



# 2022-23 Summer Newsletter

## Above and Beyond

The 2022 Above and Beyond ceremony brought both undergraduate and graduate students together with their parents to celebrate their academic, service, and clinical accomplishments. Andi Hill, an advocate for children with hearing loss, was chosen to be the guest speaker. Andi shared her story of raising three children with severe-profound deafness and highlighted how speech-language pathologists and audiologists who went “above and beyond” for her children were instrumental in their family’s journey. 90% of infants who are deaf/hard of hearing (DHH) are born to parents who have normal hearing, which makes early communication difficult since parents will not be fluent in sign language and who because of advances in hearing technologies available to children since 1990, may make other communication mode choices. Her experiences have led her to advocate for changes in public policy to promote positive outcomes for children who use cochlear implants, for whom appropriate early intervention is essential to success. Andi served on the governor’s task force for the implementation of Newborn Hearing Screening in Alabama in the early 2000s after experiencing the positive difference identification of hearing loss at birth made for her younger two children. She serves on the Alabama Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Advisory Committee and is a State Champion for the American Cochlear Implant Alliance. Andi referred to herself as a “disruptive parent” as she set out to blaze a different trail for her children.

When Andi’s oldest daughter was born, newborn hearing screenings were not yet required which delayed her diagnosis and surgery for cochlear implantation. All three of Andi’s children underwent cochlear implant surgeries that were considered off label according to FDA standards in the 1996-2003 timeframe. Her son was Alabama’s youngest CI recipient for a few years. Her younger daughter received her first cochlear implant in 2001 at eight months, which is lower than the FDA’s 2020 indication for cochlear implantation at the age of nine months. Additionally, the Hill children were among the first children to receive bilateral implants - which is now the standard of care. Andi praised the physicians, audiologists, and speech-language pathologists who helped identify hearing loss early, advocated for timely cochlear implant surgery to support language access and communication development, and guided their family to positive outcomes. As a result of Andi’s

tenacity and advocacy and the contributions of many health care professionals, all three of Andi’s children have reached high levels of success. One of Andi’s children graduated cum laude from Samford and another is a current Samford student. Andi currently serves on the Samford Parent Advisory Board with her husband, Steve.

In her presentation at the 2022 Above & Beyond ceremony, Andi shared the character of the professional team which promoted her children’s success, which could be summarized as Character + Investment in Professional Skill = Success. Reflecting on 1 Peter 4:10 (“*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.*”), the guiding verse for Samford College of Health Professions, Andi encouraged, “Our charge is then to steward the gifts we have received to benefit others, in whatever form those gifts come. For me, the unexpected gift of my children’s deafness has given me opportunities I could not have begun to imagine to mentor, guide, and advocate for others. For each of you, God is calling you to learn, apply yourself faithfully to your studies, pursue your chosen profession with excellence, and embrace future-oriented options like our team embraced - pediatric cochlear implantation and the Listening & Spoken Language (LSL) communication mode. Embrace change not for the sake of progressiveness, but because you want to serve your patients and their families by providing the best possible care. In embracing change, we submit that we don’t have all the answers, but we listen, lean-in, work hard because we care deeply, take courage, and trust that God who led us to this place is holding us and will indeed work all things together for good.”





## Welcome, Beth Aho!



Beth Aho joined the CSDS faculty as an Instructor and Clinical Supervisor in November 2022. Aho received her Bachelor of Science and her Master of Science from Miami University (Ohio). Following her graduation she served adult patients for thirty years as a speech-language pathologist in the inpatient rehabilitation, home health, private practice, and skilled nursing settings. Her clinical experience includes

treatment of patients with aphasia, dysarthria, apraxia, upper

airway dysfunction, dysphagia and cognitive impairment resulting from various medical conditions. Aho is trained to administer and interpret modified barium swallow studies and has a passion for patient/caregiver counseling and education.

Aho teaches, mentors and supervises undergraduate and graduate students. She is looking forward to serving with the medical mission team to Ecuador with the School of Health Professions this summer. She is active in her church in leading Bible studies and serving in the music and food pantry ministries. In her free time Aho is working through her bucket list of hiking the national parks with her husband and her favorite Samford Bulldogs: Abigail (class of '20) and Andrew (class of '23).

