

2025 UPDATE

*Vanderbilt Department of
Hearing and Speech Sciences*

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

MESSAGE from the Chairs



Anne Marie Tharpe, Ph.D.



Melissa Duff, Ph.D.

Dear friends and colleagues,

Happy holidays from the Vanderbilt Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences! We hope 2025 was a good year for you and your loved ones.

This year has been one of remarkable impact across every corner of the Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences. From groundbreaking research and innovative clinical care to the achievements of our students and trainees, our community continues to make a significant difference in the lives of the people we serve and in the field at large.

We're especially proud of what makes our department and the Bill Wilkerson Center so special—a collaborative, multidisciplinary community dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with communication and related disorders. Whether through new partnerships across the medical center, faculty pushing the boundaries of our knowledge, or programs preparing the next generation of scientists and clinicians, this year has been full of meaningful progress and promise.

It has also been a year of transition. After 16 years as chair, Anne Marie stepped down in June, and Melissa became the new department chair in July. Thanks to the strong foundation Anne Marie built, the department is thriving, and Melissa is eager to build on that remarkable history and trajectory as we continue advancing the department's mission and driving its work forward.

Looking back and ahead, we are filled with gratitude—for the dedication of our faculty and staff, the curiosity and energy of our students, and the patients and families who trust us with their care. We're excited for all that lies ahead in the coming year and inspired by what we'll continue to achieve together. Thank you for your role in our success! We hope 2026 is a healthy and happy new year for you and your family!

With appreciation and enthusiasm,

Anne Marie Tharpe, Ph.D.

Melissa Duff, Ph.D.

Chairs, Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences

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CLINICAL UPDATE

PI BETA PHI



Pi Beta Phi Patient Climbs Capitol Hill Steps 2 Years after Being Hit by a Car

Pi Beta Phi Rehabilitation Institute patient, Betsy Williams, takes her first triumphant walk up the Capitol Hill steps. Ms. Williams was hit by a car two years ago and has been treated by multiple teams at VUMC since then. Pi Beta Phi Physical Therapist Holly Cauthen, who has been helping her with walking and balance, joined the group for the climb. Scan the QR code to read more about this remarkable story.



Who's a Good Boy?

Norman, our resident facility dog, has a book! PT **Chrissy Lugge**, Norman's handler, and her husband, Simon, have written a book about Norman and his first day at work at Pi Beta Phi Rehab. Find out more about the book at NormanAtYourService.com.



Taylor Brooks, 2025 graduate of the Pi Beta Phi Neurologic PT Residency Program. This year-long outpatient program, in cooperation with Belmont University, prepares physical therapy residents to become advanced practitioners in neurologic rehabilitation.

PEDIATRIC SPEECH

Creation of the First Dysphagia Support Group in Tennessee



The Nashville Dysphagia Support Group is a free, welcoming space for individuals living with swallowing difficulties (dysphagia) and their caregivers to connect, share experiences, and learn from experts and peers. This was the first dysphagia support group in Tennessee and continues to offer education, encouragement, and community. Meetings are co-facilitated by graduate students, and guest speakers from Otolaryngology–Head & Neck Surgery, Gastroenterology, Nutrition, Psychiatry, and the Trach/PEG EGS service. The group was founded by SLP **Hannah Malamud Hoffman** and **Cara Donohue, Ph.D.** in partnership with VUMC and the National Foundation for Swallowing Disorders.



The Lebanon Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center Speech Clinic received a finalist nomination for the “Best Speech and OT Clinic in Wilson County” as voted by the readers of The Wilson Post.

Pediatric Medical Speech Pathology Launches 3 New Programs

Our Pediatric Medical Speech Pathology team has been busy helping launch three important new programs. SLP **Nan Hancock** has been working on the new Ready, Set, Go tool which helps families of children in the hospital engage in their child's neurodevelopment. SLP **Amy Obenauer** was an integral part of developing the new Multidisciplinary Complex Dysphagia Clinic with Vanderbilt ENT at Vanderbilt's Monroe Carol Jr. Children's Hospital. SLP **McKenzie Krebs Suell** is involved in the new SHINE Clinic which supports children ages 0 to 6 years old who were exposed to opioids before birth and their parents/caregivers. Families enrolled in SHINE will participate in well child visits and screenings with OT, PT, ST, psychology, social work, and primary care. The research component of SHINE tracks child growth and development, family home environment, caregiving style, and mental health. SHINE works with the FIREFLY clinic which is a comprehensive care and treatment clinic for pregnant and postpartum women with substance use disorder and their children.



