

2020 Hands & Voices Leadership Conference - Franklin Tennessee postponed until 2021

Dear H&V Chapter and Program Leaders, EHDI Family Leaders, families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing, professionals, and friends:

As the planning for our annual H&V Leadership Conference has moved forward over the last several months, we had high hopes to hold our conference in-person in September 2020. We had a process in place to ensure our final decision would be based on the health, safety, and guidelines of local and federal authorities, as well as the accessibility needs of our attendees. We also reached out through a survey to past attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors. With much thought, deliberation, and input from many stakeholders, and yes, a bit of tears and sorrow, **we have decided to postpone the currently planned 2020 H&V Leadership Conference, keeping the same place!... the same agenda!... the same chapter hosts, and YOU to 2021.** Recognizing the availability of all our presenters may be different and critical topics may have shifted slightly, we may explore some slight changes to the content of the agenda to accommodate the new date. We plan to work closely with our presenters as we move forward, but in the end want them to have the opportunity to present on our stage, to a live audience, and in community through an in-person event.

I want to thank our past attendees, exhibitors, corporate partners, speakers, chapter and state/province/territory leaders, family based organizations and stakeholders, for your patience and support while we did our best to come up with a reasonable solution. Not hosting an in-person conference this year is a disappointment for our community. As we, as a society, re-emerge through this recovery period, it was hard to find a clear-cut answer. Nevertheless, this decision has been made in what we believe is the right thing to do.

We plan to deliver “*something extraordinary*” in place of our conference this year. We promise to be creative and sensitive in response to a bit of our ‘zoomed out’ feelings during this era of virtual replacements of in-person events. We are looking forward to the time when we can come together again in-person, stronger and more resilient from our collective experiences. 2021 will be a conference like no other. For those of us who were looking forward to our Uptime activities such as Goat Yoga arranged by our chapter hosts – don’t worry, 2021 will be even ‘goatier’! Speaking of our chapter hosts, Hands & Voices HQ wants to acknowledge the great efforts of the TN and KY Chapters, their Boards, and local stakeholders for their planning in unprecedented times. We are grateful to the ongoing support and flexibility of our sponsors and exhibitors, and all of you – who have been holding our collective breath to be together. We will be together in 2021 and think how

sweet it will be! Please continue to follow updates on our [conference webpage](#) to take advantage of our alternative event. Stay Tuned!

If you are a sponsor, presenter, exhibitor, or award recipient, we will follow-up with specific information by phone or email.

If you have already registered for the conference, we will be in touch with your options for refunds or carryover registration to next year.

For now, stay safe and well and stay connected to Hands & Voices. We want to be here for you in any way we can. We are Community, We are Family, We are Strong!

Sincerely, regretfully, hopefully, and always grateful,

Janet DesGeorges on behalf of the H&V HQ staff, board and TN and KY chapter hosts