## ASHA Poster Presentation

Kelly Jackson and Sarah Szykiewicz from Communication Sciences and Disorders collaborated with Jennifer Beall (Pharmacy) and Lance Day (Reference and Research Services) to present their poster, Positive Therapeutic Effects of Medication on Swallowing Function: A Systematic Review Following PRISMA 2020 Guidelines, at the 2022 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention in New Orleans, LA. Pictured are Kelly Jackson, Sarah Szykiewicz, and ASHA student volunteer Abigail Ogg (Samford 2nd year speech-language pathology student). The poster represents a collaborative systematic review to provide a summary of the current landscape of literature involving positive therapeutic effects of medication on swallow function. More is known about negative effects of medication on swallowing- this study highlights potential positive therapeutic effects of medications like botulinum toxin and capsaicinoids on physiological swallow function. Potential directions for future research investigations were discussed.



## Bilingual Language Analysis



Through a collaborative project between CSDS faculty member Kelly Jackson and World Languages faculty member Tiffany Robayna, seniors in CSDS 413 partnered with students in SPAN 375 to conduct a bilingual language analysis. Caroline Finger (CSDS) and Sarah Westmorland (SPAN) had the opportunity to present their analysis project at the Lee

University X Annual Conference on Latin American and Iberian Studies on March 18, 2023. The goals of this project were to educate students at the collegiate level on the importance and practice of interprofessional collaboration to diagnose and treat bilingual clients with speech and language disorders more accurately. An in-depth analysis of two participants, a bilingual elementary school student and a bilingual adult was performed. Research including both an analysis of the regional Spanish grammar and pronunciation for each participant was completed. An ethnographic interview was performed to gain a more holistic understanding of each individual's sociolinguistic background. Finally, this project integrated knowledge of development in bilingual language and speech acquisition to accurately diagnose bilingual individuals, avoiding misdiagnosis of speech and language disorders that could be a result of their acquisition of multiple languages.



## Medical Mission Trip to India

In January, 11 the speech-language pathology graduate students, along with Dr. Carol Koch, Professor and M.S.-SLP Graduate Program Director, spent two weeks working in Kerala, India. They were also joined by 2 alumni of the M.S.-SLP program, Holly Everman (2022) and Meredith Street (2017), 2 occupational therapists, 1 physical therapist and a nursing student from Missouri. The team collaborated with speech-language pathologists and physiotherapists at the Pratheeksha Child Development Center at Pushpagiri Medical College where they worked with approximately 140 children and their families. The team focused primarily on working with children with autism spectrum disorder. The team also visited a mental health residential facility and a home for adult with developmental disabilities.

“Although India is far, the people that surrounded us made it feel like home immediately. We were humbled by their hospitality, and remained in awe of the Lord’s work there. My favorite moment was walking into Justin’s Home, a unique place for those with disabilities. It was a glimpse of what walking into the gates of heaven will look like. Each person on the trip carries experiences like that as they continue on their journey. We saw things, heard

things, learned things, that will shape us not only as a speech language pathologist, but as a disciple here on earth. Thank you Lord for Kerala, India and the opportunity you gave us to be your hands and feet” . ~ Lauren Cotton, MS-SLP Graduate Student



## CE Events for CSDS

On Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> speech-language pathologist, Judi Pritchard presented *The Prequel to Dementia and the Role of the SLP* to a group of Samford supervisors, faculty, and students. Judi owns C&T Consulting, a private practice in Alabaster, Alabama and has been an ASHA certified speech-language pathologist for over 25 years. She is also the founder and CEO of the Care and Thrive Foundation; a non-profit organization specializing in cognitive wellness, mild cognitive impairment, and young onset dementia. Judi is a Certified Montessori Dementia Practitioner and a Certified Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Care Trainer.

She is the producer and host of the podcast series **Dementia Real Talk** and **5 To Thrive** video series sharing information, products, and adaptive approaches to help others who experience cognitive decline learn how to retain independence longer. Expanding the reach of her mission, Pritchard is particularly excited about the launch of Operation Excel, a support group for veterans struggling with prolonged concussion symptoms. Pritchard’s goal is to create a society that embraces cognitive healthy lifestyles, is proactive in addressing subtle cognitive changes, and crushes the stigma regarding people with neurodegenerative decline.

Samford’s CSDS department hosts continuing education courses twice a year that focus on both pediatric and adult topics. These courses are provided to Samford supervisors at no charge. Samford’s next CE event will be on autism and will be presented by Dr. Angela Barber, Chair of Samford’s CSDS Department, on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. More information can be found on our website: [samford.edu/healthprofessions/events/](http://samford.edu/healthprofessions/events/)





## SHAA in Birmingham



Graduate and undergraduate students volunteered, presented and attended the annual Speech and Hearing Association of Alabama convention in Birmingham February 9-10. More than 25 CSDS and MS SLP students volunteered to register attendees and assist presenters during convention sessions.

