

Celebrating 85 Years of Helping Children Achieve Success

In 2011, CCHD will be celebrating its 85th year of service. From its humble beginnings as a social group for Deaf and hard of hearing adults, the Center has become Wisconsin's most trusted resource for state-of-the-art services and technologies to help children and adults with hearing loss, reaching more than 6,000 people each year. Although much has changed since the 1920's, helping children born with hearing loss develop strong language and communication skills remains one of the Center's core programs.

The 1960's were a memorable time in the Center's history, as the agency saw a surge in the number of children identified with hearing loss due to the German measles outbreak in the first half of the decade. Mary Deuster (then Mary Ziesemer) was one of the children brought to the Center for help. According to an article from the October 6, 1967 issue of *The Milwaukee Journal*, Mary was among the 80% of the Center's young clients who were enrolled in the program because of measles-related hearing loss. The Center had recently experienced a three-fold increase in the number of children being served, and was struggling to keep up with the demand for its services.

With a moderate-to-severe hearing loss, Mary could only hear a loud voice close to her ears, and used a body-worn hearing aid – large by today's standards. She would put her hand to the throat of her speech therapist, Jean Kiselis, to learn the sounds that would

help her develop speech, and three times per week, Mary came to the Center for speech therapy, lipreading and playtime in the Center's nursery school program. Although the technology and therapy techniques have changed quite a bit since Mary was a little girl, the Center's goal for her then was the same as it is for today's children – to prepare Mary for school and to give her a strong foundation for lifelong success.

Today, advances in technology, including high-powered, digital hearing aids and cochlear implants, make it possible for more children born with hearing loss to understand speech and develop age-appropriate spoken language skills than ever before. And, changes in technology have also impacted how therapy services can be delivered, with some services (*continued on page 2*)



(left) Mary at 3 years old in a picture that was featured in *The Milwaukee Journal* newspaper. (right) Today, Mary is a wife, mother, and regular volunteer at the Center, where she often fills in at the reception desk

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Focus on: CCHD Adult Programs
- Volunteer Spotlight: Sam Ballas
- Hearing and Your Brain: 5 Things You May Not Know About Hearing Loss

(continued from page 1) now available remotely, using the internet and a webcam. As a result, many children who graduate from the Center's Birth to Three program today are able to be mainstreamed in the school system, enrolling in their neighborhood school alongside their hearing peers, with little or no special accommodations required to succeed academically.

At the same time, history has taught us that there is not one best way to teach a child with hearing loss to develop language, which is why the Center now offers a full spectrum of communication options for children with hearing loss, including auditory/oral communication and sign language. The Center recognizes that parents, who know their child best, should be able to decide how they want their child to develop language and communication skills and spends a great deal of time with each family to provide unbiased information and support so they can determine the right path for their child. Specialists in Deaf education, speech-language pathology and audiology then work closely with each family to help their child reach his or her communication goals.

The success of the Center's current Birth to Three program has not come without many challenges, however. The families receiving services from the Center in 2010 are more diverse than ever before and as a result, the Center has had to adapt its programs and services to meet their specific cultural and language needs. As a reflection of this diversity, in 2009, the Center hired its first bilingual Speech-Language Pathologist to meet the growing number of Spanish-speaking families served by the Center.

The Center has also seen a dramatic surge in the number of children in need of its services in recent years, just as it did in the 1960's. In just the past few years, there has been a 60% increase in the number of children enrolled in its Birth to Three program. Unlike in the past however, this increase is likely part of a continued trend rather than a short-term bump, as children with hearing loss are being identified earlier than ever before, and even children with mild or one-sided hearing loss are now being referred to the Center so they can receive the early intervention services they need. The upside of this trend is that the earlier children with hearing loss begin receiving specialized services, the better their

long-term outcomes for language and communication development.

Unfortunately, funding available to help support these services continues to decrease. In 1967, United Fund support (the precursor to the United Way) made up 85.6% of the agency's total budget. Today it accounts for only 7%. Overall, funding from county contracts and other sources provides only 34% of what it costs to run the Center's Birth to Three program, meaning that CCHD must make up this difference in funding through private donations, fundraising events and grant writing. That's why the support of friends and community partners is so crucial.

