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Meet Harshpreet: An Alumni Success Story

An amazing and vibrant 18 year old young lady with a love for soccer, music and dance, and who has just started her first year at Simon Fraser University.

Harshpreet is hard of hearing.

Due to hearing challenges, Harshpreet has faced many difficulties. She developed a noticeable accent when speaking, which led some people not to treat her with respect. She also struggled to stay on beat in music and dance, often affecting team synchronization. She also faced challenges in her schoolwork. These experiences made her feel alone, and she took these struggles to heart, believing she was simply bad at everything and was left wondering what she was doing wrong.

“My brother was having his hearing assessed so my parents had mine assessed, just for fun.”

A Surprise Diagnosis

At the age of 13, Harshpreet’s family learned that she had been living with hearing loss for most of her life. After numerous tests, her Audiologist confirmed she was hard of hearing.

“Harshpreet has history of longstanding bilateral tympanic membrane perforations, and a known bilateral slight to moderate conductive hearing loss that is slightly worse on the right side. She wears a hearing aid on the right side to increase auditory access.”

The diagnosis came the summer before Harshpreet was to begin high school and left them in disbelief. After the initial shock and the feeling of defeat however, she says it was a bit of a relief. At that moment, Harshpreet says, “things started to make sense”.

“My parents always thought I was ignoring them. Even in dance, I couldn’t hear the music and was always off beat so they would get mad at me. I learned how to count steps to keep up. I felt I was working harder than everyone else and still not getting it.”



Perseverance and Patience

High school did not start any better than elementary school. She had to advocate for herself to get assistance and for two whole years, Harshpreet had no help at all. The school system was failing her.

In Grade 11, Harshpreet was assigned a health worker and then, Children’s Hearing and Speech Centre of BC (CHSC) came into the picture. Through our Itinerant program, Harshpreet was assigned Robyn, one of our Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing with a master’s degree in Early Intervention and Deaf Education. Harshpreet and Miss Robyn, as she calls her, quickly hit it off and became friends, and are “like sisters”.

“I LOVE Miss Robyn.”, Harshpreet exclaims. “She has helped me so much in such a brief time. She has helped me with all my classes including Chemistry, Biology and Physics. She helped me apply for scholarships. It was a wonderful experience having her as my Itinerant teacher. I can’t thank her enough. I think we will stay in touch forever.”



Harshpreet has aged out of CHSC’s Itinerant program and is now enrolled in her first year Health Sciences program at Simon Fraser University. At SFU, she was immediately assigned a Disability Counsellor. Unfortunately, her hearing aids and the FM system were not compatible, so she now has loaner hearing aids. Eventually, her parents will have to buy new hearing aids but says “they’re very expensive”.



Harshpreet's mom says, "The moment I found out she had a hearing loss, I felt terrible for her. I didn't know and I was upset that my daughter was struggling." "Now, I feel proud of her, how she is, and all she has done for herself. She is her best and does her best all the time."

Although university was very scary at the beginning, after 3 months she is settling in nicely.

New Beginnings and Future Dreams

"The teachers are very professional, and extremely helpful. They recognize me and now they come to me to ask for the FM system." SFU has assigned Harshpreet a note taker for every class so that she doesn't miss any information, and she can also record each class if she likes. "They are collaborating with me to ensure my success. I am extremely excited about all this and what's to come."

Harshpreet is excited about her future. "I want to help people. I want to do something health related. I want to help babies who are born with hearing loss whether as a researcher, in biology, something to do with cells, I'm not sure yet, but something in the medical field."



A Message from our Executive Director

We entered the new year, filled with renewed optimism, energy, and a highly qualified and talented staff, ready to propel our focus on elevating awareness and securing essential funding for CHSC's vital programs and services. As a charitable organization in the social services sector, our ability to deliver critical services relies heavily on the generosity of our donors, community partners, and government support.

We strive to ensure no family is left behind, assisting through every step necessary in the process of providing supportive and effective programs for their child's success. Our proven educational model also allows families to wholly engage in their community.

CHSC's Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing support students with hearing loss, and their teachers, in independent schools. These services are delivered in person to students in Greater Vancouver and across BC through a combination of videoconferencing, regularly scheduled visits, and ongoing communication with the student's team of professionals. This support should not stop when a student graduates.

With your donations, we can continue to provide life-changing Itinerant support across BC and help advocate for more aid. Whether a student decides to go to college, chooses a trade, or goes on to university, we can advocate for them and ensure they get the help they need to succeed.

Your support will help more young people with hearing loss, like Harshpreet, achieve their goals and dreams.

Yours Sincerely,

**Dawn McKenna
Executive Director**

Help us help amazing young people with hearing loss, like Harshpreet, achieve their goals.

Donate. Connect. Transform.



DONATE NOW