Nan Hancock



Amy Obenauer



SLPs **Madeline Caron** and **Erin Moritz** have been awarded a 2025 Nashville Predators Helper Foundation Grant to support their project, “Expanding Accessible Play.” The goal of this project is to increase the inventory of alternative access devices, including switch adapted toys, low-tech AAC, and mounts, to support the expansion of augmentative and alternative communication service provision to VUMC pediatric speech-language satellite clinics.

New Moderate-to-Severe Acquired Brain Injury Clinic

The new multidisciplinary pediatric brain injury clinic helps students get back to school successfully after recovering from a moderate-to-severe acquired brain injury such as a traumatic brain injury or brain injuries like stroke, tumor, or encephalopathy. The clinic is staffed by a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation doctor, a team of therapists, and a teacher. SLPs **Mackenzie Phillips** and **Charles Hausman** represent the pediatric speech team at the new clinic. Read the full article [here](#)



The multidisciplinary team at the Moderate-to-Severe Acquired Brain Injury Clinic includes, front row from left, Michael Wolf, MD; Elizabeth Martin, MD, MPH, MHS; Jane Owen Robbins, OT. Back row from left, Tisha Coggin Clay; Charles Hausman, SLP; Kat Hedden, PT, DPT; and Mackenzie Phillips, SLP. (Photo by Donn Jones).

Camp T.A.L.K.S. in the News!



News Channel 5 did a story on Camp T.A.L.K.S (Talking and Learning with Kids who Stutter) and how our day camp helps children who stutter build confidence. See the full story [here](#)



Pediatric Vestibular Clinic Rapidly Expands

The Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center has a longstanding history and reputation for providing balance and vestibular evaluations to adults. However, until late 2024-early 2025, the clinic was limited in its ability to see pediatric patients; particularly those below school-age, given that pediatric-sized equipment was not yet available in the clinic and there were no specialized providers in the department who were trained to work with young children experiencing dizziness and imbalance symptoms.

Between the years of 2017 to 2024, the balance program averaged seeing ~24 pediatric patients under the age of 18, per year. In 2025, the clinic is projected to see ~90 pediatric patients, including children as young as toddler-aged and those with medical complexity. This is thanks to Au.D.s **Arielle Darvin** and **Rachel Murphy**, who specialize in pediatric vestibular evaluations and who joined the Balance and Vestibular Team. Their work to procure pediatric-sized equipment, make modifications to pediatric testing protocols, and multi-disciplinary collaborations with pediatric ENT, physical therapy, and neurology colleagues have allowed for the successful growth of the pediatric vestibular program.



Danielle Clay, Au.D. celebrates the completion of the DHSS Vestibular Fellowship Program, a year-long advanced clinical and research vestibular training program.



Danielle Clay



VPATH

Providing an accessible path to Vanderbilt-level hearing care for all.

Vanderbilt's VPath program helps people in financial need get hearing care and hearing aids.

1
If not already approved, you must qualify for VUMC Financial Assistance. You can apply for Financial Assistance by contacting customer service at: <https://www.vanderbilthealth.com/information/financial-assistance> financial.assistance@vumc.org 615-936-3938 Application forms are available in Arabic, English, and Spanish.

2
You must also apply for a hearing aid program. You can apply to either: • Hear Nashville or • The Hearing Aid Project **HEAR NASHVILLE** Hear Nashville provides financial assistance to Hear Nashville provides financial assistance to qualified low-income adults in Middle Tennessee so they can obtain new hearing aids. Please contact Hear Nashville to apply. Applicants must be permanent legal residents of the United States. If they determine that you may be a candidate, they will refer you to VPATH. <https://www.hearnashville.org/hearnashville@gmail.com> 615-442-8333

THE HEARING AID PROJECT The Hearing Aid Project provides financial assistance to help adults obtain donated and refurbished hearing aids. Please contact the Hearing Aid Project to apply. Undocumented immigrants are welcome to apply. If they determine that you may be a candidate, they will refer you to VPATH. <https://hearingaidproject.org/get-an-aid/info@hearingaidproject.org> 816-895-2410

3
Contact us! Once you are approved through Step 1 and Step 2, please contact Vanderbilt to schedule an appointment. We can be reached at: VPATHHearing@vumc.org 615-936-5000



Child at the Pediatric Vestibular Clinic wearing goggles for Video Head Impulse Testing. This test measures how well a person can maintain their gaze on a target during head movement, by recording a reflex in the eyes that plays an important role in the maintenance of balance.

