Clarke Speaks

2018-19

Clarke teaches children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk

Boston | Jacksonville | Northampton | New York | Philadelphia

A BROADWAY DEBUT

EXPERIENCE

A DAY IN THE LIFE
AT CLARKE

HOW WILL TECHNOLOGY CHANGE OUR FIELD?

Experts Explain
Clarke teaches children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk.

Children served by Clarke use advanced technologies, including cochlear implants and hearing aids, to maximize their access to sound. We work with children from infants to teens and their families. Our teachers of the deaf, audiologists and speech-language pathologists have the background, training and experience to prepare children academically and socially for a world of limitless possibilities. Clarke children listen and learn in the classroom, run and laugh with their friends on the playground and have lives filled with music, sports, family and community.
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Meeting Clarke students and their families is the best part of my job. I recount parents’ stories and the amazing things their children say when I meet with potential Board Members, funders and others. I remind them—as I frequently remind myself—that these children could not listen or speak before the activation of their technology and the life-changing intervention of Clarke professionals. Clarke’s tenured leaders assure me this will never get old, and I am glad it’s the case!

From babies saying their first words to students leaving for college, the stories about Clarke’s impact continue to inspire me. And this issue of Clarke Speaks will introduce you to some of the members of our talented team who make it all possible. You’ll also meet some of the families with whom we work.

Our efforts, large and small, are all in service of those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Clarke’s 2018-19 strategic planning efforts will guide our work through 2023. The next phase of growth for Clarke resounds with opportunities for sustainable, consistent and proven services for children, youth and adults.

We’re grateful for your support today and invite you to stay engaged as we chart the future of education and support for those who are deaf or hard of hearing using listening and spoken language.

With gratitude,

Doug Scott
President and CEO, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech

Clarke Speaks

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ON THE COVER: ARIANNY
Arianny, preschooler at Clarke New York, joins her classmates in releasing the butterflies they studied and nurtured from the caterpillar stage.

Photograph by Meredith Berger

Clarke Speaks can be found online: clarkeschools.org/speaks
Sign up to receive news and information throughout the year in our bimonthly eNewsletter: clarkeschools.org/enewsletters
When Andrew Lybarger was born at 26 weeks’ gestation, doctors discouraged his mother, Jen Lybarger, from asking about typical outcomes for a child like Andrew. *Children like Andrew do not exist,* they told her.

Andrew has shown remarkable character during his 12 years at Clarke, from his early days in the Integrated Preschool Program through his graduation last June from the K-8 Program. As a freshman at a mainstream high school in New Hampshire, Andrew now receives Clarke’s itinerant teaching services, maintaining his vital connection to Clarke. His journey illustrates Clarke’s commitment to supporting children who are deaf or hard of hearing from a young age through the middle grades and beyond.

**Learning as a Family**

“Sweet Andrew,” as the nurses called him, spent seven months in the hospital after he was born. During that time, he was diagnosed with moderate to severe hearing loss in both ears and auditory dysynchrony. Andrew received hearing aids as a toddler, and early intervention services in physical therapy and speech.

When he started Clarke’s Integrated Preschool Program—designed for students with and without hearing loss—at the age of four, Andrew was only able to string together two one-syllable words, like “blue car.” His mother, Jen Lybarger, remembers his first day of school, riding the elevator down to his classroom with Marian Hartblay, MAT, MED, LSLS Cert. AVEd, director of Early Childhood Services at Clarke Northampton.

“Andrew loved copying noises, and was saying ‘Ding-Dong’ to imitate the elevator sound. Marian crouched and said, ‘Andrew, this is the elevator’ and encouraged him to imitate the word ‘elevator,’” Jen recalls. “I wanted to laugh. But then, one month later, he was saying ‘elevator’! It was such an indicator of Clarke’s philosophy: Nothing is out of reach.”

During the preschool years, Andrew’s family learned many techniques for creating a stimulating learning environment at home. These included getting down to his level when speaking to him and incorporating visuals into language lessons and schedules. Jen learned that showing Andrew images helped him organize his day, and allowed him to pick up on details that he may have otherwise missed.

“Clarke teachers are amazing,” says Jen. “They’re always looking to the whole needs of the child, not just the hearing loss.” After Andrew’s hour-long ride to Northampton, Massachusetts, from Keene, New Hampshire, it was clear that he needed physical activity. So Andrew practiced vocabulary while jumping on a trampoline or pushing boxes down a
that Grows with You.

res an extraordinary student for mainstream success

hall. “And while they’ve always accommodated Andrew, they were also pushing him out of his comfort zone academically.”

“School within a School”

Suits Andrew’s Needs

Following his graduation from Clarke’s Integrated Preschool Program, Andrew was enrolled in Clarke’s K-8 Program, co-located at Leeds Elementary School in Northampton, Massachusetts. This program provides students who are deaf or hard of hearing with Clarke’s customized curriculum, while also giving them the opportunity to become familiar with the faster pace of a mainstream school, joining their peers with typical hearing for lunch, art, music and physical education.

Students also learn valuable social-emotional skills in the K-8 Program. As a social butterfly, Andrew was eager to make new friends during non-core activities, but learned over time that not all his peers shared his fanaticism for *Star Wars* and sports statistics. Clarke teachers have worked carefully with Andrew, teaching him questions he can ask to learn more about others. And Andrew has become a dear friend to many of his classmates, even winning Clarke’s Friendship Award in 2016 and 2017.

