

## HOW SHALL THEY HEAR?

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We have been captioning for a young man named Michael Wiesner since he was in his early teens. Although Michael is now grown, has married, and soon will be moving to Kansas, he stays in touch with us and attends New Life Church with his wife and friends when he is able, especially at Christmas and Easter.

Our hearts are touched as, in looking back over the past 12 years, we realize that providing CART/captioning in a church service, indeed, really does make a difference. Twelve years ago, as we watched the Wiesner family attend church each Sunday, we realized that one of their boys was unable to hear the songs and the sermon because he was deaf. We saw the need and asked how could we meet it?

Michael's parents, Jean and Horst, would like to share their story of how captioning has not only helped Michael over the years, but has helped their entire family.

### **CAPTIONING – A Family Story**

- by Horst and Jean Wiesner

The reality of dealing with deafness was presented to us in the summer of 1984, at Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto. The diagnosis of Michael, our then two-year-old son, was now fact. He had profound hearing loss in both ears and was legally deaf. The journey to cope with and work with a deaf child was the beginning of a difficult but very rewarding challenge for us.

Through years of learning English Sign Language and being exposed to ASL (American Sign Language) and the time spent dealing with deafness has brought us to a thorough understanding of the Deaf culture. The Deaf community is a proud group of individuals just like you and I. They have a definite value system and are a close-knit community that functions like any group with a definite language and set of customs.

Over the years, we have seen enormous changes. The most remarkable difference is that the younger generation is now adapting much better in a hearing society. This is due, in part, to the increased awareness of deafness in our society and the improved communication methods such as captioning on TV, on videos, and the increased use of computers. Although ASL is the prominent method of communication of the Deaf, a growing number are making use of modern technology and advances in captioning where it is now available.

In about 1996, to our delight, a captioning ministry was being developed at New Life Church in Milton, Ontario. Through much diligence and a desire to see this project succeed, a closed captioned service was now offered every Sunday morning. Since a Deaf church was already on site at the church, an option was now available to those who wanted to take part in a “hearing” service instead of a service that was signed.

Once the captioning ministry was up and running, to our amazement, our son Michael, who had been attending New Life Deaf Church, was now spending his time in the hearing services. Michael could now be involved with both deaf and hearing friends.

As a result, we, along with our boys, were able to sit in church together as a complete family. Our son, Michael, was now able to read the words of the songs and the sermons and be spiritually blessed. Captioning now made it possible for those hindered with the lack of hearing to attend and participate in services each week.

The ability to take in a service with music and song, with captioning to fill in the words, is a real benefit to anyone who can read. This would have the effect of a hearing person turning the sound on while watching a movie that had previously had no sound. Captioned words have the effect of sound to the deafened or hard of hearing person when it comes to being able to take in and understand a message. Captioning becomes the visual language of those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This vital service is also an indispensable link to a growing group of aging individuals who are losing their hearing as well as the many younger people who are learning to adapt in a hearing world. What an opportunity to minister to hundreds who would never attend a church service due to their inability to communicate in ASL or to hear enough to make it a worthwhile effort!

Now, we can't tell you with an honest heart that Michael was always reading every little word during a church service! He was a typical teenager and we would find him drawing pictures and we would find him punching his brothers and doing all the stuff that a teenager does, but we can tell you that his life was touched by the Holy Spirit as he read the words, and that it has influenced Michael throughout his seven years of university at Gallaudet, today as a young professional adult, and will continue to do so because God's word never returns void.

Throughout Michael's university years, he often would bring friends home to visit. Michael always made his friends aware that on Sunday morning at his home you were expected to attend church. And, as a result, over the years, many of Michael's friends attended church and were touched as they sat under the captioning ministry.

Our family has been so blessed to be able to attend church as a unit because of the captioning, even at Christmas and Easter, mom's two favourite times of the year. No price can be put on that opportunity.

This is an outreach that is reaching deep into the community to establish a link to those who may desire to attend church and the blessing that this brings. We pray that the impact this outreach service is having in the community and beyond will continue to grow and flourish.

Thank you, captioning team, for your diligence and faithfulness towards this very worthwhile ministry.

**Steno outlines:**

reign RA\*EUPB  
rejoice RAOE/SKWROEUS  
religion R-PBLG  
religious R-PBLGS  
remembrance REBS  
repent RAOE/PEPBT  
repentance RAOE/PEPBT/-PBS  
resurrection RES/REBGZ  
retribution RET/RIB/AOUGS  
reveal RAOE/SRAOEL  
Revelation R-FGS  
reverence REFB/REPBS  
reverend REFB/REPBD  
reverent REFB/REPBT  
revival RE/SRAOEUFL  
righteous R-FP  
righteousness R-FP/TPH-S  
risen R\*EUFPB  
Roman ROEPL/PHAPB  
Roman Catholic R-BG  
Romans ROEPL/PHAPB/-S  
Rome RO\*EPL  
Rosh Hashanah RORB/TPHA