It is a struggle that the Center faces each year, as the gap between community needs and funding continues to widen. But, the struggle is worth it when you see the results. After graduating from MATC in 1986, Mary got married and eventually had two children, who are now 13 and 18. Her first "real" job was actually as the Receptionist at the Center, when it was still called the Milwaukee Hearing Society. She later went on to work at the Milwaukee County Courthouse, Robert W. Baird and most recently, Community Memorial Hospital. Mary is also a dedicated volunteer at CCHD, giving back to the organization that helped her get such a strong start in life. "It's an honor to help at CCHD," says Mary, "and I am amazed at how much CCHD has grown after all these years. It has been such a pleasure to get to know the people and staff currently working at CCHD." And the Center is so proud to count Mary among its alumni.

If you would like to help children struggling with hearing loss so they can build a strong foundation for lifelong success, or if you'd like to learn more about the Center's Child & Family Program, visit www.cchdwi.org or call 414-604-2200.



Much has changed over the Center's history, but helping children with hearing loss learn to communicate is still a core part of its mission.

Although hearing loss affects 1 in 10 people across all age groups, older adults are disproportionately affected by hearing problems. It is estimated that by age 55, 25% of adults have measurable hearing loss. By the time adults reach 80 years old, 90% will have trouble hearing. For many, hearing loss creates significant communication barriers that make it difficult to interact with friends and family and enjoy daily activities such as watching TV or talking on the phone. This, in turn, often leads to other problems including social isolation, depression, anxiety and a loss of independence. Hearing aids can often help reduce the impact of hearing loss on daily life, but hearing aids are just one piece of the puzzle. That's why, throughout its 85-year history, CCHD has been offering small group speechreading and communication strategies classes – to empower adults to manage their hearing loss more effectively whether or not they have hearing aids. By teaching individuals with hearing loss how to improve their ability to communicate and to advocate for their communication needs, they are able to live more active, independent lives and stay more connected to those around them.

So what kinds of things can individuals expect to learn in a CCHD speechreading class? Topics include:

- Basic speechreading (lipreading) techniques
- Rules for good communication
- How to advocate for your communication needs
- Hearing aid information and resources
- How hearing loss impacts relationships
- Gizmos & gadgets that may help you hear better
- Problem solving for difficult listening situations
- Community resources you should know

Classes are offered throughout the year and are led by Pam Bergum, a speech-language pathologist with more than twenty years of experience working with adults with hearing loss. Classes are \$95 per student for eight hours of instruction, including materials. To learn more about the benefits of speechreading and communication strategies classes or to find out when the next class series is scheduled to begin, email pbergum@cchdwi.org or call 414-604-7209.

Project Sponsored by the Home Instead Senior Care Foundation Helps Adults with Hearing Loss

Last year, CCHD was awarded a grant from the Home Instead Senior Care Foundation to provide free speechreading and communication strategies classes to older adults in SE Wisconsin. Thanks to this funding, CCHD was able to provide twelve 8-week speechreading classes at nine different locations throughout Milwaukee and Waukesha counties during 2010, and exceeded the



goals of the project in both number of classes held and the number of people served. More than 60 individuals completed the course, and all participants demonstrated marked improvements in their ability to communicate. In fact, pre- and post-testing showed that, on average, participants experienced a 53% improvement in their ability to communicate effectively with others and advocate for their hearing needs – in just 8 weeks.

When asked what they found most helpful about the classes, participant responses included:

“I learned how to tell people you have a problem with hearing, without feeling bad about it.”

“I was amazed at the degree to which one can understand what others are saying by using these skills.”

“Because of what I learned, I find myself more outgoing in group situations now, and I know how to educate family and friends about how to speak to me so I can understand them better.”

“I discovered that hearing aids alone don't always help. It's a combination of things that helps most when it comes to being able to hear well.”