2026 DHSS Events

Mark your calendars for the 2026 department events and conferences. For more info on our continuing education events and special programs, visit: vumc.org/hearingandspeechsciences/

International Cognitive Communication Disorders Conference
January 15-17, 2026

Medical Speech Pathology: Best Practices Conference
February 20-21, 2026

Pediatric Medical Speech Pathology Conference
April 24-25, 2026

Fees Certification Course
May 1-2, 2026

DHSS Graduation Ceremony
May 7, 2026

Vanderbilt SOM/Graduate School Graduation
May 8, 2026

Mama Lere Graduation
May 20, 2026

Camp T.A.L.K.S.
June 1-5, 2026

School SLP Conference
TBD

Christmas Village
November 13-16, 2026

Beloved Friends of the Center Who Passed



Judy Fingerle Simmons passed away on June 6, 2025, in Nashville, TN, at the age of 85. Judy was devoted to family, community service, and leadership. She lived her life with integrity, grace, and love.

Judy was a longtime friend to the Bill Wilkerson Center and her unwavering sense of purpose led her to chair the

capital campaign building fund for the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center located at Medical Center East. She served as Co-Chairman of the 1970 Christmas Village, an event created and run entirely by volunteers of the Nashville Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Club, to help raise funds for the Bill Wilkerson Center, with Co-chairman Nancy Fawn Diehl (Bill Wilkerson's sister). Later, Judy served as President of the Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Club of Nashville. Judy's commitment to the growth and betterment of the services provided at the Bill Wilkerson Center extended beyond our walls to include the broader VUMC community as well. Amongst her many endeavors, Judy served as President of the Friends of Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt's Monroe Carol Jr. Children's Hospital and chaired the Inaugural Symphony Ball in 1985. Judy left her mark throughout middle Tennessee and helped so many in need. She will be deeply missed.



Annette Schaffer Eskind passed away on Sunday, July 13, 2025 at the age of 97 years old. Annette was known as a civic leader, social worker, and public school advocate.

Annette and Irwin Eskind were ardent supporters of the Vanderbilt community, establishing the Annette and Irwin Eskind Family Biomedical Library at the medical school and were instrumental in the

development of the Vanderbilt Eskind Diabetes Clinic.

Annette Eskind served on numerous boards within the community, including the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center Board and was instrumental in raising the funding for building Medical Center East South Tower, now the home of the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center. Her steadfast devotion, generosity, and caring for her family, her friends, and her community serve as a benchmark for all.



2025 T-35 Training Grant Cohort



Linda Hood, Ph.D.'s NIH-NIDCD T35 Summer Research grant just completed its 19th year. This year's cohort were DHSS students **Taylor Dalzell** and **Claire Mitchell** joined by three Au.D. students from other universities: **Ava Moran** from the University of Florida, **Dilek Gas** from Adelphi University, and **Haley Williams** from the University of Utah. All five trainees will present their research at the 2026 meeting of the American Auditory Society.

Dan Ashmead Lecture and Poster Session

The 3rd annual Dan Ashmead Lecture and Data Blitz was held this October. DHSS research faculty and Ph.D. students attended to hear special guest speaker, Jennifer "Piper" Below, Ph.D. on her research titled *Emerging Understanding of the Genetic Etiology of Developmental Stuttering*. Prior to the lecture, DHSS Ph.D. students presented their research from the past year at the Data Blitz and enjoyed dinner.



Jennifer "Piper" Below, Ph.D. – 2025 Dan Ashmead Lecturer

Data Blitz Winners



Ryan Millager, Ph.D.



Michael de Riesthal, Ph.D. and Jennifer Markfeld, Ph.D.



Jonathan Neukam, Ph.D.

