



handstolove

**“where difference does not equal disability”**

## OT Tip of the Month

This winter season, we are all bundling up to keep warm. A button hook with a zipper pull is a great tool to independently get your cold weather gear on and off!

This tool has a cylindrical handle. On one end, there's a loop that secures buttons to pull them through button holes. On the other end, there's a hook that brings zipper pulls up and down.

This tool can be adapted with an EazyHold or Velcro strap to aid with grasping the handle!



Send any questions about how to make the OT Tip of the Month work for you to [kara@handstolove.org](mailto:kara@handstolove.org)

## Hand Camp 2025 Theme

**“25 Years of  
Hand Camp  
Magic”**

With Special Guest **Chris Canfield**

Chris is a magician that was born without his right hand. Chris's talent has been featured on the TV show Penn & Teller: Fool US, as well as in the Genii Magazine. Not only that, but Chris is a tech innovator and skilled musician. We can't wait to meet him at Hand Camp!



# A Note From the Executive Director

*Courtney Wampler*

## Exciting News: Celebrating 25 Years of Hand Camp Magic!

2025 is a big year for Hands to Love! This year's Hand Camp marks our 25th anniversary, and we're thrilled to celebrate the incredible journey we've had. Over the past 25 years, we've supported 300 families, each with a child who has an upper limb difference. We can't wait to celebrate the magic of Hand Camp and the impact it has had on these families – including my own – this April.

## The Magic of Hand Camp

When children with upper limb differences first arrive at Hand Camp, many struggle with low self-esteem. Parents, contacting the H2L office, often express worry about their child fitting in or finding others who truly understand their challenges. But after one trip to Hand Camp or encouraging email, the magic begins. At camp, kids start to embrace their differences, proudly showing them off instead of hiding them. Parents connect with others who understand their concerns – from surgeries to IEPs, encouraging independence, and dealing with bullying. Our volunteers are the real magicians as they provide invaluable resources, support, and encouragement throughout the weekend, helping children and families realize that their ***difference does not equal disability.***

## Spreading the Magic

The impact of Hand Camp is so powerful that those who experience it can't keep it to themselves. Since joining the Hands to Love team, I've heard countless stories of kids sharing their experiences with others who have upper limb differences. Word of mouth has been a key driver of our growth over the past 25 years.

As we saw during Hand Camp 2024 ("This is My Story"), sharing our personal stories can have a powerful impact on others. I encourage you to continue sharing your story related to Hands to Love, helping us reach more families and raise the support needed to ***empower children with upper limb differences and their families through connection, resources, and support.***





## How To Set Up Recurring Donations

1. Navigate to [handstolove.org](https://handstolove.org) and click on the "Donate" tab on the top right
2. Scroll down and click the blue "Make a Donation" button
3. Click the blue "Donate" button on the right side of the screen
4. A pop-up will appear with amount options. Instead of choosing "One-time," consider setting up a monthly, quarterly, or annual donation.

Feel free to email [info@handstolove.org](mailto:info@handstolove.org) with any questions!



## "Fundraising for the future"

As we prepare to celebrate our 25th anniversary, our focus will be on fundraising so that we can continue our mission for the next 25 years. We need your help to raise \$250,000 to kickstart the future of H2L.

Here's how you can get involved:

- **Spread the word:** Share our story with your network on social media, via text, or email. Help us raise awareness and funds by directing people to our fundraising page.
- **Make a recurring gift:** Consider starting a recurring donation of \$25 a month to honor our anniversary. If everyone who receives this message commits to this small monthly donation, we'll exceed our goal! You can find instructions for how to set up a recurring donation on the left side of this page.
- **One-time donation:** If a monthly donation isn't possible, we encourage a one-time gift in multiples of 25 (e.g., \$2.50, \$25, \$250, etc.).

### Let's Fundraise Together!

To start things off with a bang, my family will be making our first \$25 donation by the end of this month. Will you join us?

H2L has 3 funds that you can choose to give to:

[Click here view giving options!](#)

We'll also have more opportunities to give throughout the year, so stay tuned for future updates!

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey. Together, we can continue making magic happen for kids and families for the next 25 years and beyond.



## Unilateral Upper Limb Difference (Congenital or Acquired) Study for Adults & Children

adults & children – we need you!

unilateral upper limb difference survey



@ontheotherhandtherapy

Congenital amputee Dr. Claire Parkin, Associate Professor of Medical Education at the University of Kent & Medway Medical School in Canterbury, England is doing research on the effect of having a limb difference on people's back, neck, shoulders, and teeth. Very little information exists about overuse syndrome for people with upper limb differences. There's also currently no information about how people with upper limb differences who use their teeth to help them grasp may be affected. Participating in the survey will directly contribute to greater information about skeletal (bones) health and oral health for individuals with an upper limb difference. The survey is for people 16 and older or children 15 or younger with the assistance of their parents/caregivers. It's completely anonymous and takes 20-30 minutes to complete. You can learn more about the survey [here](#).

## Innovation Station

### Adaptive Technology Options for Children with Upper Limb Differences

Over the past two decades, parents have frequently told me that their school system or districts didn't have an assistive technology specialist on staff, so they needed to become both their child's advocate and an expert on technology adaptations. Since one-handed typists must cover the entire keyboard with just 4 fingers (the thumb usually types only the space bar), we want to be especially mindful of the wear and tear on our children's dominant hand - especially since it does almost every other task as well. Using technology accommodations can help set our children up for a lifetime of good bodily health. Because "practice makes permanent" and it is hard to relearn motor skills, children with hand/arm differences benefit from learning to type using an efficient, healthy motor plan. Knowing what grade children begin using technology in their school can be very helpful, as is choosing adaptations when your child is as young as possible. But even if your child is older, it's never too late to reduce strain on their arm(s) and hand(s)!

### Looking Different Can be Hard

Before we delve in, it is important to acknowledge that some children may reject adaptive technology options. Parents who do not share their child's differences may feel frustrated or confused when they reject adaptations that can reduce strain. It may help to keep in mind that our society rewards "fitting in," and children who already experience negative attention from their differences may seek to minimize standing out. Your child's stage of development and personality may further affect their willingness to try adaptive equipment.

For these reasons, regularly talking to your children about reducing their risk of overuse syndrome may encourage them to try technology adaptations. Some children may be receptive to using a more "typical" computer set up at school and an adapted arrangement up at home. Of course if your child accepts these options, you can encourage their use at school as well as at home if the equipment is easy to use.

The most important principle when choosing technology for your child is: as much as possible, adapt the technology to the child, not the other way around.

Depending on your child's specific upper limb difference, multiple adaptive technology options might make using devices easier while also reducing strain on your child's body. These options include:

- alternative keyboard layouts and keyboard stickers:
  - Dvorak - one-handed right- or left-handed or two-handed, or custom layout
- external (ergonomic) mouse and/or keyboard
- adaptive accessories like buttons
- voice to text

To learn more how to apply these options for your particular child, read [Typing/Keyboarding for Kids, Teens, and Adults with Hand/Arm Differences](#). You will find options for typing with one hand, one hand and a partial hand, two partial hands, and no hands or shortened arms. You can download several free handouts with links to an Amazon product recommendation list and a list of state Assistive Technology Centers (ATC) which offer "try before you buy" free adaptive equipment loans that typically include shipping to and from your home.

I look forward to hearing your questions!

**Laura Faye Clubok, MS, OTR/L**  
**On The Other Hand Therapy**  
**Columbus, Ohio**

[www.ontheotherhand.org/limb-difference/@ontheotherhandtherapy](http://www.ontheotherhand.org/limb-difference/@ontheotherhandtherapy)