

S2 Ep5

Katie Colella [00:00:00] You're listening to *Amplified* presented by Lurie Children's. Transcripts of this and all episodes can be found at LurieChildren.Org/Amplified.

Katie Farnsworth [00:00:12] For our final episode of season two we are excited to share our interview with Eduardo, the older son who Maria calls her teacher. Eduardo chose to share with us via American Sign Language. So you hear the voice of a fantastic ASL interpreter named Marijo Fiacchino speaking on his behalf.

Katie Colella [00:00:28] During this interview, you will hear the sounds of Eduardo at Marijo's hands moving, and Marijo speaking softly as it is part of her process. You will also hear Katie and I frequently pausing while asking questions to allow Marijo enough time to interpret. Much of this was intentionally included to appreciate the importance of using a certified ASL interpreter in clinical care.

Katie Farnsworth [00:00:52] It was really heartwarming to see just how proud of how proud she is of you.

Katie Colella [00:00:58] We've enjoyed talking to your mom.

Katie Farnsworth [00:01:04] Do you remember when your implant was first turned on?

Marijo Fiacchino [00:01:07] First time? Remember that?

Katie Farnsworth [00:01:16] For maybe your second one. Do you remember? Like, what are some of your earliest memories of coming to this office or, you know, working with your implants?

Ed Venalanzo [00:01:36] The first time I heard after three years when I was three years old, I was still I was still surprised. It was a surprise to be able to hear.

Katie Farnsworth [00:01:48] Yeah. And so you remember that?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:01:52] Uh? Kinda.

Katie Farnsworth [00:01:54] Yeah. I mean, it's it's pretty awesome that even just a small memory from over, you know, over a decade ago, almost two decades ago. That was a big moment for your family, for your mom, for you, of course. And that really kind of started the journey for you. And so I think any memory you have is fantastic. Do you remember getting your second implant a few years later?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:02:29] The second one. The first one, I don't remember this. The first one and second one I did, I remember that was fine. But it's difficult because that's how people look. Is that new or is it different cochlear implant? It was just like the second one and it was successful.

Katie Colella [00:02:58] Yeah. And there was a pretty big period of time, too, before you got your second implant, too. So I'm sure that experience was probably a little bit different also?

Marijo Fiacchino [00:03:06] Also later, that was my experience.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:03:14] Yes, it was.

Katie Colella [00:03:17] In the first season of Amplified on the podcast. We talked a lot about identity. How do you identify yourself when it comes to hearing and sign? Or in general?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:03:44] I'm saying both hard of hearing and deaf. That's how I identify.

Katie Farnsworth [00:03:51] And there's no, like, one way that we identify ourselves, right? It's like a whole continuum.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:04:05] Correct? That's right. Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:04:07] How else, how else would you describe yourself? Like, if you had to kind of describe yourself to another person who's never met you before, how would. What would you say?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:04:23] If someone were to meet me, I would feel like, over the past year's, maybe it was, I mean, after three years went on during my high school years, I was shy. I wouldn't talk to people. Maybe, I wouldn't...I was too shy to talk to people like that, hearing people, you know. And now I'm not shy. I talk to my hearing friends and and I can meet new friends who are hearing and I can talk with me, and then they can talk with them. We can communicate with each other. And we can become good friends.

Katie Colella [00:05:26] What do you talk to your friends about?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:05:35] Sports. You know what's going on with lunch, class type things are going on in class, that's all.

Katie Colella [00:05:47] Like normal stuff. What do you think changed between when you were maybe a little more shy to now?

Marijo Fiacchino [00:05:56] High school your shy and now not shy.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:06:06] More self esteem. High school was fun, but college, it's seems more normal is cool, you know. It's just, it's more fun being with my friends that can hear and doing sports, that kind of thing.

Katie Colella [00:06:30] What type of sports do you play, sport?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:06:37] There's two I like. Volleyball and basketball.

Katie Farnsworth [00:06:42] That's so.

Katie Colella [00:06:45] Do you ever use.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:06:45] Thank you.

Katie Colella [00:06:46] Do you ever use hand motions with your friends, or did you teach them anything to communicate in volleyball? In basketball?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:06:57] No, not really, no.

Katie Colella [00:06:59] There's a lot of nonverbals in those sports.