Taking the Next Step

Preparing Andrew for the transition to mainstream high school has been an exciting and comprehensive process. In his last three years in Clarke’s K-8 Program, Andrew has been part of a transition team with Clarke teachers of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, aides and his family. They have been working diligently on many skills, including self-advocacy; his ability to report on the functioning of his hearing technology; and vocabulary he’ll need in a mainstream setting.

“Clarke goes above and beyond,” Jen says of the transition. “They put together a packet for the high school team, which includes his current levels, scores, testing and then so much more—about Andrew. It gives them a picture of who he is, what his needs are and what’s been done for him in the past. They [his high school team] were thrilled to receive it.”

In addition to Clarke’s involvement in this important transition, Clarke Mainstream Services provides Andrew with support from an itinerant teacher of the deaf traveling to see him at his high school on a daily basis.

Thinking about the future for Andrew, Jen can’t help but look back. “He’s defied the odds—just the fact that he’s with us,” she says. “As he grows older, we’re learning more about him, and we’re learning right along with him to see what’s next.”
We reached out to subject matter experts and thought leaders in the fields of education and hearing health to talk about technology. We wanted to know how technological advancements—like wireless hearable technology, smartphones and teleservices—might impact people with hearing loss, and how we teach listening and spoken language to children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Here’s what they had to say...

Augmented reality (AR) technologies could offer parents and professionals a glimpse into the experience of a child with hearing loss. For example, using AR technology, a parent could share the sights and sounds picked up by their child while in a classroom, allowing them to understand the need for noise mitigation. And if hearables [smart wireless ear buds] are able to measure biometrics of concentration and stress, they could provide valuable information pertaining to how an assistive hearing technology user is feeling if the person isn’t otherwise able to report this. Hearables could change the social context of wearing hearing devices.

I believe that advancements in technology will bolster family involvement in a child’s education at Clarke. As hearing technology becomes more user-friendly, families will grow more comfortable with device usage and terminology. And I think this familiarity will make them feel more confident asking questions and being crucial players in their child’s listening and spoken language development!”

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Kevin H. Franck, PhD. Director of Audiology at Mass. Eye and Ear & Harvard Medical School, and former Clarke Trustee
Working on a college campus I can see the stigma around hearing tech breaking down right before my eyes. Wireless headphones, hearing aids and cochlear implants are common on our campus, and students (and some faculty!) are connected wirelessly to their smart devices all the time. As society shifts to a world of wearables, the stigma is no longer there, as it is becoming the norm to have a device that you rely on. This use of technology helps to ‘level the playing field’ for deaf students as they interact with their hearing peers, and allows them to better prepare for the world of work.”

“At its best, technology—like hearing aids and cochlear implants—provides an increased capacity for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, to hear. Without a rich auditory experience provided by skilled practitioners, however, the benefits of the device itself will be quite limited, and auditory performance will be poor. Fortunately, virtual teleservices [like Clarke’s tVISIT Program] can increase a child’s access to teachers, clinicians and audiologists whose expertise might be too far away for regular face-to-face visits. And since hearing technology needs to be adjusted periodically to suit specific audiological needs—if these services can also be provided remotely, children in rural areas may be able to benefit from state-of-the-art technology, even though they are geographically far from a center that supports the devices. But I also think that with the increased use of hearables in the general population, technology associated specifically with children who are deaf or hard of hearing may go undetected, or be seen as ‘cool.’ So while technology has improved the adaptability of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, there is less awareness and recognition of their disability.

Changes in medical and audiological technology will continue to create opportunities for more children with hearing loss to participate in fully inclusive settings with the support of teachers of the deaf—especially when children with hearing loss transition from learning to read, to reading to learn.”

Amanda L. Picioli, MED, AuD, CCC-A, Communication Studies and Services Chair at RIT’s National Technical Institute for the Deaf and Alumna of the Clarke – Fontbonne Northeast Collaborative

Jan Gatty, EdM, MED, EdD, Director of Child & Family Services, Clarke Northampton

Dan Salvucci, MED, EdM, Co-Director of the Clarke – Fontbonne Northeast Collaborative
Can Technology Help Speech-Language Pathologists Thrive?

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) is projected to grow 18% from 2016 to 2026—much faster than the average for all occupations. We wanted to know: How are changes in technology helping SLPs meet this increased demand? And how are these advancements affecting the families and clients they work with?

What we’ve known as ‘traditional’ speech therapy is evolving. For instance, teleservices, which provide access to services via teleconferencing technology, have become more widely utilized. SLPs are now able to provide services to more individuals throughout their day and in the client’s natural environment. And advancements in technology have also changed how we communicate. With adult clients outside Clarke’s classrooms—especially those with acquired language impairments due to stroke, dementia or neurodegenerative diseases—I’ve seen many changes in the world of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) [methods of communication used as an alternative or supplement to speech], like eye-tracking computer systems, synthesized speech devices and software that can be paired with smartphones or tablets. This is allowing us to find ways to give all our clients a voice and means of functional, purposeful communication.”

“Hearables will give our students even better access. Being able to sync to smartphones, TVs and speakers allows our students to have better and more consistent auditory access to sounds they may have otherwise struggled with. Communication situations that were once challenging, such as talking on the phone, will become easier and less intimidating. And, because our students are often extremely tech-savvy, they are able to quickly learn their equipment, what it sounds and looks like when it’s not working and how to fix it. This helps them take ownership of their devices and fosters their independence.”

