

OUTSTANDING HEARING CONSERVATIONIST AWARD



Established in 1990, the Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Hearing Conservation is bestowed on a person whose work is exemplary in our field. It is the pleasure of the National Hearing Conservation Association to announce that this year's award recipient is Deanna K. Meinke, Ph.D., for leadership in hearing loss prevention, outstanding research,

programmatic influence, presentations, publications, and her elevation of the awareness of hearing conservation.

The breadth and depth of Deanna's involvement in hearing loss prevention is truly phenomenal and our hope is to give you a sense of that in these few short words. However, what makes her accomplishments and contributions even more impactful is her kindness and generosity, and the smiles and laughter that accompany so much of who she is and what she does. Deanna is not only an exceptional scientist but also an extraordinary human being.

Although encomia often begin with citations of the awardee's notable research, with Deanna it is apt to commence by discussing her extensive mentoring and involvement with students of all ages. This includes more than 60 graduate and undergraduate students from Colorado to Singapore, and from Michigan to South Africa, as well as numerous children and parents who have participated in her research and whom she has touched and educated through her efforts. Her love for working with others is apparent from the moment you meet her. It was clearly exemplified by her 2014 NHCA Don Gasaway lecture, *Of Chainsaws and Raindrops*, featuring the diversity of friends, students, people, places, and events that fill her life, as she simultaneously teaches, informs, and befriends them, and in so doing expands her own understanding of human nature and safe listening practices.

Deanna has a passion for hearing loss prevention. Married to a professional tree trimmer who is an avid hunter, Deanna's experience with noise-induced hearing loss is personal, as well as clinical. Whereas some award-winning authorities primarily concentrate on publications and conferences, Deanna's contributions directly impact a much broader community, through

her efforts to save other people from experiencing the disabling effects of hazardous noise. This is especially true in her work with children, whether on a tractor, a shooting range, or in a classroom. A notable example has been her collaboration with colleagues from the Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland State University and the National University of Singapore in creating and managing the Dangerous Decibels® program. It engages children in public health education in a way that is enjoyable, informative, and evidence-based.

Dangerous Decibels began as a K-12 classroom hearing health intervention program and expanded to include two-day training workshops for educators. A museum exhibit about the auditory system and safe listening practices was subsequently developed with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. This highly successful program has been implemented in community based interventions with Native American cultures. The key messages reach the adults through the activities and teachings for their children. Amazingly, the Dangerous Decibels program has even been repackaged and incorporated into hearing conservation education for the New Zealand military; it turns out, it isn't just effective for children. It has been adapted/translated to educate children in other countries - notably Brazil and Singapore. Such success was facilitated by Deanna's grasp of health communication theory, and by her dedication and talent for disseminating a program that could be translated and understood by diverse audiences.

Of equal significance for children as her work with the Dangerous Decibels program, has been Deanna's creative and tireless efforts to popularize Jolene, an inexpensive acoustical manikin. Jolene can not only be used by audiologists and other educators to inform the public regarding safe music listening levels, but there is a Jolene Cookbook that teaches youth how to create their own Jolene as a learning project. As of this writing Jolene manikins have been constructed in 41 countries, 50 states and 3 U.S. territories, and she has also been crafted into a permanent museum exhibition at the Musical Instrument Museum of Phoenix, AZ.

In June of 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's, Public Health Grand Rounds focused on communicating to physicians and health professionals about issues related to excessive noise exposure. Deanna was invited to be one of four presenters. Her message was on the risk for hearing loss among adolescents - the group for whom Dangerous Decibels was

originally developed. The CDC Public Health Grand Rounds reached more than 50,000 persons.

One of Deanna's many strengths is her ability to make connections with and between people. Upon recognizing a gap in the literature on noise-induced hearing loss and recreational firearms, she teamed up with several members of NHCA to address the problem. Thus, through Deanna's leadership, the Rudyard Gang was formed, resulting in definitive research and many interesting stories. Deanna's work as a member of NHCA's Task Force on Prevention of Noise Induced Hearing Loss from Firearm Noise enabled the group to conduct the first test of the American National Standard Institute's ANSI S12.42 method to assess the performance of hearing protectors in the field with firearm noise. The task force work led to important publications, including Impulse noise generated by starter pistols, Auditory risk estimates for hearing loss for youth target shooting, and the NHCA's Position Statement on Recreational Firearm Noise. These documents inform audiologists and hearing conservation professionals who deal with clients and patients that suffer from noise induced hearing loss. Without Deanna's guidance and her perspective on audiology, these significant and influential papers would not have been published.