Katie Farnsworth [00:07:08] I don't know. I don't know if you know this, but Katie over here was a basketball player, so she's, she's all about those nonverbal cues.

Katie Colella [00:07:18] So I. I guess I do appreciate that. You don't need any. Please don't look up my stats you would be so disappointed, Eduardo.

Katie Farnsworth [00:07:31] What are you doing?

Katie Colella [00:07:32] I just wanted to say, but I can appreciate that you don't really need any special signs I feel in many sports, especially basketball, because there are so many other nonverbal cues that I don't think everyone uses, hearing hard of hearing deaf, however, one identifies all the time. I think that's one of the best things about sports, honestly.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:08:06] Yeah, I agree. Like in high school, the coaches would bring an interpreter for the deaf and hard of hearing basketball team. But, you know, during the when he was talk, you know, they would kind of point and just gesture. But in college there's no communication necessary with the hearing people. It's just me and, and I can hear her with my cochlear implants and still play. And then if I don't wear my implants, I can read the other players lips. So it's not really an issue. So I'm more able to play along. So it's fine.

Katie Colella [00:09:00] And I think you should also know Katie played Division one college sports. She was on, she rowed she was on the crew team at the University of Iowa.

Katie Farnsworth [00:09:16] What was fantastic about that was we were in a boat, right? So I'm following the girl that's in front of me. So, you know, also just a lot of cues, right. Just in terms of body language, timing, trust in other people too. I think a lot of what I felt with making new friends, especially friends that had normal hearing, was I trusted them, you know, I trusted myself. As you said, you know, your self-esteem has continued to build. And I think that also then allows you to trust other people. And I think that's a life skill that everyone learns. And so I'm so thrilled to hear that you've, you know, been able to, like, find this group of friends, especially at the college level, that you can really, you know, lean on because I think that's what also helps you be successful.

Katie Colella [00:10:27] What made you want to go into pre-med at college?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:10:36] Well, I want to learn medicine, medicate medicine, because I want to become a doctor. But I'm just interested in studying science and really been interested in that. So got me into pre-med.

Katie Colella [00:10:54] What kind of doctor do you want to be?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:11:01] Surgery. Surgeon. I want to become a surgeon.

Katie Colella [00:11:03] Oh, that's awesome.

Katie Farnsworth [00:11:05] That is. That's amazing. You know what a good aspiration for you, too. And the sky's the limit. I think so many of our parents, especially as they're facing a new diagnosis of hearing loss for their young child, it's the world's, there's so much unknown, right, about what the future is going to bring for them. And so to hear your story and hear about how that self-esteem and that self-confidence and now, you know, really having just all of the these aspirations for yourself, I think that parents are really going to just really appreciate knowing that.

Katie Colella [00:11:53] Do you receive any accommodations at University of Illinois, Chicago, because you have a hearing loss?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:12:09] Yes, I have an interpreter. Also, I have a note taker.

Katie Colella [00:12:15] Oh, great. How was the process of getting that set up? We have a lot of families that we work with. You know, we work with their kids from a young age, but eventually they transition from high school to college or trade school or whatever program or job they get. And so at that point, there's a lot of new advocacy that enters their life. And so we really love to hear firsthand what it was like for you to get those services set up.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:12:59] Like what specifically? What do you mean?

Katie Colella [00:13:02] What was the process? Who did you have to contact? Did you have to submit any type of documentation? Was it challenging? Was it easy? We make these recommendations as clinicians to say, oh, you know, contact the Adaptive Services office or whatever it's called, but we love to know what the process is like on your end.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:13:35] Well, in high school, they scheduled the classes. I said an interpreter would be there. But in college, my mother had said in order to get an interpreter for my classes in college, I had to submit documents through email to a specific department to request interpreters for my classes.

Katie Colella [00:14:14] That sounds like a pretty easy process then, but.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:14:22] Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:14:23] If you are attending college and want to request accommodations for hearing loss or any other need, find the Adaptive Services or Disabilities Office affiliated with the organization. When I attended University of Iowa, I was able to have it set up before I started my freshman year.