..... Faculty Promotions New Faculty



Troy Hackett, Ph.D. has been appointed to hold the Fred H. Bess Endowed Chair in Audiology! This chair was established by the generous donation of Thomas Yount and Jane Wilkerson Yount. It was named by them to honor Dr. Fred H. Bess, Professor Emeritus, our friend and former Chair of the Department of Hearing & Speech Sciences (DHSS). Troy is the leading international authority on the neuroanatomical organization of auditory cortex. Most recently, Troy took a scholarly leave of absence from Vanderbilt with the NIH/NIDCD to serve as coordinator of the National Temporal Bone Database and Registry. He directed a newly reorganized national program at five U.S. medical centers for human temporal bone collection and tissue analysis, pursuant to emergent therapeutics for inner ear disorders. Troy returned to Vanderbilt in March and is continuing to lead this work for the NIH in addition to his other contributions to the department.



Richard Roberts, Ph.D. was promoted to Professor of Hearing and Speech Sciences. Richard is the Vice Chair of Clinical Operations for the DHSS responsible and for a large team of professionals who support or provide services across our 7 clinical divisions at 11 different sites. In addition to his clinical leadership, Richard is the Co-Director of the specialty track in Vestibular Sciences within the Doctor of Audiology program. Richard has a strong and continuous record of research productivity in audiology and vestibular science, which he shares with students through classroom teaching and research mentorship.



Robin Jones, Ph.D. has been appointed to serve in the new role of Vice Chair for Faculty Development. In this role, Robin will lead faculty-focused initiatives and programs related to faculty support and growth. Furthermore, Robin will oversee faculty policies and liaise with faculty groups on campus.



Megan B. Woods, Ph.D. joined our faculty as an Assistant Professor on January 1, 2025. Megan's work in noise-induced hearing loss, hyperacusis, and the cochlear immune response is timely and important. She brings expertise to our research team that compliments the work already being done and expands its impact. In addition to contributing to our research mission, Megan teaches in our Au.D. and Ph.D. programs.

Passing of Retired Faculty



Mary Jane Collins, Ph.D., 84, died at her home in Nashville, TN, on February 22, 2025. She earned degrees from Vanderbilt University (BA in Mathematics and MS in Audiology and Speech Pathology) and the University of Iowa (Ph.D. in Hearing Science). Mary served as a member of the DHSS faculty from 1970-1972 and again from 1975-1977. She ended her career as a professor and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at LSU. Jane was named a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and won the Beltone Distinguished Teaching Award in Audiology. She was a passionate advocate for the importance of education and will be greatly missed.



..... Gary Jacobson Retires

After almost 50 years of service in the field of audiology, **Gary Jacobson**, Ph.D. retired this fall. Gary joined the Department over 20 years ago as Director, Division of Audiology and later became the Director, Divisions of Audiology and Vestibular Sciences. With Gary's leadership, both divisions grew beyond our wildest expectations expanding within Medical Center East and beyond. We now offer audiology services in 8 locations in and outside Nashville, largely because of the strong relationships Gary has forged with other departments across VUMC including Neurology, Medicine, and Otolaryngology, among others. Gary's outstanding classroom teaching and mentoring of our graduate students has no doubt had a significant impact on our #1 US News & World Report ranking of our Audiology graduate program. Approximately 10 years ago, Gary initiated the Fellowship Program in Vestibular Sciences at Vanderbilt. This highly successful training program has attracted bright, young clinical scholars from across the country, helping to launch their clinical and research careers.

Gary has had a long and productive research career as well. For him, the clinic is his laboratory. Always motivated by his clinical experience, Gary views all his patient encounters as opportunities to learn and share new knowledge with his professional colleagues. Gary has a long list of accolades including Honors of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, Distinguished Achievement Award of the American Academy of Audiology, and Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Balance Society, among many others.



..... Faculty/Staff Successes



Melissa Duff, Ph.D. was elected president of the Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders and Sciences (ANCDS). ANCDS is the primary association for clinicians and researchers who serve individuals with neurologic communication disorders with the goal of improving the communicative lives of people affected by neurological disorders.



Erin Picou received the Gene Bratt Award for outstanding classroom teaching. This award was named for an exemplary DHSS classroom instructor—Gene Bratt, Ph.D. He was well known for making teaching look easy.



Sarah Powell, Au.D. received the Excellence in Clinical Teaching Award for DHSS faculty or staff who demonstrate exceptional clinical teaching, mentoring or supervision of graduate students.

