

Mom's story of a child's first day at her local school is an illustrated book

Roesler-Wheat family reunion, back row: Paul, Stephen, *Ralph, *Sally, Sue and Jill; * front row: Annie, Larry, Jeanne * and Alice (mom) text in blue

"...most people take for granted. Even the too-obvious hearing aids she wore, cochlear implants, only slightly helpful with her condition. And so, for four years, she had been attending CID (Central Institute for the Deaf). CI was more than the traditional classroom teaching-school for deaf children. For four years its teachers, with Alice's help, had been training Jill to use special skills to overcome her impairment. With their training, and her mom's constant coaching, Jill had learned she could be self-sufficient. With courage and persistence, she could do anything. Her biggest challenge, her deafness, was just an obstacle to overcome. When she did, she would be able to blend into the hearing world and be anything she dreamed of.... a doctor or a firefighter or a scientist, or even an astronaut."

In the last issue of *sound effects*, we shared the stories of four (of nine) of Alice (Roesler) Wheat's children - the ones who grew up deaf and attended CID in the 1970s.

Wheat is a remarkable woman in many ways. After her children were grown, and 27 years since she attended high school, she earned an undergraduate degree in English and a master's degree in counseling. She won a scholarship to study in Germany and became a counselor. "It was important to me the way my kids saw me" she told a reporter.

Wheat's children's successes turned her into an outspoken advocate for teaching deaf children to talk. She gave magazine interviews and wrote newspaper op-eds sharing her experiences.

In her later years, she has written children's stories, one of which was recently recast as an illustrated book by another daughter, Annie, and her husband, Tony Wessler.

Jill's First Day of School is a delightful account of a teenager's early mainstream adventure. For more information, contact Annie at annleslie@gmail.com.