“The easier a device is to use, the more appealing it will be to families and children. With new technology like hearables, families may be more motivated to use the technology on a consistent basis. And teleservices can help provide care for clients who have mobility issues, and may not be able to come in for center-based services. This will also help decrease travel time for SLPs, which can increase our contact with clients.”

Lindsay Petersen, MA CCC-SLP/L, Speech-Language Pathologist, Clarke Philadelphia

Marisa Matt, MS CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, Clarke Northampton

Kim Bradford, MS CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, Clarke New York
From Drama Club to Broadway
John McGinty ’02 soars on national arts scene

Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, described the White Rabbit in his classic novel as “timid.” This is also how John McGinty, a Clarke alumnus, describes himself as a child, prior to playing the White Rabbit in a Clarke drama club production of *Alice in Wonderland*.

This was many years ago. Back then, it took significant encouragement from Clarke teachers to persuade John to audition for the drama club performance. Today, he reflects on his 2018 Broadway debut and considers what’s next for his acting career.

Finding His Voice

John was born with typical hearing and became deaf as a one-year-old. Following a combination of sign language and listening and spoken language education from preschool through fourth grade, he transferred to a private school where support services for children with hearing loss were not available.

Attending Clarke from sixth through ninth grade opened John to a world of possibilities. “The first year was a blur,” says John. “I was trying to find friends, I was beginning to feel empowered and I was gaining the confidence to discover myself during this time.”

Despite those foggy memories, he remembers his Clarke classmates discussing drama club. “I had no interest,” John recalls. “I didn’t think I was that person, I wasn’t ready to stand on stage.” His teachers encouraged him to audition and to his surprise, he was cast as the White Rabbit. “If it wasn’t for that moment I don’t think I’d be on Broadway today,” he explains.

Making a Statement on Broadway

John was cast as Orin Dennis in the new revival of Mark Medoff’s award-winning play, *Children of a Lesser God*, which ran from March to May 2018, logging 23 preview performances and 54 regular performances. He performed the role in American Sign Language and English. “Every night I had to make sure that my speech was projected enough, clear enough and that my signs were clear enough and projected enough,” explains John.

The play tells the story of an unconventional teacher at a school for children who are deaf, and the remarkable woman he meets there. “The story is timeless and not about one form of communication versus another,” says John of varying reactions from the deaf and hard of hearing community. “Regardless of the path, students are getting the language they need. They need to find their voice, and we need to find ways to get them to grow.”

The Path Ahead

After graduating from Clarke in 2002, John earned an undergraduate degree in finance from Northeastern University and a graduate degree in performing arts and theater from New York University. “It’s been an empowering journey,” he says of his time at Clarke, in college and now as a professional actor.

And John is particularly honored to have made his Broadway debut with this play, and at this time. “An important message of the play is that often no one is listening, because we are all locked into our ways of thinking. I hope that this story encouraged audiences to stop a second, look at each other, make eye contact and really understand what the other person's concerns are and what they are feeling.”

When asked what's next, John shares that he is excited to be writing some new projects and to take on roles that are “beyond my deafness.”

Photo Credit: Walter McBride
After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, preschoolers at Clarke Northampton took action. With many of their extended families originally from the Caribbean island, the class banded together to send 10 solar-powered lanterns to the US territory and then tracked the lanterns’ journey through an interactive bulletin board.

The project, “Light Up Puerto Rico,” is one way Clarke teachers and administrators, both in our schools and through our Mainstream Services, are integrating students’ cultural identities and experiences into established curricula to foster inclusion and diversity. It shows how honoring many voices and backgrounds can strengthen lessons of empathy and compassion.

“We recognize that everyone has their own story, and that every story is very much worth listening to,” says Cynthia Robinson, MEd, CED, LSLS Cert. AVerd, co-director of Clarke Jacksonville. “Our stories are the way we learn from and connect to one another.” It’s a sentiment echoed throughout the organization—in our classrooms, early intervention sessions and Mainstream Services partnerships.

Celebrating as a Means to Connect

Often the best way to introduce children to other cultures is by celebrating diverse holidays with art, songs, stories and food. “We take our cues from the calendar and from the different cultures and religions that are represented in our faculty and student body at any given time,” Cynthia says.

Holidays—such as Three Kings Day, a Christian holiday celebrated in Spain and Latin America—are integrated into the lesson plan, says Marian Hartblay, MAT, MED, LSLS Cert. AVerd, director of Early Childhood Services at Clarke Northampton. “Based on family input, we support the development of language and understanding of that tradition,” she says.

Sometimes the lesson in learning about different holidays, whether secular or religious, is that they share commonalities. Marian says students and teachers found themes of celebrating light, gratitude and generosity shared among the winter holidays Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanzaa.

To bring awareness to Ramadan, the Islamic month of spiritual reflection and fasting, parents of Clarke Boston’s preschool students visited to share stories about the tradition. “Families told us about the importance of peace and purity during the holiday,”
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—Cynthia Robinson, MEd, CED, LSLS Cert. AVEd, Co-Director of Clarke Jacksonville

Cultivating Openness
In addition to culture, celebrating diversity includes acknowledging differences in learning abilities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Often, Clarke supplies or works with partners to provide meals for low-income families, and Clarke’s Integrated Preschools at its Northampton and New York City campuses expose children to diversity from an early age.

