



Loud and Clear



St. Joseph
Institute for the Deaf



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The Circle of Love: Julie Beth Hayden's Lasting Impact

It's truly remarkable how life comes full circle, showcasing the profound impact we can have on the lives of our students. One such inspiring story is Julie Beth Hayden's, a proud 1986 graduate of St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf. Julie Beth, born with Long Q-T Syndrome, faced hearing loss but overcame the challenge with unwavering determination. Her journey led her to attain a master's degree in family studies from the University of Kentucky, followed by certification as a vocational rehabilitation counselor specializing in support for individuals who are deaf and visually impaired. For 25 years, she dedicated herself to this noble profession.



Julie Beth Hayden, 1986 St. Joseph Institute graduate

Unexpectedly, Julie Beth passed away on June 21, 2020, leaving behind a legacy that her family is determined to honor. In her memory, the Julie Beth Hayden Foundation was established by her parents. During a recent visit to SJI, Julie Beth's mother, Julie Andrews, attributed Julie Beth's early language skills, nurtured at SJI, to her subsequent academic and professional achievements.

Prior to her visit to our Indianapolis campus, Julie reached out to our executive directors expressing a desire to support our organization through the foundation. Recognizing Julie Beth's passion for education and empowerment, our directors proposed a professional development

scholarship in her name. Her mother and stepfather immediately responded with a resounding "Yes!" and asked us what more they could do.



In a subsequent proposal, specific needs were outlined for our Indiana and Missouri campuses, seeking support to develop a new toddler classroom in Indiana and equip the classroom with necessary materials. Additionally, assistance was requested in acquiring two new loaner hearing aids for our Missouri campus to support families in need. Very quickly, Julie Beth's mom and stepfather responded with a generous yes, committing to fund all our requests.

In the words of Julie, "We look forward to supporting any of St. Joseph's future projects." It is evident that Julie Beth's life's work was dedicated to the education and empowerment of others, advocating for the potential of individuals of all abilities. Her family, deeply engaged in ensuring her legacy endures, has chosen SJI as a valued partner in this ongoing mission. Together, we strive to empower professionals, embody compassion, and continue the impactful work initiated by Julie Beth Hayden.

"We look forward to supporting any of St. Joseph's future projects."

- Julie Andrews



Meet Our Staff

Lexi Newman, MS, CED, joined the SJI-MO staff in the summer of 2022 and has become an integral member of the LSL provider team. We caught her in between home and iHear visits for a quick chat.

Zareena: Why did you want to work at SJI?

Lexi: I loved the environment, the staff and the SJI reputation. From the first moment I walked in the doors, I could feel that SJI feeling through serving the kids and families we support. I knew I wanted to work in early intervention but serving families online was new to me. As I continued last fall, I experienced a wholesome feeling in the building.

The culture, the support, and the mentorship was key for me as a first-year provider. I was provided with learning opportunities but also two separate presenting opportunities at conferences. That's really unusual and I loved the collaboration aspect.

Zareena: What's the best part of your job?

Lexi: Getting to know the families and having them become family is deeply rewarding. The outcomes I see in children, then watching the whole family transition into mainstream and knowing they will be so successful. One of my favorite parts is watching a child receive a hearing aid for the first time – there are no dry eyes in the room! My small part of making a family's dream come true and being a part of the whole journey by working WITH the families is amazing!

Zareena: What do you do in your spare time?

Lexi: My family still lives in Atlanta so we Facetime a lot. I went to Washington University so I'm familiar with the city. I love Forest Park and hang out there all the time with my boyfriend Alex and Graham, the dog. I play pickleball and really like discovering new restaurants and breweries in the city.



Caitlin Stacy, M.S., CCC-SLP, LSLS Cert. AVT, is a dedicated employee with a remarkable 10-year tenure at SJI. Caitlin's extensive experience and commitment make her an invaluable asset to our mission of providing comprehensive support and education to children who have hearing loss. Thank you Caitlin for taking some time to share some information about yourself.

Cindy: Please tell me what you do at SJI.

Caitlin: As the lead of the Early Intervention department, I provide training and supervision to a team of 27 individuals delivering listening and spoken language services to families in their homes through Indiana First Steps. We work with children ages birth to three, coaching and guiding their parents

during this critical period of development.

Cindy: Why did you want to work for SJI?

Caitlin: I believe that everything happens for a reason, that God has a plan for us, and I was meant to work here! I enjoy working for SJI because I love supporting families and witnessing children reach their potential.

Cindy: What do you do during your time when you're not working?

Caitlin: I have been happily married for 12 years, and I have two daughters ages 8 and 10. My first-born loves tumbling and dancing, and my youngest is a professional actress. So, they keep me very busy!