Haleigh Deskins, Julia Brickman, Alyssa Yager, Logan Steele and Alli Spickard presented results of an Evidence Based Systematic Review that evaluated methods used to identify autism in Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists are the first line of referral for Deaf and autistic children, though to date no standard of care for this population exists. To explore commonly used identification tools and methods used in DHH populations when autism is suspected, we are conducting an Evidence-Based Systematic Review using the PRISMA framework. PRISMA provides a transparent set of items used to evaluate effects of research studies including prevalence, diagnosis, and interventions. These findings will inform our diagnostic practices and fill gaps in our knowledge and skills for serving children with this dual diagnosis.

Sarah Kate Crispell and Abigail Ogg presented on their experiences in Pirate Camp where biofeedback is used to give the clients the opportunity to see the position of their tongue in real time. There are different types of biofeedback treatment, including high and low frequency biofeedback, ultrasound

biofeedback and visual-acoustic biofeedback, and even app-delivered biofeedback. Physical manipulation and contextual facilitation are two other techniques that are proven to be beneficial in the remediation of /J /.

At the convention awards ceremony, first-year MS SLP student, Courtney Fish, and second-year MS SLP student Elizabeth Reavis, were recognized for their outstanding performance. Fish was awarded the SHAA Memorial Scholarship for Speech Pathology. This award was given based on her essay submission which highlighted her goal to work in early intervention in the future. Fish earned her undergraduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Samford University where she served as the president of Samford's NSSLHA chapter her senior year. Fish demonstrated exemplary initiative outside the classroom through her involvement in SUNSSLHA as the service coordinator for the 2020-2021 school year by developing and participating in valuable service opportunities while following COVID guidelines. These included a supply drive for Girls Inc., a student-led prayer parade, and a pen pals program with Brookdale Senior Living Center. Fish's well-developed communication skills and professionalism provided a positive model for the entire organization. Fish has also volunteered with other off campus organizations in settings focused on the education of students with disabilities.

Reavis was presented with a SHAA Student Recognition Award after being selected and nominated by Samford faculty for academic and clinical excellence and demonstration of the core values, mission, and vision of the department. Reavis completed her final externship at UAB Hospital and will continue her work with adults in a medical setting after graduation.

All Samford clinical supervisors were invited to attend an appreciation lunch with Samford faculty. Supervisor, Elizabeth Gwaltney, an SLP at Crestline Elementary, received the Honors of the Association Award at the annual convention dinner for her dedication to the field and commitment to the clients she serves. Gwaltney serves preschool and elementary aged students and has over 20 years of experience in the field of speech-language pathology. She is passionate about collaborating and working as a team with parents, general education teachers and special educators, as well as other therapists to best serve her students. Gwaltney has served on the Executive Board of SHAA since

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2006. She is Past President of SHAA and formerly served in other roles including Vice President for Convention, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. She represents Alabama as the Speech-Language Pathologist on ASHA's Committee of Ambassadors. When Gwaltney was asked about her experience supervising Samford students for the past five years, "Supervising Samford students has been a wonderful experience. I have had the opportunity to both support and learn from rising professionals who are at the beginning of their journey as speech-language pathologists. It is also a way for me to stretch my own learning and professional knowledge because I want to be able to answer questions or brainstorm situations with evidence-based research and best practice in mind! It's always rewarding to see the graduate students grow in their confidence as young clinicians who are the future of our profession."

## All SoCon Faculty-Staff Team

Laura Promer, Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Communication Disorders, was named to the 2022-2023 All-Southern Conference Faculty-Staff Team. Jim Schaus, SoCon Commissioner, presented her with a plaque on Saturday, February 11th at the Samford men's basketball game versus Citadel. In 2017, Laura started the Literacy Specialty Clinic through Samford University's Academic Enhancement Center to provide evaluations and treatment to student athletes with learning disabilities in the areas of language, reading and writing. Student-athletes identified with learning disabilities receive treatment through the Literacy Specialty Clinic until graduation.