Students in Clarke’s Integrated Preschool classrooms are made up of both children who are deaf or hard of hearing and children with typical hearing. This unique program was designed as a “reverse mainstream” program, Marian notes. “It provides an exemplary model for inclusion of typically-hearing peers within an early childhood program, and excels at meeting the diverse needs of preschoolers with hearing loss,” she says.

Clarke Philadelphia has also developed an innovative inclusion model, sharing space with local social services agency CORA Early Years. This provides experiences that are inclusive for all children regardless of hearing ability.
A Day in the Life
Learn how a family and teacher experience a typical day of preschool at Clarke

Marjorie Hill, MEd, teacher of the deaf at Clarke Boston, spends each weekday with her small class of preschoolers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Among her students is Muhammad Aboelela, a four-year-old with bilateral hearing loss. While a four-hour day of school may seem short to many, a teacher’s extensive preparation and the tenacious work of a family engaging in language lessons at home—before and after school—result in a day filled with an extraordinary amount of thoughtful, essential effort.

This is a day in the life of Muhammad, his family and his teacher.

Sunrise through Mid-morning
In North Attleboro, Massachusetts, the seven members of the Aboelela family awake before sunrise for morning prayers. The family returned to the US after a decade abroad in Saudi Arabia. The move back to the Boston area was motivated by the desire for their youngest, Muhammad—who was born with bilateral, severe-profound sensorineural hearing loss in 2014—to enjoy the same support and services as his older sister Rahmeh, who attended Clarke Boston as a preschool and kindergarten student more than 10 years earlier.

“We test and put on his hearing aids before I recite some verses from the Quran. Then Muhammad requests something funny for breakfast, like ice cream, but he eats a bagel or cereal,” says Sohada Mohamed Awad, Muhammad’s mother.

Muhammad’s teacher, Marjorie, is also getting her day started in East Walpole, Massachusetts, waking by 7:00 am to get ready for school and take care of her two dogs. “I always wear comfortable shoes—and stop at Dunkin Donuts,” she says.

After breakfast, Muhammad plays with LEGO or pretends to cook while getting excited for school, Sohada says, a 45- to 60-minute bus ride away. “It’s a hike for him, but worth it,” she says.

“When I arrive at Clarke by 8:30 am,” Marjorie says, “I make sure my classroom activities for teaching pre-literacy and pre-academic skills look really fun and appealing.” Marjorie, who received her master’s in education from Boston College, has been teaching children who are deaf or hard of hearing for more than 15 years.

Preparing her classroom includes setting up a sensory table, an art table and a science center. As part of Clarke’s specialized curriculum for children with hearing loss, these stations are designed to align with the class-
room’s weekly theme. For example, one week the theme was fall leaves, so there were leaves to touch, crunch and discuss at the sensory table; a leaf print project at the art table; and magnifying glasses to examine the structure and shape of different kinds of leaves at the science center.

The preschoolers arrive at 9:00 am and Marjorie immediately makes sure they feel welcomed. “This is an amazing opportunity for expressive language,” she says. “I often inquire about their ride to school and take advantage of their excitement by encouraging them to share information with me and their friends.”

After outdoor play, they sit for story time before lunch. “I typically read the same story throughout the week, to ensure repetition and understanding and to further highlight our weekly theme,” Marjorie says.

Sohada says her son tells her about the stories they’re reading in class, the new toys in the classroom, which classmates bring in items for show-and-tell, and what they are. She has also noticed Muhammad’s growing empathy, as he reports who fell down and cried or asks a classmate why they’re upset.

She also appreciates the ability to visit the school and observe from the observation room, without her son noticing her there. “Since he had never gone to school before and came from such a different culture and language, Muhammad experienced a transition that was long and hard, but Ms. Hill had such a warm, reassuring effect on him,” says Sohada, who can see that the team understands her son’s personality, strengths and weaknesses, and can motivate him appropriately through play.

Having a small class size allows me to understand each of my students,” Marjorie says. Planned one-to-one interactions in an intensive language learning environment allow her to get a good sense of each student, and since parents usually drop off or pick up, she also develops relationships with the family.

“The most important thing I’ve learned in my career is that parents want the very best for their child,” Marjorie says.

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Better Technology and Awareness Lead to Enrollment Surge at Clarke

New service models, changes in technology allow Clarke to reach more families in more places than ever before.

As recently as the 1990s, children were not identified as deaf or hard of hearing until they were about four years old. Today, children are screened for hearing loss at birth, resulting in diagnosis before six months.

As a result, Clarke looks remarkably different now than it did just 20 years ago, when children lived at the flagship school in Northampton until eighth grade. Five locations now reach families along the Eastern Seaboard, where children no longer need a specialized residential setting to learn. In fact, many don’t need a specialized setting at all by the time they reach kindergarten. And today, Clarke is meeting the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families by bringing high-quality Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) services directly to them.

“As more organizations, professionals and families become aware of the impact of the services we provide, referrals grow and more families are able to find us sooner.”

—Meredith Berger, Director of Clarke New York
them—in their homes, mainstream schools and communities.

All of this has resulted in unprecedented growth in the number of children benefiting from Clarke’s programs. Since 2008, Clarke’s overall enrollment for children receiving direct services has increased by 127%.