Katie Colella [00:14:38] I'd love to hear about how your family communicates with each other because I know there's your home with several languages spoken English, spoken Spanish and American Sign Language.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:14:54] That's correct. Yes. Well, we speak Spanish. Sometimes we'll speak some English. But with me and my brother, my sister and my other brother and my sister-in-law, they speak English. And then other speak Spanish with my aunt and my dad. Then there's we use technology of texting with the family and then and we text in Spanish as well. And I'm also trying to teach them some sign language.

Katie Colella [00:15:50] What would be your what's kind of your preferred mode of communication? Do you prefer Spanish English sign language? What do you did to kind of dependent on the person what you like to how you like to communicate with them?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:16:08] English and Spanish.

Katie Colella [00:16:11] Spoken. Yes.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:16:13] Yes, the spoken. Yeah.

Katie Colella [00:16:15] I know. You've gone to Mexico multiple times. How is it traveling to Mexico where you know you, don't you? Well, I guess we should first clear something up. So your mom says that you and Esteban fight about who speaks better Spanish. And we ask Esteban who he thinks speaks better Spanish. And he said him. What is your response to that?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:16:46] Is me. I speak better Spanish.

Katie Colella [00:16:51] So how is it when you travel to Mexico? Because I understand most of your family in Mexico only speaks Spanish.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:17:04] It's fine. I can communicate with my family in Mexico.

Katie Colella [00:17:08] Have they been open to learning sign language?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:17:13] No, no.

Katie Farnsworth [00:17:16] Why do you think it's because it's such a new way of communicating?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:17:22] Well, I can teach sign language with Spanish at the same time as I can't do that because interpreting with English in sign language. And it's not that it's not possible because I don't know what the English signs are.

Katie Farnsworth [00:17:45] Like oh for, for, like a, like a, Spanish sign language.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:17:50] So like, you're saying the Spanish words and then the English signs. It's like two languages, same time.

Katie Colella [00:17:58] True. I didn't think about that.

Katie Farnsworth [00:17:59] I didn't either.

Katie Colella [00:18:03] So then you try to use Spanish in Spanish.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:18:10] Right. So, so you're, saying the Spanish word. But in sign language, it's the English word. It's like two languages, same time, because Spanish, Spanish sign language is different than American sign language.

Katie Colella [00:18:26] Very different.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:18:27] There is different languages.

Katie Colella [00:18:29] That's right. They have completely different language families.

Katie Farnsworth [00:18:33] Right. And different structures.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:18:35] Different right. And so every language has its own sign language.

Katie Colella [00:18:40] A language family is a group of languages descended from a common ancestral language, resulting in overlapping vocabulary or grammatical patterns. A common example in spoken language is Spanish and Italian, both from the romance language family. American Sign language is actually in the same language family as French Sign language due to a deaf teacher named Laurent Clerc co-founding the first American School for the Deaf in 1817.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:19:07] So if he were saying good morning in Spanish, I'd be saying saying it in Spanish, explaining English. And it's like two two languages at the same time. It is hard.

Katie Colella [00:19:22] I did not even think about that, but that makes complete sense. Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:19:26] We should leave it to the trilingual expert over here.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:19:31] No, I know nothing about that.

Katie Colella [00:19:36] In high school, did you ever encounter any bullying?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:19:48] And I would say I'd deaf and hard, a deaf and hard of hearing boy bullied me because he pushed me. That's the only one time I could remember. That's all.

Katie Colella [00:20:03] How did you respond to that?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:20:09] Ah, nothing. I just said, Stop it. Don't push me.

Katie Colella [00:20:15] Good for you. Took the high road..

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:20:17] Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:20:20] I'm glad to hear it was only one time, too.

Katie Colella [00:20:24] You're in college now, which is very busy. The coursework can be extremely heavy, especially for someone in a challenging major like pre-med. Do you ever think about what it will be like for you to take over all those steps eventually when you transition out of Lurie's care?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:20:49] No, I haven't really thought about that.

Katie Farnsworth [00:20:53] Don't worry. You have a few years before that happens.

Katie Colella [00:20:55] Right? Absolutely.

Katie Farnsworth [00:20:58] But it is I think it is, you know, definitely a part of the process, working at work, at working at a children's hospital. Right. Like, at some point, we help our patients transition to an adult facility where maybe equipment support is a little more hands off.