Deanna Meinke is not only innovative – she is fearless. Today we are faced with new technologies that are reshaping the educational system and scientific publishing. While this scenario intimidates many, Deanna critically evaluates the opportunities it offers and implements creative approaches to benefit from this technological wave. A recent example was her use of a teaching platform created by the Wiki Education Foundation to encourage students to not only read Wikipedia, but to also author their own content. Her students contributed to 15 existing Wikipedia pages (related to hearing conservation topics) that were viewed by more than 320,000 readers during the semester. Furthermore, her students reported they were motivated and derived more satisfaction as compared to traditional writing assignments, and indicated that they learned to navigate the internet more judiciously.

Beyond her many accomplishments enumerated thus far, Deanna is also a respected research audiologist, at times addressing topics heretofore unexplored in the literature, and ones that she is uniquely capable of handling. For example – how much protection can a 5 10 year-old child shooting a gun obtain with a foam earplug or an earmuff, when fitted by her or himself, or a parent? Questions such as these, of great importance to the public at large, are now answered, thanks to Deanna.

In a more conventional vein, we can report that Deanna is a co-editor of Roeser's Audiology Desk Reference and the lead editor of the upcoming 6th Edition of the AIHA Noise Manual. She is the author of more than 30 publications in peer-reviewed journals, more than 30 articles in non-peer reviewed magazines or proceedings, and more than 40 articles in electronic format. She is a skilled pre-

sender having conducted over 60 workshops on a range of topics and more than 110 scientific presentations at conferences, and she has served as a peer reviewer for 20 professional journals. As an academic researcher, she has been successful in applying for several grants with the University, State and Federal funding agencies, and was just named the 2018 recipient of the A. M. & Jo Winchester Distinguished Scholar at the University of Northern Colorado, for her scholarship, creative works, peer recognition, and grant and contract activity.

Deanna grasps the big picture. When the aspiration is to raise hearing loss prevention awareness and effectiveness, not only must a researcher provide insights, but of equal significance is recognition and selfless promotion of the efforts of others. This she did from 2006 through 2017 as a founding member and the first chair of the NIOSH/NHCA Safe in-Sound and Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Award™ that annually honors excellence in workplace programs and innovators who have led the field.

In reviewing Deanna's extensive vitae, we were amazed and led to wonder: has she discovered how to extend her workday past 24 hours? Beyond the many accomplishments summarized above, she has consulted for and or been involved in projects as diverse as strategic planning for World Health Organization initiatives on hearing loss, to questions raised by the National Basketball Association on the noise exposures of their officials. And of course, our own NHCA has been the appreciative recipient of her services. She was our president from 2008-2009, was recognized with the Michael Beall Threadgill award for meritorious service in 2010, received seven Golden Lobe Awards, has been honored with our outstanding poster and lecture awards, and has led important NHCA task forces, most notably, the NHCA Task Force on Children in Noise, which paved the way for her immersion into Dangerous Decibels. Together with Billy Martin, Deanna organized and produced the first-ever scientific conference targeted at noise-related hearing loss in children, called "Noise-Induced Hearing Loss in Children at Work and Play," in 2006. This was a phenomenal collaboration between NIOSH, NIDCD, NHCA and multiple other partners.

Dr. Deanna Meinke's accomplishments have made indelible contributions to hearing loss prevention in all walks of life and especially to the National Hearing Conservation Association. She is one of those honorees who not only deserves NHCA Outstanding Hearing Conservationist Award, but increases its luster by being counted as one of its recipients. She is a foremost scholar, a mentor, a friend to many, and a shining example of kindness, grace, and what other scientists may aspire to become.

Elliott H. Berger
Division Scientist

William J. Murphy, CAPT.
U.S. Public Health Service

Laurie L. Wells *Senior Regulatory Affairs Specialist*