**Serving Infants and Their Families**

This increase is partly due to significant improvements in detection and intervention. For example, enrollment in Clarke’s Birth to Age Three Programs has surged 134% since 2008—a testament to the impact of newborn hearing screening and early access to sound, as well as effective outreach and improved awareness about the potential for children born deaf or hard of hearing today. And in some places, the surge is astounding: Clarke New York’s birth to age three population has grown a whopping 1,029% in the past decade.

“Much of this growth is due to improved collaboration with early childhood networks, New York’s Early Intervention Program and medical/professional referral sources within our region, and the increased awareness of the potential of a listening and spoken language approach for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, regardless of the family’s home language or socioeconomic background,” says Meredith Berger, director of Clarke New York. “As more organizations, professionals and families become aware of the impact of the services we provide, referrals grow and more families are able to find us sooner.”

**Supporting Children in Mainstream Classrooms**

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing can now thrive in mainstream settings as early as preschool, giving them full access to all of the academic, extracurricular and social opportunities available to peers with typical hearing. While this is a compelling shift from years ago, deafness is still educationally significant, and many children require ongoing support from trained teachers of the deaf to reap the full benefits of their experience in typical classrooms. And Clarke’s Mainstream Services have undergone a metamorphosis to meet these children’s needs.

*continued on page 24*
Attend a violin performance by Avani Shandilya, and the first thing you’ll notice is her precise tune and rhythm. Look closer, and you might also notice that she uses bilateral cochlear implants.

Fifteen-year-old Avani occasionally performs for the preschoolers at her alma mater, Clarke Jacksonville, where her mom, Geeta Shandilya, is a teacher of the deaf. “It’s a joy to me to hear Avani play music,” explains Geeta. “When she was growing up, early intervention wasn’t the way it is today. We learned how to best support Avani with the help of places like Clarke.”

Avani’s hearing loss was discovered when she was 10 months old, shortly after her family moved to Florida from India. Music became a way for her to connect with her siblings with typical hearing—bonding over a mutu-
al love for the band Queen, rock music and string instruments.

“I’ll never forget when I was able to play my first song on the violin. When I first started playing, the sound was very shaky, but when I finally played in tune, I was like, ‘Wow, I can do this.’” Avani says. “Today, I read music to help know what the tune is supposed to sound like, or I ask my siblings for help.”

For many children who are deaf or hard of hearing, listening, playing or dancing to music builds self-confidence, as well as an awareness of belonging. Ally Munro, a six-year-old bilateral cochlear implant user and Clarke Boston student, says that ballet dancing helps her feel calm and relaxed.

“The way we listen to speech is very different than the way we listen to music. Music is much more intense than speech,” says Rebecca Huzzy, AuD, CCC-A, educational audiologist at Clarke Philadelphia. “Audiologists can program hearing aids or cochlear implants to be set up specifically for different listening environments—for example, listening to speech in quiet, listening to speech in noise and listening to music.”

Music grabs students’ attention, stimulates their spoken language and supports their development of new vocabulary and language structures. “Singing routine songs such as ‘One More Minute’ or ‘Clean Up’ gives young children time to process transitions between activities,” says Mary Kate Connelly, speech-language pathologist at Clarke Philadelphia. “As a hearing aid user myself, I recognize the importance of incorporating music and movement into speech therapy.”

Mary Kate integrates music into all aspects of her life. Outside the classroom, she’s a local dance instructor—inspiring students with hearing loss, as well as those with typical hearing. “I want dance to be something that pushes my students to be more confident versions of themselves.”

In Clarke classrooms, music and movement are incorporated into lessons, routines, transitions and gross motor activities. Children are guided to explore musical instruments. Having a chance to enjoy music in the early years can aid a child’s communication skills and ability to engage with other people. “There is a positive correlation between cognitive development and music,” explains Meagan Benoit, teacher of the deaf at Clarke Northampton. “We find that music and movement help children joyfully express themselves.”

Cynthia Robinson, MED, CED, LSLS Cert. AVEd, co-director of Clarke Jacksonville, says, “Any-

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—Avani Shandilya, Clarke Jacksonville alumna

Clarke alumna Avani Shandilya, with her violin.
“Shhhhh.” It’s one of the first sounds heard by babies, as parents use it frequently to soothe them. It’s also used in classrooms and is one of the most foundational units of sound in the English language.

“Sh,” along with “m,” “ah,” “oo,” “ee” and “s,” make up the units of sound in the Ling Six Sound Test.

Developed in the 1970s and 1980s by Dr. Daniel Ling, the sound test is a simple way to evaluate a child’s ability to hear across frequencies that are necessary for spoken language.

Inscribed by the principles of the Ling Six Sound Test, Alisa Demico, MS, CCC, SLP, LSLS, Cert. AVT, co-director of Clarke Jacksonville, and her Clarke colleagues have created “Ling Six Toy Boxes” for families of children with hearing loss who are learning to listen and speak. The kits include one toy associated with each of the Ling sounds, as well as an instructional booklet to show parents how to use the toys, offering strategies for incorporating the sounds into daily play routines and listing a variety of age-appropriate children’s books that target each sound. Alisa has constructed and distributed nearly 100 boxes to Florida families, thanks to the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

“The kits are educational for parents,” explains Alisa, “because we were able to put in writing how we use the sounds and why it’s so important in getting started when you are teaching a child to listen and talk. Toys and play routines are foundational for young kids in gaining connection to sound, and this is a way for parents to learn with their kids.”

