

University of Northern Colorado Audiology and Speech Language Sciences Professors Receive Grant from the Daniels Fund

Drs. Julie Hanks and Tina Stoodly (Prout), University of Northern Colorado faculty in the School of Human Sciences, College of Natural and Health Sciences recently received a \$100,000 grant from the Daniels Fund. This project will support children with cochlear implants and their families, as well as graduate students in audiology and speech-language sciences.

Cochlear implants are medical devices that have changed the way many professionals and families view options of deafness. The costs associated with cochlear implants are significant. To achieve maximal patient benefit, extensive post-implant rehabilitation services are required to train the brain to recognize and attach meaning to sound. While insurance companies often cover the significant fee for cochlear implant surgery, they often do not cover follow-up care. Furthermore, many individuals with cochlear implants and their families need to travel to Denver to receive these services, and the time/cost incurred for these trips is a great hardship in many instances. Without timely follow-up cochlear implant users will have slowed progress and in some cases will be rendered deaf until proper diagnostics can be performed.

The grant will be used to set up a satellite cochlear implant clinic at the University of Northern Colorado, which will provide needed care to clients who are deaf and their families. The primary goal of this program is to offer cochlear implant troubleshooting services. This will allow clients faster access to services and likely improved outcomes due to timely follow-up. An additional program goal is to provide cutting-edge training for graduate students in audiology and speech-language pathology in the area of cochlear implants. Both of these high-demand fields require specialized training experience. By achieving these goals, the clinic will serve families directly while also preparing students to serve families in the future.

Dr. Stoodly is an Assistant Professor at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). She became interested in cochlear implants during her graduate training at Washington University where she worked extensively with both pediatric and adult cochlear implant users. Her clinical experiences included both aural rehabilitative and mapping/programming services.

Dr. Hanks is a certified speech-language pathologist for over 20 years. She is currently an Associate Professor in Audiology and Speech-Language Sciences. Her areas of professional study include cochlear implants, speech production of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and evidence based practice and clinical methods.

Drs. Hanks and Stoodly co-teach courses in aural rehabilitation and cochlear implants. They also provide clinical opportunities for their students in audiology and speech-language pathology through their work with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.