Katie Colella [00:21:20] What do you think would make the process easier for you to feel more comfortable to reach out on your own, or I should say easier? Well, to make the process more accessible, to reach out on your own.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:21:49] Well. I could learn from my mom like how she would how she schedules the appointments. You know, I could study that and get that information. And my mom can, you know give me that information and tell me where I need to go and give me the contact information. That's simple enough.

Katie Colella [00:22:17] Do you think your mom likes being involved still?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:22:22] Yes, definitely.

Katie Colella [00:22:24] That is what I think too, she is so lovely.

Katie Farnsworth [00:22:30] But I think that a lot of what we're kind of trying to touch based on, too, is how can we make access? That much easier for our patients besides sports.

Katie Colella [00:22:44] What's your favorite thing about UIC?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:22:50] I like my math classes. I really like just math. And it has so far been my favorite classes.

Katie Colella [00:22:59] Well, thank you. I'm glad there's somebody.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:23:01] And then also science. My science, my science classes. I'm really learning a lot from that because I'm focusing on that, of course, because that's what my major is going to be, you know, with being pre-med.

Katie Farnsworth [00:23:17] Where do you like to study?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:23:20] Where do I like to study? I kind of like to study wherever there's a free, available table where people are. Library is one place I like to go. There is a university hall. I do a lot of my studying also in the classroom, so. Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:23:41] With your cochlear implants, do you ever stream music or any, you know, any podcast or anything while you're studying?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:23:50] Yes, I do that when I'm studying, I do listen to music.

Katie Farnsworth [00:23:54] How many classes are you taking next semester.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:23:59] Maybe five or six classes. Because each hour I want each hour of the day.

Katie Colella [00:24:08] So about 15, 18 credits. Yes, That's a lot.

Katie Farnsworth [00:24:14] Yeah. That's a big course. A lot.

Katie Colella [00:24:18] So we want to ask you about what COVID was like. When everyone had to start wearing masks to communicate. How did that affect your communication with everyone?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:24:36] Well, during COVID, when people were wearing masks was, um, I just, I could hear people's voices. So I wasn't really relying on lip reading, but it was challenging because of the masks. I would have to ask people to repeat a lot.

Katie Farnsworth [00:24:57] And have we kind of already talked about how in high school you were a little more shy, So I'm sure that was also hard on top of it to really advocate for yourself..

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:25:11] Correct? Yep.

Katie Colella [00:25:13] Do you think those the masks that have the clear cut out in them are helpful? I only ask because sometimes I feel they fog easily. So I wanted to know what your thoughts were.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:25:30] Well, exactly that. For the interpreters I have them wear that for so I can read their lips. But. Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:25:40] And that's frustrating too, because the mask is designed to give you more access. And I feel like sometimes it. It doesn't always work.

Katie Colella [00:25:48] What else would you like to share, if anything, about growing up with hearing loss in your lives? Especially for somebody listening who maybe doesn't know anyone who grew up with hearing loss, what would you want them to know?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:26:05] Before when I was three years old. I didn't know. I didn't even know I had a hearing loss. I didn't know anything. And then afterwards, you know, after getting my implants, it was kind of shocking. You know, my world opened up. And then after years and years after that, things and then getting the new implants and the more powerful implants throughout the years, that changed my world as well as the years went on.

Katie Farnsworth [00:26:37] So your worlds just constantly been evolving.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:26:47] Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:26:48] If you had to give a piece of advice to a parent or a patient who is undergoing a cochlear implant and they're scared or nervous, what would you say to them?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:27:07] When I was in school, I got a new implant, I was very nervous. Yes, I would say sometimes I would cry, but I, and I was shy. But later, I would say I was okay. I went into class and I would say, you know, everything worked out okay. Then it was hard for me, but but my friends would come up to me that I was still nervous, but they would talk with me. And then I felt that I wanted to be friends and I got to meet

friends just to keep going. And, and now I'm okay. And I'm not nervous, you know? And now it's everything's good. And I have friends and I talk with them. And then after and I grew up and there's no problems.

Katie Colella [00:28:03] Why would you get nervous to get a new implant? Because I just want to make sure I understand. Is that any time you upgraded to a new processor, it would make you nervous?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:28:18] What? I would just get nervous. I don't know, because I didn't want to show my that I had the implant, I guess. Or I would just, um. I don't know. I was just nervous myself. Maybe because I wanted to hide that I had my implant, but I don't know.