CAPSTONE DAY WINNERS



Au.D. student **Eriel Confer**- *Evaluation of a Hearing Assessment Protocol for Children Seen for Communication or Autism Concerns*

Au.D. student **Jennifer Hoffman**- *Newborn Hearing Screening Follow-Up: A Telehealth Model for Rural Tennessee*



Ph.D. student **Andie DeFreese** received a \$44K grant from the American Otological Society titled *Unlocking the Genetic Basis of Cochlear Implant Success*. She also won runner up at the 2025 American Cochlear Implant Alliance Conference in Boston for her poster “Preparing for the Gene Therapy Era: Genetic Literacy in Cochlear Implant Providers.”



Ph.D. student **Jade Mitchell** received honorable mention for a meritorious paper award from the Journal of Communication Disorders for her paper titled *Comprehension of Miranda Warnings in Adults with Chronic, Moderate-Severe Traumatic Brain Injury*.



Ph.D. students **Fiona Higgins**, **Ashleigh Hayward**, and **Camille Nuttall** participated in the invitation-only Doctoral Student AAC Think Tank at Pennsylvania State University in May.



SLP students **Margaret Milantoni** and **Bailey Meyers** are two of only 14 recipients of the 2025 Students Preparing for Academic-Research Careers (SPARC) Award Program. The goal of SPARC is to foster students’ interest in the pursuit of Ph.D. education and careers in academia in order to fill faculty/researcher vacancies in communication sciences and disorders (CSD). The SPARC Award Program is part of ASHA’s strategic objective to enhance the generation and implementation of clinical research.

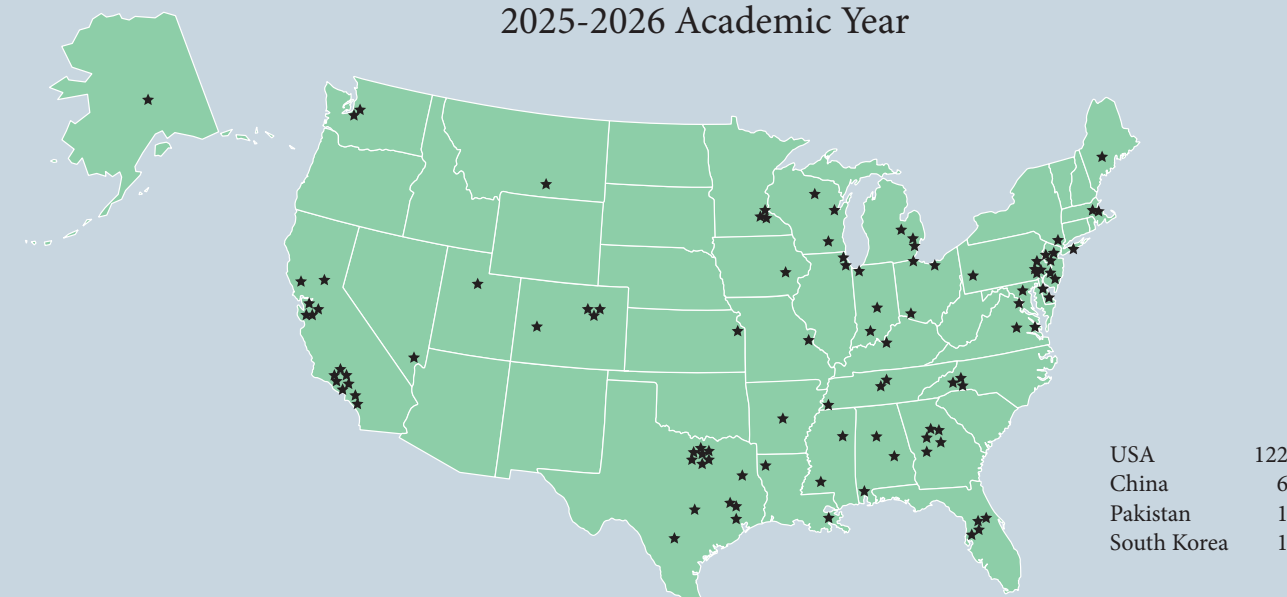


Ph.D. student **Claudia Raines** received the 2025 DHSS Publication Award for her paper “Disease-Specific Speech Movement Characteristics of the Tongue and Jaw” published in the Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research.