Beckett is one of the Clarke students in Florida using a Ling Toy Box. “We do a tVISIT [ReServices Virtual Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers] once a week and always use it during the session,” says his mom, Cindy Duncan. “My husband and I both work full-time and try to use the box with Beckett on the weekends and at night. We follow some of the activities in the booklet too.”

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Beckett and his parents are making the transition from the Ling Six toys to everyday items and activities. “If we weren’t working with Clarke, I wouldn’t think about these everyday sounds,” says Cindy. “It’s not just about the box, it’s starting to use those sounds in everything we do, like the garage door going ‘up, up, up’ at my parents’ house. Now Beckett says ‘up, up, up’ to the garage door when he wants to play with the basketball that’s stored in the garage.”

With additional funding, Alisa and her team hope to create another 50 kits for partners and families in the Miami area. “We are excited to use these kits with families of young children newly identified with hearing loss,” the booklet and its lesson format are unique to Clarke. We wanted to fill the instructional gap by providing play routines and steps for using the sounds along the four levels of listening,” says Alisa, who personally delivered 25 of the boxes to the Early Steps program in Pensacola, Florida and also uses them during tVISIT sessions with families.

The kids love them! The goal is to go from the sounds, to teaching parents how to enjoy play and build language using the toys.”

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says Lynn W. Miskiel, MA, CCC-SLP/A, LSLS Cert. AVEd, director, Auditory-Oral Education Program/Ancillary Services at the University of Miami Debbie School. “These families are just starting on the journey of helping their child learn to listen and talk, and the Ling Six Sounds are one of their first steps.”

Clarke is pleased to partner with the Debbie School and others to expand the reach of the Ling Six Toy Boxes among families seeking to build critical language skills with their children. In addition to helping so many Florida families, Alisa and her team are delighted to advance the work of a pioneer in the field of listening and spoken language. “Dr. Ling made this test accessible for the field, and today we are making it accessible for parents,” says Alisa.
Dana and Haley Stallings run the Kilwins Ice Cream Run together each year, crossing the finish line side-by-side. The mother and daughter are committed to keeping in step. They’ve been working as a team for two decades now to teach people that children who are deaf or hard of hearing can listen and speak.

Spreading the word about Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) education and fundraising for Clarke are at the heart of the 5K run that Dana Stallings and her husband, Vance, founded in 2013. One of the many special features is that the race ends at the Stallings’ ice cream shop, Kilwins Jacksonville, with a free, all-you-can-eat ice cream fest. Runners compete for the grand prize of free ice cream for a whole year; and top fundraisers can win a fabulous ice cream party for 50, courtesy of the Stallings.

“At this point in our lives, we’re able to help and give back,” Dana says. “We want to make a difference to help other families.”

In the first year of the race—initiated in gratitude to Haley’s alma mater, Clarke Jacksonville—about 500 people attended and more than $30,000 was raised. In March of 2018, over 800 participants brought in close to $100,000, bringing the total raised since 2013 to more than $300,000. Funds are typically designated to Clarke Jacksonville, and in 2017, some money raised was used to support the newly established preschool classroom in Orlando, Florida.

Clarke’s Jacksonville campus opened in 1996 and serves more than 100 children from birth to age seven through programs like the Birth to Age Three Program, Preschool / Early Childhood Program, Mainstream and Speech and Language Services. And since 2017, the preschool classroom in Orlando has provided high quality LSL education and Auditory Verbal Therapy Services to families in Central Florida.

“I like that the Kilwins race gives us the chance to educate people about Clarke,” Hal-
“At this point in our lives, we’re able to help and give back. We want to make a difference to help other families.”

—Dana Stallings, parent of Clarke alumna Haley

Haley was three years old when she was diagnosed as hard of hearing. She received hearing aids in both ears and attended Clarke’s Preschool Program at Clarke Jacksonville, mainstreaming to a neighborhood school in kindergarten.

Haley’s mom, Dana, says she and Vance feel that they’ve set a precedent in Jacksonville to organize family fun events with a purpose. She explains that in 2018 the Kilwins event was part of a trio of races dubbed the Sweet Three Race Series; they raise money for Clarke, the Girl Scouts of Gateway Council and Girls on the Run.

“The Kilwins Run is a time for our Clarke family to come together with our community to have fun and support the work of the school at the same time,” says Clarke Jacksonville Co-Director Alisa Demico.

Co-Director Cynthia Robinson adds, “We are so grateful to the Stallings family for initiating this event and generously hosting it each year. Their leadership allows us to support more families.”

And leadership seems to run in the family. At 23, Haley owns her own home, having made a down payment with money she saved while working full time at the ice cream shop in past years. She lives in Jacksonville and is a patient care technician at St. Vincent’s Medical Center; she hopes to attend nursing school.

“I could not imagine where I would be now if I hadn’t learned how to talk at Clarke,” Haley says.

Inventive Ways to Support Clarke Families

- **Dedicate a birthday** to Clarke kids by requesting donations in lieu of birthday gifts
- **Volunteer**
  - At events
  - On committees
  - At Clarke campuses
  - With a skill (e.g., gardening, painting, carpentry)
- **Intern**
- **Donate gifts-in-kind**
- **Join the Board or Leadership Council**
- **Become a business sponsor**
- Partner with Clarke for **youth or corporate service projects**
- **Ask your company** to match your gift
- **Share talents** in the classroom
So many Clarke alumni go on to enjoy wonderful, full lives—whether they’re singing their ABCs in kindergarten or celebrating anniversaries in our nation’s capital. Here are some fun highlights from our former students. Enjoy!