CCHD thanks the Home Instead Senior Care Foundation for providing the financial support necessary to make these valuable classes accessible to so many older adults in SE Wisconsin.

Name: Sam Ballas

Volunteer for: 4 years

How he helps:

In baseball, a utility player is one who can play several positions competently -- a sort of 'jack of all trades'. In the volunteer world, the name for that person is Sam Ballas. Sam has been helping the Center for several years and is the kind of volunteer that every organization wishes they could clone. Kind-hearted, dependable and always willing to jump in and help with anything that needs doing. That's Sam. Over the years, he has helped with everything from stuffing envelopes to posing for brochure photos, being the door greeter for sign language classes to cleaning up the Center's parking lot and playground area. No job is too big or too small for him to help with, because he knows that even the little things are important when it comes to running an organization like CCHD.

"I first got involved with CCHD after seeing an ad in the Sunday paper for volunteers," say Sam. "I had attended a lipreading class at the Center when it was still at the old location on 124th street, and when I saw the ad, I decided that I wanted to learn more about what the Center does and how I could help."

Never a stranger to hard work or community involvement, Sam began his career at the old Johnston Cookie Co. when he was just 16 years old and went on to work for Cutler & Hammer, Inc. before spending 24 years as a truck driver with the City of West Allis. He was a volunteer in the Emergency Department at West Allis Memorial Hospital for more than eleven years, and still helps out at Kathy's House, which provides a 'home away from home' for patients and



their caregivers traveling to Milwaukee area hospitals for medical treatment.

Why he supports CCHD:

"I really like what the Center does for people, both young and old. And since I have used some of its services myself, I like the feeling that in some little way, I can be a part of that by volunteering."

Although Sam can be seen at the Center year-round, some of his favorite assignments are when the Center has an upcoming event. "I enjoy all of the volunteer opportunities that become available before fundraisers, but picking up silent auction items that have been donated can be a real adventure. That's one of my favorites."

So, the next time you are at the Center, if you happen to see Sam, be sure to say hello and thank him for his years of service as a dedicated CCHD volunteer. The commitment of great volunteers like Sam is vital to the Center's ability to fulfill its mission in the community and we are so grateful to Sam and all of the wonderful CCHD volunteers who donate their time and talents to help us accomplish our work.

Volunteers

CCHD thanks all of its volunteers, who help the Center in so many ways. Recent volunteers include:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Sam Ballas | Ann Powers |
| Mary Deuster | Muna Qureshi |
| Theresa Durik | Philip L. Renner |
| Cara Gerspach | Melody Rupp |
| Renee King | John Steinle |
| Gary Metz | Andrew Vanden
Busch |
| Vicki Metz | |
| Sharon Plummer | |

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

We gratefully acknowledge contributions recorded between September 2, 2010 and November 14, 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.

Donors:

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In Memory of:

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 Grace Nelson
 Judy and Richard Wagner
 I Stanley Levine
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael Zaret

In Honor of:

Rita Lewenauer's Birthday
 Polly B. Siegel
 Mr. and Mrs. Gary L. Stein



GoodSearch.com – Raise money for CCHD every time you do an internet search through GoodSearch.com. Visit www.GoodSearch.com and type in Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness as your charity of choice, and then one cent will be donated to the Center for each online search.

Pick'n Save We Care Program



– Did you know that every time you use your Pick'n Save/Roundy's Advantage Card you could be helping kids and adults learn to hear and communicate better? Simply stop by the customer service desk at Pick'n Save and tell them you want to designate

CCHD (organization ID #: 108075) as your charity of choice. Then, every time you shop, a portion of your purchases will be donated to CCHD – at no cost to you.



iGive.com – If you do any holiday shopping online this year, you could be raising money for CCHD every time you shop. Simply register online at www.iGive.com/cchd, and when you shop from one of the 800+ participating online stores, a percentage of your purchase will be donated to CCHD. It's completely free to participate, and up to 26% of your next online purchase could be donated to support CCHD programs. Plus, if you make your first purchase within 45 days of registering, iGive will donate an extra \$5 to CCHD.