Katie Colella [00:28:43] But the unknown is scary too.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:28:47] True.

Katie Colella [00:28:49] Do you feel that your access to sound or sound quality has improved every time you've upgraded to the new technology?

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:29:01] Yes, definitely.

Katie Colella [00:29:04] Oh, well, that's good to hear.

Katie Farnsworth [00:29:07] We wish you the best of luck this next semester.

Eduardo Venalanzo [00:29:12] Thank you.

Katie Farnsworth [00:29:19] While waiting for Eduardo to arrive for his interview, we had the opportunity to talk to Marijo about being an American Sign Language interpreter. You may hear hands hitting the desk or clapping together at some points because Marijo is such a dedicated interpreter and she can't stop moving her hands.

Marijo Fiacchino [00:29:34] Hello, my name is Marijo Fiacchino I am a licensed sign language interpreter with the state of Illinois. I have been a sign language interpreter for over 35 years. I currently work at an agency called Chicago Hearing Society, CHS, on which I am currently a staff interpreter. Previously, I was the manager of Interpreter Services and now I currently what I call back on the streets, which I love to be out there interpreting with the deaf clients and being networking with our clients such as Lurie's and meeting the deaf clients and meeting our customers. Meeting my fellow colleagues, sign language interpreters and reaching out and finding out how things are going.

Katie Colella [00:30:28] Can you explain the process one has to go through to become a certified American Sign Language interpreter?

Marijo Fiacchino [00:30:36] Sure. Currently, if you are interested in becoming an interpreter, you need to go to an interpreter training program in the state of Illinois. We have several programs. We have four year degree programs and we have a couple of two year degree programs. Once you complete those programs, you go out and do practicum work and then you can sit before a testing body to test your skills in order to work in the state of Illinois as a an interpreter, you need to be licensed by the, by the State of Illinois IDHHC, which is the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission. And they license all

those interpreters to work in the state of Illinois. So just because you know sign language doesn't mean that you can go and interpret for people.

Katie Colella [00:31:31] Okay. We can tell you work with your hands. You cannot

Marijo Fiacchino [00:31:36] Exactly.

Katie Colella [00:31:37] Move them while you talk.

Marijo Fiacchino [00:31:37] Exactly.

Katie Colella [00:31:39] I met a young woman yesterday who works at the Morton Arboretum, who is working towards her American Sign language certification. And she said she did everything but take, I believe, the final exam. And she's been waiting because of COVID.

Marijo Fiacchino [00:31:57] Correct.

Katie Colella [00:31:58] COVID shut it all down. And can you, can you talk more about that? Did it shut down the options to take the exam?

Marijo Fiacchino [00:32:05] Unfortunately, due to COVID, the testing facilities had to put on hold the ability to hold administer those tests. There are, there is the BEI test that's held here through the state. And then there's our national testing body called the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Already that does have testing as well. And they both have been either slowed it down and or put on hold due to COVID because you can't couldn't meet during the lockdown. Now they are holding those testing again and scheduling those tests again. Unfortunately, there's a big backlog. So now there's just people waiting for appointments to take those test as well as there's a long waiting period to find out the results if they've passed those tests. It's very frustrating because there's not enough interpreters. We need more interpreters.

Katie Colella [00:33:10] One more question. Our family is here? What is the most exciting interpreting job you've ever had?

Marijo Fiacchino [00:33:20] Oh, I've had a lot of exciting interpreting jobs.

Katie Colella [00:33:23] Or your favorite whatever, you want to talk about.

Marijo Fiacchino [00:33:27] I've gotten to interpret for many famous people in my career, including those, former presidents such as Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and most recently, I got to interpret for the former first lady Michelle Obama, which is pretty cool.

Katie Farnsworth [00:33:47] That is so cool. And I'm just in awe of, of your accomplishments. And I think that, you know, American Sign Language is something that a lot of people have a hard time grasping. And I think even though it's become so much more mainstream, you know, that it kind of just I feel like we're seeing it more and more in the media where there's the interpreters in the corner of the concerts, right where they're just at the beat, you know, or they're in a classroom. And I think it's it's really good for listeners to hear about just how widespread this, this profession goes and how many different people that you reach.