## Music & CSDS Team Up

In partnership with Samford University's Division of Music, Kelly Jackson and Sarah Szykiewicz, faculty members with Samford University's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders have developed a voice screening program that took place for the first time in the Voice Swallowing Lab in College of Health Services during finals week of Fall 2022. Jackson and Szykiewicz are both licensed and certified Speech-Language Pathologists. The program launched from an Innovative Technology Grant awarded to Jackson and Szykiewicz in 2021. Freshman from the Division of Music who use their voice as an instrument participated in voice screenings using videostroboscopy, an instrumental tool used to visualize the vocal folds and assess function of the folds during voice production. Taryn Adams and Jenny Johnson, 1st year Samford University speech-language pathology students, trained in videostroboscopy and completed all the voice screenings under the supervision of Jackson and Szykiewicz. The screenings provide the freshman vocalists with the opportunity to assess baseline vocal anatomy and physiology as they start their collegiate careers and identify potential issues early on that may need further consultation with an otolaryngologist physician. Jackson and Szykiewicz also mentored Adams and Johnson in the analysis and presentation of data collected during the inaugural voice screening program for poster presentation of our program evaluation at the 2023 Samford Student Research Colloquia(SSRC). They went on to present the project independently at SSRC and were awarded recognition as a winning poster. Additionally, the work has also been submitted for poster presentation at the upcoming 2023 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association national convention in November. The launch of the first voice screening program was a success and we are looking forward to continuing this collaboration with the Division of Music and conducting ongoing research projects for years to come.





## Flynn & Hagues in Tanzania

In May 2022, Dr. Karen Flynn, Communication Sciences and Disorders, and Dr. Rachel Hagues, Department of Social Work, travelled to Tanzania with Samford students. Dr. Hagues has a long-term working relationship with the African Inland Church of Tanzania, Mara and Ukerewe Dioces, and specifically with Bishop Peter Kisena.

Over three weeks, the team travelled to Mwanza, Musoma, and the Island of Ukerewe. Several days were spent in Musoma's medical clinic where Dr. Flynn worked alongside parents to provide speech, language, and swallowing interventions. In addition, she worked with physical therapy and a nurse practitioner to provide services to adults with traumatic brain injury. She provided AAC resources in Swahili, the native language of Tanzania. Dr. Flynn also completed two trainings with all medical staff in the clinic providing information in the areas of early intervention, autism, swallowing, and speech and language. The entire team from Samford also spent a day making home visits in the community.

While on the Island of Ukerewe, Dr. Flynn spent three days at the local school working with the teacher of special education,

Wilson. He had an audiometer that had been left several years ago but he could not get it working. Working together he and Dr. Flynn were able to trouble shoot and began performing hearing screenings. The team again made home visits with Wilson to identify children not attending school and providing guidance to parents.

Although the team provided many hours of service, some fun was also had! They visited the Serengeti and experienced a safari where they encountered elephants, giraffes, zebras, monkeys, and lions in their natural habitats. They also spent time in the many street markets buying souvenirs and fabric to have dresses made by local seamstresses. Dr. Flynn recalled, "Perhaps the most enjoyable and joyous opportunities however were the invitations to have meals with the many gracious people met while there."

Dr. Hagues has a long-term working relationship with the African Inland Church of Tanzania, Mara and Ukerewe Diocese and specifically with Bishop Peter Kisena. On Monday, August 22, Bishop Peter visited Samford and met with Dr. Flynn and Dr. Hagues.





## Margaret L. Johnson Scholarship

In 2018, the School of Health Professions surprised Margaret Johnson, professor and chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, with the endowment of the Margaret L. Johnson Scholarship. This year, Brooke Shirley was selected as the 2022-2023 recipient.

"I am so honored and extremely grateful to receive this award. I have gotten to see just how selfless and servant-hearted Dr. Johnson was during her time as our department chair. She has shaped my ability to lead, and to be considered for this scholarship in her honor means the world to me. Dr. Johnson had a way of always pointing us back to Jesus. She shared that whatever we face in life or as future SLPs, we must humble ourselves each day, realizing that our lives are not about us at all. I admire Dr. Johnson and all of the CSDS professors more than they know. I am so lucky to have had a picture of servant leadership from each of them."

Shirley came to Samford as an undergraduate from Knoxville, TN.

As a junior, she served as secretary of the student speech-language hearing association chapter and during her senior year she served as president. Shirley showed excellent leadership skills when organizing events and planning service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students including assisting with the Woolley Institute for Spoken English (WISE) fundraiser Sips for Sound. Shirley's leadership resulted in the chapter receiving Gold Chapter Honors for the fourth consecutive year through the national student association. Her well-developed communication skills and professionalism provided a positive model for the entire organization. Shirley's brother, Ben received his B.S. Health Sciences in 2021 and is currently in Samford's Physician Assistant Studies Program.



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