CCHD WISH LIST

From time to time, some special items are needed to help the Center do its work. If you are able to help by donating any of the items listed here, the Center would be extremely grateful.

- LCD projector, laptop with DVD player and speakers for presentations.
- Basic tool kit
- Rolling suitcase set for outreach exhibits
- Folding utility cart
- Children's books in Spanish
- MP3 player with high quality speakers
- Wooden puzzles for small children
- Sanitizing wipes
- Colored copier paper
- Avery 5160 address labels
- Gift cards for stores such as Target, Wal-Mart, OfficeMax or Pick'n Save for purchasing supplies

Hearing and Your Brain: 5 Things You May Not Know About Hearing Loss

Maintaining healthy hearing throughout your life and treating hearing problems early is essential to preventing communication breakdowns and other issues associated with hearing loss such as difficulty functioning in social situations, job performance issues and personal safety concerns. But research shows an even greater reason to take care of your ears. Healthy hearing is linked to healthy brain function, and adults who develop hearing problems but do not seek treatment, may be putting themselves at risk.

1 Scientists at Virginia Commonwealth University have discovered that hearing loss leads to a remodeling of the brain in which parts responsible for hearing sounds are overtaken by the sensory system related to the sense of touch. This could explain why some people with hearing loss still struggle to hear and understand speech clearly after seeking treatment -- even if a person retains some ability to hear, the changes in the brain make it harder to process sound and can make the interpretation of sounds much more difficult.

2 According to researchers at Brandeis University, older adults with hearing loss may also lose some of their ability to remember spoken language. Even when adults with hearing loss heard words well enough to repeat them, they weren't able to memorize and remember those words as well as older adults with good hearing. This is because in order to hear and understand speech clearly, adults with mild to moderate hearing loss must expend a high amount of cognitive energy on listening and processing sounds. As a result, less energy is available for analyzing and storing the information conveyed.

This link between hearing and cognitive function may help to explain why some adults with hearing problems may appear to be more forgetful or easily distracted. To help reduce communication breakdowns caused by hearing loss, practice speaking more clearly and pausing after clauses, or chunks of information, to help convey meaning.

3 A number of research studies have demonstrated a correlation between Alzheimer's, dementia and hearing loss. Many symptoms of hearing loss -- especially those related to difficulty in understanding and communicating - are similar to some of those found in Alzheimer's. For example, both Alzheimer's and hearing loss are known to affect speech and language skills. Depression and anxiety are also

common features of both conditions. While hearing loss can be a risk factor for dementia and Alzheimer's disease, it can also exacerbate their symptoms. Of further concern is the fact that hearing loss is often mistaken for dementia and as a result, may go untreated. The bottom line is that hearing loss, dementia and Alzheimer's are often found in combination, and treating the underlying hearing loss can actually improve overall cognitive function and reduce behavioral problems associated with these conditions.

4 Research indicates a strong link between hearing loss and health problems. It's not that hearing loss necessarily causes or worsens other diseases, however. Rather, hearing problems can exacerbate the perceived symptoms associated with disease. Untreated hearing loss frequently results in depression and feelings of isolation, which can also heighten people's awareness of the impact of physical disease on their lives. Studies show that when people are fit with appropriate hearing devices, they report improved overall health.

5 Most adults who develop hearing loss wait, on average, seven years before seeking help. This can be a huge mistake though, and may reduce the effectiveness of hearing aids down the road. The reason is that the longer hearing loss is ignored, the more deterioration there will be in the brain's ability to process speech sounds accurately. It's a phenomenon known as "auditory deprivation," and it happens regardless of the severity of hearing loss. While partial or complete recovery of speech processing abilities may occur after wearing hearing aids, it's important to remember the old adage, "use it or lose it" when it comes to hearing loss as well.

Don't take your hearing for granted! If you would like to learn more about how to maintain healthy hearing, contact the Center at 414-604-2200 today.

I don't think I have a hearing loss, so why should I get my hearing checked?