Marijo Fiacchino [00:34:27] Well, exactly. And I think the important thing about this is that we're providing access for the deaf community. So it's, it's more than just the interpreter being in the corner, you know, you know, interpreting, you know, crazy music. But we're actually they are providing access. Someone requested those services. You'd be surprised that people are asking to have an interpreter at a K-Pop concert. So and then also people requesting to have interpreters for their doctor's appointments, for their classrooms, for, for access to information. And we're providing a vital service during all that public information that was shared during COVID, during all these disasters. That's why those interpreters are there, because the deaf community, the deaf blind and hard of hearing communities need that information just as much as we do as hearing and sighted and hearing people. So it's a valuable service that we're providing. And I think that's that's, we have to remember that we're providing the service for our deaf community.

Katie Colella [00:35:35] Yeah.

Katie Farnsworth [00:35:36] And it's just one of the many things that the Chicago Hearing Society provides to correct.

Marijo Fiacchino [00:35:40] We have a lot of services, social services like domestic violence, we have youth services, we have a free tax program that we provide. We have a full audiology department, just to name a few. A deaf blind program. We have caseworkers that go out and find out deaf blind individuals that are isolated and let them know that their services and equipment out there for them. So yes.

Katie Colella [00:36:05] And how does a family access resources from the Chicago Hearing Society?

Marijo Fiacchino [00:36:10] The best way is to reach our website which is www.ChicagoHearingSociety.org or you can call our phone number is 773-248-9121.

Katie Colella [00:36:32] Okay, this is it. Our last two for two of the season. Two Katie's two questions slash observations. This time. I'm going to let you go first, Katie Farnsworth, because I feel I am always going first. I'm gonna let you go first this time.

Katie Farnsworth [00:36:48] Well, thank you very much. I felt really inspired by this episode. I really because it was it was so cool to watch. And I recognize that our listeners aren't able to kind of see the interaction between Eduardo and Marijo, but to be in the room and feel that we could really have a pretty fluid conversation, even though there was, of course the pause between our question being asked to Marijo, interpreting to Eduardo answering, it really was a pretty seamless process, and I think it allowed Eduardo to truly answer the questions in a comfortable manner and his preferred way of communication. And I feel like we learned a lot about him that way.

Katie Colella [00:37:35] Yes, I agree, because I when when this came up that we were going to use an ASL interpreter, I think the question people kept giving, you know, asking was, well, how are you doing that with a podcast? And I think it honestly, it worked out much better than I thought. You know, it definitely surpassed my expectations. And I've never worked with an ASL interpreter in a that for that long in a situation that wasn't for clinical care.

Katie Farnsworth [00:38:05] Mm.

Katie Colella [00:38:06] You know, we're and you know, because I'm not counting a place where I'm watching something and there's an ASL interpreter present because, you know, this was a situation where I actually had to interact with the ASL interpreter and we, you know, we're very lucky to get someone with such awesome experience like Marijo.

Katie Farnsworth [00:38:23] I totally agree, you know, that she really opened up my eyes to just what what a really good fluid interpreter can do for an interaction. And I agree. I think there was a little of hesitation about, you know, how is this going to go with the podcast? I felt I felt it was really seamless and I was really happy that we could interview Eduardo and have him feel comfortable having that conversation with us because I feel like he has a lot to share. And just because his mode of communication is different doesn't necessarily mean that we can't get to the bottom of, you know, how he's feeling.

Katie Colella [00:39:03] Absolutely. Okay. So I guess mine's the half observation, half question. Well, I loved it, I loved how he talked about coming out of his shell when he transitions from high school to college, because I think that's a truthful statement for a lot of people. But it did make me wonder, you know, how can we how can we get more teen support out there for teens with hearing loss? You know, how do we connect these individuals with these you know, with these similar experiences to maybe help them have deeper connections at that younger age? Like Lurie, we've had the teen groups through our Sound Experience, it's program. But like, what do you think? Are there other ways we can get these teens connected?

