

Stopping the Spread of Hearing Loss

A new study recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Association shows that **one in five American teenagers now suffers from some type of hearing loss**, which is an increase of 31% since the mid-1990's.



This is an alarming trend that can potentially be linked to several factors including the increase in obesity and high blood pressure among children, which are known risk factors for developing hearing loss. But, based on the significant increase in high-frequency hearing loss among the children surveyed,

the most likely culprit for this dramatic surge is excessive noise exposure. Supporting this theory is an Australian study of kids with "mild to moderate" hearing loss, which found that using a portable music player, such as an iPod, was linked to a 70% increased risk of hearing loss. Kids' ears are simply being destroyed by sounds that are much too loud.

Old Ears on Young Bodies

Most of the hearing loss identified in this study was "slight," which is defined as the inability to hear sounds less than about 25 decibels. In practical terms, it means that a teenager with slight hearing loss might not be able to hear when somebody whispers, or subtle environmental sounds like water dripping or the rustling of leaves. Consonant sounds like t, k and s will also be more difficult to hear and distinguish from one another, which can occasionally cause

misunderstandings. Similar to typical age-related hearing loss, the results of the study suggest that about 6.5 million teenagers essentially have ears that have prematurely aged, and are now permanently damaged.

There is an easy recipe for developing permanent noise-induced hearing loss: Too loud, too long and too often. And everything from iPods to video games; rock concerts to lawn mowers can potentially damage young ears. The good news is that noise-induced hearing loss is almost 100% preventable, if you know how to recognize when sounds are too loud and know how you can protect your ears.

How Loud is Too Loud?

Sound is measured in decibels, ranging from the faintest sounds a human ear can hear, which is approximately 1-3 decibels, to sounds in excess of 190 decibels, which cause instantaneous hearing loss. As the decibel level increases, the length of time that ears can be exposed to these sounds without risking damage decreases. And any sound that is measured at 85 decibels or more has the risk of causing permanent hearing loss over time. So, while you might be safe listening to music played at a moderate level of 75 decibels for up to 8 hours per day without risking permanent hearing loss, if your ears are exposed to the sound of a snowmobile, which is approximately 120 decibels, your ears will be in danger after only about 15 minutes. For the record, iPods can typically reach sound

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Introducing New Video Remote Interpreting Services at CCHD

On September 1, CCHD began offering a new service option through CommunicationLink, its sign language interpreting program, called Video Remote Interpreting. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is a state-of-the-art service that uses video conferencing technology and a high-speed internet connection to provide long distance sign language interpreting services for individuals who are Deaf, and works well in a variety of situations such as business meetings, doctor appointments and job interviews. While not appropriate for all interpreting needs, VRI can provide easy, fast and economical access to qualified sign language interpreters, especially in situations when in-person sign language interpreters are not available, or in rural areas where interpreting services are less accessible.

In the United States, it is estimated that more than 31 million Americans have hearing loss, including more than 500,000 in the state of Wisconsin. According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, American Sign Language is said to be the fourth most commonly used language in the United States. For those who use sign language as their primary method of communication, professional interpreting services are critical to ensure that these individuals have equal access to employment, health care, government services and public events. Sign language interpreting services are considered a reasonable accommodation under federal laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Video Remote Interpreting offers a cost-effective way for businesses and organizations to meet the communication needs of Deaf individuals.

VRI services will initially be offered during limited hours and may be expanded as demand for this service grows. For more information, or to find out if Video Remote Interpreting is right for your interpreting needs, call CommunicationLink at 800-542-9838 or email commmlink@cchdwi.org.

levels between 115 and 130 decibels! *(continued on page 2)*

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Tips for Preventing Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

- Assess your environment. If you have to shout to be heard by someone 3 feet away, the sound level is probably at or above 85dB. Limit time spent in these environments or wear hearing protection.
- Follow the 60/60 rule for audio players. That means listening to iPods or MP3 players for a total of 60 minutes or less per day AND keeping the volume level below 60% of the total volume. Some devices include special settings to limit maximum volume, including iPods, where parents can actually lock the maximum volume setting with a code. If someone standing next to you can hear what music you're listening to, it's too loud!
- Choose headphones over earbuds. Earbuds not only increase the decibel level of sounds reaching your ears because of how they fit, they also provide little protection against outside noise, which usually means having to turn up the volume.
- If you play in a band or orchestra, or simply enjoy going to concerts, invest in a pair of filtered earplugs. These devices lower the volume of sound across all frequencies, so you can still hear speech clearly and enjoy the full sound of music without damaging your ears.
- Always wear hearing protection around loud equipment including lawnmowers, leaf blowers, and power tools. Earmuff-style hearing protectors are best in these situations.
- Get your ears checked by an audiologist regularly so hearing loss can be identified in its earliest stages and you can work harder to prevent further damage.