Paying It Forward



SJI Alumni Give Back

St. Joseph Institute provides incredible services to hundreds of children and their families each year. Thankfully, former students and families pay it forward through their gifts of volunteering and support. "I served on the Board of Directors for a decade because I wanted to give other members a student's point of view," smiled Jene O'Blennis, Class of 1960. "I volunteered because I wanted to give back to the school that had given me so much."

"I volunteered because I wanted to give back to the school that had given me so much."

- *Jene O'Blennis, Class of 1960*

From classroom volunteering to events to Board service, volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. Alumni return to classrooms chatting with current students, tying shoes, and sitting in iHear sessions assuring parents/teens of the impact the services have made for them.

The Mother's Club from 1930-2000 helped raise funds, obtained supplies, and worked in classrooms. Parents built the beautiful gardens and helped maintain the grounds at both former locations in University City and Clarkson Rd. A dedicated father built out the gross motor room at our current Brentwood location and still helps maintain the building. Alumni also participate in board committees. Not only have they made a profound difference within the committee, but also they help define the other members' volunteer experience.



Alumni have been supporting, raising money, and attending donor calls. They speak publicly at events, literally showing donors the lasting impact of their gifts. Alum Madeline Feltz recently spoke at SJI's Gala with her sister and they helped raise more than \$121,000. "I loved seeing all the little kids at the Gala," she wrote. "They are learning to listen and speak just like I did. I remember it was a lot of work. But someday, they will be touring colleges like I am because they had early help from teachers who love them."

Speaking at the gala was wonderful and a small way to say thank you to St. Joe's!"

Madeline (left) and her sister Audrey (right) at SJI's Gala.

SJI-IN Alumni, William and Lexi Baker

St. Joseph Institute welcomed back alumni brother and sister, William and Lexi Baker. William, now a linebacker at Harrison High School, shared his experience with cochlear implants, demonstrating his specialized helmet. Meanwhile, Lexi, a cheerleader at Battle Ground Middle School, led a spirited cheer, and invited students to check out her pom-poms.

Both alumni enthusiastically encouraged students to pursue their dreams, creating an inspiring and memorable visit.



L to R: William Baker, Lexi Baker, Kristen Schaaf and Jen Graff

♥ A Monthly Donor's Heartfelt Commitment

St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf is deeply blessed to have many individual donors to help make our mission possible. Our monthly donors are a special group of deeply committed supporters. We caught up with one of our most dedicated monthly donors; please meet Alexis Borkowski!

"I became involved with SJI through a good friend, Erika Sevigny, when she invited me to a Bourbon Tasting in 2020. This was during the pandemic, and we were in her St. Louis city apartment comparing bottles of bourbon. I'm not a huge bourbon fan but I loved the event and the message of the organization.

I kept attending their Young Friends events and also attended the Gala in 2022. Annie Smith, another Young Friend, was raising money while in her gorgeous silver gown. She talked about her monthly donation and how it enabled her to not only plan the gift each month, but also make a bigger difference within her budget. I signed up for a monthly gift at that event.

The next month I attended the "Waffles & Babies" open house. I watched as preschoolers laughed and talked, iHear sessions occurred four states away,

and I learned about the various listening devices. It was amazing! Now I was able to understand the full impact of my gift. All these kids, born with

♥ a significant hearing loss, were talking or learning to speak. They were listening to regular sounds and learning to communicate because of this work. Communication is much more than just language; I then grasped the impact this made versus only learning sign language. I met alumni later that year living their lives and saw the reach of these services.

Those experiences with the organization have led me to today. I'm a Development Committee member and served on the Decorations

subcommittee for both SJI's Bocce/186 Birthday party and the Gala. I recently increased my gift. I am thrilled with the difference I feel that I make for the students and families served."



Alexis and her dog Izzie

The Franko's Impactful Support of St. Joseph Institute

Vitaly and Iryna Franko began supporting St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf when their daughter attended our preschool. Eleanore, now 13 and in 8th grade, is doing fabulously!



UPCOMING

EVENTS

IND

Jan 29 - Mar 1 Hear to Read Winter Reading Challenge

May 2 Sound of Speed

Sep 13 Golf Classic

STL

Jan 29 Young Friends Bourbon Tasting / Trivia Night

May 28 100 Holes for Hearing

Vitaly and Iryna are thankful that St. Joseph Institute was able to give Eleanore the foundation she needed to transition into mainstream school.

Listening and spoken language are skills that the Frankos hold dear. "St. Joseph Institute is a great pre-school that allows kids to successfully integrate into mainstream schooling. SJI provides early intervention that sets a firm foundation for each child," says Iryna.

The Frankos became SJI Monthly Donors to support children who are deaf or hard of hearing on a consistent basis and they encourage others to join them! Go to <https://sjid.org/monthly-giving> to sign up today!



Vitaly and Iryna Franko along with their daughters Eleanore (13) and Natalie (5)