For Immediate Release:

The Decibels Foundation’s Annual Award Dinner Honors Excellence in Supporting Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and their Families

Maynard, MA (September 22, 2018) – On Saturday, September 22nd, the Decibels Foundation hosted their annual Awards Dinner at Emerson College in Boston, MA.

**Ellen Kurtzer-White Award Presented to Kym Meyer**

Each year the Decibels Foundation presents the Ellen Kurtzer-White Award to a person who has made a significant impact on the outcome of young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Ellen Kurtzer-White was a pediatric audiologist who worked with children and their families at the Thayer Lindsley Program at Emerson College, early intervention services for newborns with hearing loss in Rhode Island, and authored articles and books on young children with hearing loss. The award in her name is intended to recognize her remarkable contributions to the field.

On Saturday night, Kym Meyer was presented with the 2018 Ellen Kurtzer-White Award for excellence in service to children who are deaf and hard of hearing beyond the traditional parameters of education. Kym is recognized for her extraordinary efforts and determination to make important changes in services and supports for children with hearing loss. Beginning in the 1990s when Educational Audiology was a relatively unknown discipline, Kym was advocating for the proper educational support for children with hearing loss. Because of her efforts, we have higher standards and regulations for auditory access for children with hearing loss.

Kym Meyer is an educational audiologist and certified teacher, is Director of Public School Partnerships at The Learning Center for the Deaf (TLC) in Framingham, MA and has been on the TLC faculty for almost 25 years. Kym is also a PhD candidate in Special Education at UMass-Amherst, and is doing her dissertation on identifying factors to address the Massachusetts teacher of the deaf shortage. Kym has been an adjunct instructor at Bridgewater State, B.U., and UMass-Amherst. Previous positions include work as a rehab audiologist at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, and teaching deaf and deaf-blind students at Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf and Helen Keller National Center in NY.

**Decibels Scholarship Awarded to Erika Hodlin**

After honoring Kym Meyer for her years of dedication to children who are deaf and hard of hearing, attention was turned to recognizing a second-year graduate student who is committed to a career in pediatric speech-language pathology. Since 2008, the Decibels Foundation has partnered with the Robbins Speech, Language and Hearing Center at Emerson College to encourage the best and brightest to pursue careers as pediatric Speech Language Pathologists through the Decibels Scholar Program. On Saturday night, Erika Hodlin became the 11th Decibels Scholar in Speech Language Pathology. She received an $8,000 scholarship from the foundation and, over the next year, she will be interning at both Emerson’s Thayer Lindsley Program in Boston and the Minute Man Arc El Hearing Loss Program, in Concord, MA.

Erika is a second-year graduate student at Emerson College. She was introduced to the community of deaf and hard of hearing children as a teacher’s aide in the deaf and blind preschool at the Perkins School for the Blind. After taking a course in speech pathology at the University of Connecticut, Erika realized her passion for
the field. She got her undergraduate degree in communication disorders at the University of Connecticut and went on to work as a speech assistant in an early intervention program in Norwood, MA. She chose Emerson College to pursue her Master’s Degree because of unique programs such as the Thayer Lindsley family-centered program for deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers. Based on her internship at Thayer, Erika hopes to continue her work with the deaf and hard of hearing population and to continue to promote family-centered therapy.

About The Decibels Foundation
Founded in 2002, The Decibels Foundation’s mission is to provide specialized early intervention, educational services, family support, and access to essential technologies for children who are deaf and hard of hearing from infancy through high school. The foundation supports families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing through their support of the Minute Man ARC EI program, funding family-centered programs through Boston Children’s Hospital’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, and by awarding scholarships to future educators of deaf and hard of hearing children through institutions such as Emerson College.

About The Learning Center for the Deaf’s Public School Partnerships Program
The Learning Center for the Deaf (TLC) is a nationally recognized leader in educational, therapeutic, and community services for deaf and hard of hearing children and adults. TLC’s Public School Partnerships Program addresses the specific needs of students with hearing aids and cochlear implants who attend public schools. The program provides a support system for monitoring deaf and hard of hearing students’ academic and developmental progress. Currently, the Public School Partnerships program serves over 200 students in 50 school districts.

About The Thayer Lindsley Family-Centered Program
The Thayer Lindsley Program offers a family-centered approach to services for young children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. Communication-focused services are provided at this crucial stage in speech and language development through parent-infant groups, toddler groups, individual therapy sessions and parent support group. This involves working directly with the children as well as empowering their families as they prepare for the unique challenges of raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. The Thayer Lindsley Program, established in 1966, is housed within the Robbins Speech, Language and Hearing Center at Emerson College.

Media Contact
Naomi Campbell Siok
The Decibels Foundation
63 Great Road, Suite 207
Maynard, MA 01754
www.decibelsfoundation.org
n.campbellsio@decibelsfoundation.org
978-637-2622
Photo captions:

Photo #1 (Left) Honore Weiner, Ed.D, (Center) Kym Myer, 2018 Ellen Kurtzer White Award Recipient; and (Right) Brad Austin, President of The Decibels Foundation

Photo #2: (Left) Kimberly Bennett, M.Ed, Thayer Lindsely Program; (Center) Erika Hodlin, 2018 Decibels Scholar; and (Right) Brad Austin, President of the Decibels Foundation