Current and Incoming Students by Location

2025-2026 Academic Year



ALUMNI UPDATE



Pumpki Lei Su- Ph.D. Class of 2020

Pumpki Lei Su, Ph.D. is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Speech, Language, Hearing at the University of Texas at Dallas. Her research focuses on language development in autistic children and bilingual children. As part of her job, she directs the Language Interaction and Language Acquisition in

Children (LILAC) Lab where she shares her passion for research with students at all stages - from undergraduates exploring research for the first time to doctoral students developing independent research programs. She has taught across all levels of higher education, including undergraduate courses on pediatric language disorders and autism, graduate-level courses on bilingual assessment, and PhD seminars on language science. In 2025 Pumpki received the Early Career Contributions in Research Award from ASHA.

She lives in Dallas with her wife, Ling, and three furbabies - Puff (a 50-lb sheeapdoodle), and Softie and Sleepy (both 10-year-old cats). When she is not working, she likes to garden, swing dance, run, play ukulele, and cuddle with her furbabies!



Samantha Gustafson- Ph.D. Class of 2017

Samantha Gustafson, is an Assistant Professor of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at Indiana University Bloomington. She is the Director of the Children’s Auditory Research for Educational Success (CARES) Lab and specializes in clinical training in pediatrics and in working with children who are deaf/hard of hearing and have

other healthcare needs. Dr. Gustafson’s research aims to improve understanding of communication challenges faced by school-age children with and without hearing loss. “We use a combination of subjective, behavioral, and electrophysiologic methods to learn about listening effort, attention allocation, and the effects of intervention (e.g., hearing aids, remote microphones) on communication.” Results from her work provide valuable information to audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and teachers of children with hearing loss about environmental and child-specific characteristics that contribute to communication breakdowns. In 2025 Dr. Gustafson received the Early Career Contributions in Research Award from ASHA. She and her husband, Brad, have a three-year-old son named Max and a dog named Henry.

Researchers and professionals note critical shortage of certified deaf education teachers

The need for teachers of the deaf surpasses the available supply in virtually every state (AAEE, 2022). A recent survey of a popular online workforce site revealed **hundreds of job postings for Teachers of the Deaf**, with many listings indicating multiple positions available (Indeed, May 2025).

– Dana Kan, Ph.D. Director of Vanderbilt Master's in Deaf Education Program

Help us spread the word about our MDE Program and the need for Deaf Ed teachers!

Ratio of Teachers of the Deaf (ToD) to Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students

1985: 1:43
2010: 1:56
2025: 1:94

Recommended ratio for itinerant ToDs is **1 for every 10-24 students**

Teachers of the Deaf Training Programs (undergraduate and graduate)

1985: 81
2010: 65
2025: 51

20 of the 50 states do not have a deaf education teacher training program at all

Sources: Dolman, 2010 | Scott, Pagliaro, Kilpatrick, Henner, & Smith-Warshaw, 2025 | DesGeorges, 2023 | Scott et al, 2025

Lauren Szalay - M.D.E Class of 2021

Lauren Szalay is a high school Deaf Education teacher at Hillsboro High School in Metro Nashville Public Schools. She serves students ranging in ages 14 to 21, providing both direct instruction and support in inclusion settings, as well as support in the special education setting if needed. Her caseload is typically around 10 students. She teaches using American Sign Language (ASL), focusing on a range of academic subjects, language acquisition, communication development, and life skills.

Lauren says she adapts general education curriculum to meet language and accessibility needs for her students, often incorporating various supports, ASL, and individualized learning strategies by breaking down the class content. "When I was at Vanderbilt, I interned with Nashville Schools and have been able to work with many of those students from that placement again as their teacher when they moved up to high school. That has been one of the most gratifying aspects of my job, seeing how the students grow over the years."

Lauren believes in lifelong learning and is planning to take her EIPA (educational interpreter performance assessment) in December which will allow her to be a certified educational interpreter in Tennessee. She is going back to school for her Ed.S. in Fall 2026 at MTSU.



When she's not in a classroom somewhere, Lauren is making plans for her June 2027 wedding, traveling, reading, and walking her corgi—or preparing to test for her blue belt in Krav Maga at the end of the school year.