Even if you haven't noticed that your hearing has decreased in any way, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association recommends that adults be screened at least every decade through age 50 and at 3-year intervals thereafter. Why? There are two main reasons. First, your ears are an important part of your overall health and well-being. Just as you probably have your vision, blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked



Community Audiology Services offers comprehensive services including hearing testing, hearing aid fittings and customized hearing protection.

periodically, it's important to confirm the health of your hearing as well. Like most other medical conditions, if hearing loss

is caught early, there is usually more that can be done to correct it. And, fixing a mild hearing loss can be much easier -- and much less expensive -- than dealing with a hearing problem that is already very advanced and interfering with daily activities.

Secondly, hearing loss typically happens very gradually over a long period of time, and as the hearing loss progresses, people may not notice that they are adapting to these changes by doing simple things such as turning up the volume of their TV, watching people's faces more closely when they talk, or asking people to repeat more often. Frequently, it's actually friends or family who are the first to notice a person's hearing loss and the person with the hearing problem is the last to know. By getting regular hearing checks, you can make sure that you're still hearing the way you should and can address any possible issues right away.

If it's time for your hearing check-up, call the experts at Community Audiology Services at 414-541-4327 to schedule a full hearing evaluation.

Why are hearing aids so expensive?

One of the primary excuses people give for not purchasing hearing aids is cost. And it's no wonder why. Rarely covered by insurance or financial assistance programs, hearing aids can be expensive, sometimes costing several thousand dollars for a pair. While it's hard to put a price tag on being able to hear and communicate effectively with the world around you, many individuals do wonder why hearing aids require such an investment. So what are the factors that affect hearing aid prices?

1. Hearing aids are sold in a relatively low volume compared with most other electronic devices, with approximately 2 million aids sold per year in the US. Compare that with the number of TVs, cell phones or computers sold annually. As with other types of technology, consumer prices don't typically go down until demand goes up significantly.
2. Fitting so much technology into such a small space requires a lot of research and development. And that R & D costs a lot of money that manufacturers have to generate through sales. Hearing aid technology in just the past 10 years has advanced considerably and has resulted in much smaller, more comfortable and more effective devices for those who use them. One hearing aid company claims to have spent as much as 20 million dollars developing a single model of hearing aid. They may look simple, but hearing aids have become very sophisticated computerized devices able to meet the needs of more people than ever before.
3. Hearing aids require the expertise of professionals to fit and program them so they can meet the user's communication needs. This requires a significant amount of time spent with an Audiologist compared with, for example, the time spent when purchasing new eyeglasses. On average, an Audiologist spends five direct contact hours with each client during the first year of getting new hearing aids. So, it's important to remember that when you are paying for new aids, you are also paying for the professional, one-on-one services of a skilled Audiologist who will not only help ensure that your hearing aids perform at their best, but also provide valuable information and advice on how to manage your hearing loss more effectively.



CENTER *for*
COMMUNICATION
HEARING &
DEAFNESS

CENTER FOR COMMUNICATION, HEARING & DEAFNESS
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WEST ALLIS, WI 53227-2028

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

Spring Sign Language Classes

Classes run January 24 - April 12, 2011
ASL I & ASL Follow-Up: Mondays, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
ASL II: Tuesdays, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
Call 414-604-2200 or visit www.cchdwi.org to register.

Annual Gardens Luncheon

Featuring gardening expert Melinda Myers and emcee, Tiffany Ogle, from The Morning Blend
Thursday, May 12, 2011
Woman's Club of Wisconsin
813 East Kilbourn Ave., Milwaukee

Corks & Kegs

Beer and wine tasting fundraiser to support CCHD.
Friday, August 26, 2011
Milwaukee Brewing Company
613 S. Second St., Milwaukee

As a private, non-profit organization, the Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness relies heavily on private donations to support its programs and services. This holiday season, please consider a year-end, tax-deductible donation to the Center and give the gift of better hearing and communication for all. **To donate, please visit us online at www.cchdwi.org or call 414-604-2200.**