Marco Camacho
Birth to Age Three and Preschool Programs at Clarke Jacksonville

Now a student in the sixth grade in a mainstream school, Marco takes advanced classes, including accelerated math. He loves to play golf and video games, and has been on the “A” Honor Roll for two consecutive years. Meet Marco on video at clarkeschools.org/marco.

Curtis Reid
Residential & Day School at Clarke Northampton, ’80

Curtis was elected as the Chairperson of the Clarke Schools Alumni Council (CSAC) in September 2017—his second time as Chairperson. Additionally, he celebrated his 20th year at the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in Washington, DC, in June of 2017.

Elizabeth Nitz
Birth to Age Three and Preschool Programs at Clarke Jacksonville

Elizabeth has earned a spot on the Honor Roll each year throughout high school. She has been very active in extracurricular activities, receiving an award for Achievement in the Arts for Photography and Graphic Design from Cobb County, competing against students from across the school district. Elizabeth was also elected Vice President of Special Events for DECA, a student organization dedicated to teaching the principles of business, marketing and entrepreneurship. In addition to her leadership role with DECA, she received an award for excellence for a DECA Apparel and Accessories Marketing project. Elizabeth has begun the process of college applications and hopes to attend the University of Georgia in the fall of 2019.

Mira Filipkowski
Residential & Day School at Clarke Northampton, 2008-2010; Clarke Mainstream Services

A freshman in high school, Mira is a competitive dancer at a local dance studio, studying all genres of dance. Although she doesn’t hear every note of the music, her presence onstage is breathtaking, her mother, Leah, says. Mira is a National Honor Society member and was a counselor-in-training at a local summer camp program. Mira was also featured in a video called “Greatest Strength: Challenges Met with Courage,” produced by the Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds at Massachusetts General Hospital, available on its website at mghclaycenter.org.

Chris Sobczak
Residential & Day School at Clarke Northampton, ’94

Chris has umpired the Little League Baseball World Series in Cooperstown, New York and Williamsport, Pennsylvania. He’s also umpired the Wisconsin Little League All-Star game at Miller Park in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; officiated the first round of high school basketball playoffs; and umpired softball regionals in Wisconsin. Chris was also promoted from back judge to umpire in college football officiation.
Janiyah A. Walton
Preschool Program at Clarke New York
When Janiyah first started at Clarke, completing a sentence was difficult for her, remembers her mother, Shika. She says Janiyah is a completely different child now. She moved on to a mainstream kindergarten classroom in the fall of 2018, where she is learning and playing with her peers with typical hearing. Janiyah now expresses herself clearly and confidently—speaking in complete sentences, and singing and dancing around the house to her favorite songs.

Caleb Perez
Birth to Age Three and Preschool Programs at Clarke Philadelphia
Eighth-grader Caleb plays competitive soccer and golf and excels academically. He took his SATs in the seventh grade, scoring in the 95th percentile for reading and writing. In addition to his success on the field, the green and in the classroom, Caleb enjoys practicing acro-yoga. His mother, Tricia, reports that they live in Florida now, and Caleb looks forward to coming back to Philadelphia in the summers and visiting with his Clarke family.

Beth (Karbowski) Noworatzky
Residential & Day School at Clarke Northampton, ’99
In honor of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the National Institute of the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Beth’s photography was chosen to be part of the “50 Artists, 50 Years” exhibition as a featured artist. She was also thrilled to have won the logo competition for the NTID’s anniversary celebrations.
Clarke New York launched its Sponsor a Child program in 2015 with two distinct goals. The first is to address the $5,000 per child per year gap between public funding received in support of our programs and the true cost of teaching children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk.

Second, the program is designed to increase awareness among the general population of all that is possible for children with hearing loss. When a child’s hearing loss is identified early in life—and they’re subsequently provided with access to sound via hearing technology and enrolled in a listening and spoken language program—they’re on the path to a vibrant life in a hearing world.

To help people better understand this, we connect each of our sponsors to a Clarke student; share information about that student’s degree and type of hearing loss; and explain the range of services they’re receiving at Clarke. The donor then receives updates on the child’s progress, including video clips of the child working with Clarke professionals.

The Sponsor a Child program evolved from a series of conversations held with New York insiders, among them Fred Wilpon, owner of the New York Mets baseball team. Fred was introduced to Clarke’s work through a video of a New York student. Hearing her inspired him to sign on as our first donor to the program, pledging to sponsor 10 students a year for a three-year period. Designed as a match to encourage other donors to support Clarke’s mission, Fred sweetened his gift by offering Clarke the use of his personal suite at Citi Field for a donor event, where they could come together to relax, take in a game and meet Clarke families.

The Insider’s Night events began in May of 2015, with 40 donors and friends celebrating the launch of the New York Sponsor a Child program. Guests have been treated to batting practice on the field, a behind-the-scenes tour of the ballpark, cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, dinner and a rare view of the game enjoyed from the owner’s suite directly behind home plate. Over the following four years, Fred graciously opened his private suite to Clarke and dozens of delighted guests. The final Insider’s Night at Citi Field was held on May 1, 2018.

