

Family Engagement and Support: Creating Community Connectedness

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Introduction

- The New York State Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program partnered with Hands & Voices of New York (H&V NY) to provide family support and engagement events across the state.
- H&V NY is a parent-driven organization dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH).
- Community connectedness among families with children who are D/HH has shown to have many benefits, including establishing a sense of belonging, access to resources, shared understanding, socialization opportunities and awareness and peer support.¹

Goals & Objectives

- Increase family engagement events for families with D/HH children in NY
- Provide education for families at events
- Solicit feedback from participants at each event



Image provided by H&V NY



Image provided by H&V NY

References

1. Hands & Voices. *What Parent's Need to Know*. Hands & Voices. https://www.handsandvoices.org/needs/pdf_imgs/socialization.pdf
2. Note: H&V NY QR codes intentionally blocked as the events have closed.

Implementation

- Events were planned, scheduled, advertised, and facilitated by H&V NY board members throughout the state.
- Events were held in family friendly local spaces, including museums, parks, zoos, farms, amusement parks, arenas and each had access to interpreters.



Image provided by H&V NY

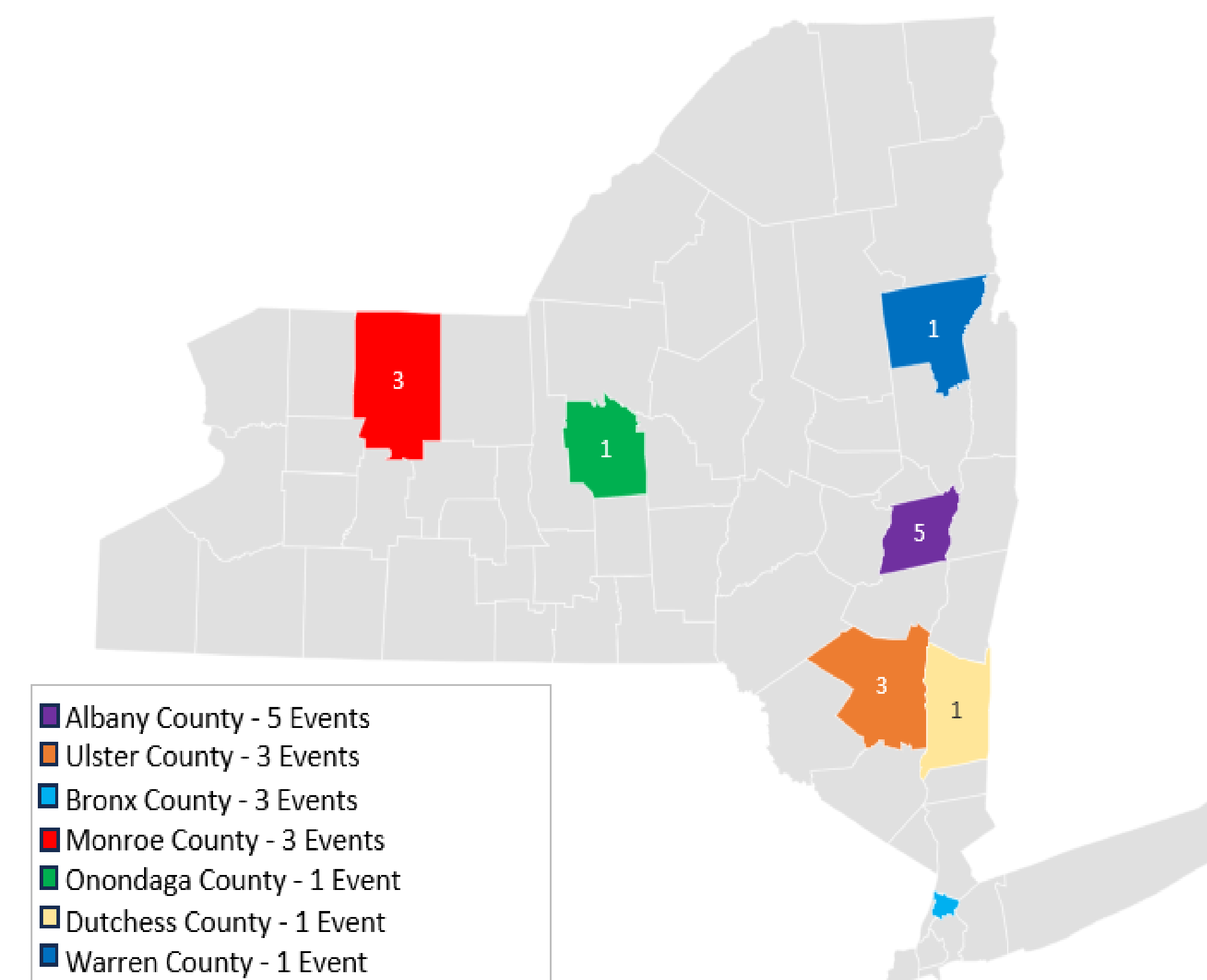
- Educational activities included reading children's books, learning basic signs for colors and animals, back to school tips, and sing/sign-along nursery rhymes.
- All families who attended events were asked to complete a feedback survey. The survey was administered to families as a hard copy or via email.

