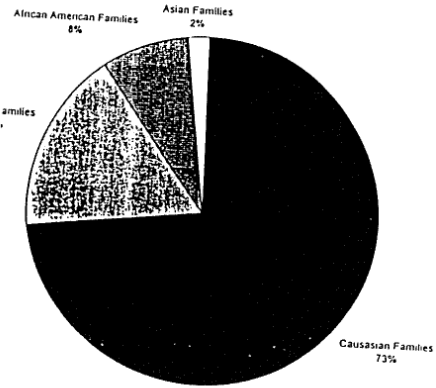
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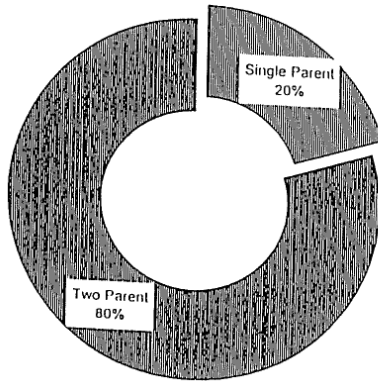
Additional Disabilities



Ethnic Backgrounds



Family Structure



Economic Levels