RESEARCH UPDATE

..... Over \$6.3 Million in New Grants



Melissa Duff, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
Language Processing in Context Following Traumatic Brain Injury
\$3.5 million over 5 years from the NIH



Mike de Riesthal, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
Neural Correlates of Recovery from Aphasia After Stroke
\$2.5 million over 5 years from the NIH



Troy Hackett, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
Cooperative Dysfunction of Neural Circuits in the Positive Symptoms of Schizophrenia
\$175K from St. Jude Research Hospital



Anne Marie Tharpe, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
Examination of Pediatric Earmold Delivery Options
\$135K from the Oberkötter Foundation



Todd Ricketts, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
Smartphone Based Custom Fit and Low Cost Hearing Aids Manufacturing System
\$125K over 3 years from Xyken

THE YEAR IN PHOTOS

Awards for Outstanding Research



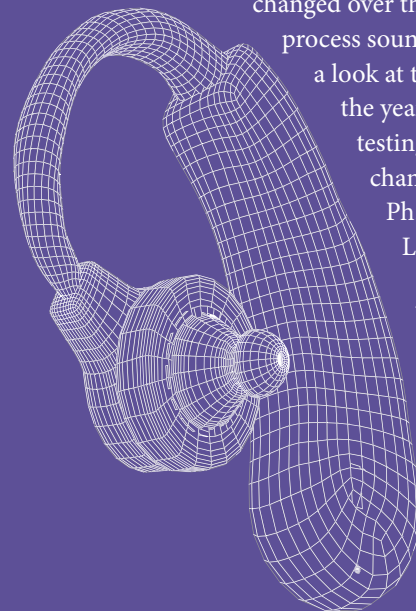
Cara Donohue, Ph.D. has been awarded the Early Career Contributions in Research Award of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. This award goes to individuals who have demonstrated significant scientific accomplishments beyond the dissertation and/or within five years of receiving their doctoral degree, other terminal degrees, or completion of post-doctoral training. This award recognizes Cara's cutting edge work aimed at improving the diagnostic and treatment modalities for individuals with swallowing disorders including her recent work investigating the safety, feasibility, and impact of preoperative respiratory strength training in cardiac surgical patients.

Linda Hood, Ph.D received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Auditory Society. This award is the American Auditory Society's highest honor, established to recognize those whose research has had a significant impact on clinical practice throughout their career, with contributions across different research areas and with long-lasting results. Linda teaches and mentors our graduate students and is the Director of the Auditory Physiology Laboratory. Her Research focuses on physiology of the auditory system at cochlear, subcortical, and cortical levels. Research areas include auditory studies in infants, auditory efferent reflexes, development of sensitive auditory physiologic assays, patients with auditory neuropathy/dys-synchrony, and hearing losses related to genetic mutations. Linda's research career has been supported for more than 40 years by research grants from several federal agencies and private sources. Her research and teaching has taken her around the world, lecturing at research and clinical institutions as well as scientific and professional meetings.



Adam Savage's Tested

Ever wonder how hearing aid companies figure out what functions/settings are necessary when making hearing aids and the science behind the technology? Well, so did Adam Savage, former co-host of Myth Busters, now host of the YouTube Channel Adam Savage's Tested. Adam stopped by our Hearing Aid Laboratory to learn more about how hearing aids and hearing care have changed over the years and the sciences behind how we process sound. In this two-part episode Adam takes a look at the various hearing devices used over the years as he undergoes specialized auditory testing in our reverberation and anechoic chambers with the help of **Todd Ricketts**, Ph.D., Director, Dan Maddix Hearing Aid Lab and Ph.D. student **Haiping Huang**.



Watch Episode 1 at the QR code below. Episode 2 will be available soon.



Emily Kimball was one of 10 researchers to receive a 2025 New Investigator Research Grant (NIRG) Award from the ASHFoundation. The grant is designed to help further new investigators' research activities by funding one-year, preliminary studies that could launch larger-scale research studies. This award will support Emily's proposal entitled, *Cannabinoid Effects in the Larynx and Upper Airway: Human Tissue Exploration and Cell Culture Modeling*.



2025 Graduation



Graduating Class of 2025



The Children at Mama Lere Hearing School celebrated Veteran's Day by passing out artwork they made to veterans at the hospital



2025 Mama Lere Hearing School Graduation



Professional Career Advancement Luncheon celebrates clinician's who have completed the promotion process



Pi Beta Phi Patient, Sam Lawrence, presenting at the Christmas Village luncheon



Norman joins the Faculty and Staff meeting



2024 Holiday Party



Christmas Village donates \$536,200 to Vanderbilt Hearing and Speech Sciences



New student orientation



2024 Mama Lere Hearing School Holiday Party

*2024 Mama Lere
Hearing School Sing Along*



DHSS SLP and AuD students, visiting AuD extern, and Valeria Matlock attend Special Olympics to do hearing screenings

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