Katie Farnsworth [00:39:53] You know, we also have that we use quite a bit in our on our cochlear implant team as well as is PeerWISE. So we have ParentWISE for the parents to be able to interact with each other. But we also have PeerWISE where patients who have cochlear implants can also, you know, be able to talk to other patients as well. And that is also something that's available for through several of the cochlear implant manufacturers as well, where there are actually recipients on call to be able to talk to families and talk to patients directly about their experience. And I think that, you know, that is such a great resource because oftentimes, you know, if we're implanting a child a little bit older or maybe a teenager is going through a tough transition, you know that there there is another person who potentially had a similar experience and being able to talk about that. You know, I think that Facebook and social media can be a great place to I think it's it's a lot to sift through with finding the right kind of connection if a patient is looking for support. So I do feel like that that peer wise program through Lurie's, is remarkable as well.

Katie Colella [00:41:06] Okay. I do not know about that. I'm not you know, I'm not on the implant team. So that is that is a great resource. But you said it's also connected with the manufacturers. So..

Katie Farnsworth [00:41:16] Yes.

Katie Colella [00:41:16] It's a way for other clinicians to tap into that?

Katie Farnsworth [00:41:20] So other clinician can tap into that. And that's obviously not specific just to Lurie Children's. And I also think, you know, just word of mouth as well. You know, I think that the world is a pretty small place. And the more that parents and kids can just kind of seek out other, you know, camps, there's there's there's so many different resources in the community as well that just with a little bit of digging, you can really find, you know, you may just find that little golden nugget and find that connection that really just makes all the difference. And I think for Eduardo, it's kind of happenstance that he

walked into UIC and kind of met that group of kids that actually didn't have a hearing loss. Right. And he just felt so safe with them. And that, I think, is also remarkable because I'm sure he felt such a sense of being reassured that, you know, even though he has a hearing loss, he's able to make connections with people who don't and feel a bond with them and a relationship with them. You know, as he kind of looks long term.

Katie Colella [00:42:26] That's a good point, that it was with a group of kids that they don't have hearing loss. And so I think it's maybe just every kid, every teen probably needs an opportunity to step out of their world that probably feels small and suffocating and that teenage angst we all go through.

Katie Farnsworth [00:42:46] Yes.

Katie Colella [00:42:46] And like, broaden their horizons.

Katie Farnsworth [00:42:49] Yeah. And I think it can be a really I mean, I remember that it's an uncomfortable feeling. I mean, I remember going to college, right, Like a fresh start. But it's also a scary start. It's a scary start for anyone, regardless of their hearing status to dating to you know, there's there's just so much that you're trying to navigate. And I feel like the chances of having other friends who also have hearing loss depending on what kind of school program you were in, if you were in the mainstream, it's very likely that you never had another kid in your class who also had a hearing loss, or for some of these kids where they are now, have transitioned from a total communication classroom to a more mainstreamed college program. You know, the likelihood of running into another student who has a hearing loss is low. So being able to kind of work on those self-advocacy skills to be able to make those connections. And I think that's something that as clinicians can work on too, you know, to help these kids develop self-advocacy.

Katie Colella [00:43:50] Agreed.

Katie Farnsworth [00:43:50] You know, not just in the classroom, but then also within our, you know, I mean, within our office as well.

Katie Colella [00:43:55] Agreed/

Katie Farnsworth [00:43:56] Yeah, right.

Katie Colella [00:43:58] Well, I can't believe that's a wrap on season two. Thank you for joining me this season as co-host.

Katie Farnsworth [00:44:05] Oh, and oh, my gosh. And thank you so much for all of the work you have done. This is this has been such a pleasure to work with you and I'm so excited for this season.

Katie Colella [00:44:15] Yeah, me too. And you may have all heard my four year old in the background on this interview. So thanks for, you know, taking us as we are a couple moms trying to podcast, a couple of audiologists too of course but yeah until until next season. Thanks for listening.

Katie Farnsworth [00:44:33] Thanks for joining us.] *Amplified*, presented by Lurie Children's, is co-hosted by Katie Colella and myself, Katie Farnsworth. Written and edited by Katie Colella. Tech and Website Support by Katie Fanella Artwork by Katrina Garagiola.

Special thanks to the Venalanzo family for sharing their story along with Beth Ternus, Dr. Nancy Young, Tatum Fritz and Marijo Fiacchino. We are grateful for the continued support from the Department of Audiology. Follow us and amplify the story. One word, no spaces. Transcripts are available at LurieChildrens.org/Amplified. If you need resources regarding childhood hearing loss, visit LurieChildrens.org/Audiology-Resources.