Since its inception, donors to the Sponsor a Child program have raised more than $1.2 million for children. Their generosity continues to create opportunities for Clarke New York students to build a foundation of listening, spoken language and academic skills so they can reach their full potential. To learn more about how you can change the life of a Clarke student, go to clarkeschools.org/sponsorachild.
Leave a Lasting Legacy

Include a Gift to Clarke in Your Will

When you leave a legacy, you’re enriching the lives of others and supporting the education of future generations.

“If you’re going to live, leave a legacy. Make a mark on the world that can’t be erased.”

—Maya Angelou

Donor support provides vital resources that allow Clarke to equip children who are deaf or hard of hearing with the listening and spoken language skills they need to thrive in a hearing world.

You can support Clarke in a way that will secure the necessary resources to provide life-changing services for generations to come: Include a charitable gift to Clarke in your will. You’ll help future generations receive the listening and spoken language skills they need to succeed. Plus, you’ll make a permanent statement about the importance of a listening and spoken language education for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. In contrast to annual gifts, which are generally used in the year in which they are received, gifts made through a will can be structured to ensure that they continue to support Clarke for years to come.

Planned gifts support subsequent generations, regardless of the amount. You can include Clarke in your will by designating a fixed sum or percentage of an estate. It’s also a great way to honor a friend or family member—gifts can be made in honor or memory of someone special. Although Clarke appreciates the opportunity to share the good news about legacy gifts, they can be made anonymously as well. Most importantly, you will secure your legacy as someone who believes in the future of deaf education.

Donors who support Clarke with a legacy gift are also invited to become members of the John Clarke Legacy Society. Named for the philanthropist whose initial gift established Clarke more than 150 years ago, the John Clarke Legacy Society recognizes those who include Clarke in their estate plans.

Learn more about including a gift to Clarke in your will by contacting your financial advisor or attorney. Or, for more information about how your legacy gift will support Clarke, you can contact Gloria Pugliese, senior development officer, at 267.499.3525 or gpugliese@clarkeschools.org.

Visit clarkeschools.org to discover more ways to show your support, and see what others have done.
During consults with teachers, we address how to talk about the child’s hearing loss to peers, how to try and ‘normalize’ it within the classroom,” Claire says. “For example, we may have two kids with typical hearing take responsibility for the classroom hearing technology—as opposed to having the child with hearing loss always doing it. We share the responsibility.”

By the same token, a best practice such as making eye contact before speaking not only helps a child with a hearing loss but all students, so teachers are encouraged to make this a classroom-wide habit, Claire adds.

Presentations to students with typical hearing help smooth the transition. “Kids often rally around the student with hearing loss and are excited to learn about how they can help,” Katie says. Clarke encourages the entire staff at each mainstream school to attend in-service presentations as well, “since they will at some point interact with our student,” she notes.

Marian points out that inclusion requires more than just access to technology and immersion in an inclusive setting. It must offer students appropriate support to ensure full participation academically and socially. To achieve this, Clarke educators assess each student for their level of verbal and non-verbal skills, and continuously facilitate individualized strategies that support and challenge students, even at very early ages.

“At the heart is ensuring that our learners are active participants in and contributors to their education,” Marian says. “The ultimate aim is to enable successful language and communication for every student to interact comfortably with their peers, teachers, families and the entire community, in settings that support differences without minimizing them.”

Clarke’s commitment to diversity is ongoing at all levels of the organization, including staff recruitment, professional development and building our Board of Trustees. In addition to our internal efforts, we’re grateful for our vital partnerships with schools, community organizations, neighborhoods and families that continuously enrich the lives of all Clarke students.

Continued from “Honoring Identity” on page 9

Continued from “Better Technology” on page 13

Once providing consultation services to a few dozen school districts in Western Massachusetts, Clarke’s Mainstream Services now reach children throughout Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Florida. Shifting from a consultative model to one that also provides itinerant teaching services, Mainstream Services have been making a greater impact on more children than ever before. Within the last 10 years, enrollment in this program has jumped by 408% Clarke-wide.

Meeting the Need Near and Far with tVISITs

Since its inception in 2012, Clarke’s tVISIT Program (teleservices Virtual Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers) has improved access to early intervention services for hundreds of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and is the largest teleservice program of its kind in the US.

Through videoconferencing, commuting distance is no longer a factor. Neither are borders; tVISIT has enabled Clarke to serve children from locations in Europe and the Middle East. And the impact of tVISIT supports not only children who live outside commuting distance, but in the vicinity of Clarke campuses as well, by meeting the needs of the most vulnerable families. For example, a mother who has had to move frequently due to an unsafe domestic situation is able to continue accessing Clarke services for her child through the tVISIT Program. And several low-income families who could not travel to Clarke due to transportation challenges are still able to attend early intervention sessions, thanks to tVISITs.

“As we look closely at the methods and trends that have allowed us to reach so many families, we’re also looking ahead,” says Clarke President and CEO Doug Scott. “In 2018, we embarked on a five-year strategic planning initiative that will give us the opportunity to learn from both our rich 150-year history and the future of deaf education, as it continues to evolve. Clarke is entering its ‘Third Wave,’ and it’s truly an exciting time to be part of this organization.”
From Listening Walks to storytime to Summer Camp... We appreciate your smiles and support!
Mariam and Fadhil, siblings from Iraq and students in Clarke’s Massachusetts-based K-8 Program, were surprised with new Cochlear™ implant sound processors. The processors were made possible through the advocacy of the Clarke Hearing Center and technology upgrade support from Cochlear™.