With a little awareness and a few minor changes to behavior, parents and teens can stop the rapid spread of noise-induced hearing loss. If you would like other ideas for keeping your ears healthy, or would like to purchase hearing protection devices or customized earplugs, contact the Center at 414-604-2200. You can also visit the Center online at www.cchdwi.org to find more articles and information

Fairy Tales & Fun at Family Learning Vacation

On August 20, families of children with hearing loss from across the state of Wisconsin came together at the Lions Camp in Rosholt for the Center's annual Family Learning Vacation (FLV) event.

The theme of FLV 2010 was "Once Upon a Family: NeverEnding Stories" and featured guest speaker Les Prausa, who shared ideas about "Parenting with Love and Logic" and how to create family harmony and well-adjusted children by using simple techniques such as empathy, choices, sharing control, and delaying consequences, to allow kids to grow by becoming accountable for their mistakes and successes.

The weekend included many fun activities for kids of all ages including campfire sign games, fairy tale story time, cookie baking, a puppet show, paddle boat races and to top it off, an evening of skits performed by many of the kids who attended.

With more deaf and hard of hearing children being mainstreamed in school, children with hearing loss and their families don't often have many opportunities to meet and network with each other. That's why Family Learning Vacation is so special. In an environment free of communication barriers, everyone who attends can enjoy a weekend filled with new friendships, valuable information, and lots of fun. Thanks to all of the sponsors, volunteers, staff, and of course families, who made FLV 2010 such a success!



Thanks to our donors who help make it possible to continue the work of CCHD.

We gratefully acknowledge contributions recorded between June 26, 2010 and September 1, 2010. Every effort has been made to ensure that all donors are listed. If there are inadvertent errors or omissions, please call 414-604-2200.

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In Honor of:

- Rita Lewenauer's Birthday
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Become a member of the Legacy Society

To recognize those who have included the Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness in their estate plans, a Legacy Society has been established. To learn how you can become a member and how planned giving can benefit you, call Dorothy Kerr at 414-604-7201 or via email at dkerr@cchdwi.org.



Name: Ralph Schroeder

Volunteer for: 4 years

How he helps:

Ralph joined the CCHD team of volunteers in late 2006, in response to a request he saw posted on “Volunteer Milwaukee” for a woodworking project. Although his professional background is in Civil Engineering, Ralph has always enjoyed handyman-type projects ranging from home construction to furniture building. So, when he found out that the Center’s Child & Family Program was in need of some custom shelving units, he knew he could help.

This one simple project has since lead to many others over the years, and his work can now be found throughout the Center. Some of his most memorable projects include building a child-size airplane for the Toddler Communication Group, a Peter Rabbit book rack, a wooden slide, and a picnic table for the Center’s playground area.

One of his most recent projects has really caught the attention of staff and parents alike – a series of



beautiful, hand-painted murals for the children’s speech therapy rooms at the Center, with themes including a jungle, farm and trains. “All of the projects I’ve done for CCHD have been interesting and fun,” says Ralph, “but the best has been the wall paintings. It was my first attempt at painting, but I’d been thinking about doing it for long time and this gave me an opportunity to give it a try. I really enjoyed it and intend to do more.”

Why he supports CCHD:

Ralph is no stranger to volunteering in the community, and lends his many talents to several local organizations. His busy schedule includes giving mini-seminars in job interviewing and preparation to enter the workforce through Goodwill, teaching English as a second language to the Spanish speaking community at Prince of Peace Parish, telling stories to seniors at Clement Manor, and helping with landscaping maintenance at his church. He enjoys volunteering at the Center though because it lets him use his creativity to help others. Says Ralph, “the kids are cute, the staff at CCHD are capable and friendly, and the things I’m asked to do are challenging and rewarding.”

The Center thanks Ralph for bringing so many smiles to the faces of children and staff since he began volunteering at the Center, and for sharing his time and energy with us.



Volunteers from Briggs & Stratton recently helped with landscaping at the Center

CCHD is proud to have many other dedicated volunteers as well, who help the Center in a wide variety of ways. The Center extends heartfelt thanks to each of them, including recent volunteers:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Maggie Alex | Gary Metz |
| Phyllis Ballas | Vicki Metz |
| Briggs & Stratton
Volunteers | Jodie Nigro |
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A Busy Summer for CCHD!