Results

- H&V NY held 17 events between November 2023 and December 2024.

Hands & Voices Events November 2023 – December 2024

Number of Events By County



- **551** D/HH children and their family partners attended the events.
- 37 individuals responded to the survey. 95% (**N=35**) of the respondents reported that their child enjoyed the event and 84% (**N=31**) reported learning something new at the event.

“I enjoyed that both educators were Deaf. It is rare for a child under 3 to have the opportunity to interact with Deaf adult educators.”

“My favorite part of the event was having the chance for my son to meet and mingle with D/HH peers.”

“I really enjoyed hearing about the research being done with D/HH children and their families.”



Conclusion/Next Steps

- Events provided a space for D/HH children and families to engage in educational activities and learn from professionals and educators who work with the D/HH population.
- Expand events to rural areas that have limited resources for families of (and) D/HH children.
- Provide more interactive educational sessions and include information on various communication modalities during events.
- Design standardized surveys to obtain better feedback from families and increase response rates.

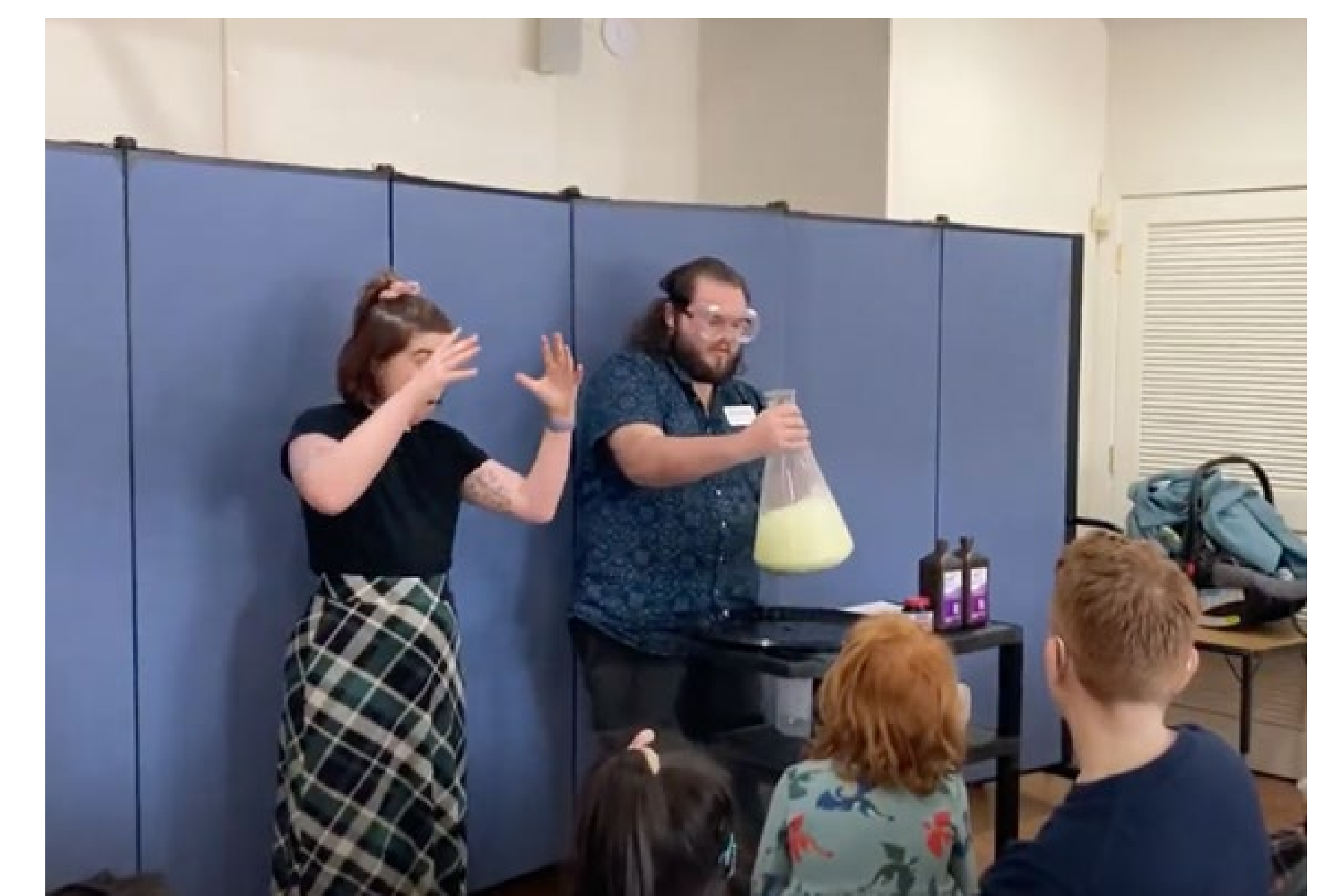


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