



## **No Limits for Deaf Kids**

*By David Kates*

Enid Wizig is a good mentor for the No Limits Theater Group students. She, like them, is profoundly deaf. Enid has volunteered in the oral education program since it started 10 years ago. Deaf children who are mainstreamed with hearing teachers and students sometimes feel self-conscious about their hearing aids. Enid makes them feel “cool.”

Enid Wizig grew up in the 1920s and 30s when funnels were used as hearing aids and most deaf children went to sign language schools.

Times have changed.

Enid remembers a junior high choir teacher who told her to mouth lyrics rather than sing. No Limits, on the other hand, encourages the children to speak at full volume. The kids memorize their lines and stage cues.

No Limits is an after-school program that provides free speech services to children from low-income families. Tamika Wesley teaches at No Limits as well as in a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade hearing class. Tamika says teaching hearing impaired students requires a little bit more time but is otherwise the same.

Enid lost her hearing at age six months from a bout with whooping cough that caused nerve damage. She entered a deaf school at age five that taught sign language. But her parents quickly removed her. They wanted her to speak and read lips so she could communicate with most of society.

Her parents sent her to the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, the preeminent oral education program in the country. After four years, CID encouraged her parents to mainstream Enid with hearing children.

Enid met an unconventional speech teacher upon entering high school. Lillian Burns Sydney had never taught a deaf person before. She was a drama coach for MGM in Hollywood. They recited poetry to practice rhythm and inflection.

After high school, Enid studied anatomy and perspective drawing at Los Angeles City College. She later drew cartoon characters at Loony Tunes for more than four years.

Wizig is writing a book about her life that she hopes to share with her grandchildren. She wants to teach them how she persevered despite the odds.

For more information on No Limits, go to [www.nolimitsspeaksout.com](http://www.nolimitsspeaksout.com)