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Karen

November 7, 2003

Karen Putz writes about being from a family where many members have hearing loss. [Contact us](http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/contact.jsp) (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/contact.jsp>) if you want us to respond to Karen or ask her a question.

I come from a family that has seen 5 generations of hearing loss. My grandmother was deaf as well as my great grandfather. My mother and all of her siblings had varying levels of hearing loss.

My mom was 27 when she began to lose her hearing. She was profoundly deaf by the time I was born, but managed to adjust to life using a hearing aid. She depended on lipreading for communication and turned over the phone to my hearing father.

One by one, my siblings lost their hearing in a variety of ways. My oldest sister was merely 3 when she fell off a counter and hit her head on a baseboard. She became profoundly deaf that day. Next in line was my brother Dennis. He was at work one day when a beam fell on him and he woke up in the hospital with a severe hearing loss at the age of 36. My other sister, Jeanie, lost her hearing the same way my mother did. My other brother, Kenny, began to use hearing aids at the age of 46.

As far as we can figure, I was born hearing, and was diagnosed with a moderate hearing loss at the age of four. I received my first hearing aid in 4th grade. I rarely wore it, taking it off first thing when I arrived home from school. The summer before my sophomore year in college, I took a hard fall while barefooting (waterskiing on bare feet) and felt like I had water in my ear for days. I went away to college, and my hearing never came back. Tests in college showed a profound loss, and I learned to wear the hearing aid every waking moment. In a nice turn of events, I stayed on a co ed floor with many other deaf and hard of hearing students and found a home in the deaf community. It was here that I met my husband and took a job in the deaf field.

Our 3 children were born hearing and appeared to lose their hearing shortly after an illness. My oldest son was very sick at 9 months of age, and was diagnosed with a moderate to profound hearing loss at the age of two. My daughter (4) and son (2) were sick at the same time, and both diagnosed with hearing loss within a short time after that. All 3 wear digital hearing aids and FM systems at school. The boys both have interpreters and all 3 have itinerant teachers that visit once a week. We try to give them the best of both worlds, with a wealth of activities and friends in both.

This page was last edited on November 26, 2003.

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<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/meet/deaf/karen.jsp>