CCHD could not fulfill its mission without the generosity and support of many friends and organizations who recognize how important the Center is to children and adults with hearing loss from all over Wisconsin. This summer, CCHD was honored to be involved with some very special community projects to help raise awareness of hearing loss and the Center's work.

Fun in the Sun Supports CCHD



On July 10, The Shops at East Towne Square and Laacke & Joys in Mequon hosted a special outdoor event called "Fun in the Sun." Featuring

live music, food and wine, pony rides and a petting zoo, this event attracted many families from all over the Milwaukee area and proceeds from the event benefitted the Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness. Many thanks to all who attended and made donations to the Center during this fun summer event and a special thank you to CCHD parent, Melanie Ribich, for getting the Center involved.



2010 Milwaukee Walk4Hearing



CCHD would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the individuals and organizations that walked in support of the Center at the 2010 Milwaukee Walk4Hearing in May. Because of your amazing efforts to recruit team members and collect donations, the Center received more than \$5,000 in proceeds from the event. This money couldn't have come at a better time, as 2010 has been a difficult fundraising year for non-profits across the country, and CCHD is no exception. The ongoing support of friends and neighbors like you is essential to the Center's ability to fulfill its mission of providing state-of-the-art services and technologies to help infants, children and adults with hearing loss reach their fullest potential. Thank you -- and we hope to see you again at the 2011 Walk for Hearing next May!



West Allis West Lions Club Helps in More Ways than One

When the West Allis West Lions Club found out that one of the families participating in the Center's Birth to Three Program was having difficulty transporting their young son Vighnesh back and forth to CCHD



to receive the services he needed to help him develop strong language and communication skills, they immediately stepped in to help. Club members began taking turns driving the family to and from Germantown for his visits to CCHD, and as time went by, these caring volunteers were charmed by the little boy who was blossoming before their very eyes.

The Lions were so inspired by Vighnesh's progress, that



they soon decided they needed to share his story with the rest of the community, and educate others about the valuable services

available through the CCHD.

From this simple idea came an hour-long TV program entitled, "Hearing Loss and Beyond," which was produced by the West Allis West Lions Club and broadcast throughout August and September on the West Allis Community Media Channel. The program will also be shown to other Lions Clubs across the state. "Hearing Loss and Beyond" focuses primarily on cochlear implants, and the many complex issues surrounding parents' and individual's decisions

for whether or not to pursue this technology for their child or themselves. Several clients and families who have received services at the Center were interviewed to share their personal experiences, and CCHD staff members provided their professional insights as well. Copies of the program are available for purchase – to learn more email kmalak@cchdwi.org.

CCHD would like to thank the West Allis West Lions Club for their dedication to making our community a better place by helping children like Vighnesh, with special thanks to Lion Bob Smole and Lion Bill Pallaske for all of the hard work they put into producing this educational program.

Staff News

Amy Peters Lalios, CCHD's Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapist, recently participated in the annual Children's Memorial Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) Summer Program in Chicago as a mentor for other professionals who serve children with hearing loss. Participants came from all over the country as well as from Canada to take part in the AVT Summer Program, which is a two week institute consisting of four days of lecture and workshops followed by a six day mentored practicum, during which participants receive hands-on therapy experience with coaching from senior therapists such as Amy Lalios.

CCHD Child & Family Program Director **Chris Kometer** was recently selected to be a "Preparing Mentor" with the Wisconsin Birth to Three Program. In this role, Chris will work with other Birth to Three providers in Wisconsin to increase the state's capacity to serve children and families with hearing loss, especially those in rural areas of Wisconsin. Chris will spend a year preparing to become a mentor and will focus on developing procedures to increase the skills of Early Intervention staff across the state so they can successfully work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Mentoring and training will then occur through periodic on-site visits, and/or use of distance web technology.



CENTER *for*
COMMUNICATION
HEARING &
DEAFNESS

CENTER FOR COMMUNICATION, HEARING & DEAFNESS
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The Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to help infants, children and adults reach their fullest potential by eliminating communication and language barriers through personalized services, technology and education.

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Mark Your Calendars

Entertainment Books Now on Sale

Now through December 15.

Save money and support CCHD by purchasing an Entertainment book for just \$35. Filled with discounts on dining, entertainment, travel and more. Books can be purchased at the Center during regular business hours.

Winter Wonderland Party

Saturday, December 4, 2010

Briggs & Stratton Auditorium
124th St. & Wirth St., Wauwatosa

Annual Gardens Luncheon

Featuring Guest Speaker Melinda Meyers

Thursday, May 12, 2011

Woman's Club of Wisconsin
813 East Kilbourn Ave., Milwaukee

